



Genjo

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PM

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi)

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by [Genjo](#) on Thu Sep 08, 2011 9:06 pm

Genjo wrote:

.... quickly, 1) declare that under no circumstances will any ZSS property be sold to either Eido Roshi or some consortium that supports him, 2) exclude Eido Roshi from being on ZSS property indefinitely, 3) remind staunch supporters of Eido Roshi that they can train elsewhere, 4) offer an organizational apology to those the organization was not able to protect from serial abuses over decades, 5) adopt bylaws that allow for significant democratization of the board and the limiting of the role of abbot to conducting practice style and schedule, 6) announce that significant resources will be devoted to healing the deep wounds of those directly and indirectly harmed during Eido Roshi's tenure as Abbot...

Several people have asked me if I have heard anything from the ZSS Board after sending this letter. Yes, three board members have contacted me about it including the Board President and Shinge Roshi. Shinge Roshi has said the Board will NOT be selling Shobo-Ji, the New York City Zendo, and is making her best efforts to support and encourage the practice there. The board president tells me that bylaw reform and completion of an audit are currently their top priorities. A third board member told me a report about the Sangha Meeting should be out soon and assured me that the "pro-Roshi faction" is not monolithic and some have even given praise to the boards actions, up to a point. Regarding the proposal to have Eido Roshi supporters buy Shobo-Ji, Shinge Roshi assured me it was not being considered by the board, but thought the idea had merit because it demonstrated thinking out of the box.

In my mind, this idea is more like thinking in the box, the box that has allowed Eido Roshi to continue to abuse the most vulnerable females under his spiritual care for decades despite multiple well documented egregious violations of ethical guidelines and precepts. It was not so long ago that I too demonstrated "in the box" thinking. I will forever regret not paying more attention to Eido Roshi's history and not taking care that Ethical Guidelines with teeth and the Precepts were more prominent in our practice.

I definitely feel that the steps the ZSS Board are taking are good and necessary, but, in my mind, so far insufficient. As Shinge Roshi admitted to Olivia, "You are right, the complex and difficult loyalties have not allowed a clean and strong separation. I hear you"; in other words, a clean and strong separation has yet to be accomplished and is sorely needed. The most direct way to accomplish a clean and strong separation is to include in the board's next public offering some sort of statement that reads, "We are greatly saddened to conclude that Eido Roshi's continued lack of understanding of the great harm he has caused this sangha and American Zen necessitates that his presence be precluded from ZSS property indefinitely." Such a statement would go a long, long way to abating reasonable peoples fears that the abusing grandfather is still a presence on campus.

I know that ER does not have a key to NYZ, I know that he is not allowed to teach, and I know that he does not visit often, but it is much more than the most radical factions who need to see a "clean break" with Eido Roshi by the ZSS board. Despite his many flaws, Eido Roshi also has shown great genius, and sometimes he reminds me of other historical figures who have demonstrated both great gifts and great flaws. I believe that the organization owes Eido Roshi a lot for the gifts he has given, but I also believe that the organization owes a lot to those who have been harmed over the decades and were not adequately protected by the ZSS organization. It adds insult to their injuries, like rubbing salt in a wound, not to have Eido Roshi cleanly and completely excluded from the use of the properties. The fact that until recently ZSS Ethical Guidelines with teeth (admittedly they need additional refinement) and the Precepts were not more prominent in our practice, means to me, that the least we can offer those we did not adequately protect is to say he is around no more. This will give at least partial relief to those he abused, and I think much relief to the Maha-Sangha, which is watching carefully to see if the board can really turn 180 degrees away from the sordid past. As I see it, we must at least partially atone for the sins of our father. I know the Board is taking time to integrate the input received from the Sangha Meeting; I only hope this integration will lead to bold additional steps to help heal the ZSS sangha. To say Eido Roshi is "fully retired" is simply not enough.

Over this last year, what has hurt terribly is coming to realize the full extent of Eido Roshi's serial abuse of females under his spiritual care, yet more painful was watching him dissemble, rationalize and backslide from taking responsibility for his actions. As I have said many times, if he can't take and hold responsibility for his actions, it falls to us to do it for him. Though I am no longer on the board, I still have a lot of years invested in this organization and lineage, and I want it to right itself and thrive in time.

I've been told by those still attached to Eido Roshi that I have been hostile and power hungry, don't represent a balanced view and even compared to Mubarak refusing to yield to reason, to them I say I truly believe we are all doing our best under very difficult trying circumstances. I want to also point out that this kind of rhetoric has been used to describe everyone who has stepped out of the box.

With palms together,

Genjo