

Rev. Kobutsu Malone

Post Office Box 213
Sedgwick, Maine 04676-0213 USA

kobutsu.malone@gmail.com

(207) 359-2555

March 13, 2012

Mark R. Tercek
The Nature Conservancy
4245 North Fairfax Drive, Suite 100
Arlington, VA 22203-1606

Re: Zen Studies Society/Dai Bosatsu Zendo

Dear Mr. Tercek:

I am the archivist of The Shimano Archives, an open source archive of original documents concerning the Zen Studies Society's former Abbot Eido Shimano and the activities of the Zen Studies Society itself during the period 1965 through the present. The Archive is located at www.shimanoarchive.com. It was originally comprised of documents kept by Robert Aitken Roshi in sealed files maintained at the University of Hawaii, Mānoa and was later supplemented by many other documents donated to the Archive or publicly available.

Now comprising over 5,800 pages, the Archives document much of the history of Shimano's sexual predation and abuse of his students spanning over forty years. The Archives also document the abject and ongoing failure of the Zen Studies Society to implement essential governance standards and institutional safeguards. Despite revelations of sexual abuse that, in any other context, would have resulted in Shimano's immediate termination for cause and the organization turning the matter over to police or prosecutors, the Zen Studies Society has acted repeatedly to conceal Shimano's predations from the public and law enforcement authorities. Beyond Shimano's own conduct, the Archive indicates that the Zen Studies actively concealed tax evasion, money laundering, funding of the Society with the proceeds of illicit narcotics transactions, harboring a fugitive wanted by federal law enforcement authorities and the use of LSD as a means of "expediting" spiritual insight. Significantly, neither Shimano nor Zen Studies Society has made a public statement denying any of this. The August 21, 2010 New York Times article by Mark Oppenheimer, hints at just some of the issues.

I have been informed that The Nature Conservancy and Zen Studies Society are broaching the possible transfer of Society property at and around it's Beecher Lake, Catskills facility to the Nature Conservancy, either through lease or outright purchase. It is my understanding that a significant part of any proceeds to the Society from the contemplated transaction would be allocated to fund a retirement package for Eido Shimano and his wife that the Society's cash flow and current assets are insufficient to satisfy.

Significantly, the Zen Studies Society has never had any independent directors; all of its directors have been culled from the organization's students, until very recently Eido Shimano's students. Similarly, the organization has not retained independent legal counsel until very recently, usually relying on members of the organization or other Zen-affiliated attorneys for legal advice.

I would suggest that beyond embroiling the Nature Conservancy and its donors in a controversy over sexual abuse, abuse of power and the abject failure of the organization to protect its students, and that has effectively crippled the Society's ability to fundraise by normal methods, by entering into the contemplated transfer of property the Nature Conservancy will make itself a necessary party in any litigation brought to enjoin or unwind the transaction as a fraudulent conveyance of property by an insolvent transferor, or that seeks to hold the Society responsible for Shimano's conduct and its own fraudulent concealment and breach of its obligations to students, donors and its own clergy.

As the Archivist, I am intimately familiar with the documents. As a victim, together with many other victims who are now finding the courage speak out, I am familiar – all too familiar – with the details. I realize that the material is voluminous but I would suggest that even a cursory review of the situation will bring you to reconsider whether an association with Zen Studies offers your organization any positive benefits, and whether the contemplated transaction actually hinders rather than furthers the Nature Conservancy's noble mission.

Sincerely,

Kobutsu



Rev. Kobutsu Malone