



Genjo

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Re: Teacher Sexual misconduct -Eido Tai Shimano, ZSS, and ot

by Genjo on Wed Aug 15, 2012 3:22 pm

christopher::: wrote:

Oh well. Seems clear to me that those who were harmed by their experiences with Eido Shimano will find the greatest peace of mind and happiness by releasing any and all expectations of there being dramatic changes made as long as Shimano lives. It's just very unrealistic.

Yes, it is time to move on. Recently I was asked about forgiveness as it relates to Eido Shimano Roshi. As we know, just recently on August 12, 2012, Eido Roshi was scheduled to conduct a special ceremony with honored guests from Japan, to inaugurate the new \$100,000+ Samon (Main Temple) Gate to Dai Bosatsu Zendo (DBZ), the Zen Studies Society (ZSS) monastery in the Catskill Mountains of New York. The current abbot of ZSS invited him, Shinge Sherry Chayat Roshi, appointed by Eido Roshi to be his successor. Many former ZSS students, including myself, and some current participants, including some ZSS Board members did not consider this invitation a good idea. In fact it is my recollection that nearly the entire ZSS board, at least when I sat on it, did not intend to invite Eido Roshi to this or any other ceremony on ZSS property, let alone allow him to "conduct" one (see: http://playfulmoon.com/EidoRoshi/segaki..._2Email.pdf).

Personally, I've come to forgive Eido Roshi for turning out to be a sexual predator who preyed on the most vulnerable female students under his care, resorting to date rape when he couldn't get his way, and passing STDs to his students. Perhaps this forgiveness is not mine to give, as I was in no way abused or assaulted by him, but somehow I've come to understand that he clearly had no capacity to control his impulses, even though he was confronted about his problem multiple times over the course of decades. I have no desire to see him in prison, even though in many states he would be in prison for having sexual relations with multiple females (often at the same time) in the "congregation." And from my gratitude to him for serving many others and me in his role as a Zen Master, I even want him to have a decent retirement package, but not what appears to me to be the ridiculously absurd package he is insisting on. However, given the facts of this case, I could only support a retirement package that was contingent on Eido Roshi's complete retirement from teaching anywhere. You see, though he has my forgiveness and understanding, I do not want more innocent students exposed to his abuses of power and authority.

What I'm not yet able to forgive is that Shinge Roshi and the ZSS board continue to expose the ZSS Sangha to this man that still denies he has a problem, at least not any kind of problem that would require him to work on his culpability. What I also cannot forgive or understand is why they are bankrupting the organization trying to pay him his deferred compensation at the rate of \$90,000+ per year in compensation and benefits, even though he continues to teach in New York and elsewhere around the world. (See: <http://playfulmoon.com/EidoRoshi/where.html>). Unfortunately, Shinge Roshi has told me he deserves this amount, which is why I think she is unwilling to test the issue in court. Yet, by holding to this position, she and the board are indirectly funding Eido Roshi's ability to continue to teach, exposing more students to his predations. As many know, ZSS is currently seeking to set up a conservation trust with the Nature Conservancy for about half of the DBZ property, an idea which I support, to fund the Shimanos retirement, which I don't support or forgive (see: <http://www.choboji.org/NC.pdf>), as it will continue to fund Eido Roshi's teaching and predations off property.

Even though I had to leave the ZSS board because I was tired of being asked by Shinge Roshi to cover up for Eido Roshi multiple times (see: <http://sweepingzen.com/interview-genjo-...-es-society>), and my temple, Chobo-Ji in Seattle, terminated all affiliation because the Chobo-Ji board recognized that the ZSS was not adequately addressing those directly harmed or alienated, ZSS for better or worse will always be my root temple. Therefore, I am still hoping for its recovery, not its downfall.

However, to my knowledge:

- 1) No further exploration or healing with the wider sangha is scheduled.
- 2) The current operating ZSS bylaws have not been made public, I'm told because they are being worked on; however, this does not fit with any idea of transparency I'm aware of.
- 3) At this point the board is still essentially appointed, not elected, and the bylaw modification process is a board only concern.
- 4) The long awaited forensic audit of ZSS books examining other possible abuses of power and authority, promised since the fall of 2010, has no scheduled completion date.
- 5) An organizational apology for its part in not better protecting its own sangha over decades of abuse has never been offered and no published ZSS newsletter has ever stated clearly why Eido Roshi resigned as abbot.
- 6) Eido Roshi retired in the Fall of 2010, yet his possessions still clutter both temples to such an extent that Shinge Roshi has not even been able to sleep in the abbot's quarters of either temple. It is as though these rooms have become shrines to him or are awaiting his return.

Many have said to me, "Shinge Roshi is doing the best she can," but sometimes we must come to recognize "the best we can" just doesn't cut it, and if we are clear eyed enough to see this we must say so. In my opinion, Shinge Roshi's loyalty to Eido Roshi is clouding her better judgment and hurting ZSS's chances of recovery. By supporting only the sangha left standing after another mass exodus, so many are ignored and left out of the process. At least this is how I see it.

In my mind, forgiveness can only come when one can reasonably conclude the abuse has stopped and those who have indirectly supported it have sufficient comprehension of the damage done that they have halted any direct or indirect support. All I can say is Not Yet. For myself, I will concentrate on my own practice with the Seattle Sangha, and I pray this is the last post I will feel compelled to make on this subject. As Christopher says, it is unrealistic that ZSS will ever actualize the dream I once had that it would become a welcoming temple to those who have been abused or alienated. It is time to let go and move on with our lives.

With palms together,

Genjo

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<http://www.choboji.org>