



I'M SORRY, WAS THIS AN INOPPORTUNE TIME? MAYBE NEXT WEEK WOULD HAVE WORKED BETTER?

Posted by: Adam Tebbe on November 23, 2012

I really am awestruck anymore by the reactions to scandals when they are published. The poor readers are tired of it all (let's just gloss over those victims). One man contacted me on Facebook to inform me I am the "Pee Pee Police." Another angry blogger previously commented that we're Sweeping Sins, now. These are just cute snapshots of an emerging theme, one which I see now flooding over in to the Zen teacher community. I'm not going to name any names, but I have a pretty good sense when the wagons are circling. In this case, it probably won't be long before the wagons blaze off and away, turning their back on the website for giving Zen a bad name. This is probably why other media outlets do 99.999% fluff in their publications, because the teachers, the readers...they'll turn on you.

What's challenging is that it's all happening in one fell swoop, right? There appears to be a rabid dog we must handle down there at our Zen teacher ankles, after all.

Eye-roll.

Everyone, including myself, is having a very hard time digesting all of this, as it's all coming in so fast and is hard to decipher. Are they connected? Are they isolated? Is this much ado about nothing?

I've spoken to people who discussed the *Sasaki thing* with me, not knowing Sweeping Zen was even the source (via Eshu Martin). It's becoming a mantra, really, and various people are repeating the "truism": "He's 105, why do this?" Boy, phrases like this sure get around quick. It's as though it was locked and loaded, in preparation for this day. If this is bad timing well, you know, maybe it should have been handled like, I don't know, decades ago.

I spoke to one man who was a therapist in the 1980s. He counseled a lot of people who were coming out of various cults and such. He told me that this woman said that, at the end of sanzen, the roshi groped and fondled her as they hugged. She slapped him in the face and spat at him, exiting the room. Apparently she informed an osho of what happened, who allegedly laughed and said, "Oh, that's just roshi."

I have also heard allegations that, during koan interviews, a woman might be asked to manifest a tree, or a flower. Up shoot their arms in the position of the tree. With the men, they might be distracted in all sorts of ways. With the women, however, the method of distraction is reportedly different. Yeah, you can guess how they were distracted...

There's a lot more to come, some of which will be from the women themselves, but these are mere tastes and glimpses. And yet, bloggers like Brad Warner opine that it's just not clear whether abuses took place. Maybe he was just making love to them all, and everyone was happy. One woman has said that her experiences (what they were are not clearly defined, and are not by her considered abusive) were the closest she had ever been to god. To this, Brad states (see his comments section):

“ *Funny how everyone reads “the closest I’ve ever gotten to God” as meaning that the woman in question thought Joshu Sasaki was God. I didn’t even think of it that way at all when I chose to include it. I guess I’m weird.*

I don’t believe she thought Sasaki was God. Sasaki never presents himself as anything of the sort. He’s not that kind of a person. I read it as the woman trying to relate what her feeling was at that moment. Like it was a kind of peak moment for her. Not that Sasaki Roshi was God and getting fondled by him was getting fondled by (and therefore being close to) God.

This shit just makes me sick. What the fuck is Brad talking about here? I don't know what the hell he's saying. Do women usually refer to their Zen teacher as gods? Let's just say the two had coffee. If the woman said it was close to being with god, that's just whacked man. I don't know where the hell he's going with this. Oh wait, yes I do. Earlier in a comment he stated:

“ *I’m not really trying to defend Joshu Sasaki. I’m saying I’m not sure he needs defending. I’m wondering if he actually abused his power at all.*

Sex is such a funny topic. For example, everyone jumped on Gempo Roshi for his alleged sex scandals. But, to me, his sex scandals were nothing much. Or maybe they were something much. But what was far worse was Big Mind™. And nobody is talking about that except me. This just baffles me.

As for Sasaki, we still don’t know what he really did. Maybe we never will. Maybe we’ll never know what really went on in any of these cases. Maybe we’ll never know what really went on over breakfast this morning. Maybe we’ll never know anything. Maybe all we have left is not knowing.

I guess what was *alleged* were the scandals? Genpo himself put on the front page of his website the sex part. But, pay no mind to this linguistic ninja-move.

You know, maybe what happened with Sasaki is a failure of curiosity. I started hearing about it all right away, from the moment I began running the website. It would come out in off the record interviews or in casual chat. It didn't take me very long to start becoming curious. But, this went on for decade, after decade, after decade...

And nobody in the broader Zen teaching mahasangha thought to ask: "Hmmm, maybe this should be looked in to. Maybe we should try and address this." Nobody? Somehow, everybody knows, and yet everybody claims to have not known?

I'll tell you what. It didn't take me long to figure it out. One female Zen teacher said he was nothing like Shimano — it reminded me of Bush's "I saw Putin's soul" moment. I wanted to gag in my mouth. This was after I'd been told that Sasaki had allegedly asked one female teacher in that person's organization to sit on his lap one time during an interview (I'd heard that from multiple sources). This same person, the one who saw in to Putin's soul, was sent a link to Eshu Martin's piece by a concerned individual and they replied, "Why did you send me this?"

Move along, everyone. Nothing to see here. Buy my book, by the way...

ABOUT ADAM TEBBE



Adam Tebbe is senior editor at Sweeping Zen and is also the founder of Kannonji Zen Retreat in Second Life, a sangha which hosts events from Buddhist clergy using the virtual technology of Second Life. He studied to be a chemical dependency counselor at a small community college in Southern Ohio but decided to devote his time to this website, instead. Adam also does a bit of news gathering for Buddhadharma: The Practitioner's Quarterly.

