



THE ZEN STUDIES SOCIETY

EIDO T. SHIMANO ROSHI, ABBOT

April 24, 1996

Governor James Guy Tucker
State Capitol
Governor's Office Room 230
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

Dear Governor Tucker:

I am a Zen Buddhist priest, originally from Japan. I have been living in this country for over 35 years. I am now an American citizen.

The reason why I am writing this letter to you is related to the life of Mr. Frankie Parker, an inmate in your state, who, to my understanding, is scheduled to be executed on May 29th. I believe it is within your power to commute his sentence to life imprisonment.

"Thou shall not kill" is the first commandment of the Judeo-Christian tradition. It is the first one in the Buddhist tradition, too. Frankie violated it and was sentenced over ten years ago to death row. He has had to live under the tremendous pressure of such a sentence. This fact has resulted in his becoming a Buddhist and has repaid some of his guilt.

If the execution takes place under your order, you too violate this sacred commandment. The person who actually performs the execution, even if it is his "job" or if he is just carrying out another's decision, also will violate "thou shall not kill." These issues should not be taken lightly.

Since it is in your power to change Mr. Parker's sentence, please handle this most serious matter with lucid wisdom and warm compassion.

Frankie is the first Buddhist in this country confronting this life and death issue in prison. We in the Buddhist community regard this event quite seriously.

Respectfully,

Eido T. Shimano
Abbot and Chairman

The Zen Studies Society, Inc.

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