

Latest Development in the ongoing Shimano situation



Author	Message
Jcbaran	DSubject: Latest Development in the ongoing Shimano situation ©Thu Dec 27, 2012 5:19 pm
	<p>An Open Letter to Sherry Chayat, the Zen Studies Society (ZSS), and Other Concerned Persons</p> <p>I trust your health is holding up despite present difficulties. As you know, I have met Eidō Shimano, visited Dai Bosatsu, and also met you at your center. But I discovered the details of this situation only because you asked me to check why Shimano was not listed on Sōen Nakagawa's lineage chart. Looking into the facts has been one of the most shocking and disturbing things I have ever done. But I have no ax to grind in this sad and shameful affair. Many have been hurt, including you. So what I offer is not in any way a personal attack, but is directed to those like you in leadership and teaching positions in an organization that has long been centered around a seriously dysfunctional teacher. May this statement, in some small way, promote healing on all sides.</p>
Posts: 815 Join date: 2010-11-13 Age: 62 Location: New York, NY	<p>First let me respond to your persistent concern: to check on the details of Shimano's certification. I have done what you requested and have confirmed that Shimano is NOT listed on Sōen Nakagawa's lineage chart. Since Sōen Nakagawa has passed away, we cannot ask him why he took the actions that he did with respect to Shimano. But what is clear is that the Myōshinji establishment (from which Shimano's purported lineage derives) has with one voice repudiated any connection with Shimano or his successors, explicitly stating that neither Shimano nor his successors are certified as priests or recognized as qualified teachers. The statement, in Japanese and English, can be found on the official Myōshinji website:</p>
	<p>http://www.myoshinji.or.jp/about/post_10.html</p>
	<p>It's heartbreaking, yet undeniable: you and many others have been duped. Plain and simple. With or without "credentials."</p>
	<p>In Rinzaï Zen Buddhism, completing formal practice, including the koan curriculum, is only a first step to becoming a qualified teacher. At least as important is a further maturation of character in compassion, virtue and personal integrity.</p>
	<p>The sad fact is that some people misuse the koan system. As in any religious institution, there are those who can manipulate it for their own ends, without going through any real inner transformation. Then they use their position and power for self-serving purposes. Their lack of virtue and integrity, however, is a clear sign that they are unfit to teach.</p>
	<p>A teacher of Zen Buddhism is not a special being exempt from ethics and allowed to play by his or her own rules – that is how a dangerous cult operates. Zen teachers are people working with students who are wondrously and vulnerably opening themselves up. And like teachers of every kind, a Zen teacher has a duty to do everything in his or her power to nurture and protect the student in this delicate process. Shimano has breached this duty, causing terrible harm to innocent people, to ZSS, and to Zen Buddhism. It's clear; no more hemming and hawing.</p>
	<p>Unfortunately, what has happened at ZSS is not an isolated occurrence. Zen in the modern world is rife with half-baked and downright bogus teachers, some coming from Japan. While I appreciate the Myōshinji statement mentioned above, I do not assume that Japanese Rinzaï Zen is pure and flawless, and that Shimano is a terrible aberration of it. Shimano IS a terrible aberration of that institution; but he is also a product of it. May we all reflect on how this disease arose – and how it could continue to fester for so long. And, going forward, may we all take this opportunity to humbly look into our own hearts and under our own feet, then take the necessary steps so Zen Buddhism in North America and elsewhere can get turned in the right direction. That is what we can shape now and so what I'd like to focus on below.</p>
	<p>There are many related issues, and I do not claim to have the answers. Others more knowledgeable and capable than me have already written about these issues. So let me just mention some things to consider here:</p>
	<p>First, where the main teacher in an organization brings his or her deep and abiding dysfunction into the heart of the teaching, two things follow: (1) the teacher selects people for leadership positions based in part on their ignorance or acquiescence to the dysfunctional behaviors; and (2) the teaching is ruined.</p>
	<p>Where this situation occurs, and the dysfunction is uncovered, people in leadership roles leave or are forced to leave. They do so because, even if they were well-intentioned individuals and their hearts were in the right place, they either acquiesced to, or remained blind to, the teacher's deprecations. Either way, they have failed in their leadership roles. Once new leadership is in place, the task is not yet done. Issues remain: What is being done to guard against future dysfunction and are their grievance procedures?</p>
	<p>Concerning who will now teach: if the dysfunctional teacher is not legitimate, as is the case with Shimano, can his successors be considered legitimate? Who is qualified to make this determination and on what basis? Teachers should sincerely ask themselves:</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Am I really qualified to teach? What criteria do I use to determine this? In the teaching of my dysfunctional teacher, how can I separate what was genuine from what was selfish manipulation?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does my training in a dysfunctional environment preclude me from teaching? Am I in need of counseling? Some things to watch for: Am I the victim of a cult mentality? Do I feel blind loyalty toward my teacher? Do I rationalize the teacher's abuses and manipulations because I believe the teacher is "enlightened"? Would I adopt that standard as a teacher?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will my role in the dysfunction affect my ability to reach and teach all in the community? Some things to watch for: Did I enable it or otherwise tolerate it? Am I part of the problem? Do I need to apologize for my actions and make amends? Do I have the trust of the whole community, including those who were harmed or who have left the community?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do I want this position? Is there some desire to maintain it for my own sake? Do I proactively respond to dysfunction to eliminate it and address its painful consequences, or do I take half-measures after the fact, hoping to protect my position until the storm blows over?
	<p>Organizational leaders and students should be sensitive to these issues in determining the merit of a teacher. Finally, please consider whether the organization is doing all it can to disclose what has occurred and to take responsibility by meeting the needs of any victims. These include: those directly abused; those who acquiesced or ignored the deprecations; those forced to leave the organization because they refused to accept what was going on; and even the dysfunctional teacher. All need to be cared for.</p>
	<p>It seems to me that these issues need to be seriously addressed for a healthy Zen Buddhist organization to go forward with authenticity, competence and compassion. For yourself and for all who have been damaged, it is not too late to make a clean break from the sickness, to really start the healing process, and to do what can be done to right the wrongs. When you have sincerely inquired into these issues, Sherry, I invite you to publicly respond in a way that could begin real reconciliation for all sides. I, and many others, await your response with an open heart.</p>
	<p>Let me end by repeating my sincere apology to you. Sherry, I should not have let our earlier messages be made public. You were right about that and I was wrong. My apologies for any grief it caused you. I did not intend to hurt you in any way. I was trying to prepare you for what was inevitably coming. To make amends, I requested that the thread be removed from the Archive Site. Unfortunately, it appeared elsewhere on the internet, so the Archive saw no point in not including it in its record and eventually put it back up, despite my protests. Since I have no connection to the Archive or to any other site where the email thread appears, there is little more I can do about it now.</p>
	<p>May we all be stirred to examine our own faults – and strive to correct them.</p>
	<p>Gasshou (palms pressed together),</p>
	<p>Jeff Shore</p>

Note: For those unfamiliar with Shimano & ZSS, there is a mountain of material available. See, for example:

http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/19640808R_Smith_Aitken.pdf
http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/19820914_Zournas_Board.pdf
http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/19821027_Zournas_Shimano.pdf
http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/20100821_NYT_Sex_Scandal.pdf