



[Home](#) > Letters

Edo Shonin's monkhood credentials suspect

by A Zen Monk, The Buddhist Channel, May 29, 2007

I read William John Van Gordon's response (with his referral to his mom as Mrs. Van Gordon). From what I read there and what I see on their website, I do not disagree with the parents.

Legitimate teachers posting on line have a published lineage, this is an accepted courtesy that teachers present a clear statement of their training and lineage for those who would approach. There is not a word of Mr. Shonin's lineage on the Pine Forest website. Mr. Shonin does not disclose his lineage because he simply does not have one. His robes are unique to say the least, they are not Shingon, not Nyingma and not at all Korean — he doesn't properly wear the Kesa.

I am not surprised hear the following in the May 25th Daily Mail article; "Suspicious aroused, Rita turned detective. She contacted monks at the French retreat who told her Edo was not a monk, but had been so keen, as a layman, that they allowed him to wear robes and to do 'guided meditations'."

I want Mr. and Mrs. Gordon to know that there is no way most genuine training lineages would permit an un-ordained person wear the robes of the Buddha no matter how "keen" they were. That "keenness" itself is an indicator of an underlying defect.

It is unfortunate that Mr. and Mrs. Van Gordon have been exposed at least twice to so-called Buddhist clergy and have come away feeling first; lied to, and second; had to deal with incompetent monks at Plum Village. Unlike William's assertion that his parents see: "that Buddhism is a cult and not a serious religion." I strongly suspect that Mr. and Mrs. Van Gordon's issue is not with "Buddhism" at all — but with Mr. Shonin — and with what he teaches as "Buddhism" and how her relates to their son William.

There are recent threads threads in E-Dharma list about Shonin:

<http://www.lioncity.net/buddhism/index.php?showtopic=49780>

and

<http://www.lioncity.net/buddhism/index.php?showtopic=39920>

The second link brings up the name: Kempo Norbu Tenzin. It is claimed that the Pine Forest site listed Kempo Norbu Tenzin as Mr. Shonin's teacher along with someone "with and Indian sounding name" but that the references have subsequently been removed. Searching for Kempo Norbu Tenzin on Google produces no definitive results other than a reference back to the E-Dharma list.

Mr. Shonin quite conveniently provides the logic for "spontaneous enlightenment" by stating that the Buddha along with a few other world religion founders had no "lineage" to begin with in the text on the Pine Forest site. One assumes now that Mr. Shonin is placing himself in their august company? Or is he really this "simple monk" that he refers to with somewhat excessive zeal?

In William's letter the line: "Is that so?" is referred to. This line was used by Hakuin Ekaku Zenji in the story of him being unjustly accused of fathering an illegitimate child. Poor William cannot see that Shonin is simply copying the master and not responding for himself. Either that or The Stockholm Syndrome has set in and William is now part and parcel to Shonin's deception.

External link: [William John Van Gordons personal statement in response to the article published in the Daily Mail on 25th May 2007](#)

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