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News Editor
The New York Times
620 Eighth Avenue
New York, New York 10018

Re: "Sex Scandal Has American Buddhists Looking Within" – published Saturday, August 21, 2010, The New York Times National section

Dear Sir,

It has been three months since the article written about me appeared in your National Section. In this day and age, it quickly spread all over the world and, I am told, was translated into Japanese. I was hurt deeply. However, I endured for more than three months and endeavored to calm down. Since this is the year that I am planning to retire, I do not want this article and my retirement to be linked. One has nothing to do with the other – there is no cause and effect.

As the date for my retirement is nearing, I think that at the very least, I need to point out the inappropriate attitude of the writer of the article and the misinformation contained in his piece. I highlight the following:


1. Mr. Oppenheimer did not interview me for this article, nor did he speak with Mr. Aitken or the young woman who is referred to in the article. The article states that he attempted to contact me and that I did not return several phone calls – this is just not true. I was never contacted by Mr. Oppenheimer, nor did I receive any correspondence from him at either my Livingston Manor address or my New York City address.

2. It is clear to me from reading the article and knowing the facts, that Mr. Oppenheimer obtained his information from second and third hand sources and the opinions expressed therein are neither factual nor backed up by proof. In fact, none of the individuals who have been quoted in the article were at the dinner table when the purported statement was made and therefore they could not have "overheard" what was said.

3. In addition, I have not resigned because of these false accusations. At the beginning of this year, during a meeting of the Board of Directors in January, I made an announcement that 2010 was the 50 year anniversary of my being in America and that I planned to do a final fund raising for a mountain gate entrance for the monastery and would step down from the Abbot. This fundraising was to be the final act in a 50 year career in the United States. The article falsely states that I am stepping down from the Abbot because of allegations.

Moreover, I would like to mention the following: When the article appeared, I was in Switzerland doing a silent retreat. When I returned to the United States, many people brought this article to my attention. The effect has been profound. Many people are hurt and confused. As an aside, minutes from our Board of Directors meetings are private documents. If they wound up in Hawaii or in Mark Oppenheimer's possession, they were improperly obtained and/or delivered. Did anyone question why Mr. Aitken would write about a Buddhist monk for 50 years, when I have had contact with him only twice since 1964? I shall look forward to hear what your journalist, Mark Oppenheimer, has to say about the contents of my letter.

Very truly yours,



Eido T. Shimano, Abbot