

Rennyo's Legacy: *The Letters* as Scripture¹

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Having reflected on the inferior ability of beings of the last age, examined the sutras and commentaries and the explanations of the masters and their disciples, and grasped the essential point for readily-attainable birth [in the Pure Land] for ignorant, ordinary people, [Rennyo] wrote numerous important letters, beginning about the first year of the Kanshō era [1460]. They are a clear light for the last age [*matsudai no meitō*] and the sole guide for this defiled world.

Rengo (1468-1543)²

Rennyo's spoken and written words are his greatest legacy—the writers of his memoirs affirm this again and again. They recall what he said at length and in rich detail, but their highest praise is for his letters and their deepest gratitude for the teaching conveyed through them. For Rengo, Rennyo's seventh son, these letters are a beacon, the only source of help in the last dharma-age. In Jitsugo's record, we find a similar evaluation: "Day after day we hear the golden words of the letters; he has given us jewels."³ And again, from the same source: "It should be understood that the letters are the direct teaching of the Tathāgata. When we look at them, [we find] Hōnen; when we hear the words, [we realize that] they are the direct teaching of Amida."⁴

The Letters,⁵ written in colloquial Japanese, has been compared to Martin Luther's translation of the Bible into the German.⁶ Both Rennyo and Luther (1483-1584), virtually contemporaries, participated in religious reformation in opposing the established religious institutions of their day, in suffering persecution, and in becoming involved in some way with popular uprisings of farmers.⁷ A point to underscore here is that, through translation into the vernacular, each made readily available a scriptural tradition for the general populace in their respective times and places; a second point, a commonplace, is that every translation is an interpre-

tation which adds to, as well as subtracts from, the words originally spoken or written. To the extent the latter holds true for Luther, so much more does it apply for Rennyo, who in authoring his letters reformulated and simplified Shinran's teaching in his effort to communicate effectively at a popular level.

We have seen that Rennyo's initiation into the Honganji branch of the Shinshu under the prolonged tutelage of his father and grandfather was, in large measure, an introduction to a Pure Land textual tradition. Through a process of hearing, watching others copy, memorizing and reciting, reading, and doing his own copying, Rennyo internalized the meaning of a diverse body of texts: the three Pure Land sutras; the commentaries of the seven Pure Land masters; the writings of Shinran, Kakunyo, and Zonkaku; Pure Land texts reflecting popular folk religiousness; and, in particular, *Anjin ketsujōshō*. It was primarily through the medium of the written word that Rennyo responded to the major challenges of his life, beginning with the crisis years at Yoshizaki, where he wrote many of his most innovative and compelling letters. Again, Rennyo's restoration of the Honganji, symbolized by the building of the Founder's Hall at Yamashina, was accompanied by a series of letters prepared especially for reading at the annual thanksgiving services. Finally, his retirement years elic-

ited a renewed flow of literary reflection on Shinran's teaching in language informed largely by Rennyo's devotion to the text, *Anjin ke-tsujōshō*.

In this essay, we review the stages through which Rennyo's successors selected certain of his letters to serve as a canonical text,⁸ drew on *The Letters* as the primary source for a confessional statement defining orthodox Shinshu piety, and cited it as the final authority in arbitrating a disruptive doctrinal controversy internal to the Nishi Honganji. First, however, it is necessary to set Rennyo's writings in context within a Pure Land Buddhist movement inaugurated by a founder's unique reading, understanding, and translation of received texts.

THE TEACHING

A pamphlet in English, "Brief Introduction to Jodo Shinshu," prepared by a former presiding officer and Bishop of the Buddhist Churches of America, introduces Shinshu tradition as follows:

The accepted date of the founding of this denomination is 1224, when the first draft of Shinran's most important book "Teaching, Practice, Faith, and Attainment" (*Kyō Gyo Shin Shō*) was completed.⁹

Despite conflicting theories for the date of the final revision of *Kyōgyōshinshō*, the point stands that it is the writing of a text that may be seen to mark the birth of a radically new Pure Land movement, the Jodo Shinshu, in Japanese history; Shinran speaks of this movement as "the culmination of the Mahayana."¹⁰

Written in classical Chinese, *Kyōgyōshinshō* is the most systematic presentation of Shinran's thought. The introduction to a recent translation of the first two chapters renders a judgement with which many would agree: "[It] stands seven hundred years after its composition as a monumental classic of Japanese religious thought, and one of the most

seminal and original contributions in the long history of Japanese Buddhism."¹¹ Without question, *Kyōgyōshinshō* is a major religious symbol for participants in Shinshu tradition; nevertheless, it is largely unread, except by sectarian scholars and students of religion. Only a small section of this important text, the 120-line *Shōshinge*, is included among the selections representing Shinran in a multi-volume series of Japanese literary classics.¹² The *Kyōgyōshinshō* as a whole appears to have been judged too demanding for readers of the series. Together with *Shōshinge*, the texts chosen as representative of Shinran are selections of his original compositions in Japanese: hymns and letters, as well as Yuien's *Tannishō*. It is an indisputable fact, however, that there is no way to come to terms intellectually and aesthetically with the depth, subtlety, and architectonic beauty of Shinran's thought without struggling with *Kyōgyōshinshō*'s chapter on faith, known as the *shinkan*.

Shinran's preface to *Kyōgyōshinshō* clarifies the fundamental importance of the written word—the three Pure Land sutras and discourses of the two Pure Land Indian masters as well as the commentaries of the five masters in China and Japan—for the transmission of the Buddha-dharma and the realization of faith:

I, Gutoku Shinran, disciple of Śākyamuni—how joyful I am! It is difficult to meet with the scriptures [*seiten*] from India and the commentaries [*shishaku*] of the masters of China and Japan, but now I have been able to meet them. It is difficult to hear them, but already I have been able to hear. Entrusting myself with reverence to the teaching, practice, and realization that are the true essence of the Pure Land way, I am in particular aware of the profundity of the Tathāgata's benevolence. Here I rejoice over what I have heard and praise what I have received.¹³

In this passage, Shinran uses the term *seiten*, which

in contemporary usage has taken on the meaning "scripture" or, perhaps, a meaning analogous to "Bible" for English-speaking participants in Shinshu tradition.¹⁴ However, *seiten*, also read *shōten*, appears in only two other places in Shinran's writings: one, in chapter six of *Kyōgyōshinshō* in a lengthy quote from *Mappō tōmyōki*, attributed to Saichō (767-822); the other, in Shinran's *Jōdo monrui jushō*, in a verse referring to Hōnen:

Genkū [Hōnen], clearly understanding the sacred scriptures,
Turned compassionately to foolish people,
both good and evil;
Establishing in this remote land the teaching
and realization that are the true essence of the
Pure Land way,
He transmits "the selected Primal Vow" to us
of the defiled world...¹⁵

Here again, Shinran's use of the term *seiten* is limited to the three major Pure Land sutras and the discourses by the Indian masters, Nāgārjuna and Vasubandhu. As noted earlier, he has a vivid sense of standing on the ground of Amida's Vow-mind, secured by an unbroken line of transmission of spoken and written texts.¹⁶ His entire life, as he says in the preface to *Kyōgyōshinshō*, is a joyful response to the Tathāgata's benevolence in allowing him to encounter the scriptures and the commentaries of the Pure Land masters. For Shinran, the *Larger Sutra* is the preeminent text. Passages culled from a wide range of other Mahayana writings, with minimal commentary of his own, are used to support what he has experienced and discovered through this sutra. On the basis of his punctuation and notations of the Chinese texts for reading in Japanese,¹⁷ he is content to have the texts speak for themselves. For example, at the end of the first chapter of *Kyōgyōshinshō*, "A Collection of Passages Revealing the True Teaching of the Pure Land Way," he writes: "These passages give clear testimony that the *Larger Sutra* reveals the true teaching."¹⁸ Again, in his *Jōdo monrui*

jushō: "Assuredly this [*Larger*] sutra is the true teaching for which the Tathāgata appeared in the world. It is the preeminent scripture [*ten*], rare and most excellent."¹⁹

Shinran's unique reading and utilization of these passages has invited criticism; a Buddhist scholar charges that Shinran, rather than quoting the passages, changes their meaning:

It is difficult to recognize them as quotations; they are basically nothing more than original passages. In order to set forth his own views, he borrowed passages from the sutras, treatises, and commentaries that suited his own purposes.²⁰

Scholars engaged in the translation of the entire corpus of Shinran's writings into English conclude their response to this criticism as follows:

... It may be said that Shinran's readings are the most faithful to the original—the source—meaning of the texts. He did not alter the texts ignoring the original meaning as some have charged; quite to the contrary, he read the source meaning of the scriptures more deeply and clearly than the original authors, and in order to bring it out, he changed the traditional readings where he felt that they were inadequate.²¹

Underlying Shinran's translation and interpretation of the passages is his confidence that Amida's call has been conveyed to him through the Chinese texts.

In order to develop Shinran's notion of written text beyond his limited but significant use of the term *seiten* (or *shōten*), we turn to a second term, *shōgyō*, frequently translated within the sectarian tradition as "sacred writings" or "sacred scriptures." *Shōgyō* occurs in three quotations from Chinese texts included in *Kyōgyōshinshō* and several times in Shinran's Japanese writings, as well as in Yuien's *Tannishō*.

The *Kyōgyōshinshō* includes a quotation from Tao-ch'o's *An li chi* (*Anrakushū*), a commentary on the *Meditation Sutra*:

It is said that the nembutsu of those of long practice may often be done in accordance with the above [instructions]. In the nembutsu practice of beginners, it is permissible to keep count of the number of utterances. This conforms with the sacred scriptures [*shōgyō*].²²

The *Kyōgyōshinshō* also contains a quotation from the *Sutra Taught to Nigranthas* (*Sassha nikenjikyō*), a passage describing the second of the five grave offenses applying to bodhisattvas, pratyekabuddhas, and shravakas as:

slandering the three-vehicle dharma, saying that it is not scripture [*shōgyō*], impeding [its spread], damaging [the texts], halting or making [their transmission] difficult, or concealing and obscuring them.²³

In the postscript to *Tannishō*, the author, Yuien, laments the confusion that may arise after his death in regard to Shinran's teaching. He advises:

When you are confused by people who discuss among themselves such views as those noted above, carefully read the sacred writings [*onshōgyō*] that accord with the late master's thought and that he himself used to read. In the sacred writings, the true and real and the accommodated and provisional are mixed. That we abandon the accommodated and take up the real, set aside the provisional and adopt the true is Shinran's fundamental meaning. You must under no circumstances misread the sacred writings. I have selected a number of important scriptural passages [*shōmon*] and appended them to this volume as a standard.²⁴

Shinran also uses the term *kyōten* in the traditional

sense of "sutra" (the recorded words of the Buddha) in quotations from Shan-tao and from the *Nirvana Sutra* (*Nehangyō*) appearing in *Kyōgyōshinshō*. Of particular interest is the scroll inscription in *Songō shinzō meimon*, quoting a passage from Vasubandhu's *Treatise on the Pure Land* (*Jōdoron*):

Relying on the sutras [shu-ta-ra] in which the manifestation of the true and real virtues is taught f. With I, Vasubandhu, the author of the treatise [*ronchu*], declares himself. *Relying on the sutras*: *Sutra* is an Indian term for the recorded words [*kyōten*] of the Buddha, including both the Mahayana and Hinayana teachings. Here, however, "sutra" indicates the Mahayana sutras, not those of the Hinayana. The "three scriptures [*kyōten*]" which we use are Mahayana sutras, and Vasubandhu's phrase means "depending on these three Mahayana sutras." *True and real virtues*: the sacred Name that embodies the Vow. *Manifestation*: form.²⁵

As evidenced by his own writings and Yuien's record, Shinran resists any implication that the teaching is something of his own creation. He sees himself as the transmitter of what he has received through his master, Hōnen. Convinced that he is incapable of accomplishing any good himself, he writes simply out of his personal experience of the salvific truth of the Tathāgata's benevolence, received through a textual tradition. Within that tradition, the *Larger Sutra* bears indisputable witness that Amida's Vow—the transcendent—has been manifested in India in the teachings of Śākyamuni—the mundane.

TEXTS AND CONTEXTS

On the occasion of the thirty-third anniversary of Shinran's death, Kakunyo prepared his *Hōonkō shiki*, a celebration of Shinran's virtues. Kakunyo's perception of the core of the textual tradition increasingly focused on the words of

Shinran, whom he identifies as a manifestation of Amida Tathāgata:

That is to say, his widespread teaching [*kyō*] and practice [of the nembutsu; *gyō*] should most certainly be regarded as Amida's direct teaching—which, by clearly setting forth the pure light of wisdom, dispels the darkness of delusion in this defiled world, and by sprinkling the dharma-rain in its sweetness everywhere, slowly but steadily permeates our dryness, our ignorance and confusion. Realizing that this is its purpose, we should entrust ourselves to it and revere it.²⁶

While the content of the Shinshu's textual tradition expands to include the writings of Kakunyo, Zonkaku, and Rennyo, there is increasing emphasis on scripture as a major religious symbol for the tradition.

Kakunyo's *Kudenshō* reports an incident which sets in broader context Shinran's cryptic statement in *Tannishō* that he had no disciples; in addition, it offers further insight as to how scripture was perceived. According to this account, Shinran was in disagreement with Shingyō, who had earlier been his disciple and to whom he had given an image of the Buddha and scriptures. When Shingyō was on the point of returning to his own province, having rejected Shinran's teaching, other disciples ran to Shinran, saying that he should demand the return of the image and the texts. Kakunyo reports that Shinran replied:

It would be highly inappropriate to take back the main image and scriptures [*shōgyō*]. The reason for this is that [I], Shinran, do not have even a single disciple. What do I teach that I could speak of having disciples? As we are all disciples of the Tathāgata, we are all fellow practitioners...

The image and the scriptures are compassionate means for the benefit of all sentient beings.... Therefore, even if scriptures

in which my name was written were discarded in the mountains or in a field,...many sentient beings in that place might be saved by those scriptures and each and every one receive benefit from them.²⁷

Shinran's single-minded devotion to Amida and gratitude for the teaching manifested in the Pure Land sutras, the commentaries of the Pure Land masters, and the person of Hōnen is redirected by Kakunyo to the person of Shinran as founder and to his writings as the authoritative texts. In due course, the writings of both Kakunyo and Zonkaku, despite disownment of the latter by his father, were to be included also in the Shinshu scriptural corpus.

Rennyo, as we have seen, was initiated into Shinshu tradition largely through a process of internalizing the teaching through his tireless copying of Pure Land texts. In a tradition which rejected any notion of gaining merit through self-effort, copying texts was only to be understood in terms of spiritual discipline as an act of thanksgiving. Rennyo takes the Shinshu textual tradition very seriously indeed: in his letters, he deplores those priests who are barely acquainted with the scriptures (*shōgyō*);²⁸ he takes to task others who, in neglecting them, disregard the settling of their own faith and fail to instruct their followers.²⁹ He warns those responsible for presenting the teaching:

When you read the scriptures, for example, or when you speak [even] briefly about the teaching, you must [first] ascertain [whether the listeners have, or lack, good from the past].³⁰

Among the participants in our tradition in various provinces, there are many who defile the meaning of the dharma by discussing eccentric teachings not prescribed in the scriptures designated by our founder. This is a situation beyond comprehension.³¹

The import of our tradition is ... that for those who do not realize the significance of the one thought-moment of faith—even though they may diligently read the various scriptures and be widely informed—all is in vain.³²

We should recognize ... that all the scriptures have the sole intent of bringing us to entrust ourselves to the six characters "na-mu-a-mi-da-butsu."³³

Each of the summer letters, written during Rennyo's final year in preparation for the annual seven-day thanksgiving services, underscores the significance of scripture in relation to the realization of Other-Power faith. From the first, written during the latter part of the fifth month of Meiō 7 (1498):

Everyone has gathered here, saying that they have come to listen to today's scriptures, [but what must be understood is that] this will be of no use at all unless they hear and are convinced, thoroughly understanding the significance of faith and holding no unsettled thoughts from today on.³⁴

From the second, written during the same month:

The purpose of reading the scriptures is to cause [the listeners] to realize Other-Power faith; it is done so that they will hear and understand its significance and correct the shallowness of their own faith. This is the fundamental intent in Buddha-dharma. Therefore, although there is scripture [reading] every day, unless you make an attempt to understand, your coming will amount to nothing at all.³⁵

From the third, written during the middle of the sixth month of the same year:

The sole purpose in reading the scriptures is to cause [those who listen] to realize Other-Power faith.³⁶

From the fourth, written during the middle of the seventh month:

Although I have always selected and read important passages of scripture every day, not one person has spoken of what was impressive or what was unclear in the day's scriptures; not a single person has come forth.... There are now only thirty days left for the reading of these scriptures. [To listen] unconcernedly, as if [the reading would continue] forever, and without improvement in one's understanding most certainly [reveals] a lack of aspiration. Indeed, it is just as if one went to a mountain of treasure and returned empty-handed.³⁷

Through his liturgical use of scripture, Rennyo introduces members of the Shinshu community to an ancient Mahayana textual tradition, presenting it as a vehicle for the establishment and nurture of Other-Power faith. During his last summer, those who assemble at Yamashina Honganji hear readings from the three Pure Land sutras, in particular the *Larger Sutra*; recite in unison *Shōshinge*, drawn from the heart of the founder's *Kyōgyōshinshō*; and listen to Rennyo read his own letters, which were phrased in terms familiar to them. Rennyo, drawing on the Pure Land textual tradition in all its richness, attempts to make Shinran's teaching available in colloquial terms replete with religious symbols through which ordinary men and women might discover the truth and reality of Amida's Vow.

A CANONICAL BOOK

Participants in Shinshu tradition have accepted without question the reverential view of Rennyo's letters presented in the memoirs. Here we find attributed to Rennyo the use of the

honorific form, *o-fumi*, in reference to his own letters. In the letters themselves, however, he uses the plain form, *fumi*, as evidenced in a postscript to a letter dated Bunmei 5 (1473).9.23, written to accompany a collection of his Yoshizaki letters:

The preceding letters [*fumi*] are ones which I wrote one after another as they came to mind, without particular thought, from the third year of Bunmei [1471] to the fall of the fifth year [1473]. There will surely be peculiarities in the style, and there may also be discontinuities between words and so forth. As this is inappropriate, whatever the case adjustment should be made; but because [Rensō] has already prepared the paper for this fascicle and had it copied, there is nothing to be done but to release it as it is. It should certainly not be seen outside [the community]. It is to be kept simply for personal use in leisure moments.³⁸

Rennyo's diffidence may reflect in part a hesitance to speak openly at a time when Yoshizaki was subject to severe scrutiny and possible attack. Several months later, however, he refers without pretension to this letter (*fumi*),³⁹ suggesting that he did not use the term in any formal sense.

The underlying tone of *The Letters* rings with a note of authority, yet there is inconclusive evidence to suggest that, even after his retirement, he ever consciously sought to establish his words as having special status in a scriptural sense. The transition of *fumi* to *o-fumi* was, quite appropriately, the work of members of his immediate family and other memoir writers after his death. This transition, promoting Rennyo's letters as a scriptural basis for orthodox Shinshu teaching, is a minor yet not insignificant step in the Honganji's consolidation as a tightly structured religious order. His letters were to provide a new locus of authority assuming the force of his personal charisma.

Ennyo (1491-1521), commissioned by his father, Jitsunyo (1458-1525), the ninth head priest of the Honganji, gathered together Rennyo's most

important letters: eighty edited in five fascicles, four written in the summer before he died, and a letter giving Shinran's genealogy. The fifty-eight letters in the first four of the five-fascicle compilation were arranged in chronological order; the twenty-two in the fifth fascicle are undated.⁴⁰ Many of the letters most significant from an historical viewpoint are omitted, and even when such letters are included, the fact that there is no accompanying commentary suggests a disregard for their historical context. An underlying theme in this study is that the ahistorical attitude of traditional piety was to lead eventually to a severe bifurcation of the transcendent and the mundane, with alarming consequences for Shinran's teaching.

The five-fascicle collection of letters is a compilation of exceptional significance for two reasons:

First, *The Letters* has provided a definitive text for interpreting Shinran's teaching from the time of Jitsunyo. An edition of the Shinshu scriptures, published by Nishi Honganji in 1969, notes that Ennyo's compilation was made in order to edify unlettered men and women on essential points of Shinshu doctrine; that the letters contained in it were revered from the first as exemplifying faith (*anjin*); that under the leadership of the head priests of the Honganji following Rennyo, *The Letters* became the standard for instruction in the Shinshu community; and that it was customary even during Rennyo's lifetime for Shinshu congregations to gather before an image of Amida Buddha and listen to readings from it. Copies of the five-fascicle collection were printed and widely distributed beginning in 1537, during the tenure of Shōnyo (1516-1554), the tenth head priest, and, granted the repetitiveness of many of the letters, the text is honored in its entirety within both the Nishi Honganji and the Higashi.⁴¹

For this study, there is a second reason for noting the special significance of this compilation: the intimate relationship that exists between the content of many of the chronologically-dated

letters in the first four fascicles and the social and political events of the years in which they were written. No less than forty of the fifty-eight dated letters were written during the fifty-month period that Rennyo was in the Hokuriku, and thirty-six of these forty were written during the most critical period of his stay at Yoshizaki while he was confronted with the dilemma of the Honganji's political power. Specifically, if his community was to survive and prosper, there was increasing pressure on him to take a stand on the issue of Honganji-related adherents becoming directly involved in the Ikko sect uprisings. It appears that Rennyo's vigorous literary response in those critical years at Yoshizaki produced a series of letters which, as the core materials of the canonized text, came to define orthodox Shinshu piety.

As we have seen, the forty letters written during Rennyo's Yoshizaki years, along with others not included in *The Letters*, reveal remarkable innovation in Rennyo's translation of Shinran's teaching. The central place he gives to a formulation of the nenbutsu using the concepts *anjin* and *ki-hō ittai* from *Anjin ketsujōshō* is new for the Shinshu;⁴² Rennyo reemphasizes and refines his use of this important religious symbol for Shinshu thought in a period of intense literary activity in his last years, 1496-1498. Out of thirty-nine extant letters attributed to this period, six are included in the five-fascicle collection and four make up the summer letters.⁴³ In addition, a number of the undated letters may be assigned to this period.

A CONFESSORIAL STATEMENT

The Letters and the memoirs, perhaps even more than Shinran's writings, came to serve as the most popular devotional texts in the lives of members of the Honganji. Not only were Rennyo, and his followers, seen as exemplary of orthodox Shinshu piety, his written words became authoritative for the interpretation of Shinran's teaching. In part, for this reason, he has been generally

credited as author of a brief "Confessional Statement," known as *Ryōgemon* within the Nishi Honganji and as *Gaikemon* within the Higashi.⁴⁴ It is clear that *The Letters* provided the doctrinal framework for the statement, but there is no conclusive evidence that, in its present form, it was written by Rennyo himself.⁴⁵ The first of the four passages reads:

Casting off the self-power mind of the sundry practices and disciplines, we single-mindedly entrust ourselves to Amida Tathāgata to save us [in regard to] the birth that is to come [in the Pure Land], the most important matter (*kondo no ichidaiji no goshō on-tasuke sōrae*).⁴⁶

This explication of the salvific process—the casting off of the mind of self-power, single-minded trust in Amida, and the phrasing, "the birth that is to come, the most important matter"—is fully consistent with Rennyo's interpretation of Shinran's teaching; the passage could well have been written by Rennyo. The statement continues:

We know that at the time of the one thought-moment of entrusting (*tanomu ichinen*), birth [in the Pure Land] is assured; it is settled that we are saved. Once [we have realized] this, we say the Name joyfully, in gratitude (*hōsha*) for [Amida's] graciousness.⁴⁷

The use of the term "entrusting" (*tanomu*) to mean "faith" (*shinjin*), along with saying the Name in gratitude (*shōmyō hōon*), is a hallmark of Rennyo's thought. The third passage reads:

We gratefully acknowledge that our hearing and understanding these truths is [due to] the benevolence of the founding master in having appeared in this world and to that of the good teachers (*zenchishiki*), his successors in the transmission [of the teaching], whose exhortations were not shallow.⁴⁸

This passage, implying that Shinran's successors in the office of head priest are to be formally designated "good teachers," appears uncharacteristic of Rennyo thought in *The Letters*.

We recall that Shinran expressed his deep sense of gratitude not only to Amida, but also to Śākyamuni and the seven Pure Land masters.⁴⁹ Meeting Hōnen, the good teacher (*yoki hito*), was the turning point in his life. Rennyo, however, uses the term *zenchishiki* in a more general and less intimate way. For Rennyo, "the function of the good teacher is just to encourage people to take refuge in Amida single-heartedly and steadfastly."⁵⁰ He singles out none of his predecessors in the Honganji, including his father, Zonnyo, in the sense that Shinran referred to Hōnen; his extant letters do not explicitly mention Zonnyo or even Kakunyo, although the names of Zonnyo and Zonkaku are to be found in *Rennyo Shōnin go-ichidai kikigaki*.⁵¹

It appears, then, that the third passage of the confessional statement reflects a post-Rennyo development. Shinran's successors, the head priests of the Honganji, are to be acknowledged as the good teachers in a sense never indicated by Rennyo; the incumbent head priest becomes the focus for devotion in a way he had resisted. In a letter dated Bunmei 6 (1474).1.20, he remonstrates with some who, on pilgrimage to Yoshizaki, would have centered their worship on him; he tells them that it is better for them to worship before a stupa (*sotoba*).⁵²

The confessional statement concludes:

Beyond this, we will observe the established norms of conduct (*onokite*) throughout our lives.⁵³

As noted earlier, the term "norms of conduct" in its honorific form was first used by Rennyo in a letter dated Bunmei 7 (1475).11.21, in the context of the annual thanksgiving services at Deguchi, Kawachi province.⁵⁴ Rennyo sought to give greater authority to the regulations that he had promulgated in

response to the crisis at Yoshizaki, seeking to legitimize them by linking them directly to Shinran's teaching. In this final passage, however, the norms are to be identified with the laws of the state (*ōbō*); Shinshu practitioners of faith are duty-bound to obey them, and to be grateful.⁵⁵

The adoption of a confessional statement into the liturgical life of the Honganji would appear to represent yet a further stage in the institutionalization and politicization of Shinran's piety. We are reminded again that Shinran had claimed no disciples of his own and vigorously denied that he could mediate salvific truth to nenbutsu devotees on his own authority. Two centuries after Shinran, Rennyo's enumeration of norms of conduct at the annual thanksgiving services came in response to issues threatening the very life of his community. After Rennyo's death, however, obedience to such norms became the test of orthodox participation in the Honganji order. Authority was focused in the office of the head priest and family council, the descendants of both "founders," Shinran and Rennyo. Elements of Rennyo's thought, abstracted from *The Letters* without regard to the historical context in which they originated, were fashioned into a confessional statement. It was important that Rennyo, the definitive interpreter of Shinran's teaching, be recognized as the author. The statement has continued to serve as a major religious symbol within the Shinshu.⁵⁶ At times, it has nurtured what is most sublime, as in *myōkonin* piety; at others, it may have been used to bind participants in the tradition to the policies of a religious order which had resolved the dilemma of its political power in favor of total accommodation to temporal authority.⁵⁷

A LETTER OF ADJUDICATION

We have reviewed a process of scripturalization during which a compilation of eighty of Rennyo's letters steadily acquired authority for the lives of participants in the Honganji branch of the Shinshu. A selection of letters became *The Letters*, a canonical text defining the teaching and extend-

ing it to norms of conduct deemed necessary for authentic participation in the tradition. A further stage in this process was signaled with the distribution of a document known as "A Letter of Adjudication" (*Gosaidan no gosho*), signed by Honnyo (1778-1826), nineteenth head priest in the Nishi Honganji lineage. This letter is dated Bunka 3 (1806).11.6; it was accompanied by an announcement (*Gosaidan shinmeishō*) dated one day earlier.⁵⁸

These two documents render a final judgement on a bitter, ten-year doctrinal controversy known as the Sangō Upheaval (*sangō wakuran*), which erupted within the Nishi Honganji in Kansei 9 (1797), during the tenure of Honnyo's predecessor, Monnyo.⁵⁹ The source of the controversy, the "three acts" teaching, made its first clearly-stated appearance as early as Shōtoku 3 (1713), in a document unassumingly entitled, "Dust Specks on a Jar by a Southern Window" (*Nansōjinko*), by Chikū (1634-1718), second head of the Gakurin.⁶⁰ In this document, Chikū expounded in question-and-answer form the teaching that "with the awakening of the one thought-moment [of entrusting], the cause [of birth] is completed in ordinary life" (*ichinen hokki heizei gojō*), interpreting it to mean that the moment of taking refuge (entrusting) would involve the "three [kinds of] acts," bodily, verbal, and mental; therefore, aspiration for birth would necessarily be accompanied by a physical manifestation of reverence and by saying the nenbutsu.⁶¹

Declared orthodox by the Gakurin, the teaching appeared again with Gikyō (1694-1768), the fifth-generation head of the Gakuryō, who stressed that it was fully consistent with Rennyo's teaching;⁶² by the time of the sixth head, Kōzon (1720-1796), it had become a strong force within the Nishi Honganji. In Hōreki 12 (1762).2, Kōzon wrote a two-fascicle exposition, "On Taking Refuge Through the Aspiration for Birth" (*Ganshō kimyō ben*), representative of and further strengthening the "three acts" position.⁶³ It was undoubtedly his emphasis on the "three acts" that gave the

Sangō Upheaval its name.⁶⁴

The doctrinal issue at stake was no less than the meaning of faith; in Tenmei 4 (1784).3, Dairin, a member of the Zaiya, an unofficial scholastic group opposing the Gakurin, authored "A Compilation of Correct and False Views on Faith in the Shinshu" (*Shinshū anjin seigihen*), criticizing Kōzon's position. The Gakurin responded with two documents, prompting a round of debate; the treatise that finally undermined their position was "The Diamond Essence of the Jodo Shinshu" (*Jōdo Shinshū kongōhai*), completed in the tenth month of Kansei 9 (1797) by Daiei (1760-1804).⁶⁵ Daiei argued that the three minds of the Primal Vow were unified as the one mind of entrusting (*shingyō*), not as the one mind of the aspiration for birth (*yokushō*); thus the right cause of birth is entrusting (or faith), not the aspiration for birth. On publication, the document is said to have sold out in three days with two hundred copies; eventually, close to seven hundred copies were distributed throughout the country.⁶⁶

In Kansei 9 (1797), when Chidō, a strong supporter of the "three acts" position, became head of the Gakurin, the argument intensified; the level of discord in Mino province prompted intervention by the shogunate;⁶⁷ and in Kyōwa 3 (1803), from the fourth to the tenth month, both sides were examined in Kyoto.⁶⁸ The investigation then moved to Edo, with Chidō among the representatives for the Gakurin, and Daiei among those for the Zaiya; on Bunka 2 (1805).4.26, the *sangō kimyō* position was declared unorthodox.⁶⁹ On Bunka 3 (1806).7.11, with a judgement by the Commission on Shrines and Temples (*jisha bugyō*), the Sangō Upheaval was officially concluded.⁷⁰ Honnyo's two letters were issued that same year in support of the orthodox position.⁷¹

Of particular significance for our discussion is Honnyo's interpretation of Shinran's teaching in Rennyo's terms, emphasizing Other-Power faith as the true essence of the Pure Land way transmitted by Shinran. The text of the "Letter of Adjudication" is as follows:⁷²

The founding master [Shinran] taught as fundamental that the essential point transmitted in our school is simply Other-Power faith. [In discussing] that faith, the [Larger] Sutra explains it as "hearing the Name and realizing faith and joy, even for a single thought-moment";⁷³ the *Treatise [On the Pure Land]* interprets it as "single-mindedly taking refuge."⁷⁴ Hence the master, explaining the *Treatise's* [use of the] term "single-mindedly," said: "'Single-mindedly' means being without double-mindedness and without doubt in regard to the words of the master of the teaching, the World-honored One. This, in other words, is true and real faith."⁷⁵ Therefore, from the founder on down, generation after generation [of his successors] have received and transmitted this [teaching]; in particular, Shinshōin [Rennyo] carefully teaches this single path in the five-fascicle [collection of his] letters.

The meaning of "faith" is that, without any calculation, we discard the self-power mind of the sundry practices and disciplines and entrust ourselves steadfastly and single-heartedly to Amida Tathāgata to save us in [regard to] the most important matter, the birth that is to come [in the Pure Land]; and when one thought-moment of entrusting is sincere, Amida unfailingly sends forth his all-pervading light and receives us. This, in other words, is the teaching established in our tradition that "with the awakening of the one thought-moment of entrusting, the cause [of birth] is completed in ordinary life."⁷⁶ It must be understood that, once faith is decisively settled, the Name we say day and night, morning and evening, is the nenbutsu of gratitude for [Amida] Buddha's benevolence. Those who understand in this way are indeed exemplary of what it is to have realized faith fully according to our tradition.

Recently, however, [some people] raise the principle of the three acts [of the Buddha

and of sentient beings; *sangō*], which is not discussed in our tradition, and, prefixing "the necessary [manifestation of]"; *jinen*] to "the three acts," debate whether [others] do or do not know the year, month, day, and hour [at which faith was settled]. Some bring [the misinterpretations of] the deluded mind [*mōjin*] to "the one thought-moment of taking refuge," or, overly-sensitive to others' interpretation of "the three acts," reject the word "entrust." I hear that there are people who are confused about other points as well; this is indeed a lamentable situation. We are, furthermore, admonished in the master's teaching, "Thinking that one can be born in the Pure Land by correcting one's confusion over acts, words, and thoughts, and practicing good [acts] is 'self-power.'"⁷⁷

In sum, regardless of what your understanding was previously, you must overturn your evil delusions from now on and ground yourself in Other-Power faith, the truth and reality of the Primal Vow; those who do so will truly accord with the master's intention. Beyond that, carefully observe the laws of the land [*ōbō*] and the laws of the provinces [*kokuhō*], honor the [principles of] humanity and justice, and continue properly in the dharma. You must never let go of the fundamental intent of the items that have been established as stated above.

Bunka 3 [1806].11.6

Honnyo, disciple of Śākyamuni
(written seal)⁷⁸

The "Letter of Adjudication" opens with a discussion of Shinran's emphasis on Other-Power faith, underscoring the master's foundation in Pure Land texts as it explains the realization of that faith. In stressing the continuous transmission of the teaching, it makes a particular point of Rennyo's contribution, a continuing legacy conveyed by *The Letters*.

The second paragraph draws powerfully on the familiar style and content of Rennyo's letters to describe the process by which faith is settled and to define the nenbutsu in terms of gratitude. Against this prologue, the ensuing paragraph makes a clear contrast between the "three-act" misinterpretations and the orthodox position, underscoring the depth of the issue with a warning against "self-power" thought and practice.

The conclusion, an admonition which again draws on Rennyo, gives a hint of the disruptive effects of the Sangō Upheaval in reminding its readers of the two dimensions of their lives—the inner, in which they should be grounded in Other-Power faith in accord with Shinran's teaching, and the outer, in which they must carry out their responsibilities as citizens and as members of society. It is significant that, following the Sangō Upheaval, the Nishi Honganji entrusted authority for the determination of heresy to a body of scholar-priests (*Kangakuryō*) in an attempt to avoid further disputes, this one having led to such bitterness and divisiveness within the community.⁷⁹

To sum up the significance of *The Letters* as scripture in Shinshu tradition: for Shinran, the truth and reality of Amida's Vow, which transcends history, is manifested in history textually as the *Larger Sutra*,

the right exposition for which the Tathāgata appeared in the world, the wondrous scripture [*myōten*] rare and most excellent, the conclusive and ultimate exposition of the One Vehicle, the precious words disclosing perfect, instantaneous fulfillment, the sincere words praised by all the Buddhas throughout the ten quarters, the true teaching [*shinkyō*] in consummate readiness for the beings of this day.⁸⁰

The commentarial tradition of the seven Pure Land masters is continuous with the *Larger Sutra* in transmitting the truth and reality of Amida's Vow.

This is the teaching received by Shinran from Hōnen and manifested in his own writings.

Some two centuries later, Shinran is reported to have reappeared as Rennyo to restore the teaching to its former purity; following Rennyo's death, the five-fascicle compilation of eighty of his letters came to be seen as the authoritative statement of the teaching. With the Honganji's further institutionalization as a religious order, *The Letters* provided, in the Tokugawa period, the doctrinal basis for a confessional statement defining orthodox belief and practice. Again, when the Nishi Honganji was torn by an internal dispute over the proper interpretation of faith, *The Letters* was a major source of authority for adjudicating the issue.

A final note on the process of scripturalization within the Nishi Honganji: contemporary Shinshu scholars writing in English have appropriated the term "scripture(s)" (also "canon") to designate and delimit their ancient textual tradition: Pure Land sutras of Indian and central Asian origin; commentaries by the seven Pure Land masters; and, in particular, the works of their founder, Shinran, and his successors—Kakunyo, Zonkaku, and Rennyo. Following Japan's modern encounter with the West and the return of Christian missionaries in the latter part of the nineteenth century, participants in Shinshu tradition, both in Japan and in the West, expressed the need for their own book of scriptures. Similarities as well as differences in the concept of sacred text—whether spoken or written—underlying the Shinshu Scriptures (*Shinshū seiten*), the Hebrew Bible, and the Christian Bible are suggestive for further comparative study of scripture as a generic form.⁸¹

FOOTNOTES

1. This essay is the first chapter in the third and final part (chapters 4-7) of a study on Rennyo (1415-1499), forthcoming as a volume in the Nanzan Studies in Asian Religions series from

Asian Humanities Press. The three parts of the study, *Rennyo: The Second Founder of Shin Buddhism*, are: Rennyo's life and thought; *The Letters*, an annotated translation of his eighty letters in five fascicles, known as *Gobunshō* in the Nishi branch of the Honganji and as *Ofumi* in the Higashi branch; and Rennyo's legacy.

2. *Rennyo Shōnin itokuki*, in *Shinshū shōgyō zensho* (hereafter cited as SSZ), 3:870.

3. *Jitsugo kyūki*, in *Rennyo Shōnin gyojitsu* (hereafter cited as RSG), 130; *Rennyo Shōnin goichidaiki kiki-gaki*, SSZ 3:605.

4. *Jitsugo kyūki*, RSG, 85; *Rennyo Shōnin goichidaiki kiki-gaki*, SSZ 3:563.

5. Several essays edited by Miriam Levering, *Rethinking Scripture* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), inform the discussion of *The Letters* as scripture in this essay. In particular, see Wilfred Cantwell Smith's "The Study of Religion and the Study of the Bible" and "Scripture as Form and Concept: Their Emergence for the Western World," and William A. Graham's "Scripture as Spoken Word."

6. The more obvious comparison is with the "Epistles of St. Paul" in the Christian tradition's *New Testament*.

7. Kimura Takeo, ed., *Rennyo Shōnin ron: Mō hitotsu no Ōsaka sengokuki* (Tokyo: PHP Kenkyūjō, 1983), 149.

8. Shizutoshi Sugihira, Shinshu scholar and author of an essay on the occasion of the 450th anniversary of Rennyo's death, uses the term "canonical book": "Eighty pieces of the Ofumi were selected out and compiled into five fasciculi, and this five fasciculi compilation of the Ofumi has attained the position of a canonical book of the sect" ("Rennyo Shōnin, the Great Teacher of Shin Buddhism," *The Eastern Buddhist* 8/1 [1949]:34).

9. Kenryu Takashi Tsuji, "Brief Introduction to Jodo Shinshu," (San Francisco: Buddhist Churches of America, n.d.), 1. The instance cited here is from a pamphlet in English introducing Shinshu tradition in a Protestant Christian North American context. In such a setting, the need for

a religious community to have a written text is no doubt strongly felt. It is probable that any chronology listing a dozen or so dates in Shinran's life will include a significant proportion relating to the preparation of a text: 1205, Shinran's copying of Hōnen's *Senjakushū*; 1224, the earliest date for *Kyōgyōshinshō*; 1247, the granting of permission to others to copy *Kyōgyōshinshō*; 1248, the writing of Shinran's first hymns in Japanese; 1251, Shinran's letters to followers in the Kanto; and 1258, Shinran's letter on *jinen*, frequently translated as naturalness or spontaneity; see "A Chronology of Shinran's Life," in Yoshifumi Ueda and Dennis Hirota, *Shinran: An Introduction to His Thought*, 1989, 18.

10. *Mattōshō*, SSZ 2: 658.

11. Shinran, *The True Teaching, Practice and Realization of the Pure Land Way*, head trans. Dennis Hirota (Kyoto: Hongwanji International Center, 1983), I: 21.

12. Tabata Ōjun et al., eds., *Shinranshū/Nichirenshū*, Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikēi, vol. 82 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1969). Both an annotated Japanese translation of *Kyōgyōshinshō* and Shinran's text in classical Chinese are available in a volume in the Outline of Japanese Thought Series: Hoshino Genpō et al., eds., *Shinran*, vol. 11, *Nihon Shisō Taikēi* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1971).

13. *True Teaching*, 1: 58-59 (slightly emended); SSZ 2:1. A concordance makes it possible to trace Shinran's use of virtually any term with reference to the text of *Kyōgyōshinshō*, SSZ 2:1-203. See Ryūkoku Daigaku Shinshū Gakkai, ed., *Shinran Shōnin chosaku yōgo sakuin: Kyōgyōshinshō no bu* (Kyoto: Ryūkoku Daigaku Shinshū Gakkai, 1977). A second volume, Ryūkoku Daigaku Shinshū Gakkai, ed., *Shinran Shōnin chosaku yōgo sakuin: Wakan senjutsu no bu* (Kyoto: Ryūkoku Daigaku Shinshū Gakkai, 1978) is available for his other writings in Chinese and Japanese.

14. For many years, Japanese-American participants in the Shinshu—Shin Buddhists—

living in Hawaii felt the need for "an English Shinshu Seiten." (The terms "Shin Buddhist" and "Shin Buddhism" were coined by Suzuki Daisetsu as collateral terms to "Zen Buddhist" and "Zen Buddhism." In this study, they are used primarily in the context of participation in Shinshu tradition outside of Japan, where, as in North America, Buddhists constitute a very small minority of the population.) In 1950, a representative of the Honpa Honganji Mission of Hawaii visited Japan to negotiate for the translation and compilation of "a holy scripture in English." Kōshō Yamamoto, a Shinshu priest and professor at Ryūkoku University in Kyoto, agreed to undertake the project. Some five years later, the English Shinshu Seiten Compilation Committee of the mission published an English version of the Shinshu scriptures, *The Shinshu Seiten: The Holy Scripture of Shinshu* (1955; repr. Honolulu: The Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, 1961), vii-viii. The preface to the 1961 edition, printed on the occasion of the seven-hundredth anniversary of Shinran's death begins: "It is now seven hundred years since Shinran Shonin, the founder of Jodoshinshu, passed away in Kyoto. And in Kyoto the Church of Honganji observed this spring, on a nationwide scale, the seven hundredth anniversary in memory of the Shonin in whose teaching we all live" (v). It is noteworthy that major anniversaries of the deaths of Shinran and Rennyo have been the occasion for the publication of texts.

In 1978, a new compilation, *Shinshū Seiten: Jōdo Shin Buddhist Teaching*, was published by the Buddhist Churches of America, endorsed by the Honpa Honganji Mission of Hawaii and the Buddhist Churches of Canada. It included many new translations of the texts based on the work of Japanese and Japanese-American scholars. In the same year, the first volume in the Shin Buddhism Translation Series was published; the foreword to *Letters of Shinran* notes that the series "will include all of Shinran's works as well as other basic scriptures." In 1979, the preface to the second volume, *Notes on 'Essentials of Faith*

Alone, announced a twelve-year program "for the translation and publication in English of the basic Canons of Jodo Shinshu."

15. Shinran, *Passages on the Pure Land Way*, head trans. Dennis Hirota (Kyoto: Hongwanji International Center, 1982), 47.

16. *Tannishō*, trans. by Dennis Hirota, 23.

17. See "Notes on Shinran's Readings," Shinran, *True Teaching*, 1:174-75.

18. Shinran, *True Teaching*, I: 67.

19. Shinran, *Passages*, 30.

20. This is the position of the Buddhist scholar, Mochizuki Shinkō; see Shinran, *True Teaching*, 1:38-39.

21. Shinran, *True Teaching*, I: 141.

22. *Ibid.*, I: 141.

23. SSZ 2:102.

24. *Tannishō*, trans. Hirota, 43; SSZ 2:791-92.

25. Shinran, *Notes on the Inscriptions on Sacred Scrolls*, head trans. Dennis Hirota (Kyoto: Hongwanji International Center, 1981), p. 46.

26. *Godenshō*, SSZ 3: 647.

27. *Kudenshō*, SSZ 3:9-10. For a discussion of this and other incidents recorded in *Kudenshō* and a brief evaluation of the text, see Phillip K. Eidmann, "Nyoshin and the Kudensho," *The Pacific World: Journal of the Institute of Buddhist Studies*, n.s., 1/1 (1982):16-17.

28. *Rennyo Shōnin ibun* (hereafter cited as RSI), 166 (#50/2:3); SSZ 2:428.

29. RSI, 195 (#61/2:12); SSZ 3:443.

30. RSI, 333 (#112/4:5); SSZ 3:481.

31. RSI, 346 (#115/4:6); SSZ 3:484.

32. RSI, 471 (#173/5:2); SSZ 3:500.

33. RSI, 444 (#155/5:9); SSZ 3:506-7.

34. RSI, 427 (#147); SSZ 3:552.

35. RSI, 429 (#148); SSZ 3:523-24.

36. RSI, 432 (#149); SSZ 3:525.

37. RSI, 433 (#150); SSZ 3:527.

38. RSI, 127-28 (#35). A collection of letters was made by Aki Rensō (also known as Shimotsuma Rensō).

39. RSI, 142 (#41/2:2).

40. The fifteen letters in the first fascicle were written between Bunmei 3 (1471).7.15 and the ninth month of Bunmei 5 (1473), during the period of Rennyo's struggle for institutional autonomy at Yoshizaki. The fifteen in the second fascicle were written between Bunmei 5 (1473).12.8 and Bunmei 6 (1474).7.9, while Rennyo was still at Yoshizaki. The thirteen in the third fascicle were written between Bunmei 6 (1474).7.14 and Bunmei 8 (1476).6.18. Ten of these were also written in Yoshizaki before Rennyo's abrupt departure in the eighth month of Bunmei 7 (1475) for Deguchi, as a temporary solution to his religious and political dilemma. The fifteen in the fourth fascicle were written between Bunmei 9 (1477).1.8 and Meiō 7 (1498).11.21.

41. Ōe Junjō and Ōhara Shōjitsu, eds., *Shinshū seiten* (1956; repr. Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1969), 893-94.

42. It is probable that a copy of *Anjin ketsujō* was available to Kakunyo and to Zonkaku, who quotes from the text directly. Rennyo was introduced to the text by his father, Zonnyo, who made a copy when Rennyo was ten. It is with Rennyo that the concept *ki-hō ittai* becomes a central tenet in Shinshu thought. For a discussion of the historical background of this text in relation to the Shinshu, see James C. Dobbins, *Jōdo Shinshū: Shin Buddhism in Medieval Japan* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989), 106-7.

43. Kitanishi Hiromu, "Dangibon kenkyū jōsetsu," *Bukkyō shigaku* 11/3 (1964): 164.

44. The *Ryōgemon* appears in the Nishi Honganji edition of the Shinshu scriptures between Rennyo's *Gozokushō* and the memoir, *Rennyo Shōnin goichidaiki kiki-gaki* (*Shinshū seiten*, ed., Ōe and Ōhara, 814); also see SSZ 3:529-30. The statement was published in Tenmei 4 (1784).3, during the tenure of Hōnyō (1707-1789), seventeenth head priest in the Nishi Honganji lineage (*Honganji nenpyō*, 195), with an appended commentary by Monnyō (1744-1799), who, in 1789, became the eighteenth. In the

Higashi Honganji edition, Rennyo is listed as author in the table of contents (Kashiwabara Yūsen, ed., *Shinshū seiten* [1935; repr. Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1969], 4).

45. Four versions of the confessional statement are listed among fourteen items of questionable authenticity that have been attributed to Rennyo; see RSI, 515-18. For a detailed study of the composition of the statement, see Umehara Ryūsho, "Jōdo Shinshū ni okeru shinkō kokuhakumon no seiritsu," *Shinshūshi no kenkyū*, 83-116.

46. *Ryōgemon*, SSZ 3: 529. English translations have also been made by: Anesaki Masaharu, *History of Japanese Religion, With Special Reference to the Social and Moral Life of the Nation* (1930; repr. Rutland, Vt., and Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle, 1963), 231, who designates *Ryōgemon* as one of Rennyo's letters; Charles Eliot, *Japanese Buddhism* (1935; repr. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1969), 377, who refers to the *Ryōgemon* as "a sort of creed"; and *The Shinshū Seiten: The Holy Scripture of Shinshū*, 299, which lists "The Ryōgemon: The Creed," attributing it to "Rennyo Shonin."

47. *Ryōgemon*, SSZ 3: 529.

48. *Ryōgemon*, SSZ 3: 529.

49. See *Shōshinge*, a joyful paean to Amida, Śākyamuni, and the seven Pure Land masters; SSZ 2:43-46. For Hōnen, see in addition, chapter two of *Tannishō*, SSZ 2:773-75.

50. RSI, 193-94 (#60/2:11).

51. For Zonnyo, see *Rennyo Shōnin goichidaiki kiki-gaki*, SSZ 3:567; for Zonkaku, see SSZ 3:570 and 610.

52. RSI, 170-171 (#51); SSZ 3:469-70.

53. *Ryōgemon*, SSZ 3:529.

54. RSI, 251 (#84/3:11).

55. Ōe and Ōhara, eds., *Shinshū seiten*, 814.

56. There is a minor difference in the phrasing of the statement in the Higashi and Nishi versions.

57. Sir Charles Eliot, in his *Japanese Buddhism*, comments that the *Ryōgemon* is "perhaps

the simplest and most authoritative statement respecting Shintai and Zokutai" (377). Further, he observes that the phrase *shinzoku nitai* is frequently used to sum up Shinshu teaching:

[It] describes the two great divisions of religion, faith and morality. Shintai refers mainly to the next world, the salvation offered by Amida and how to obtain it. Zokutai is a man's duty as a member of society, but duty in the sense of conduct arising from faith (377).

58. *Honganji nenpyō*, 208. For texts of both documents and brief commentaries, see *Jōdo Shinshū seiten: Chūshakuban*, 1411-15; 1417-22.

59. In Kansei 9 (1797).5, Chidō (1736-1805) became the seventh head of the Gakurin (first known as the Gakuryō), a scholastic movement founded within the Honganji in Kanei 15 (1638) by Ryōnyo (1612-1662), the thirteenth head priest. Chidō's six-article statement on faith and his lectures in 1797 and 1798, all of which stressed "taking refuge through the three acts" (*sangō kimyō*), provoked a storm of response (Asaeda Zenshō, "Igi: Sangō wakuran," in *Shinshū denshō no ayumi* [1], *Jōdo Shinshū Gendai Hōwa Taikei*, vol. 7 [Kyoto: Dōbōsha, 1987], 351-52).

60. *Honganjishi* 2: 359.

61. Asaeda, "Igi: Sangō wakuran," 345; *Shinshū shinjiten*, s.v. "Sangō wakuran," 184, "Chikū," 356.

62. *Honganjishi*, 2: 359.

63. This work records four lectures given by Kōzon in 1762, on the last day of the second month and the first day of the third, at the branch temple in Fukui, Echizen province; it was published in Meiwa 1 (1764).1 (*Honganjishi*, 2: 355-56; Asaeda, "Igi: Sangō wakuran," 346; *Honganji nenpyō*, 183).

64. Asaeda, "Igi: Sangō wakuran," 347.

65. This was the earliest of four versions of the treatise; with the addition of two prefaces, it was published as "The Diamond Essence of the Direct Path of Crosswise Transcendence" (*Ōchō jikidō kongōhai*), in the fifth month of Kyōwa 1 (1801). For accounts of the exchanges leading up

to this event, see *Honganjishi*, 2:360-64, 374-75; Asaeda, "Igi: Sangō wakuran," 348-51 (giving the publication date as Kansei 12).

66. Asaeda, "Igi: Sangō wakuran," 348-51. The Gakurin, unable to ignore such a response, declared the document in error and, for a time, successfully opposed its reprinting. They argued that the document refuted the sentence, "Casting off the self-power mind of the sundry practices and disciplines, we single-mindedly entrust ourselves to Amida Tathāgata to save us [in regard to] the birth that is to come [in the Pure Land], the most important matter" (*Moromoro no zōgyō zōshu jiriki no kokoro o furisutete, isshin ni Amida Nyorai warera ga kondo no ichidaiji no goshō ontasuke sōrae to tanomitatematsuru*) as an expression of self-power; in addition, they claimed that it also refuted the "Confessional Statement," since the sentence at issue was virtually the same as that statement's opening sentence. This was met with a denial that the document refuted either *The Letters* [in which variations of the phrase "goshō tasuke tamae to tanomu" appears] or the "Confessional Statement" and a demand to be shown just where this appeared; the Gakurin replied that the entire document interpreted "goshō tasuke tamae to tanomu" in such a simplistic way that it thoroughly confused the clearly-transmitted teaching on faith (*Honganjishi*, 2:376). Rennyo's writings were obviously central to the arguments of both sides, a fact which—ironically—underscores his role as the arbiter of orthodoxy.

67. *Honganjishi*, 2:377-79.

68. *Honganjishi*, 2:385-86.

69. *Honganjishi*, 2:386-90.

70. *Honganjishi*, 2:391.

71. *Honganjishi*, 2:393. For a discussion of the concept of heresy and the significance of the Sangō Upheaval, see James C. Dobbins, "The Concept of Heresy in the Jōdo Shinshū," *Transactions of the International Conference of Orientalists in Japan* 25 (1980): 41-44.

72. *Jōdo Shinshū seiten: Chūshakuban*, 1413-15.

73. *Larger Sutra*, T 12.272b; *Kyōgyōshinshō*, T 83.601a, T 83.605a; SSZ 2:49, 62.

74. T 26.230c; SSZ 1:269.

75. *Songō shinzō meimon*, SSZ 2:563-64.

76. *ichinen hokki heizei gōjō*.

77. *Mattōshō*, SSZ 2: 658.

78. Kaō. A personalized signature written under an author's name, in place of a seal. To prevent its being copied, this signature was often written in abbreviated style as a design.

79. Dobbins, "The Concept of Heresy in the Jōdo Shinshū," 43.

80. Shinran, *True Teaching*, I: 67-68.

81. See essays in Miriam Levering, ed., *Rethinking Scripture*. One form that the Shinshū's textual tradition has taken in the modern period: the covers of some compilations of Shinshū texts, printed on gilt-edged pages, have folds to protect their contents. Christian missionaries in Japan at the turn of the century used Bibles and prayer books of similar design; it appears that not only the concept but also the form for packaging scripture left its mark on modern Japanese religious consciousness. There has been considerable experimentation as to how to present the Shinshū textual tradition during the past century. See, for example:

(1) *Shinshū shōgyō daizen*, 3 vols. (1903; repr. Tokyo: Shinkō Honten, 1906), in traditional folio bindings, is comprehensive in contents;

(2) *Shinshū seiten zensho* (1907; repr. Tokyo: Fusanbō, 1932), in two volumes (one with Chinese texts and the other with Japanese), has leather covers with folds to protect the contents on gilt-edged pages;

(3) *Seiten: Jōdo Shinshū* (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1919), a single volume containing major texts beginning with Shinran's writings, has a leather cover with the inscription, *Seiten*, and folds to protect the contents on gilt-edged pages similar to a small Bible or prayer book;

(4) *Shinshū shōgyō zensho* (1941; repr. Kyoto: Ōtani Kobundō, 1969-1970), in five volumes with hard covers, is the most comprehensive in contents;

(5) *Shinshū seiten* (1956; repr. Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1969), a single comprehensive volume with a red plastic cover contains texts, liturgies, and hymns; and

(6) *Jōdo Shinshū seiten: Chūshakuban* (Tokyo: Dōbōsha, 1988), largely similar in contents to the *Shinshū seiten* (item 5 above), includes also brief commentaries on the texts and a glossary of terms.