

PACIFIC WORLD

Journal of the Institute of Buddhist Studies

Third Series Number 3
Fall 2001

**SPECIAL ISSUE ON CONTEMPORARY
SHIN BUDDHIST THOUGHT**



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Acknowledgement: This annual publication is made possible by the donation of Buddha Dharma Kyokai (Society), Inc. of Berkeley, California.

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Editorial Preface: Special Issue on Contemporary Shin Buddhist Studies at Ryukoku University

Ryukoku University occupies an important position within the sphere of Japanese religious scholasticism. Yet, it is not widely known outside of those circles. Certainly, the scholars of Ryukoku University and the religious thought they have created have never acquired the national or international renown of what is known as the Kyoto school. Nevertheless, Ryukoku University has been a locus for considerable scholarly discussion of Buddhist and Shin Buddhist thought for nearly four hundred years.

The school originated in 1639 with the establishment of the Gakuryō (later changed to Gakurin), in order to further doctrinal studies and educate temple priests of the Nishi Hongwanji branch of Jōdo Shinshū. Scholarship within the Hongwanji during the Tokugawa era—known as *shūjō* or *shūgaku*—was both sectarian in approach and highly formalized. According to Maeda Eun, one of its foremost critics, the traditional approach to the study of Shin Buddhism had four characteristics. First, it was based on extremely close and yet superficial philological exegesis. Second, it sought to interpret the entire history of Pure Land Buddhist doctrine from the perspective of Shinran, or of Kakunyo and Rennyo. Third, it emphasized sectarian Hongwanji stances. And, finally, it tended to work within the limitations of established topics for discussion (*rondai*).

In 1922 the Japanese government gave official recognition to the school as Ryukoku Daigaku (Ryukoku University). This event culminated a series of educational reforms within Japan during the Meiji and Taisho eras, which resulted in institutional changes for Ryukoku. At the same time, it also marked a sea change in the manner in which Shin Buddhism would be studied within the school. Traditional *shūjō* and *shūgaku* were replaced by *shinshūgaku* (Shin Buddhist Studies), which sought to free itself from ecclesiastical authoritarianism and adopted aspects of Western scholarship, including historical, philosophical, sociological and systematic methods of inquiry.

This issue of the *Pacific World* seeks to introduce to the Western audience the breadth of contemporary Shin Buddhist Studies currently in practice at Ryukoku University by offering the essays of eight of its scholars. The essays have been placed in order of seniority, that is, in the chronological sequence in which these eight individuals have assumed (or will assume) the senior position among Shin Buddhist scholars at the university. However, rather than following the order in which they are published, we will discuss them here in terms of methodology and subject matter.

Kōju Fugen takes what might be considered to be the most traditional approach, as he examines Rennyo's theory of Amida Buddha's Name. His analysis of textual passages from Shan-tao, Shinran, and Kakunyo demonstrates the way in which they influenced Rennyo's complex, relational explanation of "*namu-amida-butsu*." Kyōshin Asano undertakes to investigate the notion of the last dharma-age, a central theme in Pure Land thought and a key construct in the soteriology of Shinran. An exhaustive analysis of passages from Shinran's texts frames Asano's theoretical discussion as well. Sokusui Murakami argues against the tendency to hold to overly theoretical approaches to Shinran's thought. His essay maintains that, for Shinran, the stage of the truly settled does not simply indicate an assurance of future salvation, but represents the joy of true fulfillment in this world. The focus of Jōkai Asai's investigation is not Shinran, but Hōnen and his teaching of the salvation of the evil person. Asai carefully cuts through the apparent ambiguity of Hōnen's thought with a constructive consideration of a number of his works, most of which are not yet available in English. Like Asai, Ryōshō Yata also endeavors to take an historical approach to doctrinal developments. His effort to trace the development of Shinran's notion of shinjin, particularly his perspective on the two aspects of deep belief, is based on an extensive analysis of Shan-tao's scriptural interpretations. Ryōji Oka approaches Shinran's thought from a different direction. For Oka, Shinran's major work, the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, should not be viewed through interpretations subsequent to Shinran. Nor does he engage in an historical analysis of Shinran's doctrinal positions. Instead, Oka asserts that Shinran's work stands by itself; it represents a systematic and internally consistent explication of the "true essence of the Pure Land way." Ryūsei Takeda goes outside of the normal sphere of Shin Buddhist ideas in order to clarify those ideas from a unique perspective. Takeda's use of the notion of *duḥkha*, a fundamental Buddhist concept, to demonstrate the meaning of Amida's salvation might be considered to be an example of an intra-Buddhist, comparative study. Finally, Takamaro Shigaraki's discussion of the state of Shin Buddhist studies includes both a criticism of false interpretations of Shinran's thought (which result from sectarian or secular intervention into the true) and a radical revalorization of Shin Buddhism itself through Shigaraki's insistence that it be taken not to be a religion of power, but as a religion of path.

We are also pleased that in addition to the collection of essays presenting contemporary Shin Buddhist thought, this issue includes essays by two American scholars. James L. Ford's essay examines the relationship between Hōnen and one of his important contemporaries, Jōkei of the Hossō school (Fa hsiang, or Yogācāra). Charles Jones examines the varieties of Buddha recitation (*nien-fo*, or *nembutsu*) in Chinese Pure Land Buddhism. In this issue we also continue publishing Leo Pruden's translation of

Shinkō Mochizuki's landmark *Pure Land Buddhism in China: A Doctrinal History*, and publish the third and final part of Hisao Inagaki's translation of Shan-tao's "Exposition of the Method of Contemplation on Amida Buddha."

The editorial board wishes to express its particular appreciation to Marjorie Kondo for all of her assistance, as well as to everyone else who contributed to the production of this issue.

David Matsumoto

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at the Institute of Buddhist Studies

The Joy of Shinran: Rethinking Traditional Shinshū Views on the Concept of the Stage of the Truly Settled¹

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I.

FOR MANY YEARS, I HAVE been mulling over an unsettled question relating to the traditional manner of explaining Shinran's concept of attaining the truly settled stage in the present life (*genshō shōjōju*). In order to identify the problem clearly, let me present a few passages from some well known Shinshū exegetical works. First, let us examine a passage from the *Shinshū yōron* (The Essence of the Shinshū Teaching) discussing Jōdo Shinshū's theory of benefits (*riyakuron*), a passage which deals with the teaching of "dual benefits" in the present life and in the future life (*gentō ryōyaku*).

For Shinshū followers, one anticipates realizing ultimate nirvana in the Pure Land. In the present life, we are initiated into the truly settled stage (*shōjōju*), which is endowed with the hope of realizing ultimate nirvana. This hope eliminates all feelings of frustration about unsettledness in the future and is characterized as the hope springing from the great settled mind (*dai anjin*) of the settled anticipation (*ketsujō yōgo*) for the certain realization of future birth in the Pure Land. We become confident about the ultimate achievement of our lives to be realized in the Pure Land of the other shore (*higan*), and thus we are able to live our present lives with the settled mind of total confidence (*anjin ryūmyō*) and full of hope.²

The ultimate nirvana of enlightenment is the benefit realized in the Pure Land in the future. The truly settled stage is the benefit realized in the present life and makes one "filled with the hope of realizing nirvana in the Pure Land," which is "the hope springing from the great settled mind of the settled anticipation for the certain realization of future birth in the Pure Land."

This type of explanation of the attainment of the truly settled stage in the present life naturally leads to the following kinds of interpretations.

A: "To save" means to save someone from his/her dissatisfactions and deficiencies in the present life. Therefore, in terms of time, salvation is located in the future and the priority of salvation should be found in the future. In a sense, this is one of the natural characteristics of the concept of salvation itself. In soteriological religions, salvation must be perfect: as long as the physical body exists, we cannot accomplish this perfection in the present life Although it may not manifest consciously, hope for this future provides those who aspire to be born in the Pure Land with a great resource for living in the present. Therefore, as a soteriological religion, [Shinshū] affirms the position that the priority of salvation should be found in the future.³

B: We need to pay special attention to this concept [of attaining the stage of truly settled in the present life] because it teaches us that the brightness of the future and our hope for the future in fact sustain our present lives. Shinran teaches us how to live in the present life based on his affirmation of the superiority of salvation in the future. Brightness in one's present life comes not only from the present life itself. We also experience how much the bright hope for tomorrow brightens up our present lives.⁴

These interpretations of Shinran's teaching on the stage of the truly settled represent a future-centric logic in which present existence is governed by future hope. According to this understanding, one is to feel fulfilled and secure in the present life through the confidence that one will certainly be born in the Pure Land and attain nirvana in the future.

Yet, if Shinran's conception of attaining the truly settled stage in the present life is to be understood in this manner, how are we to respond to the following critiques?

A: There are some people who teach about salvation in Jōdo Shinshū in a future-centric manner without giving it much thought. But I disagree with them. For example, we often hear that "Shinshū followers' religious life is just like Saturday night. On Saturday night, we feel joyful because we know that tomorrow is Sunday. Likewise, the present life is joyful because we know that we are going to be born in the Pure Land when we die" However, in reality, "tomorrow" is not Sunday but more like Monday. In the afterlife in the Pure Land, there awaits more work that will make us busier than in this life. It is a grave mistake to believe that it will be an easy time in the Pure Land after death If it were Saturday night now, we might wish for Sunday to come sooner. However, in the case of birth in the Pure Land, if you wish "to go to the Pure

Land quickly, we might wonder if we weren't free of blind passions."⁵ That is very unrealistic.⁶

B: Since I am not sure whether the Pure Land really exists, I do not have any illusory yearning for birth in the Land of Utmost Bliss in the afterlife. If my life depended on such thoughts, my present life would certainly be filled with anxiety until I die, because my anxiety could not be eased until I actually got there and saw that the Pure Land existed.⁷

C: Shinran was a truly honest person and never discussed anything with confidence until he had experienced it. Therefore, he could not talk about the afterlife as if he had already seen it, because he had yet to experience it.⁸

Now I want to stress that I am not against the traditional Shinshū doctrine of the dual benefits in the present and future lives (*gentō ryōyaku setsu*). Shinran's view of the attainment of the truly settled stage in the present life and realization of nirvana in the afterlife (*tōrai metsudo*) is clearly delineated in several Shinshū scriptures.⁹ I am very well aware that Shinran himself explains that the meaning of the truly settled stage is "to have become one who will unfailingly attain Buddhahood" and "to become settled as one who will definitely be born in the Pure Land."¹⁰ The problem is whether it is true that Shinran's joy of becoming a person of the truly settled stage is based in anticipation for birth in the Pure Land in the future. If Shinran's concept of attaining the truly settled stage in the present life means to live in hope with anticipation for future birth in the Pure Land, the primary benefit of the Shinshū teaching in this life would be simply the *anticipation* for the attainment of Buddhahood through birth in the Pure Land in the afterlife. The attainment of the truly settled stage in this life, then, becomes merely a secondary by-product.¹¹ If this were true, no matter how greatly the significance of the present life is emphasized in Shinshū teaching, we must accept the criticism that Shinshū is a religion whose primary focus is in the afterlife. We must also face the related criticism that aspiration for birth in an uncertain Pure Land is nothing but a quest for a shadowy illusion. However, I would like to raise the question of whether Shinran's understanding of the joy of attaining the truly settled stage was really such a future-centric idea.

II.

To examine Shinran's understanding of the joy of attaining the truly settled stage, I will review how he describes this joyfulness in his major work, the *True Teaching, Practice, and Realization of the Pure Land Way*

(*Ken Jōdo shinjitsu kyō gyō shō monrui*, hereafter *Kyōgyōshinshō*). Shinran's first reference to joy is found in the preface (*sōjo*) to the text.

How joyous I am, Gutoku Shinran, disciple of Śākyamuni! Rare it is to come upon the sacred scriptures from the westward land of India and the commentaries of the masters of China and Japan, but now [*ima*] I have been able to encounter them. Rare is it to hear them, but already [*sude ni*] I have been able to hear. Reverently entrusting myself to the teaching, practice, and realization that are the true essence of the Pure Land way, I am especially aware of the profundity of the Tathagata's benevolence. Here I rejoice in what I have heard and extol what I have attained.¹²

In the separate preface (*betsujo*) to the Chapter on Shinjin, Shinran explains the source of his joyfulness.

As I reflect, I find that our attainment of shinjin [*shingyō*] arises from the heart and mind with which Amida Tathagata selected the Vow, and that the clarification of true mind has been taught for us through the skillful works of compassion of the Great Sage, Śākyamuni. . . . Here I, Gutoku Shinran, disciple of Śākyamuni, reverently embrace the true teaching of the Buddhas and Tathagatas and look to the essential meaning of the treatises and commentaries of the masters. Fully guided by the beneficent light of the three sutras, I seek in particular to clarify the luminous passage on the "mind that is single." . . . Mindful solely of the depth and vastness of the Buddha's benevolence, I am unconcerned about being personally abused.¹³

In the section known as the Turning and Entering through the Three Vows (*sangan tennyū*), Shinran explains the tenor and expression of that joy.

Nevertheless, I have now [*ima*] decisively departed from the "true" gate of provisional means and, [my self-power] overturned, have entered the ocean of the selected Vow. . . . Having entered forever the ocean of the vow, I now realize deeply the Buddha's benevolence. To respond with gratitude for the supreme virtues, I collect the crucial passages expressing the true essence of the Pure Land way, constantly saying, out of mindfulness [the Name that is] the inconceivable ocean of virtues. Ever more greatly rejoicing, I humbly receive it.¹⁴

And in the postscript (*gojo*) of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, he tries to convey the depth of his feeling.

How joyous I am, my heart and mind being rooted in the Buddhaground of the universal Vow, and my thoughts and feelings flowing within the dharma-ocean, which is beyond comprehension! I am deeply aware of the Tathagata's immense compassion, and I sincerely revere the benevolent care behind the masters' teaching activity. My joy grows ever fuller, my gratitude and indebtedness ever more compelling.¹⁵

The joyfulness Shinran expresses in these passages is based on his realization that "now" (*ima*) he has "already" (*sude ni*) encountered the teaching of Amida's Primal Vow. It is the joy of taking refuge in the Ocean of Amida's Vow (*gankai*), not an expression arising from anticipation for his future birth in the Pure Land.

On the other hand, there are also passages in which Shinran seems to express joy for his anticipated birth in the Pure Land, as in the conclusive exaltation (*kettan*) in the section discussing the significance of the Great Practice (*daigyō shaku*).

Thus, when one has boarded the ship of the Vow of great compassion and sailed out on the vast ocean of light, the winds of perfect virtue blow softly and the waves of evil are transformed. The darkness of ignorance is immediately broken through, and quickly reaching the land of immeasurable light, one realizes great nirvana.¹⁶

However, it should be recognized that the main point of this passage is becoming a being who has "boarded the ship of the Vow of great compassion."¹⁷

In a similar vein, Shinran seems to discuss the joyful anticipation of the moment of death (*rinjū no ichinen*) in the section "On Being the Same as Maitreya" (*bendō Miroku shaku*) in the Chapter on Shinjin.

Because sentient beings of the nembutsu have perfectly realized the diamondlike mind of crosswise transcendence, they transcend and realize great, complete nirvana on the eve of the moment of death.¹⁸

Yet when we consider the sentence preceding this passage—"Because Mahāsattva Maitreya has perfectly realized the diamondlike mind of the stage equal to enlightenment, he will without fail attain the stage of supreme enlightenment beneath a dragon-flower tree at the dawn of the three assemblies"¹⁹—we see that Shinran wrote the passage to demonstrate the superiority of the nembutsu practice and not to express joy for the anticipation of birth in the Pure Land at the moment of death. Shinran's intention becomes even clearer when we read the next sentence of the passage.

Moreover, the people who have realized the diamondlike mind are the equals of Vaidehī and have been able to realize the insights of joy, awakening, and confidence. This is because they have thoroughly attained the true mind directed to them for their going forth, and because this accords with [the working of] the Primal Vow, which surpasses conceptual understanding.²⁰

Shinran's focus is thus on the attainment of the three insights of joy, awakening, and confidence in the present life just as Vaidehī attained them.

In fact, Shinran admits in a number of his writings that he feels not joy but reluctance when anticipating the death that will lead to birth in the Pure Land. In the same chapter of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, Shinran laments that he feels "no happiness at coming nearer the realization of true enlightenment."²¹ In Chapter Nine of *A Record in Lament of Divergences* (*Tannishō*), Shinran is remembered as saying:

It is hard for us to abandon this old home of pain, where we have been transmigrating for innumerable kalpas down to the present, and we feel no longing for the Pure Land of peace, where we have yet to be born. Truly, how powerful our blind passions are! But though we feel reluctant to part from this world, at the moment our karmic bonds to this Sahā world run out and helplessly we die, we shall go to that land.²²

Instead of intimating any hope for the anticipated birth in the Pure Land, Shinran honestly discloses to us that such hopefulness never arises in his heart.

What, then, is the source of joy for Shinran? In the same chapter of the *Tannishō* Shinran goes on to describe just what the wellspring of joy is.

What suppresses the heart that should rejoice and keeps one from rejoicing is the action of blind passions. Nevertheless, the Buddha, knowing this beforehand, called us "foolish beings possessed of blind passions"; thus, becoming aware that the compassionate Vow of Other Power is indeed for the sake of ourselves, who are such beings, we find it all the more trustworthy. . . . Amida pities especially the person who has no thought of wanting to go to the Pure Land quickly. Reflecting on this, we feel the great Vow of great compassion to be all the more trustworthy and realize that our birth is settled.²³

Shinran's joy derives from nothing other than his immediate experience, "now" (*ima*), encountering "the great Vow of great compassion" (*daihi*

daigan) of Amida who “pities especially the person who has no thought of wanting to go to the Pure Land quickly.” Therefore, in the first chapter of the *Tannishō*, Shinran places greater emphasis on “being brought to share in the benefit of being grasped by Amida, never to be abandoned” (*sesshu fusha*)²⁴ than on the realization of birth in the Pure Land.

At the risk of sounding repetitious, let me remind the reader that I am not suggesting that Shinran rejects the concept of birth in the Pure Land. My purpose here is to pinpoint where in the texts Shinran discusses joyfulness and what he says the source of joy is. Traditional Shinshū scholarship circumscribes the stage of the truly settled as no more than a causal stage for the attainment of Buddhahood, despite Shinran’s strong emphasis on its presentness. Certainly there is no doubt that it is one stage of a bodhisattva; and, of course, the practitioner’s realization of ultimate nirvana is to be achieved after birth in the Pure Land. However, it does not necessarily follow that anticipation for birth in the Pure Land is the concrete content of joy experienced by Shinran. As clearly shown in the above citations, Shinran’s joy is founded in the one thought-moment of realization of shinjin (*gyakushin no ichinen*)—the moment when Shinran realized that he was “brought to share in the benefit of being grasped by Amida, never to be abandoned.” This interpretation of Shinran’s conception of joy is further strengthened and clarified by reference to the following passage.

Thus, when one attains the true and real practice and shinjin, one greatly rejoices in one’s heart. This attainment is therefore called the stage of joy. . . . Even more decisively will the ocean of beings of the ten quarters be grasped and never abandoned when they have taken refuge in this practice and shinjin. Therefore the Buddha is called “Amida Buddha.” This is Other Power.²⁵

Although Shinran has yet to attain buddhahood, his salvation has already been accomplished at the moment of attaining the true and real practice and shinjin. If we imagine that Shinran still yearns for the future Pure Land at this point, we would have to do so based on the assumption that Shinran still had feelings of emptiness and that his life was yet to be truly fulfilled. This is clearly not the case.

Although Shinran has attained shinjin, he was still an ordinary being filled with blind passions. On this point, Shinran states:

Concerning the term [to] *cut off* [blind passions]: because we have awakened the mind that is single, which is directed to us for our going forth, there is no further state of existence into which we must be born, no further realm into which we must pass. Already the causes leading to the six courses and the four modes of birth

have died away and their results become null. Therefore we immediately and swiftly cut off birth-and-death in the three realms of existence.²⁶

For Shinran, the existence or non-existence of blind passions is no longer of any concern. Shinran even says that “If we had the feeling of dancing with joy and wished to go to the Pure Land quickly, we might wonder if we weren’t free of blind passions.”²⁷ The life of an ordinary being filled with blind passions is not to be considered empty. Any feelings of emptiness Shinran had were satisfied by Amida’s great Vow of great compassion which is completely trustworthy—not by a longing for the future attainment of Buddhahood through birth in the Pure Land. Shinran does not say that, because Amida promises birth in the Pure Land in the *future*, his attainment of the truly settled stage makes him joyful *now*. Rather, he says that, because he has attained the truly settled stage *now*, his attainment of birth in the Pure Land in the *future* becomes necessary. Shinran makes this point in the Chapter on Realization.

When foolish beings possessed of blind passions, the multitudes caught in birth-and-death and defiled by evil karma, realize the mind and practice that Amida directs to them for their going forth, they immediately join the truly settled of Mahayana. Because they dwell among the truly settled, they necessarily attain nirvana.²⁸

This is similarly stated in the *Hymn of the Pure Land* (*Jōdo wasan*).

Those who attain true and real shinjin
Immediately join the truly settled;
Thus having entered the stage of nonretrogression,
They necessarily attain nirvana.²⁹

And, in the *Notes on ‘Essentials of Faith Alone’* (*Yuishinshō mon’i*), we find, “To return is to attain the supreme nirvana without fail because one has already entered the ocean of the Vow.”³⁰ It is clear that Shinran’s priority is on encountering the teaching of the Primal Vow and not on the future attainment of nirvana. In fact, for Shinran, “It is not attainment of the unexcelled, incomparable fruit of enlightenment that is difficult; the genuine difficulty is realizing true and real shinjin [*shingyō*].”³¹ The most significant issue for Shinran is realizing shinjin. Once one realizes shinjin, one’s attainment of the fruit of enlightenment becomes a necessary event.³²

There are many other examples similar to these passages in Shinran’s writings. For example, in the *Notes on the Inscriptions on Sacred Scrolls* (*Songō shinzō meimon*), Shinran describes the easiness of attaining nirvana.

To go is easy: When persons allow themselves to be carried by the power of the Primal Vow, they are certain to be born in the land that has been fulfilled through it; hence, it is easy to go there. . . . Through the karmic power of the great vow, the person who has realized true and real shinjin naturally is in accord with the cause of birth in the Pure Land and is drawn by the Buddha's karmic power; hence the going is easy, and ascending to and attaining the supreme great nirvana is without limit. Thus the words, *one is drawn there by its spontaneous working (jinen)*. One is drawn there naturally by the cause of birth, the entrusting with sincere mind that is Other Power.³³

The important issue is to be carried by the power of the Primal Vow—to attain true and real shinjin. Birth in the true fulfilled land (*jippōdo*) is simply a natural result of the karmic power of the great Vow. Those famous words of the *Tannishō*—"I have no idea whether the nembutsu is truly the seed for my being born in the Pure Land or whether it is the karmic act for which I must fall into hell"³⁴—reveal Shinran's firm conviction of his birth through total entrusting in the Primal Vow, so much so that his birth in the Pure Land in the future is not even an issue. If his joy arose from his hope for future birth in the Pure Land, shinjin and nembutsu would be merely instruments or methods for birth and not unconditionally free from human value judgements. Shinran goes so far as to state, "I am incapable of any other practice, so hell is decidedly my abode whatever I do,"³⁵ revealing that for him birth in the Pure Land in the afterlife was simply an inconceivable event. Utter joy stems instead from encountering the inconceivable Vow "now."

Shinran's joy of encountering the teaching of the Primal Vow is most clearly reflected in his notes "On Jinen Hōni" which is composed toward the end of his life.

Amida's Vow is, from the very beginning, designed to bring each of us to entrust ourselves to it—saying "Namu-amida-butsu"—and to receive us into the Pure Land; none of this is through our calculation. Thus, there is no room for the practitioner to be concerned about being good or bad. This is the meaning of *jinen* as I have been taught."³⁶

III.

This problem concerning Shinran's conception of joy is closely related to doctrinal discussions on the relationship between shinjin and aspiration for birth in the Pure Land (*yokushō*). In traditional Shinshū studies,

scholars have taken up this problem under the rubric of such topics for discussion as truth and expediency in the three vows (*sangan shinke*), aspiration for birth in the Pure Land in the three vows (*sangan yokushō*), and the relationship between shinjin and aspiration (*shingan kōzai*).

In the *Larger Sutra*, shinjin, practice, and its benefits appear in all three vows for the cause of birth in the Pure Land, namely the Eighteenth, Nineteenth, and Twentieth Vows of Dharmākara Bodhisattva.³⁷ Shinran understands that each of these is independently vowed to establish the cause for sentient beings' birth in the Pure Land. The differences among the three form the basis for Shinran's exegesis of self power and Other Power. The first significant difference is that, in the Eighteenth Vow, shinjin precedes practice (*shinzen gyōgo*); while in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Vows, practice precedes shinjin (*gyōzen shingo*). Based on this difference, Shinran understands that shinjin in the Nineteenth and the Twentieth Vows is established through sentient beings' practice and identifies this as the shinjin of self power (*jiriki no shin*) in which practitioners aspire to attain birth in the Pure Land through the virtues created by their practices. On the other hand, the shinjin of the Eighteenth Vow, which precedes practice, is the shinjin of Other Power (*tariki no shin*) responding to Amida's commands (*chokumei*) without doubt and in joyful entrustment (*mugi aigyō*). The practice that follows shinjin is defined as the easy practice of enduring shinjin (*shin sōzoku no igyō*). The second difference among the three vows concerns the listing of the three minds. Two of the three minds—sincere mind (*shishin*) and mind of aspiration for birth (*yokushō*)—appear in all three vows. However, the middle of the three minds is different in each vow: in the Eighteenth Vow entrusting (*shingyō*) is listed as the second of the three minds; in the Nineteenth Vow it is aspiration (*hotsugan*); and in the Twentieth Vow it is directing virtues (*ekō*). Shinran's interpretation of this difference is that, although the three vows all mention the mind aspiring for birth, in the Nineteenth and the Twentieth it is the self power mind of aspiration for birth. In the Eighteenth Vow, however, the mind aspiring for birth is to be taken as a synonym for shinjin or entrusting mind (*shingyō*). Therefore, it is interpreted as the mind of settled anticipation (*ketsujō yōgo*) for birth in the Pure Land.³⁸

In other words, the mind of aspiring for birth in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Vows identifies the mind of practitioners who abhor their lives in this world of defilement and aspire for the land of purity. It is the mind of practitioners who desire to abandon this world and seek to fill up their feelings of emptiness in the present life with the hope for future birth in the Pure Land. They recognize the defilement of the world they live in yet are unable to recognize their own falsity and insincerity. Shinran realizes that those practitioners misapprehend both the nature of practice and their own motives to believe that they can attain birth in the Pure Land by relying on the root of goodness produced by their own self power practice. No matter

how strongly they aspire for birth in the Pure Land, and no matter how much they accumulate roots of goodness, their self power efforts can never free them from anxiety in the present life or provide the strength for living in the present world.

The mind of aspiration for birth in the Eighteenth Vow is traditionally defined as the mind of settled anticipation for birth in the Pure Land. However, if we discuss it without reference to the reality of the present, it simply becomes a future goal. The stronger we wish for the realization of the ideal future, the emptier our present lives become—no matter how firmly settled is our mind for anticipating the realization of future birth in the Pure Land. Even though future birth in the Pure Land is guaranteed, it does not save us from suffering in the present life. Such convictions about future birth are, after all, not so different from the shinjin of self-power in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Vows.

When Shinran realized that Amida's light of wisdom crushed the faults of his incomplete understanding of the Buddha's wisdom (*furyō bucchi*) created out of his reliance on his self power mind of aspiration for birth (*jiriki yokushō shin*), he had the religious experience of "being overturned and entering into the realization of shinjin through the three vows" (*sangan tennyū*). It was then that, for the first time, he realized the mind of entrusting (*shingyō*) without any hindrance of doubts (*gigai muzō*). At that point, his own falsity and insincerity were crushed, and he realized that he was a man "incapable of any other practice."³⁹

In the Eighteenth Vow, entrusting (*shingyō*) is to be established as the negation of the self-power mind of aspiration for birth, or the self-power mind hoping for future birth. From the standpoint of the Eighteenth Vow, the present life is not abhorrent simply because one exists in a defiled world; rather, shinjin makes us realize our own insincerity in negating the present reality as abhorrent. When the mind that is attached to self power has been crushed by the light of the Buddha's wisdom, then the present reality which we find difficult to accept is transformed into a positive one in which we can recognize its significance as it is. The mind of aspiration described in the Eighteenth Vow, which is the mind of settled anticipation for birth, is only possible at the moment of shinjin, when the mind is brightened by the Buddha's wisdom and entrusts Amida Buddha's command (*chokumei*).

In the Nineteenth and Twentieth Vows, the mind of aspiration for birth is the aspiration of the "self" (*ware*) toward "tathāgata" (i.e., the Pure Land). When one realizes that this "self" is an ordinary sentient being destined to fall into avici hell (*hitsuda muken*), the direction of aspiration toward the Pure Land is overturned, and one realizes the proper perspective, which is instead that "tathāgata" is directed toward "self." This is the mind of aspiration in the Eighteenth Vow.⁴⁰

Finally, “aspire for birth” is the command of the Tathagata calling to and summoning the multitude of all beings. . . . [H]e took the mind of directing virtues as foremost, and thus realized the mind of great compassion. Accordingly, the Buddha directs this other-benefiting, true and real mind of aspiration for birth to the ocean of all beings. Aspiration for birth is this mind of directing virtues. It is none other than the mind of great compassion; therefore, it is untainted by the hindrance of doubt.⁴¹

In this realization of shinjin, tathāgata and the Pure Land do not exist in the future but have already come to exist in this present life. They have existed since the time of the absolute past and will exist into the absolute future as an uninterrupted force working in this present reality. The Pure Land realized in shinjin is not a Pure Land waiting in the afterlife. As T’an-luan says, “the name of the land performs the work of the Buddha. How can we conceive of this?”⁴² Since one becomes aware of this Pure Land through shinjin in the present—in the “now” (*ima*)—one’s salvation is accomplished here, and one receives the benefit of Amida’s light once grasped never to be abandoned (*sesshu fusha*).⁴³ At the moment shinjin is realized, there is no other future life to wish for any longer. For the person of shinjin, there is no need for the welcoming at the moment of death (*rinjū raigō*) in the future time. Therefore, Shinran in one of his letters teaches:

The practitioner of true shinjin, however, abides in the stage of the truly settled, for he or she has already been grasped, never to be abandoned. There is no need to wait in anticipation for the moment of death, no need to rely on Amida’s coming. At the time shinjin becomes settled, birth too becomes settled.⁴⁴

Although the term “aspiration for birth” (*yokushō*) is used in the context of birth in the Pure Land, it is “now” when we entrust (*shingyō*), and the aspiration is nothing other than the mind of entrusting. Therefore, the term “aspiration for birth” needs to be understood as a synonym for entrusting mind (*shingyō*) in the context of the “now.”

In doctrinal discussions on the relationship between shinjin and aspiration (*shingan kōzai*), the term aspiration as used in the Eighteenth Vow has traditionally been interpreted as a synonym for entrusting mind. The term “entrusting mind” is used to signify Amida’s command at present, and the term “aspiration for birth” implies the land that is included in Amida’s command but is yet to be presented. However, although it is called “the land yet to be presented,” it should not be understood in terms of a conviction or wish to be born in a Pure Land existing in an imaginative future time. If we interpret the phrase “the land yet to be presented” as the

Pure Land in the temporal future, the joy of shinjin would be equivalent to the mind of settled anticipation (*ketsujō yōgo*). If that were the meaning of the truly settled stage (*shōjōju*), we should rather say that the entrusting mind is a synonym for the mind of aspiration for birth and not vice versa. Since we say that the mind of aspiration is a synonym for the entrusting mind, the joy of shinjin should not be understood as the mind of settled anticipation for future birth. The mind of settled anticipation is established at the moment of realization of the entrusting mind. Shinran's experience of salvation and joy should be understood as realized at the one thought-moment of shinjin (*shin no ichinen*), when he was awakened to be embraced by the benefit of "once grasped never to be abandoned."

IV.

According to the presuppositions underlying traditional doctrinal discussions on the meaning of the truly settled stage (*shōjōju*), the concept of birth in the Pure Land (*ōjō*) is understood strictly as to "leave here and be born [in the Pure Land] on the pedestal of the lotus flower,"⁴⁵ following Hōnen's teaching. If we are bound by this definition, then interpreting the concept of birth in the context of the present life becomes a radical exercise that some see as distorting the fundamental paradigm of the Pure Land teaching. However, as Ueda Yoshifumi has suggested many times, we must recognize that Shinran employs the concept of birth in the Pure Land with a broader vision beyond the traditional definition of birth as simply a matter of the afterlife.⁴⁶ This is evident in Shinran's teaching, such as "becom[ing] established in the stage of the truly settled . . . is the meaning of *attaining birth*,"⁴⁷ and "when a person realizes shinjin, he or she is born immediately."⁴⁸ Although I employ the concept of birth in the context of the present life, I am not saying that ordinary beings become extraordinary or change their nature in any way. Nor does this shift in viewpoint imply that sentient beings will attain enlightenment in the present life. Thus there is no need to fear that it might be confused with the teaching of the Path of Sages. I am well aware of the dangers of suggesting that enlightenment is attained in the present body and of Shinran's criticism of such a position in chapter fifteen of the *Tannishō*.

On the assertion that one attains enlightenment even while maintaining this bodily existence full of blind passions. This statement is completely absurd.⁴⁹

If we understand the concept of birth in the Pure Land as leaving here and being born in the Pure Land, the land is reduced to a place existing in the future as a kind of continuation of our present lives in this world.

Furthermore, if we continue in this line of thinking, we must necessarily make a split between life in this world and life in the coming world, taking this world as a defiled land and the other world as pure. In this context, salvation occurs only after birth into the Pure Land in the afterlife. Attaining the truly settled stage in the present life, too, simply becomes a reflection in the present world of our future salvation in the afterlife. But we must remember that Amida's salvation has been proffered since the time of innumerable kalpas past and extends into the infinite future. The Pure Land of Bliss is the land of eternal existence. The Tathagata, however, does not quietly preside in that eternal land and wait for us to attain birth. According to T'an-luan's explanation of the significance of Amida's accomplishment of the Primal Vow:

His Vow gave rise to the Power; the Power fulfils the Vow. The Vows have not been in vain; the Power is not empty. The Power and Vows work in complete harmony, and are not in the least discordant with each other; hence "accomplishment."⁵⁰

Due to Amida's Primal Vow, the Tathagata never stops working. Shinran understands that, according to his pledge, the Tathagata has made Śākyamuni expound the *Larger Sutra* and causes sentient beings to practice, entrust and realize. Teaching, practice, entrusting, and realization are all the contents of Amida's directing his virtues in the aspect of going forth (*ōsō*). Therefore, in the Chapter on Teaching, Shinran says, "in the aspect of going forth, there is the true teaching, practice, shinjin, and realization."⁵¹

The Pure Land is the land of eternity. However, simply because we are going to the Pure Land in the afterlife we should not assume that the Pure Land exists only in the future and has nothing to do with our present lives. Our salvation in the Pure Land does not start in the future. In the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, Chapter on the True Buddha and the Land, Shinran prefers the word "infinite light" to "infinite life" in describing the nature of the Pure Land,⁵² which implies that Shinran understands the unhindered working of Amida as destroying the blind passions of sentient beings without interruption.⁵³ Traditional scholarship also agrees that the True Buddha and the Land are "the peaceful and spontaneous wonderful fruition" and "the root of embracing and awakening all beings in the ten directions." The Tathagata "exists and expounds the Dharma right now." The Pure Land is also the Pure Land in which "the name of the land performs the work of the Buddha."

In Vasubandhu's *Treatise on the Pure Land (Jōdoron)*, this eternal Tathagata and the Pure Land are explained as "the manifestation of true merit." T'an-luan interprets the meaning of "true" here as "neither inverted nor false" (*futendō fukogi*). He explains that it is not false because

“it leads sentient beings to ultimate Purity.”⁵⁴ The Tathagata and the Pure Land have always existed and transformed sentient beings living in the three realms of impurity by assimilating them into the pure nature of the Tathagata and the Pure Land.

According to Shinran, the “manifestation of true merit” is “the sacred Name that embodies the Vow,”⁵⁵ and “directing of virtue” is “Amida’s giving the Name that embodies the Primal Vow to sentient beings throughout the ten quarters.”⁵⁶ The virtues of the Tathagata and the Pure Land are directed to sentient beings in the concrete form of the single Name. Therefore, a contact point between, on the one hand, the eternal and true Tathagata and the Pure Land, which are beyond the paradigm of time, and, on the other hand, us, who live in the paradigm of temporality, is only possible in the “present” when we hear the Name and entrust in it. At the one thought-moment of shinjin, we take refuge in the eternal ocean of the Primal Vow. Shinran teaches that this is the only chance for our salvation to become complete—not before or after. The benefit given at the moment of shinjin is the truly settled stage. Shinran places the benefit of the truly settled stage into the ten benefits given in this life (*genshō jūyaku*).⁵⁷ However, within these ten there is no benefit of the *hope* of settled anticipation of future birth. Once we realize shinjin, our attainment of birth in the Pure Land happens naturally. Therefore, Shinran says in the *Hymns of the Pure Land Masters* (*Kōsō wasan*):

Since shinjin arises from the Vow,
We Attain Buddhahood though the nembutsu by the [Vow’s]
spontaneous working.
The spontaneous working is itself the fulfilled land;
Our realization of supreme nirvana is beyond doubt.⁵⁸

And in the *Hymns of the Dharma-Ages* (*Shōzōmatsu wasan*):

The directing virtue embodied in Namu-amida-butsu
Is, in its benevolent working, vast and inconceivable;
Through the benefit of the directing of virtue for going forth,
We have already entered (*enyū seri*) the aspect of directing of
virtue for returning to this world.⁵⁹

If we simply believe that directing virtue for returning to this world begins only in the afterlife by following a strict dichotomy that this world is for the present life and the Pure Land is for afterlife, then we cannot understand the significance of Shinran’s hymn that tells us “we have already entered the aspect of the directing of virtue for returning to this world.” We can understand the hymn only when we realize that at the moment of shinjin we have already taken refuge in the Pure Land of eternity.

Taking another tack, one may attempt to associate the relationship between the attainment of nirvana in the Pure Land and the attainment of the truly settled stage in the present life with the idea that “hope for the future sustains our present lives.” However, a bit of rhetorical magic lies hiding in this idea. Behind the statement that future hope sustains present life there is an assumption that time flows as an uninterrupted continuum like a river running without interruption. In respect to the concept of birth in the Pure Land, this statement also assumes two separate realms—this world and the coming world (the afterlife). While perhaps the future world is arguably in the process of becoming this world, the future world cannot immediately become this world. Even though we may have “hope of settled anticipation (*ketsujō yōgo*) for birth in the Pure Land, which is the hope of the great settled mind (*dai anjin*) for the truth certainly to be realized,” within such a dichotomous interpretation the present world is reduced to nothing but empty human life. To the contrary, we must realize that, when this world is truly fulfilled, we naturally know that the coming life is fulfilled.⁶⁰

Finally, I would like to point out that there is a problem with the analogy comparing time in this world to a Saturday spent anticipating Sunday. The joy of Saturday is based on experiences of actually having enjoyed Sundays in the past. On the other hand, birth in the Pure Land is something we have never experienced. The only person who can truthfully use such an analogy is one who has received in the present life the benefit of having been embraced and never forsaken. An experience of the eternal, an experience of “attaining shinjin,” must have occurred first. Only when one attains shinjin does the path of birth in the Pure Land at last become clear. From this standpoint, as Rennyō says, “as for nirvana, we are grateful knowing that Amida will save us.”⁶¹ Feelings of gratitude for Amida’s salvation naturally inspire us into the anticipation of that salvation, causing us to say, “we are grateful knowing that Amida will save us” and not vice versa (i.e., it is not that anticipation leads to gratitude). It is in this sense that aspiration for birth becomes a synonym for entrusting mind. Therefore, the proposition “hope for the future sustains our present lives” is to be rejected as a viable interpretation of Shinran’s concept of attaining the truly settled stage in the present life. We must remember that, for the majority of modern people (with very special exceptions), this kind of interpretation brings no hope for salvation at all.⁶²

Translated by Eisho Nasu

NOTES

1. Translator's note: This is a translation of "Shinran no yorokobi," in *Zoku Shinran kyōgi no kenkyū* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1989), pp. 91–109, by the late Prof. Murakami Sokusui, Ryukoku University, Kyoto, Japan. This essay originally appeared in *Ryūkoku daigaku ronshū* 400/401 (1973). Unless otherwise noted, all of the quoted passages have been translated into English by the translator. Minor editorial changes and revisions are made in the texts and notes according to the journal's editorial guidelines and conventions of academic publication in English. Additional notes are inserted occasionally to help readers identify the original texts and their English translations if available. Any errors are solely the responsibility of the translator.

2. Ryukoku University, ed., *Shinshū yōron* (Kyoto: Hyakkaen, 1953), pp. 143–144.

3. Kiritani Junnin, *Shinran wa nani wo toita ka* (Tokyo: Kyōiku Shinchōsha, 1964), pp. 50–52.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 242.

5. *Tannishō*, in *The Collected Works of Shinran* (hereafter, *CWS*), (Kyōto: Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-ha, 1997), p. 666.

6. Katō Kyōjun, *Wakaki sedai no Tannishō* (Kyoto: Hyakkaen, 1958), pp. 83–89.

7. Honda Kenshō, *Tannishō nyūmon: Kono ranse wo ikinuku tame no chie* (Tokyo: Kōbunsha, 1964), p. 69.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 112. I would like to remind the reader that my citing of the *Tannishō nyūmon* does not mean that I necessarily agree with all of the author's views in the text.

9. The concept of dual benefits appears, for example, in the *Rokuyōshō* by Zonkaku:

Question: As for the benefits of attaining the truly settled stage and of attaining of enlightenment, are they dual benefits or a single benefit? Answer: They are dual benefits. The truly settled stage is the attainment of the stage of non-retrogression [in the present life]. Enlightenment is the attainment of nirvana [in the afterlife]. (*Shinshū shōgyō zensho* [hereafter, *SSZ*], vol. 2, [Kyoto: Oyagi Kōbundō, 1941], p. 321)

In Rennyo's *Letters* (1-4), we also find the following.

Question: Should we understand [the state of] being truly settled and [that of] nirvana as one benefit, or as two? Answer: The

dimension of “the awakening of the one thought-moment” is that of “[joining] the company of those truly settled.” This is the benefit [we gain] in the defiled world. Next, it should be understood that nirvana is the benefit to be gained in the Pure Land. Hence we should think of them as two benefits. (Minor Lee Rogers and Ann T. Rogers, *Rennyō: The Second Founder of Shin Buddhism* [Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1991], p. 152)

10. *Notes on Once Calling and Many Calling*, in *CWS*, p. 475, notes 4 and 7. For the original Japanese text, see *Ichinen tanen mon’i*, in *SSZ*, vol. 2, pp. 605–606.

11. By using the word “primary” (*daiichigi*), I mean that it is “central” (*chūshin*) but not “ultimate” (*kyūkyoku*). Therefore, here “secondary” (*fukujiteki*) means “subordinate” (*jūzokuteki*).

12. *CWS*, p. 4; *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 1.

13. *CWS*, p. 77; *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 47.

14. *CWS*, p. 240; *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 166.

15. *CWS*, p. 291; *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 203.

16. *CWS*, p. 56; *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 35.

17. In a hymn praising Shan-tao (87), however, Shinran says:

Casting off long kalpas of painful existence in this world of Sahā,
We live in expectation of the Pure Land, the uncreated;
This is the power of our teacher, Śākyamuni;
Let us respond always in gratitude for his
compassion and benevolence.

(*Hymns of the Pure Land Masters*, in *CWS*, p. 383; *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 511)

In this hymn, Shinran seems to express hope for the anticipated birth in the Pure Land. However, this hymn is based on passages in Shan-tao’s *Pan-chou-tsan* (*Hanjusan*).

Attainment of deliverance from the
Suffering of many kalpas in the Sahā World
Is especially due to the benevolence of the
Great master Śākyamuni.
(*Hanjusan*, translated by Hisao Inagaki, in *Ryūkoku daigaku ronshū* 434/435 [1999]: pp. 108–109)

How can you expect to reach the Treasure Land now?
It is indeed due to the power of the
Great Master of the Sahā World [Śākyamuni].
(*Ibid.*, p. 98)

Also, we need to pay attention to the hymn, that precedes the above hymn.

Had we not received the power of the universal Vow,
When could we part from this Sahā world?
Reflecting deeply on the Buddha's benevolence,
Let us think on Amida always.

(CWS, p. 383; SSZ, vol. 2, p. 511).

In this hymn, Shinran is emphasizing that "receiving the power of the universal Vow" is the most important factor for birth.

18. CWS, p. 123; SSZ, vol. 2, p. 79.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

21. CWS, p. 125; SSZ, vol. 2, p. 80.

22. CWS, p. 666; SSZ, vol. 2, p. 778.

23. CWS, p. 665–666; SSZ, vol. 2, p. 777.

24. CWS, p. 661; SSZ, vol. 2, p. 773.

25. *Kyōgyōshinshō*, Chapter on Practice, in CWS, p. 54; SSZ, vol. 2, p. 33.

26. *Kyōgyōshinshō*, Chapter on Shinjin, in CWS, p. 115; SSZ, vol. 2, p. 74.

27. *Tannishō*, in CWS, 666; SSZ, vol. 2, p. 778.

28. CWS, p. 153; SSZ, vol. 2, p. 103.

29. CWS, p. 341; SSZ, vol. 2, p. 493.

30. CWS, p. 454; SSZ, vol. 2, p. 624.

31. *Kyōgyōshinshō*, Chapter on Shinjin, in CWS, p. 79; SSZ, vol. 2, p. 48.

32. Also in the *Passages on the Pure Land Way* (*Jōdomon ruiju shō*), Shinran says that "it is impossible to realize pure shinjin, impossible to attain the highest end. This is because we do not depend on Amida's directing of virtue for our going forth and because we are entangled in a net of doubt." (CWS, p. 299; SSZ, vol. 2, p. 445)

33. CWS, p. 496–497; SSZ, vol. 2, p. 563.

34. CWS, p. 662; SSZ, vol. 2, p. 774.

35. CWS, p. 662; SSZ, vol. 2, p. 774.

36. CWS, p. 427–428; SSZ, vol. 2, p. 530.

37. Shinran cites the three vows in the Chapter on Shinjin (18th Vow) and the Chapter on Transformed Buddhas and Lands (19th and 20th Vows) in the *Kyōgyōshinshō* as follows.

If, when I attain Buddhahood, the sentient beings of the ten quarters, with sincere mind entrusting themselves, aspiring to be born in my land, and saying the Name perhaps even ten times, should not be born there, may I not attain the supreme enlighten-

ment. Excluded are those who commit the five grave offences and those who slander the right dharma. (18th Vow, in *CWS*, p. 80; *SSZ*, vol. 2. p.48–49)

If, when I attain buddhahood, the sentient beings of the ten quarters—awakening the mind of enlightenment and performing meritorious acts—should aspire with sincere mind and desire to be born in my land, and yet I should not appear before them at the moment of death surrounded by a host of sages, may I not attain the supreme enlightenment. (19th Vow, in *CWS*, p. 208; *SSZ*, vol. 2. p. 144)

If, when I attain Buddhahood, the sentient beings of the ten quarters, on hearing my Name, should place their thoughts on my land, cultivate the root of all virtues, and direct merits with sincere mind desiring to be born in my land, and yet not ultimately attain it, may I not attain the supreme enlightenment. (20th Vow, in *CWS*, p. 229; *SSZ*, vol. 2. p. 158)

38. For a more detailed discussion of this issue, see Murakami Sokusui, *Shinran kyōgi no kenkyū* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1968), pp. 301–310.

39. *Tannishō*, in *CWS*, 662; *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 774.

40. Murakami, *Shinran kyōgi no kenkyū*, p. 12.

41. Chapter on Shinjin, *Kyōgyōshinshō*, in *CWS*, p. 103–104; *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 65.

42. Hisao Inagaki, trans., *T'an-luan's Commentary on Vasubandhu's Discourse on the Pure Land* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1998), p. 233; *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 324.

43. Shinran provides a note explaining this phrase: “*setsu* [to grasp] means to pursue and grasp the one who seeks to run away” (*CWS*, p. 347).

44. *Lamp for the Latter Ages* (Mattōshō), in *CWS*, p. 523; *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 656.

45. *Kango tōroku*, vol. 6, in the *SSZ*, vol. 4, p. 393.

46. See Ueda Yoshifumi, “Shinran no ōjō shisō,” Parts 1 and 2, *Shinran kyōgaku* 13 (1968): pp. 97–117; 14 (1969): pp. 105–128.

47. *Ichinen tanen mon'i*, in *CWS*, p. 475; *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 605.

48. *Yuishinshō mon'i*, in *CWS*, p. 455; *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 625.

49. *CWS*, p. 674; *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 786.

50. Inagaki, *T'an-luan's Commentary*, p. 251; *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 331.

51. *CWS*, p. 7; *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 2.

52. *CWS*, p. 177; *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 120.

53. In the *Lamp for the Latter Ages*, Shinran comments:

The statement, “they attain nirvana,” means that when the heart of the persons of true and real shinjin attain the fulfilled land at the end of his or her present life, that person becomes one with the light that is the heart of Tathagata, for his reality is immeasurable life and his activity is inseparable from immeasurable light. (CWS, p. 541; SSZ, vol. 2, p. 675)

See also Ōe Junjō, *Kyōgyōshinshō kōjutsu* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1964), p. 274.

54. Inagaki, *T’an-luan’s Commentary*, p. 135; SSZ, vol. 1, p. 285.

55. *Songō shinzō meimon*, in CWS, p. 501; SSZ, vol. 2, p. 583.

56. *Ichinen tanen mon’i*, in CWS, p. 474; SSZ, vol. 2, p. 605.

57. *Kyōgyōshinshō*, Chapter on Shinjin, in CWS, p. 112; SSZ, vol. 2, p. 72.

58. CWS, p. 382; SSZ, vol. 2, p. 510.

59. Modified, CWS, p. 411; SSZ, vol. 2, p. 522.

60. A similar critique can also be applied to Kiritani Junnin’s interpretation in *Gendai ni wasurararete iru mono* (Sapporo: Kyōiku Shinchōsha, 1961), pp. 26–31.

61. See *Rennyō Shōnin goichidai kikigaki*, Chapter 19, in SSZ, vol. 3, p. 537.

62. In addition to the works referred in the notes, this paper has also been generally informed by the following works:

Ueda Yoshifumi, “Kako genzai mirai ga towareru toki,” in *Jōdo Shinshū wo rikai suru tameni*, edited by Dendōin Kenkyūbu (Kyoto: Hongwanji Shuppan Kyōkai, 1972).

Fugen Daien, *Saikin no ōjō shisō wo megurite* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1972).

Kiritani Junnin, “Genjitsu kyūsai no rikai,” in *Ōhara sensei kokikinen: Jōdokyōshisō kenkyū*, edited by Ōhara Sensei Kokikinen Ronbunshū Kankōkai (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1967).

Shigaraki Takamaro, “Shinran shōnin ni okeru genshō shōjōju no igi,” *Ryūkoku daigaku ronshū* 365/366 (1960): pp 150–164.

Sasaki Tetsujō, *Shūgi yōron* (Kyoto: Hyakkaen, 1960).

The Problem of the True and the False in Contemporary Shin Buddhist Studies: True Shin Buddhism and False Shin Buddhism¹

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I. INTRODUCTION

Issues Facing Shin Buddhist Studies Today

TODAY, IN THE EARLY STAGES of this new twenty-first century, the walls of our national borders are gradually starting to fall. As we cross over these national boundaries, we find ourselves entering an age in which people, cultures and religions will all have to engage in a broad range of interchange. It has been my experience that, in the midst of this situation, a growing number of persons from outside of Japan are taking interest in Japanese Buddhism, and particularly in Shin Buddhism. In this new age, Shin Buddhism must be able to open itself up even more widely to the world. In spite of that, however, the doctrinal study of Shin Buddhism today remains mired in a conservative traditionalism. As long as it remains that way, it will never be able to mesh fully with the aspirations of the people of the world. The world is looking toward Shin Buddhism with heart-felt expectations. Yet, as long as it fails to attempt to become modernized and globalized, all of those hopes will certainly end in disappointment. This is what I have been feeling quite keenly, as of late.

I would also like to ask this question of Shin Buddhism: Just what message does it have for contemporary society and how does it intend to respond to the myriad problems of today? Our twenty-first century scientific culture is now exposing a variety of contradictions within human life. Certainly, those aspects that fail to take account of the human intellect are being severely brought into question. In addition, an assortment of new themes have arisen, including bio-ethics and environmental ethics, as well as the problems of peace, human rights and other issues that are common to all humanity. In that sense, the present situation requires the involvement of religion within it. However, how on earth is Japanese Buddhism—and we must include Shin Buddhism here—going to be able to respond to

the truly perplexing problems of this new twenty-first century? If I might offer my frank opinion, it is very uncertain whether it will likely be able to do so. If Shin Buddhism is unable to say anything in regard to the new problems found in today's globalized society, then inevitably it will find itself abandoned not only by persons from outside of Japan, but also eventually by the Japanese people themselves.

Thus, Shin Buddhist Studies of today is directly faced with the problems of a new globalized society, and it is being asked how it will respond to them. More than anything else, I believe that Shin Buddhism of today and the future must cast off its traditional framework, which not only deviates from fundamental Buddhist principles, but also consists of convenient interpretations of them from institutional or sectarian levels. Shin Buddhism must be restored as a truly Buddhist school. As long as it fails to do so, it will be unable to respond to today's societal problems or to issues that are global or international in scope. A variety of recent experiences have convinced me of this.

Posing the Problem of the True and the False in Contemporary Shin Buddhist Studies

Contemporary Shin Buddhist Studies must clearly return to the fundamental purport of Shinran and to the true Buddhist teachings. However, prior to that Shin Buddhism must face the task of addressing the problem of what teachings it considers to be true and false. That is to say, we must be able to construct a clear theory for discerning and distinguishing "true Shin Buddhism" from "false Shin Buddhism." Shinran had earlier made critical classifications vis-à-vis traditional Buddhist teachings and other Japanese religions of his era, distinguishing between "true," "provisional" and "false" teachings. Today, the same kind of clear discernment of "true," "provisional," and "false" teachings must be made, in a way that accords with the actual situation that Shin Buddhism finds itself within. Since time will not permit me to take up this entire issue today, I will not touch upon the discussion of "true" versus "provisional" teachings. Instead, I would like simply to present a few of my thoughts regarding "true" versus "false" Shin Buddhism.

As we consider the problem of the true and the false in Shin Buddhism, what basic standard should we apply in order to distinguish between true Shin Buddhism and false Shin Buddhism? The first consideration should be whether or not Shin Buddhism is clearly grounded in the logic of the East, or, that is, in the logic of Mahayana Buddhism. Secondly, we must consider whether Shin Buddhism is being interpreted through the logic of the Primal Vow, as it is set forth in the *Muryōjyūkyō* (the *Larger Sutra of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life*), the fundamental Pure Land sutra. Third,

we must take up the question of whether or not it correctly comprehends the fundamental purport of Shinran himself. Any criteria or logic that falls outside of these three considerations ought to be excluded. Yet, these three points are not very clear in today's understanding of Shin Buddhism. What is evident instead is the blending of Shin Buddhist thought with sectarian and institutional ideologies. It is here that an array of problems exists.

Thus, a Shin Buddhism that correctly corresponds to the three theoretical points above is what we can call, "true Shin Buddhism." Any form of Shin Buddhism that contravenes those principles must be called, "false Shin Buddhism." It is not possible to avoid the fact that Shin Buddhism of today deviates in large part from those standards. I must firmly assert that, unless Shin Buddhism can return to its original state and take a correct stance with respect to these three principles, then, without question it will soon forfeit its societal and international position, and be reduced to just another Japanese folk religion.

It is from this context that I would like to discuss the contents of a theory of the true and false in Shin Buddhism. Although there are many ideas that I would like to take up along this line, time is limited, and so I will address the problem of the distinction between "true Shin Buddhism" and "false Shin Buddhism" from the perspective of three questions. They are:

1. Is Amida Buddha an Entity or a Symbol?
2. Is Shinjin in Shin Buddhism Non-dualistic or Dualistic?
3. Is Shin Buddhism a Religion of Power or a Religion of Path?

II. IS AMIDA BUDDHA AN ENTITY OR A SYMBOL?

The Formation of the Pure Land Teachings

I will first consider the question of whether Amida exists as a substantial entity, or a symbol. The conclusion that I will draw is that Amida Buddha exists as a symbol and that, as long as it is taken to be a substantial entity, there could be no "true Shin Buddhism."

Let us first take a brief look at the formation of the Pure Land Buddhist teachings. The notion of Amida Buddha can be identified with a stream of Mahayana Buddhist thought that arose around the first century of the Common Era—some five hundred years after the death of Śākyamuni Buddha. On this question there remain many unresolved issues from an academic standpoint, although scholarly research has made numerous recent advances in this area. Speaking only from my own understanding, it appears that after his death Śākyamuni's body was cremated by his

followers, who then divided the bones and ashes into eight parts and passed them on to other Buddhist followers. Stupas were then constructed to house the relics, which became the objects of Buddhist worship. With the passing of time, these stupas multiplied, and groups of Buddhist followers were formed, centering on such stupa worship. Undoubtedly, such groups must have included renunciant monks. In large part, however, the groups were made up of lay devotees, whose role it was to worship and maintain the stupas. Before long people began making pilgrimages to the stupas, and a belief system centered on stupa worship was born.

Gradually, within this current of beliefs and practices, a form of Śākyamuni worship came to be promoted. It was based on the notion that, although Śākyamuni Buddha left this world at the age of eighty, his life and the enlightened content of his life eternally continue to guide beings. As a result of this, the concrete human image of Śākyamuni eventually disappeared, and the idea of his new Buddha-body—Amida Buddha—was born. This then developed into the worship of Amida Buddha.

Amida Buddha is said to be the Buddha of immeasurable light (*Amitābha*) and immeasurable life (*Amitāyus*). The basis for this idea rests in ideas and expressions in praise of Śākyamuni Buddha's virtues found in stories about the Buddha's life. According to them, Śākyamuni might have passed on from this world, but his true life is immeasurable, and his teaching—his light—has unlimited reach. Hence, he continues to guide beings even now. The concepts extolling the eternal nature of Śākyamuni's life (his vertical axis) and the unlimited breadth of his light (his horizontal axis) eventually developed into the idea of a new and independent Buddha-body. We can see, for instance, that Śākyamuni's beginnings as a prince overlaps with the narrative of the *Larger Sutra*, in which the Bodhisattva Dharmākara is said to have originally been a king. Or, as another example, the *Larger Sutra* tells of fifty-three Buddhas that existed prior to Amida, starting with a Tathagata named "Dīpamkara," which is identical to the name of the Buddha said to have been Śākyamuni's teacher in the distant past. In this way, we can see that on many points the Amida narrative must have been based on the life story of Śākyamuni. It is quite evident that the idea of Amida Buddha arose as an extension and sublimation of Śākyamuni worship.

Amida Buddha as Symbol

In that sense, it is possible for us to say that Amida Buddha is a symbolic expression of both Śākyamuni Buddha's life and enlightenment, as clarified by Śākyamuni's teaching.

The word "symbol" contains a number of problems. However, I am now using it simply to refer to the use of analogy and other expressions in

the worldly dimension that use secular concepts to point to an ultimate, world-transcending truth. Ultimate truth or world-transcending existence is a reference to the content of the enlightenment realized by Śākyamuni and to the ultimate reality that he expounded. In Shin Buddhist terminology, it could also be said to refer to Amida Buddha's Primal Vow. This is the basic concept of the word "symbol."

A symbol represents a means or method of pointing to a world-transcending, ultimate truth. Accordingly, since a symbol must always be expressed in an analogical and worldly manner, at some point also it must necessarily be negated. This, then, is the fundamental meaning of the word "symbol." By negating worldly ideas even as it utilizes them, a symbol guides us to ultimacy, which transcends this world. Both "life" and "light" are worldly concepts. However, when both are expressed as "immeasurable," they then point to that which transcends this world. The word "life" basically refers to a life spanning from birth to death. However, when expressed as "immeasurable life," it could be said to transcend all worldly concepts. The phrase "immeasurable light" acts in the same way. Since the existence of "light" would illuminate the darkness, "unlimited light" would mean that no darkness could exist. That, however, would not be possible in this world. Here then is an attempt to talk about a world-transcending ultimacy by negating the worldly concept of "light," even while utilizing it.

In Nāgārjuna's *Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa* (*Commentary on the Mahāprajñāpāramitā Sūtra*)² we find the phrase, "Rely on the meaning, not on the words." Shinran cites this passage in the Chapter on Transformed Buddha-bodies and Lands of his *Kyōgyōshō monrui* (*True Teaching, Practice and Realization*).³ Here Nāgārjuna provides an easily understandable illustration involving the moon and a finger. Since we human beings always look downward when we walk, he says, we do not see the beautiful, brilliant moon in the heavens. Someone then taps us on the shoulder and, with his finger, indicates that we should look up at the beautiful moon in the sky. This is the so-called illustration of the "finger pointing to the moon."

Nāgārjuna explains that the finger represents "words," while the moon represents "meaning." "Meaning" here refers to true meaning, first principle, or true essence. As we have seen above, it corresponds to the life of Śākyamuni and the content of his enlightenment. In this illustration, ultimate truth is represented by the moon. Since we are not able to grasp this first principle directly, we are directed toward it by words and language—by the finger, or, symbol that points us toward the moon.

Nāgārjuna urges us not to mistake the finger for the moon. He tells us not to confound words and meaning, that is, not to mistake the secular words that are used to point to ultimate truth for that truth itself. We are able to see the moon because of the finger. However, we should not look at

the finger and think that it is the moon. This is the meaning of the phrase, "Rely on the meaning, not on the words." Here, the topic of our discussion is the significance of symbols. The Buddha-body called "Amida," that Buddha's Name, and all of the other words in the *Sutra* are all nothing more than "fingers." None of them constitute the "moon" itself. The entire content of the *Sutra* and the teaching of Amida Buddha's Primal Vow are expressed symbolically so that we can know the moon itself.

This idea can be more precisely explained by referring to the late Paul Tillich's understanding of symbols. Born in Germany, Tillich was a well-known Protestant theologian who spent the latter part of his life in America. I would like to offer a summary of my own understanding of his splendid explanation of symbols.⁴

For Tillich, first of all, a symbol is something that points to ultimate truth, which transcends the secular world. Thus, Amida Buddha, Amida's Name, all of the words in the sutras, as well as hell and the Pure Land are all symbolic expressions that point to an ultimate, world-transcending truth. Secondly, however, at the same time that a symbol points toward something, it also exists in a profound relationship with the thing itself. This is an important point, I believe. The finger points to the moon, and because of the finger we are able to look up to the moon for the first time. However, the finger is not simply a finger. It is because the finger is bathed in the light of the moon that, for the first time, the finger can engage in finger-activity, which is to point to the moon. The activity of the finger itself would not be able to exist in complete darkness. It is because the moon gives off light that the finger can exhibit finger-activity for the first time. In this sense, a symbol participates profoundly within ultimacy. It is none other than the self-expression of the ultimate.

Tillich's third point is that we can encounter ultimate truth or world-transcending reality for the first time through symbols. Needless to say, were it not for symbols we would not be able to encounter ultimate truth or Amida Buddha. Fourth, Tillich says that a symbol reveals the deepest levels of our own, individual spirit. A familiar example might be that, if we continuously worship before a Buddha image everyday of our life, eventually our eyes will be opened to the transcendent, ultimate reality behind the image. Yet, at the same time, our spirit (or, spirituality) gradually becomes cultivated through this process. These four points, I believe, reflect the fundamental meaning of symbols in Tillich's thought.

Further, when discussing the transmission of symbols, Tillich states that a symbol must constantly be re-interpreted within every era and society. According to him, a symbol necessarily arises within a certain historical or societal context. The formation of the notion of Amida Buddha is a case in point. We do not know who produced the *Larger Sutra*. Although the *Sutra* indicates that it was expounded by Śākyamuni, he had

in fact died five hundred years prior to its development. However, even though we do not know who expounded the notion of Amida Buddha in the *Larger Sutra*, the *Sutra* had to have arisen within certain necessary historical and societal circumstances. I mentioned earlier that Amida worship probably arose out of circumstances involved in stupa worship. Tillich might say that, because it arose within a particular situation, Amida Buddha as a symbol could become extinct when those conditions greatly change. Thus, the length of a symbol's life could be extended and the symbol thus transmitted, depending on how it is re-interpreted in various era and societies. I am in complete agreement with this idea.

If such a re-interpretation is not skillfully done, however, the symbol would not be transmitted, and it would fall into decline. It would be reduced to a mere shell of itself, stripped of content or purpose. It would become nothing more than a magical incantation, and would lose its life for all eternity. Is this not, in large measure, the current state of Japanese Buddhism today? Today, Buddhist images and paintings have become exhibition pieces, lined up for display at museums. Previously, life continuously flowed within those images, as they served to nurture the spirits of a great many persons. Today, however, they have been completely reduced to simple skeletons and show pieces. Not only that, the names of Buddhas or Buddhist scriptures originally pointed beings to ultimate truth. Yet now, more than just a few of them have, in various forms, become nothing more than magical incantations. In Shin Buddhism as well, a re-interpretation and re-transmission of its symbols must be courageously attempted and accomplished in the midst of the actual conditions of today's society.

This kind of re-interpretation of symbols can be clearly seen in Shinran's thought. In the twelfth month of his eighty-sixth year, Shinran gave a sermon to Kenchi, a disciple who had gone to visit him at his temporary residence on Sanjō street in Kyoto. The topic of Shinran's Dharma message was *jinen hōni*, in regard to which he explained,

Amida Buddha fulfills the purpose of making us know the significance of *jinen*.⁵

Here the word "significance" (*yō* in Japanese) indicates a state of affairs, aspect, situation, circumstances, and indication, as well as form and the inner reality of that form. The phrase "fulfills the purpose" (*ryō* in Japanese) refers to a factor or element, or, a method or means used for the purpose of accomplishing something. In the context of our present discussion, this refers to symbol. Thus, according to Shinran, Amida Buddha is the symbol that fulfills the purport of making us know the truth of *jinen*. In other terms, *jinen* refers to ultimate truth, which flows throughout heaven, earth, and the universe. This truth pervades all of human history. It is the

universal principle that penetratingly includes both human beings and the entire universe. Śākyamuni awakened to, realized, and then taught this truth. Amida Buddha is the symbol—the finger—that enables us to know the significance of this truth. Some two thousand years ago, Nāgārjuna correctly expounded a Buddhist semiotic theory, and Shinran, nearly eight hundred years ago, further clarified this notion of symbols.

In this way, Amida Buddha and the Name are nothing more than symbolic expressions; they are fingers pointing to the moon of ultimate, universal truth and reality. What is important for us is to experience and awaken to this ultimate truth, which lies on the far side of the moon. Yet, there is great question as to whether this is fully understood by traditional, institutional doctrinal studies.

Erroneous Interpretations in Traditional Doctrinal Studies

Today's traditional doctrinal studies give absolutely no consideration to this understanding of Amida Buddha as symbol, that is, as a finger pointing to the moon. As a result, proponents of traditional Shin Buddhist doctrinal studies have a tendency in large measure to apprehend the Name of Amida Buddha as a substantial entity. One example of this can be found in the concept that "the Name and its substance are not separate" (*myōtai funi*). This notion was originally discussed in a text entitled, *Anjin ketsujōshō* (*On Attaining the Settled Mind*),⁶ a work of unknown authorship. According to current research in the area, the text is thought to have likely been associated with the Seizan branch of Jōdoshū. Kakunyo apparently long possessed his own copy of the text, and Rennyo is said to have compared the importance of the text to the unearthing of gold. As a result, the text has been accorded particular importance within the Hongwanji branch of Shin Buddhism as well. In the doctrine that "the Name and its substance are not separate," the Name refers to a designation or appellation attached to a thing. Substance means the thing itself, or its actual state. Thus, the notion is that the appellation attached to a thing and the substance of the thing itself are not separate; rather, they constitute a single entity.

I have a recollection that relates to this. Long ago, when I was still a student, a certain professor made the statement in a lecture on Shin Buddhist Studies that the Name of Amida Buddha is such that the "Name and its substance are not separate." To explain what this meant he wrote in a large size the kanji character for "fire" on the blackboard. Touching it with his hand, he said, "Gentlemen. Although I place my hand on this character it is not hot." I remember wondering what he was talking about. Next, he placed a piece of white chalk in his mouth and made the gesture of lighting a cigarette. "No matter how many times I do this, it will not light." Finally, he stated, "When we speak of names in this world, they are all simply

appellations and have no substance. Thus, the character for 'fire' is not hot; you cannot light a cigarette with it. However, the Name of Amida is not like that. The Name, as it is, is perfectly endowed with substance. Thus, the 'Name and its substance are not separate.'" Even now I can clearly remember that professor's gestures. Yet, my thoughts then (and now) were that this kind of thinking turns Shin Buddhism into nothing more than a kind of belief in magical incantations. Yet, isn't this kind of idea still being preached in Shin Buddhist sermons even now? If that is so, then shinjin in Shin Buddhism has become nothing more than a belief in magic.

It is also imprudent to try to understand, preach about, or propagate Shin Buddhism using ideas or terminology not seen anywhere in Shinran's works, but instead that are based on a classic book of unknown authorship and produced by another Buddhist school. That could not be considered Shin Buddhism. Moreover, the implication of the theory that the "Name and its substance are not separate" is that Amida Buddha exists as some kind of substantial entity. Hence, Amida's significance as a symbol becomes lost.

Doctrinal studies of the Hongwanji branch have produced yet another concept that takes Amida Buddha to be a substantial entity. It is the theory that the "Name is stamped (in the minds of beings) and arises as shinjin" (*myōgō ingen*). This theory appeared during the *Sangō wakuran* conflict that occurred near the latter stages of the modern era. In the midst of the conflict, Daiei of the Aki province wrote a text entitled, *Ōchō jikidō kongō bei*,⁷ in which he criticized the theory of "taking refuge in the three karmic modes of action" for promoting a shinjin of self-power. Daiei asserted that shinjin, as set forth in Shin Buddhism, arises when the Name is "stamped" into the minds of sentient beings. According to this idea, the Buddha inscribes on his hand the Name, "*Namu Amida Butsu*" in reverse-image characters so as to be able to confer it on sentient beings. When the Buddha stamps it onto the "white paper" of sentient beings' minds, shinjin arises in them. Thus, shinjin is said to appear when the Name is stamped onto their hearts and minds. According to this theory, shinjin in Shin Buddhism comes about when one receives the substantial entity of the Name, in which the "Name and its substance are not separate." This idea that the "Name is stamped in the mind of beings and arises as shinjin" is still being discussed in books written by Shin Buddhist scholars and sold commercially today. It is frequently mentioned in the sermons of Shin Buddhist preachers. This is an inexcusable misinterpretation of the Shin Buddhist understanding that shinjin is to become free of self-power and entrust in Other Power. What can be done to counter these erroneous views? We must resolutely return to the starting point of Shinran's teaching, and seek to learn the true Shin Buddhist teaching.

III. IS SHINJIN IN SHIN BUDDHISM NON-DUALISTIC OR DUALISTIC?

The Original Meaning of Shinjin in Shin Buddhism

Next, I would like to examine the question of whether shinjin in Shin Buddhism is non-dualistic or dualistic. My conclusion will be that shinjin in Shin Buddhism should be understood from the standpoint of the non-dualism of Mahayana Buddhism.

The original meaning of shinjin in Shin Buddhism emerges from the words pertaining to shinjin in both the passage of the Primal Vow and the passage on the fulfillment of the Primal Vow. The Vow passage presents it as “entrust with joy” (*shingyō*), while the fulfillment passage explains it as “shinjin and joy” (*shinjin kangi*). We can inquire into the original meaning of these phrases by referring to the Sanskrit version of the *Larger Sutra*. There, we find that the original meaning of shinjin is *citta-prasāda*. *Citta* indicates one’s heart and mind, while *prasāda* means that joy arises in the mind when it becomes pure and clear. When the mind becomes clear, things can be seen within it. This state of mind has connections with the sphere of *samādhi*, in which our deluded passions are transformed. It refers to the supramundane realm, which transcends this world.

Shinran certainly could not have known of these original Sanskrit terms. However, I believe that he fully understood their essential meaning. In the Chapter on Shinjin in his text, *Kyōgyōshō monrui*, Shinran explains that “entrusting in joy” means that one’s mind is “completely untainted by the hindrance of doubt.”⁸ Here, the “hindrance of doubt” is a reference to ignorance and deluded passions. Thus, since shinjin is not tainted or mixed with the “hindrance of doubt” it indicates a realm in which one has become freed of ignorance and where one’s deluded passions have been transformed. The concept of the “hindrance of doubt” can be seen throughout Buddhist literature. For instance, one can find it explained in detail in introductory texts to Tendai thought. Since in his early years Shinran studied Tendai doctrine, I believe that he must have frequently come upon the term “hindrance of doubt” and fully understood its doctrinal intent. With this as his background, he later explained that “entrusting in joy” or shinjin is “completely untainted by the hindrance of doubt.” In a variety of senses, shinjin can be taken to mean that one has become free of ignorance and that deluded passions have been transformed. For instance, with this passage in his *Shōshin nembutsuge* (*Hymn of True Shinjin and the Nembutsu*), “The darkness of our ignorance is already broken through,”⁹ Shinran offers us a clear description of the realm of shinjin.

In explaining shinjin, Shinran uses phrases such as “the wisdom of shinjin”¹⁰ and “shinjin that is unsurpassed wisdom.”¹¹ In a similar way, he states,

[K]now that since Amida's Vow is wisdom, the emergence of the mind of entrusting oneself to it is the arising of wisdom.¹²

In this sense, the arising of shinjin is the arising of wisdom. By learning the Buddha-dharma, our ignorance and deluded passions are gradually transformed, and a new eye is opened. We come to see things anew. In other words, shinjin is the "experience of awakening," which transcends the secular world. Hence, shinjin does not mean to believe in something in a dualistic or objectifying manner. The meaning of shinjin is always that of a non-dualistic, or, subjective state of mind.

Originally, when shinjin was spoken of in simple terms, it was unavoidably described in relation to an object, such as "having faith in Amida Buddha" or "entrusting in the Primal Vow." As a result, Shinran's Japanese-language works almost always express shinjin as being addressed toward some object. However, the Chapter on Shinjin elucidates shinjin of Shin Buddhism in terms of Mahayana logic. There, it should be noted, shinjin is clearly discussed in a manner that is non-dualistic, or, subjective in nature.

To say that shinjin is the experience of awakening means, in a more concrete sense, that we awaken to the compassion of the Tathagata. Not only that, we also awaken to the depths and weight of our own karmic evil, which is illumined by that compassion. "Awakening" means that our eyes are opened in the direction of the light. Yet, at the same time, our eyes are also opened to the darkness in which we had been wandering up to this moment. The "experience of awakening" possesses this kind of two-fold directionality. This is also the structure of shinjin.

Shinjin as the Experience of Awakening

Let us discuss the structure of shinjin, and its inner reality, in a slightly more concrete way. The Eighteenth Vow of Amida Buddha (the Primal Vow) ends with this oath, "(If they) should not be born there, may I not attain the supreme enlightenment."¹³

Concretely, this means that our attainment of birth and Amida Buddha's attainment of supreme enlightenment come about simultaneously. This notion has been long described with the phrase, "birth and supreme enlightenment are of one essence" (*ōjō shōgaku ittai*). According to the words of the Vow, the Buddha states, "I will enable you to be born without fail. If you should fail to be born, I will never attain Buddhahood." Hence, the import of the Primal Vow is that as long as we are not saved, the Buddha Amida will not exist. This the problem implied by the idea that "birth and perfect enlightenment are of one essence." This problem developed into a major theme in Shin Buddhist doctrinal studies from the Tokugawa period on.

How is this problem interpreted in traditional doctrinal studies? A number of other issues are also involved here, but basically most of the approaches have made a dualistic distinction between “our” attainment of birth and the Buddha’s attainment of supreme enlightenment. Even today, many persons hold to this understanding. For instance, later in the *Sutra*, it states, “Since he attained Buddhahood, about ten kalpas have passed.”¹⁴ According to this, Amida had already become a Buddha ten kalpas ago in the distant past. Traditionally, this has been interpreted to mean that Amida has already become a Buddha, at a time prior to our attainment of birth. In his *Jōdo wasan (Hymns on the Pure Land)*, however, Shinran comments on this *Sutra* passage with this phrase,

But he seems a Buddha more ancient than kalpas countless as particles.¹⁵

In other words, for Shinran, the existence of Amida Buddha—the Buddha of Immeasurable Life—originally began in the beginningless past. This would imply that Amida Buddha is eternally coming toward the secular world and manifesting itself in that world. As a consequence, Amida Buddha has no existence outside of our own subjectivity, or, our own *shinjin*.

However, in traditional doctrinal studies this problem has been separated dualistically into questions of logic and fact. Amida Buddha’s prior attainment of supreme enlightenment ten kalpas ago in the distant past is said to establish the logic of the possibility of birth. On the other hand, our remaining in the world of delusion without actually attaining birth is an issue of fact. Hence, the difference between logic and fact is likened to the difference between the existence of medicine and our taking of it. Amida Buddha’s attainment of supreme enlightenment means that the logic through which sentient beings can attain birth has been fulfilled. The medicine that will enable us to attain birth has been created. If we should take this medicine our illness would be cured without fail. That is, we would be able to attain birth.

Thus, according to traditional Shin Buddhist doctrinal studies, the medicine of our path to birth has been created with Amida’s attainment of supreme enlightenment. Thus, in effect, his work is over. What is said to remain is an issue of fact: Will we take the medicine or not? Will we walk the path or not? What remains is the problem of this self. Our task is to answer the question of whether to take this medicine that has been given to us already—that is, whether to progress along this path to birth. Thus, it is said, the supremely enlightened Amida Buddha calls to us from the Pure Land, “Come here! Come here!” What then is essential is that, in response to that voice, we immediately accept without doubt the medicine of the perfected, six-character Name.

However, is this really the purport of the Primal Vow? The passage of the Primal Vow reveals, in contrast, the truth that “birth and supreme enlightenment are of one essence.” That is, there is no Buddha apart from me; there is no me apart from the Buddha. This self and Amida Buddha, as well as our attainment of birth and Amida’s attainment of supreme enlightenment are identical—of one essence. This theory of simultaneous arising is a fundamental principle of Mahayana Buddhism. Accordingly, it is also the truth of Amida Buddha’s Primal Vow. Yet, in traditional doctrinal studies the idea of “one essence” is separated out in a completely dualistic and objectifying manner. This is how Amida Buddha is grasped in the traditional doctrinal studies of the Hongwanji branch of Shin Buddhism.

On the other hand, the doctrinal studies of the Hongwanji branch also discuss the notion of “innumerable attainments of enlightenment” (*saku saku jōbutsu*). In this case, the one essence of birth and supreme enlightenment is apprehended subjectively. The idea is that an individual Dharmākara Bodhisattva becomes manifest for each individual sentient being. That is to say, an individual Dharmākara Bodhisattva attains enlightenment in correspondence with an individual person’s attainment of birth. Thus, innumerable Dharmākaras are unendingly attaining Buddhahood. This is the meaning of “innumerable attainments of enlightenment.” We can fully appreciate the fact that this interpretation seeks to grasp the problem in a subjective way. However, we must also recognize that this interpretation is an abstract one, which is removed from each individual’s subjective experience of shinjin.

In sum, the issue essentially comes down to this: Unless I attain birth, Amida Buddha will not exist for me. Shin Buddhism teaches that Amida Buddha exists definitively for the first time—in the present moment and for this self—only in identity with the experience of awakening, which is the arising of shinjin. To say otherwise—to believe that Amida Buddha already exists somewhere, to ponder over it and engage in a dualistic search for an objectified Amida, and finally to accept that the Buddha must exist somewhere—this is not shinjin as taught in Shin Buddhism. It is not that, since Amida Buddha exists somewhere, we must believe in Amida. Rather, it is that, within our experience of shinjin, Amida Buddha reveals itself and becomes certain to us.

Guided by Shinran’s teachings and single-heartedly saying the nembutsu—within this life of nembutsu and in the continuation and deepening of the Buddhist path that it entails—we will eventually come to realize shinjin as the experience of awakening. In shinjin, for the first time Amida Buddha comes to exist indisputably for us. It is in the experience of shinjin that we can definitively know the existence of both hell and the Pure Land.

Erroneous Interpretations in Traditional Doctrinal Studies

However, this sense that shinjin is a non-dualistic and subjective “experience of awakening” is completely missing in the interpretations of shinjin found in traditional Shin Buddhist doctrinal studies. In its place, we find interpretations that are both dualistic and objectifying in nature. Such erroneous interpretations clearly began with Kakunyo’s approach to Shin Buddhism. In his youth Kakunyo had studied with the Seizan branch of the Jōdoshū. As a result, his understanding of Shin Buddhism deeply reflected the hues of the dualistic Seizan doctrines. This included his understanding of shinjin.

Kakunyo asserted that the meaning of shinjin was to “take refuge and submit to” or “take refuge and rely upon” the Buddha. That is, for him it meant that one must wholeheartedly take refuge in Amida Buddha. Furthermore, he stated that it was necessary to have as a mediator a “good teacher” who was a member of Shinran’s blood lineage. This good teacher, he maintained, would function essentially as a “living Buddha” or as the “official representative of the Tathagata.” By taking refuge in the good teacher in this way, one would be able to “take refuge in and submit to” or “take refuge in and rely upon” Amida Buddha.

Kakunyo’s eldest son, Zonkaku, also offered various explanations of Shin Buddhist doctrine in his voluminous writings. Like his father, he had also been influenced by the teachings of the Seizan branch of Jōdoshū. Thus, he identified shinjin with a person’s “taking of refuge” in the Buddha. In his text, *Rokuyōshō* (*Notes on the Essence of the Six-fascicle Work*)¹⁶, Zonkaku’s explication of the significance of shinjin appears to be based on general Buddhist literature, such as commentaries on the *Abhidharma-kośa* and the *Ch’êng-wei-shih-lun*. In fact, however, Zonkaku is simply attempting to draw meaning from mere fragments of the literature, often applying his own, forced readings upon them. This technique leads him to assert that the meaning of shinjin is really to enjoy hearing the Buddha-dharma (*aigyō*).

In this way, not long after Shinran’s death shinjin came to be interpreted in a completely dualistic or objective sense, as the “mind that takes refuge and submits to” or the mind is able to “take refuge” in the Buddha. From this point on, distortions in the understanding of shinjin in Shin Buddhism began to take place. By Rennyo’s time this sort of dualistic understanding of shinjin had come to be thoroughly accepted. This could be seen in the expression, “I entrust in the Buddha to save me” (*tasuketamae to tanomu*). From an early age, Rennyo took the position that the Japanese word “tanomu” (entrust or rely) was an appropriate translation for the word, “shinjin,” and in his later years he used the word extensively. For instance, he states in a *Letter*,

[W]hen we have the thought of clinging firmly to Amida Buddha's sleeve without calculation and entrusting ourselves to the Buddha to save us in the life-to-come, the Amida Tathagata will deeply rejoice.¹⁷

Clearly, *shinjin* is understood here to be a state of mind that is in a dualistic or objectifying relationship with Amida. We are able to see that this was in reality something completely foreign to the original sense of *shinjin*—that of *citta-prasāda*—as well as *shinjin* in the sense of Shinran's expression that, "the emergence of the mind of entrusting oneself to it is the arising of wisdom."¹⁸

Next, let us take a look historically at the interpretations of *shinjin* made within the doctrinal studies in the Hongwanji branch since the Tokugawa period. On the whole, they can be separated into two schools of thought: the Kūge school and the Sekisen school. According to Zenjō, a representative scholar of the Kūge school, *shinjin* is to "rely upon and put one's trust in the Name." This was typical of the dualistic interpretations of *shinjin*. In contrast, Sōe, a Sekisen scholar, stated that *shinjin* means that "the mind becomes pure and clear. That is the nature of *shinjin*." This view represented an excellent understanding of Shinran's purport—the original meaning of *shinjin* in Shin Buddhism. Yet, the Hongwanji branch labeled Sōe's doctrine as heterodoxy, and completely rejected it. The dualistic Kūge school became mainstream of Hongwanji thought, and remains so even today.

In sum, the prevailing understanding of *shinjin* that is found in the Hongwanji branch of Shin Buddhism was inherited from Kakunyo and Rennyo. According to this view, the sole practice in Shin Buddhism is the Name. *Shinjin* means that one takes refuge in, abides by and receives the Name of Dharmic-substance. In the Ōtani branch of Shin Buddhism, by contrast, the understanding of *shinjin* was inherited from Zonkaku. In this view, the practice of Shin Buddhism is to say the nembutsu. *Shinjin* refers to one's active reliance on the practice of the nembutsu.

Despite their apparent differences, the doctrinal interpretations in both branches essentially amount to nothing more than dualistic or objectifying understandings of *shinjin*. Needless to say, then, our task today is to correctly study the significance of *shinjin* as expressed in the passage of the Primal Vow in the *Large Sutra*, as well as the significance of *shinjin* in Shinran's thought.

IV. IS SHIN BUDDHISM A RELIGION OF POWER OR A RELIGION OF PATH?

The Fundamental Standpoint of Buddhism

Next, I would like to address the issue of whether Shin Buddhism is a religion of power, or a religion of path. My conclusion is that Shin Bud-

dhism corresponds to the latter. It constitutes a religion of path and is not concerned with power.

The fundamental principle of Śākyamuni Buddha's teaching can be seen in the contents of his first sermon—the "first turning of the Dharma Wheel"—after his attainment of enlightenment. It was there that he expounded the teaching of the Middle Path. After his birth as a prince, Śākyamuni had spent long years in pursuit of pleasure within his castle walls. However, he came to have doubts about this way of life, and so he left his kingdom and assumed the life of a renunciant. For the next six years he utterly abused himself physically, as he undertook austere practices in the hope of achieving spiritual independence. However, he later engaged in a critical reconsideration of the two extreme paths of pleasure and hardship. As a result, he changed his mind and sat beneath a bodhi tree, there deeply pondering the fundamental truths of the universe and human existence. He became aware that both a life in pursuit of pleasure and a life of complete austerity were erroneous. Not only was it wrong to live a life solely directed by instinct or desires, but it was also wrong to live by abusing oneself physically in order to negate one's desires. He then awakened to the truth that the genuine path for human life was the "Middle Path"—a path of neither pleasure nor pain. This Middle Path did not simply lie between pleasure and pain. Instead, the paths of both pleasure and pain were to be rejected. With the rejection of both pleasure and pain, one would come to live one's life based on the negation of both. Śākyamuni taught that it was here that a true and real human life could come about.

In later years, this teaching of the Middle Path underwent numerous changes and developments, becoming, as it were, the tenet a number of Buddhist schools. In this sense, the way of life that Shinran exemplified—that of being "neither a monk nor one in worldly life,"¹⁹ or, as I wish to phrase it, "neither true nor worldly"—developed out of Śākyamuni's teaching of the Middle Path. What this means is that the life of a nembutsu follower is one of "pain" and "aspiration." To live within shinjin in Shin Buddhism means that our life is neither "true" nor "worldly." As we reflect on the present condition of our life—lived in disregard of the Buddha-dharma—we cannot help but feel a sense of "pain." Yet, at the same time, as we reflect on the present condition of our life—submerged and buried in the secular world—we constantly "aspire" to be able to draw nearer to the Buddha-dharma. This way of life, which Shinran described as "neither priest nor one in worldly life," is based on the Middle Path, which Śākyamuni expounded in the first turning of the Dharma Wheel.

In that first sermon Śākyamuni Buddha then went on to give a concrete explication of the Middle Path through his teaching of the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Noble Path. This represents, fundamentally, both a challenge to us and an instruction on how we could live a genuine

human life. How could we, in our present state of being, come to realize our ideal self—the self that we ought to be? Śākyamuni Buddha revealed to us the way—the path that would lead to our attainment of enlightenment.

By inheriting this teaching as well, Shin Buddhism sets out a path upon which we can attain Buddhahood. This was Shinran's purport when he stated that,

Attaining Buddhahood through the nembutsu is the true essence of the Pure Land Way.²⁰

[O]ne who entrusts oneself to the Primal Vow and says the nembutsu attains Buddhahood.²¹

It is in this sense that we can say that Shin Buddhism is a religion of path. The path of human fulfillment, or, human maturation, in which one singleheartedly says the nembutsu, and with that nembutsu gradually casts off the skin of one's old self and realizes true growth as a human being—this is the path of Shin Buddhism. On this path, this “not-so-human” self becomes, little-by-little, a bit more human through the nembutsu. Directing our sight to the Buddha and the far-off Pure Land, we come to realize true human growth. This is the path of Shin Buddhism, the true essence of the Pure Land Way.

Shin Buddhism is the Teaching of “Attaining Buddhahood Through the Nembutsu”

The Shin Buddhist path for the attainment of enlightenment is the path of the nembutsu. On this path, one says the nembutsu and realizes shinjin. In today's Shin Buddhist doctrinal studies, however, this sense of the nembutsu has often been omitted. I was once shocked to hear of the distress felt by a Shin Buddhist follower, who had been rebuked by a priest in this way, “When you recite the nembutsu, that is not the practice of the nembutsu!” This is a shocking statement, since the Shin Buddhism teaches us first and foremost to say the nembutsu. A Shin Buddhist path that neglects the nembutsu would be absolutely meaningless. It is through the recitation of the nembutsu that the nembutsu opens up as shinjin. In other words, by saying the nembutsu one realizes shinjin. The nembutsu is the process and shinjin is the goal. However, at the same time, there can be no shinjin aside from the nembutsu. This is the notion of the “oneness of practice and shinjin” (*gyōshin ichinyō*), to which Shinran was referring when he said,

True and real shinjin is unfailingly accompanied by [saying] the Name. [Saying] the Name, however, is not necessarily accompanied by shinjin that is the power of the Vow.²²

[T]here is no nembutsu separate from shinjin. . . . There is no shinjin separate from nembutsu²³

Dōgen said essentially the same thing in this regard. In Dōgen's thought one realizes enlightenment through the practice of sitting meditation. Yet, although practice is the process and enlightenment is the goal, at the same time he comprehended that, "practice and enlightenment are identical" (*shūshō ittō*). We can see that the structure of the path to enlightenment is the same for both the nembutsu and zazen.

Since shinjin is realized in the true practice of the nembutsu, Shinran also states,

To entrust oneself to the nembutsu is to already have become a person who realizes wisdom and will attain Buddhahood.²⁴

Note that Shinran does not say, "one becomes a Buddha." Instead, he uses the phrase, "becomes one who will attain Buddhahood." Both Dōgen and Nichiren asserted, in contrast, that one becomes a Buddha in this body and in this world. Although Dōgen died at the age of fifty-two, he is said to have already become a Buddha. On the other hand, Shinran lived until he was ninety, but he was unable to attain Buddhahood in this life. Here we can make an inference as to the severity of Shinran's own critical self-scrutiny. He could become a person who "will become a Buddha," but he never spoke of becoming a Buddha. We can also sense the thoroughness of Shinran's thought. However, be that as it may, he also taught us that we can realize true human growth through the nembutsu. When this foolish, inferior human being says the nembutsu, we grow, little-by-little, to be a somewhat better human being. This is the meaning of shinjin.

However, this is not what the traditional doctrinal studies say. Rather, what we are told is that, upon the attainment of shinjin, all that happens is that our birth in the life-to-come becomes clear. Hence, our human nature does not change at all. Or, we are told that we attain enlightenment only upon birth in the Pure Land after death. But that is not the Shin Buddhism that Shinran taught. What he made clear was that, as we say the nembutsu, we come to be nurtured positively by that nembutsu, even in our current state. Little-by-little, we individual human beings each cast off the skin of our old self and realize true human growth. Shinran addresses this in his text, *Gutokushō* (*Gutoku's Notes*), where he gives the following explanation of shinjin, based on the passage on the fulfillment of the Eighteenth Vow of the *Larger Sutra*,

Concerning the entrusting of oneself to the Primal Vow, [to borrow the words of Shan-tao,] “in the preceding moment, life ends”

This means that “one immediately enters the groups of the truly settled” [T’an-luan].

Concerning immediately attaining birth, [to borrow the words of Shan-tao,] “in the next moment, you are immediately born.”

This means that “one immediately enters the stage of the definitely settled” [Nāgārjuna].

Further: “one is termed a definitely-settled bodhisattva.”²⁵

The two main passages here are from Shan-tao. In those passages, the phrases, “preceding moment” and “next moment” refer to preceding and succeeding moments of time. In other words, the passage indicates that, upon the realization of true shinjin (“entrusting in the Primal Vow”), our life of delusion in the *sahā* world came to an end in the preceding moment of time. In the succeeding moment of time, we “immediately” attain birth. What this means is that, we receive the life of the Buddha and, from that moment on, a new life in the Pure Land begins. This continues without limit through the nembutsu.

This process of casting off our old self and realizing true growth as a human being is continuously repeated and deepened. In this continuous repetition and deepening of shinjin, a human being is able to achieve ever more self-renewal and growth. Shinran described the person of shinjin as a “definitely-settled bodhisattva” and a person who is “the equal of all the Tathagatas.”²⁶ In this sense, it could be said that Shin Buddhism is a religion of path—a path that aims for true human fulfillment.

Erroneous Interpretations in Traditional Doctrinal Studies

However, this is not what is discussed in the traditional Shin Buddhist doctrinal studies. Rather, what is presented there is a religion of power. Shintō, the Japanese way of the kami, for instance, is a religion of power since it merely entails prayers to the kami, with no discussion of its teaching. After the death of Shinran, Shin Buddhism quickly joined leagues with Shintō. We have already seen that trend in Kakunyo’s thought, and his son, Zonkaku, united Shin Buddhism even more closely with Shintō. Despite the fact that Shinran had been severely critical of that very union, soon after he died Shin Buddhism embarked on a path that lowered it to the level of Shintō, a Japanese folk religion. This can be clearly seen in Zonkaku’s texts, such as the *Shojin hongai shū*.²⁷ According to Zonkaku, the Japanese kami could be divided into spirits of a variety of actual beings and

provisionally manifested deities. The former included animals such as the kitsune fox or snakes, which the Japanese people had worshipped as kami since ancient times. The latter referred to auspicious deities, including certain eminent persons who were worshipped as kami.

In his early writings, Zonkaku rejected the worship of the former type of kami, but claimed that the latter were in fact manifested forms of Amida Buddha. Later, however, he took the position that all kami, including foxes, snakes, or other actual beings were manifestations of Amida Buddha, and he thus urged people to value them all. This trend of thought was even stronger in Rennyo, who claimed that the meritorious power of all of the kami was completely embodied in the Name of Amida Buddha.

Recent scholarship suggests that Rennyo apparently made an inscription of the name of a heavenly deity—“*Namu Tenman Daijizaiten*” (“I take refuge in the God Maheśvara of the Tenman Shrine.” At that time, belief in the Tenman Shrine was apparently flourishing. According to one record, Rennyo’s children reverently held up his inscription of the name of the heavenly deity. In addition, a scroll inscribed, “*Namu Haishi Myōshin*” (“I take refuge in the illustrious spirit of our esteemed teacher”) in Rennyo’s hand was discovered. With these examples, we can clearly see how belief in the Japanese deities of heaven and earth became assimilated and overlapped with shinjin in Shin Buddhism.

This trend of thought eventually gave rise in modern doctrinal studies to a view often referred to as “conformity among the three teachings” (*sangyō itchiron*). Toward the end of the so-called modern age, pressure was being applied to Japan by foreign nations in particular to open its doors. In reaction to that, ultra-nationalism was slowly on the rise in Japan. Accusing Buddhism of being a foreign religion, Japanese classical scholars and Shintōists criticized Buddhism, using the theory that Buddhism was no benefit to the nation. By the end of the Tokugawa era, many tracts critical of Buddhism appeared. They claimed that Buddhist priests did nothing but drink sake and play go; that the Buddhist teaching said nothing about this world, but only talked about life after death; and thus that the Buddhist religion was meaningless. This kind of thorough-going criticism and denunciation of Buddhism eventually led to the anti-Buddhist movement in the Meiji era.

How did the Buddhist schools, and especially Shin Buddhism, respond to the rejection of Buddhism in Japan? For the most part, Shin Buddhism sought to reach a compromise with those critical of it, hoping thereby that the criticism would end. Few persons undertook a severe self-criticism of the actual state of Shin Buddhism. Rare also were movements seeking an accurate return to the fundamental standpoint of Buddhism. Instead, Shin Buddhism sought to reach a compromise with heterogeneous religious traditions by advocating the theory that Buddhism, Shintō, and Confucianism essentially taught the same thing. This logic of “conformity

among the three teachings" was representative of the direction that Shin Buddhism was taking in the modern age. Hence, when the modern imperial system, with its background in Shintō, arose in the twentieth century, Shin Buddhism found itself in a state whereby it had simply to cooperate with and submit to it. This would later lead, of course, to the formation of Shin Buddhist "wartime doctrines" during the Second World War.

As I have already mentioned, Shintō—the Japanese way of the kami—is a religion of power. All of the kami are said to have specialized functions, bearing the responsibility for carrying out various kinds of work. Numerous kinds of kami are said to exist, such as deities for entrance examinations, deities for personal relationships, deities for getting money, and deities for traffic safety. When a person prays to the kami, it is believed, one is bestowed with the power of that deity, and receives a benefit as the result. Hence, whenever Shin Buddhism is made to coincide with Shintō and Amida Buddha is connected with the kami, then inevitably Shin Buddhism also becomes a religion of power. It certainly appears that Shin Buddhism of today has both the character and tendencies of a religion of power.

In light of this, how we should understand the idea of *tariki*, which appears in the Shin Buddhist teachings and can be literally translated as "Other Power?" There may be some who will take the position that Shin Buddhism must be a religion of power, since it involves the notion of "Other Power." Instead of that, however, I would submit that we must first examine the notion of "Other Power" very carefully. In other words, if Amida Buddha is understood to be some kind of substantial entity that is to be grasped in a dualistic or objective manner, then Amida Buddha would undoubtedly be thought of in terms of power. It would then be almost natural to equate Amida with some kind of *omamori* paper charm. Some Shin Buddhist followers have been known to want to buy *omamori* during their visit to the Hongwanji. This is not to say that such followers are bad Buddhists. Rather, the problem lies with the doctrines and sermons that encourage followers to think in that way. That is the problem with equating the notion of "Other Power" with a simple, conventional notion of power. The problem with translating *tariki* as "Other Power" is that it implies that *tariki* stands in contradistinction to "self-power." Interpretations taking place at this level lead to a variety of misunderstandings.

Although it is believed that the term *tariki* is a Chinese translation of an earlier term, that original word is now unknown. Scholars have engaged in various investigations of this problem, but they have still reached no definite conclusions. It can be inferred, however, that the origin of *tariki* was the term *paratantra*. Nakamura Hajime's *Bukkyōgo daijiten*²⁸ notes that this is the origin of *tariki*. However, other theories consider that to be

in error. Thus, we are unable to make any sweeping statement about the origin of *tariki*. Nevertheless, I believe that the term *tariki* arose around the periphery of the term *paratantra*, and in the extension of that concept. *Paratantra* has been translated as *engi* (dependent origination) or *eta* (dependent-on-other). Dependent origination reveals that all existences arise or come about through causes and conditions. For instance, all of you and I have been able to form a relationship here today because you have come here in the midst of your busy schedules. I have been healthy enough to be able to come here. Our mutual existence, at this instant, has indeed come about through these and other conditions. Because I am here, you are here. Because you are here, I am here. Certainly, our mutual existence at this instant takes place within a relationship of reciprocity and mutual interdependence. This is the meaning of dependent origination.

However, from the standpoint of Buddhism, it is a mistake to say, "You are here because I am here." This is not a Buddhist way of thinking. Rather, to say, "I am here," means that I am able to exist here because of all of you. Buddhism teaches us first of all to question the self. When this is the direction of our thinking, then we can understand that the self exists only as the result of others. Today, all of you have come here despite your busy schedules. Because of you, I am able to present this talk. Here, dependent origination has the same source as being dependent-on-the other. This level of understanding of *engi* or dependent origination would inevitably give rise to the term *tariki*. We could understand *tariki* in that way. Yet, it would be a mistake to take *tariki* to mean that one makes no effort by oneself or that things will somehow progress through the working of the other. This is not *tariki*. Rather, *tariki* can be understood when, even while one is making diligent efforts to do something, one stares deeply into the heart of the matter and discovers—one awakens to reality—that it is made to come about through others.

Often in discussions at Dharma gatherings one of the young people in the group will make this kind of statement: "If the Buddha is *tariki* (Other Power), then the Buddha should be able to save us unilaterally, whether we go to the temple or listen to the Dharma, or do not." How lamentable that this is the level at which some people understand the meaning of *tariki*! Yet, does the responsibility for such erroneous interpretations not lie with those who teach these ideas? This is the kind of thing that happens when we consider Amida Buddha to be some kind of substantial entity, and discuss Amida in terms of power. Today, Shin Buddhist observances for the deceased have been distorted in a variety of ways. As I have stated above, Shin Buddhism originally provided a Buddhist teaching for human beings to realize growth to a true humanity—to realize maturation even as they cast off the skin of their old selves. In that way, Shin Buddhism was a religion of a path. However, this fundamental meaning has been lost in many regions and by many priests, replaced by a religion centered on the

performance of rituals for the deceased. Amida Buddha is grasped solely within the context of power.

This understanding is based on an erroneous understanding of Shin Buddhism that began with Zonkaku. Three of his texts, *Jōdo kenmonshū*,²⁹ *Hō-on ki*,³⁰ and *Shidōshō*,³¹ focus on Shin Buddhist observances for the deceased. By examining the first two texts, we will see how Zonkaku presents this as Shin Buddhist doctrine.

According to the *Jōdo kenmonshū* after a person dies his sins and offenses are investigated by the King Emma for a period of forty-nine days. Thus, the living are instructed to perform memorial services for the repose of the deceased every seven days without fail. He states that the deceased also asks the living to do this. Depending on the way in which the memorial services are performed, the deceased will then be able to go to a better place. In the *Hō-on ki*, Zonkaku extensively discusses the importance of offering prayers for benefits in this life. He writes in detail about how the nembutsu is the most efficacious way to perform prayers for present-day benefits or memorial services for the repose of the deceased. The final text is the *Shidōshō*. Here, Zonkaku says that by performing memorial services for the deceased, that person will be able to move to a good location within the Pure Land. He also states that the activity of “directing of virtue in the aspect of returning” (*gensō ekō*) will differ depending on the merits generated by the observance of memorial services. Perhaps enough has been said about these ideas, except that in them the Shin Buddhist teaching has completely disappeared.

Yet, a paper recently presented at the Nishi Hongwanji’s Doctrinal Research Center took the position that Zonkaku’s three texts, which center on funerary rites for the deceased, are equivalent to the triple sutra in the current state of affairs, and should be actively used to teach the realities of Shin Buddhism to its followers. According to this position, the function of Shin Buddhist instruction and propagation is to teach and guide followers, even though, by advocating the observance of memorial services for the deceased and prayers for worldly benefits, it is completely submerged in Japanese customary practices and folk beliefs, and has totally compromised itself to them. This is truly shocking. At my temple, I am struggling hard against these secularized beliefs and customs. But, is the Hongwanji capable of saying the same? How truly lamentable it is. Each of us should take note of this situation and seek to learn correctly the teachings of Shinran.

V. CONCLUSION

I have discussed the problem of the true and the false in contemporary Shin Buddhist Studies by considering both “true Shin Buddhism” and

“false Shin Buddhism.” In this discussion, I have offered three conclusions:

1. Amida Buddha exists as a symbol, and must not be taken to be a substantial entity.
2. Shinjin in Shin Buddhism is a non-dualistic, or, subjective “experience of awakening.” It should not be understood in a dualistic, or, objectifying way.
3. Shin Buddhism is a religion of path, and must not be understood to be a religion concerned with power.

I believe that, as long as our understanding of Shin Buddhist doctrine does not clearly return, at least in regard to these three points, to a “true Shin Buddhism,” it will not be accepted or understood well by many persons on the international stage today. Further, anything other than a “true Shin Buddhism” will be unable to speak affirmatively as a religion with a fully developed societal presence or respond to the range of problems that are sure to gush forth from human society in the years to come.

Translated by David Matsumoto

NOTES

1. Translator's note: This essay is based on a lecture presented by Dr. Takamaro Shigaraki to the Shinshū Rengō Gakkai in Kyoto, Japan, on June 8, 2001.
2. Nāgārjuna, *Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa (Commentary on the Mahāprajñāpāramitā Sūtra; Ta-chih-tu-lun; Jpn. Daichidoron)*, Taishō, vol. 25, p. 125 a25–b9, c1–3.
3. *The Collected Works of Shinran* (hereafter, *CWS*), (Kyoto: Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-ha, 1997), pp. 241–2.
4. In particular, see Paul Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith* (New York: Harper and Row, 1957), pp. 41–54.
5. Shinran, *Mattōshō (Lamp for the Latter Ages)*, 5, in *CWS*, p. 530.
6. The text of *Anjin ketsujō shō* is available in *Shinshū shōgyō zensho* (hereafter, *SSZ*), vol. 3 (Kyoto: Ōyagi Kōbundō, 1941), pp. 615–638. For an English translation of the text, see Dennis Hirota, “On Attaining the Settled Mind: A Translation of *Anjin ketsujō shō*,” in Jōdo Shinshū kyōgaku kenkyūsho, ed., *Rennyo Shōnin kenkyū: kyōgi hen*, 2 (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1998), pp. 19–54.
7. Daiei, *Ōchō jikidō kongō bei*, 3 vols. (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1879).
8. *The True Teaching, Practice and Realization*, Chapter on Shinjin, in *CWS*, p. 94.
9. *The True Teaching, Practice and Realization*, Chapter on Practice, in *CWS*, p. 70.
10. Shinran, *Shōzōmatsu wasan (Hymns of the Dharma-Ages)*, 35, in *CWS*, p. 407.
11. Shinran, *Yuishinshō mon'i (Notes on 'Essentials of Faith Alone')*, in *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 624.
12. Left-hand notes to *Hymns of the Dharma-ages*, 34, in *CWS*, p. 407.
13. Cited in *The True Teaching, Practice and Realization*, Chapter on Shinjin, in *CWS*, p. 80.
14. *Muryōjyūkyō (The Larger Sutra of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life)*, in Hisao Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras: A Study and Translation from Chinese* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1994), p. 253.
15. Shinran, *Jōdo wasan (Hymns on the Pure Land)*, 55, in *CWS*, p. 340.
16. *SSZ*, vol. 2, pp. 205–442.
17. Rennyo, *Gobunshō (Letters of Rennyo)* vol. 2, no. 13, in *Jōdo shinshū*

- seiten: chūshakuban* (Kyoto: Hongwanji Shuppanbu, 1997), pp. 1128–9.
18. Left-hand notes to *Hymns of the Dharma-ages*, 34, in *CWS*, p. 407.
 19. *True Teaching, Practice and Realization*, Chapter on Transformed Buddha-bodies and Buddha-lands, in *CWS*, p. 289.
 20. Shinran, *Hymns on the Pure Land*, 71, in *CWS*, p. 344.
 21. *Tannishō (A Record in Lament of Divergences)*, 12, in *CWS*, p. 668
 22. *True Teaching, Practice and Realization*, Chapter on Shinjin, in *CWS*, p. 107.
 23. *Lamp for the Latter Ages*, in *CWS*, p. 538
 24. Shinran, *Mida Nyorai Myōgōtoku (The Virtue of the Name of Amida Tathagata)*, in *CWS*, pp. 656–7
 25. Shinran, *Gutokushō (Gutoku's Notes)*, in *CWS*, p. 594.
 26. *Lamp for the Latter Ages*, 4, in *CWS*, p. 529.
 27. Zonkaku, *Shojin hongaiishū*, in *Shinshūhōyō*, vol. 12; *Shinshū kanashōgyō*, 6. See the reference in Okamura Shūsatsu, ed, *Shinshū daijiten*, vol. 2 (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1972), p. 1171.
 28. Nakamura Hajime, *Bukkyōgo daijiten* (Tokyo: Tokyo Shoseki, 1983), p. 897.
 29. *SSZ*, vol. 3, pp. 375–383.
 30. *SSZ*, vol. 3, pp. 256–281.
 31. *SSZ*, vol. 5, pp. 252–270.

The Idea of the Last Dharma-Age in Shinran's Thought, Part 1¹

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INTRODUCTION

THE GOAL OF THE BUDDHIST PATH is to realize unsurpassed enlightenment by awakening to and overcoming the impermanent nature of the existential world. In Japan as well, the Buddhist path that was transmitted through China was also founded in both the realization and overcoming of the impermanent nature of reality. The awakening that comes from understanding the impermanent nature of reality is the first step toward practicing the Buddhist path. It is through practicing the Buddhist path that one is able to overcome the impermanent nature of existence and realize the realm of unsurpassed enlightenment.

The doctrines that the Buddha expanded during his forty-five years of propagation are said to have reached eighty-four thousand in number. Over time, the transmission of these doctrines incorporated various complex conditions that existed during its history of propagation. One such example was the construct of the three dharma-ages: the right dharma-age, the semblance dharma-age, and the last dharma-age. This construct became so prevalent that it began to influence how the doctrine was transmitted. In the period corresponding to the last dharma-age, it was said that of the three pillars of teaching, practice, and enlightenment—a system indicating the process toward enlightenment—the two characteristics of practice and enlightenment were lost. This last dharma-age connoted a breakdown in the ability of the Buddhist path itself to overcome impermanence and bring about the attainment of enlightenment. By forcing those who would attempt to resurrect the right dharma-age into a re-examination of Śākyamuni's teaching itself, it drove them to discover a new system of thought and thereby re-establish the path toward enlightenment.

Within the historical development of Japanese Buddhism, it was during the era of what is known as Kamakura Buddhism that the concept of the dharma-ages received noticeable acceptance. In particular, the construct was introduced as one of the fundamental doctrines of Pure Land Buddhist transmission. Genshin (942–1017), who was representative of the

pioneers of the Japanese Pure Land Buddhist tradition, states the following at the outset of his work, *Ōjō yōshū* (*Essentials for Attaining Birth*),

The teaching and the practice for birth in the Pure Land of Utmost Bliss are the eye and the foot in the latter age of this defiled world. Who then—monk or layman, noble or common—would not depend on it?²

Genshin indicates that the path toward enlightenment in the latter age of this defiled world is found in “the teaching and practice for birth in the Pure Land of Utmost Bliss.” He then carefully explicates the teaching and practice for the last dharma-age in his work of three fascicles.

Later, Hōnen (1133–1212) took refuge in the Pure Land path based on the writings of Genshin, and accomplished the monumental task of making the Pure Land School independent of other Buddhist schools. This was declared in his text, *Senjakushū* (*Passages on the Nembutsu Selected in the Primal Vow*). There, Hōnen imparts the classification of the two gates of the Path of Sages and the Pure Land path found in *An-lo-chi* (*Passages on the Land of Happiness*) by Tao-ch’o (562–645), and then states,

In the present time, it is difficult to attain enlightenment through the Path of Sages. One reason is that the Great Sage departed from this world in the far distant past. A second reason is that, while the truth is profound, [human] understanding of it is slight. For that reason the “Moon-Matrix” section of the *Ta-chi ching* (*Great Collection Sutra*) states, “Out of billions of sentient beings who seek to perform practices and cultivate the way in the last dharma-age, not one will gain realization. This is now the last dharma-age; it is the evil world of the five defilements. This one gate—the Pure Land way—is the only path that affords passage.”³

Hōnen clearly and carefully makes the point that the single gate of the Pure Land path is the path that one should take in order to attain emancipation during the last dharma-age. That is to say, it is the path that is suitable both to the period and to beings. His sense that the Pure Land School is the path to achieve emancipation during the last dharma-age is also presented in various other works, many of which are compilations of his spoken words.⁴ Among Hōnen’s disciples, Shinran (1173–1262) in particular held a deep interest in the idea of the three dharma-ages. He inherited the idea in his own unique fashion, and revealed the path of emancipation during the last dharma-age. By describing a path that neither needed nor could support the efficacy of practice, he went so far as to show the value of a path of “pure religiosity.”

Research on Shinran's idea of the last dharma-age has been undertaken from many perspectives, from orthodox standpoints to the perspectives of religious studies, philosophical history, and religious philosophy. Because the results of this body of research are voluminous and have already been discussed elsewhere, there is probably no need to add to it in this study. Instead, this study will examine the attitude with which Shinran inherited the idea of the three dharma-ages, which forms the foundation of his faith. Through this inquiry, I propose to venture my own ideas with the hope of establishing the foundations of my own faith. It would be my good fortune if I were to be able to receive the criticism of many.

SHINRAN'S VIEW OF THE LAST DHARMA-AGE AS SEEN IN THE *KYŌGYŌSHINSHŌ*

The Last dharma-age: Viewed from the Perspective of Its Appropriateness to the Times and Beings

By turning from the Path of Sages and becoming a disciple of Hōnen, Shinran was able to gain the path of salvation in the after-life (the path of gaining emancipation). He was able to receive the teaching of the earlier Pure Land teachers of India, China, and Japan, and spread this path to others through his many writings in Chinese and Japanese, beginning with his principal work, the *Kyōgyōshinshō* (*A Collection of Passages Revealing the True Teaching, Practice and Realization of the Pure Land Way*). Needless to say, the idea of the three dharma-ages, which formed the foundation of Pure Land thought after the writings of Tao-ch'ō (562–645), was incorporated into many of Shinran's writings. In particular, references are found in both the *Kyōgyōshinshō* and the *Shōzōmatsu wasan* (*Hymns of the Dharma-Ages*).

The way in which this incorporation took place could be seen by examining the Chapter on the Transformed Buddha-bodies and Lands of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*. There we discover that he writes of his joy in having turned and entered into the true, universal Vow in his spiritual declaration known as *sangan tennyū* (turning and entering the three vows), which follows his explication of the provisional teachings of the essential gate and the true gate. This is followed by an interpretation of the Path of Sages, in which he indicates, from a Jōdo Shinshū perspective, how to understand the Path of Sages from the perspective of the theory of the three dharma-ages.

Truly we know that the teachings of the Path of Sages were intended for the period when the Buddha was in the world and for the right dharma-age; they are altogether inappropriate for the times and beings of the semblance and last dharma-ages and the

age when the dharma has become extinct. Already their time has passed; they are no longer in accord with beings.

The true essence of the Pure Land way compassionately draws all of the innumerable evil, defiled beings to enlightenment without discrimination, whether they be of the period when the Buddha was in the world, of the right, semblance, or last dharma-ages, or of the time when the dharma has become extinct.⁵

Here we can see, first of all, that Shinran makes a determination as to whether the two teachings—the Path of Sages and the Pure Land Path—are effective in leading to, or in closing off, the attainment of emancipation during the right, semblance, and last dharma-ages, or during the period of the complete extinction of the dharma. The Path of Sages, he states, is a path for attaining emancipation only during the time when the world is in the right dharma-age, and it is not efficacious during other period. In contrast, Jōdo Shinshū (“the true essence of the Pure Land way”) demonstrates its efficacy for attaining emancipation during the right dharma-age certainly, but also during the times when the Path of Sages is no longer effective, that is, during the semblance dharma-age, the last dharma-age, and even during the period of the complete extinction of the dharma.

Shinran’s determination as to whether a path leads to, or closes off, the attainment of enlightenment is extremely severe. For instance, he states that even during his lifetime the Path of Sages was already unable to lead practitioners to enlightenment; it had lost its value as a Buddhist path. On the other hand, he states, the Pure Land Path is currently effective in leading to the attainment of enlightenment. Its efficacy has been demonstrated since the time of Śākyamuni Buddha’s propagation of the teaching, up through the last dharma-age and even during the period of the complete eradication of the dharma. Thus, he declares the determination of whether a particular path is to be discarded or upheld as a Buddhist teaching is based on whether the Path of Sages or the Pure Land Path leads to, or closes off, the attainment of enlightenment during the three dharma-ages.

Particular note should be given to the fact that, within the course of the historical development of the Pure Land Path, this point represented a stance unique to Shinran. The distinction between the Path of Sages and the Pure Land Path, as well as the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the paths during the last dharma-age (which we will discuss later) had already been emphasized by Tao-ch’o in his *An-lo-chi* (*Passages on the Land of Happiness*). Further, Hōnen had already made clear the efficacy of the Pure Land Path throughout the three dharma-ages and during the period of the extinction of the dharma in Chapter 6, entitled “The Nembutsu in particular will remain when all other practices have disappeared ten thousand years after the last dharma-age” and Chapter 12, “The Buddha did not confer the meditative or non-meditative practices on Ānanda, but instead

conferred him with the Nembutsu alone" of his *Senjakushū*.

Shinran, however, combined the perspectives of Tao-ch'ō and Hōnen, and clarified the provisional nature of the Path of Sages during the present age. For him, the Path of Sages has dimensions that could either lead to, or close off, one's attainment of enlightenment depending upon in which of the three dharma-ages one lived. In contrast, the teaching of Jōdo Shinshū is effective in allowing one to attain emancipation in any of the three dharma-ages, and even during the period of the complete eradication of the dharma. From this perspective, it becomes easy to understand how Shinran could regard Jōdo Shinshū in particular as the primary reason for Śākyamuni's appearance in this world.

We can see that one factor in Shinran's determination of whether the Path of Sages or the Pure Land Path leads to, or closes one off from, enlightenment was the question of which of the three dharma-ages one finds oneself within. Another determining factor was whether or not the Buddhist practitioner has the capacity to persevere in the practices of the Buddhist path. In other words, the passages quoted above indicate that the various teachings of the Path of Sages are not suitable to either the time period or to the capacities of beings living during the semblance dharma-age, the last dharma-age, or the age of the complete extinction of the dharma. In Shinran's phrase, "Already their time has passed; they are no longer in accord with beings," the term "already" indicates that the period [from which he speaks] is not the right dharma-age, and that beings of the period do not have the capacity to persevere in the practices of the Path of Sages.

In contrast to this, the Pure Land Path allows one to enter and gain the fruit of enlightenment throughout the right, semblance, and the last dharma-ages, as well as the period of the complete extinction of the dharma. The term "already" indicates that the only path that allows one to gain emancipation during these time periods and that is appropriate to the capacities of beings living during these periods is the Pure Land Path. According to Tao-ch'ō, one must determine whether or not beings have the capacity to gain emancipation by determining the conditions of the age. That is to say, the value of a teaching of emancipation can be determined from the perspective that "beings acquire the conditions of the age in which they live." (In other words, the capacity of beings to attain emancipation is determined by the conditions of the age in which they live.) Thus, the term "already" serves not only as Shinran's declaration of deep religious introspection, but it also expresses the incorporation of this extraordinary idea of the three dharma-ages into his thought.

Shinran then sets out to determine the year of Śākyamuni's entry into *parinirvāṇa* and clearly explain the distinctive characteristics of each of the three dharma-ages. By doing so, he concludes that the only path for attaining emancipation in correspondence with the time period and the

capacities of beings is the single gate of the Pure Land Path. To demonstrate this, Shinran cites a series of four passages from Tao-ch'o's *An-lo-chi*:

Concerning this, Master Tao-ch'o of Hsuan-chung temple states:

Those who practice the way must continue without interruption for ten thousand kalpas before they can attain the stage of nonretrogression. Foolish beings of the present are said to be in reality "those whose thoughts of entrusting are as light as feathers." Further, they are called [bodhisattvas merely in] "provisional name," "those not settled," and "foolish beings outside [the bodhisattva stages]." They have not yet departed from the burning house [of samsaric existence].

How do we know this? In the *Bodhisattva-Ornament Sutra*, the stages of practice leading to attainment of enlightenment are minutely distinguished; because of the principle functioning here, these stages are called the path of difficult practice.⁶

Further, he states:

I will clarify the reason for the Pure Land teaching by relating it to beings through its connection with the times and encourage them to take refuge in it; here, if the beings, the teaching, and the times are not in accord, it would be difficult to perform practice and difficult to attain enlightenment. The *Sutra of Mindfulness of the Right Dharma* states:

When practitioners single-heartedly seek enlightenment,
They must always consider the times and the means;
If the times are inappropriate, there are no means.
This is called "loss"; it is not beneficial.

Why? Because it is like rubbing green wood to build a fire; fire cannot be made, for the time is not right. Because it is like merely breaking dry wood to build a fire; a fire cannot be made, for wisdom is lacking.

The "Moon-Matrix" section of the *Great Collection Sutra* states:

During the first five-hundred year period after the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*, my disciples will be resolute in acquiring wisdom. During the second five-hundred year period, they will be resolute in cultivating meditation. During the third five-hundred year period, they will be resolute in listening to the teaching and sutra-recitation. During the fourth five-hundred year period, they will be

resolute in constructing towers and temples, practicing meritorious conduct, and performing repentance. During the fifth five-hundred year period, they will be resolute in conflict and strife, which will become widespread with the good dharma being diminished.

In ascertaining the nature of sentient beings of the present, we must consider that we are now in the fourth five-hundred year period following the Buddha's departure from this world. This is indeed the age when beings should perform repentance, practice meritorious conduct, and recite the Buddha's Name. In a single utterance of the Name of Amida Buddha, karmic evil that would involve one in eighty billion kalpas of birth-and-death is eliminated. Even a single utterance is thus; the person who practices the constant saying of the Name, then, is none other than the one who is always performing repentance.⁷

Further, he states:

In distinguishing the sutras that will remain in the world from those that will disappear, we must consider that all the teachings of Śakyamuni's lifetime will last through the five hundred years of the right dharma-age and the thousand years of the semblance dharma-age; during the ten thousand years of the last dharma-age, sentient beings will diminish in number, and the sutras will all disappear. The Tathagata, out of pity for the sentient beings in the various forms of pain and torment, will have this sutra in particular survive, remaining for a hundred years.⁸

Further, he states:

The *Great Collection Sutra* states,

Out of billions of sentient beings who seek to perform practices and cultivate the way in the last dharma-age, not one will gain realization.

This is now the last dharma-age; it is the evil world of the five defilements. This one gate—the Pure Land way—is the only path that affords passage.⁹

As Shinran indicates, the first passage is based on the *Bodhisattva-Ornament Sutra*. According to this sutra, bodhisattva practices are divided into fifty-two stages. It is said that ten thousand kalpas of practice are required for a bodhisattva to progress from the first of the ten levels of faith, which constitutes the first stage of practice, to the fulfillment of the ten levels of settlement (and thereby the attainment of the stage of endurance, or, the

stage of true settlement according to the *Benevolent King Sutra*). From this, one can appreciate how difficult the path is. How much more so, writes Tao-ch'ō, would it be impossible for those who have yet to practice the Buddhist path—those “foolish beings outside [the bodhisattva stages]” who have not even entered the ten levels of faith—to attain that bodhisattva stage. We must note that Tao-ch'ō includes himself with all of the weak and evil foolish beings of the present age.

According to the last three passages, when the Buddhist teachings are re-examined through a consideration of the circumstances of both the times in which Tao-ch'ō lived—a period far removed from Śākyamuni's departure from this world—and sentient beings—persons of karmic evil and inferior capacity—it becomes clear that the doctrine of birth in the Pure Land makes possible the attainment of emancipation in accordance with the circumstances of both the times and the beings living within it. By clarifying the circumstances of times in which he lived, Tao-ch'ō first determines that the period corresponds to the fourth of five five-hundred year periods, which are described in the *Great Collection Sutra*. In this period, he writes, it is still possible to build stupas and temples, do meritorious acts, and perform practices of repentance. Next, through an explication of the theory of the three dharma-ages, which could also be seen as a theory of historical decline, he determines that the fourth five-hundred year period falls within the last dharma-age. Further, he states that this is an evil world of the five defilements, the result of which is that it is impossible to attain emancipation through the path of difficult practices. He makes it clear that the single gate of birth in the Pure Land is the sole path that leads to enlightenment.

Particular note should be given to the relative order in which the four passages from the *An-lo-chi* have been cited by Shinran. Tao-ch'ō's text, as a whole, elucidates the teaching of birth in the Pure Land throughout all of its twelve major divisions. Yet, the first passage cited by Shinran is taken from the fifth major section of the *An-lo-chi*. The second cited passage is from the first of nine subsections of the first major section. This and the fourth passage cited by Shinran are among the most notable passages of the *An-lo-chi*. The third cited passage is found in the third of three subsections in the sixth major section. Finally, the fourth cited passage is set out in the last of five question-and-answer segments in the third of four subsections in the third major section of Tao-ch'ō's text. This final passage, it is said, presents a classification of the two gates of the Path of Sages and the Pure Land Path. By highlighting these particular passages and presenting them in a revised order, it could be said that Shinran was seeking to reveal Tao-ch'ō's own view of the last dharma-age (from the perspective that “beings acquire the conditions of the age in which they live”), and to point directly to the path for attaining emancipation, based upon this. It could also be said that it reveals Shinran's own view of the last dharma-age from the perspec-

tive that "beings acquire the conditions of the age in which they live." Accordingly, Shinran states,

Thus, the multitudes of this evil, defiled world, ignorant of the distinctive characteristics of the latter age, revile the behavior and attitude of monks and nuns, but all people of the present, whether monk or lay, must take measure of their own capacities.¹⁰

With this severe exposition, Shinran turns toward his contemporaries, both practicers of the Buddhist path and those within worldly life, and states that because they do not understand the distinctive characteristics of the latter age in which they live they viciously slander the behavior and attitudes of monk and nuns. He urges those people to reflect upon the circumstances of the times and upon their own capacities, without casting they eyes upon others.

Persons pursuing the path of enlightenment today, some seven hundred fifty years after the time of Shinran, should not lose track of that which Shinran himself deeply wished for. This is also the spirit that runs throughout the entirety of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*. It is immediately evident in the religious attitude of Shinran, whose explication of Jōdo Shinshū offered a great many expressions such as, "monks and laity of this latter age,"¹¹ "[w]e, an ocean of beings in an evil age of five defilements,"¹² "[m]onks and laity of this defiled world,"¹³ and the "multitudes of this defiled world."¹⁴ The present age is indeed that of the last dharma-age of this defiled world. The capacities of beings are indeed corrupt and defiled. For this age and for such beings, the one teaching that radiates a pure, brilliant light of attaining emancipation is the true essence of the Pure Land way. One can also perceive this in the intent of Shinran's words of praise and lament,

This is the teaching and practice for our latter age; devote yourself solely to it. It is eye and limb in this defiled world; do not fail to endeavor in it.¹⁵

It is . . . the true teaching in consummate readiness for the beings of this day.¹⁶

Shinran's View of the Yearly Progression of the Last Dharma-age and Its Internal Features

We have seen that at the foundation of Shinran's teaching lies a deep reflection on the historical decline of the transmission of Buddhist doctrine. We will now examine the period of last dharma-age in more concrete terms.

We will first examine the period of the last dharma-age that Shinran experienced directly. We discover that he simply accepted the yearly

progression presented in the third passage of Tao-ch'ō's text, which was cited above. That is the theory that the right dharma-age lasted for five hundred years, the semblance dharma-age lasted for one thousand years, and the last dharma-age will last for ten thousand years. Immediately after urging that "all people of the present, whether monk or lay, must take measure of their own capacities," Shinran then presents this calculation,

Considering the teachings concerning the three dharma-ages, we find that the date of the Tathagatas' *parinirvāṇa* falls on the fifty-[first] year (the year water / monkey) of the reign of Kung Mu, the fifth emperor of the Chou dynasty. From that year of water / monkey to the first year of our Gennin era (the year wood / monkey) it is 2,1[8]3 years. Based on the *Auspicious Kalpa Sutra*, the *Benevolent King Sutra*, and the *Nirvana Sutra*, we find that we are already 6[8]3 years into the last dharma-age.¹⁷

In the first year of the Gennin era (1224) Shinran was fifty-two years of age. Shinran calculates that that year would correspond to 2183 years after the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*.¹⁸ Because 1224 was 2183 years after the death of the Buddha, it would also be 683 years into the last dharma-age.¹⁹ Based on this, we could calculate that the first year of the last dharma-age would have occurred 1501 years after the Buddha's departure from this world. From this, we can know that Shinran's calculations were based on the same dharma-age theory that was used by Tao-ch'ō.

We have seen that Tao-ch'ō utilized the temporal structure of the right dharma-age lasting for five hundred years, a semblance dharma-age lasting for one thousand years, and the last dharma-age lasting for ten thousand years. Yet, to support that theory he does not record the yearly progression of the time since the Buddha's death. Nor does he point to competing theories regarding the right and semblance dharma-ages in order to argue concretely that his era was within the last dharma-age. Instead, he simply relies on the conventions existing in the Buddhist world. He simply records the years in which each of the three dharma-ages are said to end, but provides no other preliminary work to support his argument.

Shinran, on the other hand, calculates the yearly progression from the Buddha's demise to the first year of the Gennin era, basing his argument on the explications of the dharma-ages found in the *Mappō tōmyōki* (*Lamp for the Last Dharma-Age*) attributed to Saichō (766 or 767–822).²⁰ Thus, he uses "the fifty-[first] year (the year water / monkey) of the reign of Kung Mu, the fifth emperor of the Chou dynasty" (949) as the reference point for the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*. Similarly, his theory that the last dharma-age began 1,501 years after that date relies on the *Auspicious Kalpa Sutra*, the *Benevolent King Sutra*, and the *Nirvana Sutra*, three expositions that are recorded in the *Mappō tōmyōki*. Each of those sutras employs the theory

that the right dharma-age will last for five hundred years and the semblance dharma-age will last for one thousand years. From this, Shinran is able to calculate that, in the first of year of the Gennin era (1224), "we are already 6[8]3 years into the last dharma-age."

Thus, although Shinran's view of the yearly progression of the dharma-ages coincided with that of Tao-ch'ō, his was inherited from the *Mappō tōmyōki*. We have seen that there were two lines of transmission within Japanese Buddhism regarding the yearly progression of the dharma-ages. The first held to a five hundred year right dharma-age, and a one thousand year semblance dharma-age. The second, and mainstream school of thought during Shinran's time, argued for a one thousand year right dharma-age and a one thousand year semblance dharma-age. Shinran, however, did not employ the explanation in vogue at the time. Instead, in the same manner as his teacher, Hōnen, had before him,²¹ Shinran utilized the former theory, which posited a five hundred year right dharma-age and a one thousand year semblance dharma-age, in order to situate the last dharma-age historically. This led to his endorsement of Tao-ch'ō's assertion that, "This is now the last dharma-age," which we discussed above.

Correctly speaking, therefore, the fourth of the five five-hundred year periods was the time when the last dharma-age began.²² Among the Pure Land masters recognized by Shinran, the four masters after Tao-ch'ō all lived within the period of the last dharma-age. In that light, all of these masters' assertions help to establish the immutable authenticity of the Pure Land teaching of attaining emancipation during the last dharma-age. Furthermore, Shinran's life took place some six hundred years into the last dharma-age. When one considers the attributes of the state of society during his lifetime, its similarities to the descriptions of the fifth of the five-hundred year periods in the *Great Collection Sutra* are chilling. When considered along with his personal recognition of the inefficacy of attaining enlightenment through self-power, it is possible to say that Shinran had reached the point where his search for a teaching and practice in the latter age would save him in the life-to-come.

Having now inquired into Shinran's view of the yearly progression of the last dharma-age, let us next make an inquiry into the internal features of this last dharma-age. First, the passages from the *An-lo-chi* cited above demonstrate Shinran's standpoint in contrast to the Path of Sages. At the same time, however, these passages also reveal the internal features of the last dharma-age. For instance,

Foolish beings of the present are said to be in reality "those whose thoughts of entrusting are as light as feathers." Further, they are called [bodhisattvas merely in] "provisional name", "those not settled," and "foolish beings outside [the bodhisattva stages]." They have not yet departed from the burning house [of samsaric existence].²³

During the fourth five-hundred year period, they will be resolute in constructing towers and temples, practicing meritorious conduct, and performing repentance. During the fifth five-hundred year period, they will be resolute in conflict and strife, which will become widespread with the good dharma being diminished.²⁴

The *Great Collection Sutra* states,

Out of billions of sentient beings who seek to perform practices and cultivate the way in the last dharma-age, not one will gain realization.

This is now the last dharma-age; it is the evil world of the five defilements.²⁵

Further, when we compare the descriptions with the explications of the *Mappō tōmyōki*, we are able to make an even more concrete inquiry into these internal features.

The first internal feature of the last dharma-age is the fact that not even a single person has been able to achieve realization through the practices of the Path of Sages. In the *Mappō tōmyōki*, Saichō explains this by comparing the two sutras, the *Sutra of Mahāmāyā* and the *Great Collection Sutra*, which were mentioned previously. That is, he refers to the portion of the *Sutra of Mahāmāyā* that describes the events of the one thousand, five hundred-year period that followed the death of the Buddha.

In the *Sutra of Mahāmāyā* it is stated:

During the first five hundred years after the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*, seven holy monks, sages all, including Mahākāśyapa, will uphold the right dharma in succession so that it does not perish. After five hundred years, the right dharma will become completely extinct.

Six hundred years after, the ninety-five kinds of nonbuddhist teaching will arise and vie with each other, but Aśvaghōṣa will appear and subdue them all.

Seven hundred years after, Nāgārjuna will appear and demolish the banners of wrong-views.

Eight hundred years after, monks will give themselves to self-indulgence and only a few will attain the fruit of enlightenment.

Nine hundred years after, menials will be made into monks and nuns.

One thousand years after, on hearing of the contemplation of bodily impurity, they will be enraged and give it no thought.

One thousand one hundred years after, monks and nuns will

take wives and husbands, and will break and revile the precepts.

One thousand two hundred years after, monks and nuns will have children.

One thousand three hundred years after, the yellow monk's robe will be changed to white.

One thousand four hundred years after, the four kinds of disciples will all be like hunters, and will sell the offerings made to the Three Treasures.

Here I declare: One thousand five hundred years after, two monks in the land of Kausambi will fall into dispute with each other and finally kill each other. As a result, the teachings will be stored in the naga's palace.

This passage is also found in the *Nirvana Sutra*, fascicle eighteen, the *Benevolent King Sutra*, and others. According to these sutra passages, after 1,500 years, there will be no precepts, meditation, or wisdom.²⁶

Next, Saichō cites the explanation found in the *Great Collection Sutra*, which concretely states,

Therefore, the *Great Collection Sutra*, fascicle fifty-one states:

During the first five hundred years after my nirvana, monks and others will be resolute in attaining emancipation through the right dharma that I have taught. (The first state of sagehood that is attained is termed emancipation.) In the next five hundred years, they will be resolute in meditation. In the next five hundred years, they will be resolute in listening to the teaching. In the next five hundred years, they will be resolute in constructing temples. In the last five hundred years, they will be resolute in conflict and disputes, and the pure dharma will sink into dormancy. . . .

This passage means that during the first three five-hundred year periods, the three dharmas of precepts, meditation, and wisdom will, in succession, be resolutely upheld. This corresponds to the two periods in question above: the right dharma lasting five hundred years and the semblance dharma lasting one thousand years.

The period from that of temple construction on is the last dharma-age.

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In the last dharma-age, only the verbal teaching remains; there is no practice or realization.²⁷

Although there are some differences in the explications of these two sutras, they both state that the period of the last dharma-age begins fifteen hundred years after the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*. By the end of the five hundred year right dharma-age and the one thousand year semblance dharma-age, the three learnings of precepts, meditation and wisdom will have been completely eradicated. As a consequence, no one will be able to attain enlightenment during the last dharma-age. This point is made clear by the way in which the author of the *Mappō tōmyōki* has arranged the sutra passages within his text.

One could also use the notion of the three pillars of teaching, practice and realization to describe the internal features of the dharma-ages. That is, the right dharma-age (resolute in emancipation and wisdom) is endowed with the three pillars of teaching, practice, and realization. The semblance dharma-age (resolute in meditation and precepts) possesses only the two pillars of teaching and practice, since the realization of enlightenment (emancipation) does not exist. The last dharma-age (lacking in precepts, meditation, and wisdom; resolute in conflict and disputes) becomes a period having none of the pillars; "only the verbal teaching remains; there is no practice or realization."

The *Mappō tōmyōki* goes on to explain that, even the Buddhist teaching that exists only verbally will finally disappear, to be stored away and hidden in the naga's palace. Thus, there will be no dharma to abuse; there will be no precepts to break. Since there will be no precepts to break or observe, there will be monks "in name only." Such monks in name only, who are without precepts, are the "true treasures of the age"; they are seen as "fields of merits."²⁸ Such nominal monks who keep no precepts ought to be referred to as "pale reflections of the good dharma." This is the form that monks and nuns will take during the last dharma-age. Yet, here is the idea that monks and nuns of the last dharma-age who, having shaved their heads and beards, and donned monks' robes, are monks and nuns in appearance only are still described as "true treasures of the age" and the "field of merits." The reasoning behind that idea can be found in the *Mappō tōmyōki*, which examines passages from the *Great Collection Sutra* to explain the meaning of "true treasures of the ages" for the semblance and last dharma-ages.

In this passage, eight kinds of priceless treasures are mentioned: the Tathagata, pratyekabuddhas, śrāvakas, and those of the first three fruits; beings who have realized meditation, monks who observe precepts, and monks who break precepts; and monks in name only who are without precepts. These are the priceless treasures of the right, semblance, and last dharma-ages, respectively. The first four belong to the right dharma-age, the next three to the semblance dharma-age, and the last to the last dharma-age.

Thus we know clearly that those who break precepts and those who have no precepts are all true treasures.²⁹

The *Mappō tōmyōki* then provides further reasons for being able to refer to such beings as the “true treasures” of the three dharma-ages through its examining of the *Nirvana Sutra* and the *Sutra of Ten Wheels*. The text goes on to explain the meaning of the “true treasure” of the last dharma-age in this way,

Next, after the end of the semblance dharma-age, there are no precepts whatsoever. Recognizing the momentum of the times, the Buddha praises those who are monks in name only, declaring them to be the field of merits for the world, in order to save the people of the last dharma-age. The *Great Collection Sutra*, fascicle fifty-two, states:

If, in the last age that follows, there is a monk in name only who, in accord with my teaching, shaves his hair and beard and wears a monk's robe, and if there are lay supporters making offerings to him, these latter will acquire immeasurable merit.

Further, the *Sutra of the Wise and the Foolish* states;

If in the future, in the last age when the dharma-vehicle is about to perish, nominal monks should take wives and have them bear children, still lay supporters should pay homage to groups of four or more such monks just as they would to Śāriputra, Mahāmaudgalayāna, and the others.

Further, it states:

If one beats and scolds monks who break precepts, failing to recognize that they wear monk's robes, the offense is the same as causing blood to flow from the bodies of a hundred million Buddhas. If, because of the dharma that I teach, sentient beings shave their hair and beard and don monk's robes, though they may not observe the precepts, they all bear the seal of nirvana already³⁰

As these passages indicate, even monks in name only, who are without precepts, can still serve as conditions for guiding lay persons who have yet to gain the virtue of the dharma. For this reason and also because monks without precepts already “bear the seal of nirvana,” they can be called the “true treasure” of the last dharma-age, and can be seen as “fields of merits.”

Further, it is bad enough that the internal features of the last dharma-age include the existence of monks in name only, who are without precepts. Still, we should not overlook the fact that the practice of making offerings

to them is no longer a regular occurrence. This is exactly what Tao-ch'ō's expression, "foolish beings of the present" refers to: their thoughts of faith are light like feathers; they are "not settled" as to whether they will or will not retrogress in their quest for toward enlightenment; moreover, they are on the outside of even the initial stages of the Buddhist path of practice, and dwell exclusively within the burning house of the evil world of five defilements; and even though they may wish to be freed from suffering, they are unable to accomplish that in any way through their own power. Such is the state of existence of those who make up the internal features of the last dharma-age.

This perspective, as seen from Shinran's thought, is not limited solely to the last dharma-age. It includes not only the semblance dharma-age, but applied even to the right dharma-age. Hidden in the shadows of the Path of Sages during the right and semblance dharma-ages, it continued to exist in a state of complete neglect. It was as if the remnants of its life were barely sustained until the last dharma-age. The gradual progression of the three dharma-ages has evolved naturally, and now, during the last dharma-age, the central issue has become one of attaining emancipation. As a result, Shinran takes the position that the Pure Land way—the path upon which "foolish beings of the present" can attain emancipation—has had efficacy throughout the right, semblance, and last dharma-ages. He further asserts that the Path of Sages lies at the level of an expedient, or, provisional teaching that leads one to the Pure Land Path. It follows that this last dharma-age is instead necessary for the Path of Sages itself. It is only through historical circumstances that it did not ally itself with the Pure Land Path. Even for Śākyamuni Buddha himself, the reason for his appearing in this world was to open wide the path upon which "foolish beings in the present" can attain emancipation throughout all of the three dharma-ages.

For this reason, according to Shinran's thought, the last dharma-age is not simply an excellent external system that reveals the internal, true form of "foolish beings of the present." It does not simply stop at the individual level, but is a system that completely fills the ocean of all beings. One could probably refer to it as a clear recognition of the nature of karmic evil, which has existed from the beginningless past. Or, stating it in another way, it is the clear recognition of one's true form as a foolish being, which one becomes able to acknowledge for the first time when illuminated by the light of Amida Buddha's salvation.

Translated by John Iwohara

NOTES

1. This article was originally published in Japanese as “Shinran Shōnin ni okeru mappō shisō,” the fourth chapter of Asano Kyōshin, *Shinran to Jōdokyōgi no kenkyū* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1998). Part 2 will be published in the *Pacific World*, Third Series, 4 (2002). For the most part, the English translations of passages from Shinran's texts have been taken from The Shin Buddhism Translation Series, *The Collected Works of Shinran* (hereinafter CWS), (Kyoto: Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-ha, 1997).
2. Genshin, *Ōjō yōshū* (*Essentials for Attaining Birth*), *Taishō*, vol. 84, p. 33a; *Shinshū shōgyō zensho* (hereinafter SSZ), vol. 1 (Kyoto: Ōyagi Kōbundō, 1983), p. 729; Ryukoku University Translation Center, *The Kōso Wasan: the Hymns on the Patriarchs* (Kyoto: Ryukoku University, 1974), p. 11.
3. Hōnen, *Senjaku hongan nembutsushū* (*Passages on the Nembutsu Selected in the Primal Vow*), in *Taishō*, vol. 83, p. 1a; SSZ, vol. 1, p. 929. The passage cited from the *Great Collection Sutra* can be found in CWS, p. 244.
4. See Asano, *Shinran to Jōdokyōgi no kenkyū*, Chapter Three, “Hōnen Shōnin no mappō kan.”
5. Shinran, *Ken Jōdo shinjitsu kyōgyōshō monrui* (*A Collection of Passages Revealing the True Teaching, Practice and Realization of the Pure Land Way*) (hereinafter, *Kyōgyōshinshō*), in SSZ, vol. 2, 166; CWS, p. 240.
6. Tao-ch'ō, *An-lo-chi* (*Passages on the Land of Happiness*), in *Taishō*, vol. 47, p. 16b; cited in SSZ, vol. 2, p. 167; CWS, p. 242.
7. *Taishō*, vol. 47, 4a25; cited in SSZ, vol. 2, p. 167; CWS, pp. 242–3.
8. *Taishō*, vol. 47, 18b15; cited in SSZ, vol. 2, p. 168; CWS, p. 243.
9. *Taishō*, vol. 47, 13c8; cited in SSZ, vol. 2, p. 168; CWS, pp. 243–4.
10. SSZ, vol. 2, p. 168; CWS, p. 244.
11. SSZ, vol. 2, p. 47; CWS, p. 77.
12. SSZ, vol. 2, p. 44; CWS, p. 70.
13. SSZ, vol. 2, p. 157; CWS, p. 228.
14. SSZ, vol. 2, p. 143; CWS, p. 207.
15. Shinran, *Jōdo monrui jushō* (*Passages on the Pure Land Way*), in SSZ, vol. 2, p. 443; CWS, p. 295.
16. SSZ, vol. 2, p. 4; CWS, p. 10.
17. SSZ, vol. 2, p. 168; CWS, p. 244.
18. According to Shinran's calculations, the first year of Gennin (1224) corresponded to 2183 years after the Buddha's death, or, 683 years into the

last Dharma-age. In reality, however, 1224 would correctly correspond to 2173 years after the Buddha's death, or, 673 years into the last Dharma-age. Zonkaku corrects this discrepancy in his *Rokuyōshō* (SSZ, vol. 2, p. 401), "The character '8' is erroneous; it should be '7.' ... In the same way as above, the character '8' is not correct; it should be '7.'" [Translator's note: The CWS translation adopts the correct dates. However, since the author has adopted the former set of dates, the present translation will reflect them as well.]

19. See fn. 18.

20. There is some question as to whether Saichō was the author of the *Mappō tōmyōki*. Since both Hōnen and Shinran took the position that Saichō did author the text, we will follow that here as well. It cannot be denied that, since Hōnen and Shinran took the text to be that of Saichō, it was for them a definitive source for calculating the yearly progressions of the dharma-ages and for descriptions of the inner features of the last dharma-age.

21. See Asano, *Shinran to Jōdokyōgi no kenkyū*, Chapter Three, Section Two for reference.

22. A calculation of the number of years from the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa* until Tao-ch'ō's lifetime would show the following: if the date of the Buddha's demise was during fifty-first year of the reign of Kung Mu, the fifth emperor of the Chou dynasty (949 BCE), then, since Tao-ch'ō lived from 561–645 CE, he would have lived some 1,511 to 1,594 years after the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*. According to the theory of a five-hundred year right dharma-age and one thousand year semblance dharma-age, Tao-ch'ō would have lived during the very beginning of the last dharma-age.

23. Cited in SSZ, vol. 2, p. 167; CWS, p. 242.

24. Cited in SSZ, vol. 2, pp. 167–8; CWS, p. 243.

25. Cited in SSZ, vol. 2, p. 168; CWS, p. 244.

26. Cited in SSZ, vol. 2, p. 169; CWS, pp. 245–6.

27. Cited in SSZ, vol. 2, pp. 169–170; CWS, pp. 246–7.

28. Cited in SSZ, vol. 2, pp. 170–1; CWS, pp. 247–8.

29. Cited in SSZ, vol. 2, p. 171; CWS, p. 249.

30. Cited in SSZ, vol. 2, pp. 173–4; CWS, p. 252.

Rennyo's Theory on Amida Buddha's Name and Its Relationship to Shinran's Thought, Part 1¹

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I.

RENNYO (1415–1499), THE EIGHTH head priest of the Hongwanji, is known for his unique theory on Amida Buddha's Name (*myōgō-ron* 名号論) developed while he worked to propagate Jōdo Shinshū through a concrete application of Shinran's interpretation of the six-character Name (*rokuji shaku* 六字釈). The most distinctive characteristic of Rennyo's theory, as well noted in traditional scholarship, is his interpretation of the six-character Name (*na-mu-a-mi-da-butsu* 南無阿弥陀仏) as the relationship between the practitioner and Amida's Dharma (*kihōmon* 機法門, "gateway of practitioner and Dharma"). This paper examines the development of Rennyo's theory on Amida's Name by focusing on three factors crucial to understanding his theory. First, Rennyo's understanding of Shinran's thought is influenced by Kakunyo. Rennyo adopts Kakunyo's doctrinal position, which frames Shinran's doctrinal system through an emphasis on Shinran's interpretation of the passage of the fulfillment of the Eighteenth Vow (*jūhachigan jōjumon* 十八願成就文). Second, Rennyo follows Shan-tao's interpretation of the six-character Name, that Amida's Name is the practitioner's aspiration and practice for birth in the Pure Land (*gangyōmon* 願行門, "gateway of aspiration and practice"). However, Rennyo reinterprets Shan-tao's theory by incorporating Shinran's concept of directing merit through Other Power (*tariki ekō* 他力回向). Third, Rennyo's interpretation of the six-character Name as the relationship between practitioners and Dharma was greatly influenced by the concept of the oneness of practitioner and Dharma of Amida Buddha (*kihō ittai* 機法一体) from the *Anjin ketsujō shō* (On Attaining the Settled Mind).² By paying special attention to these three factors, I will demonstrate how Rennyo developed his interpretation of the Name as the relationship between the practitioner and the Dharma.

II.

The first element in understanding Rennyo's unique contribution to Jōdo Shinshū doctrine is the influence he received from reading the works of Kakunyo (1270–1351, third head priest of the Hongwanji). One of Kakunyo's contributions to Shinshū exegesis, seen in many of his writings, was his emphasis on the fulfillment passage of the Eighteenth Vow of the *Larger Sutra*. For example, he discusses the relationship between the fulfillment passage and the notion of the one thought-moment of shinjin (*ichinen* 一念) and many recitations of the Name (*tanen* 多念) in his *Kudenshō* (Notes on Oral Transmission).³

The significance of many recitations [of Amida's Name] and the one thought-moment [of shinjin] is that both originate in the passage of the Primal Vow. This passage is often explained, for example, as meaning that [practitioners recite Amida's Name] "up until the end of life and even at the one thought-moment [of shinjin]" (*jōjin ichigyō geshi ichinen* 上尽一形下至一念).⁴ The phrase "even at the one thought-moment [of shinjin]" points to the moment the practitioner's birth in the Pure Land is settled by entrusting the Primal Vow. The phrase "up until the end of life" expresses the practitioner's gratitude to the Buddha's benevolence in granting instantaneous determination for the attainment of birth in the Pure Land (*ōjō sokutoku* 往生即得) [through shinjin] *The most significant teaching of Shinshū originates in the concept [of the settlement] of birth in the Pure Land in the one thought-moment [of shinjin] (ichinen ōjō 一念往生). This is demonstrated in the passage of the fulfillment of the [Eighteenth] Vow [in the Larger Sūtra]: "As practitioners hear the Name, realize even one thought-moment of shinjin and joy, which is directed to them from Amida's sincere mind, and aspiring to be born in that land, they attain birth and dwell in the stage of nonretrogression."*⁵ . . . Such passages⁶ reveal that, because of the impermanent nature of sentient beings' life, the one thought-moment [of shinjin] is the time of the settlement of the practitioners' birth in the Pure Land. These passages also demonstrate the truth that, if practitioners live longer, they of course recite the Name many more times. Since practitioners are settled to be born in the Pure Land in this present life, they recite the Name many times to express their gratitude for the Buddha's benevolence. This point is very clear and natural both in the scriptural passages as well as its reasoning.⁷

In the above passage we see many of the major elements of Kakunyo's interpretive work. First, the *Kudenshō* resolves that the practitioner's birth

in the Pure Land is settled at the one thought-moment of shinjin. Kakunyo understands this one thought-moment as the moment of awakening of shinjin, thus clarifying Shinran's teaching that shinjin is the true cause for birth in the Pure Land (*shinjin shōin* 信心正因). Second, many recitations of the Name are therefore understood as the practitioner's expression of gratitude for the benevolence of Amida Buddha (*button hōsha* 佛恩報謝). For Kakunyo, the essence of Shinran's thought is that shinjin is the true cause for birth and reciting the Name expresses one's gratitude (*shinjin shōin shōmyō hōon* 信心正因称名報恩). Third and most noteworthy, Kakunyo uses the fulfillment passage to support his assertion that "the most significant teaching of Shinshū originates in the concept [of the settlement] of birth in the Pure Land in the one thought-moment [of shinjin]." ⁸ Kakunyo thus places the foundation of Shinshū in the fulfillment passage of the Eighteenth Vow.

Kakunyo's emphasis on the fulfillment passage derives from Shinran's interpretation of the relationship between the passage and the teaching of the one thought-moment of shinjin. In the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, Shinran cites the fulfillment passage in the Chapter on Shinjin. In the section "On One Thought-moment of Shinjin" (*shin ichinen jaku* 信一念釈), he uses the passage as the proof text for the following statement.

Contemplating true and real shinjin [*shingyō*], I find there is the one thought-moment. One thought-moment expresses the ultimate brevity of the instant of the realization of shinjin [*shingyō*] and manifests the vast, inconceivable mind of joyfulness.⁹

Shinran goes on to state that the one thought-moment is free of double-mindedness (*munishin* 無二心).

One thought-moment: because shinjin is free of double-mindedness, one-thought moment is used. It is the mind that is single. The mind that is single is the true cause of [birth in] the pure fulfilled land. When we realize the diamondlike true mind, we transcend crosswise the path of the five courses and eight hindered existences and unfailingly gain ten benefits in the present life.¹⁰

This definition of the one thought-moment of shinjin conveys the most fundamental point of Shinran's thought, that the benefits of shinjin are accomplished simultaneously (*shinyaku dōji* 信益同時). At the one-thought moment of shinjin, practitioners fulfill the cause for birth in the Pure Land, gain the ten benefits in this life (*genshō jūyaku* 現生十益),¹¹ and future birth in the Pure Land is settled, all at the same time. Shinran's thought on this matter of simultaneity is based on the fulfillment passage of the Eighteenth Vow.

Kakunyo closely follows Shinran in his emphasis on the fulfillment passage, as seen in his *Gaijashō* (Notes on Rectifying False Views).

Although each of the three Pure Land Sutras expounds the settled mind (*anjin* 安心), the teaching of the *Larger Sutra* is the most authentic. In the teaching of the *Larger Sutra*, the passage of the Eighteenth Vow is the most essential. Concerning the teaching of the Eighteenth Vow, the passage of the fulfillment of the Eighteenth Vow is most virtuous.¹²

The fundamental root of Kakunyo's interpretation of Shin doctrine is his understanding of the passage of fulfillment of the Eighteenth Vow as the ultimate basis for Shinshū doctrine.

Rennyō's doctrinal interpretation accepts Kakunyo's interpretation of Shinran's teaching on the fulfillment passage, but he combines it with Shan-tao's exegesis of the six-character Name. Rennyō's doctrinal position is found in his *Letters* (*Gobunshō*, 5-11).

Receiving Other-Power faith [*shinjin*] is a matter of fully knowing the import of the six-character Name "*na-mu-a-mi-da-butsu*" and, by this, undergoing a settling of faith [*anjin*]. As for the substance of faith, (the fulfillment passage) in the (*Larger*) *Sutra* states: "Hear the Name and realize faith and joy." Shan-tao has said: "'Namu' (means) 'to take refuge.' It also signifies aspiring to be born and directing virtue. 'Amida-butsu' is the practice." The meaning of the two characters "*na-mu*" is that we abandon the sundry practices and, without doubting, entrust ourselves single-heartedly and steadfastly to Amida Buddha. The meaning of the four characters "*a-mi-da-butsu*" is that, without any effort on our part, (Amida) saves sentient beings who single-heartedly take refuge in him. This is the very essence of the four characters "*a-mi-da-butsu*." To understand "*namu-amidabutsu*" in this way is, therefore, to achieve faith.¹³

Here we see how Rennyō uses the fulfillment passage in his interpretation of the six-character name. His method of citing the passage is to divide it into two sections, "to hear the Name and realize faith and joy" (*mongo myōgō shinjin kangi* 聞其名号信心歡喜), and "attaining birth and dwelling in the stage of non-retrogression" (*sokutoku ōjō jū futaiten* 即得往生住不退轉).¹⁴ The first portion is seen in this letter explaining the contents of *shinjin*. The second portion can be found in another of Rennyō's *Letters* (4-1), where he explains the meaning of the accomplishment of the cause of birth in ordinary life (*heizei gōjō* 平生業成) and the attainment of the truly settled stage in the present life (*genshō shōjōju* 現生正定聚).¹⁵ In

the above letter focusing on the former portion of the passage, Rennyo explains the significance of the fulfillment passage for understanding the contents of shinjin and develops his interpretation of the six-character Name following Kakunyo's interpretation of Shinran. In other words, Rennyo's interpretation of the six-character Name involves his concrete application of the essence of the fulfillment passage of the Eighteenth Vow.

III.

As seen in the letter cited above, Rennyo developed his unique interpretation of the six-character Name based on a series of three major theoretical positions. First, attaining Other-Power shinjin is equivalent to realizing fully the import of the six-character Name *na-mu-a-mi-da-butsu*. Second, the essence of shinjin, i.e., fully realizing the import of the Name, is expressed by the phrase, "to hear the Name and realize shinjin and joy." Third, based on this understanding, Rennyo expands on Shan-tao's interpretation of the six-character Name to develop his own interpretation of the Name. What then is the content of Shan-tao's interpretation of the six-character Name that provided the model for Rennyo's interpretation?

As is well known, Shan-tao defines the six-character Name as the practitioners' aspiration and practice for birth in the Pure Land (*gangyōmon*). This proposition was his response to criticisms leveled against the Pure Land teaching by scholars of the She-lun school [a Chinese school devoted to Mādhyamika], who maintained that birth through ten recitations of the Name, as expounded in the section for the birth of the beings of lowest level of the lowest grade (*gegebon* 下下品) in the *Contemplation Sutra*, was not sufficient cause for birth in the Pure Land. They argued that recitation of the Name is only a cause for birth in the distant future (*betsuji'i* 別時意) because it is merely an act of aspiration lacking in actual practice (*yuigan mugyō* 唯願無行, "mere aspiration without practice").¹⁶ Responding to this critique, Shan-tao asserted in his "Hsuan-i fen" (Jpn. Gengi bun, "Essential Meanings") that reciting the Name as taught in the *Contemplation Sutra* is the authentic practice for birth in the Pure Land, complete with both aspiration and practice.

The ten-times *nien-fo* taught in the *Contemplation Sutra* contains ten aspirations and ten practices. How? "Na-mu" means "taking refuge in"; it also means "aspiring (for birth in the Pure Land) and transferring (the merit of practice toward it)." "O-mi-t'o-fo" is the "practice" (to be transferred for birth). For this reason, one can surely attain birth.¹⁷

Shan-tao posits that “na-mu” has two meanings; “taking refuge” (*kimyō* 歸命) and “aspiration for birth and directing merit” (*hotsugan ekō* 発願回向). Then he defines “O-mi-t’o-fo” (Jpn. A-mi-da-butsu) as the practice. Therefore, he maintains, birth in the Pure Land is possible through reciting the Name because this act embodies at once both aspiration and practice.

A thorough understanding of Shan-tao’s theory of the Name requires a further analysis of these terms, aspiration and practice. A concrete explanation of the contents of aspiration and practice is found not in Shan-tao’s “Hsüan-i fen,” as might be expected, but in the conclusion to his interpretation of the three minds in the “San-shan i” (Jpn. Sanzen gi, “Non-meditative Good Acts”). In this work Shan-tao explains how aspiration and practice are linked to the concept of the three minds:

Since one already possesses the three minds, there is no practice that is not fulfilled. With aspiration and practice already fulfilled, any assertion that one is not born is clearly baseless.¹⁸

In this passage, aspiration and practice are broadly associated with the three minds as a whole; but let us examine Shan-tao’s interpretation of the three minds to see how aspiration, practice and the three minds are interconnected.

In the “San-shan i” Shan-tao begins by defining the three minds: sincere mind (*shijōshin* 至誠心), deep mind (*jinshin* 深心), and the mind of aspiration for birth and directing merit (*ekō hotsugan shin* 回向発願心). First, sincere mind is defined as the being’s fundamental “true and real mind” (*shinjitsushin* 真実心).

[In] sincere mind (*shijōshin*), *shi* means true and *jō* means real. This shows that the understanding and practice of all sentient beings, cultivated through their bodily, verbal, and mental acts, unfailingly take as essential what was performed with a true and real mind.¹⁹

The practices of physical, verbal, and mental actions must be performed with the true and real mind free of falsity and the unreal (*koke fujitsu* 虚仮不実). Next, deep mind is described as based in the two kinds of deep shinjin (*nishu jinshin* 二種深信); it is to apprehend the practice for birth based on the recitation of the Name as revealed in the Primal Vow—which is the five right practices (*goshōgyō* 五正行) of Shan-tao’s “establishing shinjin through practice” (*jūgyō risshin shaku* 就行立信釈). Finally, the mind of aspiration for birth and directing merit is defined as the mind of aspiration for birth by directing the good roots created in the mind of true and real deep shinjin.

The mind of aspiration for birth and directing merit is to aspire, with a mind of genuine deep trust, to attain birth in that land though directing all roots of good performed by oneself and others—the mundane and supramundane roots of good that one has performed through bodily, verbal, and mental acts from the past down to the present life, and further all the mundane and supramundane roots of good performed through bodily, verbal, and mental acts by others, both foolish beings and sages, in which one rejoices. Therefore it is called the mind of aspiration for birth and directing merit. Again, the person who seeks to be born with the mind of aspiration and directing virtue must aspire for attainment of birth by directing virtue and aspire in the true and real mind.²⁰

For Shan-tao, the essence of the three minds is encapsulated in the mind of aspiration for birth and directing merit. Hence, the aspiration portion of “aspiration and practice” is to be understood as the mind of aspiration for birth (*ganshōshin* 願生心), which is the mind of aspiration for birth and directing merit (*ekō hotsugan shin*) containing the essence of the three minds.

The practice that corresponds to the mind of aspiration is broadly defined as the practice for birth (*ōjōgyō* 往生行) based on the three minds. Specifically, it is the five right practices Shan-tao discusses in his basic premise of “establishing shinjin through practice,” which is none other than the recitation of Amida's Name as revealed in the Eighteenth Vow. In the “San-shan i,” Shan-tao shows how his position is supported by the final section of the *Contemplation Sutra* explaining how the sutra's teachings are to be propagated.

The passage beginning, “The Buddha said to Ānanda, ‘Hold well to these words,’”²¹ reveals precisely that Śākyamuni entrusted Amida's name to Ānanda so that it would be passed down to distant generations. Although the advantages of the two gateways of meditative and nonmeditative practices have been taught up to this point, in view of the intent of the Buddha's Primal Vow, this is to bring sentient beings solely to wholehearted utterance of the Name of Amida Buddha.²²

Shan-tao concludes that the fundamental practice for birth discussed in the *Contemplation Sutra* is the recitation of the Name as it is revealed in the Eighteenth Vow. Therefore, the practice discussed here is ultimately to be understood as the recitation of the Name as it is expressed in the phrase “even ten times” (*naishi jūnen*) in the Eighteenth Vow. Thus Shan-tao explains in the conclusion to his interpretation of the three minds that, if

one possesses the three minds, there is no practice that is not fulfilled; and since aspiration and practice are complete, birth is possible.

It is now clear that we must understand Shan-tao's interpretation of the six-character Name *na-mu-a-mi-da-butsu* in light of his theory of aspiration and practice found in his treatment of the three minds. *Na-mu* expresses "aspiration" in two ways: first, its meaning of "taking refuge" (*kimyō*) is the manifestation of shinjin by practitioners who faithfully follow the Buddha; second, its meaning of "aspiration for birth and directing merit" (*hotsugan ekō*) is the practitioner's mind of aspiration for birth and directing merit in which the essence of the three minds is encapsulated. *A-mi-da-butsu* is to be understood as "practice," since reciting the Name is the act of the truly settled and is the practice for birth in accordance with the Buddha's vow. Shan-tao uses the teaching of aspiration and practice (*gangyōmon*) to demonstrate that sentient beings' recitation of the Name contains both aspiration and practice and is indeed the practice for their birth in the Pure Land.

In contrast to Shan-tao's interpretation of the six-character Name as aspiration and practice, Rennyo develops his interpretation of Amida's Name as the relationship between the practitioner (*ki* 機) and the Dharma (*hō* 法) of Amida Buddha (*kihōmon*). In his *Letters* (3-7), he elaborates his position.

... full realization of the significance of the six characters "na-mu-a-mi-da-butsu" is the substance of decisively settled faith. That is, the two characters "na-mu" indicate the receptive attitude of the sentient beings [*ki*] who entrust themselves to Amida buddha. Next, the four characters "a-mi-da-butsu" signify the dharma [*hō*] through which Amida Tathāgata saves sentient beings. This is expressed as "the oneness in 'namu-amidabutsu' of the person (to be saved) and dharma (that saves) [*kihō ittai*]."²³

In this letter, Rennyo identifies *na-mu*, meaning "to take refuge," with the practitioner's shinjin entrusting the Buddha and *a-mi-da-butsu* with the dharma that saves the sentient being. Here Rennyo is speaking of the meaning of *na-mu* (to take refuge) from the perspective of practitioners (*yakushō* 約生) and "a-mi-da-butsu" from the perspective of the Buddha (*yakubutsu* 約仏).

Rennyo follows Shan-tao's interpretation of the six-character Name as the practitioner's aspiration and practice for birth in the Pure Land. However, he further develops the interpretation by emphasizing that the Name also expresses the relationship between the practitioner and the Dharma of Amida Buddha. Rennyo does this through a knowledge of Shinran's thought, especially the master's theory of the Name based on the concept of merit transference through Other Power (*tariki ekō*). Yet,

although Rennyo cites Shan-tao's theory of the six-character Name in his *Letters*, he never directly cites Shinran's writings on this topic. Nevertheless, it is clear that Shinran's thought functions as a lens through which Rennyo views Shan-tao's interpretation of the Name in order to develop his own interpretation of Amida's Name as the relationship between practitioner and Dharma. Now we turn to the development of Shinran's theory of the Name, and how it influenced Rennyo's thought.

IV.

Shinran's theory of Amida's Name is fundamentally developed around his interpretation of the Seventeenth Vow of Dharmākara Bodhisattva in the *Larger Sutra*. In the opening to the Chapter on Teaching in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, Shinran explains the outline of Jōdo Shinshū by introducing the concept of the two aspects of Amida's directing of virtues: the aspect of going forth (*ōsō* 往相) and the aspect of returning (*gensō* 還相).

Reverently contemplating the true essence of the Pure Land way,
I see that Amida's directing of virtue to sentient beings has two
aspects: the aspect for our going forth to the Pure Land and the
aspect for our return to this world. In the aspect of going forth,
there is the true teaching, practice, shinjin, and realization.²⁴

According to Shinran, the virtues of the aspects of going forth and returning are given to us through the working of Amida's Name. Similarly in the Hymns of the Dharma-Ages (*Shōzōmatsu wasan*), Shinran extols the truth that practitioners of shinjin are made to go forth and return by the working of the Name directed to them by Amida.

The directing of virtue embodied in namu-amida-butsu
Is, in its benevolent working, vast and inconceivable;
Through the benefit of the directing of virtue for going forth,
We enter the directing of virtue for returning to this world.²⁵

The basis for Shinran's doctrinal position that salvation occurs through the working of Amida's Name is found in the Seventeenth Vow: "If, when I attain Buddhahood, the countless Buddhas throughout the worlds in the ten quarters do not all praise and say my Name, may I not attain the supreme enlightenment."²⁶ According to this vow, all buddhas in the ten directions are to praise the name of Amida Buddha. Shinran's interpretation of this passage is that Amida has vowed to make all buddhas praise his Name, and through the working of the Name he saves all sentient beings. We sentient beings hear and receive this teaching of the Name, originally

directed to us by Amida Buddha, through Śākyamuni's expounding of the *Larger Sutra*.

Shinran identifies the word "praise" in the Seventeenth Vow as Śākyamuni's expounding of the *Larger Sutra*, and "my Name" as the Great Practice (*daigyō* 大行) of Amida Buddha that is the Name. In a letter found in the *Collection of Letters* (*Goshōsoku shū*), Shinran indicates that the Seventeenth Vow is the basis for his theory of Amida's directing of the Name.

I understand that that which is called "the Vow that all buddhas say the Name" and "the Vow that all Buddhas praise the Name" is for the purpose of encouraging sentient beings of the ten quarters [to entrust themselves to Amida's Vow]. Further, I have been taught that it fulfills the purpose of bringing to an end the doubting thoughts of sentient beings of the ten quarters.²⁷

Shinran also discusses the significance of the Name in the *Notes on Once-calling and Many-calling* (*Ichinen tanen mon'i*), identifying it with "true and real virtue": "'True and real virtue' is the Name. Since the wondrous principle of true reality or suchness has reached its perfection in the Primal Vow, this Vow is likened to a great treasure ocean."²⁸ The meaning of "true and real virtue" is discussed by the Chinese Pure Land master and the third patriarch of Jōdo Shinshū, T'an-luan (476–542), in his *Commentary on Vasubandhu's Discourse on the Pure Land*.

[Virtue] arises from the wisdom and pure deeds of the bodhisattva and adorns the Buddha's activity. It is in accord with suchness and culminates in purity. It is not inverted or false; hence, it is termed true and real virtue. Why is it not inverted? Because it is in accord with suchness and in conformity with the twofold truth. Why is it not false? Because it takes in all beings and brings them into the ultimate purity.²⁹

In other words, true and real virtue displays the fruition of the virtues accomplished by the bodhisattva through wisdom and pure deeds in accordance with the Dharma nature. Shinran applies T'an-luan's definition to equate true and real virtue with Amida's Name. Shinran then adds that Amida's Name embodies the Dharma by demonstrating that the total nature of the Dharma arises through the practice of Dharmākara bodhisattva, in which the wondrous principle of true reality or suchness (*ichijitsu shinnyo* 一実真如) has reached its perfection. In the *Ichinen tanen mon'i*, Shinran gives his reading of the meaning of true reality or suchness: "True reality, or suchness, is the supreme great nirvana. Nirvana is dharma-nature. Dharma-nature is Tathagata."³⁰ The Name is the Dharma whose

total nature arises through the practice of Dharmākara bodhisattva, perfected in the wondrous principle of suchness; it is the Dharma embodying the perfected virtues of nirvana and of Amida's true awakening.

The concept of true and real virtue is also related to T'an-luan's theory of the two dharma-bodies, which is essential for Shinran's understanding of the Name. T'an-luan in his *Commentary* explains that true and real virtue is the three kinds of adornment (*sanshu shōgon* 三種莊嚴) of the Pure Land. This is because the three kinds of adornment are essentially one form of the one Dharma principle (*ippokku* 一法句): that is, the three kinds of adornment are an extended presentation (*kō* 広) of true suchness; and the one Dharma principle is a condensed presentation (*ryaku* 略) of the three adornments.³¹ The three adornments as the extended presentation of the Pure Land are the existential manifestation of the condensed form of oneness (*ichinyo* 一如), whose total nature has arisen through Dharmākara bodhisattva's practice for the salvation of sentient beings as initiated by the bodhisattva's mind of aspiration. In T'an-luan's system, the original form of one suchness itself is the Dharma-body of Dharma Nature (*hosshō hosshin* 法性法身). The Dharma-body of Dharma Nature manifests itself in the existential form of the Dharma-body of Expediency (*hōben hosshin* 方便法身) in order to save sentient beings. Hence, the fruition of virtue in its entirety (the three kinds of adornment and the aspect of true and real virtue) arises through the practice of Dharmākara Bodhisattva and is concretely manifested as Amida's Name, which is the Dharma for the salvation of beings.³²

Based on T'an-luan's theory of the two dharma-bodies, Shinran interpolates that true and real virtue is Amida's Name. We can see how Shinran adopts T'an-luan's dharma-body language in the *Ichinen tanen mon'i*.

From this treasure ocean of oneness form was manifested, taking the name of Bodhisattva Dharmākara, who, through establishing the unhindered Vow as the cause, became Amida Buddha. For this reason Amida is the "Tathagata of fulfilled body." Amida has been called "buddha of unhindered light filling the ten quarters." This Tathagata is also known as *Namu-fukashigikō-butsu* 南無不可思議光佛 (Namu-Buddha of inconceivable light) and is the "dharma-body as compassionate means" [or Dharma-body of Expediency (*hōben hosshin*)]. "Compassionate means" refers to manifesting form, revealing a name, and making itself known to sentient beings. It refers to Amida Buddha.³³

Oneness (*ichinyo*) is the realm of tranquil nirvana which is colorless, formless and featureless dharma nature. The ocean-like nature of true thusness is, however, not simply a realm without color, form, or features, without causes or effects. It is also an active realm working toward this

world of existence by revealing its name and manifesting its forms of adornments. As we saw in T'an-luan's work, Amida Buddha is simultaneously the Dharma-body of Dharma Nature and the Dharma-body of Expediency. However, Amida Buddha is not only suchness, not only a Dharma-body of Dharma Nature; Amida Buddha appeared out of suchness in the form of Dharmākara bodhisattva—the existential, physical form of the Dharma-body of Expediency as the extended presentation of the adornments created through Amida's mind of aspiration and created through the bodhisattva's practice.

Shinran explains the appearance of the bodhisattva in the *Notes on 'Essentials of Faith Alone'* (*Yuishinshō mon'i*): "From this oneness was manifested form, called Dharma-body of Expediency."³⁴ Amida's working toward sentient beings is concretely expressed in the revelation of the Name and the manifestation of his figure (*suimyo jigyo* 垂名示形). Amida's form is the product of the causes and fruitions of the process whereby Dharmākara bodhisattva appeared out of suchness and aspired and practiced to become Amida Buddha. Amida's Name is the revealed name of the Buddha of Unhindered Light Filling the Ten Quarters (*jin jippō mugekō nyorai* 尽十方無碍光如来) who appeared as Dharmākara from the dynamic working of suchness and accomplished the fruition of buddhahood through the fulfillment of cause and aspiration.

In the *Ichinen tanen mon'i* Shinran explains that "'expediency' refers to manifesting form, revealing a name, and making itself known to sentient beings."³⁵ "Manifesting form" means a concrete manifestation of the Dharma-body of Expediency through the causes and fruitions in the process whereby suchness gives rise to Dharmākara Bodhisattva who then becomes the Buddha of Unhindered Light Filling the Ten Quarters:

Suchness → Dharmākara Bodhisattva → Buddha of Unhindered Light

"Revealing a name" means the revelation of the name of the Buddha of Unhindered Light Filling the Ten Quarters. Shinran adds that the form of the Dharma-body of Expediency is not distinct from the Dharma-body of Dharma Nature: "Appearing in the form of light called 'Tathagata of unhindered light filling the ten quarters,' it is without color and without form; that is, it is identical with the Dharma-body of Dharma Nature."³⁶ Although the Dharma-body of Expediency appears in the conditioned realm of existence, it remains equivalent to the Dharma-body of Dharma Nature and is thus beyond the comprehension of ordinary sentient beings. Herein lies the necessity for the revelation of the Name for the sake of the salvation of sentient beings as promised in the Seventeenth Vow.

The Dharma-body of Expediency is the buddha body which arises out of suchness (or the Dharma-body of Dharma Nature) and issues forth its virtue through the practice of Dharmākara Bodhisattva. This is the body of

the Buddha of Unhindered Light Filling the Ten Quarters. It is in the Name that the entire virtue of the essence of the awakening of the Buddha of Infinite Light and Life is realized as the dharma for the salvation of all beings. Thus the Name in the Seventeenth Vow should be understood as the result embodying the total virtues of enlightenment engendered through the process in which (1) suchness gave rise to Dharmākara Bodhisattva, who (2) established vows and practiced to become the buddha Amida, who (3) appeared as a Dharma-body of Expediency in the form of the Buddha of Unhindered Light Filling the Ten Quarters. The resultant Name is directed from Amida Buddha, unflaggingly pervades the Dharma realm, and becomes the cause making sentient beings believe, practice, attain birth in the Pure Land, and attain buddhahood.

Shinran's contribution to this discourse was his demonstration that the Name in the Seventeenth Vow, as the teaching for the salvation of beings, is nothing other than the teaching of directing virtue by Other Power (*tariki ekō*). Shinran explains the connection between the Name and directing virtue by Other Power in his interpretation of the six-character Name in the Chapter on Practice of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*.³⁷

Within Shinran's interpretation of the six-character name, there are three major elements at play. First, *namu* in its meaning of "taking refuge" and interpreted as "the command of the Primal Vow calling to and summoning us" is taken as the *aspect* of Amida's directing virtue (*nōekō no sō* 能回向の相). Second, *namu* in its meaning of "aspiring for birth and directing virtue" and interpreted as "the mind of the Tathagata who, having already established the Vow, gives sentient beings the practice necessary for their birth," is taken as the *mind* of Amida's directing virtue (*nōekō no kokoro* 能回向の心). Third, *amida-butsu*, interpreted as "the practice is the selected Primal Vow," is taken as the *practice* of those who receive Amida's directing virtue (*shoekō no gyō* 所廻向の行). In this context, "the selected Primal Vow" signifies the Seventeenth Vow, since in the introductory remarks to the *Shōshinge* in the Chapter on Practice, Shinran identifies the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Vows as respectively "the practice and shinjin of the selected Primal Vow."³⁸ Practice is the praising of the Name by all Buddhas, which is the Great Practice embodying the Dharma essence (*hottai daigyō* 法体大行). In the above quoted passage, Shinran interprets the six-character Name from the standpoint of Amida (*yakubutsu*) to demonstrate that the Great Practice of Amida's Name is the Dharma directed to us by Amida Buddha.

In the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, Shinran cites numerous texts to support his theory of the Name, but primary among these are the works of the Chinese Pure Land masters of the Sung Dynasty (960–1279). Let us examine some of the major citations to see how Shinran constructs his theory. First, he cites the *Shorter Pure Land Liturgy of Nembutsu Chant in Five Stages* (Wu-hui fa-shih-tsan, Jpn. Goe hōjisan) by Fa-chao (?–821).

Indeed, nembutsu-samadhi is the true supreme and profound gate. With the name fulfilled through the Forty-eight Vows of Amida, the Dharma-king, the Buddha saves sentient beings, taking the power of the Vow as central.³⁹

This statement declares that nembutsu-*samādhi* is the working of the Other Power of Amida's Primal Vow to deliver sentient beings to the Pure Land with his Name. Shinran also draws on the *Collection of Passages on the Land of Bliss* (Le-pang-we-lei, Jpn. Rakuho monrui) by Tsung-hsiao (1151–1214): "The military officer Chang-lun declares: The Name of the buddha is exceedingly easy to keep and say; the Pure Land is exceedingly easy to reach. Among the eighty-four thousand dharma-gates, none compares with this quick path to birth there.⁴⁰ He also uses a passage from the *Commentary on the Amida Sutra* (O-mi-t'o ching i-shu, Jpn. Amida-kyō gisho) by Yüan-chao (1048–1116): "The resultant name stands alone as most excellent in embodying the perfect accomplishment of a myriad practices All myriad virtues manifest themselves in the four characters [*a-mi-da-butsu*]."⁴¹ According to these passages, Amida's Name embodies all virtues promised by Dharmākara Bodhisattva in his causal stage. In the *Commentary on the Amida Sutra*, Yüan-chao also states, "Needless to say, our Buddha Amida grasps beings with the Name,"⁴² to demonstrate the meaning of salvation through the Name. These passages are quoted by Shinran in order to demonstrate the absoluteness of the virtues of Amida's Name and the significance of the salvation through the Name. Therefore, Shinran developed his interpretation of the six-character Name in the Chapter on Practice to clarify that the teaching of the Name is directed to practitioners by Other Power.

In contrast to the interpretation of the six-character Name from the standpoint of the virtues directed by the Other Power of Amida discussed in the Chapter on Practice, Shinran introduces another interpretation of the six-character Name from the standpoint of sentient beings in his *Notes on the Inscription on Sacred Scrolls* (*Songō shinzō meimon*).

Namu means "to take refuge." "To take refuge" is to respond to the command and follow the call of the two honored ones, Śākyamuni and Amida. Thus Shan-tao explains, *Namu* means *to take refuge*. *It further signifies aspiring for birth and directing virtue*: the aspiration to be born in the Pure Land of happiness in response to the call of the two honored ones.

Amida-butsu is explained as the practice, which means we should know that the fulfilled practice is none other than the Primal Vow in which bodhisattva Dharmākara selected the Name. It is the act-as-cause by which birth in the Pure land of peace is truly settled.⁴³

In these passages, Shinran interprets "taking refuge" as shinjin responding and following the command of Śākyamuni and Amida Buddhas. "Aspiration for birth and directing of virtues" is understood as the mind of aspiration for birth into the Pure Land of happiness. "Practice" is the practice of the nembutsu (*naishi jūnen*) appearing in the Eighteenth Vow. This practice is in accordance with Amida's command and is taken as the act-as-cause by which birth in the Pure land is truly settled. In this case, Shinran understands the Name from the standpoint of practitioners, establishing that birth in the Pure Land is attainable through the three minds and ten nembutsu by applying Shan-tao's interpretation of the six-character Name.

In Shinran's interpretation of the Name there are two aspects: the standpoint of practitioners (*yakuki* 約機) and the standpoint of Amida Buddha, or the Dharma (*yakuho* 約法). The former is demonstrated in the *Notes on the Inscription on Sacred Scrolls*, and the latter is found in the interpretation of the six character Name in the Chapter on Practice of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*. These two aspects are not contradictory but are complementary. Amida's Name directed from the Buddha is itself the practitioner's shinjin and recitation of the Name. The Chapter on Practice demonstrates the significance of the Name from the side of Dharma (*hō*) as the teaching of the directing of virtues by Other Power, or the Buddha's working toward sentient beings; the *Notes on the Inscriptions on Sacred Scrolls* discusses the six-character Name from the perspective of practitioners (*ki*) in which the Name as the Dharma of Other Power directing virtues dynamically works in sentient beings. It was through using these two aspects in Shinran's theory of the Name that Rennyo can be said to have adopted Shan-tao's interpretation of the six-character Name to develop his own theory.

V.

The third section of this essay discussed how Shan-tao interprets the six-character Name as the practitioner's aspiration (*gan*) and practice (*gyō*) for birth in the Pure Land from the standpoint of the practitioner (*yakushō*). Rennyo transformed Shan-tao's interpretation based on Shinran's interpretation of the Name as the teaching of Other Power, thereby creating his own theory on Amida's Name as the relationship between practitioner (*ki*) and the Buddha's Dharma (*hō*). In the *Letters* (3-6), Rennyo outlines his position.

(A) What is the meaning of "namu-amida-butsu"? To begin with, the two characters "na-mu" have two meanings: "to take refuge" and "to aspire to be born and to direct virtue." Also, "namu" is the Vow; "amida-butsu" is the practice.

(B) When we cast away the sundry practices and miscellaneous good acts and entrust ourselves to Amida Tathāgata with the single practice and single-mindedness, awakening the one thought-moment of taking refuge in which we realize that he saves us, [Amida] graciously sends forth his all-prevading light and receives us. This is precisely what is meant by the four characters “a-mi-da-butsu” and, also, by “aspiring to be born and directing virtue.”

We see, then, that the six characters “na-mu-a-mi-da-butsu” comprise the Name that fully expresses the significance of Other-Power faith, through which we are to be born [in the Pure Land].⁴⁴

In these two passages we clearly see how Rennyo has reshaped Shan-tao's basic idea. In passage A, Rennyo introduces the Name as aspiration and practice (*gangyōmon*), which is Shan-tao's position. (In reading this passage, however, we must keep in mind that Rennyo understands aspiration and practice as accomplished from the side of Amida Buddha.) In passage B, he gives his own interpretation of the Name as the relationship between practitioners and the Buddha's Dharma (*kihōmon*), which is influenced by Shinran's position. As examined in section three, Shan-tao interprets the six-character Name from the standpoint of the practitioner (*yakushō*), stating in his twofold theory of aspiration and practice that, first, aspiration (aspiration for birth and directing virtue, *hotsugan ekō*) is the mind of directing virtue and aspiration in which the three minds are merged; and, second, *practice* (as in “*amida-butsu* is the practice”) indicates the practitioner's recitation of the Name, which is the act of true settlement for birth (*shōjōgō* 正定業). Rennyo reinterprets Shan-tao's understanding of the six-character Name based in this theory of aspiration and practice through his reading of Shinran's interpretation of the six-character Name, that aspiration and practice are directed from Amida (*yakubutsu*). Thus we see that Rennyo understands the theory of aspiration and practice (*gangyōmon*) as the foundation of his theory of the Name as the relationship between practitioner and Amida's Dharma (*kihōmon*).

As seen in part four above, Shinran interprets the two meanings of *namu*, i.e., “taking refuge” and “aspiration and merit transference,” as “the command of the Primal Vow calling to and summoning us” and “the mind of the Tathagata who, having already established the Vow, gives sentient beings the practice necessary for their birth,” respectively. He understands *namu* as the working of Amida's mind of aspiration and the formulation “*amida-butsu* is the practice” as the practice of Amida directed to practitioners as promised in the Seventeenth Vow. For Shinran, aspiration and practice are accomplished through the working of Amida directed from the side of the Buddha (*yakubutsu*). Based on this understanding of aspiration and practice accomplished from the side of Amida Buddha, Rennyo

developed his interpretation of the six-character Name as the relationship between the practitioner and Amida Buddha. Rennyo transformed Shan-tao's interpretation of the six-character Name as practitioner's aspiration and practice (*yakushō no gangyōmon*) into aspiration and practice directed from the Buddha (*yakubutsu no gangyōmon*) by introducing Shinran's theory of the directing of virtues by Other Power.

In part A of the above quoted letter, Rennyo indicates that Shinran's teaching of aspiration and practice directed from the Buddha will form the foundation for his interpretation of the six-character Name as the relationship between practitioner and Amida Buddha (*kihōmon*). In part B of the letter, Rennyo identifies "take refuge" as the practitioner's shinjin entrusting Amida, or the practitioner's shinjin of entrusting (from the standpoint of the practitioner, or *yakushō*). Rennyo interprets *amida-butsu* as the Buddha's working to embrace beings with the light (*kōmyō sesshu* 光明摂取): when practitioners take refuge in Amida in the one-thought moment of shinjin, they are embraced by Amida's illuminating light. Rennyo then interprets the meaning of this *amida-butsu* as "aspiring to be born and directing virtue" (*hotsugan ekō*), identifying the four characters of *a-mi-da-butsu* with the four-characters of "aspiring to be born and directing virtue" (*hotsu-gan-e-kō* 発願回向) from the standpoint of the Dharma (*hō*; or from Amida Buddha's side, *yakubutsu*). In this way Rennyo develops the interpretation of the six-character Name from the perspective of the relationship between practitioner and Amida Buddha (*kihōmon*). Thus Rennyo incorporates Shinran's understanding of the directing of merit by Other Power to move, first, from Shan-tao's interpretation of the six-character Name as aspiration and practice (*gangyōmon*) from the side of the practitioner (*yakushō*); to, second, aspiration and practice directed from the side of the Buddha (*yakubutsu*); to finally making the relationship between practitioner and Amida Buddha (*kihōmon*) the foundation for his interpretation of the Name.

In another of the *Letters* (4-8), Rennyo further explicates his conception of the relationship between practitioner and Amida Buddha.

(A) It must be understood that the decisive settling of faith in our tradition is expressed by the six characters (*na-mu-a-mi-da-butsu*). Shan-tao explained long ago in his commentary: "'Namu' means 'to take refuge.' It also signifies aspiring to be born and directing virtue. 'Amida-butsu' is the practice." When sentient beings take refuge in Amida—"namu," Amida Buddha, fully knowing those sentient beings, bestows on them the virtue of a myriad good deeds and practices, countless as the grains of sand in the river of Ganges. This is what is meant by "Amida-butsu is the practice." Those who take refuge ("namu") are therefore one with the saving dharma of Amida Buddha; we speak of "the oneness in 'namu-amida-butsu'

of the person [to be saved] and dharma [that saves],” indicating this point.

(B) We must bear in mind, therefore, that “*namu-amida-butsu*” expresses the full realization of perfect enlightenment [that was accomplished] when Amida Buddha vowed long ago (when he was the monk Dharmākara) that unless sentient beings attained buddhahood [*gan*], he too would not attain perfect enlightenment [*gyō*]. This, in other words, is evidence that our birth [in the Pure Land] is settled.⁴⁵

In reading part B of this letter, we must remember that “*namu-amida-butsu*,” as the “full realization of perfect enlightenment,” is equated with practice; and the vow made by Dharmākara is equated with aspiration. Rennyo points out the significance of the six-character Name as Amida’s aspiration and practice (*yakubutsu no gangyōmon*), explaining how the fruition of the virtues of right awakening accomplished by the aspiration and practice of Dharmākara bodhisattva is directed to the practitioner in the form of the teaching of Amida’s Name. Rennyo’s position is based on Shinran’s teaching on Dharmākara and the Forty-eight Vows in the *Yuishinshō mon’i*.

From this oneness was manifested form, called dharma-body as compassionate means [or Expediency (*hōben hosshin*)]. Taking this form, the buddha announced the name Bhikṣu Dharmākara and established the Forty-eight great Vows that surpass conceptual understanding. Amid these Vows are the Primal Vow of immeasurable light and the universal Vow of immeasurable life, and to the form manifesting these two Vows Bodhisattva Vasubandhu gave the title, “Tathagata of unhindered light filling the ten quarters.”⁴⁶

Both aspiration and practice are completely accomplished by Amida Buddha. Based on this teaching, Rennyo constructed his theory of the Name from the perspective that aspiration and practice are directed from the Buddha (*yakubutsu no gangyōmon*) in part B of the above letter.

Rennyo developed his interpretation of the six-character Name as the relationship between practitioner and Amida based on Shinran’s doctrine of the accomplishment of aspiration and practice from the side of Amida Buddha. In part A above, Rennyo identifies *namu* (taking refuge) with sentient beings (*ki*) and links it directly with *amida-butsu*. He interprets Shan-tao’s “Amida-butsu is the practice” as Dharma (*hō*), equivalent to Amida’s directing of virtue, which “bestows on [practitioners] the virtue of a myriad good deeds and practices, countless as the grains of sand in the

river of Ganges." This is the demonstration of the oneness of practioner (*ki*) and Dharma (*hō*) in the six-character Name. Amida's Name, as the fulfillment of his aspiration and practice, is directed toward sentient beings, and when we take refuge in Amida buddha (practitioner's standpoint, *ki*), all virtues and all practices are directed to us. This is the development of the Dharma (*hō*) of "Amida-butsu is the practice," which saves sentient beings who ask for that salvation. Rennyo developed his unique interpretation of the six-character Name as the relationship between practitioners and Amida Buddha (*kihōmon*) by reinterpreting Shan-tao's theory of the six-character Name as the practitioner's aspiration and practice through incorporating Shinran's view of the six-character Name based on the concept of the directing of virtue by Other Power.

Translated by Eisho Nasu

NOTES

1. Translator's note: This is the first part of a translation of "Rennyō Shōnin no myōgō ron: Shinran Shōnin to Rennyō Shōnin," first published in *Rennyō Shōnin kenkyū: Kyōgi hen 2*, edited by Jōdo Shinshū Kyōgaku Kenkūsho (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1998), pp. 191–218, by Dr. Fugen Kōju (Prof. Emeritus, Ryukoku University, Kyoto, Japan). Translations of quoted passages have been taken, wherever possible, from available English translations in the *Collected Works of Shinra* (hereafter *CWS*), (Kyōto: Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-ha, 1997), and in Minor Lee Rogers and Ann T. Rogers, *Rennyō: The Second Founder of Shin Buddhism* (Berkeley, Calif.: Asian Humanities Press, 1991). All other quoted passages have been translated into English by the translator. The original Japanese for each quoted passage can be found in *Shinshū shōgyō zensho* (hereafter *SSZ*), (Kyoto: Ōyagi Kōbundō, 1941), as indicated in the notes. Minor editorial changes and revisions have been made in the text and notes according to the journal's editorial guidelines and conventions of academic publication in English. The translator also wishes to thank Lisa Grumbach for editorial assistance.
2. *SSZ*, vol. 3, pp. 615–638. An English translation is available by Dennis Hirota, "'On Attaining the Settled Mind': A Translation of *Anjin ketsujō shō*, in *Rennyō Shōnin kenkyū: Kyōgi hen 2*, pp. 19–54.
3. The following passages are from the *Kudenshō* (*SSZ*, vol. 3, pp. 1–36), Chapter Twenty-one, "On the problem of practitioners believing one must recite the Name many times because single moment of awakening of shinjin is not enough" (*ichinen nite tarinu to shiri te tanen o hagemu beshi to yū koto*).
4. A modified citation of Shan-tao's *Wang-sheng li-tsan* (Jpn. Ōjō raisan), in *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 651.
5. Shinran cites this passage in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, Chapter on Shinjin; see *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 49, and *CWS*, p. 80.
6. Kakunyo also cites two other passages, one from the *Larger Sutra* (*SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 46) and Shan-tao's *Wang-sheng li-tsan* (*SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 661), to support his discussion. These have been elided for brevity.
7. *SSZ*, vol. 3, pp. 33–34.
8. *SSZ*, vol. 3, p. 34.
9. *Kyōgyōshinshō*, Chapter on Shinjin in *CWS*, pp. 110–111, and *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 71. Shinran makes this kind of statement in many other of his works as well. For example, in the *Notes on Once-calling and Many-calling*

(*Ichinen tanen mon'i*), Shinran explains the fulfillment passage as equivalent to the one-thought moment of shinjin with the statement that "one thought-moment is time at its ultimate limit, where the realization of shinjin takes place" (CWS, p. 474, and SSZ, vol. 2, p. 605). He also defines the concept of immediate attainment of birth in the Pure Land (*sokutoku ōjō*) as attaining the stage of the truly settled immediately—without a moment or a day elapsing—at the one-thought moment of shinjin through hearing and entrusting the Name selected in the Primal Vow (CWS, p. 475, and SSZ, vol. 2, p. 605.).

10. In the section "On One Thought-moment of Shinjin," in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, in CWS, p. 112, and SSZ, vol. 2, p. 72.

11. According to Shinran, the ten benefits are:

1. The benefit of being protected and sustained by unseen powers.
2. The benefit of being possessed of supreme virtues.
3. The benefit of our karmic evil being transformed into good.
4. The benefit of being protected and cared for by all the Buddhas.
5. The benefit of being praised by all the Buddhas.
6. The benefit of being constantly protected by the light of the Buddha's heart.
7. The benefit of having great joy in our hearts.
8. The benefit of being aware of Amida's benevolence and of responding in gratitude to his virtue.
9. The benefit of constantly practicing great compassion.
10. The benefit of entering the stage of the truly settled.

(*Kyōgyōshinshō*, Chapter on Shinjin, in CWS, p. 112, and SSZ, vol. 2, p. 72).

12. SSZ, vol. 3, p. 75.

13. Rogers and Rogers, *Rennyo*, p. 250 (modified); SSZ, vol. 3, p. 508.

14. SSZ, vol. 1, p. 24.

15. In the letter, Rennyo says, "The passage of fulfillment of the Vow further explains it as 'immediately attaining birth [in the Pure Land] and dwelling in [a state of] non-retrogression.' Or again, we may say that [a person in] this state is a person of true and real faith, a practitioner with deep past causes, and one who has completed the cause [of birth] in ordinary life." Rogers and Rogers, *Rennyo*, p. 219; SSZ, vol. 3, p. 475.

16. For an overview of Shan-tao's theory on the six-character Name, see Hisao Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras: A Study and Translation* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 2000), pp. 107–108.

17. "Hsüan-i fen," *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching shu*, in SSZ, vol. 1, p. 457.

Shinran cites these passages in the Chapter on Practice, *Kyōgyōshinshō*, in *CWS*, p. 37.

18. Chapter on Shinjin, *Kyōgyōshinshō*, in *CWS*, p. 91; *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 541.

19. Chapter on Shinjin, *Kyōgyōshinshō*, in *CWS*, p. 84 (modified); *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 533.

20. *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 538. The translation of this passages are based on the translations of the *CWS* cited in Shinran's *Kyōgyōshinshō*, Chapter on Transformed Buddha-Bodies and Lands (p. 217) and Chapter on Shinjin (p. 88).

21. The sutra passage continues: "To hold these words is to hold to the Name of the Buddha of immeasurable life." Chapter on Transformed Buddha-Bodies and Lands, *Kyōgyōshinshō*, in *CWS*, p. 230; *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 66.

22. Chapter on Transformed Buddha-Bodies and Lands, *Kyōgyōshinshō*, in *CWS*, p. 232; *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 558.

23. Rogers and Rogers, *Rennyō*, p. 205.

24. *CWS*, p. 7; *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 2.

25. *CWS*, p. 411; *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 522.

26. Chapter on Practice, *Kyōgyōshinshō*, in *CWS*, p. 13; *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 9.

27. *CWS*, p. 571; *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 711.

28. *CWS*, p. 486; *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 615.

29. Chapter on Practice, *Kyōgyōshinshō*, in *CWS*, p. 29; *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 284.

30. *CWS*, p. 486 (modified); *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 616.

31. Shinran cites T'an-luan's passages in the Chapter on Realization, *Kyōgyōshinshō*, in *CWS*, p. 164–168. See also *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 336–337.

32. For a more detailed discussion on Shinran's understanding of T'an-luan's dharma-body theory, see Yukio Yamada, "T'an-luan's Theory of Two Kinds of Dharma-body as Found in Shinran's *Wago Writings*," *Pacific World*, Third Series, 2 (2000): pp. 99–113.

33. *CWS*, p. 486; *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 616.

34. *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 630. See also *CWS*, p. 461.

35. *CWS*, p. 486 (modified); *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 616.

36. *Yuishinshō mon'i*, in *CWS*, p. 461–462 (modified); *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 631.

37. Shinran discusses Shan-tao's interpretation of the six-character Name (see section 3 in this essay) in the Chapter on Practice: "The word *Namu* means to take refuge [*kimyō*] Thus *kimyō* is the command of the Primal Vow calling to and summoning us. *Aspiring for birth and directing virtue* indicates the mind of the Tathagata who, having already established the Vow, gives sentient beings the practice necessary for their birth. *The*

practice is the selected Primal Vow. *One necessarily attains birth* elucidates the attainment of the stage of non-retrogression. " CWS, p. 38; SSZ, vol. 2, p. 22.

38. CWS, p. 68; SSZ, vol. 2, p. 43.

39. CWS, p. 39; SSZ, vol. 2, p. 23.

40. CWS, p. 45; SSZ, vol. 2, p. 27.

41. CWS, pp. 47–48; SSZ, vol. 2, p. 29.

42. CWS, p. 48; SSZ, vol. 2, p. 29.

43. CWS, pp. 504–505; SSZ, vol. 2, p. 588.

44. Rogers and Rogers, *Rennyo*, pp. 202–203; SSZ, vol. 3, p. 459.

45. Rogers and Rogers, *Rennyo*, p. 233; SSZ, vol. 3, p. 490–491.

46. CWS, p. 461; SSZ, vol. 2, p. 630–631.

The Structure of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*¹

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INTRODUCTION

IN THE TRADITION OF SHIN BUDDHIST doctrinal studies at Ryukoku University, Shinran's idea of practice and shinjin has been viewed, for the most part, from the perspectives of two schools of thought: the first considers true practice to be the Name that we recite (*shogyō-ha*), whereas for the second, true practice is our act of reciting the Name (*nōgyō-ha*). It could be said that, of these two currents of thought, the former represents the mainstream approach within the Ryukoku tradition. Which of the two do I belong to? If one must belong to either of these two schools of thought, then I would belong to the *shogyō-ha*. This is because in my view all practices that enable sentient beings to attain Buddhahood are present within the power of Amida Buddha's Primal Vow and in the working of the Name, which is the practice of great compassion. In that sense, when I am in dialogue with persons belonging to the mainstream faction regarding the problem of practice and shinjin in Shinran's thought in general, I do not sense very much incompatibility between us.

However, strangely, it is when we interpret specific sections in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*² that we tend to disagree with one another; here, our thinking does not seem to mesh at all. I question a number of points taken by the traditional interpretations of the past. From the opposite perspective, scholars who drink from the traditional streams of Tokugawa-era sectarian studies are completely unable to understand what I am driving at. Why should that be? Up until now, I had been unable to grasp the root of our differences. Recently, however, I have come to believe that the cause lies in the existence of studies of Shin Buddhist doctrine that are based in Rennyo's thought. Without doubt, traditional scholars have interpreted the *Kyōgyōshinshō* through the ideas of Rennyo. I, on the other hand, completely reject that sort of approach. How, then, has the *Kyōgyōshinshō* been read from Rennyo's point of view?

I. THE KYŌGYŌSHINSHŌ AND DOCTRINAL STUDIES BASED IN RENNYO'S THOUGHT

Generally, the kind of Shin Buddhist scholarship that I refer to as "Tokugawa-era sectarian studies" arose out of doctrinal studies based in the thought of Rennyo (1415–1499, eighth head priest of the Hongwanji). The doctrinal studies found in Nishi Hongwanji have inherited (and still continue to accept) such traditional, Tokugawa-era sectarian studies. Hence, today's Shin Buddhist doctrinal studies would not be able to exist were it not for Rennyo, and so it is only natural that those engaged in such studies would attach great importance to his thought. After all, the Hongwanji institution exists today only because of Rennyo's influence. Thus, the Hongwanji religious order could never evaluate Rennyo or the ideas that gave birth to the Hongwanji highly enough. Why was Rennyo in such a short period of time able to turn a feeble religious order into the largest religious institution in Japan? A number of factors have been considered. Among them is the point that Rennyo was able to widely explain the thought of Shinran, which was exceedingly difficult to understand, in simple and ordinary words. The "words" he used were his *Gobunshō* (*Letters of Rennyo*).

Renjun (1464–1550), the sixth son of Rennyo, says the following about the production of the *Gobunshō*,

The Master Rennyo constantly read the *Kyōgyōshinshō* and the *Rokuyōshō* from the time that he was young to such an extent that the covers of both texts were in tatters. He later produced his *Ofumi* (*Letters*). In his *Ofumi*, he condensed the teachings of the Master Shinran's *Kyōgyōshinshō*. One thousand passages were first arranged into one hundred; one hundred passages were then condensed into ten. From those ten passages, he further deduced and selected one very simple expression. He presented [the teaching] in this way so that any ordinary being would be able to hear and immediately understand it, and thereby soon attain faith.³

In his *Gobunshō*, how then did Rennyo comprehend Shinran's idea of the cause of birth, based on his study of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*? The following represents the overall structure of Rennyo's idea of the cause of birth, as seen in his *Gobunshō*, with a focus on the relationship between the nembutsu and shinjin.

- (1) The relationship between saying the Name and birth: Persons do not attain birth by single-heartedly saying the nembutsu.

Here, three points regarding the recitation of the nembutsu should be noted:

- (a) One should completely discard all practices other than saying the nembutsu, as well as the mind of self-power.
 - (b) One cannot attain birth simply through the vocalization of the nembutsu, done in the absence of shinjin.
 - (c) A nembutsu that is not recited after the attainment of shinjin is meaningless.
- (2) The relationship between shinjin and birth: Birth depends on shinjin alone, which is very easy to attain. What then is the mind that entrusts? The following three points should be noted:
- (a) To entrust is to believe that one will be born through the power of Amida Buddha's Primal Vow, and not through one's own power.
 - (b) Entrusting means to rely solely, earnestly, and single-heartedly that [Amida] will save one in the afterlife.
 - (c) Entrusting means to entrust everything to Amida Buddha.
- (3) How can one attain shinjin? Here, three points are noted:
- (a) One reflects upon oneself, seeing oneself as an ordinary being of extreme evil, forever foolish and deluded.
 - (b) One believes that Amida Buddha will save this self without fail.
 - (c) This mind arises by single-heartedly hearing the truth of the six-character Name.
- (4) How does *Namu-amida-butsu* relate to us?
- (a) "*Namu*" is the mind with which sentient beings entrust in Amida Buddha, and earnestly wish to be saved.
 - (b) "*Amida-butsu*" is the form with which Amida Buddha saves beings.
 - (c) For that reason, when we entrust in and say, "*Namu-amida-butsu*," at that moment, Amida Buddha, which saves us, and we, who are saved, become of one substance. This constitutes the form of our salvation.
- (5) The relationship between one who has attained shinjin and the nembutsu: "*Shinjin is the true cause of birth*" and "*Saying the*

Name is a response in gratitude.”

“Namu-amida-butsu” is said with the mind of joy over being embraced by the power of the Primal Vow. One’s heart naturally feels happiness, appreciation and gratitude. The life of the nembutsu follower is simply to say the nembutsu as a response in gratitude for the Buddha’s benevolence.

We can see that Rennyo grasped the essence of Shinran’s teaching as “shinjin is the true cause of birth” and “saying the Name is a response in gratitude.” In this way, he indeed condensed one thousand passages in the *Kyōgyōshinshō* into a single expression, and presented it in his *Gobunshō* in response to the requests of his followers. Rennyo’s letter, “On the Master Shinran and his tradition,” sets forth his understanding of the essence of Shinran’s thought in the following straight-forward way,

The essential meaning of the teaching of the Master Shinran and his tradition is that *shinjin* is fundamental. The reason is that, when we cast away all miscellaneous practices and single-heartedly take refuge in Amida Buddha, our birth is settled by the Buddha through the inconceivable power of the Vow. It is also explained that this state means that “one enters the ranks of the truly settled in the one thought-moment in which *shinjin* arises.” It should be understood that one’s recitation of the Name after that is the *nembutsu*, which is a response in gratitude for the benevolence of the Tathagata in bringing about the settlement of our birth.

Respectfully⁴

I can accept Rennyo’s understanding of Shinran’s thought as stated in this letter. Furthermore, I marvel at his easy grasp of the entirety of Shinran’s abstruse thought and his ability to express it in simple terms, which were easily understandable by the masses of people during his time. It is precisely because of Rennyo’s teaching that the orthodox doctrinal studies exist today. On these points my opinion does not differ from them in any way. So, where does the problem exist? Traditional scholars immersed in the stream of Tokugawa-era sectarian studies take the stance that, for the reasons given above, we cannot understand Shinran’s thought unless it is through Rennyo’s teaching. Further, when they interpret the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, they take the position that there is no contradiction at all—even down to each individual character or phrase—between that text and the doctrinal studies based in Rennyo’s thought.

Let us now pick out two or three examples of what I am talking about. At the beginning of the Chapter on Practice Shinran presents a passage in which he reveals the essence of great practice.

The great practice is to say the Name of the Tathagata of unhindered light.⁵

When Rennyo's idea of the nembutsu is superimposed onto Shinran's idea of "saying the Name," it comes to mean, not surprisingly, that any act of reciting the nembutsu with thoughts of engaging in sundry and mixed practices through self-power is to be rejected. Next, the mere vocalization of the nembutsu with one's mouth, without any mental involvement, is also to be proscribed. This does not mean, of course, that one recites the nembutsu in order to attain true and real shinjin. Hence, according to this view, as long as "saying the Name" is taken to be an act performed by sentient beings, the act of saying the nembutsu must unavoidably take place following one's attainment of true and real shinjin.

Here, then, "saying the Name" is understood in the following way:

- (1) "Great practice" is the Name itself, which is the perfect fulfillment of the Buddha's essence and is directed to beings by the Buddha. "This is the practice," [in Shan-tao's terms]. This "practice-as-essence," which leads beings to birth, arises within the entrusting mind, which has received the Name. It manifests in the form of "saying the Name."⁶
- (2) In this case, even though this speaks of sentient beings *saying* the Name, it does not do so from the standpoint of their recitation. Instead, it is discussed from the perspective of sentient beings *hearing* the Name (Namu-amida-butsu), which comes out of their mouths as they say the Name.⁷

That is, "saying the Name" refers neither to a self-powered recitation of the Name, nor to some meaningless recitation of the nembutsu. What is emphasized, instead, is how "saying the Name" is identified with the Name itself, which is directed to beings from Amida.

Later in the Chapter on Practice, Shinran presents another passage in which he comments on the effects of saying the Name.

These passages reveal that saying the Name breaks through all the ignorance of sentient beings and fulfills all their aspirations.⁸

How would this passage be interpreted in the doctrinal studies that are based in Rennyo's thought?

- (1) In effect, "saying the Name" means that one recites the Name (Namu-amida-butsu), upon hearing and entrusting oneself to

it. This is able to break through all sentient beings' ignorance of doubt, which is the basis of samsaric existence. It is also able to fulfill all of their aspirations for birth. Shinran here inherits T'an-luan's analysis of the gate of praise in his *Ching-t'u-wang-sheng-lun-chu* (*Commentary on the Treatise on the Pure Land*) in which he states, "The Name of the Tathagata of unhindered light dispels all the ignorance of sentient beings and fulfills all their aspirations."⁹

- (2) How is it that the Name (saying the Name) is able to break through all deluded passions? It is because one's birth is assured when one entrusts in the Name of the Tathagata. Accordingly, it could be said that, from the standpoint of the Name, all sentient beings' deluded passions are eliminated.¹⁰

Both of these commentaries from the *Kyōgyōshinshō* have points in common. Since the latter one overlaps with T'an-luan's commentary on the gate of praise, Shinran here identifies the nembutsu with the act of "saying the Name," accompanied by true and real shinjin. This would also be an acceptable interpretation from the perspective of doctrinal studies based in Rennyo's thought.

Let us now take note of a third *Kyōgyōshinshō* passage, this one from the Chapter on Shinjin,

True and real shinjin is unfailingly accompanied by [saying] the Name. [Saying] the Name, however, is not necessarily accompanied by shinjin that is the power of the Vow.¹¹

This passage, which appears at the conclusion of Shinran's analysis of the three-fold mind, has been interpreted in the following way by traditional studies:

- (1) In true and real shinjin the Name, which one has received, becomes manifested vocally as one's constant recitation of the Name. Thus, shinjin is necessarily accompanied by saying the Name. However, since the act of saying the Name could include self-powered recitation, it cannot necessarily be said that saying the Name is always accompanied by shinjin.¹²
- (2) We must note that the "Name" here means, "saying the Name." Hence, it is said, "accompanied by" does not refer to a simultaneous accompaniment, but to a sequential accompaniment. When Shinran's passage is interpreted in this sense, it is taken

to mean that, for one who has received true and real shinjin that has been directed from the Tathagata, saying the Name will eventually and unfailingly be manifested as one's response in gratitude for the Buddha's benevolence. However, according to this view, true and real shinjin that is directed from the Tathagata might not necessarily be attained, even though one recites the nembutsu.¹³

Kakunyo (1270–1351, third head priest of the Hongwanji) discusses Shinran's passage in his text, *Honganshō* (*Notes on the Primal Vow*),

True and real shinjin is unfailingly accompanied by [saying] the Name means that, when one is able to hear, from the mouth of a good teacher, of the arising of the Primal Vow, one is embraced by the light of Amida's heart. The Name then naturally comes to be recited, due to the power of that embrace. This is the act of responding in gratitude for the Buddha's benevolence.¹⁴

Needless to say, Shin Buddhist sectarian studies have accepted this interpretation absolutely to the letter.

The tenor of the argument inherent in this interpretation of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* is that "saying the Name" connotes the principles, "shinjin is the true cause of birth" and "saying the Name is a response in gratitude." The claim here is that this thesis is repeated, not just in the three passages cited above, but also in all sections in the Chapters on Practice and Shinjin that pertain to shinjin and saying the Name. That is to say, [the argument is made that] this idea of the cause of birth, as explained by Rennyo, is discussed repeatedly in the *Kyōgyōshinshō* sections on the "explication of the six-character Name," "twofold analysis of the cause of birth," "analysis of the one utterance as practice," "discussion of the three-fold mind and the mind that is single," and "explication of the one thought-moment of shinjin." If that were so, however, it would be completely unrelated to the flow of thought in Shinran's text.

I seriously question the kind of interpretation of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* made in traditional sectarian studies. In his *Gobunshō*, Rennyo does not offer any commentary on the systematic arguments of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* by following the flow of its passages or offering a literal translation of them. His letters do not comment on any particular sections of Shinran's text. Rather, Rennyo's letters do nothing more than re-interpret the entirety of Shinran's thought from Rennyo's own standpoint. Rennyo then uses his own words to express this simply and in response to the requests of his followers. The significance of Rennyo's doctrine lies in how it re-interpreted and modernized Shinran's thought. The great value of his *Gobunshō*

exists in the fact that the gist and essence of Shinran's thought is correctly and concisely expressed in simple terms.

In the Tokugawa era, commoners, of course, and even priests were not easily able to get their hands on the *Kyōgyōshinshō*. But, even if they had, it would have been extremely difficult for them to understand its content. That is why it was often said that Shinran's thought was correctly understood for the first time through Rennyo's teachings. This was the standpoint of Tokugawa-era sectarian studies. As one might expect, then, careful attention was paid so that their interpretations of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* would not differ from the teachings in Zonkaku's *Rokuyōshō* (*Notes on the Essence of the Six-fascicle Work*) or Rennyo's *Gobunshō*.

However, from the perspective of modern textual analysis, that kind of method for interpreting the *Kyōgyōshinshō* must be revised. Today, it is easy for anyone to get hold of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*. Those receiving educational training at a university can easily read its passages and study its content, without any need to refer to the *Rokuyōshō* or *Gobunshō*. More than anything we must avoid superimposing the ideas of Zonkaku (1290–1373) or Rennyo when engaging in a text-based analysis of Shinran's thought. The reason is that, while Zonkaku and Rennyo were both strongly influenced by Shinran's thought, Shinran received absolutely no influence from them. If we must pass through Zonkaku's or Rennyo's ideas [in order to get to Shinran], then Shinran's ideas would be read according to Zonkaku's or Rennyo's doctrinal interpretations. This would result in a distortion of Shinran's thought itself.

In this sense, my interpretation of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* differs greatly, from a methodological standpoint, from the current studies of the text that have developed out of the doctrinal studies based in Rennyo's thought. I completely accept that "shinjin is the true cause of birth" and "saying the Name is a response in gratitude," as established by Rennyo, capture the fundamental essence of Shinran's thought. However, at the same time, I strive to look at Shinran's idea of the "true cause" of birth, not just as Rennyo perceived it, but also through the entirety of the ideas contained within the *Kyōgyōshinshō*. Therefore, I will attempt, to the extent possible, to interpret the extremely systematic arguments of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* in accordance with the flow of its passages, and seek to clarify the ideas found in each section. This point differs fundamentally from the interpretations of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* in traditional sectarian studies, which looked to find the principles of "shinjin is the true cause of birth" and "saying the Name is a response in gratitude" in each and every section of the text. What, then, is the structure of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*?

II. TRUE BUDDHA AND TRUE LAND: TWO ASPECTS OF AMIDA BUDDHA'S DIRECTING OF VIRTUE

The Chapter on Teaching begins with the passage,

Reverently contemplating the true essence of the Pure Land way, I see that Amida's directing of virtue to sentient beings has two aspects: the aspect for our going forth the Pure Land and the aspect for our return to this world. In the aspect for going forth, there is the true teaching, practice, shinjin, and realization.¹⁵

For Shinran, the "true essence of the Pure Land way" (*Jōdo shinshū*) means the teaching regarding Amida Buddha, which is the true teaching of the Pure Land way. The teaching as to Amida Buddha is formed out of two aspects of directing of virtue¹⁶—the aspect for our going forth to the Pure Land and the aspect for our return to this world. The aspect for our going represents the state of sentient beings who are going to realize birth in the Pure Land. The aspect for our return refers to the state in which sentient beings who have been born in the Pure Land immediately return once again to this defiled world in order to instruct and guide others to birth. These two aspects of directing of virtue, however, do not refer to a directing of virtue by beings; we do not practice it ourselves in order to attain birth and then return to this world. Instead, it refers to the working of Amida Buddha's directing of virtue, which enables beings to be born and return to this world. Amida Buddha's Primal Vow, which takes in and holds beings, constitutes this two-fold directing of virtue itself. Then, what kind of Buddha is Amida? What kind of Pure Land did this Buddha establish? What kind of great compassion does this Buddha practice? In the *Kyōgyōshinshō* these questions are discussed in the Chapter on the True Buddha and Land. However, I would first like to draw our attention toward two of Shinran's Japanese-language works, which address this point directly.

In his work, *Yuishinshō mon'i* (*Notes on 'Essentials of Faith Alone'*), Shinran states in regard to Amida Buddha's Pure Land that, "The land of bliss is the realm of nirvana, the uncreated."¹⁷ He then goes on to state,

Nirvana is called extinction of passions, the uncreated, peaceful happiness, eternal bliss, true reality, dharma-body, dharma-nature, suchness, oneness, and Buddha-nature. Buddha-nature is none other than Tathagata. This Tathagata pervades the countless worlds; it fills the hearts and minds of the ocean of all beings. Thus, plants, trees, and land all attain Buddhahood.

Since it is with this heart and mind of all sentient beings that they entrust themselves to the Vow of the dharma-body as compassionate means, this shinjin is none other than Buddha-nature.¹⁸

Why, then, does the heart and mind that entrusts in the vow of the dharma-body of compassionate means arise in all sentient beings? It is because fundamentally there are two kinds of dharma-body: dharma-body as suchness and dharma-body as compassionate means. Since dharma-body as suchness is without color or form, there exists no point of contact between this Buddha and the hearts and minds of ordinary beings. For that reason, oneness manifested all of its virtues as form in order to save such beings. That form was dharma-body as compassionate means. Oneness took the name of a bodhisattva, “Dharmākara,” and gave rise to the inconceivable, great vows. Taking as primary the vows of immeasurable light and immeasurable life, Amida Buddha fulfilled those vows. Vasubandhu called the form of this Buddha, “Tathagata of unhindered light filling the ten quarters.”

Why, then, did oneness give rise to the great vows and become the Buddha, “Amida”? Shinran addresses this point in his letter “On Jinen-Hōni,” in his *Mattōshō* (*Lamp for the Latter Ages*) when he states,

As the essential purport of the Vow, [Amida] vowed to bring us all to become supreme Buddha.¹⁹

What is the nature of the great compassion with which suchness became Dharmākara Bodhisattva? Its sole purpose was to bring all sentient beings to the attainment of supreme Buddhahood. Supreme Buddha is none other than suchness itself. Thus, in order to bring ordinary beings to know supreme Buddha and attain to suchness, suchness first moved, and manifested itself as the Tathagata named “Amida” (immeasurable light and life) that takes in and holds all sentient beings. For that very reason, from the very beginning the vows of Amida Buddha have not arisen through the practitioner’s calculation. Rather, Shinran states,

Amida’s Vow is, from the very beginning, designed to bring each of us to entrust ourselves to it—saying “Namu-amida-butsu.”²⁰

Accordingly, for the purpose of attaining birth, neither practitioners’ abilities or states of mind, nor our being evil or good are the issue. The sole question that is asked is whether or not practitioners entrust in [the vow, saying,] “Namu-amida-butsu.” Sentient beings who do so will realize supreme Buddha, as the truth of *jinen*. Shinran explains this truth by stating,

Amida Buddha is material that allows us to know the state of *jinen*.²¹

“State” (*yō* in Japanese) has the meaning of condition, aspect, state, or sign. “Material” (*reu* in Japanese) is a reference to data; it means to count on a measure and then infer something through it. In order to make ordinary beings know the truth of *jinen-hōni*, or, the principle of suchness, suchness gave rise to the vows of great compassion (that is, suchness *namu-s*) and became Amida Buddha. That is to say, both the Buddha-body and Buddha-land, which are the dharma-body as compassionate means, are “Namu-amida-butsu.” This dharmic-truth, which takes in and holds all sentient beings, constitutes the two aspects of directing of virtue in the true essence of the Pure Land way. This is what Shinran declares at the outset of the Chapter on Teaching. He also discovers the true teaching, which is directed to beings in the aspect for our going forth, within the *Larger Sutra of Immeasurable Life*. This sutra teaches that Amida Buddha established the vows and fulfilled the Name, which is the treasure of virtues that takes in and holds all sentient beings. Thus, this teaching, which expounds “how the Buddha’s Vow arose—its origin and fulfillment,”²² becomes the authentication of the fundamental reason for Śākyamuni’s appearance in the world—to save all beings in this world.

III. THE TEACHING AND PRACTICE DIRECTED TO BEINGS IN THE ASPECT OF GOING

What kind of sutra is the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life*? Shinran expresses the fundamental essence of this sutra with the words,

Thus, to teach the Tathagata’s Primal Vow is the true intent of this sutra; the Name of the Buddha is its essence.²³

The most important point of this sutra lies in its exposition of the Primal Vow of Amida Buddha. The truth of the Buddha’s Name—Namu-amida-butsu—is revealed within the entirety of the Primal Vow. Shinran, first of all, searches for the true practice that enables all sentient beings to realize Buddhahood, and he discovers that practice in the Seventeenth Vow. He considers this vow—the “Vow that all the Buddhas say the Name”—to be the “true practice of the Pure Land way” and the “practice selected in the Primal Vow.”²⁴ What, then, is set forth in this vow?

If, when I attain Buddhahood, the countless Buddhas throughout the worlds in the ten quarters do not all praise and say my Name, may I not attain the supreme enlightenment.²⁵

In the Seventeenth Vow Dharmākara vows that, when he becomes a Buddha, all of the immeasurable Buddhas throughout the worlds of the ten directions will praise him and the “majestic power and virtues, inconceivably profound” of his Pure Land, and will recite his Name. If they should not, then he would not attain the supreme enlightenment. What aspect of this vow, we must ask, constitutes the “true practice of the Pure Land way” or the “practice selected in the Primal Vow?” In the opening passage of the Chapter on Practice, Shinran states,

Reverently contemplating Amida’s directing of virtue for our going forth to the Pure Land, I find that there is great practice, there is great shinjin. The great practice is to say the Name of the Tathagata of unhindered light.²⁶

He informs us that great practice, which is directed by the Buddha so that all sentient beings may attain birth in the Pure Land, is to “say the Name of the Tathagata of unhindered light.” Why, then, would this action constitute “great practice?” It is because this practice embodies “all good acts” and possesses “all roots of virtue.” Saying “Namu-amida-butsu” is the sole practice that is “perfect and most rapid” for reaching the realm of enlightenment. For that reason, Shinran explains, saying the Name is the true practice of the Pure Land way, and the Name—Namu-amida-butsu—which is directed to beings from the Tathagata, is the practice selected in the Primal Vow.

By combining Shinran’s commentary on great practice in the Chapter on Practice with the meaning of the Seventeenth Vow, we can see that the “saying of the Name” by all of the countless Buddhas is the true practice of the Pure land way. The Name that they recite is the practice selected in the Primal Vow. What, then, does “all the Buddhas say the Name” mean? It does not mean that all the Buddhas simply engage in a vocalized, yet meaningless recitation of “Namu-amida-butsu.” Rather, it means that all the Buddhas praise the majestic virtues of that Name. With this act, all the Buddhas are also teaching all sentient beings in their Buddha-lands, “For this reason, just as we are saying the Name, you should recite the Name and attain birth in that Buddha’s land!” The totality of that practice can be understood symbolically as “all the Buddhas say the Name.”

Thus, the “saying of the Name” by all the Buddhas constitutes their exposition as to the Buddha of immeasurable life. If so, however, what would be the relationship between teaching and practice? Here, we must examine the passages from the *Larger Sutra* cited in both the Chapter on Teaching and the Chapter on Practice. What is being said here? First, let us take a look at the passage from the *Larger Sutra* cited in the Chapter on Teaching. Strangely, here Śākyamuni does not make one mention of the majestic powers and virtues of Amida Buddha. Instead, the passage does

nothing more than discuss the fact that Śākyamuni radiates with five exquisite and virtuous features, which had never been seen before. Struck by Śākyamuni's inconceivably rare and virtuous appearance, his disciple Ānanda asks him, "Do not you, the present Buddha, also think on all other Buddhas now?"²⁷ He ends with a request, "Since those Buddhas are no doubt supreme Buddhas, please allow us to hear their teaching!" In contrast, the passages cited in the Chapter on Practice present Śākyamuni Buddha's concrete teaching. They address the questions of what the relationship between Amida Buddha, all the Buddhas and sentient beings is; why Amida Buddha makes his Name resound through the worlds of the ten quarters; how all the Buddhas preach the truth of that Name; and what kind of beings truly hear that teaching.

What, then, is meant by the five inconceivably exquisite and virtuous features of Śākyamuni, which is discussed in the Chapter on Teaching? His limitless radiance is a manifestation of the fact that his heart is filled with the highest joy. Śākyamuni's superlative brilliance, which he had never exhibited before now, indicates that he has come into contact with the most superlative Buddhist teaching. In this state, the teaching of Amida Buddha's great compassion, which takes in and holds all sentient beings unconditionally, is now being directed to the heart and mind of Śākyamuni. Shinran understood this truth to be the "teaching," which is directed by Amida Buddha in the aspect for our going forth; this is what Shinran calls the "true essence of the Pure Land way."

This "teaching" would eventually become the *Larger Sutra of Immeasurable Life* as expounded by Śākyamuni. However, at the point of time contained in the Chapter on Teaching it had not yet been spoken by him. Concretely speaking, the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* mentioned in the Chapter on Teaching does not refer to a sutra that had appeared in this world. Rather, the Chapter states that the purport of Amida Buddha's Vow and the virtues of the Name have all been directed to the heart and mind of Śākyamuni. Śākyamuni himself is now about to expound this teaching, which is the fundamental reason for his appearance in the world. Shinran refers to the entirety of this teaching as the "true teaching" of the Pure Land way, which is directed by Amida in the aspect for our going forth. In his words,

It is indeed the right exposition for which the Tathagata appeared in the world, the wondrous scripture rare and most excellent, the conclusive and ultimate exposition of the One Vehicle."²⁸

In this way, the Chapter on Practice becomes Śākyamuni's concrete exposition of this teaching. Where, then, does the difference between the Chapters on Teaching and Practice lie? The same truth is contained in both teachings. The difference lies in whether it exists within the mind or

whether it becomes manifested outwardly as action. The Chapter on Teaching reveals the “dharma-gladness” of Amida Buddha’s great compassion, which fills the heart and mind of Śākyamuni. The Chapter on Practice, on the other hand, sets forth the explication of that “dharmic-truth.” Thus, it must be said that the one performing the practice throughout the Chapter on Practice is always Śākyamuni himself.²⁹

The passages in the Chapter on Practice progress in a flow from Shinran’s “commentary presenting the essence of great practice,” to the passages cited from the *Larger Sutra*, and then to his “commentary on breaking through and fulfillment through saying the Name.” These are followed by passages cited from the commentaries of the Pure Land masters, beginning with Nāgārjuna. Here, Shinran replaces the relationship between Amida Buddha and Śākyamuni (which the Chapters on Teaching and Practice had clarified) with the relationship between Śākyamuni Buddha and Nāgārjuna. In explaining why Nāgārjuna himself was able to praise the teaching of Amida Buddha, he states that was because the true bodhisattva path cannot exist outside of saying the Name of Amida Buddha and praising Amida’s Primal Vow. This teaching is followed by those of Vasubandhu, T’an-luan, Tao-ch’o, Shan-tao, Genshin and Genkū. Of these masters Shan-tao in particular explicates the meaning of “Namu-amida-butsu,” which is recited. He explains that “namu” means to take refuge, and to aspire and direct merit. “Amida-butsu” indicates the one who takes refuge, and aspires and directs merit; that is to say, it is the “practice” of Amida Buddha itself.

Shinran then interprets this specialized meaning of “namu” in even more detail, based upon his own, unique view. He reveals that, when sentient beings recite, “Namu-amida-butsu,” our hearts and minds are endowed with all of Amida Buddha’s roots of good and virtues. What is important here is that, as long as we do not truly know this truth, our birth will not be settled. Shinran elucidates the notion of settlement of birth through the relationship of light, Name and shinjin. When we hear the truth of the Name (which is great practice), realize shinjin and joy, and say the nembutsu even once, our birth will be settled. Within the Buddha’s teachings nothing surpasses this great benefit. For this reason, Śākyamuni entrusts this eternal teaching of “saying the Name once” to Maitreya [at the close of the *Larger Sutra*].

Why would saying the Name once bring sentient beings to the attainment of Buddhahood? It is because it is due to Other Power—the power of Amida Buddha’s Primal Vow. This single, ultimate teaching of the Buddha is called the “ocean of the one vehicle—the Primal Vow.” This is made clear to us by the teachings of the seven Pure Land masters. Shinran himself, together with those masters, praises and extols the teaching of the nembutsu—the ocean of the one vehicle of the universal Vow—to all persons who will be born. By observing the flow of ideas in the Chapter on

Practice in this way, we have to say that “practice,” as it is revealed here, involves neither a method of practice (“How do persons without shinjin attain it?”) nor a question of the way in which we should recite (“How and with what state of mind should we recite?”). Then, what kind of practice is presented in the Chapter on Practice? It is this: within the true essence of the Pure Land way, every single person, from Śākyamuni to Shinran, has recited “Namu-amida-butsu” in the same way as the exclusive practice; he has praised the virtues of that great practice, and spoken of the truth of this teaching to other people. When persons who have attained shinjin teach the Name to those who have not realized shinjin, this “act” is the “true practice of the Pure Land way” and the “practice selected in the Primal Vow.”

IV. THE SHINJIN AND REALIZATION DIRECTED TO BEINGS IN THE ASPECT OF GOING

As we move from the Chapter on Practice to the Chapter on Shinjin, where does the definitive difference between the two lie? Needless to say, it lies in the difference between the Seventeenth Vow and the Eighteenth Vow. For whom did Amida Buddha establish these two vows? The former is addressed to “all the Buddhas in the ten quarters,” while the latter mentions the “sentient beings of the ten quarters.” The subject of each vow is “all the Buddhas” on the one hand, and, on the other, “sentient beings.” Thus, the practice set forth in the Chapter on Practice is the practice of saying the Name performed by all the Buddhas. The shinjin described in the Chapter on Shinjin is the shinjin that is attained by sentient beings.

Shinran’s detailed commentary shows that the central problem of the Chapter on Shinjin concerns the “person in the stage of the truly settled.” How could sentient beings attain this shinjin? If that point were elucidated in the Chapter on Shinjin, then we would have to say that the central problem of the chapter would focus on the structure of the attainment of shinjin by persons without shinjin. However, Shinran says this in regard to the attainment of shinjin in the special preface to the Chapter on Shinjin,

As I reflect, I find that our attainment of shinjin arises from the heart and mind with which Amida Tathagata selected the Vow, and that the clarification of true mind has been taught for us through the skillful works of compassion of the Great Sage, Śākyamuni.³⁰

Here the “attainment of shinjin” refers to the attainment of shinjin by sentient beings. However, Shinran interprets this to mean that such shinjin arises from the vow-mind selected by the Tathagata. Further, the true mind is realized in our minds because Śākyamuni has clarified this teaching

through his skillful works of compassion. This activity of Amida and Śākyamuni was explained in the Chapter on Practice. Therefore, we can see that the Chapter on Shinjin inquires into sentient beings' attainment of shinjin. That is, it looks into the Vow-mind of the Tathagata, which takes in and holds beings, and poses the question of how beings can attain shinjin, which is directed to us from that Vow-mind.

Amida Buddha promises in the Primal Vow simply to give shinjin—the true cause of our birth—to sentient beings unilaterally. Through his entire life, Śākyamuni Buddha continually preached the truth of this teaching, in order that beings would truly know this vow-mind. Why does the Buddha practice such great compassion? It is because foolish, ordinary beings are transmigrating endlessly in delusion, with no understanding of this truth. In his commentary on great shinjin, Shinran elucidates the relationship between the Tathagata's vow-mind and the minds of sentient beings, by citing passages from the *Larger Sutra*, as well as T'an-luan, Shantao, and Genshin. By tying together the contents of those passages, he explains that true practice and shinjin is entirely fulfilled and directed to beings through the pure vow-mind of Amida Buddha. The three minds—sincere mind, entrusting, and aspiration for birth—were established in the Primal Vow. Vasubandhu received these three minds and aspired singleheartedly to be born in the Pure Land. Hence, the three-fold mind of the Primal Vow and the single-mind of sentient beings becomes the most crucial issue in the Chapter on Shinjin.

Here, two problems arise. The first involves the vow-mind of the Tathagata; the second concerns the attainment of shinjin by sentient beings. The former inquires into the three-fold mind established in the Primal Vow, while the latter looks into the single-mind, which receives those minds. What sort of relationship, then, is there between the three-fold mind and the single-mind? Shinran first interprets the three-fold mind of the Primal Vow from two perspectives: the literal meanings of the terms and the Buddha's intention. In his etymological analysis, Shinran inquires into the linguistic meanings of the terms, "sincere mind, entrusting, and aspiration for birth," which Amida establishes in the Vow. All of these terms, he states, refer to the true, pure mind that is single. Further, the meaning of the term "entrusting" includes the meaning of the terms "sincerity" and "aspiration for birth." Thus, when viewed as being true and pure, and not mixed with the hindrance of doubt, emptiness, or falsity, all three minds naturally become the single-mind of entrusting. Fundamentally, the three minds of the Vow are none other than the single, true and pure mind of the Tathagata, which is absolutely unmixed with the hindrances of doubt and falseness existing in the minds of sentient beings. For Shinran, Vasubandhu's declaration of "the mind that is single" at the beginning of his text, *Sukhāvati-vyūhopadeśa* (*Treatise on the Pure Land*), presents

the essence of the three-fold mind as the single-mind in order to make this truth “easily comprehensible for foolish sentient beings.”³¹

Yet, the Primal Vow could have set forth the single-mind alone. Why, then, does the Vow purposely establish the three-fold mind of sincerity, entrusting, and aspiration for birth? In the structure of salvation, the working of the mind of great compassion must be revealed concretely to foolish sentient beings so that we might be saved. We foolish sentient beings do not possess any true mind that would enable us to attain enlightenment. We are fundamentally unable to bear a mind of pure realization. Foolish, ordinary beings are also completely unable to give rise to the mind that aspires for enlightenment. What, then, could be done so that sentient beings could be taken in and held by great compassion? The true and real mind, the “mind full of truth, reality, and sincerity,”³² and the enlightened “mind of delight, joy, gladness, and happiness”³³—that is, the heart and mind of great compassion, which enables foolish sentient beings, as we are, to realize Buddhahood—can only be fulfilled from the side of the Buddha. That is why the words “sincere mind, entrusting and aspiration for birth” are set forth in Amida Buddha’s Primal Vow. It goes without saying that these three minds are in themselves the single-mind of the Buddha that is true, real, and pure.³⁴

How, then, can beings truly know the three-fold mind established in Amida Buddha’s Primal Vow, which reaches the hearts and minds of sentient beings? Through Śākyamuni’s act of preaching the dharma, sentient beings will eventually be able to attain shinjin, or, trust in Amida’s mind of true entrusting. The *Larger Sutra of Immeasurable Life* explains sentient beings’ attainment of shinjin in this way,

All sentient beings, as they hear the Name, realize even one thought-moment of shinjin and joy, which is directed to them from Amida’s sincere mind.³⁵

Here, Śākyamuni teaches that the Name, which is recited by sentient beings, is Amida Buddha’s vow-mind itself. When sentient beings “hear the Name” the inner truth of that teaching—that is, the truth of the Primal Vow—becomes clear. Shinran reveals the truth of the three-fold mind of the Primal Vow, which he himself heard and in which he entrusted, through his question-and-answers regarding the “three-fold mind and the single-mind.”

Continuing on with Shinran’s discussion of the three-fold mind of the Primal Vow, the *Kyōgyōshinshō* presents an interpretation of the principle of the one thought-moment of hearing and entrusting from the *Larger Sutra* passage, which expresses sentient beings’ attainment of shinjin. How does “hearing” arise? What kind of Buddhist path do such sentient beings follow? The path of practice for beings who attain shinjin is set forth in the

commentaries on the one thought-moment of shinjin and the true disciple of the Buddha in the Chapter on Shinjin.

The section on the true disciple of the Buddha ends with the following passage,

I know truly how grievous it is that I, Gutoku Shinran, am sinking in an immense ocean of desires and attachments and am lost in vast mountains of fame and advantage, so that I rejoice not at all at entering the stage of the truly settled, and feel no happiness at coming nearer the realization of true enlightenment. How ugly it is! How wretched!³⁶

What on earth could this mean? When it became clear to Shinran what being a true disciple of the Buddha really entailed, then for the first time it became apparent to him that he was completely incapable of being a true disciple of the Buddha. Here we are given an image of Shinran as one who accepted exactly what the teaching of the Eighteenth Vow told him; and yet, even as he did, found himself in direct defiance of that teaching. He was the very person who would “commit the five grave offenses” and “slander the right dharma”; thus, he would be the sole person excluded by the Primal Vow. Then, could a path for the salvation of such a person really exist? This point becomes the final issue taken upon in the Chapter on Shinjin, an issue expressed as the “inclusion of those who commit the five grave offenses and slander the right dharma.” Shinran’s position is that beings who are excluded from the Vow are in reality the very persons who have the potential to truly encounter the Primal Vow. Hence, the structure of attaining shinjin in the true essence of the Pure Land way is discussed in terms of the inclusion of those who commit the five grave offenses and slander the right dharma.

What is the relationship between shinjin and realization? The phrase, “the clarification of the true mind”, which appears at the outset of the Chapter on Shinjin, refers to the mind that attains shinjin. However, at the same time, it signifies realization, which is attained by that mind. To attain shinjin is in itself to attain realization. Shinran describes this sense of realization in the beginning of the Chapter on Realization.

To reveal, with reverence, the true realization: It is the wondrous state attained through Amida’s perfect benefiting of others; it is the ultimate fruition of supreme nirvana.³⁷

Shinran then confers “supreme nirvana” with various meanings: “uncreated dharma-body”, “true reality”, “dharma-nature”, “suchness”, and “oneness.” He goes on to state that, in order to bring sentient beings to achieve

realization, Amida Buddha “comes forth from suchness and manifests various bodies—fulfilled, accommodated, and transformed.”³⁸

We normally think that after realization comes nirvana. That is, we believe that one first attains realization and then achieves birth in the true Buddha-land. In our view, the *Kyōgyōshinshō* flows from the Chapter on Realization to the Chapter on the True Buddha and Land. However, that is not how the structure of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* flows. Amida Buddha has already come forth from suchness into this world in order to enable sentient beings to attain true realization. Therefore, it is not that the true Buddha-land lies on the other side of realization. Rather, realization in the aspect for our going forth to be born is directed to beings from the true Buddha-land so that we might be able to become supreme Buddha. For that reason, it must be said that, for sentient beings, our attainment of true realization in itself signifies our becoming the true Buddha.³⁹

What, then, is the form that true realization takes for sentient beings? Shinran states that supreme nirvana has neither color nor form. Such realization, therefore, cannot take form in living beings, and it is necessary to wait until the moment of death. Hence, two forms of realization become apparent. The first is realization attained during the life of nembutsu followers of shinjin. The second is realization that is attained at the instant of death. In this case, the former could be referred to as realization in the aspect of going, while the latter could be called realization in the aspect of returning. Then, what would be the Buddhist path for nembutsu practitioners who have attained realization in the aspect for going forth? What kind of path would be practiced by bodhisattvas in the aspect for returning? The path of bodhisattvas in the aspect of returning is described in detail in the passages cited from T'an-luan's Commentary in the second half of the Chapter on Realization. However, the path of practice for those who have attained realization in the aspect of going is not, for the most part, discussed concretely in the Chapter on Realization. Why would this be?

Where do we find the discussion of the path of practice for nembutsu practitioners who have attained shinjin? Needless to say, it can be found in the Chapter on Practice and in the commentary on the true disciple of the Buddha in the Chapter on Shinjin. In these sections, Shinran presents the image of nembutsu practitioners who have attained shinjin, praise Amida Buddha, and teach the true and real virtues of the Name to nembutsu followers who have not yet attained shinjin. In other words, the Buddhist path of nembutsu practitioners who have attained realization in the aspect for going is concretely revealed in these sections. Therefore, there was no need for Shinran to provide a detailed description of such persons in the Chapter on Realization.

What, then, is the significance of the path of practice for bodhisattvas in the aspect of the return for those of us who have not yet been born in the Pure Land? Shinran places importance on the commentary on the directing

of virtue in the aspect for our return in the Chapter on Realization. Why would it have been so necessary for Shinran to write about a bodhisattva path that arises after death? It must have been that Shinran himself saw the truth of the aspect for the return in the instant that he attained shinjin and achieved realization in the aspect for his going forth. This means that the truth of the aspect of returning superimposed itself on Shinran, who was in the aspect of going. As a result, it became necessary for him to clarify for himself [what would become] his own eternal practice of directing virtue as a bodhisattva in the aspect of returning. However, if that were all that there was to it, then for him it would simply have been a future concern. One cannot imagine that it would have been an especially important matter in his present existence. So, why would this have been an important and vital Buddhist path for him?

Shinran states the following in regard to nembutsu followers, who have attained shinjin,

Because sentient beings of the nembutsu have perfectly realized the diamondlike mind of crosswise transcendence, they transcend and realize great, complete nirvana on the eve of the moment of death.⁴⁰

“Great, complete nirvana” is a reference to the Buddha of suchness itself. Thus, when sentient beings of the nembutsu “transcend and realize great, complete nirvana at the moment of death” they become the Buddha of suchness. This is what it means to become bodhisattvas in the aspect of returning. As the accommodated and transformed bodies of Amida Buddha, they represent the form taken by the activity of great compassion. Those of us living today have not yet met with the moment of our death. Therefore, even nembutsu followers who have attained shinjin but have not yet arrived at the moment of death can exist only in the aspect of going. For persons who are presently in the aspect of going what exactly is the bodhisattvas’ directing of virtue in the aspect of returning?

Shinran says that true realization in the true essence of the Pure Land way is “the ultimate fruition of supreme nirvana.”⁴¹ He then states that this realization is true reality, dharma-nature, suchness and oneness. He interprets this to mean that, in order to bring sentient beings to the attainment of true realization, “Amida Tathagata comes forth from suchness and manifests various bodies—fulfilled, accommodated, and transformed.” That being so, bodhisattvas in the aspect of the return, who have attained supreme nirvana, exist within the directing of virtue of the great compassion of Amida Buddha, which comes forth from suchness. This might be referred to as the state of nembutsu followers who have attained birth in the Pure Land; together with Amida Buddha, their image shines brilliantly on persons of the nembutsu in this world of the present.

We ordinary beings who live in the present life cannot personally experience any direct contact with the great compassion of Amida Buddha. Neither can we feel such living warmth even in the words of Śākyamuni Buddha's exposition of the *Larger Sutra of Immeasurable Life*. However, we can be deeply moved by the words of Shinran, and can feel living warmth in our teachers and parents, who raised and nurtured us. We can remember the images of those who have taught and guided us. We can also warmly and concretely touch bodhisattvas in the aspect of returning. In this sense, a bodhisattva in the aspect of returning represents the future state of nembutsu followers of today. At the same time, for those of us who are currently alive, it is also the form of persons of the nembutsu who come back from the Pure Land in order to enable us to attain shinjin and to guide us to the fruition of Buddhahood.

Shinran's discussion of the form of bodhisattvas who return once again to this world after having attained birth in the Pure Land, and thereafter "sport in the gardens and forests" takes place in the context of the practices of the five gates of mindfulness. That is, he states that when foolish, ordinary beings worship Amida Buddha, praise the nembutsu, and hear the teachings of the Pure Land, it is all due to the working of the bodhisattvas in the aspect of the return. However, awakening to this truth is realized by persons of the nembutsu who are in the aspect of going. We can see in this way that, while the Chapter on Realization speaks principally about directing of virtue in the aspect for our return, Shinran discusses the totality of realization in terms of our realization in the aspect for our going forth.

CONCLUSION: THE MEANING OF THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH VOWS

What is explicated in the Chapter on the Transformed Buddha-Bodies and Lands? In the instant of the attainment of shinjin, the true teaching, practice, shinjin, and realization of the true essence of the Pure Land way all became clear for Shinran. However, why had he not been able to perceive this truth prior to that very time? It could be said that the reason for that also became clear. This is why both the cause of his delusion prior to his attainment of shinjin and the provisional teachings that can guide beings to that attainment are expounded in the Chapter on the Transformed Buddha-bodies and Lands. Why do sentient beings of this world currently exist in a state of delusion? It is because we have not yet encountered the Buddha-dharma. Here, Shinran raises three sets of questions. First of all, he asks why teachings other than the Buddhist teachings continue to delude persons. This is the point of inquiry in his commentary on non-Buddhist teachings.

Next, he asks why the teachings in the Path of Sages are to be excluded from the acceptable Buddhist teachings. This question requires an inquiry into the nature of the times in which we live. Shinran reveals that it is impossible to perform practices in the Path of Sages in today's world of the last dharma-age. Hence, the Pure Land path is the sole path for the attainment of enlightenment. Shinran then asks why Amida Buddha vowed to establish the practices leading to birth in the Pure Land in the Eighteenth, Nineteenth and Twentieth Vows? Here, Shinran reflects on his own path of practice, and comes to know that it had inevitably traced its way from the Nineteenth Vow, turned toward the Twentieth Vow, and then turned and entered the Eighteenth Vow.⁴²

Why would Amida Buddha's Primal Vow purposely establish the paths of the practices of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Vows in order to lead beings to the attainment of shinjin? Further, why would Śākyamuni intentionally teach us about the Primal Vow in that way? In the Chapter on the Transformed Buddha-bodies and Lands, Shinran elucidates the truth that beings will not directly enter the Eighteenth Vow. Rather, we must take the long way around, through the Nineteenth and Twentieth Vows. The reason is simple: we are normally not able to listen unquestioningly to the teaching of the Eighteenth Vow.

The Eighteenth Vow declares, "Simply say the nembutsu and attain Buddhahood. Entrust in my fundamental aspiration!" However, even if we were told how to entrust in this kind of teaching, we would not normally even attempt to listen to it. This is because, even if we were say the nembutsu, no change would take place in our everyday lives, and our worldly desires would still not be satisfied. Even though we might recite the nembutsu and wish for happiness, neither misery nor benefit would visit us in our ordinary lives as a result. In such circumstances, people are not attracted to this teaching.

In contrast, the teaching of the Nineteenth Vow is alluring. It teaches us that, by practicing the nembutsu single-heartedly, our hearts will become pure, and Amida Buddha will come to welcome us at the moment of death. That is why people feel they should practice the Pure Land path of the Nineteenth Vow. However, no matter how single-heartedly people might practice the nembutsu, they will not readily be able to attain such purity of mind. Instead, they will fall into uncertainty, and suffering and anguish will arise. At that moment, for the first time, persons will cast away all of their own powers, and will desperately rely upon the power of the Primal Vow. They will say the nembutsu in order to ask the Buddha to save them.

The Twentieth Vow conforms to this wish of sentient beings. This Primal Vow declares, "Simply say the nembutsu single-heartedly and ask to be saved. Your wish will eventually be fulfilled!" Because this vow allows beings to recite the nembutsu single-heartedly and wish for a path to the Pure Land, people will inevitably turn from the Nineteenth Vow and

enter the Twentieth Vow. But, in this path of the Twentieth Vow, is salvation really possible? When persons fall into the depths of suffering and anguish, we desperately struggle, and cling to the powers of the gods and Buddhas as we cry out to be saved. However, we can never have any complete confirmation that we will be saved. Therefore, this kind of single-hearted search will cause persons to fall into the abyss of despair. Yet, even as we despair, we will be left with only a single path, upon which we can continue to seek salvation by saying the nembutsu alone.

Here, for the first time, the teaching of the Eighteenth Vow—the exclusive path of salvation, which removes all human conditions—can be realized. Yet, persons gasping in the abyss of despair had, up until now, clung only onto the nembutsu of the Twentieth Vow, and were not able to know the truth of the Eighteenth Vow through our own power. For that very reason, we must seek out the appearance of a good teacher, who could bring beings in despair to an encounter with the Eighteenth Vow. This is because the only thing capable of cutting off our attachment to self-power would be the true teaching that can only come from the “other.”

Looking at it in this way, the true significance of the Nineteenth Vow is that of a Primal Vow that brings sentient beings to aspire single-heartedly for birth in the Pure Land. The purport of the Twentieth Vow is to encourage sentient beings simply to say the nembutsu with single-heartedness. This is the working of great compassion. In this way, Shinran saw both the “implicit” and “explicit” meanings of these two vows; he held that truth exists in each of the vows. Neither of the two vows enables sentient beings to attain birth directly. However, if these vows did not exist, then the path leading to the Eighteenth Vow would never open up for sentient beings. Here we can see the Buddha’s intent in his establishment of the provisional Primal Vows. Because these provisional vows exist, all beings have the potential to encounter the Eighteenth Vow. However, in order to turn from the Twentieth Vow and enter the Eighteenth Vow, the “condition” of the Seventeenth Vow is absolutely necessary. This is because the only person capable of saving beings, who are suffering in the depths of delusion and despair, would a “good teacher,” who can deliver the true teaching.

If we look at it in this way, we realize that the contents of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* do not flow within actual time, in this present life. Shinran met his teacher, Hōnen, and in that instant realized the mind of true shinjin. The *Kyōgyōshinshō*, over which he would later spend many decades, is the logical and systematic discussion of the structure of his mind that attained shinjin.

Why was Shinran able to encounter this teaching of the true essence of the Pure Land way? It was due to the two aspects of Amida Buddha’s directing of virtue. However, in order to enable all sentient beings to become supreme Buddha, Amida appeared out of suchness, became the

bodhisattva Dharmākara, transcendently established the great vows that are beyond conceivability, fulfilled the virtues of immeasurable light and life (becoming Amida Buddha), and directed his Name to the worlds of the ten quarters. That is the truth contained in the salvation established in the Eighteenth Vow, which saves all sentient beings unconditionally. The fundamental reason for Śākyamuni's appearance in the world existed in his response to Amida's Primal Vow. This is because, in order to save all sentient beings, all that Śākyamuni could do was expound the teaching of Amida Buddha's Eighteenth Vow. In actuality, even prior to Śākyamuni's sutra, the contents of his exposition had already been established in Amida Buddha's Primal Vow. This represents the truth inherent in the Seventeenth Vow.

In this way, sentient beings are guided to the attainment of shinjin through the practice of the Seventeenth Vow, that is, through the elucidation of the Eighteenth Vow by a good teacher. The transmission of the teachings following Śākyamuni's death was the result of expositions of the Eighteenth Vow to the persons of the nembutsu without shinjin by the nembutsu practitioners who had been brought to the attainment of shinjin by Śākyamuni Buddha.

The *Kyōgyōshinshō* concludes with the words,

I have collected true words to aid others in their practice for attaining birth, in order that the process be made continuous, without end and without interruption, by which those who have been born first guide those who come later, and those who are born later join those who were born before. This is so that the boundless ocean of birth-and-death be exhausted.⁴³

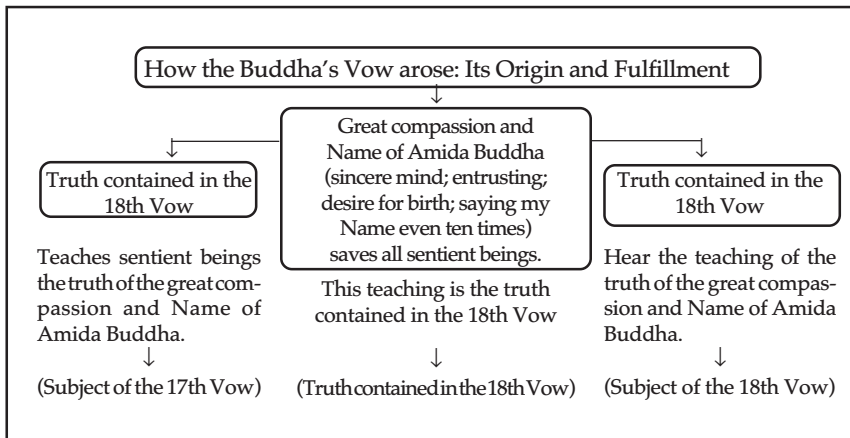
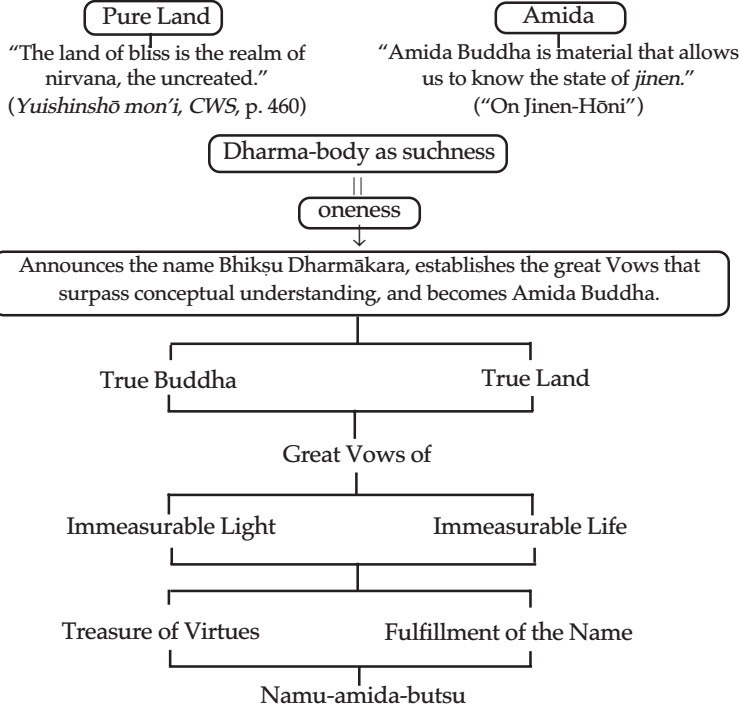
These words describe the transmission of the true teaching, which Shinran calls the "true essence of the Pure Land way" (*Jōdo shinshū*).

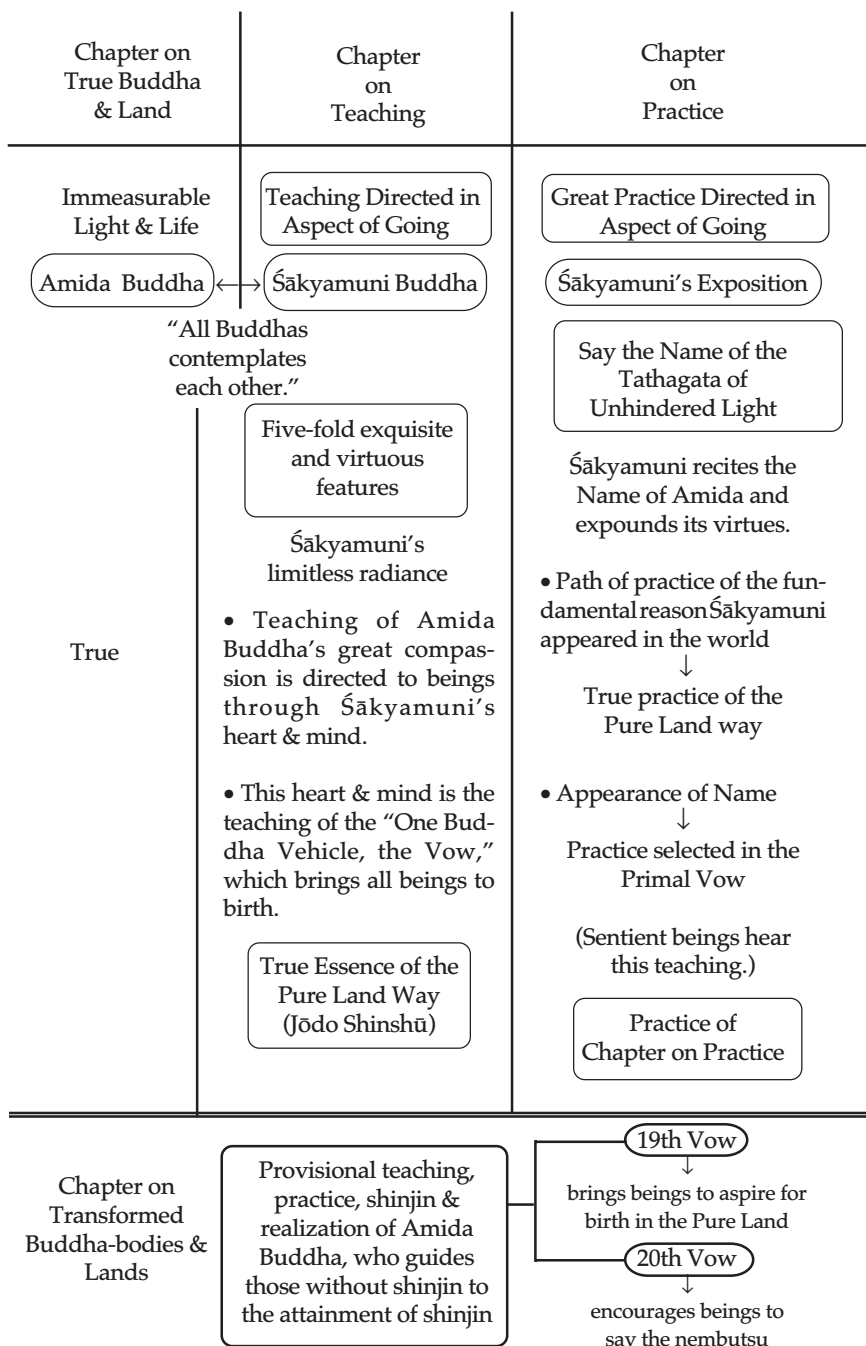
Finally, the following is a graphic illustration of what I have stated above.

Translated by David Matsumoto

THE STRUCTURE OF THE KYŌGYŌSHINSHŌ

“Reverently contemplating the true essence of the Pure Land way, I see that Amida’s directing of virtue to sentient beings has two aspects: the aspect for our going forth to the Pure Land and the aspect for our return to this world. In the aspect for going forth, there is the true teaching, practice, shinjin, and realization.” (*Kyōgyōshinshō*, Chapter on Teaching, CWS, p. 7)





Chapter on Shinjin	Chapter on Realization	Practice of Chapter on Practice
<div>Great Shinjin Directed in Aspect of Going</div> <div>Sentient Beings' Attainment of Shinjin</div> <div>Person in the Stage of the Truly Settled</div> <p>Through Śākyamuni's exposition, Amida's great shinjin & Name (three minds & ten recitations) are directed to the hearts and minds of sentient beings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentient beings hear this truth single-heartedly. <p>(hear my Name, realize even one thought-moment of shinjin & joy)</p> <p>"Having heard how the Buddha's Vow arose—its origin & fulfillment—together free of doubt."</p> <p>Attainment of Shinjin</p>	<div>Realization of Necessary Attainment of Nirvana</div> <div>Sentient Beings' Realization</div> <div>Practice of Benefiting-Others in the Aspect of Going</div> <p>In the instant of attaining shinjin, realization is attained within the hearts & minds of sentient beings.</p> <div>Realization Directed in the Aspect of Going</div> <p>For the being whose birth is settled, one's birth is no longer a problem.</p> <p>(There is no need to pursue birth.)</p> <p>Transmission of the joy of the nembutsu to others</p> <div>True Realization</div>	<div>Practice as a Response in Gratitude</div> <p>↓ Practice directed in aspect of birth by one who has attained shinjin</p> <p>Teach the truth of the nembutsu to beings without shinjin</p> <p>brings beings to aspire for birth</p>
	<p>(True Pure Land)</p> <div>Practice Directed to Beings in the Aspect of the Return</div>	

NOTES

1. Translator's Note: This article originally appeared under the title, "*Kyōgyōshinshō no kōzō*," in the journal *Shinshūgaku* 99/100, March 1999. For the most part, the English translations of passages from Shinran's texts have been taken from The Shin Buddhism Translation Series, *The Collected Works of Shinran* (hereinafter *CWS*), (Kyoto: Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-ha, 1997). Unless otherwise noted, the text of the article and all other cited passages have been translated into English by David Matsumoto.
2. The complete title of Shinran's text is *Ken jōdo shinjitsu kyōgyōshō monrui* (*A Collection of Passages Revealing the True Teaching, Practice, and Realization of the Pure Land Way*).
3. Renjun was the sixth son of Rennyo. His *Renjunki* (*Renjun's Diary*) contains the section, "Rennyo Shōnin gonyakunen no migiri no koto" (The Master Rennyo's Younger Years). It is formed from ten sections. This is an interpretation of the contents of section five.
4. Rennyo, *Gobunshō* (*Letters of Rennyo*) 5-10, *Shinshū shōgyō zensho* (hereinafter *SSZ*), vol. 3 (Kyoto: Ōyagi Kōbundō, 1941), p. 507; Jitsuen Kakehashi, *Bearer of the Light: the Life and Thought of Rennyo*, IBS Center for Contemporary Shin Buddhist Studies, trans. (Los Angeles: Pure Land Publications, 1998), pp. 29-30.
5. *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 5; see also *True Teaching, Practice and Realization*, in *CWS*, p. 13.
6. See Umehara Shinryū, *Kyōgyōshinshō shinshaku: Kanjō* (Toyama: Senchōji Bunshodendōbu, 1955), p. 69.
7. See Kiritani Junnin, *Kyōgyōshinshō ni kiku: Jōkan* (Tokyo: Kyōiku Shinchōsha, 1966-80), pp. 153-4.
8. *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 8; *CWS*, p. 17.
9. T'an-luan, *Ching-t'u-wang-sheng-lun-chu* (*Commentary on the Treatise on the Pure Land*; Jpn. *Ōjō Ronchū*), in *Taishō*, vol. 40, p. 826; *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 514; cited in Chapter on Shinjin, in *CWS*, p. 82. See also Umehara, pp. 110-1.
10. See Kiritani, p. 173.
11. *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 68; *CWS*, p. 107.
12. See Umehara Shinryū, *Kyōgyōshinshō shinshaku: Kanchū*, pp. 304-5.
13. See Kiritani Junnin, *Kyōgyōshinshō ni kiku: Chūkan*, p. 183.
14. Kakunyo, *Honganshō* (*Notes on the Primal Vow*), in *SSZ*, vol. 3, p. 56.

15. SSZ, vol. 2, p. 2; CWS, p. 7.
16. Translator's note: "Directing of virtue" is an English rendering of the term *ekō* (Skt. *pariṇāma*), which in Shinran's thought refers to the compassionate working of Amida Buddha that carries sentient beings to birth and enlightenment. The editors of *The Collected Works of Shinran* likely chose the phrase in order to contrast it with "merit transference," which is a more common translation of *ekō*. Whereas in other forms of Buddhism, one would seek to transfer the merit generated from one's own practice toward one's own or others' attainment, Shinran's thought is founded on the notion that such virtues are directed to beings entirely from the true and real mind of Amida.
17. Shinran, *Yuishinshō mon'i*, (*Notes on 'Essentials of Faith Alone'*), in SSZ, vol. 2, p. 630; CWS, pp. 460–1.
18. Ibid.
19. Shinran, "On Jinen-Hōni," in *Mattōshō* (*Lamp for the Latter Age*), in SSZ, vol. 2, p. 664; CWS, p. 530.
20. SSZ, vol. 2, p. 663; CWS, p. 530.
21. SSZ, vol. 2, p. 663.
22. Chapter on Shinjin, in SSZ, vol. 2, p.72; CWS, p. 112.
23. Chapter on Teaching, in SSZ, vol. 2, p.3; CWS, p. 7.
24. Chapter on Practice, in SSZ, vol. 2, p. 5; CWS, p. 13.
25. Cited in SSZ, vol. 2, p. 5; CWS, p. 13.
26. SSZ, vol. 2, p. 5; CWS, p. 13.
27. SSZ, vol. 2, p. 3; CWS p. 8.
28. SSZ, vol. 2, p. 4; CWS, p. 10.
29. On this point, the ideas of "shinjin is the true cause of birth" and "saying the Name is a response in gratitude," which we see in doctrinal studies based in Rennyo's thought, have no direct relationship with this notion of "saying the Name." The idea set forth in the Chapter on Practice that, "The great practice is to say the Name of the Tathagata of unhindered light," does not address the questions of how persons without shinjin can say the nembutsu and attain birth, or what kind of nembutsu is recited by persons who have attained shinjin. In this sense of "saying the Name" the issue is not whether or not we have attained shinjin. Rather, it means only that Śākyamuni recites "Namu-amida-butsu" and teaches us that this nembutsu is great practice, which is directed to us from Amida Buddha.
30. SSZ, vol. 2, p. 47; CWS, p. 77.
31. SSZ, vol. 2, p. 59; CWS, p. 93.

32. *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 59; *CWS*, p. 94.

33. *Ibid.*

34. The three-fold mind of the Primal Vow necessarily works to bring itself into oneness with the minds of sentient beings. However, any discussion of the three-fold mind of the Primal Vow involves the issue of salvation by Amida Buddha. In other words, the question will always be that of how this three-fold mind reaches sentient beings. The attainment of shinjin by sentient beings is not directly brought into issue. On this point my thinking differs from that found in sectarian studies, which reiterate Rennyo's interpretation that the problem is one of sentient beings' "settled mind."

35. Shinran's reading of the passage on the fulfillment of the Primal Vow. Chapter on Shinjin, in *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 49; *CWS*, p. 80.

36. *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 80; *CWS*, p. 125.

37. *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 103; *CWS*, p. 153.

38. *Ibid.*

39. Shinran's thinking here is totally consistent with his explanation in his letter "On Jinen-honi." See *Mattōshō* (Lamp for the Latter Age), in *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 663–4; *CWS*, p. 530.

40. *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 79; *CWS*, p. 123.

41. *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 103; *CWS*, p. 153.

42. This constitutes the structure of Shinran's thought, and is generally referred to as "turning and entering the three Vows" (*sangan tennyū*). Although it is usually comprehended as the structure of Shinran's attainment of shinjin, I do not view it in that way. Rather, I take it to be the process for realizing the attainment of shinjin. This idea is explained at the conclusion of Shinran's explication of the true gate. See *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 166; *CWS*, p. 240.

43. Passage from the *An-lo-chi* of Tao-ch'ō. Cited in the Chapter on the Transformed Buddha-bodies and Lands, in *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 203; *CWS*, p. 291.

Exclusion and Salvation in Hōnen's Thought: Salvation of Those Who Commit the Five Grave Offenses or Slander the Right Dharma¹

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I. INTRODUCTION

PURE LAND BUDDHISM POSSESSES many distinctive features, chief among which is the perspective that Pure Land doctrine brings to questions regarding humanity. Questions such as “What is a ‘human being’?” and “How is the definition of ‘human being’ related to the Pure Land teachings?” have been central to the tradition’s historical development. The Japanese Pure Land master Hōnen (1133–1212) made various comments regarding the human question, and in later studies of Hōnen’s doctrine there has been much attention given to his view of humanity.

Discourse on the view of human beings in the Pure Land teachings culminated historically in a theory, offered by Shinran in the Kamakura-era, that the “evil person is the true object of Amida’s Vow.” The evil person is the very person for whom Amida’s salvation was intended. All human beings, moreover, are evil persons. For Shinran, the proof for the existence of such an evil person could be found “within myself, alone.” Shinran’s view of humanity is perhaps one of the most distinctive among those present within the Pure Land teachings. Some scholars, however, believe that the notion that the “evil person is the true object of the Vow” was already present in Hōnen’s thought, prior to Shinran’s elucidation of that idea. That is to say, according to this scholarship, the idea that the “evil person is the true object of the Vow” represented Hōnen’s own view of humanity. We must also note, however, that this scholarship has been the subject of some criticism.

Previous studies have already organized and introduced the various theories related to this idea.² Recently, research has placed particular focus on the treatment of textual materials related to the notion that the “evil person is the true object of the Vow” and, based on these, a variety of new theories have been offered. The most authoritative materials pointing to

Hōnen's thinking on this doctrinal matter can be found in his religious instructions, known collectively as *Sanjin ryōken oyobi gohōgo* (*Clarifications and instructions [related to] the three minds*), which have been compiled in the *Daigobon Hōnen Shōnin denki* (*Biographical Records of the Master Hōnen, Daigo Manuscript*).

Scholars have offered differing theories as to the formation of the *Daigobon Hōnen Shōnin denki*. There have been numerous studies related to the text and future examinations are expected to add greatly to our knowledge of the text. However, it is generally believed that the text originated with the handwritten manuscript of Gien, the seventy-ninth head priest of the Daigo-ji temple. Alternatively, someone within Gien's circle could possibly have copied it at his request. Because the original hand-copied manuscript is no longer extant, there are conflicting theories about its composition and development. The view that has gained some acceptance within current academic circles is that it was probably compiled by some of the disciples of Seikan-bō Genchi.

Further, the Daigo manuscript is made up of six parts: (1) *Hōnen Shōnin denki*, (2) *Jūni mondō* (*Twelve questions and answers*), (3) *Sanjin ryōken oyobi gohōgo*, (4) *Betsu denki* (*A separate biography*), (5) *Gorinjū nikki* (*A diary of the last moments of his life*), and (6) *Sammai hottokki* (*Records of the attainment of samādhi*). We are unable to draw any clear conclusions as to whether the disciples compiled these materials themselves or simply copied manuscripts that had already been compiled. Examinations of a recently published photographic reproduction of the *Daigobon Hōnen Shōnin denki*³ reveal that the brushwork and penmanship of the manuscript do not necessarily appear to be consistent throughout the work. This might indicate that the materials once consisted of a number of separately completed works. It might even have been the case that each chapter of the original manuscript was compiled or copied separately from the other texts.⁴

Be that as it may, the *Sanjin ryōken oyobi gohōgo* represents materials that seem closely connected to Hōnen's theory that the "evil person is the true object of the Vow." According to a passage set forth therein,

Even a good person attains birth in the Pure Land. So it goes without saying that an evil person will. This teaching has been orally transmitted in our tradition. To this I say that Amida's Primal Vow does not establish a provisional teaching allowing good persons to become free of birth-and-death through self-power. [Rather, Amida gave rise to the vow] out of pity for persons whose karmic evil is extremely heavy—those persons for whom there is no other provisional teaching.

That being so, bodhisattvas and wise sages aspire for birth, and these good beings attain birth by taking refuge in this vow.

How much more so will foolish beings of sin and evil entrust themselves to this Other Power! They should understand that they are evil, and not dwell in false views. It is said that “both foolish, ordinary beings and sages together” are able to attain this thought.⁵

The initial expression, purportedly received through oral transmission, is identical with the well-known opening passage of Chapter Three of the *Tannishō* (*A Record in Lament of Divergences*).⁶ Opinions differ as to whether this expression, set forth as part of an oral Pure Land transmission, represents a stance taken by Hōnen, or whether it was added later to the manuscript by another person. Such opinions are not limited to this expression. There are also conflicting opinions regarding the inclusion of the *Sanjin ryōken oyobi hōgo* itself within the *Daigobon Hōnen Shōnin denki*. Two examples include Mochitzuki Shinkō's early theory that it was appended by another author⁷ and Tsuboi Shun'ei's recent view that it is from a religious instruction made by some person from Ryūkan's lineage.⁸ Indeed, a further task would be to answer the question of how far back we need to trace the *Daigobon Hōnen Shōnin denki* itself, in order to be able to accept it as original source material.

Certainly, as Tsuboi points out, this passage represents an internally consistent Buddhist instruction, which emphasizes the salvation of the evil person. Hōnen goes on to say,

We are taught that the evil being is an individual person, and that this being will attain birth. This is the teaching of our Pure Land School. Our school takes the evil person as the model, one that includes the good person as well. The Path of Sages takes the good person as its model, which includes the evil person.⁹

We should take note here of Hōnen's assertion that the Pure Land School “takes the evil person as its model, one that includes the good person.” He then states,

All beings are included within this dharma.

The Eighteenth Vow speaks of “sentient beings of the ten quarters.” [This means that,] throughout the ten quarters, no sentient beings are excluded, and that “[beings of] the ten quarters are all included within my vow.” Regarding this, the Dhyana Master Fa-chao states,

That Buddha, in the causal stage, made the universal Vow:
When beings hear my Name and think on me, I will come to

welcome each of them,
 Not discriminating at all between the poor and the rich and
 wellborn,
 Not discriminating between the inferior and the highly
 gifted,
 Not choosing the learned and those upholding pure pre-
 cepts,
 Nor rejecting those who break precepts and whose evil
 karma is profound.
 Solely making beings turn about and abundantly say the
 nembutsu,
 I can make bits of rubble change into gold.¹⁰

Based on this passage we should know that, even though we may be poor, unable to generate merit, fail to understand the teachings, violate the precepts, or commit karmic sins, [the Buddha] will bring us to turn about at heart and recite the nembutsu many times.¹¹

Here, Hōnen, explains that all sentient beings are included within the working of the Primal Vow, which is directed to “sentient beings of the ten quarters.” Hence, it emphasizes that the salvation of the Primal Vow does not exclude anyone. He cites a well-known passage, “That Buddha, in the causal stage, made the universal Vow . . .”, from Fa-chao’s *Wu-hui fa-shih tsan* (*Shorter Pure Land Liturgy of Nembutsu Chant in Five Stages*)¹² in order to attest that, when even those who are poor, of inferior learning, and violate the precepts turn about at heart and say the nembutsu, the path of salvation will unfold for them.

This material enables us to perceive Hōnen’s understanding of the salvation of the evil person. He also cites the same passage from Fa-chao’s text as proof of the virtue of the ease of practice in the Chapter on the Meaning of the Primal Vow in his *Senjaku hongan nembutsu shū* (*Passages on the Nembutsu Selected in the Primal Vow*).¹³ There, he takes up the two virtues of the superiority and the ease of practicing the nembutsu selected in the Primal Vow in order to explicate the salvation of all persons, through the working of Amida Buddha’s compassion of equality. In this way, we can see a connection between Hōnen’s instruction regarding the salvation of the evil person and the position taken in the *Senjakushū* as to the salvation of those who violate the precepts or are without precepts. The latter stance was clearly not adopted from other masters. Rather, one can draw it out from the flow of thought in the *Senjakushū*. We will later examine the view of human beings present in the *Senjakushū*. However, we should note that the salvation of those who slander the right dharma is not mentioned at all in Hōnen’s text.

II. SALVATION OF THE EVIL PERSON IN HŌNEN'S THOUGHT

Although the notion that the “evil person is the true object of Amida’s Vow” can be seen in Hōnen’s thought, it is not completely identical with the stance taken by Shinran.¹⁴ We will now look at how Hōnen explains his unique notion of the salvation of the evil person. He states in the *Sanjin ryōken oyobi gohōgo*,

On good and evil beings.

One who says the nembutsu should simply do so in accordance with one’s own nature. A good person as a good person and an evil person as an evil person—each should say the nembutsu in accordance with one’s basic nature. When entering the nembutsu [path], for the first time one will not be bound by [the question of] whether one either observes or violates the precepts. One simply says the nembutsu in accordance with one’s essential nature.

In reference to this, I ask: When a person who had originally observed the precepts in the Path of Sages takes refuge in the Pure Land Path, he gives up observing both the general precepts and precepts of abstinence, and performs the exclusive practice of the nembutsu. [That is,] he can commit the offense of violating the precepts. Why is this so?

Answer: If a nembutsu practitioner, who wishes to commit an evil act thinks that saying the nembutsu would extinguish his sins, his committing of evil would truly be an evil thing. In the Shingon school esoteric rites are performed to extinguish evil passions. One relies upon those rites, as well as on-going rites performed to subdue future evil. In the same way, one who commits evil acts while entrusting in the power of the Primal Vow to extinguish one’s sins will not suffer in the least.¹⁵

Hōnen explains that one says the nembutsu in accordance with one’s basic nature—a good person says the nembutsu as a good person, and an evil person recites it as an evil person. He advances the notion that the nembutsu, which accords with one’s essential nature, frees one from attachments to the question of whether one observes or violates the precepts. However, he states, it is wrong to commit evil, thinking that one’s sins will be extinguished with the recitation of the nembutsu, even though one has violated the precepts. On the other hand, he states that it is not an error for one who will commit evil to entrust in the power of the Primal Vow that extinguishes one’s sins. If a person, who had been observing the precepts in the Path of Sages, takes refuge in the Pure Land Path of the exclusive practice of the nembutsu, he will come to abandon those precepts. Even in that case,

Hōnen does not approve of saying the nembutsu for the purpose of extinguishing sins. Rather, Hōnen states that when one says the nembutsu, entrusting in the Primal Vow and being carried by that Vow, even the person who violates precepts is saved, just as he is. In this case, although he states that both good persons and evil persons are the objects of salvation, in the final analysis he comes to focus his inquiry upon the person who violates the precepts and commits evil acts in his life.

In the *Jūni mondō* as well, Hōnen discusses saying the nembutsu in accordance with one's nature. However, he then goes on to state,

The person of the nembutsu just says [the nembutsu] in accord with his nature and so attains birth. The wise person says it as a sage and attains birth. The foolish person says it as a fool and attains birth. A person who aspires for enlightenment says it and attains birth; one who does not aspire for enlightenment says it and attains birth. A person who is given to false views says it and attains birth. Those who are wealthy and noble, those who are poor and humble, those whose desires are profound, those of anger and wrath, those with compassion, those without compassion—if they simply say the nembutsu, then all will attain birth through the inconceivable Primal Vow.¹⁶

Here, Hōnen considers the wide variety of human capacities and discusses the attainment of birth by beings of all different capabilities. He explains that, if one says the nembutsu, one will attain birth through the inconceivability of the Primal Vow; all persons will be saved through the nembutsu that accords with the Primal Vow. Even while discussing the salvation of the evil person, he sets forth a path to birth in the Pure Land that recognizes all people, whether good or evil in terms of their human capacities.

Hōnen did not teach about the salvation of the evil person alone; rather, his view encompassed both good and evil persons.

Even though our karmic evil is deep, we have not yet committed the five grave offenses.¹⁷

Even though we have entered the last dharma-age, one hundred years have not yet passed; even though our karmic evil is deep, we have not yet committed the five grave offenses.¹⁸

Here, Hōnen states that persons of his time had already entered the last dharma-age, but that one hundred years had not yet passed. His mention of the last dharma-age, however, was not meant to imply that persons of that era who had not yet committed the five grave offenses would be saved.¹⁹ Neither did he mean that those who had already committed these

offenses would not be saved. Rather, he states that all persons will be saved.

Persons with wisdom and without wisdom, persons of karmic sins and those without, good persons and evil persons, those who observe the precepts and those who violate them, men and women, and all sentient beings living within one hundred years of the extinction of the three treasures—all beings are included by the Vow [to save the] “sentient beings of the ten quarters.”²⁰

Compared to persons living during the time of the extinction of the three treasures, the people of Hōnen's era might be considered to be almost “Buddha-like.” Persons in the age of the extinction of the three treasures would have life spans of ten years. They would not even hear of the names of the three learnings—precepts, meditation and wisdom. In the passage above, however, Hōnen continues by stating that all will be saved.

Persons who have doubts as to whether their attainment of birth is settled, even though they say the nembutsu, do not know that the Primal Vow was established so as not to exclude either good or evil [persons].²¹

He explains that those who harbor doubt, thinking that their attainment of birth is unsettled, fail to understand that the true purport of the Primal Vow's salvation is not to exclude either good or evil persons.

As we have seen above, Hōnen's view of human beings involves a great variety of expressions. Hōnen would, on occasion, emphasize that the Path of Sages means that one attains wisdom and becomes free from birth-and-death, whereas on the Pure Land Path one returns to one's foolish self and thereby attains birth in the Land of Utmost Bliss. He would describe the foolish person as one who is dull and of inferior wisdom, one who hears and understands little, or one who violates the precepts or is without precepts. He saw the foolish being as “the person burdened with extreme evil.” Hōnen referred to himself as “Hōnen the fool, who has committed the ten evil acts.”²² When we reflect on these points, we see that the notion that “the good person is born; how much more so is the evil person,” purportedly transmitted orally in the tradition, is present in Hōnen's view of human beings. It is reflected in his words, “taking the evil person as the model,” and “taking as its object the salvation of the evil person.”

However, although Hōnen's view of human beings had as its objective the salvation of the evil person, he did not consider all humans to be evil persons. Further, he saw a variety of differences among evil persons. In the early stages of the last dharma-age and the age of the extinction of the dharma, there would be differences in the capacities of beings and also in the kinds of beings making up the nine grades. Hōnen, moreover, taught

the dharma in accordance with the capacities of his listeners. He taught of birth through the nembutsu, using prudent care not to use expressions that might encourage his followers to commit or tolerate evil. He strove to avoid teaching in a way that would invite false understanding; from the pragmatic perspective, he employed a variety of modes of teaching.²³

III. DESISTING FROM COMMITTING EVIL ACTS

Hōnen's deep self-reflection led him to a direct disclosure of his own nature with such expressions as, "How pitiful! How pitiful! What can we do? What can we do? People like us have no capacity to practice the three-fold learning of precepts, meditation, and wisdom"; "I am Hōnen, who has committed the ten evil acts; I am Hōnen the fool"; "The Master Hōnen stated, 'I am a person lacking in wisdom. I am a violator of the precepts'." ²⁴ Hōnen deeply probed into his own foolishness and, for that very reason, was capable of clarifying the salvation of such a person.

Hōnen was not the only Pure Land master to have done so. Among the masters whose teachings preceded him, T'an-luan, Tao-ch'ō, Shan-tao, Genshin and others also sought to clarify the salvation of the ordinary, foolish person through penetrating and profound insight into both human nature and the nature of their own selves. For instance, in the section on the lowest grade of beings in his *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching shu* (*Commentary on the Sutra on the Contemplation of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life*), Shan-tao explicates the salvation of persons who cannot help but commit evil offenses through their lives. He describes such persons as "ordinary beings of foolishness and evil."²⁵

Further, the passage of the Eighteenth Vow in the *Wu-liang-shou ching* (*Larger Sutra of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life*) states, "Excluded are those who commit the five grave offenses and those who slander the right dharma."²⁶ There have been exhaustive inquiries into the meaning of this "exclusion clause," particularly into how it might relate to the section on the lowest level of birth for the lowest grade of beings in the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching* (*Contemplation Sutra*).²⁷ Hōnen's examination of that sutra passage focuses attention on the salvation of persons who commit the five grave offenses. In his *Kangyōshaku* (*Commentary on the Contemplation Sutra*), he provides this definition:

Persons attaining the lowest level of birth for the lowest grade of beings: This refers to persons who commit the five grave offenses.²⁸

Hōnen then provides a faithful interpretation of the sutra passage. He states that, by reciting the nembutsu, sentient beings, who repeatedly

perform karmic actions of non-good and receive unending suffering through many kalpas, are able to remove the karmic sins that would bind them to samsaric existence for 800,000 kalpas. Upon their death, they will be greeted by the assembly of sages and be born transformed within a lotus blossom.

In a later discussion of the various roots of good of both meditative and non-meditative acts, he considers the passage, "each ray of light shines universally upon the worlds of the ten quarters," from the ninth contemplation (contemplation on the true body) of the sutra, and concludes that it supports the idea of birth through the nembutsu. Hōnen attributes to that passage a three-fold significance: equality, Primal Vow, and close karmic connections. Equality reveals the principle of non-discrimination among all persons who are illuminated by the light that takes in and holds beings. Based on this, Hōnen then elucidates the salvation of persons who commit the ten evil acts, violate the precepts and commit the five grave offenses.

The Sutra on the Contemplation of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life states that [Amida's light] illuminates not only persons who commit the lighter offenses of the ten evil acts or violating the precepts, but also those who commit the heavier five grave offenses.²⁹

Hōnen finds the basis for their salvation in the *Contemplation Sutra's* teaching of the lowest level of birth for persons in the lowest grade of being. Elsewhere, he also discusses the salvation of those who commit the five grave offenses, such as in this passage from the *Ōjō taiyōshō* (*Record of the main essentials for birth*),

[Birth] depends simply on whether or not one entrusts in the Buddha's Vow, with no distinction made between the goodness and evil of practitioners. It is also taught that even those who commit the five grave offenses or the ten evil acts will realize birth upon even one calling or ten callings of the nembutsu Persons who commit the five grave offenses are included among those beings who will attain birth. When we realize how much more this would be true for those who commit lighter offenses or for good persons, [then we would know that] no one is without the capacity to realize birth.³⁰

Here, he views the five grave offenses as the most serious offenses. Thus, the salvation of those who commit the five grave offenses would imply that those who commit lighter offenses and, of course, good persons will also be saved. His central position can be found in the words, "no one is without the capacity to realize birth." That is, Hōnen teaches the salvation of all

persons by establishing first that those who commit the five grave offenses are the objects of salvation, which by implication would include those who commit less serious offenses as well. This is similar to the stance taken by Hōnen in this passage, which we have already seen above,

Even though we have entered the last dharma-age, one hundred years have not yet passed; even though our karmic evil is deep, we have not yet committed the five grave offenses.³¹

Although Hōnen recognized the salvation of those who commit the five grave offenses, it does not mean that he gave simple approval to those who would commit such serious offenses. Rather, it might be said that Hōnen was emphasizing how the five grave offenses ought not readily be committed.

Question: Since the Primal Vow does not exclude evil persons, should one intentionally commit evil acts as one pleases?

Answer: Although the Buddha does not abandon evil persons, one who intentionally commits evil acts as one pleases is not a disciple of the Buddha. All of the Buddha's teachings [instruct beings] to desist from committing evil acts. Those completely unable to desist from doing evil are instructed to say the nembutsu and extinguish all of their sins. None of the Buddha's teachings state that beings should simply commit evil acts As you come to understand the Primal Vow, which does not abandon even the evil person, then more and more you will feel shame and lament before the Buddha's wisdom. If you receive the compassion of your father and mother, but engage in evil acts, even as your mother and father might do, would your mother and father rejoice over that? [No,] they would lament, yet not abandon you; they would pity you, yet detest your actions. The Buddha is just like this.³²

This rather long passage is easy to understand, and it skillfully explains the meaning of the salvation of the evil person. Hōnen does not give simple approval to the committing of evil acts. The often-held view that "committing evil does not hinder the Vow" does not constitute a true understanding of the Buddha's heart of great compassion. Hōnen states that, although the Buddha saves the evil person, the Buddha laments and detests that person's evil actions. Even though one who aspires for birth might know of the Primal Vow, which does not abandon the evil person, one becomes ashamed of and laments one's own evil acts in light of the Tathagata's wisdom. What Hōnen emphasizes here is the notion of desisting from evil. Despite the existence of the Primal Vow of great compassion, he does not permit one to presume upon the Vow.

IV. HŌNEN'S MENTION OF THE SALVATION OF THOSE WHO COMMIT THE OFFENSE OF SLANDERING THE RIGHT DHARMA

We will next examine the manner in which Hōnen mentions the salvation of those who commit the offense of slandering the right dharma. Let us look at this very brief discussion.

The Vow does not discriminate against persons who commit heavy sins or the five grave offenses; nor does it reject women or those lacking the seeds of Buddhahood. Practice is one calling or ten callings.³³

Here he explains that, beside those who commit the five grave offenses, the Vow also saves women and those lacking the seeds to attain Buddhahood. In this discussion, Hōnen cites a passage from Shan-tao's *Fa-shih tsan* (*Hymns of the Nembutsu Liturgy*), which discusses practitioners of the nembutsu whose minds are poisoned with malice, who cleverly engage in deception and slander, who damage the exclusive practice of the nembutsu, and who perform other acts of evil. Such persons, he says, are known as "icchantika," whose eyes of Buddha-nature are closed and who have lost the seeds of good. He then continues by pointing out that these persons will suffer in the three lowest realms of samsaric existence for endless kalpas, surpassing in the number of dust particles in the continent, as a result of their slander of the nembutsu. In contrast, Hōnen states that beings who entrust in the Primal Vow will go to attain the highest level of birth for the highest grade of beings in the Land of Utmost Bliss, and then return to this world to perform the activity of guiding sentient beings who are lacking in trust.

Know that [those who entrust in the Vow] will realize the highest level of birth for the highest grade of beings in the Land of Utmost Bliss. Upon realizing enlightenment, they will return to samsaric existence to practice the roots of good so that persons who slander the nembutsu and are without trust [may go to be born].³⁴

It is not easy to commit the offense of destroying or slandering the teaching of the nembutsu. Thus, Hōnen emphasizes that such persons who do not entrust in or who slander the dharma will be saved by the compassionate activity of bodhisattvas in the aspect of the return to this world, which will produce in them thoughts of their mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, or relatives from the past. He discusses the way in which one

should respond to persons who slander the teaching of the nembutsu, explaining that ultimately such persons will be saved.

In the *Ōjō taiyōshō*, Hōnen refers to Shan-tao's interpretation of the deep mind of the *Contemplation Sutra*. Hōnen defines deep mind to mean that one deeply trusts, without any doubt, that the Primal Vow rejects no one who commits evil acts, and that one will become settled in birth with even a single calling of the Name. Here, he provides a concrete description of "all persons who commit evil acts" by referring to a passage from Shan-tao's *Wang-sheng-li tsan* (*Hymns of Birth in the Pure Land*),

In the section on the lowest level of birth for the lowest grade of beings in the *Contemplation Sutra*, it is taught that even persons who commit the ten evil acts and the five grave offenses will attain birth by calling the nembutsu even once or even ten times. The offenses of those who commit the ten evil acts and the five grave offenses are said to include greed, anger, the four serious offenses, stealing from the sangha, slandering the right dharma, and failing to repent one's previous faults. These offenses portray the karmic evil of our present age.³⁵

In other words, those who slander the right dharma are included among persons who commit karmic offenses.³⁶ Hōnen then goes on to clarify the salvation of beings of such varying capacities by citing this passage from the same section of the *Wang-sheng-li tsan*:

He quickly meets a good teacher who guides him to birth, and immediately says the Name of that Buddha exclusively. Transformed Buddhas and bodhisattvas come and call out to him, and in that moment he thinks [on them] and enters the treasure lotus.³⁷

Although the issue Hōnen is addressing here is that of salvation at the moment of death, he is also emphasizing the equality of the Primal Vow's salvation by revealing the breadth of the inclusiveness of Amida's Vow and the length of its reach. By raising the heaviness of karmic sins, it encompasses lightness; by taking into account those distant from the dharma, it includes those who are close; and by pointing out those who are born later, it embraces those born before.

Shan-tao's commentary on the mind of deep trust, or, belief as to the nature of beings elucidates the capacities of beings who commit karmic sins. Citing from the *Wang-sheng-li tsan*, Hōnen points out the offenses of the ten evil acts, five grave offenses, four serious offenses, stealing from the sangha, and slandering the right dharma. In his view, the salvation of beings who commit such acts takes place through the working of the Primal

Vow. In the *Sanbukyō tai'i* Hōnen offers another interpretation of the mind of deep trust, citing the following passage from Shan-tao.

Shan-tao's *Commentary* states:

"Since the beginningless past down to this present existence, sentient beings such as yourselves have, with physical, verbal, and mental acts, committed all the ten transgressions, the five grave offenses, and the four serious offenses. You have slandered the dharma, lacked of the seed of Buddhahood, violated the precepts, destroyed right views and so on. [You have committed these acts] against all others, whether ordinary beings or sages, and the retribution for these acts has yet to be eliminated or exhausted. This karmic evil will bind you to the three realms and the evil courses. How is it possible that, by performing meritorious deeds and saying the nembutsu for but one lifetime, you will attain the undefiled land of no-birth and realize the stage of nonretrogression forever?"

Answer: The teachings and practices of all the Buddhas outnumber even particles of grains of sand . . . [They include] a thousand differences and myriad variations. How much more so is this with the inconceivable power of the Buddha-dharma! Does it not benefit us in a variety of ways? ³⁸

Here, a question is posed: How could one who commits the karmic sin of slandering the dharma and who lacks the seeds of Buddhahood be able to attain enlightenment by performing meritorious deeds and saying the nembutsu for but one lifetime? In response, Hōnen points out that, since the Buddhas' teachings are infinite and multifarious, and possess inconceivable power, they bring about a variety of benefits. He explains that the Name, "A-mi-da," is endowed with the innermost truth possessed by the Tathagatas, their externally exercised virtues, and the exceptionally profound teachings with virtues more numerous than the sands of the Ganges River. What Hōnen has developed here is a theory of salvation in which the purport of Amida's Vow is to teach beings that the Buddha will come to greet those who deeply entrust in his teaching and recite the nembutsu.

In this way, Hōnen first accepts Shan-tao's interpretation, and then further explains the salvation of those who commit the offense of slandering the right dharma. Finally, he cleverly sets out to clarify the working of the nembutsu using the metaphor of a medicine.

It is like a medicinal compound prepared from many plants and other medications. An ailing person knows about the medicine, but not about the percentages of the medicinal ingredients, or what

medicinal grasses are mixed into it. Nevertheless, all illness will be cured by this medicine.³⁹

In his text, *Amidakyōshaku* (*Commentary on the Amida Sutra*),⁴⁰ Hōnen provides an interpretation of the final passage in the *Amida Sutra*, which states,

When the Buddha delivered this sutra, Śāriputra and all the monks, together with beings of the whole world, including devas, humans and asuras, rejoiced at what they had heard and reverently accepted it. Having worshipped him, they departed.⁴¹

The words, “rejoiced at what they had heard and reverently accepted it,” he states, mean that beings hear the teaching of birth through the nembutsu and do not slander it. Rather, they deeply accept and believe in it. Persons lacking in trust—who hear and slander the teaching of birth through the nembutsu—are persons of extreme evil who lack the seeds for attaining Buddhahood. Hōnen continues by citing a passage from Shan-tao’s *Fa-shih tsan*,⁴² which declares that various teachings exist in the world of the five defilements, yet none surpasses the teaching of birth in the Land in the Western quarter through the nembutsu. In this way, he urges beings to turn about at heart and aspire to be born in the Pure Land.

Hōnen further states that persons of doubt and slander are persons born blind to enlightenment, who lack the seeds of Buddhahood. In destroying the sudden teaching, they sink forever in delusion, and will be unable to free themselves from the three lowest realms of samsaric existence, even though they may pass through kalpas as numerous as dust particles in the continent. He urges the members of the great assembly of disciples to repent their sins of having destroyed the dharma during many lives and worlds, thereby to turn about at heart and aspire for birth in the Pure Land. Relying on Shan-tao’s passage, Hōnen urges practitioners to stop doubting the teaching of birth through the nembutsu, and reverently accept it. In other words, by stating that persons of doubt and slander are persons of extreme evil, who lack the seeds of Buddhahood, Hōnen admonishes them from engaging in such acts. At the same time, he urges them to turn about at heart and aspire to be born in the Pure Land.

We have presented some of the textual materials that mention Hōnen’s stance regarding the salvation of those who commit the offense of slandering the right dharma and those lacking the seed for the attainment of Buddhahood. We have observed his strong warning against committing the offense of slandering the right dharma, as well as his stance that even persons who have slandered the dharma can be saved if they take refuge in the teaching of the nembutsu. We have also seen that Hōnen’s view was based in the writings of Shan-tao. It is interesting to note, however, that

Hōnen does not cite those passages in which Shan-tao most clearly sets forth the notion of the salvation of those who slander the dharma or those who lack the seeds for Buddhahood. That is, he makes no reference to the section on the lowest level of birth for the lowest grade of beings in the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching shu*, or to the *Fa-shih tsan* passage, "When persons who slander the dharma or persons lacking the seeds of Buddhahood turn about at heart, they will all go [to be born]." ⁴³

Shan-tao distinguished between persons who had not yet committed the offense of slandering the right dharma and those who already had done so. The Buddha's mind of great compassion admonishes those who had not committed the offense, he explained, even while it embraces those who already have done so. Hōnen clearly inherited this position from Shan-tao, albeit apparently based upon passages other than the two mentioned above; but he does not offer any further explanation of it. ⁴⁴

Hōnen's understanding of the Eighteenth Vow's exclusion clause, "Excluded are those who commit the five grave offenses and those who slander the right dharma," is not clearly known. During the development of the Pure Land teachings in India, China and Japan, the clause had been studied with great interest. Yet Hōnen's texts make virtually no mention of it. Nor does he explain how it relates to the salvation of those in the lowest level of birth of persons in the lowest grade of being (as set forth in the *Contemplation Sutra*), persons who commit the ten evil acts, or persons who commit the five grave offenses.

The *Hyakuyonjūgokajō mondō* (*One hundred forty-five questions and answers*) does offer the following reference, in the form of a question and answer, to the exclusion clause.

Are the five grave offenses and ten evil acts extinguished with one calling?

Answer: Without a doubt.

It is said that the offense of slandering the right dharma greatly exceeds that of the five grave offenses. Is this true?

Answer: One should not even consider [committing] that [offense]. ⁴⁵

These passages are perhaps too concise, and it is difficult to understand what they mean. The words, "One should not even consider that," seem to imply that, even as Hōnen answers questions pertaining to the relative seriousness and lightness of the offenses of slandering the right dharma and committing the five grave offenses, he is also instructing persons not to commit the act of slandering the dharma. The passages do not seem to say much more than that. Here, we can see how fully conscious Hōnen was of the offense of slandering the right dharma and how concerned he was about warning practitioners against committing such an act.

Even though Hōnen often cited the Eighteenth Vow as an attested passage, he usually omitted the exclusion clause from it. The clause is cited in only two places: as part of the passage on the fulfillment of the Eighteenth Vow in his *Muryōjukyōshaku* (*Commentary on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life*), and as part of the Vow passage in the *Tozanjō*. Even in those cases, he does not mention his reason for citing the exclusion clause.⁴⁶ For instance, in the *Muryōjukyōshaku*, he simply states that the passage on the fulfillment of the Eighteenth Vow contains three principles: (1) the purport of the sutra passage, (2) the meaning of once-calling and ten-callings differs from the teachings of the various masters, and (3) the clause that, “excluded are those who commit the five grave offenses.” Each of them, he states, explains the single practice of the nembutsu and clarifies the notion of birth in the Pure Land. Hōnen, however, does not explain the reason why the exclusion clause clarifies the teaching of birth through the nembutsu. It might have been that he accepted Shan-tao’s understanding that the exclusion clause contains a sense of both admonishment and inclusion (as we have seen above), reading into it the idea that the mind of great compassion ultimately guides beings to attain birth through the nembutsu. However, his manner of presentation is too concise, and it is quite difficult to understand what he means.

We have seen that Hōnen taught the salvation of those who slander the right dharma and those who lack the seed for the attainment of Buddhahood. What is the reason then that he makes virtually no reference to the exclusion clause of the Eighteenth Vow? I will now consider what that reason might have been, as we seek to clarify Hōnen’s view of human beings found in both his religious instructions and the *Senjakushū*.

V. HŌNEN’S REASON FOR NOT MENTIONING THE EXCLUSION CLAUSE

At the outset of the Chapter on the Two Gates of the *Senjakushū*, Hōnen quotes from the *An-lo chi* (*Passages on the Land of Happiness*)⁴⁷ of Tao-ch’o. During the last dharma-age, Tao-ch’o states, the Pure Land Path is the only one through which beings will be able to pass in order to attain enlightenment. In the world of the five defilements during the last dharma-age, sentient beings of inferior capacities will not be able to understand the profound teaching. Hōnen also cites the well-known phrase, “When we ponder the evil that people do and the offenses that they commit, are they any different than violent winds and driving rain?” Near the conclusion of this chapter, Hōnen also cites a passage from the *Shi-fang yao-chüeh* (*Essentials for Rebirth in the Western Land*), which states,

As I reflect, we have been born at the end of the semblance dharma-age; the sage [Śākyamuni] departed [from this world] long ago. The path we have received is that of the three vehicles; yet, we are not able to attain enlightenment upon it Those whose hearts are foolish and whose practices shallow will likely sink into the dark realms of existence. Thus, we must without fail remove ourselves far away from this saḥa world, so that our hearts may dwell in the land of purity.⁴⁸

Through this passage, Hōnen explains that “those whose hearts are foolish and whose practices shallow” should aspire without fail to be born in the Pure Land. In this way, Hōnen explicates the salvation of persons of inferior capacities living in this evil world of the five defilements. We must note that the *Senjakushū* does not discuss the idea of the last dharma-age through a direct citation of the *Mappō tōmyōki* (*Lamp for the Last Dharma-Age*). Instead, we need to look to Hōnen's religious instructions to find reference to Saichō's work. For instance, in the *Jūnikajō mondō* (*Questions and answers in twelve sections*), Hōnen states,

As the Master Dengyō (Saichō) writes in the *Mappō tōmyōki*, can we determine whether we observe or violate the precepts? Because of the Primal Vow, which was established for the sake of ordinary foolish beings, we should quickly, quickly say the Name.⁴⁹

In this world of the last dharma-age, there is no need for us to consider whether we observe the precepts or violate them. For that reason Hōnen emphasizes the salvation of ordinary, foolish beings.

In the Chapter on the Primal Vow, which is the third chapter of the *Senjakushū*, Hōnen presents two virtues—superiority and ease of performance—possessed by the practice of the nembutsu selected in the Primal Vow. In this chapter he cites a passage from Shan-tao's *Wang-sheng-li-tsan* (*Hymns of Birth in the Pure Land*), in order to consider why the Bodhisattva Dharmākara selected the easy practice of the nembutsu.

The burdens of sentient beings are heavy and the objects they perceive are faint; their minds are lax, their senses uncontrollable, and their spirits fly about. Hence, it is difficult for them to fulfill their practices of contemplation.⁵⁰

Burdened with many hindrances, the minds of sentient beings are constantly agitated, and it is difficult for them to perfect any contemplative practice. Here, Hōnen once again makes it clear that Dharmākara, driven by the compassion of equality, selected the single practice of saying the nembutsu for the sake of those who are destitute and troubled, those who

are dull and of inferior wisdom, those of little learning or knowledge, and those who violate the precepts or are without precepts. He explains that it is the easiest of practices, which anyone is able to perform.

When we consider the development of the idea of the nembutsu from Shan-tao to Hōnen, we see that both masters explicated saying the Name as “easy practice.” However, the discussion of the “essence” of the nembutsu (that is, its virtue of superiority) represented a stance unique to Hōnen. Some regard this as the unique character of Hōnen’s notion of the nembutsu selected in the Primal Vow,⁵¹ and certainly, the virtue of superiority could be considered as such. However, at the same time, we cannot separate the virtue of superiority from the ease of practice. That is to say, Hōnen makes clear that the practice that anyone is capable of reciting is—for that reason—the most superior of practices. Thus, by coupling the virtues of superiority and ease, Hōnen is able to talk about the practice selected in the Primal Vow. Saying the nembutsu—the most superlative of practices—was selected for the sake of persons driven away from the Buddhist path by the circumstances of their lives, and who thus are without any karmic connections to the teachings. It was selected for those incapable of performing the miscellaneous practices, and who thus had not in the past found acceptance within the Buddhist teachings.

It is believed that Hōnen produced the *Muryōjyūōshaku* prior to the *Senjakushū*. In that text as well, the two ideas of superiority versus inferiority and difficulty versus ease of practice are presented as reasons for the selection of the single practice of saying the nembutsu. The analysis of the notion of superior versus inferior differs little from the words in the *Senjakushū*. The issue of difficulty versus ease, however, is discussed in greater detail in the *Muryōjyūōshaku*. Hōnen begins by stating that the essence of the minds of all the Buddhas is compassion; thus they embrace all beings universally. He presents the teachings of the Shingon, Busshin (Zen), and Hokke (Tendai) schools of Buddhism, all of which teach of the compassion of equality. He declares, however, that through those teachings the great masters of each school might be able to attain birth, but that it would be impossible for other persons to do so. On the other hand, the vow of birth through the nembutsu includes all beings; thus the great masters of the various Buddhist schools in China and Japan have all aspired for birth in the Pure Land.

Concretely speaking, if alms-giving were the practice set out in the Primal Vow, then Sīlāditya alone would be capable of attaining birth. None of the poor and destitute people would be saved. If building stupas were the practice prescribed in the Primal Vow, then King Aśoka would be saved, but none of those suffering from hardship and strife could receive salvation. In meticulously ordered fashion, he elucidates the Primal Vow, which clarifies the birth of all persons, those who are poor and destitute, those of meager means and in hardship, those whose senses are shallow

and whose passions abound, those of inferior capacities, and those who live as lay householders.⁵² In his conclusion, Hōnen states that the vow of birth through the nembutsu makes no issue with regard to those with wisdom and those without, those who observe precepts and those who violate them, those who hear and understand little, or those living as lay persons in worldly life. The vow establishes a practice that is easy to recite and birth that is easy to attain. Finally, he cites Fa-chao's *Wu-hui fa-shih tsan*, as he concludes with the statement that the Buddha embraces all beings with the compassion of equality.

Hōnen emphasizes the compassion of equality of the Buddha's heart and mind. By mentioning the names of existing Buddhist schools and individuals, he emphasizes that salvation is not limited to a chosen few. Rather, he asserts that salvation includes those people who had been traditionally perceived as having no karmic connections to the Buddhist teachings. In this way, he takes great pains to explain the issue of difficulty versus ease of practice in order to present a salvation for all persons. Hōnen devotes further, organized discussion to this point in the *Senjakushū*. Thus, we can understand how much care Hōnen paid to his attempts to give expression to the salvation of great compassion.

Another point must be noted. It is known that Hōnen's discussion of the idea of difficulty versus ease of practice was influenced by Fa-chao's *Wu-hui fa-shih tsan*, which was cited as an attesting passage at the end of the *Muryōjukyōshaku*. The passage was originally a verse by Tz'u-min, which Fa-chao cites in his text. For Hōnen, the meaning of the passage cited from Tz'u-min was identical to that of Fa-chao. According to it, the Primal Vow of Amida Buddha makes no discrimination between the poor and the rich or wellborn, or between the inferior and the highly gifted; it does not choose the learned and those upholding pure precepts; nor does it reject those who violate the precepts and whose evil karma is profound. Simply by causing beings to turn about and abundantly say the nembutsu, it can make bits of rubble change into gold.

The content of this *Muryōjukyōshaku* passage is expressed in terms of the salvation of "those who are dull and of inferior wisdom, those who violate the precepts or are without precepts" in the Chapter on the Primal Vow in the *Senjakushū*. There, it is stated that "those who violate the precepts and whose evil karma is profound" are like bits of tile and rubble, which become changed into gold.⁵³ In this way, Hōnen explains that the basis for clarifying the salvation of all beings lies in the Amida Buddha's compassionate mind of equality. At the same time, he reveals the significance of Amida's establishment of a separate vow for the salvation of people who are like bits of tile and rubble. Hōnen clarifies the salvation of persons who are like bits of tile and rubble—those who break precepts and whose evil karma is profound. This is the manner in which the *Senjakushū* expounds the salvation of the evil person.

As mentioned above, on those occasions when Hōnen cited the passage on the Eighteenth Vow as an attesting passage, he usually omitted the exclusion clause. In those cases where he included the exclusion clause in his quotation of the Eighteenth Vow, such as in the *Tozanjō*, it was usually followed by a citation of Shan-tao's interpretive rendering of the gist of the vow. Hōnen made no other mention of this issue. In the Chapter on the Primal Vow and other passages in the *Senjakushū* as well, Hōnen cites the passages on the Eighteenth Vow and the fulfillment of the Eighteenth Vow. However, in both cases the exclusion clause is omitted.

Having declared, "I rely solely on Shan-tao, as my one master," Hōnen naturally must have found his view of the Primal Vow strongly influenced by Shan-tao. We have seen above how Hōnen occasionally adopted Shan-tao's interpretive rendering of the gist of the vow. Yet, in the *Senjakushū* Hōnen does not cite any of Shan-tao's adapted readings of the Primal Vow. His discussion of the vow in terms of the practice forming the cause of birth, however, shows a clear acceptance of Shan-tao's thought. That is to say, Hōnen makes it clear, in accordance with Shan-tao, that the exclusive practice of saying the nembutsu is in itself the practice selected in the Primal Vow. This is the central theme of the *Senjakushū*, and thus it is taken up at the outset of the text. Since sentient beings of the ten quarters constitute the object of salvation through the Primal Vow, Hōnen seeks to clarify the equanimity of salvation in his discussion of the two virtues of the nembutsu: superiority and ease of practice. That point is clarified in the later Chapter on Praise for the Nembutsu of the *Senjakushū* along with his discussion of the salvation of the evil person.⁵⁴

As mentioned above, Hōnen discusses the salvation of those who commit the five grave offenses in the section of the lowest level of birth by persons in the lowest grade of being of his text, *Kangyōshaku*.⁵⁵ In that context, he takes the position that the extinguishing of heavy sins and offenses is possible only through the power of the nembutsu, and not through any other practice. This, he states, is the most superlative teaching of ultimate good for the sake of the lowest people of extreme evil. He then offers an illustration as further explanation. If the source of ignorance were an illness, he says, then one could never be cured without the medicine taken from the Mādhyamika storehouse. The five grave offenses constitute a serious illness, which can be cured only through the nembutsu, taken from the storehouse of miraculous medicines.

As proof, Hōnen cites from the *Rokuharamitsukyō*, taken from the second fascicle of the *Ben-kenmitsu-nikyōron* (*Commentary on the Esoteric and Exoteric Teachings*) of Kōbō Daishi (Kūkai).⁵⁶ There, the 84,000 Buddhist teachings are separated into five divisions: *sūtra*, *vinaya*, *abhidharma*, *prajñā-pāramitā*, and *dhāraṇī*. It is taught that each of these five kinds of teachings is expounded in accordance with the capacities of the beings. In particular, persons who have committed serious offenses—

beings of karmic evil, those who have committed the four serious offenses or the eight major sins, those who commit the five offenses that will cause them to suffer in Avīci Hell, those who slander the Mahāyāna sutras, and those who lack the seeds for attaining Buddhahood—such persons must rely upon the various *dhāraṇī-piṭaka* in order to extinguish quickly all of their sins, gain emancipation and attain nirvana. These five divisions of Buddhist teachings are further categorized in terms of “five tastes,” respectively: milk, cream, curdled milk, butter and clarified butter (*maṇḍa*). The *dhāraṇī* scriptures correspond to the taste of *maṇḍa*. In the final analysis, according to Kūkai, the *dhāraṇī* is the most superlative of all the Buddhist teachings, for it is able to eliminate all grave sins, bring all sentient beings to liberation from samsaric existence, and instantly cause them to realize the dharma-body of nirvana and utmost bliss. Essentially, the *Ben-kenmitsu-nikyōron*, and two of Kūkai's other texts, *Himitsu-mandara-jūjūshin-ron* and *Hizō-hōyaku* together constitute his scriptural classification in terms of crosswise and lengthwise teachings. The *Nikyōron* establishes contrasts between the esoteric and exoteric teachings. By elucidating theories such as the Buddha-bodies, dharmic instruction, attainment of enlightenment, and dharma-body expositions, it declares the superior nature of Shingon esoteric teachings. In particular, the *dhāraṇī* scriptures are illustrated through the metaphor of the wondrous medicine of *maṇḍa*. By taking it, one can eliminate such heavy sins as the five grave offenses, slandering of the right dharma, and lacking the seeds for Buddhahood, and one will be able to attain the dharma-body of nirvana and utmost bliss.

Hōnen viewed the *dhāraṇī* teaching to be synonymous with the teaching of the nembutsu. He concludes,

Among these, the five offenses that cause beings to suffer in Avīci Hell correspond to the five grave offenses. Without the wondrous medicine of *maṇḍa*, the illness of these five offenses would be extremely difficult to cure. Know that the nembutsu is just like this. Among the teachings leading to birth, nembutsu *samādhi* is like a *dhāraṇī*; it is just like *maṇḍa*. Without the *maṇḍa*-like medicine of nembutsu *samādhi*, the illness of the five grave and heavy offenses would be extremely difficult to cure.⁵⁷

With this skillful citation of an attesting passage, Hōnen explicates the salvation of persons with heavy karmic sins through the working of the nembutsu. One point deserves special note. The *Ben-kenmitsu-nikyōron* elucidates a path to enlightenment after having first taken up persons who have committed various grave offenses: those who commit the four serious offenses or the eight major sins; those who commit the five offenses which cause them to suffer in Avīci Hell; those who slander the Mahāyāna sutras; and those who lack the seeds for attaining Buddhahood. It is very difficult

to teach the dharma to such persons and guide them to enlightenment. Hōnen, however, does not touch at all upon the offense of slandering the dharma or upon *icchāntika*, who lack the seeds for attain Buddhahood. Instead, he points out that the five offenses that would cause one to suffer in Avīci Hell correspond to the five grave offenses. Thus, he only addresses the salvation of those who commit the five grave offenses through the nembutsu teaching. One would think that Hōnen would have discussed the nembutsu as a teaching of admonition and inclusion, as we have seen in Shan-tao's analysis of the *Contemplation Sutra's* section on the lowest level of birth among the lowest grade of beings, or in the context of the offense of slandering the right dharma and the five grave offenses, based on the *Fa-shih tsan*.⁵⁸ However, he does not touch upon them at all. Instead, he clarifies the salvation of persons who have committed heavy karmic sins, such as the five grave offenses, through the citation of passages from Kūkai's texts.

In his *Kangyōshaku*, Hōnen follows along with the sutra passages, and sets forth the salvation of those who have committed the five grave offenses in his commentary on the section on persons in the lowest grade of beings. In the *Senjakushū*, he adds further development to this notion of the salvation of persons who commit the five grave offenses in the Chapter on Praise of the Nembutsu. Again, he cites the *Ben-kenmitsu-nikyōron* as the authority to discuss the significance of the *dhāraṇī* scriptures. He argues that, compared to other practices, the nembutsu is inclusive of all practices; it is able to cure the sickness of the five grave offenses.

In this way, Hōnen explicated the salvation of a person who commits the ten evil acts and the five grave offenses, and he asserted by implication the notion that the evil person is the true object of the Primal Vow's salvation. In addition, he fully understood and inherited the import of Shan-tao's teaching that when persons who slander the right dharma and persons who lack the seeds to attain Buddhahood turn about at heart, they will also be included in salvation. Despite that, however, he did not mention the exclusion clause from the passage on the Primal Vow. Moreover, Hōnen neither cited nor commented on the various passages from Shan-tao's texts, which provide the clearest discussion of the inclusion of slanderers of the dharma or *icchāntika*.

It is likely that Hōnen was quite careful in his interpretation and religious instructions regarding the offense of slandering the right dharma. If he had focused solely on those who slander the right dharma and actively argued for the inclusion of such persons, it might have encouraged misunderstanding of his position by those who were critical of other Buddhist schools and wished to recognize the nembutsu teaching alone. Or, he might have given credence to those people from outside the Pure Land path, who wished to denounce the nembutsu teaching for being non-Buddhistic. It might be said that, among the various repercussions that arose around

Hōnen's positions, the problem concerning those who slander the right dharma was one of the greatest issues. In this light, by inheriting the import of Shan-tao's thought, Hōnen could respond discreetly to the problem, while not having to argue affirmatively for the inclusion of those who commit the offense of slandering the right dharma. Therefore, Hōnen took careful note of those who slander the right dharma and made frequent mention of them.

Hōnen comments in this way on the passage from Shan-tao's *Fa-shih tsan*, which we mentioned above.

The time has come when the five defilements increase and those who doubt and revile [Amida's Vow] are numerous.

Both monks and lay people despise [the nembutsu] and refuse to listen [to the teaching].

When they see those who practice it, the poison of anger arises in them;

Hindering others in every way, they vie in causing harm.

Such people like these, who are born blind [to enlightenment] and lack the seeds to attain Buddhahood, destroy the sudden teaching, and thus forever sink [in transmigration].⁵⁹

For Hōnen, persons who look upon those who aspire for birth in the Pure Land and practice the nembutsu with thoughts of malice, prejudice and hatred are lacking the eyes of Buddha-nature—they are *icchantika*, who lack the seeds for the attainment of Buddhahood. Such persons will sink forever into the three evil courses; they will be unable to escape from this world of delusion, even if they were to pass through kalpas as numerous as the motes of dust in the great continent. At the conclusion of this letter, Hōnen does not himself force the nembutsu upon those who slander it. Rather, he writes that such persons will be guided by bodhisattvas in the aspect of their return to this world, who will take such persons in and instruct them, while making them think on their own relatives.

There were many people who slandered the nembutsu, each of them committing the offense of slandering the right dharma. However, here Hōnen's sentiment is that enmity not be directed against such persons. In the *Amidakyōshaku* he comments on the words, "rejoiced at what they had heard and reverently accepted it," from the conclusion of the *Amida Sutra* in order to state that persons who hear the teaching of birth through the nembutsu and slander it are persons of extreme evil—*icchantika*, persons lacking the seeds for attaining Buddhahood.⁶⁰ He also mentions that there were people in various locations, such as Tennōji, who were critical of the nembutsu *samādhi*. In the Chapter on Entrusting the Nembutsu in the *Senjakushū*, the same *Fa-shih tsan* passage is cited. Here, Hōnen states that there were many persons in the evil world of the five defilements who

slandered, criticized and attacked the nembutsu teaching. In spite of that, he emphasizes, the followers in the great assembly should, with like-mindedness, repent the conditions that have brought about such slandering of the dharma, and take refuge in the teaching of the nembutsu.⁶¹

In his *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching shu*, Shan-tao teaches that one should believe deeply in the *Contemplation Sutra*. During his time, persons of all different understandings and practices, as well as divergent learning, views and attachments, everywhere filled the worlds of the ten quarters. They quoted from the sutras and commentaries and rejected the teaching of birth through the nembutsu. Despite that, however, Shan-tao teaches that persons of the nembutsu should not waver or be disturbed. Hōnen, in texts such as *Ōjōtaiyōshō*, cites Shan-tao's words and interprets them in an easily understandable way. No matter what sort of criticism or slander one might be subject to, he says, one should not doubt the nembutsu for even one moment.⁶²

In the concluding passage of the *Senjakushū*, Hōnen states that, since he had been asked to write the text by Kujō Kanezane, he did not even consider his own inability to do so. Having compiled the essential passages and presented the essential meaning of the nembutsu, he concludes his work with the words,

I humbly ask that, after you have once deigned to read this collection, you hide it in the base of a wall and not leave it out before a window, for I fear that that it might cause one who wishes to destroy the Buddhist teachings to fall into evil ways.⁶³

Here Hōnen's deep feelings are well displayed. Hōnen fully predicted that the publication of the *Senjakushū* would produce a great deal of criticism and censure, and that it would also give rise to the offense of slandering the right dharma. Eventually, voices calling for the suppression of the nembutsu would gradually be raised, just as Hōnen had feared. In time, those voices brought about the Jōgen prohibition of the nembutsu movement. In Kanto, Nichiren launched his criticism of the exclusive practice of the nembutsu. He denounced Hōnen for teaching people to "reject, close, seal off, and abandon" any teachings and practices other than the nembutsu. Nichiren declared that the practice of the nembutsu would cause persons to fall into Avīci Hell, for the exclusive practice of the nembutsu itself was a slandering of the right Buddhist teachings.⁶⁴ Other works, such as Myōe's *Zaijarin*, also criticized Hōnen's published doctrines as non-Buddhistic. Finally, after Hōnen's death a variety of divergent views and disputes arose among his followers. Some of the issues involved the problem of once-calling versus many-calling, and whether or not it would be possible to attain birth through practices other than the nembutsu.

The path of the exclusive practice of the nembutsu involves a life of severe choices. The nembutsu selected in the Primal Vow brought about a hundred eighty degree revolution of traditional Buddhist views. For that reason, Hōnen was able to foresee the arising of much slander of the right dharma and he was deeply worried about that very prospect. Having stated that evil persons are saved by the Primal Vow of great compassion, and that slanderers of the right dharma are also included within that salvation, he urged people not to understand this teaching superficially or incorrectly. People should never presume on the great compassionate mind of the Primal Vow; nor should they ever accept evil acts or slandering of the right dharma; and they should never criticize or do harm to the teaching of birth through the nembutsu. Certainly, Hōnen's thought involves the notion that we should fully understand just how grave an offense slandering the right dharma really is.

Translated by David Matsumoto

NOTES

1. This article originally appeared under the title, "Hōnen ni okeru gyaku hō no sukui no mondai," in the journal *Ryūkoku daigaku ronshū* 434/435 (1999): pp. 1–22. Unless otherwise noted, the text of the article and all cited passages have been translated into English by David Matsumoto.
2. See Yata Ryōshō, "Akunin shōki setsu no seiritsu ni tsuite: (1) tokuni Hōnen to kanren shite," in *Shinshūgaku* 65 (1982): pp. 38–39.
3. "Dainibu: Daigobon *Hōnen Shōnin denki*" (hereinafter *Daigobon*) in Tōdō Kyōshun hakase koki kinenkai, ed., *Tōdō Kyōshun hakase koki kinen Jōdoshū tenseki kenkyū* (hereinafter, *Jōdoshū tenseki kenkyū*): *shiryōhen* (Kyoto: Dōbōsha, 1988), pp. 125–237.
4. Itō Yuishin, "*Hōnen Shōnin denki* (Daigobon) no seiritsu shiteki kōsatsu," in *Jōdoshū tenseki kenkyū: kenkyūhen*, pp. 281–282.
5. *Daigobon*, leaves 43 verso, and 44 recto, in *Jōdoshū tenseki kenkyū: shiryōhen*, pp. 213–214. See also, Ishii Kyōdō, ed., *Shōwa shinshū Hōnen Shōnin zenshū* (hereinafter *Hōnen zenshū*), (Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1955), p. 454.
6. *Tannishō* (*A Record in Lament of Divergences*) in *Shinshū shōgyō zensho* (hereinafter *SSZ*), (Kyoto: Ōyagi Kōbundō, 1941), vol. 2, p. 775; also, The Shin Buddhism Translation Series, *The Collected Works of Shinran* (hereinafter *CWS*), (Kyoto: Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-ha, 1997), p. 663.
7. Mochizuki Shinkō, *Jōdokyō no kenkyū* (1930; reprint, Tokyo: Nihon Tosho Center, 1977).
8. Tsuboi has presented a number of articles on this issue. His view has been advanced in a recent article, "*Daigobon Hōnen Shōnin denki*, shoshū, *Sanjinryōken no koto*, ika *Nijūshichi hōgo* ni tsuite: toku ni akunin shōki setsu to sono jojutsusha ni kanshite," in *Jōdoshū tenseki kenkyū: kenkyūhen*, pp. 433–460.
9. *Daigobon*, leaf 35 recto and verso, in *Jōdoshū tenseki kenkyū: shiryōhen*, pp. 196–197. See also, *Hōnen zenshū*, p. 450.
10. A hymn by Tz'u-min, cited by Fa-chao in the *Wu-hui fa-shih tsan* (*Shorter Pure Land Liturgy of Nembutsu Chant in Five Stages*, in *Taishō*, vol. 47, no. 1983). This portion of the English translation has been taken from Shinran's *Yushinshō mon'i*, in *CWS*, p. 456.
11. *Daigobon*, leaf 36 recto and verso, in *Jōdoshū tenseki kenkyū: shiryōhen*, pp. 198–199. See also *Hōnen zenshū*, p. 451.
12. The passage, "That Buddha, in the causal stage, made the universal

Vow . . .,” from the *Wu-hui fa-shih tsan* of Fa-chao, is actually from Tz'u-min's *Pan-chou san-meī tsan* (*Hymns on the Samādhi of All Buddhas' Presence*), a hymn cited by Fa-chao. See Jōdoshū shūten kankōkai, ed., *Jōdoshū zensho*, vol. 6 (Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 1982), p. 686. Hōnen considers Tz'u-min's passage to be that of Fa-chao himself. Hōnen's citation omits the four lines, “Not rejecting those who do not perform Pure Land practices or the *icchantika* of non-Buddhist paths; nor choosing those who perform practices over long periods of time or those who give rise to that mind for the first time today.” We must examine the question of whether he omitted these passages for some particular reason.

13. Hōnen, *Senjaku hongan nembutsu shū* (*Passages on the Nembutsu Selected in the Primal Vow*) in *Hōnen zenshū*, p. 320. See also SSZ, vol. 1, p. 945.

14. Shinran's notion of the salvation of the evil person is explained in terms of the salvation of those who commit the five grave offenses, slander the right dharma, or those who lack the seed of Buddhahood (*icchantika*) in sections in the general preface, commentary on the ocean of the one vehicle, and the latter portion of the Chapter on Shinjin in the *Kyōgyōshinshō* (*Collection of Passages Revealing the True Teaching, Practice, and Realization of the Pure Land Way*). It can also be seen in the writings of his later years. Hence, it was a position taken by Shinran throughout his lifetime. He also teaches that, “since the beginningless past, the multitudes of beings have been transmigrating in the ocean of ignorance, sinking aimlessly in the cycle of all forms of [false] existence.” (Chapter on Shinjin, in SSZ, vol. 2, p. 62; CWS, p. 98.) In other words, the entire existence of all human beings is evil.

15. *Daigobon*, leafs 34 recto and verso, and 35 recto, in *Jōdoshū tenseki kenkyū: shiryōhen*, pp. 194–196. See also *Hōnen zenshū*, p. 450.

16. *Jūni mondō* (*Twelve Questions and Answers*), in *Hōnen zenshū*, p. 639.

17. Hōnen, *Sanbukyō tai'i* (*Overall Significance of the Three Pure Land Sutras*), in *Hōnen zenshū*, p. 44. Recently, there have been advances in the bibliographic studies known as “Jōdoshū tenseki” (Pure Land school texts). There are differing theories concerning the formation of the *Sanbukyō tai'i*. Tsuboi Shun'ei raises questions as to whether or not the *Sanbukyō tai'i* transmitted Hōnen's true intent. See Tsuboi Shun'ei, *Hōnen Jōdokyō no kenkyū: Dentō to jishō ni tsuite* (Tokyo: Ryūbunkan, 1982), pp. 170–188. Tōdō Kyōshun analyzes the text's commentary on the sincere mind, pointing out that it contains a notion of “mental cultivation [polishing],” which Hōnen discussed early on. Thus, he sees the *Sanbukyō tai'i* as one of Hōnen's early works. See Tōdō Kyōshun, *Hōnen Shōnin kenkyū* (Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 1983), pp. 252–280. Kakehashi Jitsuen engages in a similar analysis of the commentary on the sincere mind and concludes that

the *Sanbukyō tai'ī* is an important text in the development from Hōnen to Shinran of the notion of directing of virtue through Other Power. See Kakehashi Jitsuen, *Hōnen kyōgaku no kenkyū* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1986), pp. 270–288. There remains a need for further studies on the question of the formation of this text.

18. Hōnen, *Ōjō taiyō shō* (*Record of the main essentials for birth*), in *Hōnen zenshū*, p. 61.

19. Translator's Note: The "five grave offenses" (Jpn. *gogyakuzai*) are considered to be so serious that the person committing even one of them would be condemned to suffer endless pain and suffering in hell. Traditionally, the five offenses have been considered to be: (1) killing one's mother; (2) killing one's father; (3) killing an *arhat*; (4) causing the body of a Buddha to bleed; and (5) bringing disharmony to the Buddhist sangha. The five offenses apparently take on a different character in the Mahāyāna tradition. See *CWS*, vol. 2, pp. 186–187.

20. *Jūni mondō*, in *Hōnen zenshū*, p. 638.

21. *Ibid.*

22. Translator's note: The "ten evil acts" (Jpn. *jūaku*) represent transgressions of ten Buddhist precepts against: (1) taking life; (2) stealing; (3) committing adultery; (4) lying; (5) using harsh language; (6) speaking in a way that causes enmity between persons; (7) idle talk; (8) greed; (9) anger; and (10) wrong views.

23. In fact, there are many interpretations of the place of "the evil person is the true object of salvation" within Hōnen's thought. Some of them, which I have introduced in an earlier article, include:

(1) It is not accepted as a stance taken by Hōnen. Tsuboi Shun'ei takes the position that it was actually a theory set forth by Ryūkan. See Tsuboi Shun'ei, *Hōnen Jōdokyō no kenkyū*, pp. 44–52.

(2) While the theory can be viewed as a position taken by Hōnen, it involves two meanings: "take evil as the right act and cast away good" and "take good as the right act and cast away evil." Opinions are divided as to how to view these two ideas. The former might be viewed as an attempt to make one's practice more thorough-going. See, for instance, Yata Ryōshō, "Akunin shōki setsu no seiritsu ni tsuite: (1) tokuni Hōnen to kanrenshite," in *Shinshūgaku* 65 (1982): pp. 35–56. Kakehashi Jitsuen makes the point that this notion forms the core of Hōnen's understanding of the Primal Vow. However, since it could easily become a pretext for engaging in licensed evil, Hōnen conferred this teaching orally only to those disciples capable of understanding its true meaning. See, Kakehashi Jitsuen, *Hōnen kyōgaku no kenkyū*, p. 322.

Shigematsu Akihisa believes that Hōnen never fully accepted the view that “the evil person is the object of salvation.” Rather, held in check by the traditional stance that “good is taken as the right act, while evil is cast away,” Hōnen was not able to cross over that final line. Shigematsu’s position can be found in his *Nihon Jōdokyō seiritsukatei no kenkyū: Shinran no shisō to sono genryū* (Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1964).

(3) Shinran’s notion that “the evil person is the true object of the Vow” was anticipated by Hōnen’s interpretation. For examples of those adopting this view, see Kajimura Noboru, *Hōnen* (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1970), pp. 215–217, and Takahashi Kōji, *Hōnen Jōdokyō no shomondai* (Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 1980), p. 30. Fujimoto Kiyohiko says that the theory that “the evil person is the true object of salvation” has been espoused as the idea of Shinran. However, above and beyond that, it can be understood to have been a concrete and real religious ideal within Hōnen’s thought. Although Hōnen also taught that “good is to be taken as the right practice, while evil is to be cast aside,” this might be considered as a teaching geared to the capacities of the listener. Thus, it was based in secular ethics and morality. Fujimoto points out that all of this was concentrated in his teaching that “the evil person is the true object of salvation.” See Fujimoto, “Hōnen ni okeru akuninshōki no shisō,” in *Jōdoshū tenseki kenkyū: Kenkyūhen*, pp. 491–514.

24. *Shijūhachikan den* (Biography in Forty-eight Volumes), vol. 6, in *Hōnen zenshū*, pp. 493 and 752.

25. Shan-tao, *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching shu* (Commentary on the Contemplation Sutra), *Hsüan-i fen* (Chapter on the Essential Meaning of the Sūtra), in *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 453.

26. *Wu-liang-shou ching* (Sutra of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life), in *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 9. See also, *CWS*, p. 80.

27. For instance, Tamaki Kōshirō has engaged in a detailed study of the development of interpretation of the exclusion clause of the Eighteenth Vow, from the eightfold questions and answers in T’an-luan’s *Wang-sheng lun chu* (*SSZ*, vol. 1, pp. 308–9) to Shan-tao’s *San-shan i* (Chapter on the Meaning of Non-Meditative Practice) in the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching shu* (*SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 555). See Tamaki, “Yuijo gogyaku no imi ni tsuite: Chūgoku, Nihon hen,” in *Tōbōgaku ronshū: Tōbōgakkai sōritsu yonjussūnen kinen* (Tokyo: Tōbōgakkai, 1987): pp. 483–500, and “Yuijo gogyaku hihō shōbō no imi ni tsuite: Indo sōkatsuhēn,” in *Narita bukkyō kenkyūsho kiyō* 11 [*Tokubetsugō: Bukkyō shisōshi ronshū*] (1988): pp. 219–90.

28. *Hōnen zenshū*, p. 119.

29. *Hōnen zenshū*, p. 121.
30. *Ōjō taiyōshō*, in *Hōnen zenshū*, pp. 49–50.
31. *Ōjō taiyōshō*, in *Hōnen zenshū*, p. 61.
32. Hōnen, *Jūnikajō no mondō* (*Questions and Answers in Twelve Sections*), *Hōnen zenshū*, pp. 679–680.
33. Hōnen, *Nembutsu ōjō yōgishō* (*Notes on the Essential Meaning of Birth through the Nembutsu*), in *Hōnen zenshū*, p. 688.
34. *Kamakura ni'i no zenni e shinzuru gohenji*, in *Hōnen zenshū*, p. 530.
35. Shan-tao, *Wang-sheng-li tsan* (*Hymns of Birth in the Pure Land*), in *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 679. Cited in *Ōjō taiyōshō*, in *Hōnen zenshū*, p. 60.
36. This passage from the *Wang-sheng-li tsan* (*SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 679) is often cited in records of Hōnen's religious instructions. It greatly influenced Hōnen's thinking on the issue of the offense of slandering the right dharma. His use of the terms "slandering the dharma" and "destroying the dharma" in the sixteenth chapter of the *Senjakushū* (*SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 988) carries with it a strong sense of admonition against committing such acts.
37. *Wang-sheng-li tsan*, in *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 679.
38. *Hōnen zenshū*, p. 37; cited in *CWS*, pp. 88–9.
39. *Hōnen zenshū*, p. 39.
40. *Hōnen zenshū*, p. 143.
41. *A-mi-t'o ching* (*Amida Sutra*), in *SSZ*, p. 72. This English translation is from *The Smaller Sutra on Amitāyus*, Hisao Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras: A Study and Translation* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1994), p. 360.
42. Shan-tao, *Fa-shih tsan* (*Hymns of the Nembutsu Liturgy*), in *SSZ*, vol. 1, pp. 604–5. The passage in question reads, "The time has come when the five defilements increase and those who doubt and revile [Amida's Vow] are numerous. Both monks and lay people despise [the nembutsu] and refuse to listen [to the teaching]. When they see those who practice it, the poison of anger arises in them; hindering others in every way, they vie in causing harm. (This portion is cited in *CWS*, p. 566.) Such people like these, who are born blind [to enlightenment] and lack the seeds to attain Buddhahood, destroy the sudden teaching, and [thus] are forever sinking [in transmigration]. Though they may pass through kalpas as numerous as the motes of dust in the great continent, they will be unable to gain liberation from the three lowest realms of [samsaric] existence.
43. See *SSZ*, vol. 1, pp. 555 and 567.
44. Tamaki Kōshirō examines the meaning of "excluded (only) are those. . . ." (*yuijo*) in the Sanskrit version of the exclusion clause of the Primal Vow. He shows the meaning to include "to restrict, detain, or

restrain." In China and Japan this developed into a sense of a "special ordering," the undercurrent of which implied that one is set in the direction of "dharma," which can be contacted with neither the physical nor mental eye. Tamaki's idea is richly and deeply suggestive. See Tamaki, "Yuijo gogyaku no imi ni tsuite: Chūgoku, Nihon hen," and "Yuijo gogyaku hihō shōbō no imi ni tsuite: Indo sōkatsuhen."

45. *Hyakuyonjūgokajō mondō* (One Hundred Forty-five Questions and Answers), in *Hōnen zenshū*, p. 657.

46. *Muryōjukyōshaku*, in *Hōnen zenshū*, p. 88; *Tozanjō*, in *Hōnen zenshū*, p. 422.

47. Tao-ch'ō, *An-le chi* (Passages on the Land of Happiness) in *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 377.

48. *Shi-fang yao-chüeh* (Essentials for Rebirth in the Western Land), in *Taishō*, vol. 47, p. 104a; cited in *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 933.

49. Hōnen, *Jūnikajō mondō* (Questions and Answers in Twelve Sections), in *Hōnen zenshū*, p. 634.

50. Shan-tao, *Wang-sheng-li-tsan* (Hymns of Birth in the Pure Land), in *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 651. Cited in *Hōnen zenshū*, p. 319, and *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 944.

51. Ishii Kyōdō, *Senjakushū zenkō* (Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1975).

52. *Muryōjukyōshaku*, in *Hōnen zenshū*, p. 72.

53. See *Hōnen zenshū*, p. 320; also *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 945.

54. See *Hōnen zenshū*, pp. 336-8; also *SSZ*, vol. 1, pp. 971-76.

55. See *Hōnen zenshū*, p. 124.

56. See *Kōbō Daishi zenshū*, vol. 2 (1968; reprint, Kyoto: Dōbōsha, 1978), vol. 2, pp. 189-92.

57. Hōnen, *Kanmuryōjukyōshaku* (Commentary on the Contemplation Sutra), in *Hōnen zenshū*, p. 125.

58. *Fa-shih tsan*; see *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 567.

59. *Kamakura ni'i no zenni e shinzuru gohenji*, in *Hōnen zenshū*, p. 529. See also *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 605. The first four lines of this English translation have been taken from CWS, p. 566.

60. See *Hōnen zenshū*, p. 143.

61. See *Hōnen zenshū*, p. 346; also *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 988.

62. See *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 535; also *Hōnen zenshū*, pp. 64-65.

63. *Hōnen zenshū*, p. 350; also *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 993.

64. Nichiren criticized the nembutsu for being an act of slander against the right dharma. This criticism began from the time of his sermons at the crossroads in Kamakura when he was thirty-two years old (1253). He

clarified the theory behind his criticism in his *Risshō ankokuron* (*A Treatise to Establish Righteousness and Peace for our Nation*) in 1260. In that text Nichiren states, “The true teaching of the *Lotus Sutra*, and the six hundred, thirty-seven sections and two thousand, eight hundred, and eighty-three chapters of Mahāyāna scriptures taught during Śākyamuni’s life, as well as all Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and devas—[Hōnen] includes them all within the ‘difficult’ and ‘sundry’ practices. He urges people to ‘reject, close, seal off, and abandon’ them. With these four words, he brings great confusion to all. He calls the sacred monks and disciples of the Buddha in the three countries ‘groups of thieves’ and other slanderous things. He comes close to repudiating the vow passage, ‘excluded are those who commit the five grave offenses and slander the right dharma,’ in the sacred three Pure Land sutras.” See *Risshō ankokuron*, in *Taishō*, vol. 84, pp. 204–205. Nichiren claims that Hōnen’s theory of “reject, close, seal off, and abandon” contravenes the meaning of the exclusion clause of the Eighteenth Vow. Thus, he states, the teaching of birth through the nembutsu itself constitutes the slandering of the right dharma.

An Examination of the Historical Development of the Concept of Two Aspects of Deep Belief, Part 1¹

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I. INTRODUCTION

CLEARLY, THE FEATURE most directly explicated in Shinran's teaching of *Jōdo Shinshū* ("the true essence of the Pure Land way") is that of shinjin.² *Jōdo Shinshū*, he reveals in the Chapter on Teaching in his *Kyōgyōshinshō* (*Collection of Passages Revealing the True Teaching, Practice and Realization of the Pure Land Way*), refers to the entirety of the teaching regarding Amida Buddha. Shinran further states in his other religious tracts that shinjin is at the core of the true Pure Land way. For instance,

Know that the true essence of the Pure Land teaching (*Jōdo Shinshū*) is that when we realize true and real shinjin, we are born in the true fulfilled land.³

Know that shinjin is the true intent of the Pure Land teaching.⁴

The late Master said,

According to the true essence of the Pure Land way, one entrusts oneself to the Primal Vow in this life and realizes enlightenment in the Pure Land; this is the teaching I received.⁵

In the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, shinjin is thoroughly elucidated in the Chapter on Shinjin. There, Shinran takes up the idea of two aspects of deep belief (Jpn. *nishu jinshin*) in order to offer a detailed explanation of the content of shinjin. The notion of the two aspects of deep belief was first discussed by Shan-tao in the *San-shan-i* (Chapter on nonmeditative practice) of his *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching shu* (*Commentary on the Contemplation Sutra*). Shinran cites that passage in the Chapter on Shinjin.

There are two aspects. One is to believe deeply and decidedly that you are a foolish being of karmic evil caught in birth-and-death, ever sinking and ever wandering in transmigration from innumerable kalpas in the past, with never a condition that would lead to emancipation. The second is to believe deeply and decidedly that Amida Buddha's Forty-eight Vows grasp sentient beings, and that allowing yourself to be carried by the power of the Vow without any doubt or apprehension, you will attain birth.⁶

Here, shinjin is discussed in terms of its two aspects:

- (1) A deep belief regarding the nature of sentient beings (Jpn. *ki no jinshin*). One believes deeply in the actual state of this self, whose karmic evil is deep and grave and who is without any condition that would lead to emancipation from samsaric existence;
- (2) A deep belief regarding the "Dharmic-truth" of the Buddha's Vow (Jpn. *hō no jinshin*). One believes deeply in the truth of great compassion, wherein the Primal Vow of Amida Buddha exists for the sake of such a self.

Scholars of Shin Buddhism have long understood these two kinds of deep belief through the concept that "a single [shinjin] possesses two aspects" (Jpn. *nishu ichigu*). That is to say, the deep belief as to beings and the deep belief as to Dharma together represent the two aspects of a single shinjin. Although differences can be observed among the ways in which past scholars have interpreted the expression, "a single [shinjin] possesses two aspects," it basically means that the deep belief as to the nature of one's karmic evil and the deep belief as to the truth and reality of the Tathāgata are realized simultaneously as a single shinjin.

In shinjin, the self-realization of as to the nature of beings, which can be seen in the phrase, "a foolish being of karmic evil caught in birth-and-death . . . with never a condition that would lead to emancipation," represents a complete negation of the self. In the Chapter on Transformed Buddhas and Lands in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, Shinran states,

Sages of the Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna and all good people make the auspicious Name of the Primal Vow their own root of good; hence, they cannot give rise to shinjin and do not apprehend the Buddha's wisdom. Because they cannot comprehend [the Buddha's intent in] establishing the cause [of birth], they do not enter the fulfilled land.⁷

One who accepts that one has the potential for doing good (thus believing that one is capable of amassing roots of good) relies upon one's own self-

powered calculation. Shinran states that such a person is unable to give rise to shinjin, fails to apprehend the wisdom of the Buddha, and is incapable of understanding the Buddha's intent in establishing the Primal Vow. Stated conversely, upon giving rise to shinjin, one for the first time is able to understand the impossibility of abandoning evil and performing good, and thus is able to attain the realization that one's existence—that of “a foolish being of karmic evil caught in birth-and-death . . . with never a condition that would lead to emancipation”—runs contrary to Amida Buddha.

This self-realization as to one's own existence arises within the deep belief as to Dharma. It is not a self-cognition in which the seer and the seen are grasped in a relationship of subject versus object. Rather, one is able to “truly know” for the first time in one's encounter with Amida Buddha, which entirely subsumes all subject and object dichotomies. The state of one's existence can be known for the first time in the arising of shinjin, which is founded in the transcendence of all human discrimination. At the same time, Shinran states that one's encounter with the truth and reality of Amida Buddha, which subsumes all existences, cannot take place in the absence of the negation of one's own actual state. Thus, it could be said that the structure of (1) deep belief as to beings, in which one truly knows that one exists contrary to Amida Buddha and (2) deep belief as to Dharma, in which one truly knows that the Primal Vow of Amida Buddha seeks to grasp just such as being is one of both mutual opposition and mutual identity.

Through these two aspects of deep belief, Shinran was able to awaken to the structure of shinjin, and understand that the fundamental spirit of Mahāyāna Buddhism is born within it. For him, *Jōdo Shinshū*, with shinjin as the heart of its doctrine, was the most concrete manifestation of the fundamental spirit of Mahāyāna Buddhism. He states, for instance, in the *Mattōshō* (Lamp for the Latter Ages),

The true essence of the Pure Land way is the consummation of Mahāyāna Buddhism.⁸

In other words, he states that, among all of the teachings of Mahāyāna Buddhism, *Jōdo Shinshū* is for us the supreme teaching, reaching to the ultimate limits of the great vehicle. His words are based in the conviction that the fundamental spirit of the Mahāyāna Buddhist teachings is fully manifested in *Jōdo Shinshū*. In the long history of Pure Land Buddhism prior to Shinran, it had been considered to be a secondary teaching within the Mahāyāna Buddhist doctrines. Yet, Shinran now declares it to be, “the consummation of Mahāyāna Buddhism.”

One could say that Shinran's clarification of the two aspects of deep belief placed the Pure Land teachings firmly in the position of being the

most Mahāyānist of all Mahāyāna Buddhist teachings. We will now examine how the notion of the two aspects of deep belief, which has great meaning in Shinran's "true essence of the Pure Land way," arose within the Pure Land Buddhist teachings.

II. DOCTRINAL STANDPOINT OF TWO ASPECTS OF DEEP BELIEF

Where the deep belief as to beings and the deep belief as to Dharma are understood to indicate that "a single [shinjin] possesses two aspects," Shinran's *Jōdo Shinshū* (the true essence of the Pure Land way) clearly attains the standpoint of being the most Mahāyānist of all Mahāyāna teachings. However, as far as we are able to know today, the first person to discuss shinjin by separating it into the two aspects regarding beings and Dharma was Shan-tao. In the Buddhist teachings, "shinjin refers to an attitude of trustful acceptance and resolute assurance in such [teachings] as the three treasures (Buddha, Dharma and Sangha). At the same time, it refers, more fundamentally, to purity of mind—a sphere free of the defilements [of ignorance]—which is grounded in that trustful knowing and arises within a thorough deepening of it."⁹ For Shan-tao, shinjin also involved a self-realization of the sinful and evil nature within the self. This understanding represented an epoch-making change in the way that shinjin came to be expressed in the doctrinal history of Pure Land Buddhism.

Although the two aspects of deep belief were elucidated by Shan-tao, I would first like to take up the question of what standpoint in Shan-tao's thought it addressed. In his text *Wang-sheng li-tsan* (*Hymns in Praise of Birth*), Shan-tao sets out the fundamental form of the practice leading to birth in the Pure Land: peaceful mind, performance of practice, and manner of performance. Peaceful mind refers to the three minds expounded in the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching* (*Contemplation Sutra*): sincere mind, deep mind, and the mind of aspiration for birth by directing merit. Performance of practice indicates that one engages in the practice of meritorious good acts (roots of good) in the three modes of action—physical, verbal and mental—that will bring one to be born in the Pure Land. Concretely, it means that one performs the practices of the "five gates of mindfulness" of Vasubandhu's *Ching-t'u-lun* (*Treatise on the Pure Land*), according to the *Wang-sheng li-tsan*,¹⁰ or, according to the *San-shan-i*, performs the "five right practices" (reciting the sutras, contemplating the Pure Land, worshipping Amida Buddha, saying the Name of Amida, and praising and making offerings to the Buddha). There, Shan-tao divides the right practices into two types: the "act of true settlement" and

“auxiliary acts.” Saying the Name of Amida Buddha is the central practice, while the other four are supplemental to the act of saying the Name.¹¹ Although Shan-tao discusses other practices at various places in his texts, it is evident that the most important practices are the “five right practices” and that the central practice among them is saying the Name. Finally, manner of performance refers to the four-fold method of performing practice: practice with reverence, practice over the long-term, exclusive practice and uninterrupted practice. In sum, one ought to follow this method when performing the right practices with a peaceful mind.¹² It could be said that, in Shan-tao’s thought, the fundamental form of the practice leading to birth in the Pure Land is to have the three minds while engaging in the act of saying the Name exclusively and unmixed with any other practices.

Once again, the three minds expounded by the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching* are sincere mind, deep mind, and the mind of aspiration for birth by directing merit. In the exposition regarding the highest rank of the highest grade of birth, the sutra states,

The sentient beings in the highest rank of the highest grade of birth are those who aspire to be born in that land, and by awakening the three minds, they attain birth. What are the three? The first is sincere mind; the second, deep mind; and the third, the mind aspiring for birth by transferring merit. Those who possess the three minds will be born in that land without fail.¹³

The sutra reveals that, for the person aspiring to attain birth in the Pure Land, awakening the sincere mind, deep mind, and mind of aspiration for birth by directing merit is an essential condition for birth. Shan-tao comments on these three minds in the *San-shan-i*,

[This sutra passage] clearly delineates the three minds and explains that these are the true cause resulting in birth.¹⁴

In other words, he interprets the exposition in the sutra to mean that the three minds are the true cause of birth. At the end of the commentary, he further states that the three minds should be possessed not only when saying the Name as a practice of non-meditative good, but also when engaging in meditative practices.

Because one is possessed of the three minds, one’s practices will be fulfilled. It could not be that one fulfilled in both aspiration and practice would not attain birth. Know that these three minds pertain to the teaching of meditative practices as well.¹⁵

Shan-tao's commentaries on the three minds can be found in the *San-shan-i*, and in the *Wang-sheng li-tsan*. The former contains this statement regarding the sincere mind,

The sutra states, *The first is sincere mind (shijō shin)*. *Shi* means true, *jō* means real. This shows that the understanding and practice of all sentient beings, cultivated through their bodily, verbal and mental acts, should unfailingly be performed with a true and real mind. We should not express outwardly signs of wisdom, goodness, or diligence while inwardly being possessed of falsity. We are filled with all manner of greed, anger, perversity, deceit, wickedness, and cunning, and it is difficult to put an end to our evil nature. In this we are like poisonous snakes or scorpions. Though we perform practices in the three modes of action, they must be called poisoned good acts or false practices. They cannot be called true, real and sincere action. Firmly setting our minds and undertaking practice in this way—even if we strive to the utmost with body and mind through the twelve periods of the day and night, urgently seeking and urgently acting as though sweeping fire from our heads—must all be called poisoned good acts. To seek birth in the Buddha's Pure Land by directing the merit of such poisoned practice is completely wrong.¹⁶

He presents it in this way in the *Wang-sheng li-tsan*,

The first is sincere mind. One worships that Buddha with bodily action; praises and extols that Buddha with verbal action; and contemplates that Buddha with mental action. These three actions must unfailingly be performed with a true and real mind. Thus, it is called, "sincere mind."¹⁷

Shan-tao states that the sincere mind is the true and real mind. A sentient being must perform the practices to attain birth in the Pure Land with a true and real mind, in which one's inner state and outward actions are in complete harmony with one another. He concludes that, if one were to perform practices while possessing a mind that is false, empty and untrue, one's actions would amount to "poisoned good acts" and birth would be impossible.

Next, in the *San-shan-i* he presents the mind of aspiration for birth by directing merit in this way,

The mind of aspiration for birth by directing merit [is the mind that] rejoices in accord with worldly and supramundane roots of

good performed by [one's own] physical, verbal and mental actions in the past and the present, and with worldly and supramundane roots of good performed by the physical, verbal and mental practices of all other ordinary beings and sages. One aspires to be born in that land, directing [the merit of] all of those roots of good performed by oneself and others, with deep belief that is true and real. Thus, it is called, "mind of aspiration for birth by directing merit." Those who aspire and direct merit for birth should produce thoughts that they will unfailingly and assuredly attain birth by aspiring to be born and directing merit with a true and real mind.¹⁸

In the *Wang-sheng li-tsan* he states,

The third is the mind of aspiration for birth through directing merit. Directing all the roots of good that one has performed, one aspires for birth; hence, "mind of aspiration for birth through directing merit."¹⁹

Shan-tao states that sentient beings should aspire to be born by directing all of the merit generated by their good acts, with a true and real mind, or, that is, with deep belief that is true and real. That is, in his commentary on the mind of aspiration for birth by directing merit, he states that the true and real mind is synonymous with deep belief that is true and real. In other words, these two different expressions refer to the same mind. These passages on the sincere mind and the mind of aspiration for birth by directing merit have been presented here in a manner that directly reflects Shan-tao's intent. They do not follow Shinran's unique reading of Shan-tao's passages. Past scholars have pointed out that there are definite differences between Shan-tao's and Shinran's way of reading the passages on the sincere mind and the mind of aspiration for birth by directing merit. The readings of the passages cited above conform to that of Shan-tao.²⁰

As we have seen above, Shan-tao stated, with respect to both the sincere mind and the mind of aspiration for birth by directing merit, that one should perform practices with a true and real mind, or, with deep belief that is true and real. He provides concrete description of the true and real mind in his discussion of the deep mind. For instance,

Deep mind is the deeply entrusting mind.²¹

Second [of the three minds] is deep mind, which is true and real shinjin.²²

According to Shan-tao, deep mind as “true and real shinjin.” Shinjin, as we have seen above, can be understood in terms of the two aspects of deep belief. When examined in this way, one is able to say that the essence of the practice leading to birth in the Pure Land in Shan-tao’s thought is to say the Name with a mind comprising the two aspects of deep belief. This, it might be said, is the doctrinal standpoint of the two aspects of deep belief in Shan-tao’s thought.

III. POINTS OF CONTRADICTION IN ESTABLISHED THEORIES REGARDING TWO ASPECTS OF DEEP BELIEF

Shan-tao’s explanations of the two aspects of deep belief are made in his commentaries on the deep mind, which provide concrete explication of the content of the three minds of the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching*. He states the following in the *San-shan-i*,

Deep mind is the deeply entrusting mind. There are two aspects. One is to believe deeply and decidedly that you are a foolish being of karmic evil caught in birth-and-death, ever sinking and ever wandering in transmigration from innumerable kalpas in the past, with never a condition that would lead to emancipation. The second is to believe deeply and decidedly that Amida Buddha’s Forty-eight Vows grasp sentient beings, and that allowing yourself to be carried by the power of the Vow without any doubt or apprehension, you will attain birth.²³

This commentary on the deep mind continues with the words, “Further, it is to believe deeply . . .” Shan-tao then sets forth five additional forms of deep mind: (1) “believe deeply and decidedly” in the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching*; (2) “believe deeply and decidedly” in the *A-mi-t’o ching* (*Amida Sutra*); (3) “entrust oneself to the Buddha’s words alone and rely decidedly on the practice [of the nembutsu]”; (4) “in accord with the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching*, entrust oneself deeply [to the practice of the nembutsu]”; and (5) “decidedly settle one’s own mind.”²⁴ It is generally believed that each of these provides an expanded and more detailed explanation of the second aspect of deep belief—that is, deep belief as to Dharma.²⁵ In sum, since Shan-tao’s commentary on deep mind involves the two aspects of deep belief as to beings and as to Dharma, it could be said that his commentary on deep mind is in and of itself a commentary on the two aspects of deep belief.

The two aspects of deep belief are also set out in an almost identical passage in the *Wang-sheng li-tsan*. That passages states,

Second is deep mind, which is true and real shinjin. One truly knows oneself to be a foolish being full of blind passions, with scant roots of good, transmigrating in the three realms and unable to emerge from this burning house. And further, one truly knows now, without so much as a single thought of doubt, that Amida's universal Primal Vow decisively enables all to attain birth, including those who say the Name even down to ten times or even one time. Hence, it is called "deep mind."²⁶

In this way, the forms in which the *San-shan-i* and the *Wang-sheng li-tsan* present the two aspects of deep belief are virtually identical. That is to say, both texts elucidate deep belief as to beings and deep belief as to Dharma in that order, considering the two to be "true and real shinjin." They first discuss deep belief as to beings, in which one truly knows one's true state to be that of a foolish being of karmic evil who lacks any condition for emancipation from birth-and-death. Next, they expound deep belief as to Dharmic-truth, in which one truly knows that Amida Buddha's Primal Vow is established to save such a person as this self. The point of difference between the *San-shan-i* and the *Wang-sheng li-tsan* lies simply in their manner of explanation. In regard to deep belief as to beings, the *San-shan-i* denies the possibility that a being can attain birth in the Pure Land by oneself, that is, as a foolish being of karmic evil that lacks any condition for emancipation. In contrast, in the *Wang-sheng li-tsan* states that, although one is a foolish being full of blind passions, one does possess scant roots of good; that is, it recognizes that the possibility for doing good within the self, albeit quite limited and scant.²⁷ As for deep belief as to Dharma, the *San-shan-i* emphasizes that beings are "carried by the power of the Vow." In contrast, the *Wang-sheng li-tsan* seems to indicate that the Primal Vow makes the act of saying the Name a condition for birth.

In any event, both passages convey the notion that "true and real shinjin" does not simply mean that one deeply believes in the Primal Vow of Amida Buddha, but also that one knows of one's own karmic evil. Prior to Shan-tao this notion did not exist in the Pure Land Buddhist tradition; it was entirely his own original view. What could Shan-tao have wanted to explain by interpreting shinjin in terms of these two aspects? As we have previously mentioned, his explanation of the two aspects of deep belief can be found in only the *San-shan-i* and the *Wang-sheng li-tsan*. However, in both places Shan-tao simply sets forth the two aspects of the state of shinjin. Questions about their functioning and their relationship to each other are left completely untouched. For this reason, Fujiwara Ryōsetsu states, "Since there is no clear statement regarding the relationship between these two aspects of deep faith in Shan-tao's texts, a variety of different theories have arisen in succeeding years."²⁸ It could be said that the many theories

interpreting the two aspects of deep belief have largely stuck to the sectarian viewpoints of a particular Buddhist school. They represent views that have lost sight of the perspective offered by the study of the historical development of Pure Land doctrine.

For instance, this tendency can be seen in the following examples.

However, in the *Kuan-ching shu* [Shan-tao] divides deep mind [into two minds], marking them with “first” and “second.” In the *Wang-sheng li-tsan* he stipulates more precisely that the essence of deep mind is that of “true and real shinjin.” Although [the aspects] “as to beings” and “as to Dharma,” are interpreted separately, he heads both of them with the words, “truly know.” Hence, it is inarguable that [both] refer to the concrete form implied within a single faith. Therefore, they refer neither to two minds rising in parallel, nor to those occurring in sequential order. It does not indicate that one refers to self-power and the other to Other Power; nor does it signify the overcoming of a contradiction through direct insight [Rather,] it is the faith that ordinary beings of karmic evil who are without any conditions for escaping from birth-and-death will simply be saved upon being carried by the power of the Buddha’s Vow. [This means that] the command to save those beings who are sinking is, in and of itself, impressed within the minds of beings and arises as faith. That is to say, a single faith possesses two aspects—one believes in the salvation (belief in Dharma) of the one who is sinking (belief in the nature of beings).²⁹

It is long-settled that meaning of the state of faith [referred to as] the two aspects of deep faith is clarified in the expression, “a single faith possesses two aspects.” “A single faith possesses two aspects” means that, in the one moment [in which it arises] faith is possessed of a belief as to beings and a belief as to Dharma. These two do not arise in [sequential] order. Nor do the two minds rise in parallel. It is not that they are essentially separate. Rather, it signifies two aspects of a single faith. Therefore, in reality a belief in beings is [the same as] belief in Dharma; a belief in Dharma is [the same as] belief in beings.³⁰

Both of these writers seek to interpret Shan-tao’s notion of two aspects of deep belief by applying Shinran’s view of the two aspects of deep shinjin to it. The latter has been expressed as “a single [shinjin] possesses two aspects” by sectarian scholars subsequent to Shinran.³¹ Neither writer makes any attempt to interpret the notion in accordance with Shan-tao’s own thought.

Moreover, they are not aware that any attempt to understand Shan-tao's notion of "two aspects of deep belief" in terms of the traditional sectarian notion that "a single [shinjin] possesses two aspects" would give rise to a rather thorny contradiction in their interpretations of Shan-tao's thought. That is to say, Shan-tao's three minds would become so fragmented that it would be impossible to state that, "the [sutra] passage clearly delineates the three minds and explains that these are the true cause resulting in birth."³² When the two aspects of deep belief in the commentary on deep mind in the *San-shan-i* are interpreted to mean that "a single [shinjin] possesses two aspects," [it would imply that], when Amida Buddha's Primal Vow is truly known, then one would know that one exists as an ordinary being of karmic evil, without any conditions for gaining emancipation from birth-and-death. In other words, there could be absolutely no acknowledgement that a true and real mind could exist within oneself. However, as we mentioned earlier, in Shan-tao's commentaries on the sincere mind and mind of aspiration for birth by directing merit, he instructs that one who aspires for birth in the Pure Land should perform practices with a true and real mind. The passages cited above have been presented in a manner that directly reflects Shan-tao's intent, according to past scholars. They do not follow Shinran's unique reading of Shan-tao's passages.

If one were to accept the traditional sectarian theories (as seen above) regarding Shan-tao's three minds, then in the context of the sincere mind and mind of aspiration for birth by directing merit, he would be encouraging beings to perform the practices for birth with a true and real mind, which is not empty or false. However, in the context of the deep mind, he would be instructing beings to truly know that they are completely without a true and real mind. Thus, the three minds would fall into a state of fragmentation, and the practice of saying the Name while possessed of the three minds, which Shan-tao declares is the practice for birth in the Pure Land, would not be able to take place in reality.

Some scholars have already pointed out the contradiction inherent in such an interpretation of the three minds. For instance, Tanabe Hajime states,

First of all, we will look at the relationship between the sincere mind and deep mind. The sincere mind, as we have mentioned above, refers to a self-realization as to our past actions that is true and pure, in which our inner state is in harmony with our outward actions. The one aspect of deep faith—our belief as to the nature of beings—refers to the self-realization that we are presently ordinary beings of karmic evil caught in birth-and-death with never a condition that would lead to our emancipation. Considering it in this way, we can readily observe that the two [minds] contradict each other, and could never co-exist. We must admit to the existen-

tial reality that prevents us from denying this realization of our deep and heavy karmic evil within the deep faith as to beings. Hence, we cannot help but recognize that the sincere mind represents an essential ideal, which we ordinary beings of karmic evil are incapable of actualizing. Thus, it is impossible that the three minds could be identical to the one mind.³³

Tanabe states that the sincere mind and deep mind in Shan-tao's thought cannot co-exist, but instead contradict each other. He attempts to overcome the contradiction between the two philosophically. Matsuno Junkō also makes the following point, taking as the premise for his argument the traditional viewpoint,

Shan-tao states that in order to attain birth in the Pure Land, we must possess the three minds. Deep mind, which is one of the three minds, means that sentient beings should believe deeply that they have been completely filled with blind passions since ageless kalpas ago. (This is the deep faith as to beings.) That being so, because sentient beings are essentially filled with burning passions it would be utterly nonsensical to expect that they could have true and real minds. Shan-tao has created a contradiction in his interpretation of the sincere mind and deep mind. Thus, it was only natural that Shinran, who faithfully followed the reading of the passage on the deep mind, would have changed the way in which the passage on the sincere mind would be read.³⁴

Both Matsuno and Tanabe, in the same way, see a difference between Shan-tao's stances regarding the sincere mind and the deep mind. Shinran took the standpoint of the deep mind and so changed the reading of Shan-tao's passage on the sincere mind.

As long as interpretations are made from the standpoint of traditional sectarian theories, Shan-tao's three minds will succumb to self-contradiction. However, the three minds occupy a pivotal point in Shan-tao's notion of practice. If they were brimming with contradictions, would his well-known and fervent search for realization or his propagational efforts have been possible? If Shan-tao were just an idealist lacking in practical application, then contradictions could possibly have arisen in his interpretation of the three minds. However, he practiced amid the great assembly of monks and was revered as one who brought Pure Land Buddhism to fulfillment in China. One cannot believe that there was any contradiction between any of the three minds for him. It would be normal, then, to think that traditional sectarian theories contain errors either in their interpretation of sincere mind and the mind of aspiration for birth by directing merit or in their interpretation of the deep mind. Further, it would natural to consider

that the problem lies on the side of traditional interpretations of the two aspects of deep belief, judging from the fact that interpretations of sincere mind that accord with the direct intent of Shan-tao's texts have already been studied, and, as we have previously mentioned, the absence of passages in Shan-tao's texts touching on the relationship between deep belief as to beings and deep belief as Dharma has resulted in the rise of many differing theories.

IV. THE STRUCTURE OF THE TWO ASPECTS OF DEEP BELIEF

Elsewhere I have offered a summary of my views regarding the mutual relationship between the two aspects of deep belief as to the nature of beings and deep belief as to Dharmic-truth.³⁵ Here I would like to provide a more detailed explanation to my position. As mentioned earlier, the two aspects of deep belief are only elucidated in two places in Shan-tao's texts: in the *San-shan-i* (Chapter on nonmeditative practice) of his *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching shu* and in the *Wang-sheng li-tsan*. But there he does not touch upon the relationship between the deep beliefs as to beings and as to Dharma. In other words, it is not possible to discern the relationship between the two aspects of deep belief from the passages pertaining directly to them. I would therefore like to examine other passages throughout Shan-tao's works, which discuss shinjin in a form identical to that of the two aspects of deep belief and which impart his intent for doing so. From that basis, then, I would like to consider what the structure of the two aspects of deep belief might be.

One is able to find many passages throughout Shan-tao's works in which shinjin is discussed in the same form as the two aspects of deep belief. All of them appear in connection with his interpretation of the phrases, "believe deeply in the principle of cause and effect," and "also believe in the principle of cause and effect" in the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching*. For instance, in the *Hsü-fên-i* (Chapter on the introductory part of the sutra) of the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching shu*, he interprets the passage, "believe deeply in the principle of cause and effect,"³⁶ from the introductory portion of the sutra, which clarifies the meritorious act of practice (one of three meritorious acts). Shan-tao interprets it in this way,

Believe deeply in the principle of cause and effect. This has two meanings. The first explains the cause and effect of worldly suffering and happiness. When one creates the cause of suffering, one will experience the effect of suffering; when one creates the cause of happiness, one will experience the effect of happiness. It is like

using a [wax] seal to impress a mark in the mud. When the seal is destroyed, all that is left is the mark. There can be no doubt about this.³⁷

According to this passage, there are two meanings to the phrase, "believe deeply in the principle of cause and effect." However, Shan-tao only discusses the first and then omits the second. This has long been a topic of consideration. It is believed, when one considers Shan-tao's arguments regarding the sutra passages on the middle rank of the highest grade of birth and the lowest rank of the highest grade of birth that follow, that what has been omitted is a reference to the cause and effect of suffering and bliss in the supramundane realm.³⁸ We can then understand that he distinguished between the cause and effect of suffering and that of happiness. We can surmise that he also separated the cause and effect operating in the mundane world from that functioning in the supramundane realm.

Shan-tao next addresses the meaning of "believe deeply in the principle of cause and effect"³⁹ in his interpretation of the middle rank of the highest grade of birth in the *San-shan-i*,

The means that one deeply believes in two kinds of cause and effect, which bring about suffering and bliss in both the mundane and supramundane realms, and does not give rise to doubt or slander regarding these principles of cause and effect. If one should give rise to doubt or slander, one would not fulfill the meritorious act of practice. Further, one would not be able to attain any worldly rewards. How much less so would it be that one could attain birth in the Pure Land!⁴⁰

Besides the two kinds of cause and effect that bring about suffering and bliss in the mundane world, Shan-tao is also clearly explaining the two kinds of cause and effect that will bring about suffering and bliss in the supramundane realm. However, he does not touch upon either their content or their relationship to each other. In the *San-shan-i*, Shan-tao also comments on the phrase, "also believe in the principle of cause and effect"⁴¹ in the section on the lowest rank of the highest grade of birth in the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching*. He states,

[The sutra] explains that belief in the principle of cause and effect is not settled. One may believe or not believe in it. For that reason it states, "also." It is the same as with the words "deeply believe" in the earlier [section on the middle rank of the highest grade of birth]. Although one might believe, one does not do so deeply; one frequently loses the mind of good, and evil arises profusely. This is because one does not deeply believe that the principle of cause

and effect brings about suffering or happiness. One who believes deeply in samsaric suffering will ultimately never commit acts of karmic evil again. One who believes deeply in the unconditioned bliss of the Pure Land will give rise to the mind of good only once and never again lose it.⁴²

According to Shan-tao, “also believe” is identical in meaning to “deeply believe” in the sutra passage on the middle rank of the highest grade of birth. He states that, if one does not deeply believe that the principle of cause and effect brings about suffering and happiness, this might easily disrupt one’s mind of good, and evil would frequently arise. Next, if one believes deeply in samsaric suffering, then one would not commit karmic evil again; if one deeply believes in the unconditioned bliss of the Pure Land, one’s mind of good would continue forever.

Shan-tao thus clarifies two functions: first, that of deeply believing in the cause and effect of suffering, that is, in samsaric suffering; and second, that of deeply believing in the cause and effect of happiness, that is, in the unconditioned bliss of the Pure Land. The former functions to bring the commission of karmic evil to an end, while the latter functions to bring about a continuation of the good mind and the settlement of birth. Deeply believing in samsaric suffering means that one deeply and truly knows the suffering that we ordinary beings experience as we transmigrate throughout the three worlds and six realms of samsaric existence. Hence, it is identical in content to that of deep belief as to the nature of beings, in which (as we have previously mentioned in regard to the two aspects of deep belief) one deeply believes that one is “a foolish being of karmic evil caught in birth-and-death, ever sinking and ever wandering in transmigration from innumerable kalpas in the past, with never a condition that would lead to emancipation,” and “a foolish being full of blind passions, with scant roots of good, transmigrating in the three realms and unable to emerge from this burning house.” Further, deeply believing in the unconditioned bliss of the Pure Land means that one deeply and truly knows that the Pure Land is eternal and absolute truth and reality, which transcends the ever-changing states of arising and extinction. This could be said to correspond to deep belief as to Dharmic-truth.

In this way, passages that elucidate shinjin in the same form as the two aspects of deep belief and that clearly set forth their respective functions do exist in Shan-tao’s texts. That being so, it would be reasonable to conclude that he must have understood the two aspects of deep belief in the same manner that we find in his commentary on the lowest rank of highest grade of birth. That is to say, I believe that Shan-tao, in his discussion of the two aspects of deep belief, considered that (1) through deep belief as to beings, one who has committed acts of karmic evil would never again commit evil, and (2) through deep belief as to Dharma, one’s mind of good would

continue and one's birth in the Pure Land would be settled.

When we understand the two aspects of deep belief, which are elucidated in Shan-tao's interpretation of deep mind in this way, we will be able to maintain conformity with the other two minds set out in the sutra. It would not be problematic to explain that the mind that aspires for birth by directing merit means that one does so with a true and real mind, or, a true and real mind of deep belief. The sincere mind, however, is the one that must be examined. As we have mentioned previously, the sincere mind is the true and real mind. Shan-tao teaches that one should engage in the practice for birth with this mind. No matter how much one might perform the practices leading to birth, if one practices with a mind that is empty and false, then one would be incapable of attaining birth. Shan-tao, after explaining this in the *San-shan-i*, states the following in regard to "self-benefiting with a true and real mind,"

Self-benefiting with a true and real mind is of two kinds. The first is, with a true and real mind, to stop all one's own and others' evil acts and abandon this defiled world, and, just as bodhisattvas stop and cast off all evil acts, to aspire oneself to do likewise whether walking, standing, sitting or reclining.

The second is to cultivate diligently with a true and real mind what is good for oneself and for others, both ordinary people and sages. . . .⁴³

Here, Shan-tao provides a concrete description of the state of the true and real mind with which we ought to practice. Such a mind, he says, is not mixed with emptiness or falsity. Rather, such a mind would indicate that we stop committing karmic evil and come to discard it, and diligently cultivate roots of good. In other words, the sincere mind signifies that we stop and abandon our committing of evil acts, and practice good acts with a true and real mind. Shan-tao's view with regard to this sincere mind is identical to the structure of the deep mind and the two aspects of deep belief, which we have explained above. In other words, there is no contradiction between any of the three minds.

Finally, the three minds are expounded in the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching* passage on the highest rank of the highest grade of birth (among the nine grades of birth). Shan-tao considered this rank of birth to correspond to the three meritorious acts and other nonmeditative practices.⁴⁴ He clarifies the meaning of nonmeditative practice in the *Hsüan-i-fên* (Chapter on the essential meaning of the sutra) in his *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching shu* in this way,

"nonmeditative" refers to abandoning evil and performing good.⁴⁵

This means that Shan-tao's explication of the three minds, and the two aspects of deep belief, is based on the idea of "abandoning evil and performing good." It would be appropriate to understand the two aspects of deep belief with this in mind.

Translated by David Matsumoto

NOTES

1. This article originally appeared under the title, "Nishu jinshin no kyōrishiteki kōsatsu: Seiritsu to sono haikai," in *Shinshūgaku* 83 (1991): pp. 1–31. Part Two will be published in the *Pacific World*, Third Series, 4 (2002). For the most part, the English translations of passages from Shinran's texts have been taken from The Shin Buddhism Translation Series, *The Collected Works of Shinran* (hereinafter CWS), vol. 1 (Kyoto: Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-ha, 1997). Unless otherwise noted, the text of the article and all other cited passages have been translated into English by David Matsumoto.
2. Translator's note: Due to the complexity of Shinran's treatment of the word "shinjin" (literally, the mind of faith, belief, or trust), the Shin Buddhism Translation Series has chosen not to render the term into English. See, for instance, the "Glossary of Shin Buddhist Terms," in CWS, vol. 2, pp. 206–7. In this article both Shinran's and Shan-tao's treatments of the term "shinjin" have been left untranslated to avoid confusion. However, the term "jinshin" has been rendered as "deep belief" or "deeply believe" for contextual reasons.
3. *Yuishinshō mon'i* (*Notes on the Essentials of Faith Alone*), in *Shinshū shōgyō zensho* (hereinafter SSZ), vol. 2 (Kyoto: Ōyagi Kōbundō, 1941), p. 628; CWS, vol. 1, p. 458.
4. *Songō shinzō meimon* (*Notes on the Inscriptions on Sacred Scrolls*), in SSZ, vol. 2, p. 602; CWS, vol. 1, p. 520.
5. *Tannishō* (*A Record in Lament of Divergences*), in SSZ, vol. 2, p. 787; CWS, vol. 1, p. 675.
6. *Kyōgyōshinshō* (*Passages Revealing the True Teaching, Practice and Realization of the Pure Land Way*), in SSZ, vol. 2, p. 52; CWS, vol. 1, p. 85.
7. *Ibid.*, in SSZ, vol. 2, pp. 165–6; CWS, vol. 1, p. 240.
8. *Mattōshō* (*Lamp for the Latter Ages*), in SSZ, vol. 2, p. 658; CWS, vol. 1, pp. 524–5.
9. Shigaraki Takamaro, *Jōdokyō ni okeru shin no kenkyū* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1975), p. 505.
10. See *Wang-sheng li-tsan* (*Hymns of Birth in the Pure Land*), in SSZ, vol. 1, pp. 649–650.
11. *San-shan-i* (Chapter on Non-meditative Practice) of the *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching shu* (*Commentary on the Contemplation Sutra*), in SSZ, vol. 1, pp. 537–8. See also CWS, vol. 1, p. 217 for reference.

12. See *Wang-sheng li-tsan*, in *SSZ*, vol. 1, pp. 650–1.
 13. *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching*, in *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 60; *The Sutra of Contemplation on the Buddha of Immeasurable Life*, translated and annotated by the Ryukoku University Translation Center under the direction of Meiji Yamada (Kyoto: Ryukoku University, 1984), p. 77.
 14. *San-shan-i*, in *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 532; Cited in *CWS*, vol. 1, p. 84.
 15. *San-shan-i*, in *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 541.
 16. *San-shan-i*, in *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 533; *CWS*, vol. 1, p. 84 and *CWS*, vol. 2, pp. 259–60.
 17. *Wang-sheng li-tsan*, in *SSZ*, vol. 1, pp. 648–9.
 18. *San-shan-i*, in *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 538.
 19. *Wang-sheng li-tsan*, in *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 649; *CWS*, vol. 1, p. 218.
 20. See Murakami Sokusui, *Zoku Shinran kyōgi no kenkyū* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1989), pp. 24, et seq.
- Translator's note: For a detailed comparison of the differences between Shan-tao's and Shinran's readings of the same passages, see *CWS*, vol. 2, pp. 249–270.
21. *San-shan-i*, in *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 534; cited in *CWS*, vol. 1, p. 84.
 22. *Wang-sheng li-tsan*, in *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 649; cited in *CWS*, vol. 1, p. 92.
 23. *San-shan-i*, in *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 534; cited in *CWS*, vol. 1, p. 85.
 24. Of the seven kinds of deep mind, the phrases used to describe the third through the seventh are based on Shinran's descriptions in the *Gutokushō* (*Gutoku's Notes*). See *SSZ*, vol. 2, pp. 467–8; *CWS*, vol. 1, p. 605.
 25. See Shigaraki Takamaro, "Zendō kyōgaku ni okeru shin no igi," in *Shinshūgaku* 33/34 (1966): pp. 179–201.
 26. *Wang-sheng li-tsan*, in *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 649; English translation has been taken on the whole from *CWS*, vol. 1, p. 92, which contains a version of Shan-tao's passage found in a text compiled by Chih-sheng. Note that Shan-tao's phrase, "even one time" is replaced by the words, "even but hear it" in the version cited by Shinran.
 27. Fujiwara Ryōsetsu looks at the differences in the contents and expressions of deep shinjin as to beings in the *San-shan-i* and the *Wang-sheng li-tsan*, and discusses order of the time/period of the formation of both. However, as mentioned above, he concludes that it is impossible to determine the order of their formation based on these differences. See, Fujiwara Ryōsetsu, *Ōjō raisan gaisetsu* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1962), p. 28 and pp. 68–9.
 28. *Ibid.*, p. 67.

29. Ibid.
30. Ōhara Shōjitsu, *Zendō kyōgaku no kenkyū* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1974), p. 108.
31. Ibid., p. 110.
32. See *San-shan-i*, in *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 532; Cited in *CWS*, vol. 1, p. 84.
33. Tanabe Hajime, *Zangedō to shite no tetsugaku* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1946), p. 278.
34. Matsuno Junkō, "Zendō no Kangyōsho no mondai," in *Bukkyō kenkyū ronshū*, edited by Hashimoto Hakushi Taikan Kinen Bukkyō Kenkyū Ronshū Kankōkai (Osaka: Seibundō, 1975), p. 538.
35. See Yata Ryōshō, "Zendō Jōdokyō ni okeru zaiaku ni tsuite," *Ryūkoku Daigaku ronshū* 399 (1972): 108–129.
36. See *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching*, in *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 51; *The Sutra of Contemplation on the Buddha of Immeasurable Life*, pp. 22–23.
37. *Hsü-fên-i*, in *SSZ*, vol. 1, pp. 492–3.
38. See Kōgatsu-in Jinrei, *Kangyōshijōsho kōgi* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1975), p. 314 for reference.
39. See *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching*, in *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 61; *The Sutra of Contemplation on the Buddha of Immeasurable Life*, pp. 84–85.
40. *San-shan-i*, in *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 544.
41. See *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching*, in *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 62; *The Sutra of Contemplation on the Buddha of Immeasurable Life*, pp. 88–89.
42. *San-shan-i*, in *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 546.
43. *San-shan-i*, in *SSZ*, vol. 1, P. 533; cited in *CWS*, vol. 1, p. 215.
44. See *Hsüan-i-fên* (Chapter on the essential meaning of the sutra) in his *Kuan wu-liang-shou ching shu*, in *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 447.
45. See *Hsüan-i-fên*, in *SSZ*, vol. 1, p. 443; also cited in *CWS*, vol. 1, p. 214.

Pure Land Buddhist View of *Duḥkha*¹

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ALTHOUGH THE SANSKRIT TERM *duḥkha* is generally considered the English equivalent of 'suffering', two major Sanskrit–English dictionaries, Monier and Apte, do not include 'suffering' in their definitions.² Apte gives 'sorrow', 'grief', 'unhappiness', 'distress', 'pain', 'agony', 'trouble', and 'difficulty', and Monier 'uneasiness', 'pain', 'sorrow', 'trouble', and 'difficulty'.³ This exclusion of 'suffering' (παθημα)⁴ is not to be lightly dismissed, for surely it is deliberate, intending to avoid the strong Christian implications of 'suffering'. A comparison of the two notions, Buddhist and Christian, is beyond the scope of this paper, although I hope the essential difference—particularly in terms of the *cause* of *duḥkha* rather than in terms of the religious experience of *duḥkha*—will become clear through this discussion. I feel that 'suffering' as an equivalent for *duḥkha* is omitted not only because it is misleading, but further because of a great divergence between Christianity and Buddhism in their approaches to the reality of this world. Therefore, I shall try to use the Sanskrit term *duḥkha* as often as I can, although it may be something of an obstacle for the reader who is unfamiliar with Sanskrit, and 'pain' or 'distress' will only be adopted as the English equivalent out of necessity.

In the general context of Hindi *duḥkha* simply means 'to have hardship in doing' or 'difficult to do', being used as an indeclinable.⁵ Its basic connotation is the agony and distress caused by a situation which goes counter to one's own wishes and desires, hence, more precisely, *duḥkha* indicates the 'unsatisfactory' feeling that results from confrontation with the gulf between one's wishes and desires on the one hand and the real facts on the other. This root meaning of *duḥkha* underlies various usages of the term in different schools of Indian thought, including Buddhism.

This paper is constituted of four sections. Section One surveys the Buddhist realization of *duḥkha*. It shows how *duḥkha* has come to be taken as the intrinsic mode of human existence. Section Two treats the scriptural teaching of *duḥkha* expounded in the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra*, which provides the foundational witness for the whole structure of Pure Land Buddhist salvation. In this section I will argue that, rather than the general

Buddhist mode of Gautama's teachings, which aims at the attainment of enlightenment through 'self-power', it is the Buddhist mode of the teaching of Amida, which leads us to enlightenment through Amida's vow-power, namely, 'other-power', that has fathomed the depth of human *duḥkha* and carried the Buddhist doctrine of *duḥkha* to its ultimate development. Section Three focuses upon the bodhisattva's compassionate practice of vicarious *duḥkha*, which is the ground upon which Amida's salvation of all sentient beings is made possible. The concluding section clarifies the Pure Land Buddhist way to emancipation from *duḥkha*. I will argue here that it is the only way possible for *all* sentient beings to be able to attain *nirvāṇa*, the goal of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

I. DUḤKHA AS THE MODE OF HUMAN EXISTENCE

Ordinarily our sense experience can be either pleasant or painful, or they can be neither. But Buddhism considers all ordinary experiences as being ultimately distressing; whatever may be felt, either internally or externally, must be realized as entailing *duḥkha*. This Buddhist awareness of *duḥkha* even behind the pleasure felt in daily life reflects the Buddhist refusal to limit the reality of *duḥkha* merely to the domain of the senses and emotions. *Duḥkha* is more deep-rooted.

Buddhism analyses *duḥkha* into three or eight qualities to show the truth that everything is *duḥkha*. The three forms of *duḥkha* are 'painful sensation caused by bodily pain', 'pain having its origin in the *saṃskāras* which are impermanent', and 'pain caused by perishing'.⁶ Based upon these three forms of pain, Vasubandhu maintains in his *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* that all outflowing existents are pain.⁷ His reasoning is that all outflowing existents, pleasant, unpleasant, and neither pleasant nor unpleasant, are characterized by *duḥkha* because they are tied to one of the three forms of pain. Namely, pleasant flux is bound with 'pain caused by perishing', unpleasant flux with 'painful sensation caused by bodily pain', and flux that is neither pleasant nor unpleasant with 'pain having its origin in the *saṃskāras*, which are impermanent'. Here the point to be noted lies in the first and the third propositions, which form the foundation for the universal nature of *duḥkha*. What is common to these propositions is the fact that *duḥkha* is rooted in that which is *anitya*, or impermanent and incessantly flowing. According to Vasubandhu, even pleasantly felt existents turn out to be painful when they are perishing; they are experienced as pleasant only when they come into being and as long as they are enduring. Flux that is neither pleasant nor unpleasant is by nature painful insofar as the *saṃskāras* constituting the flux are impermanent. In the end, the Buddhist doctrine that all outflowing existents are *duḥkha* is based on the factual reality that nothing remains imperishable.

It must be noted, however, that an outflowing existent in itself has nothing of pain; it is entirely transcendent of pain or non-pain; it is flowing just as it is.⁸ *Duḥkha* is the result of human conception, which grasps everything as permanent and immutable. It originates from the unconscious intent of appropriating whatever is perceived as one's own, which is the essence of human conception. This intrinsic mode of 'possessiveness' in the function of human conception is what Buddhists mean by 'attachment', for the act of conceiving is the act of holding what is owned to endure everlastingly. 'Possessiveness' is essential to ordinary conception in the sense that whatever is conceived is possessed as the conceiver's own. Hence, human conception is inherently blind to the perishing reality, including the human conception itself, and thus is illusive. This blindness, termed *avidyā* (unenlightenment), engenders attachment. The whole of ordinary human conception is so naturally bound up with this *avidyā* that one is disposed to conceive everything he perceives as fixed, enduring substances to which he feels attachment. This blind attachment of 'possessiveness' is the root of *duḥkha*.

Another well-known theory of *duḥkha* is concerned with eight forms of pain; birth, aging, disease, death, the pain of meeting people in hatred and hostility, of parting from loved ones, of the impossibility of acquiring what one desires, and that arising from the five aggregates constituting a human being. The eighth notion of pain is that the five aggregates are considered as the essential cause of the others. The five aggregates, which constitute the essential pain, are none other than the factors of attachment. The five are (a) 'material qualities' (*rūpa*), (b) 'sensation' (*vedanā*), (c) 'perception' (*saṃjñā*), (d) 'complexes of consciousness' (*saṃskāras*), and (e) 'soul' (*viññāna*).⁹ It is repeatedly enunciated in scriptures of primitive Buddhism that these five aggregates are severally and collectively impermanent and non-substantial, as there is no *ātman* in them; that which is impermanent is *duḥkha*; that which is *duḥkha* is non-*ātman*; non-*ātman* is not mine; this is not I; this is not *ātman*; this truth must be precisely observed with true wisdom.¹⁰ In those scriptures it is quite likely that 'impermanence', '*duḥkha*', and 'non-*ātman*' are considered synonymous. The root cause of *duḥkha* is seen in relation to the impermanent nature of reality. It is precisely because each constituent is in itself impermanent that a human being, a provisional unity of five aggregates, is distressed by *duḥkha*. It must be kept in mind, however, that no impermanent nature of reality as such can be characterized as the nature of *duḥkha*. Whether the constituents turn out to be the cause of *duḥkha* is not due to their own impermanence but to the attachment that a human being falls into through them. Here we can recognize that the Buddhist doctrine of regarding the five aggregates as *duḥkha* reveals the view that the existential mode of human life is *duḥkha*.

II. THE CONCEPT OF *DUḤKHA* IN THE LARGER *SUKHĀVATĪVYŪHA SŪTRA*

The *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra*, the central scripture in the Pure Land tradition, which is said to be compiled around in the first or second century C.E., gives testimony to the reality of Amida's salvation as the reason for Gautama's appearance in this world. Shinran, the exponent of the latest evolution of Pure Land Buddhism, *Jōdo Shinshū*, states:

The central purport of this sutra is that Amida, by establishing his Vow, has opened wide the storehouse of the dharma, and full of compassion for foolish, small beings, he selects and bestows his treasure of virtues. Further, the sutra reveals that Gautama appeared in this world and illuminated the teaching of the Buddha-way to save the multitudes of living beings, that is, to bless them with the benefit that is true and real. Thus, to teach the Tathagata's Primal Vow is the true intent of this sutra; the Buddha's Name is its core.¹¹

Shinran's words focus on the object of Amida's salvation and the disclosing of the dharma. It is for 'foolish, small beings', the 'multitudes of living beings', that Amida has revealed the storehouse of the dharma through his Vow and Name. The *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra* is solely for the sake of people who are existentially aware of the 'foolishness' rooted in their defilement and evil passions, which leads them to ceaseless transmigration and thus causes their *duḥkha*. Whoever lacks awareness of the depth of 'foolishness' in human existence cannot grasp and rejoice in the true purport of Amida's compassion.

While the awareness of 'foolishness' must be called a kind of 'religious' realization, what Shinran means by 'foolishness' itself is most deeply embedded in lay life. He defines 'foolish being' as:

full of ignorance and blind passion, in which desires are countless, and anger, wrath, jealousy, and envy are overwhelming, arising without pause; to the very last moment of life they do not cease, or disappear, or exhaust themselves.¹²

Shinran is aware that such a 'foolish being' is none other than ourselves.

The *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra* shows the 'foolishness' ingrained in the depth of our existence in this defiled world as the cause of *duḥkha*. It sets forth three fundamental "poisons" of our everyday life that ceaselessly cause *duḥkha*: greed, anger, and ignorance.

Regarding the pain caused by greed, the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra* states:

However, people are shallow and strive for non-urgent things; in the midst of severe evil and pain, they perform tasks to support themselves; whether noble or humble, rich or poor, young or old, man or woman, they worry about wealth. Whether they have or have not, their worries are the same; wandering in sorrow and pain, accumulating various worries, and driven by their own minds, they find no peace.¹³

The *Sūtra* sees the cause of pain not only in deprivation but also in the state of possessing, however much one may have. Greed is so boundless and bottomless that worries continually press one and apprehensive thoughts follow one after another until the final moment of death. The *Sūtra* teaches:

Living thus, they wear themselves out and ruin their lives; they never try to do good, practice the way or strive for virtue. When they perish, alone they must go far away. Although there is a destination, no one knows if the path leads to good or evil.¹⁴

Two ways of emancipation from the pain caused by greed can be considered; one is an endless effort to seek some means to satisfy one's greed, and the other is a decision to keep oneself completely aloof from greed and to own nothing whatsoever. The latter is a traditional Buddhist way. The former is incongruous with the actual life of this world, where greed can never be quenched. The latter also, however, seems impracticable for most people, for can a layperson really seclude himself or herself from the unfathomable, insatiable avarice that has dominated his or her existence since the beginningless past? Certainly one can understand *intellectually* that pain will vanish if greed can be cast off, but for laymen greed is so firmly ingrained in their existence that its eradication would make life itself impossible. This deep reflection is characteristic of the Pure Land view of a human being.

It is also to be noted here that Pure Land Buddhism is the only path by which laymen, or 'foolish' people, can awaken to Buddhahood. This places it in sharp antithesis to Zen Buddhism and other schools relying on 'self-power'. Shinran grieves over his unquenchable greed, confessing that "the universal Vow difficult to fathom is indeed a great vessel bearing all across the ocean difficult to cross."¹⁵ The 'ocean difficult to cross' is the world in which laymen carry on their lives.

Then, what will be the next step such laymen can take after realizing the impossibility of completely keeping aloof from greed? To them the *Larger*

Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra gives the following words:

People of the world! Parents and children, brothers and sisters, husbands and wives, family members and relatives, all should respect and love one another, and never hate or be jealous. The rich as well as the poor should never be stingy or greedy. Be gentle in speech and manner, and never contrary to one another.¹⁶

Harmony is a way by which for lay people can moderate the pain of anxiety, which afflicts both those that have and those that do not. The recognition of this sameness in the nature of pain is the basis for making possible the harmonizing between people, affluent or destitute. Indeed, one must "help each other by providing what one person lacks with what another has." But laymen will soon become aware that their endeavor to harmonize is restrained by obdurate anger. Hence, Gautama's message follows:

When beings quarrel and harbor anger in their minds, even slight dislike or jealousy from resentment will magnify and become a greater grudge. Why? Because even if mutual insults are not serious at present, poison and anger accumulate, and indignation is carved naturally and unforgettably in the mind; subsequently beings become opposed to and retaliate against one another.¹⁷

Amplification and accumulation characterize the nature of anger. The reason for such ceaseless intensification is the fact that things in this world inflict pain one after another without end. Even a matter of little significance for oneself may grow and cause serious pain for others, which is so pernicious as to engrave itself deep in their subconsciousness. The pain caused by anger is agony concerned with human relationships. Behind hatred and anger there is deep-rooted affectionate attachment. Pain is caused by the tension between hatred and affection, anger and attachment. The *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra* exposition of desolation experienced as threatened attachment is impressive:

In the midst of attachment and desire, beings are born alone, die alone, come alone and go alone; when they depart, they go to a realm of either pain or pleasure; they themselves go, and no one can go for them.¹⁸

Our experience of solitariness in our birth and death arises because of subliminal attachment of affection. Painful desolation is caused by the chasm between detachment in actual reality and attachment in human conception.

The *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra* urges people to become aware of such dreadful desolation:

Why do you not abandon worldly matters, make every effort to practice good and solely aspire to transcend the world while you are still strong and healthy? You will thereby gain infinite life. Why not seek the way? Why delay? What other pleasure do you want?¹⁹

However, ‘foolish’ people in fact do not know, as the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra* discloses, that “good is gained through doing it, and the way through treading it”; they do not believe in “rebirth” and that “happiness is gained through sharing”; they do not believe “anything concerning good and evil”; thus “they affirm nothing and also take pride in such views.”²⁰ This ‘ignorance’ of ‘foolish’ people is thus the third message following in the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra*, which regards it as a cause of *duḥkha* in this world.

This message teaches three forms of ignorance that compel ‘foolish’ people to descend into the dark of transmigration. First is failure to realize that “good is gained through doing it, and the way through treading it,” which is ignorance of the law of causality in which cause and effect are identical by nature.

Second is failure to realize that “rebirth,” which is ignorance of our existence before and after our present life. Our life must take into account all that has occurred before birth and all that will result after death; its meaning cannot be known only by the span of ranging from birth to death in this world.

Third is failure to realize that “happiness is gained through sharing,” which points to the ignorance of the law of causality in which a cause is progressively transformed into an effect. The state of happiness is not identical with the act of sharing, but the latter actually brings about the former. Everything in the past causally proceeds to become happenings in the present, characterized by pleasure or pain and creating further pleasure or pain in the future.

Common to these three forms of ignorance is the lack of recognition that everything is causally inter-related. We should not overlook, however, that causality here is by no means logical or abstract causality, but rather is temporal or actual causality. The acknowledgement of this causal reality in its temporal sense sharply distinguishes the whole structure of Pure Land thought from those of the other traditions, especially Zen; Pure Land tradition is religiously aware of the necessity of considering such notions as historical reality, historicity of human existence, historical perspective of degenerating dharma, and so on. Without this discernment of history, secular or salvific, Pure Land Buddhism loses its foundation, which pro-

vides 'foolish' people with the certitude of attaining birth in the Pure Land for the sake of them.²¹

The *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra* reveals that these three forms of ignorance are not confined to one person, but are handed down from generation to generation; they endure throughout the history of human beings. This idea of transference is not a mere fatalism, but rather shows the precariousness of everyday human life, which is destined to fall into delusion and attachment.

Further, on the basis of the second form of ignorance, the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra* defines the reverse of one's place in the scale of being as the reason for our painful experience of the impermanence of our life. When life proceeds in ordinarily expected order, the older person is expected to die first; this is our judgment based on a standard span ranging from birth to death. Our actual experience, however, is often different. Pain arises from the gulf between the fact of reality and the expectations we cherish in our attachment to life. A direct cause of pain is not the impermanence of life in itself, but our expectation, which is blind to the contingency of life.

In conclusion, according to the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra*, the fundamental cause of pain is 'ignorance' (*avidyā*), the blindness to the causal reality of the whole universe, in which our appearance is but a small part. The main concern of the *Sūtra*, however, is not with a metaphysical analysis of causal reality (although metaphysical speculation is required for a task of constructing its coherent, philosophical scheme), but rather with an endeavor to guide 'foolish' people to the awareness of causal reality by demanding their sentive reflection upon the distress and agony they confront in daily life. Pure Land Buddhism is indeed the Way for the sake of such 'foolish' lay people.

III. BODHISATTVA'S COMPASSIONATE PRACTICE OF VICARIOUS *DUḤKHA*

The Mahāyāna Buddhist movement adopted the concept of the 'bodhisattva' as the center of its doctrines, focusing especially on the practice of vicarious *duḥkha* for the sake of 'benefiting others'. For all Mahāyāna Buddhists of whatever sects or schools, there is no genuine enlightenment apart from fulfillment of 'self-benefit and benefiting others'. Benefit for oneself refers to the bodhisattva's own enlightenment, and benefiting others refers leading others to enlightenment; for the bodhisattva, the content of 'self-benefit' is in essence none other than 'benefiting others'. Since the bodhisattva represents the ideal mode of existence in Mahāyāna Buddhism, it is important to emphasize that the Mahāyāna notion of *nirvāṇa* is not fulfilled without benefiting unenlightened beings who

constitute the realm of *saṃsāra*. This Mahāyāna understanding of the reciprocal working of *nirvāṇa* and *saṃsāra* has been developed in Pure Land Buddhism into its unique doctrine that “*nirvāṇa* is attained without severing blind passions of *saṃsāra*.” It is this doctrine that Pure Land Buddhist salvation finds as its distinctive characteristic. The doctrine of salvation will come up for further discussion in the next section.

It is the essential nature of bodhisattvas to be concerned with whether others can assuredly attain *nirvāṇa*. Bodhisattvas vow, “If, when I attain Buddhahood, sentient beings throughout the ten quarters do not attain enlightenment, may I not attain the supreme enlightenment.” This deep concern of bodhisattvas for others is echoed in the doctrine of ‘six *pāramitās*’, which require firm resolution to lead people unfailingly to enlightenment; particularly *dāna* (giving) and *kṣānti* (forbearance) hold this significance. Although the six *pāramitās* are related to several basic concepts of early Buddhism, Mahāyānists attach the greatest importance to these two *pāramitās*, which are understood as distinguishing bodhisattvas from inferior arhats and pratyekabuddhas, who pursue the ascetic ideals of a meditative monk.²² The early Mahāyānists considered the practices of giving and forbearance as of equal importance with the higher stages of concentration and wisdom. In fact, these practices are indispensable to the bodhisattva’s lofty aspiration for the enlightenment of lay people who are absorbed in worldly social life.

The bodhisattva’s aspiration for enlightenment naturally actualizes itself in *duḥkha* with others. According to Mahāyāna sutras, the bodhisattva’s *duḥkha* manifests the virtue of the great compassion that is inherent in his or her nature. This compassion arises from his or her infinite sensitivity in seeing the pain of all sentient beings as he or she does of his or her own children. Hence his or her devotional mind is characterized by a ‘great compassionate heart of one taste’. This spiritual insight into oneness with all living beings encourages him or her to remain in hell and to suffer therein with them and for their sake.

“He becomes sick when they are sick and is cured when they are cured.”²³ This is the reason for the sickness of Vimalakīrti, the great exponent in proclaiming the essence of Mahāyāna imagery of the bodhisattva. This paradoxical identity in which Buddhist compassion is rooted is none other than the practical mode of the ceaseless ‘de-substantializing’ dynamism (*śūnyatā*) that is itself true, universal reality. Such paradoxical identification of dichotomies can be fulfilled only through the realization that all actualities constituting the universe are co-dependent in origination. This notion, which negates a substantialistic view of reality, is therefore concerned with neither ‘being’ nor ‘non-being’;²⁴ the dichotomy is still tinged with substantialistic parlance.

The Mahāyāna bodhisattva’s compassion, manifesting itself as experiencing the pain of other beings, is nothing but his or her untiring actualiza-

tion of 'de-substantializing' dynamism of the universal reality. Apart from the bodhisattva's actualization as ingressing his or her will into the actual existence of each being, the 'de-substantializing' reality turns out to be so abstract that any sort of reference to it falls into delusive attachment to that reality itself, which is none other than its dogmatic substantialization. In this respect, our understanding of the bodhisattva's compassion must be in itself non-substantialistic, and, moreover, we should not consider the compassion as if there were anything more ultimate or real behind and in addition to that bodhisattva's compassionate actualization, which is itself 'de-substantializing'. Nothing can be added to or subtracted from that compassionate activity.

The non-substantialistic articulation of the bodhisattva's 'de-substantializing' activity, which is compassion, is after all a thoroughgoing endeavor to elucidate the dynamic character of that activity in the midst of the actual, temporal, and historical world of sentient beings. This dynamism of the bodhisattva's ceaseless 'de-substantializing' is embodied as the universal creativity of Dharmākara Bodhisattva's Primal Vow, whose fulfillment is Amida Buddha's untiring dynamism of saving all sentient beings. The uniqueness of Amida's compassion, which is the ultimate form of bodhisattva's vicarious *duḥkha*, will be discussed in some detail in the next section.

Finally, as a special mode of bodhisattva's vicarious *duḥkha*, a short reference must be made to the 'Icchantika Bodhisattva', who appears in the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra*.²⁵ The *icchantikas*, who are considered the fifth order of beings in the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra*, are those who have forsaken all roots of merit. This class of beings has no aspiration at all for emancipation, and due to the lack of religious concern they abuse the right dharma of Buddhism. They are the most evil people, destined for hell, and can never attain enlightenment by any means.

What is here called 'Icchantika Bodhisattva', however, may be distinguished from the so-called *icchantikas* mentioned above. Although he belongs to the order of *icchantika*, he is a bodhisattva in the sense that "he vowed in the beginning of his religious career that until every one of his fellow-beings is led to enjoy the eternal happiness of *nirvāṇa* he himself would not leave this world of *duḥkha*, but must strenuously and with every possible means (*upāya*) work towards the completion of his mission."²⁶ Among his fellow-beings there are the *icchantikas* also, who can never reach *nirvāṇa*. Hence, as long as the *icchantikas* exist, the bodhisattva can never complete his activity of leading all beings to *nirvāṇa*; in this sense he also can never attain enlightenment. Nevertheless, "as for the bodhisattva, he never enters into *nirvāṇa*, for he has a deep insight into the nature of things, which are already in *nirvāṇa* even as they are."²⁷

The profound religious implications of this relationship between the *icchantikas* and the Icchantika Bodhisattva correspond remarkably to

Amida's untiring and universal compassion.²⁸ Shinran, in his awareness of himself as *icchantika* and of Amida's Vow resolutely 'grasping even the *icchantika* without forsaking' him, speaks of Amida as 'grasping those who seek to escape from Amida'.²⁹

The *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, also well known for the doctrine of *icchantikas* and its treatment of the question of their buddha-nature, profoundly influenced Shinran's soteriology.³⁰ In this sutra the metaphor of an aching parental heart dying when it confronts the death of the child is used to evoke the heart of a bodhisattva: "Seeing an *icchantika* fall into hell, he himself desires to be born there, too."³¹

IV. PURE LAND EMANCIPATION FROM *DUḤKHA*.

Since the main object of this paper is to bring to light some of the implications of the Pure Land doctrine of *duḥkha*, the subject of this section leads us a bit afield. But, as I mentioned in the last section, deliverance from pain and *duḥkha* as taught in the Pure Land tradition reflects the core of the Mahāyāna view of *duḥkha*.

Three factors must be taken into account as presuppositions for dealing with Mahāyāna teachings of *duḥkha*. First, the *existential* mode of human beings is *duḥkha*; all beings without exception suffer pain; everything is *duḥkha*. Second, *all* beings attain enlightenment; no one is excluded from the possibility of entering into *nirvāṇa*. Third, all doctrines of Mahāyāna Buddhist thought must be philosophically penetrated by the perspective of 'de-substantializing' dynamism of reality (*śūnyatā*). Just as the very doctrine of *śūnyatā* must be in itself de-substantial, so the reality of *duḥkha* is not to be taken as something substantial; Nāgārjuna in fact argues that *duḥkha* is de-substantial.³²

My thesis is that these three factors are all present in their most radical form in the Pure Land soteriological process of emancipation from *duḥkha*. My understanding of the Pure Land view of emancipation is based upon Shinran's buddhology of Amida Buddha, which is of course a small but highly developed part of the whole body of different interpretations of Pure Land doctrines. In Shinran's view, the only path to emancipation from the universal *duḥkha* caused by the ignorance ingrained in the depth of all sentient beings, whether the wise of the Mahāyāna or the Theravāda, or the ignorant, good, or evil, is to attain *faith*. This *faith* is fulfilled by Amida's giving her virtue to them out of her pure Vow-mind. *Faith* is the right cause bringing all sentient beings to the great *nirvāṇa*.³³ Hence, the Pure Land view of emancipation from *duḥkha* focuses on the attainment of *faith* and on what takes place in sentient beings who realize that attainment.

The notion of *faith* is intricately analyzed and elaborated by Shinran. Throughout his writings his Pure Land doctrines center on Amida's

fulfillment of *faith* for the sake of all sentient beings. Since an exhaustive consideration of Shinran's analysis is beyond the scope of this paper, our discussion will focus only on the three factors mentioned above, viewing them as the key concepts that lay bare the meaning of the attainment of *faith*.

First of all, for Shinran *faith* is not a believing mind that arises through the self-power of sentient beings, but none other than Amida's own mind. Nothing of what we usually think of as our nature as human beings or of the self is to be found in the nature of *faith*. Since *faith* is the pure and true mind with which Amida established and fulfilled her Vow, all virtues, qualities, and powers that Amida has fulfilled by completing vigorous bodhisattva practices with untiring resolution are attributed to *faith*. Moreover, her fulfillment surpasses that of all other buddhas in that it embraces all their virtues, qualities, and powers. According to the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra*, after having searched into the causes of the pure lands of all buddhas and the qualities of those lands and of the beings and gods therein, Amida Buddha, in her causal stage as Bodhisattva Dharmākara, established the supreme, incomparable Vow by selecting the best cause of bringing all sentient beings to Buddhahood and qualities from among them, and she fulfilled it in such a way as to make it all-encompassing.

Therefore, Shinran sets forth the following twelve expressions clarifying the supreme qualities of *faith*, which he thus terms 'great faith'.

- a. The superlative means for attaining longevity and deathlessness.
- b. The wondrous way to awaken aspiration for the pure and rejection of the defiled.
- c. The straightforward mind of giving virtues in the selected Vow.
- d. The joyful faith of Amida's deep and vast concern to benefit others.
- e. True mind, diamond-like and indestructible.
- f. The pure faith that takes one easily to Amida's land, where no one can be born without faith.
- g. The single mind of grasping and protecting in Amida's spiritual light.
- h. Great faith, rare and unsurpassed.
- i. The short path difficult for the secular world to believe.
- j. The true cause of realizing great *nirvāṇa*.
- k. The white path of instantly fulfilling all virtues.
- l. The ocean-like faith of true suchness or one reality.³⁴

It is clear from these elucidations that the nature of *faith* is not Amida's mind separated from her concern about others, but her untiring commitment in ceaselessly giving her virtues to all sentient beings. Indeed, that indefatigable mindfulness of others is what makes Amida Amida; this boundless working of Amida's Vow to save all beings without excluding even a single one is the Pure Land mode of actualizing 'One Reality', which is 'de-substantial reality' (*śūnyatā*); hence Amida is none other than the *actualizing śūnyatā*. This form of the being of Amida, which may be more accurately termed 'formless form', characterizes the way in which Amida performs her activity of grasping all sentient beings and bringing them into her Pure Land, and further it characterizes the way in which 'great faith' exerts the decisive influence on their denied world rooted in 'ignorance'. This is concerned with the third of the aforementioned 'three factors' that the existential mode of human beings is *duḥkha*. We now come to discuss these factors in the hope that an observation of each can make clear the Pure Land emancipation from *duḥkha*.

In the light of the discussion of *faith*, it can be understood that Shinran's recognition that *faith* is the only way for all sentient beings to be saved by Amida is based upon his radical insight into the universal reality of *duḥkha*. The following quotation, which is just one of many similar passages, explicitly shows the radicalness of his deep reflection:

All the ocean-like multitudinous beings, from the beginningless past to this day and this moment, have been transmigrating in the sea of ignorance, drowning in the cycle of existences, bound to the cycle of *duḥkhas*, and having no pure, serene faith. They have, as a natural consequence, no true serene faith.³⁵

For all 'foolish' lay people thoughts of desire arise at all times constantly to defile any goodness of heart; the flames of anger and hatred in their minds consume the dharma-treasure. Even if they strive to the utmost with body and mind through the twelve periods of the day and night, and however importunate their actions and practices may be, as though sweeping fire away from their heads, they must all be called poisoned good acts, or transitory, and false practices. They cannot be called true, real, and sincere activities. Though they may direct the merit of such poisoned good toward entering into the Pure Land, it is of no avail.³⁶

The radicalness of Shinran's sensitivity lies in his total negation of every possible endeavor to attain Buddhahood by the *self-power* for all people, regardless of race, nationality, sex, ability, and social status, who have been fettered to the dark *duḥkha*-world of *samsāra*, having transmigrated since innumerable kalpas ago until this moment.

In Shinran's awareness we can see that the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra* teaching in which the three root evil passions, 'desire, anger, and ignorance', are regarded as the fundamental causes of *duḥkha* is genuinely accepted. Shinran penetratingly discerns that ego which is so ingrained in the depth of human existence as to constantly poison good acts and destroy the treasure of dharma.

Shinran's judgment may seem but an arbitrary extension of his own personal awareness to all other people. His true intent, however, is to bring the very awareness of the depth of his own existence to its ultimate extremity. In the general Buddhist concept of cyclic transmigration, we can see a practical implication that, if there had been even a single person who was free from evil passion, Shinran would have been that person at a certain time in a certain world; this would mitigate his deep and thoroughgoing awareness of his sinful, foolish existence having been fettered to birth-and-death since innumerable kalpas ago. His absolute negation of any possible existence of such a person precisely discloses the deep-rootedness of human sinful and ignorant karma, which constantly brings about *duḥkha*.³⁷

This total negation necessarily leads Shinran to identification of himself as an *icchantika*. For Shinran the *icchantika* mode of existence is no longer one class of human beings among many, but has been taken as the universal existence, indicative of the intrinsic nature of all sentient beings. Here the question arises: How can such an *icchantika* that has entirely forsaken all roots of merit and thus withdrawn from emancipation be saved and enter into the great *nirvāṇa*? Here the notion of Buddha-nature must be introduced to answer the question, consisting of two elements, absolutely paradoxical to each other. But this theme is concerned with the third factor, which must follow our next discussion on the second factor dealing with the universality of salvation.

In surpassing all other buddhas and bodhisattvas, the uniqueness of Amida's Vow lies precisely in her patient and untiring aspiration for the emancipation of all sentient beings, particularly those who are completely deserted by other buddhas and bodhisattvas. For Shinran, such deserted people, called *icchantikas*, include all sentient beings. In the view of Shan-tao, father of Chinese Pure Land Buddhism, and Hōnen, who inherited his teaching in Japan—both of whose understandings were handed down to Shinran—ultimately only Amida's Vow can save the *icchantika* and emancipate all sentient beings from *duḥkha*.

Indeed, a multitude of practices have been expounded in the various Mahāyāna scriptures as the way to emancipation. Shan-tao classifies them into 'right practices' and 'sundry practices'. The former includes five types of practices—chanting, contemplation, worship, recitation, and praise—concentrated on Amida; the latter includes all practices not performed in focusing on Amida. Of the right practices, the recitation of Amida's Name

is singled out as that definitely selected in her Primal Vow as the true way to birth in the Pure Land, so that it is termed the 'true, definite practice', and the remaining four are labeled 'auxiliary practices'.³⁸

In order to disclose how the recitation of Amida's Name is in accord with the universality of Amida's true intent in the Vow, Hōnen shows some cases:

The recitation of Amida's Name, called *nembutsu*, is so easy that it is possible for *all* people; whereas, other practices are so difficult that they are not performed equally by all people. In order to lead *all* beings *equally* to be born in the Pure Land, Amida has made his Primal Vow by taking 'easy' and renouncing 'difficult'.

If sculpturing the images of buddhas and building pagodas had been chosen as the practice of the Primal Vow, the poverty-stricken people would have had to relinquish the hope of birth; in fact, the affluent are few and the destitute many. If sagacity and intelligence had been selected as the practice of the Primal Vow, the foolish and shallow would have had to relinquish the hope; in fact, the wise are few and the ignorant many. If a great amount of hearing and seeing had been required, those who hear and see less would have had no hope; in fact, those who hear much are few and those who hear little exceedingly many. If observance of precepts had been chosen as the practice of the Primal Vow, those who violate and those who are indifferent to them would have had their hopes cut off; in fact, those who observe precepts are few and those who violate them many.³⁹

Hōnen concludes that Amida, in her past as Dharmākara Bodhisattva, was so deeply moved by the compassion of equality that, for the purpose of universally grasping all sentient beings, she selected as the practice of the Primal Vow not such practices as sculpturing the images of buddhas and building pagodas and so on, but solely the single practice of *nembutsu*, the utterance of Amida's Name. Therefore, Amida's selection of that single practice is intended not to exclude anyone from her salvation, it is her activity of "grasping without forsaking any single being," originating from her absolute actualization of 'One Reality'.

Our next and final point concerns the structure of the Pure Land fulfillment of the *icchantika*'s salvation; it will clarify the unique Pure Land Buddhist way of embodying the Mahāyāna philosophy of 'de-substantializing dynamic reality' (*śūnyatā*) in its unparalleled doctrine that "*nirvāṇa* can be attained without severing evil passion of *saṃsāra*."

According to the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, the *icchantika* is defined as one who has entirely forsaken all roots of good from the beginningless past to this moment and hence in this respect is secluded from any possibility of entering into *nirvāṇa*. But at the same time the *Sūtra* states that there still

remains one path, which enables the *icchantika* to attain Buddhahood, that is, by virtue of the 'Buddha-nature'. The concept of 'Buddha-nature' is therefore a key to the question of whether the *icchantika* can become a buddha.

Two characteristics of Buddha-nature deserve our attention;⁴⁰ first, Buddha-nature transcends past, present, and future; and second, it will definitely reveal itself in the future. The former is often illustrated by the notion of 'space' or 'void'. This corresponds to the notion of *śūnyatā*. Therefore, 'Buddha-nature' is of the same efficacy as *śūnyatā* in the religious awakening of Pure Land Buddhists. The second characteristic of Buddha-nature provides a soteriological foundation for the basic Mahāyāna doctrine that all beings, including the *icchantika*, have the Buddha-nature. It is the future that brings about the manifestation of Buddha-nature; moreover, it occurs with definite assurance. The future is frequently understood to be a realm that has yet to come into being and thus is unknown and ambiguous. With respect to Buddha-nature, however, the certainty of its future revelation indicates its everlasting potentiality for all beings at all times. In this sense, it transcends the temporal flux of transmigration, and yet it is always ingressing itself in such a way as to lead each being to *nirvāṇa*.

These two characteristics of Buddha-nature are remarkably embodied in Shinran's view of Pure Land salvation fulfilled by Amida's compassionate Vow *through faith alone*. For Shinran, Buddha-nature is *faith*.⁴¹ *Faith* is given by Amida to each being, and through this gift of *faith* the Buddha-nature ingresses itself into each being. *Faith* is Amida Buddha's mind, the eye of the Buddha, which can bring the depth of each being into light. The ingression of Buddha-nature into each being by virtue of Amida's gift of *faith* leads to twofold awareness: the awakening to the depth of evil passion ingrained in ignorance and the firm assurance of entering great *nirvāṇa*. This twofold awareness is reflected in Shinran's confession that the more awakened to evil passion one is, the more assured in the attainment of Buddhahood. This is precisely the awareness awakened in each being through the attainment of Amida's mind, which Shinran terms 'great faith'. This Pure Land awakening, which is itself the working of Amida's mind, is the realization that "*nirvāṇa* can be attained without severing evil passion of *saṃsāra*"; in fact, it is precisely in the midst of evil passion of *saṃsāra* that *nirvāṇa* is attained.⁴² In closing our discussion on the Pure Land view of *duḥkha*, the following three hymns composed by Shinran may be relevant:

Hindrance of evil becomes the substance of virtue.
 As with the example of ice and water:
 The greater the ice, the greater the water;
 The greater the hindrance, the greater the virtue.⁴³

The perfect, instantaneous 'One Vehicle' of the Primal Vow
Grasps the perverse and evil.
Be awakened to this, and immediately you will realize that
Evil passion and enlightenment are not two in essence.⁴⁴

Into the ocean of Amida's Wisdom-Vow
The rivers of *faith* in the Other Power have completely flowed,
Hence, evil passions have become one in taste with enlightenment
By virtue of the true recompensed land fulfilled by Amida.⁴⁵

NOTES

1. This article is a revised edition of Appendix I, "Pure Land Buddhist View of *Duḥkha*," in Ryūsei Takeda, *Shinran Jōdokyō to Nishida tetsugaku* (Shinran's Pure Land Buddhism and Nishida's Philosophy), (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1991), pp. 13–42. According to the author, "This article was originally read in the session of Theological Encounter on Suffering at the Second International Conference on East-West Religions in Encounter, 'Paradigm Shifts in Buddhism & Christianity: Cultural Systems and the Self,' January 3–11, 1984, Hawaii. The session was specially organized by Christian theologians and Buddhist thinkers. The Christian theologians who responded to my paper were Gordon Kaufman, Harvard University, and Seiichi Yagi, then of the Tokyo Institute of Technology. The original paper has been slightly revised for the present edition" (p. 13fn). Minor editorial changes and revisions have been made in the text and notes according to the journal's editorial guidelines with the permission of the author.

2. Sir Monier Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1899); and Vaman Shivram Apte, *The Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1965).

3. Apte, *The Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, p. 501; and Monier, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, p. 483. Also Franklin Edgerton, in his *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, defines '*duḥkhata*' as "(state of) 'misery' and gives three kinds of misery referring to Mvy. 2228–31, SP 108.17f., and AbhidhK. LaV-P. vi.125ff.: 'state of misery qua misery' (what is grievous by its very nature, from the start, always painful), 'state of misery due to conditioning' (*saṃskāra*; acc. to Vism. 499.20f, this means particularly experience in itself not painful or pleasurable, but, because impermanent and so undependable, still a cause of misery), and 'state of misery due to alteration' (of what was pleasurable to begin with, but cannot last)" (Franklin Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, vol. 2: Dictionary [1953; reprint, Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, 1985], p. 265).

4. Nakamura Hajime makes the same inference in his article, "Ku no mondai" (The Problem of *duḥkha*), in *Ku: Bukkyō shisō*, vol. 5, edited by Bukkyō Shisō Kenkyūkai (Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1980), p. 4. In *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, an interpretation is given to Phil. 1:29 that "*παθεῖν* is not a privilege of the apostle or a select few but is of the very essence of Christianity as such. All the same, it is a privilege, a special grace which surpasses even the grace of being able to believe in Christ" (*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, edited by

Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich; translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley; abridged in one volume by Geoffrey W. Bromiley [Grand Rapids, Michigan: W.B. Eerdmans, 1985], p. 920). Also, in 2 Cor. 1; 5 Paul calls his suffering 'Christ's sufferings' (παθηματα τοῦ Χριστοῦ).

5. Nakamura, "Ku no mondai," p. 6.

6. Har Dayal, *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature* (1932; reprint, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1970), p. 157.

7. *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, edited by Prahlād Pradhān, in *The Abhidharmakośa of Vasubandhu with the Commentary* (Patna: K.P. Jayaswal Research Institute, 1983), p. 328. See also *O-p'i-ta-mo-chu-she-lun*, vol. 22, in *Taishō*, vol.29, p. 114b.

8. To the best of my knowledge, a distinction between ontological and epistemological dimensions is seldom brought into a clear and self-conscious discussion, and one may hold that such a distinction itself is not of Indian character. Tamura Yoshirō raises the same question, pointing out that many references can be found in primitive Buddhist scriptures in which, on the one hand, outflowing and impermanent existents as such are regarded as painful and on the other hand attachment ingrained in ignorance is regarded as the cause of pain. While he leaves the problem open to further examination, he considers that an emphasis has been shifted from what he calls 'existential reality' to 'delusive reality' in the later phase of Mahāyāna Buddhist history in which one's primary interest has been directed toward emancipation and salvation. His terminology of the two types of 'reality' corresponds respectively to mine of 'ontological and epistemological dimensions.' See, Tamura Yoshirō, "Daijuku: Bosatsu to ku" (Vicarious *duḥkha*: Bodhisattva and *duḥkha*), in *Ku: Bukkyō shisō*, vol. 5, pp. 327–328).

9. A number of renderings are presented by Har Dayal, *The Bodhisattva Doctrine*, p. 69 ff. I have selected those I find most suitable.

10. *Samyutta Nikāya*, PTS, III, pp. 42 and 45; *Taishō*, vol. 2, p. 2a.

11. Shinran, *Kyōgyōshinshō*, Chapter on Teaching, in *Shinshū shōgyō zensho* (hereinafter *SSZ*), vol. 2 (Kyoto: Ōyagi Kōbundō, 1941), pp. 2–3.

12. Shinran, *Ichinen tanen mon'i*, in *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 618; *Notes on Once-calling and Many-calling*, Shin Buddhism Translation Series (Kyoto: Hongwanji International Center, 1980), p. 48.

13. *Wu-liang-shou ching*, in *Taishō*, vol.12, p. 274 b-c. Translated into English by Hiroshi Suzuki, *The Larger Sūtra* (unpublished manuscript).

14. Ibid.

15. Shinran, *Kyōgyōshinshō*, in *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 1.

16. *Wu-liang-shou ching*, in *Taishō*, vol.12, p. 274c.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid., p. 275 a.

20. Ibid.

21. My emphasis upon temporality, actuality, and historicity of co-dependently originating events of reality can be supported by Shinran's endeavor to show that the only way possible for all sentient beings aware of thoroughgoing 'foolishness' is 'to be able to attain *nirvāṇa* without severing evil passions of *saṃsāra*', which will be our thesis of the fourth section, and also treated to some extent in the third one.

22. *Dāna* and *kṣānti pāramitās*, which demand bodhisattvas' social concern and sensitivity, are, interestingly enough, absent from the thirty-seven *bodhipakṣyadharmas* (the comprehensive catalogue of a monk's duties), which are considered too monastic and antisocial in their scope and tendency from a Mahāyāna viewpoint. See, Har Dayal, *The Bodhisattva Doctrine*, p. 170.

23. *Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa Sūtra*, in *Taishō*, vol. 14, p. 544b. Translated into English by Robert A. F. Thurman, *The Holy Teaching of Vimalakīrti: A Mahāyāna Scripture* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1976), p. 43.

24. D. T. Suzuki states: "By him [the possessor of 'wisdom-eye'] the world is perceived *yathābhūtam* stripped of all its logical predicates and also its so-called objective trappings; the world thus appearing in its nakedness has been designated empty (*śūnya*) by the Mahāyānists. It is in this sense, therefore, that it can be said there is nothing substantial in the world, nothing which has individuality (*ātman*), nothing which can be grasped; and that it slips through the hands, one predicate disappearing after another, so that it cannot be designated, as being (*sat*), nor by its opposite, not-being (*asat*)" (Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, *Studies in the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* [London: Routledge, 1930], P. 115).

25. *Ju-leng-ch'ieh-ching*, translated by Bodhiruci, ch. 3 (*Sarvadharma-samuccaya*), in *Taishō*, vol. 16, p. 527b.

26. D. T. Suzuki, *Studies in the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, p. 220.

27. Ibid. Suzuki cites the Sanskrit: "Bodhisattvecchantiko' tra mahāmate ādiparinirvṛitān sarvadharman viditvā'tyantato na parinirvāti."

28. In this connection, I propose that it is meaningful to recall what Paul designates the 'sufferings of Christ'. According to Rudolf Bultmann, "the 'sufferings of Christ' are neither sufferings *such as* Christ endured, nor are they simply sufferings endured for Christ's sake. Still less are they sufferings in 'imitation of Christ'." He goes on to say that "they are sufferings of

any kind, sufferings which may befall anyone, although they will come in special number upon the followers of Christ. But for the believer, because of his relation with Christ, they have gained a new meaning, since living and dying are encountered in his allegiance to the Lord" (Rudolf Bultmann, *Faith and Understanding I*, edited with an introduction by Robert W. Funk, translated by Louise Pettibone Smith [New York: Harper and Row, 1969], p. 201). Furthermore, in Reinhold Niebuhr's view, "the suffering Messiah became, in the eyes of faith, a clue to the mystery of the mercy and the justice of God, and the atonement became the real content of the revelation" (Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Self and the Dramas of History* [New York: Scribner, 1955], p. 91). Also Luther's theology of the cross may bring about a fruitful comparison: "God is known only in suffering"; "God meets us 'hidden in the sufferings' of Christ" (Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, translated by Robert C. Schultz [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966], pp. 25–34, and p. 291).

29. Shinran's unique characterization of Amida's saving activity appears in his marginal annotation to the term 'grasping' in one of his hymns on the three sutras: "Watching over the beings of the *nembutsu* in the worlds of the ten quarters, as numerous as dust-particles, She grasps them and does not forsake; Hence, She is called 'Amida'" (*Jōdo wasan*, in *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 495. See also *SSZ*, vol. 5, p. 13).

30. Shinran quotes extensively from the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* in the Chapter on the True Buddha and Land of *Kyōgyōshinshō*, adding his own revision to it in such a way as to lay bare Amida's true intent. See *SSZ*, vol. 2, pp. 123–132.

31. *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, in *Taishō*, vol. 12, p. 701b. Translated into English by Kosho Yamamoto, *The Mahāparinirvāṇa-sutra* (Ube, Yamaguchi-ken: Karinbunko, 1975), p. 390.

32. *Duḥkha-parīkṣā nāma dvādaśamaṁ prakaraṇam*. See, *Mūla-madhyamakakārikās de Nāgārjuna, avec la Prasannapadā Commentaire de Candrakīrti*, ed. par L. de la Villed Poussin, Bibliotheca Buddhica IV (St. Petersburg: Académie Imperiale des Sciences, 1913).

33. Shinran, *Kyōgyōshinshō*, in *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 59.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 48.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 62.

36. Shinran, *Jōdomonruijushō*, in *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 451.

37. Kiritani Junnin, *Kyūsai no ronri* (Pure Land Soteriology), (Tokyo: Kyōiku Shinchōsha, 1982), pp. 39, 75, et seq. His profound speculation must be seriously taken for further examination of fundamental problems, which are common to any salvific religion.

38. Shan-tao, *Kuan-ching-ssu-t'ieh-shu*, *San-shan-i*, in *SSZ*, vol. 1, pp. 537–138.
39. Hōnen, *Senjaku hongwan nembutsu shū*, Ch. 3 (on Amida's Primal Vow), in *SSZ*, vol. 1, pp. 944–945.
40. What follows is elaborated on the basis of a paradoxical exposition of *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, particularly Ch. 33, in *Taishō*, vol. 12, p. 562a-c.
41. Shinran derives his understanding of *faith* as Buddha-nature from a passage in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* that states "great faith is buddha-nature; buddha-nature is suchness; buddha-nature is termed 'one-child-stage'" (*Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, Ch. 32, in *Taishō*, vol.12, p. 556 c). See also, *Kyōgyōshinshō*, Chapter on Faith, in *SSZ*, p. 63.
42. As far as my religious experience as a Pure Land Buddhist of *nembutsu* is concerned, I am deeply moved by Luther's christological statements which point in the direction of a *genus tapeinoticaon*. According to Paul Althaus, "Luther holds that the deity of Christ, because of the incarnation and of its personal unity with the humanity, enters into the uttermost depths of its suffering For it means nothing else than that God is at once completely above and completely below This man Jesus who bears the wrath of God, the sin of the world, all earthly trouble, yes, hell itself, is at the same time the highest God. The mystery of Christ cannot be expressed without these paradoxes. This is especially true of Christ's suffering on the cross. The deity itself is present with its power in the sufferings" (Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, pp. 197–198). In spite of entirely different terminology, what a remarkable congeniality there may underlie between Luther's awakening to the mystery of Christ and Shinran's realization of what he often calls the inconceivable virtue of Amida's Primal Vow!
43. Shinran, "Hymns on T'an-luan" in *Kōsō wasan* (The Hymns of the Pure Land Masters), in *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 506.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 505.
45. Shinran, *Shōzōmatsu wasan* (The Hymns of the Dharma-Ages), in *SSZ*, vol. 2, p. 519.

Jōkei and Hōnen: Debating Buddhist Liberation in Medieval Japan—Then and Now

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AS ANALYTICAL CATEGORIES, “universal” and “particular” carry a variety of connotations in religious studies. They sometimes represent the metaphysical opposition between the One and the many or, in Buddhist jargon, the Absolute and phenomena. “Universal” may also designate those religions, such as Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism that offer salvation to all human beings; religions that may be geographically or ethnically specific are, on the other hand, considered particularistic. And within any specific religion, there may be debates concerning the relationship between its universal soteriology and the particular doctrines, practices, and/or devotions advocated by various traditions. Mahāyāna Buddhism, for example, generally claims that there are many “particular” forms of practice and devotion that can lead to liberation. Articulated through the doctrine of *upāya* or skillful means, there is a traditionally fluid relationship between Buddhism’s universal soteriology and its particular forms of devotion and practice.

What has come to be called “new” Kamakura Buddhism in Japan represents a peculiar turn in this understanding of the universal and particular in Buddhism. I would like to examine here the debate in the early thirteenth century between Jōkei (1155–1213) of the Hossō school and Hōnen (1133–1212), founder of the Pure Land school in Japan. In many ways, this controversy epitomizes the fundamental doctrinal divide between the broader Buddhist tradition and particular regional forms that emerged in Japan during and after the Kamakura period (1185–1333). To call this a debate is somewhat of a misnomer since there was never any formal debate between these two figures. However, they were contemporaries and in various writings they do articulate radically different perspectives such that we can, I venture, imagine at least the principles upon which such a debate might have taken place. From Hōnen, we have the *Senchakushū* (Passages on the Selection of the Nembutsu in the Original Vow). And from Jōkei, we have the *Kōfukuji sōjō*, a petition to the Court calling for the prohibition of the Hōnen’s *senju nembutsu* movement, as well as a number of other texts that reflect his broader views concerning Buddhist salvation and practice. Before we consider this debate, it might be

useful to introduce Jōkei since he has not been widely studied, especially in the West, despite the fact that he was clearly one of the most prominent monks during his lifetime. Hōnen, I am assuming, needs little introduction.

JŌKEI'S BIOGRAPHY

Jōkei (1155–1213), posthumously known as Gedatsu Shōnin, was born into the once-powerful Fujiwara clan. At the ripe age of seven, Jōkei was sent to Kōfukuji, the prominent Hossō temple in Nara, as a result of the exile of his father Sadanori subsequent to the Heiji disturbance (1159–60). Four years later, he took the tonsure at Kōfukuji and trained under his uncle Kakuken (1131–1212), who later became superintendent of Kōfukuji, and Zōshun, a prominent Hossō scholar-monk. Available records tell us little of Jōkei's early years of study, but he must have been prodigious given his later prominence as a scholar-monk. By 1182, at the age of twenty-seven, he was a candidate at the Yuima-e at Kōfukuji, one of the most prestigious annual public lectures, and within four years (1186) held the prestigious position of lecturer (*kōshi*) for the same assembly. This was followed by at least six appearances at the other major yearly lectures over the next five years. Following his performance in the 1191 Hōjōji lectures, held on the anniversary of the death of Kujō Kanezane's eldest son Yoshimichi, Kanezane writes of Jōkei in his diary:

His exposition of the Dharma is profound. It is unfortunate that his voice is so soft, but whether he is discussing or expounding, he is clearly one of the wise and virtuous men of this degenerate age (*mappō*).¹

Kanezane, chancellor (*kampaku*) to Go-Shirakawa and Go-Toba, was the most powerful Court official until he was pushed out in 1196.

In 1192, Jōkei resolved to move to Kasagidera, a somewhat remote mountain temple about twelve kilometers northeast of Nara and Kōfukuji. Despite appeals from Kujō Kanezane (and even the Kasuga deity, if we are to believe the *Kasuga Gongen genki*²), Jōkei actually did move in the fall of the following year. Though this did not prove to be a complete disengagement from worldly affairs, it was a clear move toward a life of reclusion (*tonsei*). It also turned out to be a decided rejection of what had every indication of becoming a very successful career in the Kōfukuji hierarchy. The reasons for this unexpected move are not altogether clear but at least some evidence suggests that Jōkei was annoyed with the highly politicized environment in Nara and sought a more sedate and spiritual

lifestyle. Scholars offer different reasons for Jōkei's radical move, but it seems clear that Jōkei sought a more secluded and spiritual lifestyle.³

Kasagidera was not, however, an altogether obscure temple. It featured a massive cliff-carved image of Miroku (Skt. *Maitreya*) dating from the eighth century and claimed many prominent visitors. Over the next fifteen years at Kasagidera, Jōkei was involved in various *kanjin* (solicitation) campaigns, temple reconstructions, and numerous public appearances. He also promoted a wide variety of Buddhist devotions and practices among layfolk. It was during these years at Kasagi, in 1205, that Jōkei wrote, on behalf of the eight established schools, his now famous petition to the Court appealing for a censure of Hōnen's *senju nembutsu* teaching. Three years later in 1208, after expanding Kasagidera considerably, Jōkei moved to Kaijusenji, another remote temple dedicated to Kannon Bodhisattva (Avalokiteśvara). Over the remaining five years of his life, he was active in a precept "revival" campaign and wrote a number of important treatises on Hossō doctrine.

HŌNEN AND THE *SENJU NEMBUTSU* TEACHING

Let us turn now to the dispute between Jōkei and Hōnen. Hōnen was of course the "founder" of the Pure Land sect (Jōdo-shū) in Japan. After more than twenty years of training within the Tendai system on Mt. Hiei, it appears that Hōnen gravitated gradually toward devotion to Amida Buddha and specific aspirations for birth in Amida's Western Pure Land. In 1198, he wrote the *Senchakushū* at the behest of Kujō Kanezane, a text that delineates the doctrinal and scriptural basis for an independent Pure Land sect. Despite its 1198 date, the readership of the *Senchakushū* was purportedly confined to Hōnen's close followers for approximately fourteen years until soon after his death in 1212. At that time, the text was officially published. We can only conjecture the reason for this "secret" period, but based on its contents, Hōnen surely knew the reaction it would provoke. Even so, there must have been enough clues from Hōnen's public lectures and hearsay for the established schools to discern the gist of his ideas. A petition, sponsored by Enryaku-ji, was submitted to the Court in 1204, which precipitated Hōnen's apologetic Seven Article Pledge (*Shichikajō kishōmon*).⁴ This pledge was addressed and submitted to the Tendai abbot Shinshō, signed by approximately one hundred ninety of Hōnen's followers, and was to serve as a guide for the conduct of all *senju nembutsu* practitioners. Additionally, Jōkei's petition in 1205 makes it readily evident that the radical nature of the teachings within the *Senchakushū* were widely known by that time.

The central thesis of the *Senchakushū*, as implied by its title, is the assertion that only the vocal *nembutsu* yields birth into Amida's Pure

Land. For Hōnen, the vocal *nembutsu* is the repeated recitation of the phrase “*namu Amida butsu*” or “I pay homage to Amida Buddha.” Hōnen adopted the term *senju nembutsu* (exclusive *nembutsu*) for this radical doctrine. It seems evident that there are actually two dimensions of “exclusivity” in the *Senchakushū*—one with respect to the soteriological (relating to salvation) goal and the other with respect to the means of achieving that goal. For Hōnen, birth in Amida’s Pure Land (*ōjō*) is the only achievable soteriological goal for humans to strive for in this lifetime. This claim seems to be an underlying assumption of the text and is only briefly dealt with directly. Most of the text endeavors to justify why *nembutsu* recitation is the only efficacious practice for achieving *ōjō*. Because the world had entered the last age of the Dharma (*mappō*), Hōnen argued, no one has the capacity to follow the traditional practices.⁵

Borrowing from Shan-tao (613–681), the Chinese devotee to Amida Buddha, Hōnen made the familiar distinctions between the Path of Sages and the Pure Land Path (*shōdōmon/jōdomon*), difficult and easy practices (*nangyō/igyō*), right practices and miscellaneous practices (*shōgyō/zōgyō*), and self-power and other-power (*jiriki/tariki*). Critical, of course, was Hōnen’s interpretation of “*senchaku*.” In contrast to Shan-tao, Hōnen emphasized Amida’s “choice” of the *nembutsu*, to the exclusion of all other practices, as opposed to the personal “choice” of Buddhist followers. Thus, Amida’s “choice” of the *nembutsu* in his eighteenth vow was for Hōnen a “rejection” of all other practices. In chapter three, he argues that Amida specifically chose the verbal *nembutsu* and guaranteed it with the eighteenth vow.⁶ In chapter six, he argues that this is the most appropriate practice for the degenerate age (*mappō*).⁷ And in chapter twelve, Hōnen explicitly rejects other practices such as meditation, discipline, sutra recitations, and meritorious deeds because Amida did not include them in his eighteenth vow.⁸

Hōnen deviated from both Shan-tao and Genshin (914–1017) in two important ways. First, he rejected the efficacy of all practices other than recitation of the *nembutsu*. And second, he asserted that the meaning of “*nembutsu*” or “*nien-fo*,” within both Amida’s vows and Shan-tao’s interpretation, is “verbal recitation” only. That is, Hōnen reduced all prior classifications of *nembutsu* practice (i.e., meditation and visualization) to its vocal dimension. Allan Andrews has demonstrated that Hōnen’s selective hermeneutical method as applied to Shan-tao is problematic at best.⁹

JŌKEI’S CRITIQUE OF THE *SENJU NEMBUTSU* TEACHING AND ITS MODERN (MIS)INTERPRETATIONS

The *Kōfukuji sōjō* was a petition to the Court, authored by Jōkei on behalf of the eight established schools, appealing for the suppression of

Hōnen's *senju nembutsu* teaching. Jōkei lists nine specific errors in Hōnen's teaching. Let me first briefly summarize the arguments in each of these.¹⁰

1. *The error of establishing a new sect:* Jōkei points out that there have been eight sects transmitted to Japan, either by foreign monks or Japanese monks traveling to China, and each was sanctioned by the Court. He argues that Pure Land worship was never a separate school (*shū*) in China, nor did Hōnen receive a direct transmission.

2. *The error of designing new images for worship:* This article attacks the mandala popular among Hōnen's followers known as "The Mandala Embracing All and Forsaking None" (*sesshu fusha mandara*). In it, the light shining forth from Amida (*kōmyō*) embraces only those practicing the verbal *nembutsu* and leaves other practitioners and scholar-monks in the dark. The problem, of course, is the implicit claim that birth in Amida's Pure Land is reserved *exclusively* for those practicing the verbal *nembutsu*. This, in effect, denies the efficacy of the traditional practices of meditation, morality, and good works.

3. *The error of slighting Śākyamuni:* Jōkei claims that *senju nembutsu* practitioners say: "With our bodies we do not worship other Buddhas and with our voices we do not call upon other Names." Consequently, by proclaiming exclusive allegiance to Amida, they are in essence rejecting Śākyamuni, the "Original Teacher" (*honshi*), and one of the Three Treasures that all Buddhists take as refuge.

4. *The error of neglecting the varieties of good deeds:* Jōkei asserts that some disciples of Hōnen (though not Hōnen himself) go so far in promoting the practice of the *nembutsu* as to slander other teachings such as recitation of the *Lotus Sutra*, meditation, or various esoteric practices.

5. *The error of turning one's back on the holy gods of Shintō:* Similarly, *nembutsu* followers reject the kami (*shinmei*) and do not honor the great shrines or Imperial sanctuaries (*sōbyō*).

6. *The error of ignorance concerning the Pure Lands:* Jōkei cites various Pure Land texts and masters in an effort to demonstrate that they all acknowledged and exercised a variety of religious practices. Birth in the Pure Land necessarily requires the development of other practices and cannot simply be reduced to the verbal recitation of the *nembutsu*.

7. *The error of misunderstanding the nembutsu:* Jōkei argues that the reduction of "nembutsu practice" to verbal recitation (*kushō*) is erroneous because it abandons the essential aspects of medita-

tion (*kan*) and concentration (*jō*). Moreover, Jōkei argues that there is no basis for choosing only the eighteenth vow and dismissing the authenticity of Amida's forty-seven other vows.

8. *The error of vilifying the followers of Śākyamuni*: This article reiterates the importance of practice, especially discipline according to the precepts (*kairitsu*). Jōkei emphasizes the mutual relationship between meditation, moral practice, and realization. By openly violating and refuting the traditional precepts, *nembutsu* followers disparage the monastic tradition established by Śākyamuni and the traditional precepts upon which the *sangha* has been preserved.

9. *The error of bringing disorder to the nation*: Jōkei asserts that there is a mutual relationship between the Buddha's Law (*Buppō*) and Imperial Law (*ōbō*). If the practitioners of the *senju nembutsu* succeed and the Eight Sects decline (along with adherence to the Three Learnings of morality, wisdom and meditation), then this mutual relationship will be threatened and social chaos is inevitable.

Jōkei's petition might be condensed to four essential points. First, he asserts that Hōnen abandoned all traditional Buddhist practices (i.e., the Path of Sages) other than the verbal recitation of the *nembutsu*. Second, Hōnen rejected the importance of karmic causality and moral behavior in the pursuit of Buddhist liberation. From Jōkei's perspective, these two consequences of Hōnen's teaching represent, in effect, a complete refutation of almost two-thousand years of the Buddhist tradition. Third, Hōnen falsely appropriated and misinterpreted Shan-tao with respect to *nembutsu* practice. And finally, Jōkei contends that there are negative social and political implications to Hōnen's teachings. By undermining the traditional Buddhist doctrines and moral construct, Hōnen's movement will engender social and political disorder.

It is clear that articles one, five, and nine contend, at least in part, that the *senju nembutsu* movement represents a threat to State authority and social stability. At the same time, these articles reflect a concern for the impact of the movement on the established sects of Buddhism. When Jōkei's petition is cited by scholars, it is very often reduced to these "political" concerns. For example, scholars such as Fukihara Shōshin, Sasaki Kaoru, and Satō Hiroo characterize the petition as a primarily politically motivated text.¹¹ The Matsunagas offer a classic example of this perspective as well. They write:

But the question arises, why a recluse would compose such a worldly document, primarily concerned with accusations of a

political rather than theological nature? In this respect, the petition appears to represent a sectarian reaction rather than a true idealist concern.¹²

In other words, Jōkei's critique is interpreted by these scholars as a defensive and politically motivated response to the growing popularity of the *nembutsu* movement. He saw it as a perceived threat to the status quo and established temple authority. In this framework of interpretation, of course, Hōnen's movement is viewed as a liberating force, both soteriologically for the masses and institutionally for the Pure Land school.

This reductionistic reading is problematic for a number of reasons. It is first worth reminding ourselves that the intended audience for this petition was the Court. Given this, we should probably expect it to appeal to the Court's primary interests. That is, we should expect Jōkei to emphasize the potential threat to the state's authority and control latent in the *senju nembutsu* movement. From the Court's perspective, this aspect of the petition, more than its doctrinal content, may have been the most persuasive component.

Moreover, this "political" interpretation discounts Jōkei's genuine concern with the social impact of Hōnen's *senju nembutsu* teaching and followers. Jōkei laments their criticism of other practices and their intentional violation of fundamental Buddhist precepts. By asserting only one path to salvation, although it is equal for everyone, Hōnen fostered tension between his followers and the existing Buddhist groups and undermined the traditional support for proper ethical and moral behavior. Sueki Fumihiko considers this to be one of the principle elements in Jōkei's critique. He emphasizes the tension between the religious and social dimensions of Hōnen's teaching. Religiously, Hōnen offered universal and equal access to salvation to people of all social levels. But he appears naive to the potential social impact of such a teaching. Thus, Sueki contends that Hōnen cut off his religious perspective from social reality.¹³ Ueda Sachiko makes a similar point. Jōkei, she claims, held a broader perspective in contrast to Hōnen, who focused only on the individual and lost site of the individual within society.¹⁴ It is the potentially adverse social impact of Hōnen's teaching that concerns Jōkei most when he complains of the behavior of *senju nembutsu* followers and stresses need for censure.

In addition, this dominant "political" reading of Jōkei's petition and motivations ignores or minimizes the essence of his doctrinal critique that is far from obscure. In fact, I would contend that recent scholarship appears to corroborate the more fundamentally doctrinal aspects of Jōkei's critique. First of all, Hōnen's claim of a preexisting, independent Pure Land school in China is suspect.¹⁵ Second, it is clear that Tao-ch'ō and Shan-tao, Hōnen's chosen patriarchs, were never exclusive in their advocacy of the *nembutsu*. They both emphasized the importance of precept adherence

and three of five of Shan-tao's extant works are actually liturgical guides for ritual worship.¹⁶ And third, it is also clear that Tao-ch'ao, Shan-tao, and even Genshin did not interpret *nembutsu* practice to be only verbal recitation. They recognized and even advocated the traditional contemplative forms of the practice.¹⁷ The point here is not to declare Jōkei the "winner," but to acknowledge the substantive aspects of his petition that have been too often dismissed or ignored.

Not only has Jōkei's critique been minimized, but interpretations of Kamakura Buddhism tend to adopt uncritically the very terms and categories of Hōnen's treatise. It is in this sense that this debate has carried on in some ways within contemporary scholarship. The division between the "new" Kamakura schools and the traditional schools is often articulated in terms of the distinction between self-power and other-power, difficult practice and easy practice, or the way of the sages and the way of the Pure Land. For example, the Matsunagas assert that Jōkei possessed a "sectarian inability to appreciate the true meaning of the 'Other-power' single-practice *nembutsu*."¹⁸ Narita Jōkan argues that Hōnen's *jōdomon/shōdōmon* categories truly represent the basic distinction between Hōnen and Jōkei.¹⁹ And Miyajima Shinichi contends that Jōkei denied the other-power *ōjō* and the way of easy practice.²⁰

The new schools are also characterized as "popular" in that they made "simple" practices available to the masses for the first time. For example, Ōsumi Kazuo, in his overview of Buddhism of the Kamakura period in the recent Cambridge history of Japan volume on medieval Japan, writes that the establishment of Kamakura Buddhism (by which he means the newly established schools) "was a pivotal event in Japanese history, because through it Buddhism was adapted to the Japanese ways and thus made accessible to the common people."²¹ He goes on to assert that Hōnen's *senju nembutsu* teaching was "epoch-making" because "for the first time Buddhism's path of salvation was opened to people without specialized religious training or discipline."²² Ōsumi reflects an enduring tendency to see Kamakura Buddhism as the final "Japanization" of Buddhism and the first expansion of Buddhism to the common people. Similarly, Soho Machida, in his recent study of Hōnen, characterizes the *senju nembutsu* movement as the "'liberation theology' of medieval Japan" which "generated a liberating potential against the hierarchic nature of the Old Buddhism...."²³ Such interpretations echo the rhetoric of the "new" Kamakura founders, especially Hōnen and Shinran, and their subsequent traditions. As we shall see, however, such interpretations seriously distort the nature of Buddhism within the established schools and gloss over widespread popular practices of the Heian period.²⁴

These scholars, among others, claim that the basic differences between Jōkei and Hōnen mirror the broader divisions between "new" and "old" Kamakura Buddhism. In contrast, I would argue that Hōnen's dualistic

categories (self/other power, difficult/easy practice, etc.) are in many ways largely polemical and only marginally relate to Buddhist practice of the day. A brief look at Jōkei's life and practice tends to corroborate this point.

JŌKEI'S PLURALISTIC PERSPECTIVE

Jōkei's religious life reflects a broad and eclectic range of beliefs and practices. The Kasuga deity, Miroku, Kannon, Jizō, and certainly Śākyamuni were all, at one time or another, the focal point of his devotion and evangelistic efforts. Among the practices that he followed and proselytized were mind-only contemplation (*yuishiki sammai*), recitation of various *nembutsu* and sacred *darani*,²⁵ worship of Buddha-relics (*busshari*), precept adherence (*kairitsu*), solicitation (*kanjin*) campaigns, temple construction, and various ritual performances and lectures. How to make sense of all this has been a challenge for scholars. Interpretations have ranged from those who perceive a unifying theme (e.g., devotion to Śākyamuni) to others who contend that Jōkei was a lost soul searching unsuccessfully for what Hōnen and Shinran found—certitude in simplicity. Here I want to point out, first, that the self/other-power or difficult/easy practice oppositions, like the polemical distinction between Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna or the sudden-gradual debate within Ch'an/Zen Buddhism, are often rhetorical devices used to denigrate those who followed the traditional practices. Unfortunately, scholars have been hasty in unreflectively adopting such rhetorical labels in their historical overviews and interpretations, as we have seen above. Only recently have we come to realize the pejorative connotation of labels like Hīnayāna or "gradual practice." And second, these two-dimensional labels rarely had any true relation to reality on either side of the debate. Hōnen continued "*jiriki*-type" practices to the end of his life; and Jōkei, as we will see, *emphasized* the necessity of "other-power."

While Jōkei stressed the implications and importance of karmic causality, he also praised the benefits of powers beyond our own. He recognized the power of Amida's vows (as well as those of Kannon, Miroku, and Śākyamuni), the Buddha's relics, and the recitation of various *nembutsu* and *darani*, among other sources of other-power. For him, the compassion of the various Buddhas and bodhisattvas in providing such supernatural mechanisms was beyond compare. In short, Jōkei recognized the well-accepted notion of his time that self-power alone was not enough. Despite accusations to the contrary, he never denied the importance of "other-power." What he denied is the "exclusive" reliance on other-power.

Although it remains unclear whether or not Jōkei considered his time to be within *mappō* (final age of the Dharma), it is quite apparent that he

saw it as a critical time for the Dharma.²⁶ He recognized that people no longer had the capacity to achieve enlightenment on their own. Thus, he continually argued for the necessity of “other-power” or “super-natural intervention” (*myōga*). In the *Busshari Kannon daishi hotsugammon* (Vow to the Buddha’s Relics and the Great Sage Kannon), written between 1208 and his death in 1213, Jōkei promotes reliance on the power of Buddha relics and aspiration for birth in Kannon’s realm known as Fudaraku-sen, a mountain located off the southern coast of India. He cautions against sole reliance on self-power:

If by means of self-power one attempts to eradicate these sins, it is like a moth trying to drink up the great ocean. Simply relying on the Buddha’s power, you should single-mindedly repent your errors. We humbly pray that the relics which he has left behind and which are the object of worship of his disciples, the holy retinue of the Southern Sea, and Kanjizaison, will shine the beams of the sun of wisdom and extinguish the darkness of the sins of the six roots, and, by means of the power of this great compassion and wisdom, eradicate the offenses of the three categories of action.²⁷

He goes on to emphasize the necessity of relying on some “other-power,” in this case the Buddha’s relics, to achieve birth in Kannon’s realm:

Even manifesting the great fruit of progress in the present (*genzai*) is from relying on the majestic power of the relics. Moreover, it is not difficult. How much easier it will be in one’s next life (*jinji*) to realize birth (*ōjō*) in the Southern Sea and see the great sages by means of the skillful means (*hōben*) of the Tathāgata’s relics.²⁸

And in the *Shin’yō shō* (Essentials of the Mind [Intent Upon Seeking Enlightenment], ca. 1206), perhaps Jōkei’s most studied text that emphatically promotes Miroku devotion, he states:

All the more so, the karmic causes for birth in the Pure Land, in accordance with one’s capacity, are not the same. Finding the nectar largely depends on super-natural intervention (*myōga*).²⁹

Some have contended that such statements are a direct response to the popularity of Hōnen’s movement. But a broader look at Jōkei’s religious life indicates that his emphasis on eclectic devotion and a variety of “accessible” practices were present from very early on. For example, according to extant records, Jōkei was the most prolific author of *kōshiki* texts, a genre of liturgical texts that praise the powers of and advocate

devotion to various Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and other sacred objects.³⁰ Jōkei's texts extol the powers of the Kasuga deity, Miroku, Kannon, Jizō, Buddha relics, and the *Lotus Sutra*, among others. Through participation in such liturgical ceremonies that involved performance and congregational chanting, one acquired karmic merit and established a spiritual connection (*kechien*) with the object of devotion.

As evident in the *Busshari Kannon* passage above, Jōkei also advocated aspiration for birth in the pure lands of Miroku (Tosotsu), Kannon (Fudaraku-sen), Śākyamuni's Vulture Peak (Ryōzen-jōdo), and Amida. There is not space to review the pure land debates here, but Jōkei, reflecting the conventional Hossō view, argued that Amida's Land of Bliss (Gokuraku) existed outside the realm of desire (*shaba*; Skt. *sahā*). In order to achieve birth there, one must have aroused the aspiration for enlightenment (*bodaishin*) and advanced to the third of five bodhisattva stages (*go-i*) outlined in Vasubandhu's *Trimśikā* (Thirty Verses on Consciousness-only). At this point, one will have realized the wisdom free of delusion (*muro-chi*, Skt. *anāsrava-jñāna*) and is sufficiently "pure" to enter Gokuraku. This was considered a rather advanced stage on the bodhisattva path. The realms of Miroku, Kannon, and Śākyamuni, on the other hand, reside within the realm of desire and, thus, one need only have aroused the aspiration for enlightenment in order to achieve birth there. Thus, in the 1201 (three-part) version of the *Kannon kōshiki*, he writes: "If there is someone whose practice and karma are not yet mature and has hindrances to birth in [Amida's] Pure Land, he can first reside in Fudaraku-sen. . . . Birth there is truly easy for the unenlightened *bonpu*)." ³¹ Jōkei advocated aspiration for Miroku and Kannon's realms precisely because they were easier to attain than birth in Gokuraku.

Jōkei's evangelism, evident most notably in these *kōshiki* texts, also speaks to the importance of "place" in Japanese religiosity, then and now. *Kōshiki* ceremonial rituals were usually linked to the primary image (*honzon*) of the temple where they were performed. They were considered especially efficacious precisely because of their proximity to the auspicious figure that was at the center of the devotional ritual. Ian Reader and George Tanabe make this same observation in their significant study of the "this-worldly" (*genze riyaku*) character of contemporary Japanese religion.³² The healing or soteriological power of Kannon, Miroku, Jizō, etc., is directly proportional to one's spatial proximity to an auspicious image of these figures. It is in part for this reason, as James Foard has observed, that the teachings of Hōnen and later Shinran were so threatening to the established temple network. They represented a "delocation of sacrality" by undermining the fundamentally geographic principle that defined religious devotion, then and now.³³ Moreover, by reducing Buddhism to one practice and one object of devotion, Hōnen undermined the principle of plurality underlying the Mahāyāna tradition.

To conclude this section, it should be evident that Jōkei, despite representing one the most conservative of the traditional schools, argued emphatically for the necessity of relying on some external power. And there were a plurality of powers and practices that one could turn to. All of this does not make Jōkei unique within the world of pre-modern Japanese Buddhism, however. Reliance on the various sacred forms of power within Buddhism was emphasized since its introduction into Japan. Jōkei simply highlights the problem of depicting “old” Kamakura Buddhists as monastic “self-power” extremists.

Hōnen and Jōkei do, in fact, share a number of characteristics, both biographically and religiously. For example, both emphasize aspiration for pure land birth, reliance on “other-power,” and easier, more accessible practices. Both also spent most of their lives outside the established institutions where their careers originated. At the same time, neither was a complete recluse. Each maintained relations with ranking political and aristocratic figures who were important in the development of their careers. Finally, they are both perceived as dedicated and disciplined monks who upheld the precepts throughout their lives. Nevertheless, there were important differences.

FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCES

Jōkei differs decidedly from Hōnen in at least one fundamental way. Other-power alone is not sufficient for ultimate salvation. We must contend with our own inherited karmic disposition. Other-power can never fully overcome the basic law of causality. Underlying Jōkei’s eclectic mix of practices is the fundamental assumption that people possess different capacities for enlightenment. At the conventional level, people, like dharmas, are different. Consequently, there are different sects, different practices, and even different Buddhas and bodhisattvas to worship in accordance with one’s nature. As he writes in the *Kōfukuji sōjō*:

Although polemics abound as to which is greater or lesser, before or behind, there is for each person one teaching he cannot leave, one method he cannot go beyond. Searching his own limits, he finds his proper sect. It is like the various currents finding their source in the great sea, or the multitudes paying court to a single individual.³⁴

Later in the petition he adds:

Numerous sectarian positions arise as occasion demands, and we partake of the good ambrosial medicine [of the Buddha’s varying

teachings] each according to our karmic predispositions. They are all aspects of the True Law which our great teacher Śākyamuni gained for us by difficult and painful labors over innumerable eons. Now to be attached to the name of a single Buddha is completely to obstruct the paths essential for deliverance.³⁵

And finally, in the *Kan'yū dōhōki* (Encouraging Mutual Understanding of the Dharma, date unknown), Jōkei writes:

The spiritual capacity of bodhisattvas is assorted and different. Some are inclined toward sudden realization and others toward gradual realization; some excel in wisdom while others excel in compassion; some are intimidated by defilements (*bonnō*; Skt. *kleśa*) while others are not; and so forth. And there are further distinctions within each of those. Some rely on their innate seeds of enlightenment. Others rely on the capacity of beings they teach. Whether they follow the original vow of the Buddhas who teach or the meritorious power of hearing the true Dharma, at the very first they arouse the aspiration for enlightenment and vow to seek the way.³⁶

The point is that there are various practices within the Buddhist tradition and various Buddhas and bodhisattvas to lead us for a reason: we are not all the same. We each have different “karmic predispositions” and stand at different points along the bodhisattva path. Nevertheless, Jōkei argues that these teachings are all true and consistent with each other just as all dharmas merge into one from the perspective of absolute truth.

In the face of extraordinary diversity within Buddhism, this was, and is, the most traditional response. It is nothing less than an articulation of the principles of *upāya* or “skillful means,” what James Foard has called the “great universalizer of salvation.”³⁷ We may also add that karmic causality, though interpretations of it may vary, is one of the most fundamental doctrines in Buddhism. So, from Jōkei’s perspective, to argue for absolute reliance on the vow and compassion of a particular Buddha was contradictory to fundamental Buddhist doctrine. It was equivalent to abandoning the most basic principles of Buddhism and had significant social implications. Jōkei relied on the doctrine of *upāya* (*hōben*) to reconcile the diversity within Buddhism with Mahāyāna’s universal soteriology.

Faced with the state of medieval Buddhism in Japan, Hōnen and Jōkei represent two forks in the road. Hōnen broke with tradition altogether and, one may argue, introduced an entirely “new” religion around selective Buddhist iconography and textual sources. There were predecessors, but no one had renounced the monastic ideal, the importance of discipline, the

diverse practices, etc., so radically. Here, Hōnen was quite explicit even though his personal life speaks otherwise.

Jōkei, on the other hand, envisioned restoring the monastic ideal, while at the same time expanding the soteriological opportunities for layfolk. He recognized the hypocrisy rampant throughout the established monastic community and was no more satisfied with the status quo than Hōnen. Unlike Hōnen and Shinran, however, Jōkei sought to amend the system based on normative Buddhist values. To call this a “Nara Revival” is problematic if that means to suggest, as it often does, that the goal was to return to the “heyday” of Nara Buddhism. So often explicit in this characterization is the goal of reacquiring the “power” once held by the major Nara sects. I rather see in Jōkei’s efforts an attempt to cling to the idealized tradition of Buddhism. From this perspective, his was a valid normative critique of all the *senju nembutsu* represented. The essence of “*nembutsu* only” was to erase two thousand years of tradition and practice. From Jōkei’s perspective, Hōnen and Shinran did not represent a “reformation,” but an “apostasy.”

CONCLUSION

Returning to the themes of universal and particular, Hōnen and Jōkei offer interesting contrasts. Both would embrace Buddhism as a soteriologically “universal” religion—Buddhist liberation is universally accessible. But Hōnen claimed that only one particular goal and one particular practice is ultimately efficacious. Jōkei, with his differentiated view of human capacity based on the law of causality, perceived the many “particular” practices as a necessity. Put simplistically, spiritual plurality (based on karmic causality) leads to plurality in practice and doctrine, which *enables* universal salvation. The variety of Buddhist teachings and practices are provisional manifestations of the Buddhas’ wisdom and compassion.

In our contemporary world of extraordinary and undeniable religious plurality, Jōkei’s pluralism, while decidedly Buddhist, has striking resonance. One may find Hōnen’s emphasis on singular devotion to Amida and the *nembutsu* or Shinran’s emphasis on “faith” more persuasive or appealing. But we should not allow their rhetorical categories to distort the views of established monks like Jōkei who were neither self-power extremists nor intent upon limiting Buddhist liberation to a chosen few. In fact, I would contend that Jōkei’s emphasis on place and plurality resonates remarkably with contemporary Japanese religion. Jōkei’s eclectic mix of practice and devotion may appear confusing at first; but examined from the perspective of “place,” both physical and anthropological, we can begin to understand the logic underlying it. Though the new Kamakura sects appear dominant

in contemporary Japan, one might well argue that Jōkei's vision and practice has more in common with contemporary Japanese religion than that of his adversaries Hōnen and Shinran. As noted earlier, Reader and Tanabe emphasize the pluralistic character of contemporary Japanese religion. Almost all temples feature a variety of auspicious images offering different practical and religious benefits, and this plurality is true of Pure Land temples as well.³⁸ It is in this pluralistic respect, at least, that contemporary Japanese religion is so fundamentally confluent with pre-modern Japanese religion. Some Pure Land proponents lament that their tradition has lost the truly radical nature of Hōnen and Shinran's vision.³⁹ What these scholars see as lost, namely the radically exclusive claims of Hōnen and Shinran, are the very elements that differentiated them so much from established figures like Jōkei.

NOTES

1. Quoted in Tanaka Hisao, *Kamakura kyū Bukkyō* (hereafter, *KKB*), *Nihon shisō taikei*, vol. 15, eds. Kamata Shigeo and Tanaka Hisao (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1971), p. 462. For the original text, see Kujō Kanezane, *Gyokuyō* (Tokyo: Kunaichō Shoryōbu, 1994), p. 662.
2. According to the *Kasuga Gongen genki* (Miracles of the Kasuga Deity), the Kasuga deity appeared in the form of a woman before Myōe. She professed her devotion for Jōkei and especially Myōe. But just before departing, she asked Myōe to pass along an appeal to Jōkei. The *genki* states: "'As for Gedatsu-bō,' she then went on, 'consider that both of you are the same age. It is extraordinary how deeply one feels for him!' She repeated this four or five times. 'However,' she continued, 'I cannot accept his living in seclusion. Do tell him so.'" Royall Tyler, *Miracles of the Kasuga Deity* (New York: Columbia University, 1990), p. 274.
3. The traditional reason offered for Jōkei's reclusive move is based on a biography of Jōkei in the *Genkō shakusho* of the early fourteenth century. That text describes Jōkei's righteous indignation at the ill-treatment he received from other monks at the *Saishō-kō* lectures in 1190 because of the simple robes he wore. Hiraoka and Ueda question the historicity of this episode and offer other possible reasons such as his aspiration for birth in Miroku's realm, concern for his health, and, most persuasively from my perspective, his longing for a more serious and less distracting spiritual environment. See Hiraoka Jōkai, *Tōdaiji Sōshō Shōnin no kenkyū narabini shiryō* [hereafter, *TSS*], vol. 3 (Tokyo: Nihon Gakujutsu Shinkō Kai, 1960), p. 588 and Ueda Sachiko, "Jōkei no shūkyō katsudō ni tsuite," *Historia* 75 (1977), pp. 28–29.
4. This is the *Shichikajō kishōmon*, a pledge addressed to the Tendai abbot Shinshō that was to serve as a guide for the conduct of *senju nembutsu* practitioners. It was submitted in 1204 and signed by approximately 190 of Hōnen's disciples although many signatures are duplicated. For an overview of its contents, see Takagi Yutaka, ed., *Ronshū Nihon Bukkyōshi: Kamakura jidai*, vol. 4 (Tokyo: Yūzankaku Shuppan, 1988), pp. 19–20. Jōkei refers to this text in the final summation of the *Sōjō*. He writes: "In particular, after he had taken up his brush to write his pledge (*kishō*) on the day when the monks of Mount Hiei sent a messenger with additional queries, his disciples told his lay followers: 'The Shōnin's words are all two-sided and don't go to the heart of the matter. Don't be influenced by what you hear from outsiders!' . . . Afterwards there was no change at all in the cleverness of his heretical views. Will the apology this time be the same as the one before?" Robert E. Morrell, *Early Kamakura Buddhism: A Minority Report* (Berkeley, California: Asian Humanities Press, 1987), p. 88.

5. This was based on a prevalent belief that the Buddhist teachings (Dharma) would degenerate in three distinct stages of time after the Buddha's death. *Mappō* is the third and final of these stages. Various theories existed regarding the length of each period and the date of the Buddha's death, but in Japan, the year 1052 was widely considered to be the threshold of *mappō* in which it was believed that no one could follow the practice of the Buddha's teachings or achieve enlightenment.
6. *Senchaku hongan nembutsu shū*, Taishō shinshū daizōkyō (hereafter, *Taishō*), 85 vols. eds. Takakusu Junjirō and Watanabe Kaigyoku (Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1924–34), vol. 83, pp. 4b–6c.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 8b–9a.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 14c–17a.
9. See Andrews, "Hōnen and Popular Pure Land Piety" (unpublished paper, 1993), pp. 8–9. See also Daniel Stevenson, "Pure Land Buddhist Worship and Meditation in China," in *Buddhism in Practice*, ed. Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 361–62.
10. For a translation of the entire text, see Morrell, *Early Kamakura Buddhism*, pp. 75–88.
11. See Fukihara Shōshin, "Gedatsu shōnin to sono nembutsu," *Nihon Bukkyō gakkai nenpō* 34 (1969): p. 111; Sasaki Kaoru, *Chūsei kokka no shūkyō kōzō* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1988), pp. 87–90 and particularly page 92; and Satō Hiroo, *Nihon chūsei no kokka to shūkyō* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1987), pp. 147–55.
12. Daigan Matsunaga and Alicia Matsunaga, *Foundations of Japanese Buddhism*, vol. 2, *The Mass Movement* (Los Angeles: Buddhist Books International, 1976), pp. 275–76.
13. Sueki Fumihiko, *Nihon Bukkyō shisōshi ronkō* (Tokyo: Daizō Shuppan, 1993), pp. 403–405.
14. Ueda, "Jōkei no shūkyō katsudō ni tsuite," p. 45.
15. Both Allan Andrews and Daniel Stevenson conclude that Pure Land was not an independent school in China in the sense that Hōnen and the Japanese Pure Land schools suggest. See Allan Andrews, "The *Senchakushū* in Japanese Religious History: The Founding of the Pure Land School," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 15-3 (1987), p. 481 and Stevenson, "Pure Land Buddhist Worship and Meditation in China," p. 359.
16. Stevenson, "Pure Land Buddhist Worship and Meditation in China," p. 266.
17. See, for example, Andrews, "Hōnen and Popular Pure Land Piety," pp. 8–9.
18. Matsunaga and Matsunaga, *Foundations of Japanese Buddhism*, vol. 2, p. 283.

19. Narita Jōkan, "Hōnen Shōnin to Gedatsu Shōnin: jukkai to nembutsu o chūshin toshite," Bukkyō daigaku, ed. *Hōnen Shōnin kenkyū* (Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1961), p. 237.
20. Miyajima Shinichi, "Gedatsu Shōnin sakuzenshū," *Gekkan bunkazai* 274 (1986): p. 47.
21. Ōsumi Kazuo, "Buddhism in the Kamakura Period," in *The Cambridge History of Japan: vol. 3 Medieval Japan*, ed. Yamamura Kozo (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 546.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 548.
23. Soho Machida, *Renegade Monk* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), p. 5.
24. Sueki Fumihiko provides an insightful analysis of factors contributing to this "popular" characterization of new Kamakura Buddhism. In particular, he notes the ideological agenda of the twentieth century Marxist historians who wanted to discern a socially egalitarian revolution in the teachings of Hōnen and especially Shinran. Later *ikkō* uprisings were highlighted to substantiate the revolutionary seeds in the teachings of these figures. As a result, "new" Kamakura Buddhism is labeled "popular" and "egalitarian" while established Buddhism is characterized as "elite" and "aristocratic." Sueki concludes that this ideological interpretation of the period is highly anachronistic and inaccurate. See Sueki Fumihiko, *Kamakura Bukkyō keiseiron: Shisōshi no tachiba kara* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1998), pp. 410–13.
25. *Darani* is a phrase, often the quintessence of a sūtra, that purportedly possesses inordinate mystical power. As with the oral *nembutsu*, recitation of a *darani* evokes those mystical powers. It is also the basis for a fundamental practice within esoteric Buddhism.
26. In the *Kōfukuji sōjō*, there are no less than six references to the time as *mappō*. And in the *Kairitsu saikō ganmon* (Vow for the Restoration of the Precepts), he states that "the Law of the Buddha in these Latter Days [*matsudai*] is not free from considerations of fame and profit" (Morrell, *Early Kamakura Buddhism*, p. 7). On the other hand, Taira Masayuki cites three instances in which Jōkei clearly saw himself at the end of the Imitation Dharma (*zōbō*) based on the traditional Hossō view that 1392 marked the beginning of *mappō*. In the *Kasuga daimyōjin hotsugammon*, Jōkei explicitly states that "now is the time of the Imitation Dharma." See Taira Masayuki, *Nihon chūsei no shakai to Bukkyō* (Tokyo: Hanawa Shobō, 1992), pp. 129ff.
27. *Busshari Kannon daishi hotsugammon*, in *Nihon Daizōkyō* (hereafter, *ND*), vol. 64, *Hossōshū-shōso* (Tokyo: Suzuki Gakujutsu Shuppan, 1973–78), p. 33a7–11.

28. Ibid., pp. 33a17–33b2. Note that this is at least one instance in which Jōkei specifically uses the term *ōjō* to designate birth in a land other than Amida's Gokuraku.
29. *Shin'yō shō*, *ND*, vol. 63, pp. 353a16–353b.
30. Twenty-nine of Jōkei's *kōshiki* texts are extant. The next most prolific authors were Myōe (16), Kakuban (16), and Genshin (10). See the *Kōshiki Database Website* maintained by Niels Guelberg at <http://faculty.web.waseda.ac.jp/guelberg/koshiki/datenb-j.htm>.
31. *Kannon kōshiki*, *Taishō*, vol. 84, p. 887a.
32. See Ian Reader and George Tanabe, *Practically Religious: Worldly Benefits and the Common Religion of Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998), pp. 50–70.
33. See James H. Foard, "What One Kamakura Story Does: Practice, Place, and Text in the Account of Ippen at Kumano," in *Re-Visioning "Kamakura" Buddhism*, ed. Richard K. Payne (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998), pp. 109–11.
34. See Morrell, *Early Kamakura Buddhism*, 76; for original text, see *KKB*, p. 312.
35. Ibid., p. 78; for original text, see *KKB*, 313.
36. *Kan'yū dōhōki*, in *ND*, vol. 64, p. 11b4–11.
37. James Foard, "What One Kamakura Story Does," p. 110.
38. Observing this dimension of contemporary Japanese religion, Reader and Tanabe write: "Temples and shrines recognize the importance of plurality and hence of reinforcing the power of prayers for practical benefits by utilizing more than one deity or shrine, especially in times of great need" (Reader and Tanabe, *Practically Religious*, p. 189).
39. See, for example, Machida, *Renegade Monk*, p. 152.

Toward a Typology of *Nien-fō*: A Study in Methods of Buddha-Invocation in Chinese Pure Land Buddhism

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I. INTRODUCTION

AS STUDENTS IN THE WEST study Pure Land Buddhism in East Asia, they learn a number of standard facts. They learn that there is a Pure Land “school,” that it originated in China with Hui-yüan’s (334–416) “White Lotus Association,” and was popularized by a series of eminent teachers: T’an-luan (476–542), Tao-ch’o (562–645), Shan-tao (613–681), and a few other figures. The prime import of their teaching was that the ordinary person (Ch. *fan-fu*), lacking the skills and leisure of the monastic religious virtuoso, could call upon the name of the buddha Amitābha in faith, and the buddha would come to them at the time of death, lift them out of samsara, and take them to rebirth in the Pure Land called Sukhāvati, an ideal location for study and practice. Once there, they would be assured of eventual enlightenment and buddhahood.¹ This school fed directly into the formation of the major lines of Pure Land Buddhism in Japan, which stress the unworthiness and inability of believers to effect their own liberation through traditional Buddhist practices (denigrated as “self-power,” Jpn. *jiriki*) and the need to call upon Amitābha’s name in trust and sincerity, believing that he will do what is necessary on the believer’s behalf.

In this construction, there are few elements, and Pure Land teaching and practice look like simplicity itself. The main practice of the “school,” called *nien-fō* in Chinese and *nembutsu* in Japanese, consists of the oral invocation of the Buddha’s name, in response to which the buddha will bring one to rebirth. This is a practice that can be taught and practiced effectively without much nuance, variety, or theological-philosophical depth to it.²

Over time, however, a steadily-accumulating body of research has increasingly called the hegemony of this understanding of Pure Land into doubt, particularly in the case of its Chinese manifestations. Some scholars are now questioning the legitimacy of referring to Pure Land as a “school”

at all, citing its lack of institutional coherence and continuity, textual tradition, or clear-cut lineage of teachers and students.³ Others, while not disputing the existence of the “school” as such, point out that a great deal of Pure Land practice and writing took place outside the bounds of the “school” as generally conceived.⁴ Others have brought forward for attention the various conceptions of Pure Land practice beyond simple *nien-fo/nembutsu*.⁵ Our picture of Chinese Pure Land thought and practice is becoming more complex all the time.

In addition to doubts in these areas, another topic within Chinese Pure Land studies in which some fine-tuning seems necessary is the core practice of *nien-fo* itself. Many years ago, Hori Ichirō published an article in English entitled “Nembutsu as Folk Religion,” which pointed out, among other things, that within the generally simpler world of Japanese Pure Land Buddhism, people could and did perform *nembutsu* for all kinds of reasons, not all of which had to do with gaining rebirth.⁶ As I have spent much time over the past several years reading through a wide variety of Chinese Pure Land materials, mostly dating from the Sung dynasty (960–1279) or later, I have also noticed significant variations in the way individual authors, both in and out of the Pure Land “school,” present the practice of *nien-fo*. While all accept this as the fundamental practice of the “easy path,” their exposition of the nature and methods of the practice show that the term, in fact, is quite elastic. One finds various answers to the following questions: (1) In what does the practice of *nien-fo* consist? (2) Is there one or are there many ways to *nien-fo*? (3) If many, are they random (the “84,000 medicines” model), or do they form a graded path (the *mārga* model)? (4) What results should one expect from one’s chosen method(s) of *nien-fo*, either in this life or after death? (5) How does (do) the chosen method(s) of *nien-fo* work to bring about their results?

In one brief article such as this, it is not realistic to expect a full rehearsal of all the answers to all of the above questions regarding Chinese Pure Land Buddhism *in toto*; such a study may well turn into a monograph as I continue to pursue it. I wish to limit myself here to the relatively simple question of how different practices relate to each other. This breaks down into two subsidiary questions: First, how does *nien-fo* relate to other practices within Buddhism? Second, if there is a variety of ways in which to perform *nien-fo* itself, how do these methods relate to each other as well as to non-*nien-fo* practices?

The intention of this study is not to lay out a table of methods, in which any one way of positioning and doing *nien-fo* occupies a single, discrete place along a continuum. As the reader will see, the material does not lend itself to such neat organization. Rather, I wish to pose the following analysis as a heuristic, a way of querying the material in order to see relationships with other practices that cut across the spectrum of Chinese Buddhist praxis in a number of directions at once. One may ask a series of

questions of the materials at hand; the answer to one question may position the practice of *nien-fo* in one way for a particular authority, but in another way when a different question is asked of that same authority. Such an investigation must not be deemed unsuccessful if it fails to yield a rigorous and consistent taxonomy of practice; it simply gives us a way to think more systematically about the variety of *nien-fo* methods that have appeared in the history of Chinese Pure Land Buddhism.

II. WHEN NIEN-FO IS ONE PRACTICE AMONG MANY

Some Pure Land teachers based their understanding of *nien-fo* on the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi-sūtra* rather than the traditional “Three Sūtras” (Ch. *ching-t’u san pu*), and so positioned the practice of *nien-fo* within its scheme of multiple practices. In the case of Hui-yüan, we find a clear instance where the practice of *nien-fo* is construed as a certain type of practice intended to reach a certain kind of result, both of which differ considerably from the way they are usually presented in works on Pure Land Buddhism. If we look into the *Ta-ch’eng ta yi chang* (“Chapters on the Great Meaning of the Mahāyāna,” a compilation of correspondence between Hui-yüan and Kumārajīva found at *Taishō*, vol. 45, no. 1856, pp. 122–143), we find that Hui-yüan, explicitly basing his question on the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi-sūtra*, asks Kumārajīva how it is that a buddha seen in dreams, being an image manufactured by the practitioner’s own mind, could teach one things one does not already know, as the sūtra says. The specifics of the question and answer need not detain us here; we need only observe that Hui-yüan (1) clearly bases his practice on a scripture outside of the usual “three Pure Land sūtras,” (2) that he intends the practice to lead not only to rebirth in Sukhāvati, but also to the *nien-fo samādhi* and a vision of the buddha Amitābha in the present life, and (3) part of the purpose of this visualization-leading-to-vision is so that the buddha can bestow teachings on the practitioner.⁷ In addition, this is only one of a number of concerns Hui-yüan raised with Kumārajīva; like the sūtra itself, his range of learning and practice included many other elements in addition to those centering on the Pure Land of Amitābha. All of these factors present a significant contrast to more traditional methods of *nien-fo*, and tended to be ignored or glossed over by later Chinese Pure Land thinkers, even as they elevated Hui-yüan to the status of first “patriarch” of Pure Land.

Chih-i’s “constantly-walking *samādhi*” was also based on the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi-sūtra*. As described by Daniel Stevenson,⁸ this practice was a complicated and difficult one, to be attempted only by clergy who had already demonstrated great tenacity, devotion, and adherence to the disciplinary and procedural precepts of the monastic order. In this case,

the term *nien* denotes both visualization and oral invocation, as the meditator is directed to construct a highly detailed eidetic image of the buddha while slowly and sonorously reciting the name. At the same time, the meditator is to realize the empty nature of the visualized buddha as a manifestation of his or her own mind (something also affirmed by the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi-sūtra* at *Taishō*, vol. 13, no. 418, p. 905c).⁹ Thus, the purpose of *nien-fo* here is not only to gain a vision of the buddha(s), but also to realize wisdom at the same time. Finally, we should note that the “constantly-walking *samādhi*” is only one of four different modes of practice contained in the *Mo-ho chih-kuan*, others of which contain within themselves further subtypes, constituting a broad palette of possible practices.

Both Hui-yüan and Chih-i, then, clearly saw *nien-fo* in a certain way based on the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi-sūtra*, which differed from the stripped-down *nien-fo* practice of other teachers, in addition to which they saw it as only one mode of practice among many.

III. WHEN *NIEN-FO* IS THE ONLY PRACTICE, BUT TAKES MANY FORMS

Another approach to Pure Land practice was to recommend *nien-fo* as a single practice, but to take this “single practice” as itself multiform. In other words, while recommending *nien-fo*, one also analyzed it into several varieties. When a teacher takes this approach, two other possibilities emerge: (1) one may see the varieties of *nien-fo* as simply different modes of practice suited to different practitioners, an approach that resonates with traditional Buddhist views of methods of cultivations as “medicines” directed toward the treatment of distinct “ailments.” (2) One might also try to arrange the various types of *nien-fo* into a sort of graded path, in which case a single practitioner would begin at the beginning with the simplest practice and then progress through the more advanced levels.

A. *Nien-fo* as Medicine Cabinet

As an example of the “medicine cabinet” approach, I have chosen the eminent Buddhist figure Yin-kuang (1861–1940). Revered since his death as the thirteenth “patriarch” of the Pure Land movement, Yin-kuang dedicated his entire monastic career to defending and advancing Pure Land practice. Hundreds of devotees were deeply affected by personal visits to his cell at the Ling-yen Shan Temple in Suchou, and thousands of others were (and are) moved and inspired by his writings, recently collected and published as the *Complete Works of the Great Master Yin-kuang* (*Yin-kuang ta-shih ch’üan chi*).¹⁰

Surveying Yin-kuang's works, one finds a few systematic expositions of Pure Land thought and practice, but his writing appears to have been driven by practical rather than theoretical concerns. One sees him engaging in apologetics or pastoral work in his writings (the former in his treatises, the latter in letters to his disciples). Thus, if what I have seen of his writing so far holds true for the corpus of his work *in toto*, then it would seem that he never set out Pure Land practice as a graded path, but recommended practices for individuals as the need required.

To give an example, among the memorial essays written after Yin-kuang's death, we find one entitled "The Great Master Taught Me the Method of *nien-fo*" (*ta shih chiao wo nien-fo fang-fa*), in which a disciple named Tz'u-chou describes the method this way: Yin-kuang told him to recite the name of Amitābha ten times mentally, but without actually counting from one to ten. In other words, Tz'u-chou was simply to be aware of his oral recitation and, without counting or using a rosary, know when he had recited ten times. This method, clearly based on the Ch'an technique of counting breaths, served not only the purpose of gaining the devotee rebirth in Sukhāvātī, but also of increasing his concentration in the present life.¹¹

In a letter to another disciple, Yin-kuang defined *nien-fo* as both recitation and visualization, and stressed the need for constancy in practice. One's *nien-fo*, he said, had to take place in a context of faith in Amitābha's primal vows, and one's own vows to be reborn in Sukhāvātī and return the merit of one's practice to all living beings. He described the practice in quasi-esoteric terms as consisting of acts of body, speech, and mind, and gave advice to this disciple on factors of practice that would affect the quality of the *samādhi* he would attain, clearly indicating that he considered *nien-fo* a serious practice that, as with the other discipline mentioned above, would produce benefits even prior to gaining rebirth. At the end of the letter, he denies that mere oral invocation will produce any benefit, in this life or after death, without the proper framework of genuine and unremitting aspiration for rebirth and effort.¹² Done within this framework, however, *nien-fo* could produce marvellous results; Yin-kuang even credited the practice with curing him of conjunctivitis.¹³

One could spend a lot of time gathering up the scattered fragments of Yin-kuang's teachings and recommendations and try to bring some system and order into it. The point here is that Yin-kuang himself did not do so, and it appears that, while he had some basic ideas about *nien-fo* that held in all cases (such as the need for aspiration and constancy of practice), he also did not hesitate to vary the practice for different people (as seen in the variety of recommendations that appear in his letters), and to vary it for different purposes (achieving rebirth, attaining *samādhi*, or curing illness). The fact that Yin-kuang never tried to systematize the practice, or put his various methods into any kind of order, demonstrates that, for him, it was like

medicine to be administered for specific purposes, and not a graded path where one moved from easier to more difficult practices. This contrasts with the systems to be presented below.

B. *Nien-fo* as Graded Path

1. Kui-feng Tsung-mi's Fourfold Typology

As my first example of the "graded path" approach, I have chosen Kui-feng Tsung-mi (780–841), even though I am aware that this choice is loaded with difficulties. As a Hua-yen patriarch and Ch'an master, it may seem more logical to include him in the above section, among the teachers who saw *nien-fo* as one practice among many. This is the very difficulty stated in the introduction with attempting to position any single authoritative figure in a discrete place on a kind of table of practices and teachings.

According to Mochizuki Shinkō's *Chūgoku Jōdokyōri shi*, in the fourth fascicle of his *Hua-yen ching p'u-hsien hsing-yüan p'in shu ch'ao* (Subcommentary on [Ch'eng-kuan's] Commentary on the "Chapter of Samantabhadra's Practice of his Vows," *Zoku zōkyō* 7, p. 773ff)¹⁴ Tsung-mi set out four different types of *nien-fo*, each with its own scriptural basis. These are:

1. Oral invocation (*ch'eng ming nien*), which he based on a passage relating to the "single-practice *samādhi*" (*yi hsing san-mei*) found in the scripture *Wen-shu-shih-li suo shuo mo-ho pan-juo po-lo-mi ching* (The Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra Preached by Mañjuśrī, *Taishō*, vol. 8, no. 232, pp. 726–732), which recommends selecting a particular buddha (not necessarily Amitābha), facing that buddha's direction, and calling upon his name out loud until one achieves a vision of all buddhas of the present world. This, of course, is reminiscent of the practice outlined in the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi-sūtra*, except that it does not involve visualization, only oral recitation of the name. Tsung-mi presented this as a sufficient means to gain the vision of the buddhas.

2. Contemplating the image (*kuan hsiang* 觀像 *nien*), which involves contemplating a physical image or picture of the buddha. He based this on the *Ta pao chi ching* (Great Collection Sūtra, also called *P'u-ming p'u-sa hui*, *Taishō*, vol. 11, no. 310–43, pp. 631–638). This says that, in contemplating an image of the buddha, one realizes the non-duality of the image with the buddha, and in this way one achieves the five powers (*wu t'ung*) and the *samādhi* of universal light (*p'u kuang san-mei*).

3. Contemplating the characteristics (*kuan hsiang* 觀相 *nien*), in which one contemplates the major and minor marks of a buddha's body. One may select one mark upon which to focus, or contemplate them all simultaneously. The first is based on the scripture *Fo shuo kuan fo san-mei hai ching* (Sūtra on the Samādhi-ocean of the Contemplation of the Buddha, *Taishō*, vol. 15, no. 643, pp. 645–697), which speaks of gazing at the tuft of white hair between the buddha's eyes. The second is based on the *Tsuo ch'an san-mei ching* (Sūtra on the Samādhi of Seated Meditation, *Taishō*, vol. 15, no. 614, pp. 269–286), which recommends constant contemplation of the buddha's body as a means of "entering the buddha-way." If one can do this, and not set one's mind on "earth, wind, fire, water, or any dharma," then one will gain a vision of all the buddhas of the ten directions and the three times, and will eliminate countless kalpas of karmic guilt.

4. Contemplating the True Mark (*shih hsiang nien*), which is for advanced practitioners with an enlightened vision of the world. In this, one contemplates the buddha's *dharmakāya*, which in nondual terms is also the contemplation of one's own true self and the true nature of all phenomena. This is also based on *The Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra Preached by Mañjuśrī* (*Taishō*, no. 232), which describes the true nature of the buddha as "unproduced and unextinguished, neither going nor coming, without name and without feature, that alone is called 'buddha'." The scripture also calls this the "single-practice *samādhi*," and Tsung-mi cites other perfection of wisdom literature, such as the *Ta chih-tu lun* in support of this view of the buddha.

Mochizuki Shinkō, in listing these techniques, says that Tsung-mi presented these four methods of *nien-fo* as a graded path going from easiest/shallowest to most difficult/most profound.¹⁵ For our purposes, we can observe several relevant features of his thought. First, his outline rests on different scriptural bases than traditional Pure Land practice. Second, it is clearly aimed at gaining a vision of the buddha in this life and on attainment of wisdom and/or enlightenment (as opposed to gaining rebirth in the Pure Land after death). Third, and perhaps most problematically, he does not appear to use the term *nien-fo* to describe these practices, but only the single word *nien*. This may call into question the identification of Tsung-mi as a Pure Land figure, but whatever his own intentions may have been in setting out this scheme, his typology and path have come to be used by later Pure Land teachers in need of a graded curriculum of practice. For example, I first ran across this typology in an essay entitled "*Ssu chung nien-fo*" (Four types of *nien-fo*) by the contemporary Taiwan-

based Pure Land master Chih-yü, where he sets it out as a set of techniques for his own disciples.¹⁶

2. Yün-ch'í Chu-hung's Deepening Realization

A second example of a master who saw Pure Land and *nien-fo* as an unfolding or ascending path of practice is the Ming dynasty monk-reformer Yün-ch'í Chu-hung (1535–1615). One may find an extended statement of his vision of Pure Land practice in the first fascicle of his *A-mi-t'o ching shu ch'ao* (Subcommentary to the Commentary on the *Smaller Sukhāvati-vyūha-sūtra*, *Zoku zōkyō* 33, pp. 326–491).¹⁷

At the outset, Chu-hung states that he sees the purpose of practicing *nien-fo* (for which he also uses the terms *ch'eng-ming* [recite the name] and *ch'ih-ming* ["hold" the name]) is to achieve the "single, unperturbed mind" (*yi hsin pu luan*) or the buddha-recitation *samādhi*, two terms he clearly holds to be synonyms (p. 334a–b). He then makes a strong statement of what he feels the nature of the buddha and his Pure Land to be, and the way in which *nien-fo* works. Following the teachings of the second chapter of the *Vimalakīrti-sūtra*, he states,

Now thoughts / contemplations / recitations (*nien*) are empty, and production enters into non-production [or, birth enters into non-birth], and to *nien* the buddha (*nien-fo*) is to *nien* the mind. Birth there (i.e., in the Pure Land) does not mean leaving birth here (the present defiled world). Mind, buddha, and sentient beings form one body, the middle stream does not abide on [either of] the two banks. Therefore, we say "the Amitābha of one's own nature; the Pure Land of mind-only" (p. 334b11–12).

Based on this, one might think that Chu-hung is espousing the position of "mind-only Pure Land," (*wei-hsin ching-t'u*) a position that came later into polemical opposition to a more literal reading of Pure Land cosmology called "Western Direction Pure Land" (*hsi-fang ching-t'u*). Taking this with his earlier statement that one is to use *nien-fo* to put an end to scattered thoughts and achieve the "single, unperturbed mind" and a state of *samādhi*, one may well think that he was putting forward a path of practice aimed at an élite audience of religious virtuosi.

However, he has also stated that he includes oral invocation under the rubric *nien-fo*, indicating an easier level of practice. This apparent contradiction resolves itself somewhat when he brings in the vocabulary of principle (*li*) and phenomena (*shih*) at page 334a. In a subsequent section entitled "Broadly demonstrating what *ch'ih-ming* covers," which begins at page 335a10, he says that the "one mind" divides into two types, the "one mind of principle" (*li yi hsin*) and the "one mind of phenomena" (*shih yi*

hsin). Here he clarifies that his use of the vocabulary of mind-only Pure Land is to be understood as pointing to the "one mind of principle," and in fact represents only one end of a duality that must be interfused with the other end in order to achieve the highest wisdom. In fact, he does not approve of those who one-sidedly claim that Amitābha is *only* a manifestation of one's own nature, or that the Pure Land is *only* this world as seen by a purified consciousness. At the level of the "one mind of phenomena," Amitābha and his Pure Land are separate and distinct from the practitioner, existing countless buddha-lands off to the west. Only a truly enlightened being can see both of these truths at once.

The ordinary practitioner of the Pure Land path, alas, is stuck at a lower level of realization, and here Chu-hung makes a crucial recommendation. Since unenlightened beings can only hold one end of the principle/phenomena dyad at a time, it is actually better to lean toward phenomena than principle. He decries those who, based on "crazy wisdom" (*k'uang hui*) assert a bland monism that collapses all distinctions and undermines religious practice and achievement. Better, he says, to be an ignorant peasant ardently reciting the buddha's name in hopes of rebirth in the Pure Land than an educated monk with a little realization who thinks that he has already run the race and attained the vision of non-duality. At least the foolish practitioner will recite the name continuously and keep the precepts. They will achieve rebirth in the Pure Land (*wang-sheng*) and attain a purified body (*ching-shen*).¹⁸

In a later passage, Chu-hung goes on to list ten advantages of the Pure Land path. While the first nine are general and serve a hortatory function, the tenth presents practical instructions for practice which Chu-hung relates directly to the teachings of the *Smaller Sukhāvati-vyūha sūtra*. After praising the superiority of *nien-fo* over all other gates of practice, Chu-hung states that there are many "gates" to *nien-fo* itself.¹⁹ When he lists the four types, one finds that he uses Kui-feng Tsung-mi's typology as given above, but in reverse order, and with the caveat that ordinary practitioners will find Kui-feng's numbers two through four too difficult and dangerous. His final recommendation is that everyone begin with the easiest practice, that of *ch'ih-ming* or "holding the name," as it is the simplest and the quickest. One cannot expect to "begin to contemplate the true mark and grasp the true mark." (p. 346b10). Just as *nien-fo* is the "shortcut among shortcuts," so *ch'ih-ming nien-fo* is the "shortcut among shortcuts" with respect to the varieties of *nien-fo*. This is why both the *Larger* and *Smaller Sukhāvati-vyūha sūtras* take the teaching of *ch'ih fo ming hao* (holding the Buddha's name) as their main import.²⁰

Chün-fang Yü, in reading this same commentary, discovered in the second fascicle other recommendations. For instance, depending upon the situation, "holding the name" could indicate audible recitation of the name, silent contemplation of the name, or contemplation accompanied by

barely-audible whispering of the name.²¹ She also notes that, further on in the commentary, Chu-hung details two specific ways of performing *nien-fo*, or, more accurately, two different states of mind within which one performs the practice, that lead to the attainment of the “one mind of phenomena” and the “one mind of principle.” The first, called “phenomenal holding of the name” (*shih ch’ih-ming*), consists of mental/oral invocation of the name where one remains concentrated on the syllables of the name. This creates the “one mind of phenomena,” which means a mind cleared of defilements, calmed, and focused. It creates concentration, not wisdom, and so corresponds to the “calming” (*chih*) phase of the two-part *chih-kuan* meditation. The second, called “noumenal holding of the name” (*li ch’ih-ming*), moves the focus from the name to the mind that holds it, realizing the non-duality of practitioner and buddha. This leads to the attainment of wisdom in the “one mind of principle” that Chu-hung had earlier identified with the higher attainment.²² However, as we have seen earlier, this was a dangerous practice, entailing the risk of becoming fixated on principle and non-duality to the denigration of phenomenal reality.

While this represents nothing more than a very brief summary of a long and intricate argument in favor of Pure Land practice, we should notice at least this much with regard to Chu-hung’s thought: First, he clearly recognizes the superiority of Pure Land practice over all other types of Buddhist cultivation.²³ Second, while recognizing a variety of methods of *nien-fo* based mainly on Tsung-mi’s typology, he turned Tsung-mi’s list on its head and asserted the superiority of the most basic form of practice, that of “holding the name.” Third, he nevertheless maintained a graded hierarchy of practice, even if he was less optimistic than Tsung-mi about the possibility that beings in this life could progress past the first of the four stages. Fourth, he built upon this multiplicity of methods subsumed under the term *nien-fo* and turned it into a complete system of practice that could potentially accomplish for all practitioners any Buddhist objective, from rebirth in the Pure Land to the completion of the Six Perfections to the realization of the highest wisdom. Finally, he recognized several levels of attainment that accrue from completion of the various stages: from rebirth in the Pure Land as a result of “holding the name” to the attainment of *samādhi* and the realization of the perfect interpenetration of principle and phenomena accompanying the arising of the “single, undisturbed mind.”

IV. WHEN *NIEN-FO* IS A SINGLE PRACTICE: CHI-HSING CH’O-WU (1741–1810)

Not all Pure Land masters took the view of *nien-fo* as a graded path, and among these, we can take as an example another figure from the list of Pure Land “patriarchs,” the former Ch’an master Chi-hsing Ch’o-wu. He

had abandoned the practice of Ch'an somewhere in mid-life, perhaps due to illness or some other circumstance that led him to question the real benefit of Ch'an enlightenment. While he practiced "dual cultivation" for a while, he came in the end to abandon Ch'an and advocate only the practice of *nien-fo*. Ch'o-wu's literary remains are rather sparse, and so it is difficult to know whether we have access to the entire range of his thought, but within his *Recorded Sayings*,²⁴ we can find only a single idea of how one ought to *nien-fo*.

The practice began with several prerequisites. The practitioner needed to have generated *bodhicitta*, the altruistic resolve to attain enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings. He or she also needed to generate faith in the Pure Land path, and a genuine aspiration to achieve rebirth in the Pure Land.²⁵ In addition, one needed four other "minds": a sense of shame at past wrongdoing, joy at having learned of the Pure Land path, sorrow at the weight of one's karmic obstructions, and gratitude to the buddha for having taught this path.²⁶ With these minds firmly set, one moved to the practice of *nien-fo* itself.

Like Chu-hung, Ch'o-wu used the term *ch'ih-ming* to indicate both audible recitation and silent internal contemplation of the name. Ch'o-wu specifically recommended keeping Amitābha's name in one's mind at all times to purify it. Whereas Chu-hung used the image of a lion emerging from its den, whose roar silences all the other beasts to indicate the power of the name held in mind,²⁷ Ch'o-wu compared the name to a *mani* gem which, when dropped into turbid water, clarifies it instantly. It is also important to note that Ch'o-wu only made use of the name, and eschewed visualization of the buddha's form. Indeed, for him the two were equivalent. He argued that the buddha would not even merit the name "buddha" if he were not already fully endowed with all the virtues, merits, and bodily adornments of a buddha, and so the name could serve as a placeholder for the full image, rendering complex and difficult visualization exercises unnecessary.²⁸ Thus, while he seemed indifferent as to whether one's *nien-fo* were audible or silent, he was quite clear that to *nien-fo* meant to "hold the name" and nothing else.

Even though he constricted Tsung-mi's and Chu-hung's typology of *nien-fo* from a four-stage graded path to this single practice, he still held that this one practice could lead to both this-worldly and post-mortem benefits. That the practice led to rebirth in the Pure Land after death seemed obvious to him. But he also echoed Chu-hung's assertions that the very process of performing *nien-fo* led to a purification of the mind and attainment of wisdom. However, Chu-hung had separated "holding the name" into two aspects of phenomenon and principle, one leading to purification and the other leading to wisdom. Ch'o-wu, on the other hand, predicated both results on the one practice, and did not require his students to contemplate their own state of mind and its non-duality with the buddha.

Instead, he asserted that the non-duality was simply a given, and that the very practice of *nien-fo* caused the practitioner's innate buddha-wisdom to manifest spontaneously, without the student necessarily realizing that such a thing was happening.

This was because Ch'o-wu gave Amitābha Buddha a more active role in the process. Chu-hung seemed to think that realization of non-duality and manifestation of buddha-wisdom was the practitioner's responsibility. Ch'o-wu stated that, because in *nien-fo* both the buddha and the practitioner hold each other in their gazes, the buddha's wisdom automatically became part of the practitioner's purified mind, even if the practitioner was unaware of this happening:

Now if at this present moment, my mind is focused on Amitābha, the Western Region, and on seeking rebirth in the Pure Land of utmost bliss, then at this very moment the proper and dependent [recompense] of the western region are within my mind, and my mind is within the proper and dependent [recompense] of the western region. They are like two mirrors exchanging light and mutually illuminating each other. This is the mark of horizontally pervading the ten directions. If it firmly exhausts the three margins of time, then the very moment of contemplating the buddha is the very moment of seeing the buddha and becoming the buddha. The very moment of seeking rebirth is the very moment of attaining rebirth and the very moment of liberating all beings. The three margins of time are all a single, identical time; there is no before and after Awakening to this principle is most difficult; having faith in it is most easy.²⁹

Thus, in Ch'o-wu we have an example of a master who saw *nien-fo* as a single practice, not a graded path or even a heterogeneous variety of practices, but a practice which nevertheless could fulfill all of the possible goals of Buddhist cultivation.³⁰

V. WHEN *NIEN-FO* IS SUBORDINATED TO OTHER PRACTICES

Not all of those who recommended Pure Land practice to their followers qualify to be called Pure Land masters. Others, particularly in the Ch'an school, sometimes taught some form of Pure Land practice, but clearly as a subsidiary practice or within their own school's understanding of how it might work. I am making this a different category than those who teach Pure Land and *nien-fo* as one path among many, because in this instance one sometimes finds Pure Land denigrated as a last resort or redefined so

as to eliminate it as competition, not as one respectable practice among others. Two examples of this kind of teaching will suffice.

V.A. Han-shan Te-ch'ing (1546–1623), the late Ming-dynasty Buddhist reformer, was very clear in his own thought that Ch'an meditation was much better than Pure Land practices, and he never hesitated to say so, even when speaking to gatherings of Pure Land devotees. Nevertheless, he did not dismiss the practice outright; instead, he assigned it a place within an overall scheme of practice that culminated in Ch'an. His various talks and writings have been anthologized in the collection known as *Han-shan lao-jen meng-yu chi*, or "A Record of Elder Han-shan's Dream Travels," from which the following is derived.³¹

In an essay entitled "Instructing Laity to Form a *nien-fo* Society" (*Shih yu-p'o-sai jie nien-fo she*), Han-shan begins by extolling the rich variety of Buddhist practices, comparing it to the rain that falls on all plants alike without differentiation in itself. Plants, on the other hand, have differing capacities, and so absorb only what they are able: grass absorbs what is suitable for grass, trees absorb what is suitable for trees. He then related the story of ten laymen who came to him once to receive the five lay precepts and some instruction in practice. He saw that they were sincere, but very unenlightened and not capable of much realization, at least in the near future. Thus, out of compassion, he instructed them in the Pure Land path, and directed them to perform oral invocation (*ch'eng-ming*) and repentance three times daily, and to meet once a month together. They were to generate a genuine aspiration for rebirth in Sukhāvati. Han-shan indicates that this is a low-level practice for beginners, but is a valid practice nonetheless. Since it will make their faith more steady and purify their minds, how can it be false? However, he still clearly expected them to outgrow the practice as soon as possible and move on to more productive methods of cultivation.³²

In another talk entitled "Instructions in the Essentials of *nien-fo*" (*Shih nien-fo ch'ieh-yao*),³³ Han-shan gives a more theoretical treatment of the practice of *nien-fo*, in which the reasons for his low estimation of the practice become apparent. The problem for him is not in the practice itself, but in the fact that people use it as a stand-alone practice without contextualizing it in an overall picture of Buddhist thought. Precisely because people believe that the practice of *nien-fo*, however conceived, works automatically without any further input on their part, they make no further progress on the path beyond what this bare practice has to offer. They must always remember, he says, that the "great matter" is to "penetrate birth and death" so as to liberate themselves from it. When practitioners fail even to acknowledge that they have this task, then *nien-fo* in hopes of gaining rebirth in Sukhāvati becomes just another form of clinging, and thus obstructs progress. Here is how he puts the matter:

The practice of *nien-fo* seeking rebirth in the Pure Land was originally aimed at penetrating the great matter of birth-and-death. That is why it was stated as, "*nien-fo* and penetrate birth-and-death." People of today generate the mind to penetrate birth-and-death, but they are only willing to *nien-fo*. [They think that by] merely saying "buddha," they will penetrate birth-and-death. If one does not know the roots of birth-and-death, then in what direction can you *nien*? If the mind that engages in *nien-fo* cannot cut off the roots of birth-and-death, then how can it penetrate birth-and-death?³⁴

In other words, the phrase "*nien-fo* and penetrate birth-and-death" (*nien-fo liao sheng-ssu*) has been misconstrued at a basic, grammatical level. Whereas the original meaning was something like "perform *nien-fo* and then go on to penetrate birth-and-death," contemporary practitioners have interpreted the phrase to mean "perform *nien-fo* by saying the word 'buddha' and you will penetrate birth-and-death." This basic grammatical misreading, as well as the misunderstanding that *nien-fo* entails nothing more than oral recitation of the buddha's name, have led to a serious distortion of the practice and the results one may reasonably expect from it.

V.B. Hsü-yün (1840?–1959), the modern Ch'an master, was once proposed as a candidate for the title of thirteenth patriarch of the Pure Land school, an honor that went instead to Yin-kuang. When one looks through the thoughts and speeches recorded in his "Chronological autobiography" (*nien-p'u*), one can indeed find approving and instructive speeches about the Pure Land gate. However, I wish to argue that, like Han-shan, Hsü-yün was not among those presenting Pure Land as one valid path among many, because, like many Ch'an masters, he took the position of "mind-only Pure Land" (*wei-hsin ching-t'u*), and subsumed it within a Ch'an framework and assumed that it aimed toward Ch'an goals.

For example, in December 1952, he gave a dharma-talk before followers of Yin-kuang on the occasion of the latter's twelfth death-anniversary. In this speech, he charged those who chose the Pure Land path to keep to their original vow, firm in their faith. The worst mistake that one can make in Buddhist practice, he said, is to jump from one method to another indiscriminately. Therefore, he praised Yin-kuang's unremitting devotion to the practice of reciting Amitābha's name and commended it to those assembled.

However, when Hsü-yün brought Pure Land in for comparison with Ch'an, he found no difference in the results to which both methods lead. In this extract, it becomes clear that Hsü-yün saw *nien-fo* and Ch'an *hua-t'ou* practice as equivalent:

Ch'an and Pure Land seem to be two different methods as seen by beginners, but are really one to experienced practitioners. The *hua-tou* [sic] technique in Ch'an meditation, which puts an end to the stream of birth and death, also requires a firm believing mind to be effective. If the *hua-tou* is not firmly held, Ch'an practice will fail. If the believing mind is strong and if the *hua-tou* is firmly held, the practitioner will be mindless of even eating and drinking and his training will take effect; when sense-organs disengage from sense data, his attainment will be similar to that achieved by a reciter of the Buddha's name when his training becomes effective and when the Pure Land manifests in front of him. In this state, noumenon and phenomenon intermingle, Mind and Buddha are not a duality and both are in the state of suchness which is absolute and free from all contraries and relativities. Then what difference is there between Ch'an and Pure Land?³⁵

That final rhetorical question gets its obvious answer (i.e., there is no difference) from the fact that Hsü-yün describes *nien-fo* as just another kind of *hua-t'ou* practice. One sees here no indication whatsoever that reciting the buddha's name could have any effect other than to produce a Ch'an-style enlightenment experience—no rebirth in the Pure Land even for the simplest practitioners, none of Ch'o-wu's ebullient confidence that *nien-fo* puts one's mind into resonance with Amitābha's and thus guarantees rebirth, only a phrase to which one holds on with firm faith until it detaches one from the "dusts of this world" and leads one to realize the nonduality of principle and phenomenon. For Hsü-yün, one penetrates the word "Amitābha" just as one penetrates Chao-chou's "wu."

These two Ch'an figures represent what some (Yin-kuang included) have considered the illegitimate colonizing of Pure Land by those of other schools. This kind of praise for the Pure Land path is, for them, the more pernicious because it appears positive on the surface, but when one looks into the substance behind the words of praise, one finds Pure Land practice redefined so as to become indistinguishable from the methods of the Ch'an school. Once this happens, then much that is special and distinctive about Pure Land disappears, having been absorbed into the framework of its rival. This represents, then, a form of teaching about *nien-fo* in which the practice becomes a gateway out of the Pure Land context and into other understandings of Buddhist practice and attainment. For this reason I have created this special category for teachings of *nien-fo*, and not simply placed them as other examples of *nien-fo* as one practice among many, as in section II above.

VI. WHEN *NIEN-FO* IS NOT FOR REBIRTH

As mentioned at the outset, Hori Ichirō noted some thirty years ago that in Japan, the *nembutsu* became, at the level of folk religion, an incantation credited with the power to provide a variety of this-worldly benefits in addition to assuring rebirth in the Pure Land after death. Ogasawara Senshū once noted a similar tendency in China since recent times to posit this-worldly benefits from *nien-fo*,³⁶ but in fact the trend goes back at least to Sung times. Daniel Getz has called attention to the fact that when the Sung-dynasty T'ien-t'ai reformer Ssu-ming Chih-li (960–1028) organized his Pure Land society in the early eleventh century, one of the purposes he envisioned for the society's practice was to "extend the emperor's longevity and contribute to the prosperity of the people."³⁷ In addition, Getz reports that a layman who, having lost his sight, recited the buddha's name 360,000 times, filling four printed charts, whereupon his eyesight was restored.³⁸ This story reminds one of the modern reformer Yin-kuang's use of *nien-fo* to cure his conjunctivitis, as mentioned above.

All this is merely to call attention to the fact that not everyone who practiced *nien-fo* in China did so for the purpose of gaining rebirth in the Pure Land, or to achieve the *nien-fo san-mei*, or the "single, unperturbed mind," or to attain a vision of the buddha, or for any other specifically Buddhist purpose. It appears to be easy for people to regard a short, mantra-like invocation as having magical power to grant wishes in this life. Not a profound point, granted, but one that needs mention in this catalogue of *nien-fo* practice.

I will finish by reporting on a text whose provenance I am still trying to determine. Called "Forty-eight Ways to *nien-fo*" (*Nien-fo ssu-shih-pa fa*) by one Cheng Wei-an, it has been reprinted many times in many formats, both as an independent treatise and in anthologies of Pure Land texts.³⁹ It contains brief presentations of forty-eight different methods of performing *nien-fo* and describes the situations in which one might wish to use each one.

Even though we have seen that there are many ways to *nien-fo*, this text does not give any method of mental contemplation or visualization. Each technique is described as a way to *ch'ih-ming*, to "hold the name," and all seem to point to some form of oral invocation of Amitābha's name. To give a few examples: When one is sleepy or one's thoughts are scattered, then one ought to recite the Buddha's name in a loud voice (p. 55). If one is tired, one may rest by reciting quietly for a time, restoring the buddha-*ch'i* (*fo-ch'i*) until one is again able to recite loudly (p. 55). If one is in a place unsuitable for any audible practice, then one may try the "vajra recitation," in which one moves only the lips, or the "silent recitation" in which one keeps the mouth closed and moves only the tongue (p. 55). There are

instructions for reciting the name in various other circumstances: when walking or sitting straight (p. 56), at fixed times of day (p. 57), before a buddha-image (pp. 57–58, in which case one faces the image and does not worry if one is not facing west, and also seeks nothing more than a respectful realization of one's nonduality with the buddha). There are other methods marked by certain moods or attitudes, such as extreme respect (p. 58), in grave misfortune (p. 59), or with utter sincerity (p. 59). Others are meant to accompany other Buddhist acts or liturgies, such as making offerings to buddhas or clergy (p. 61), or giving alms (p. 62). Some seem quasi-esoteric, such as the one called "Holding the name in the midst of light" (p. 63), in which one lets the sound of one's recitation revolve around the space within the heart, visualizes the sound turning into light, and then dwelling in the midst of this light, still reciting the name (or perhaps contemplating? The text reverts from the word *ch'ih-ming* to *nien-fo* here).

And so the text proceeds, until at the end one finds ways to hold the name in dreams, in sickness, at the end of life, and finally, while making vows and performing repentances (pp. 69–71). It may appear at first that this text really belongs in another section of this paper, among those who hold to many methods of performing *nien-fo* without organizing them into a graded path; this text does have that kind of *ad hoc*, "medicine chest" character about it. However, I include it here, not because the methods described are not aimed at rebirth in the Pure Land, but because, assuming this goal, it posits different methods of *nien-fo* or *ch'ih-ming* for their "side effects." That is, within the assumption that the practitioner would like to achieve rebirth in the Land of Utmost Bliss, it seems to ask the question: as long as you plan to perform *nien-fo* anyway, why not vary the practice to achieve other, more immediate goals, such as arousing the mind, cheering oneself up when feeling self-pity, or to return your parents' kindness?

VII. CONCLUSIONS

At this early stage of the work, I am not sure what this brief paper has accomplished. It began with my noting the wide variety of methods of Pure Land practice found throughout the long stream of Chinese Pure Land literature, and wondering if there might be some way to organize them and understand them in terms of the technique presented, the goal it seeks to achieve, and the rationale by which the practitioner understands it to bring that goal about.

Having made this first attempt at systematizing the profusion of methods that I found in this (admittedly incomplete) survey of the literature, it seems clear that much refinement is necessary, both in terms of determining categories to be used, and in the placement of various authors

within these categories. Nevertheless, I find value in this attempt as a first approach to the task of looking more systematically at a practice that is too easily seen as simple and homogeneous and finding that, when authorities recommend that their followers engage in the practice of *nien-fo*, they may in fact have very different ideas about what this means. Here I have only asked the single question of how *nien-fo* relates to other practices, or, in cases where *nien-fo* itself takes different forms, how these forms relate to each other. Many other analytic questions could be raised, as indicated in the opening, and I hope to continue pursuing this line of investigation until I have a clearer idea of what, exactly, one does when one practices *nien-fo*.

NOTES

1. This is the gist of the section on Pure Land in China as presented in Kenneth Ch'en, *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1964), pp. 338–350. This work is still used as a textbook in many classes on East Asian Buddhism.
2. An anecdote: When I first presented this paper at the 2000 Annual Meeting of the AAS, a colleague noted that these stereotypes were at least twenty years out of date, and perhaps needed no further belaboring. Later that same day, however, these very views were articulated by another colleague whose research was in Chinese religion, but not Buddhism. Evidently, specialists in Pure Land studies need to work harder to communicate advances in the field to others.
3. See, for example, Daniel A. Getz, Jr., "T'ien-t'ai Pure Land Societies and the Creation of the Pure Land Patriarchate," in *Buddhism in the Sung*, ed. Peter N. Gregory and Daniel A. Getz, Jr. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999), p.477; and Robert H. Sharf, "On Ch'an-Pure Land Syncretism in Medieval China," a paper presented at the Third Chung-hwa International Conference on Buddhism, Taipei, Taiwan, July 1997, pp. 2–3.
4. Daniel. Getz, "Siming Zhili and Tiantai Pure Land in the Sung Dynasty" (Ph.D. diss. Yale University, 1994), which examines the founding of Pure Land societies by T'ien-t'ai figures, and Kenneth K. Tanaka, *The Dawn of Chinese Pure Land Buddhist Doctrine: Chingying Hui-yüan's Commentary on the Visualization Sūtra* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1990), which looked at the Pure Land writings of a figure not normally thought of as a member of the "school" and whose work covered many other facets of Buddhist thought and practice as well.
5. See, for instance, Richard K. Payne, "The Five Contemplative Gates of Vasubandhu's *Rebirth Treatise* as a Ritualized Visualization Practice," David Chappell, "The Formation of the Pure Land Movement in China: Tao-ch'ao and Shan-tao," and Roger J. Corless, "T'an-luan: the First Systematizer of Pure Land Buddhism," all in *The Pure Land Tradition: History and Development*, ed. James Foard, Michael Solomon, and Richard Payne (Berkeley, California: Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series, 1996), as well as Chün-fang Yü, *The Renewal of Buddhism in China: Chu-hung and the Late Ming Synthesis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), particularly chapter three.
6. Hori Ichirō, *Folk Religion in Japan: Continuity and Change*, ed. Joseph M. Kitagawa and Alan L. Miller (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), pp. 83–139.

7. As an aside, one may also note the similarity between this Buddhist practice and Taoist practices of the period, also aimed at visiting deities and receiving teachings.
8. Daniel B. Stevenson, "The Four Kinds of *samādhi* in Early T'ien-t'ai Buddhism," in *Traditions of Meditation in Chinese Buddhism*, ed. Peter N. Gregory (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986), pp. 45–98.
9. For an English translation of this *sūtra*, see Paul Harrison, trans., *The Pratyutpanna Samādhi Sūtra*, BDK English Tripitaka 25–II (Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 1998).
10. Yin-kuang, *Yin-kuang ta-shih ch'üan chi* (The Complete Works of Great Master Yin-kuang), rev. and expanded, ed. Shih Kuang-ting, 7 vols. (Taipei: Fo-chiao Shu-chü, 1991).
11. *Yin-kuang ta-shih ch'üan chi*, vol. 7, pp. 471–72.
12. *Yin-kuang ta-shih ch'üan chi*, vol. 1, pp. 39–43.
13. Shih Chien-cheng, *Yin-kuang ta-shih te sheng-p'ing yü ssu-hsiang* (The Life and Thought of the Great Master Yin-kuang), (Taipei: Tung-ch'u Publishing Co., 1989), p. 20. He recommended *nien-fo* to others to cure illnesses; see his letter to "a certain layman" in *Yin-kuang ta-shih ch'üan chi*, vol. 1, pp. 327–28.
14. The following four types of *nien-fo* are outlined in Mochizuki Shinkō, *Chūgoku jōdokyōri shi* (A History of Chinese Pure Land Thought), (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1942), pp. 309–311. The title is a variant of that given in Peter N. Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 319, and I have to assume they are talking about the same work. The reference in the *Zoku zōkyō* is also different, as I consulted the Hsin Wen Feng edition published in Taipei.
15. Mochizuki, *Chūgoku jōdokyōri shi*, p. 311.
16. Chih-yü, "Ssu chung nien-fo" (Four Kinds of *nien-fo*), in *Ch'ih-p'an lien ch'ao*, vol. 2 (San-hsia: Hsi-lien Ching-yüan, 1986), pp. 71–80.
17. Again, the volume and page numbers refer to the Hsin Wen Feng reprint edition printed in Taipei.
18. *Zoku zōkyō* 33, pp. 35b1–336a10.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 346a13–14 (commentary), 346b4ff (subcommentary).
20. *Ibid.*, p. 347a7–16.
21. Yü, p. 59. Yü cites the edition of Chu-hung's commentary found in the anthology *Lien-ch'ih ta-shih fa-hui* ("The Dharma-words of Great Master Lien-ch'ih [i.e., Chu-hung]"), and so I have not yet been able to correlate it with the *Zoku zōkyō* version.
22. Yü, pp. 59–60.

23. Chu-hung's denigration of efforts at self-cultivation that led to pride in one's accomplishments explains why later, the Zen Master Hakuin Ekaku (1685–1768) vehemently objected to recognizing him as a Zen master as well as a Pure Land thinker. See Hakuin's critique in Philip Yampolsky, ed. and trans, *The Zen Master Hakuin* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), pp. 147–148.
24. Chi-hsing Ch'o-wu, *Ch'o-wu ch'an-shih yü-lu* (The Recorded Sayings of Ch'an Master Ch'o-wu), *Zoku zōkyō* 109, pp. 750–790.
25. *Zoku zōkyō* 109, p. 757b9–16.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 772b5–8.
27. *Zoku zōkyō* 33, p. 334a15–17.
28. *Zoku zōkyō* 109, pp. 762b5, 767b7.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 756a3–9.
30. For more information on Chi-hsing Ch'o-wu, see Charles B. Jones, "Mentally Constructing What Already Exists: The Pure Land Thought of Ch'an Master Jixing Chewu (1741–1810)," *Journal of the International Society of Buddhist Studies* 23-1 (2000), pp. 43–70.
31. Han-shan Te-ch'ing, *Han-shan lao-jen meng-yu chi* (Record of Elder Han-shan's Dream Travels), ed. T'ung-chiung, 4 vols (Chiang-pei: Chiang-pei k'o ching ch'u, 1879; Rpt., Taipei: Hsin Wen Feng, 1992). In subsequent notes, this will be abbreviated as *Meng-yu chi*.
32. *Meng-yu chi* 1, pp. 107–110.
33. *Ibid.*, pp. 336–340.
34. *Ibid.*, pp. 336–337.
35. Hsü-yün, *Empty Cloud: the Autobiography of the Chinese Zen Master Hsü-yün*, trans. Charles Luk; rev. and ed. Richard Hunn (Longmead: Element Books, 1988), pp. 153–54.
36. Ogasawara Senshū, "Chūgoku kindai jōdokyō no ichi kōsatsu" (An inquiry into the modern Chinese Pure Land school), *Ryūkyō shidan* 34 (1951), p. 12.
37. Getz, "T'ien-t'ai Pure Land Societies and the Creation of the Pure Land Patriarchate," pp. 494–495.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 501.
39. My copy of the text is found in Cheng Wei-an, "Nien-fo ssu-shih-pa fa" (Forty-eight Ways to *nien-fo*), in Ching-tsuo yao-chüeh yü nien-fo fa-yao (Essential instructions for meditation and an outline of *nien-fo*), ed. Yüan Liao-fan and Mao Ling-yün (Taipei: Ch'ang-ch'un shu), pp. 54–71. To avoid a profusion of footnotes, page numbers will be given in the text of this article, all referring to this edition.

Pure Land Buddhism in China:

A Doctrinal History

Chapter Two: The Earliest Period,

Chapter Three: Hui-yuan of Mt. Lu, and

Chapter Four: The Translation of Texts; Spurious Scriptures

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CHAPTER II: THE EARLIEST PERIOD

1. The Translation of the *P'an-shou san-mei ching*

Buddhism was introduced into China from the countries of Central Asia and from India, so it is only natural that one of the first requisites of the new faith was for its scriptures to be translated into the Chinese language. The first translation project was initiated in China during the reign of the Latter Han Emperor Huan (reigned 147–167). The monk An Shih-kao is considered to be the first to translate texts into Chinese and is termed “the scripture-translating Tripiṭaka Master” (*i-ching san-tsang*). After him, towards the end of the reign of this Emperor Huan, the monks Chu Fo-shuo and Chih-ch'ien (var. Chih Lokakṣema) arrived in the capital city of Loyang. Here they translated many works of the Prajñāpāramitā corpus, and in so doing effectively began the introduction of Mahāyāna Buddhism into China. Of special interest to us is the fact that at this time Lokakṣema, together with Chu Fo-shuo, translated a text entitled the *P'an-shou san-mei ching*, the *Pratyutpanna samādhi sūtra*, a translation finished in the tenth month of 179. It is recorded that two natives of Loyang, Meng Fu and Chang Lien, served as the copyists in this translation work, which is the first text dealing with the Buddha Amitābha to be translated into Chinese.

This work does not give a detailed description of the adornments of the Pure Land, Sukhāvātī, but rather teaches that by means of a certain

meditation, and concentration of mind, one is able to actually see the Buddha Amitābha of the Western Land. In other words, this text is famous for teaching a method by which one is enabled to see the Buddha while in a state of *samādhi*. Of all works dealing with Amitābha and his Pure Land, this was probably the first to be edited into final form, and other Pure Land scriptures, such as the *O-mi-t'o ching* and the *Ta O-mi-t'o ching*, are detailed elaborations of this basic and original text. At the present time, there exist in the Chinese canon some four editions of this one work. Of these four, two of them are identically entitled the *P'an-shou san-mei ching*: one of these texts being made up of eight chapters (in one Chinese volume, or *chüan*) and the other of some sixteen chapters (in three Chinese volumes). Both of these works bear the statement "translated by Chih Lokakṣema of the Latter Han Dynasty," but it is improbable that one person would have translated two editions of the same work, which differ greatly one from the other, and yet give them exactly the same title. Volume two of the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi* records that, independently of the above, the Western Chin Dynasty monk, Chu Fa-huo (Dharmarakṣita?) translated a two-volume edition of this work, also entitled the *P'an-shou san-mei ching*. Perhaps, therefore, one of the two texts ascribed to Lokakṣema was actually translated by this Chu Fa-huo.

Also, a certain *Pa-p'o P'u-sa ching* is a variant translation of the *P'an-shou san-mei ching*. This work is in one Chinese volume, and does not have any chapter divisions in it; the name of its translator has not been preserved for us. In volume three of the *Ch'u-san-tsang chi-chi*, in the *Catalogue of Old and Variant Scriptures* compiled by the Master An (An Shih-kao?), the name of this scripture is given as the *Pa-p'o-ta P'u-sa ching*. Thus we are able to tell that this work is from the oldest period of scriptural translations, the period dating from before the Fu-ch'in (the Yao Ch'in) Dynasty. Volume one of the *Ta Fang-teng Ta-chi ching*, in the Bhadrāpāla section (the *Hsien-huo fen*), also includes this text, and here it is entitled the *Hsien-huo ching* (the *Bhadrāpāla sūtra*). It is divided into seventeen chapters (in five Chinese volumes), and was translated by the monk Jñānagupta. This work is the longest and the most detailed in its narration of the four editions of this one text.

In addition to the above, in volume four of the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi*, in a section entitled "The Newly Compiled Continuation of the Scriptural Catalogue of Miscellaneous Scriptures of Unknown Translators," two other works are mentioned. The first is a one-volume *P'an-shou san-mei Nien-fo chang ching* (the *Pratyutpanna Samādhi Scripture*, the Section on Calling the Buddha to Mind), and the second a one-volume *I-ch'u P'an-shou san mei ching* (the *Pratyutpanna samādhi sūtra*, a Variant Translation).

This *Nien-fo chang ching* is perhaps a translation of only one of the chapters of the longer work, whereas the *I-ch'u ching* is perhaps a variant of the *Pa-p'o P'u-sa ching*.

2. The Translation of the *Ta O-mi-t'o ching* and the *Ping-teng ch'üeh ching*

In the San-kuo period of Chinese history, that is, from 222 to 253, the monk Wu Chih-ch'ien translated a large number of Buddhist scriptures, one of which was the *Ta O-mi-t'o ching*, in two Chinese volumes, translated at some unknown date during this period. This work is presently included in the canon under this name, but the Koryō edition of this work has the title *O-mi-t'o san-ya-san-fo-sa-lo-fa-dan-kuo-tu-pien-tao ching*. The Sung Dynasty and the Yuan Dynasty editions give the title as merely the *O-mi-t'o ching*. [A different work was translated by the monk Kumārajīva entitled the *O-mi-t'o ching* and, in order to distinguish these two works, the earlier and longer work has traditionally been entitled the *Ta O-mi-t'o ching*]. This is the oldest translation of the *Wu-liang-shou ching*, a very important Pure Land scripture which describes in great detail the various vows generated by the Buddha Amitābha while he was still a Bodhisattva (lit: "still in the causal state"), and also describes the various adornments of the Pure Land, Sukhāvati.

Now, it appears that, based on the records of the *Li-tai san-pao chi* and the *K'ai-yuan Shih-chiao lu*, the *Wu-liang-shou ching* had been translated several times from the time of the Latter Han Dynasty onwards. According to these works, the first such translation was the two-volume edition, the *Wu-liang-shou ching*, translated in the Latter Han Dynasty by the monk An Shih-kao. The second translation was the originally two-volume (not four-volume) edition entitled the *Wu-liang ch'ing-ching ping-teng ch'üeh ching* translated by the monk Chih-ch'ien. The third translation was the above-mentioned *Ta O-mi-t'o ching*, by the monk Wu Chih-ch'ien, and the fourth translation was a two volume *Wu-liang-shou ching* by the Wei Dynasty monk K'ang Seng-hui. The Wei Dynasty monk Po-yen translated the fifth, a two-volume work entitled the *Wu-liang ch'ing-ching ping-teng ch'üeh ching*. The sixth translation was a two-volume work, entitled the *Wu-liang-shou ching*, translated by the Western Chin Dynasty monk, Chu Fa-huo.

Now, of the six translations of this one work, the only ones mentioned in the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi* are the translation of Wu Chih-ch'ien (the third listed above) and the translation of Chu Fa-huo (the sixth listed above). The only editions of these translations which presently exist are the *Ta O-mi-t'o ching* and the *Wu-liang ch'ing-ching ping-teng ch'üeh ching* (the second and third listed above). This perhaps reflects the fact that in actuality there were only two translations of the *Wu-liang-shou ching* carried out up to the time of the Western Chin Dynasty.

Of these two extant works, all the various scripture catalogues are unanimous in ascribing the translation of the *Ta O-mi-t'o ching* to the monk Chih-ch'ien. There seems to be no known variation to this attribution.

However, several different names are given as the translators of Chu Fa-huo's edition of the *Wu-liang-shou ching*; that is, the remaining four editions of the six listed above are now recognized as these variants.

Volume one of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan* states that sometime in the Kan-lu period of the Wei Dynasty (256–259), the monk Po-yen translated the *Wu-liang ch'ing-ching ping teng ch'üeh ching*. However, the fifth volume of the *Li-tai san-pao chi*, in turn quoting the *Chin-shih tsa-lu*, [the *Miscellaneous Catalogue from the Chin period*, compiled by the Liu-Sung Dynasty monk Tao-tsu] and the *Chung-ching Mu-lu* [the *Catalogue of Scriptures*, compiled by the Liang Dynasty monk Pao-ch'ang], states that sometime during the Chia-ping period of this same Wei Dynasty (249–254) this work was translated under the title of *Wu-liang-shou ching* by the monk K'ang Seng-hui. But the fourth volume of this same work (the *Li-tai san-pao chi*), in its narration of the life of the monk An Shih-kao, states that, according to “a different catalogue” (a *pieh lu*), this scripture was translated by An Shih-kao. Furthermore, in this work's account of the life and activities of the monk Chih-ch'ien, Tao-tsu's *Catalogue of Wu* (the *Wu-lu*) is quoted to the effect that Chih-ch'ien translated this work as the *Wu-liang ch'ing-ching ping-teng ch'üeh ching*. In actual point of fact, however, these are nothing more than variant theories concerning the translation history of this important Pure Land scripture. In the second volume of this same *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi*, the Chu Fa-huo text, the *Wu-liang shou ching*, has the variant name of *Wu-liang ch'ing-ching ping-teng ch'üeh ching*. Thus it appears to be clearly the case that the various different scripture catalogues called this work either the *Wu-liang-shou ching* or the *Wu-liang ch'ing-ching ping-teng ch'üeh ching*. Although these names differ considerably, they refer to only one text of this scripture.

The *Li-tai san-pao chi* relies heavily on a number of other, earlier scripture catalogues, such as the *Chin-shih tsa-lu*, and even the “different catalogue” (the *pieh-lu*) [both mentioned above], but can we consider these [presently lost] catalogues to be totally reliable? These various catalogues (more properly, the compilers of these catalogues) did not notice that one and the same scripture is attributed to a number of different translators, living for the most part in different dynasties. These catalogues appear to incorporate (and so to canonize) various theories with respect to the translators' identities without the least bit of critical judgment being brought to bear. If we arrange these theories in a chronological order, the attributions appear all the more ludicrous.

For the present then, we shall adopt the theories given in the *Li-tai san-pao chi* and the *K'ai-Yuan Shih-chiao lu*, that is, that the present text of the *Wu-liang ch'ing-ching ping-teng ch'üeh ching* is a product of the Latter Han Dynasty translator, Chih-ch'ien. The *Wu-lu* of Tao-tsu also gives this attribution. However, since this work has not been preserved for us, and

was already lost by the time of the compilation of the *Li-tai san-pao chi*, it would appear very strange indeed if the compiler of this latter work had trusted to this earlier compiler's opinions. Even if the compiler of the *Li-tai san-pao chi* had seen this reference in some other document existing at that time, it is impossible to believe that there would be any reason to acknowledge this one specific tradition as the most accurate from among the rather many variant theories. Of the presently existing scripture catalogues, the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi* is the oldest, and has proven to be a reliable source. We can thus safely believe that the Western Chin Dynasty monk, Chu-Fa-huo, translated the present text entitled the Wu-liang ch'ing-ching ping-teng ch'üeh ching. Even so, the attribution of this text to Po-yen (attribution in the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan* or to K'ang Seng-hui (attribution in the *Pao-chang Lu*) both place this translation in the Liang Dynasty, so perhaps it was a contemporary problem determining who the translator actually was.

The descriptions of the Pure Land given in this scripture are almost identical to those given in Chih-ch'ien's *Ta O-mi-t'o ching*; the number of the vows—twenty-four—is also identical, although the order of the vows and their contents differ. Thus, the Sanskrit texts upon which these translations were based, although similar, were different.

In addition to the above, the San Kuo—the Three Kingdoms—period and the Chin Dynasty saw the translation of a number of scriptures which recorded many tales giving biographical data concerning the person of the Buddha Amitābha. Such texts were Wu Chih-ch'ien's translations of the *Hui-yin san mei ching* (the Scripture of the *Prajñāmudrā Samādhi*) and the *Wu-liang men wei mi chih ching*; as well as, the *Teh-kuang t'ai-tzu ching* (the Scripture of Prince Guṇaprabha), the *Ch'ueh-ting tsung-ch'ih ching* (the Scripture of the Definitive Dhāraṇī), the *Hsien-ch'üeh ching* (the Bhadrakalpa sūtra), the *Ch'eng Fa-hua ching* (an edition of the *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka sūtra*), the *Ch'i chu-fang teng hsüeh ching*, the *Sheng ching*, and the (now lost) *Kuang-shih-yin Ta chih-chih shou-ch'üeh ching* (the Scripture on the Future Buddhahood of Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta), all translated by Chu Fa-huo. In volume four of the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi*, in the section "Catalogue of Miscellaneous Scriptures of Unknown Translators," two short works are mentioned, the *O-mi-t'o Fo chieh* (A Gāthā [in praise of] the Buddha Amitābha, and a *Hou-ch'u O-mi-t'o Fo chieh* (The Latter Work, a Gāthā [in Praise of] the Buddha Amitābha).

The first of these works, the *O-mi-t'o fo chieh*, is no longer preserved, but the *Hou-ch'u O-mi-t'o fo chieh* does exist, and is in the Buddhist Canon. It is a short work, with only fourteen lines of five-word verses. The phrase "his twenty-four vows" (*shih erh-shih-ssu chang*) occurs in this work, and while it is not clear whether this is a translation from a Sanskrit or Indic original, or a native Chinese composition, there is no doubt that it does date from before the Liu-Sung Dynasty.

3. The Earliest Period of the Pure Land Faith.

As mentioned above, the monks Wu Chih-ch'ien and Chu Fa-hou translated scriptures concerned with the Pure Land of the Buddha Amitābha, and soon thereafter these came to be read and recited, and there gradually grew up a number of devotees who sought rebirth in this Western Pure Land. Volume forty-two of the *Fa-yuan chu-lin*, which quotes the *Ming-hsiang chi*, records that the Western Chin monk Ch'üeh Kung-ts'e and his disciple, the layman Wei Shih-tu, were in fact reborn in the Pure Land. According to this passage, Ch'üeh Kung-ts'e was a native of the land of Chao; he was always of a dignified and calm nature, and was diligent in attending religious ceremonies. During the reign of the Emperor Huan of the Chin Dynasty (265–274), Kung-ts'e died in Loyang. His friends and admirers, both monks and laymen, held a memorial service in the Po-ma ssu monastery in that city. When the scriptures were being read that evening, he suddenly appeared before them and said, "I have now been born in the world of Ease and Happiness (Sukhāvati) in the West, but I have come with a multitude of the Bodhisattvas to listen to the scriptures." This Ch'üeh Kung-ts'e is thus perhaps the first instance of a Pure Land devotee to appear in the extant Chinese literature. The second volume of T'ang Dynasty monk Fei-hsi's *Nien-fo san-mei Pao-wang lun* records that the Eastern Chin monk Chih Tao-lin and the layman Yü Hsiao-ching both composed a work praising the faith and the character of Kung-ts'e.

According to the *Ming-hsiang chi*, Kung-ts'e's disciple, the layman Wei Shih-tu, was born in Chi chün (present-day Chi hsien, Honan). According to this account he was a layman who gave himself over to painful ascetic practices, was skilled in literary composition, and on one occasion composed a confession ritual to be recited for the Upavāsatha Ceremony. He is reported to have died in 322. The miraculous character of his personality is recorded in great detail in Hao-hsiang's *Sheng-hsien ch'uan* (Biographies of Saints and Worthies), and it is also said that he was reborn in the Pure Land. Volume two of the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi* also records that Wei Shih-tu compiled an abridged edition of a Prajñāpāramitā text, a two-volume *Mo-k'o P'an-jo po-lo-mi Tao-hsing ching*, so, if this account is accurate, he appears to have also been an ardent student of the Prajñāpāramitā.

During the end of the Western Chin Dynasty, there lived the monk Chu Seng-hsien. He was a native of North China, and was earnest in both his study of the scriptures and in his cultivation of meditation. Sometime near the end of the T'ai-hsing period of the Eastern Chin Dynasty (321), he journeyed to South China. Here he contracted a serious illness and turned his thoughts to the Pure Land. Upon his death, the Buddha came himself and welcomed him into the Pure Land. At a slightly later date lived the

monk Chu Fa-kuang. A native of Hsia-p'i, he initially studied with the master Chu T'an-yin. After a while he left his master and came to reside in a cave on Mt. Hsien-ch'ing, where he would elucidate the ekayāna teaching of the *Lotus Sūtra* and teach the methods for attaining rebirth in the Pure Land based on the teachings of the *Wu-liang-shou ching*. He would constantly recite these two scriptures: if there was an audience he would lecture on these texts, and if he were alone he would merely chant them. In the Hsing-ning era (363–365), Chu Fa-kuang journeyed to Yu-ch'üeh (present day Yuan-wei shan, located in Shao-hsing *hsien*, Chekiang), where he made the acquaintance of Hsi Chao and Hsien Ching-chu. On one occasion he is also recorded to have aided in the curing of villagers during an epidemic. At this time, the monk Chu Tao-lin constructed an image of the Buddha Amitābha, and Chu Fa-kuang collected donations from various devotees and had a large temple constructed to house this image. These events are recorded in the fifth and the eleventh volumes of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*. In this account, however, when it speaks of Fa-kuang lecturing on the *Wu-liang-shou ching*, this I believe refers to the Chu Fa-huo translation of the *Wu-jiang ch'ing-ching ping-teng ch'üeh ching*. In any case, it is the first record of a lecture being given on a Pure Land scripture in China.

In the early years of the Eastern Chin Dynasty, there lived the monk Chih Tun (tzu Tao-lin). A native of Ch'en-liu (the present-day K'ai-feng), he early studied the *Tao-hsing ching* (a Prajñāpāramitā text, see above) and the *Hui-yin san-mei ching*. He was a close friend of the laymen Wang Hsia, Hsi Chao and Sun Ch'o. Chih Tun composed some works, among which are the *Chi-hsin Yü-hsüan lun*, and the *Tao-hsing Chih-kuai*, and died at age fifty-two in 366.

On one occasion he commissioned an artist to cast an image of the Buddha Amitābha, and himself composed a work in praise of this Buddha. This is preserved in volume fifteen of the *Kuang Hung-ming chi*, entitled the *O-mi-t'o Fo-hsiang ts'an ping hsü* (Introduction and Praises of the Image of the Buddha Amitābha). This work contains the words, "In the five last reigns of this the Chin land, the true precepts of the Buddha have been esteemed. The *O-mi-t'o ching* has been recited, and [many] have vowed to be born in that Pure Land. Those who have not been lax in their sincerity have seen the miraculous welcoming at their deaths, and in transformation (*hua*) they have gone there and seen the Buddha. Their spirits (*shen*) have been enlightened and they have attained bodhi." This composition reflects the fact that Chih Tun himself recited Chih-ch'ien's translation of the *O-mi-t'o ching*, and that he too sought rebirth in the Pure Land as taught in that scripture. It is unclear which of the two above Buddha images, that of Chu Tao-lin or that of Chih Tun, was made first, but in any early years of the Eastern Chin Dynasty onwards, more and more images of the Buddha Amitābha came to be made and enshrined in various places.

In the sixteenth volume of the *Fa-yuan chu-lin*, in the section on the Bodhisattva Maitreya, it is recorded that during the Chin Dynasty there was a man by the name of Tsai K'uei (*tzu An-tao*) of the land of Ch'iao. He fled to the state of Wu and there studied the Buddhadharma. He made statues of the Bodhisattvas attendant on Amitābha, but those who looked at them criticized these works. So he continued work on them, improving their appearance. After three years they were finally finished and enshrined in the Ling-pao ssu Monastery in Shan-yin (located in present-day Shao-hsing *hsien*, Chekiang). Soon thereafter, the layman Hsi Chao of Kao-ping came and did homage to them; when he did so rays of light were emitted by the backs of the images, and it is recorded that "all those who witnessed this, be they cleric or laymen, gave rise to the Bodhi Mind." The ninety-fourth volume of the *Chin Shu* (the Standard History of the Chin Dynasty) records that during the reign of the Emperor Hsiao-wu of the Eastern Chin Dynasty this Tsai K'uei passed his civil service examination. This entitled him to be an Imperial Tutor to the Crown Prince. However, he declined this post, and on this occasion he fled his native state of Ch'iao for Wu. So, based on this information, he must have cast these images sometime during the T'ai-yuan period, 378 to 395.

The twenty-ninth volume of the *Hsü Kao-seng ch'uan* and the thirteenth volume of the *Fa-yuan chu-lin* state that the monk Tao-an in the fourth month of the third year of Ning-k'ang (of the Eastern Chin Dynasty, 375) had cast a metal image of Amitābha, approximately six feet seven inches in height, for the T'an-hsi ssu Monastery in Hsiang-yang (located in Hupei province). In the winter of the following year, its decorations and adornments were completed, and the monastery's name was changed to that of the Chin-hsiang ssu (the Monastery of the Golden Image). Furthermore, the fifteenth volume of the *Kuang Hung-ming chi* preserves for us a poem of praises of this image composed by the monk Tao-an. This work is entitled "Introduction and Praises for the One-Chang Six-Sun Golden Image of Hsiang-yang, of the Chin Dynasty," but it does not say anything about this image being a statue of the Buddha Amitābha, nor does it anywhere refer to his Pure Land. The poem, however, has the phrase: "eminent indeed are the actions of Śākya[muni] in the world." Furthermore, the fifth volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan* only speaks of a copper image, and does not mention any name for it. Therefore, this image is not of Amitābha, but must be acknowledged as a statue of the Buddha Śākyamuni.

Soon after this event, the eminent monk Hui-yuan organized the White Lotus Society (*Pai-lien-she*) on Mt. Lu in the year 402, during the rule of the Eastern Chin Dynasty. In the organization of this society, its members made collective vows in front of an image of the Buddha Amitābha in a monastery, the P'an-jo t'ai ching-she (the Prajñā Pavilion Vihāra), as recorded in the text of these vows, composed by the layman Liu I-min. Thus, there was an image of the Buddha Amitābha enshrined on Mt. Lu

(located in present-day Chiu-chiang *hsien*, Kiangsi), at roughly the same period as the construction of the above-mentioned images.

A number of scriptural passages refer to the construction of Buddha images. The chapter "Four Things," in the *P'an-jo san-mei ching*, states that, if one wishes to quickly attain to this *pratyutpanna-samādhi*, he should construct an image of the human form of the Buddha. Also, in explaining the reasons for constructing an image of the Buddha, the chapter "On the Bodhisattva Dharmakṣema" in the tenth volume of the *Tao-hsing p'an-jo ching* states that even though the spirit (*shen*) of the deity is not within the image, if one should call the Buddha to mind, and make *pūjā* offerings to his image, then he will attain blessings. The *P'u-sa pen-yeh ching*, translated by Wu Chih-ch'ien, has the passage, "If one sees a picture of the Buddha, or his image, he should vow that all sentient beings may see such in all of the ten directions, and that their eyes may be without obstruction or covering." With these references as the authority for such activities, the Three Kingdoms period and afterwards saw an increased interest in the construction of Buddha images.

Most especially, the *P'an-jo san-mei ching* states "if one wishes to quickly attain to this *pratyutpanna-samādhi*, one should construct an image of the human form of the Buddha." This says clearly that if one visualizes, with one-pointedness of mind, an image of the human form of the Buddha, he will quickly attain to *samādhi*, and be able to see the True [form of the] Buddha. Such teachings are also taken up in the ninth volume of the *Kuan Fo san-mei hai ching*, in the chapter "Visualizing the Buddha," and the Visualization on an Image [of the Buddha] given in the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*. Such texts teach that one should set up an image of the Buddha and use it as a source of visualization. Also at this time, the passage in the *Tao-hsing p'an-jo ching* to the effect that construction of such images would be a source of blessings served as a further source of incentive for such pious works. Nevertheless, the primary and original purpose for the construction of an image of the Buddha was to serve as an object of meditation or visualization, for the more rapid success in the attainment of *samādhi*, and more specifically for the attainment of the *pratyutpanna-samādhi*, the *samādhi* in which the devotee sees at the present time (*pratyutpanna*) the real and true form of the Buddha. Thus, the construction of images of the Buddha Amitābha, in the early decades of the growing faith in him, was a response to this religious need. Later generations were to see the construction of these same images as actual representations of the deity in whom one was to take refuge, and who was to be worshiped and prayed to. Such images came to be worshiped and venerated, and the image then came to be regarded as an image of the True Buddha, of the Dharmakāya of the Buddha Amitābha, a function of the image somewhat at variance with the original, and scriptural, teaching with respect to such images.

CHAPTER III: HUI-YUAN OF MT. LU

1. The Life of Hui-yuan

The monk Hui-yuan (334–416) organized the White Lotus Society on Mt. Lu (located in Chiu-chiang *hsien*), in Kiangsi province, and together with his disciples, both lay and clerics, he is reputed to have strenuously cultivated the *nien-fo san-mei*, the *samādhi* of calling the Buddha to remembrance. These were events of outstanding fame in the history of Chinese Buddhism for, beginning with them, Pure Land teachings underwent a sudden growth in popularity, and the influence of this organization, and of the personality of Hui-yuan, had a lasting impression on subsequent generations of Pure Land followers. Even today, Hui-yuan is generally venerated as the First Patriarch of the Pure Land Tradition, termed the “Lien tsung,” or the “Lotus (i.e., the White Lotus) Tradition.”

Hui-yuan was born during the reign of the Emperor Ch’eng of the Eastern Chin Dynasty, in Lo fan in the province of Ying-men (located in present-day Kuo *hsien*, Tai-chou, in Shansi). At the age of twelve he began his studies in the city of Hsü-lo (present-day Hsü-chou, Honan). He studied all of the six Confucian Classics, and is recorded to have been especially proficient in the teachings of Chuang-Lao (the works of Chuang-tzu and Lao-tzu). At age twenty he went to the monastery of Tao-an, in the T’ai-hsing-heng Mountains (located in present-day Hun-yuan chou, Ta-t’ung fu, Shansi), and there attended Tao-an’s lectures on the *Prajñāpāramitā*. Here, too, he attained a state of awakening. Then, together with his younger brother, he shaved his head and became Tao-an’s disciple, taking now for the first time the name of Hui-yuan (his brother became Hui-ch’i). Day and night, Hui-yuan was earnest in the continuation of his studies. Soon Hui-yuan, with some four hundred other disciples, followed Tao-an to the city of Hsiang-yang, which, in 379, fell to the army of Fu Ch’ien. Tao-an was about to leave the city of Hsiang-yang to return to the city of Ch’ang-an, but Hui-yuan parted from his master and, together with ten of his disciples, went to Ching-chou (present-day Ching-ling *hsien*, Ching-chou fu, Hupei). In 381, he first settled on Mt. Lu, lodging in the Lung-ch’uan ching-she (the Dragon Spring Vihāra). Soon thereafter, the Military Commander of Chiang-chou, Huan Yin, constructed the Tung-lin ching-she and contributed it to Hui-yuan for his use. Hui-yuan took up residence in the Tung-lin ching-she, had a meditation hall constructed within the compound of this monastery, and had a temple raised with pictures of the Buddha painted on its walls. Soon, a statue of the Emperor Aśoka was

received from the city of Wu-ch'ang, and this image was installed in the temple. During this time Hui-yuan and his disciples gave themselves over to a constant round of services in the monastery. In 391, the Kuchan *śramaṇa* Sanghadeva was welcomed to Lu-shan, and it was here that he translated the *O-pi-t'an hsin lun* (the *Abhidharma Hṛdaya*) and the *San-fa-tu lun*. In the following year Hui-yuan dispatched his disciple, Chih Fa-ling, to Central Asia to search for Sanskrit manuscripts of scriptures.

Hui-yuan's fame spread far and wide, and he gathered together a large number of both monastic and lay followers. Since it was his desire that his followers avoid worldly fame and devote themselves to the spread of the Buddha's teachings, in the seventh month of 402 he assembled some one hundred twenty-three of his followers, including the laymen Liu I-min and Lai Tz'u-tung, in front of an image of the Buddha Amitābha within the P'an-jo t'ai ching-she. There they had a *pūjā* offering and together made vows to be reborn into the Western Pure Land, and began their cultivation of the *nien-fo san-mei*. This is what has come to be known as the founding of the White Lotus Society, the *Pai-lien she*, and, as such, is the first founding on Chinese soil of a religious confraternity or fellowship dedicated to the worship of the Buddha Amitābha. Originally, however, it emphasized cultivation of the visualization-meditation of this Buddha.

On this occasion, the layman Liu I-min composed the text of their vows. Later he composed a series of poems in praise of the Pure Land of Amitābha, and in all, this work has come down to us as the *Nien-fo san-mei shih chi*, (A Collection of Shih poems on the *Samādhi* of Recalling the Buddha). Hui-yuan himself composed the Introduction, the *Hsü*, to this collection.

In the following year, Huan Hsüan proclaimed himself king in the Chiang-tung region and commanded that all should bow down to him in submission of his kingship, including the Buddhist monastic clergy. In opposition to this order, Hui-yuan composed the *Sha-men pu ching wang-che lun*, (An Essay on Why Śramaṇas Do not Tender Homage to Kings).

When Kumārajīva arrived in the northern capital city of Ch'ang-an, Hui-yuan initiated a correspondence with him, sending him articles in token of his friendship and respect for him. In his correspondence, Hui-yuan asked Kumārajīva to answer some eighteen doubts that Hui-yuan had with respect to certain points in Mahāyāna Buddhist doctrine, the *Wen Ta-ch'eng chung shen-i Shih-pa-k'o*. In 405 (the seventh year of Hung-shih, of the Yao-Ch'in Dynasty), Kumārajīva finished his compilation of the *Ta-chih-tu lun*, a work traditionally held to be the master Nāgārjuna's commentary on the Prajñāpāramitā scripture. The Emperor Yao Hsing, ruler of the Yao-Ch'in Dynasty, sent a copy of this work to Hui-yuan, and requested him to compose an *Introduction* for it. Hui-yuan is also reputed to have compiled a twenty-volume abridgement of this work, the *Ta-chih-tu lun Yao-lüeh*.

At roughly this time, too, the monk Buddhahadra arrived in the capital city of Ch'ang-an; he soon left Ch'ang-an and took up residence on Mt. Lu, and there Hui-yuan requested him to translate the *Ta-mo-to-lo ch'an ching* (the Dhyāna Scripture According to Dharmatara). When this work was finished, Hui-yuan requested Buddhahadra to give instruction in its meditational techniques.

Hui-yuan lived on Mt. Lu for over thirty years without once leaving the mountain. He would see honored guests off, but only as far as the Hu Stream that bounded the fastness of the mountain.

Hui-yuan became ill in the eighth month of 416; on the sixth day of this month his condition became critical, and all the inhabitants of his monastery stood watch around his bed. He was requested to take a little wine as medicine, but he refused to do so on the grounds that it was not allowed in the *Vinaya*. He was requested to take a little rice gruel as medicine, and this he also refused to take for the same reason. He was then requested to take a little water mixed with honey; he summoned a *Vinaya* master and asked if such was allowed by the *Vinaya*. The master then began to read through the pages of the *Vinaya Pīṭaka* searching out such legislation, but before he could finish his search, Hui-yuan died, being at that time eighty-two years of age. He was buried on the western slope of Mt. Lu; stones were gathered for a memorial *stūpa*, and the eminent writer Hsieh Ling-yün composed his memorial inscription.

Some four hundred years later, in 848, during the reign of the Emperor Hsuan-tsang of the T'ang Dynasty, Hui-yuan was awarded the posthumous title Pien-ch'üeh ta-shih, "the Great Master, Discerner of Enlightenment." In 939 he was again awarded the title of Ch'eng-ch'üeh, "of Correct Enlightenment." In 978 he was awarded the title of Huan-wu, "of Perfect Awakening." Finally in 1166 the Southern Sung Dynasty Emperor Hsiao-tsung combined a number of the above titles into a fuller title, Ch'eng-ch'üeh Huan-wu ta-shih, "the Great Master of Correct Enlightenment and Perfect Awakening." So we can see that his virtue was the object of veneration and honor for many generations after his death.

Hui-yuan composed a large number of works. The sixth volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan* records that Hui-yuan composed over fifty assorted "essays, introductions, inscriptions, praises, poems, and letters," filling ten volumes. His corpus is known as the *Lu-shan chi*, the *Mt. Lu Collection*, and this collection holds his complete works.

The seventh volume of the *Li-tai san-pao chi* and the third volume of the *Ta-T'ang Nei-tien lu* record fourteen titles in a total of thirty-five volumes, beginning with his major works, the *Ta-chih-tu lun Yao-lueh* (in twenty volumes) and the *Wen Ta-ch'eng chung shen-i Shih-pa-k'o* (in three volumes). Of the works listed, his *Sha-men pu ching wang-che lun*, *Sha-men tsu-fu lun*, *Ming pao-ying lun*, and *San-pao lun* are preserved in the fifth volume of the *Hung-ming chi*. Various of his shorter works, such as

the *Nien-fo san-mei shih-chi hsü* (his *Introduction* to Liu I-min's poems on the Pure Land, see above), and his *Ta-chih-tu lun ch'ao-hsü* are preserved in such compilations as the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi*, the *Hung-ming chi*, and the *Kuang Hung-ming chi*. His *Wen Ta-ch'eng chung shen-i Shih-pa k'o* also has the variant title of *Chiu-ma-lo-shih fa-shih ta-i* (The Major Teachings of the Dharma Master Kumārajīva), and this work has been included in the *Taishō Daizōkyō* under this title.

2. Hui-Yuan's *nien-fo* Thought

The organization of Pure Land activities initiated by Hui-yuan consisted of seeing the Buddha by means of the *nien-fo san-mei*, the *Samādhi* of Calling the Buddha to Remembrance; through this cultivation Hui-yuan and his disciples hoped to attain rebirth in the Pure Land. Since the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching* had not yet been translated into Chinese, it must be recognized that the basis for this practice lay in the teachings of the *P'an-shou san-mei ching*.

According to his own *Nien-fo san-mei shih-chi hsü* (preserved in the thirtieth volume of the *Kuang Hung-ming chi*), *samādhi* consists of concentrating the mind (*ch'uan ssu*) and calming the thoughts (*chi hsiang*), that is, developing one-pointedness of mind so that it is not dispersed in various kinds of thoughts. When one's thoughts are thus stilled, one can "penetrate into things" (*ch'é wu*). If the mind is one-pointed and thoughts are stilled, one's *ch'í* becomes empty and his spirit (*shen*) becomes clear and bright. A wisdom that clearly reflects all things will automatically be generated, and one will be able to penetrate into profound and minute things. However, there are various different kinds of *samādhi*, the most meritorious and the easiest to progress in being the *nien-fo san-mei*. The reason for this is that the Tathāgata has penetrated the mysterious and has exhausted all stillness; his spirit is totally at one with change and so conforms to all beings in accord with what is fitting for them. When one has entered this *samādhi*, all obscure knowledge is forgotten, and one is able to clearly reflect the external spheres of sense perception which normally condition the mind. That is, since this reflective wisdom has become clear, internal clarity of perception reflects external events, and all the myriad forms and images are generated; even those spheres which are not within the range of the eyes and ears are nevertheless heard and seen. If one's mind becomes exclusively concentrated and one-pointed, and all other thoughts are stilled, one will automatically generate this reflective mind, and it is clear that one will be able to see the realm or the sphere of the Buddhas.

In the vows written by Liu I-min for the White Lotus Society, the *Pai-lien she shih-wen* (preserved in volume fifteen of the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi*), it says, "The spirit can be felt, but cannot be discovered by means of

any tracks if one would feel it. If there is anyone who feels that he perceives it, then it is mysterious and beyond knowing. If one would search it out, then it is masterless and as vast and deep as a river or bay" That is, if one takes the Buddha as the object of his visualization, then it is easy to feel this spirit. But if there is no object of visualization or meditation, then it is vague and formless, and can be as unknown as the depth of a bay or river, and one will be unable to accomplish his *samādhi*. We can see to what extent Hui-yuan regarded the *nien-fo san-meī* as being lofty in its merits, and easy to progress in.

Also, a letter sent from Hui-yuan to Liu I-min (preserved in the seventeenth volume of the *Kuang Hung-ming chi*) records that "I-min was extreme in his diligence and energy, kept all of the prohibitory precepts, and spent over half a year in one-pointed sitting in meditation. He perceived the Buddha in *samādhi*, and would encounter the image [of the Buddha] while walking along the road. The Buddha would appear to him in the sky, and his light would brighten both heaven and earth, turning all things to a golden color." That is, Liu-I-min attained this *nien-fo san-meī*, the *samādhi* of calling the Buddha to remembrance, and saw the Buddha everywhere. From the above testimony then, we can clearly see that the White Lotus Society founded by Hui-yuan on Mt. Lu had for its aim the cultivation of the *samādhi* as described in the *P'an-shou san-meī ching*. The goal of this cultivation was to see the Buddha while one was still alive (*hsien-shen chien-fo*).

In his correspondence with Kumārajīva, Hui-yuan once asked him concerning the Buddha that is perceived in *samādhi*, and Kumārajīva's reply is preserved. When one sees the Buddha in the *samādhi* as described in the *P'an-shou san-meī ching*, the scripture likens this to going to another country in a dream, and there talking with people, and the scripture uses this simile of the dream many times. But a dream is of the realm of ordinary, unenlightened beings, and is ultimately not real; if in a dream one gives rise to delusions, or if he gives rise to understanding, this is still nothing more than a construction of the mind. But, according to that scripture, it is taught that if one sees the Buddha through this *nien-fo san-meī*, one can ask the Buddha questions concerning Dharma, and have one's doubts resolved. Now, if seeing the Buddha in this *samādhi* is identical to seeing the Buddha in a dream, it will be only a construction of one's own mind, and he will be only a Buddha seen in a dream. It is impossible that such a Buddha would be able to put an end to our doubts. But if the Buddha truly comes to us from a sphere external to ourselves, then it is not fitting to use the dream simile.

Also, the scripture teaches that the *samādhi* is attained through three things—the keeping of the Precepts without transgressing them, the power of the merits of the devotee, and the miraculous, supernormal power of the Buddha. Now, is this miraculous, supernormal power of the Buddha that of the Buddha as perceived in the *samādhi*, or is it the power of the Buddha

that comes to the devotee from outside of himself? If this refers to the Buddha perceived in the *samādhi*, a mere construction of one's own thoughts, his miraculous powers likewise simply come out of the devotee's own person. But if this really refers to a Buddha external to the *samādhi*, and this holy one exists apart from any dream, it is not fitting that its existence should be likened to a dream as in the simile.

In reply to this, Kumārajīva answers that there are many ways in which one may see a Buddha. One may attain divine eyes and divine ears and so see the Buddha, or one may attain supernormal powers (*rddhi*) and fly to where the Buddhas of the ten directions reside. One is then able to see the Buddha, and ask the Buddha concerning the Dharma, having one's doubts removed. But, if one has not yet cut off his desires, and so has not attained these supernormal powers, it is best to constantly meditate on all the various Buddhas of the present time, such as the Buddha Amitābha. If one is able to concentrate his mind on one object, then he will be able to see the Buddha and have his doubts resolved. Keeping one's mind in one place is the basic reason for searching out the path of the Buddhas. But if one is without faith, then one will not know how to cultivate the teachings of *dhyāna* and *samādhi* and, if one is unable to attain supernormal powers, then he will never be able to see all the Buddhas. It is for this reason, then, that the scripture uses the simile of a dream, for by the power of a dream one is able to travel to distant places and see distant things. In a similar manner, if one enters into the *pratyutpanna-samādhi*, it is by the power of the *samādhi* that one is able to see the Buddhas in other distant places.

Now the Buddha seen in the *samādhi* comes basically from one's own cognitive discriminative thoughts, but the sphere that does the seeing is neither empty nor false. The reason for this is that all the scriptures taught by the Buddha Śākyamuni clearly teach that the Buddha Amitābha does possess all the marks of a physical body. Also, the *P'an-shou san-mei ching* posits many different kinds of teachings, one being that one should call to remembrance the fact that the Buddha Amitābha is now in the west. And not only this, but the body of the Buddha has, indeed, definite and definitive marks. So even though some may say that this image is the product of cognitive and discriminative thoughts, and is both empty and false, it is taught in scripture that the body of the Buddha arises from all of its various conditions and is without self-nature, being ultimately empty and still, like a dream or a phantom. Therefore, if one cultivates as one is taught (in scripture), one should not hold that only the seeing of the body of the Buddhas is empty and false. For if one holds that this is empty and false, then one must also say that all things are empty and false. With respect to the use of the dream simile in the *P'an-shou san-mei ching*, Hui-yuan asks, since dreams are empty and false, is not the Buddha perceived in the *samādhi* likened to a dream also empty and false? In response to Hui-yuan's question as to whether this *samādhi* is not the "sphere which is only

a shadow," as taught in the Wei-shih Tradition, Kumārajīva answers that the use of the dream is only a simile, and that the Buddha perceived in the *samādhi* is not empty and false like the realm of dreams, but that it is through the power of the *samādhi* that one is able to see the Buddha Amitābha who is presently existing in the far distant West. This image of the Buddha as perceived by the devotee is best explained as being of "the sphere which embraces substance," as taught in the Wei-shih Tradition.

Hui-yuan's acceptance of this teaching is seen in a phrase composed by him in his *Introduction* to the *Nien-fo san-mei shih-chi*, where he says, "The Honored One who has plumbed the mysterious and who has delimited stillness is termed the Thus-Gone (*Tathāgata*). He has embodied his spirit and is one with change, and this without any limit whatsoever. Thus, in order to cause one to enter into this *samādhi*, in a most mysterious manner he forgets all cognitive thoughts, and his mind is illumined by the reflection of the external spheres of sense perception." In other words, Hui-yuan now came to understand that the Buddha comes from a sphere external to the devotee, and causes the devotee to see his form.

3. The White Lotus Society: Hui-yuan's Disciples

North China, at this time, saw the capital city of Ch'ang-an conquered and overrun several times, and was in a state of almost uninterrupted war and chaos. The south of China was a land of peace and tranquility, and, most especially, Mt. Lu was a scene of serenity and great natural beauty.

Not only was it truly a location cut off from the affairs of the outside world, but it was a site wherein a great monk dwelled, Hui-yuan, and where the Buddha-dharma was proclaimed. Thus, many Chinese literati of the day, longing for a site for still contemplation and rest from the turmoil of the world, flocked to Mt. Lu in great numbers, until it came to be said that the visitors on the mountain numbered some three thousand! The members of the White Lotus Society numbered one hundred and twenty-three, as is stated in the vows composed by Liu I-min. Through the years, various works have attempted to give us the names of the members of the society. The fifteenth volume of the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi* gives the names of only four of the society's members: Liu I-min of P'eng-ch'eng (present-day Hsueh-chou, Kiangsi), Chou Hsü-chih of Yin-men (present-day Tai hsien, Shansi), Pi Ying-chih of Hsin-ts'ai (present-day Hsin-ts'ai hsien, Honan), and Tsung Ping of Nan-yang. The sixth volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan* gives only three more names in addition to those given above: Lai Ts'u-tung of Yü-chang (present-day Nan-ch'ang hsien, Kiangsi), Chang Lai-min, and Li Shih.

The T'ang Dynasty monk, Fei-hsi, in the second volume of his *Nien-fo san-mei Pao-wang lun*, gives the names of nine members of the White

Lotus Society; Hui-ch'ih (Hui-yuan's younger brother), Hui-yung, Tsung Ping, Chang Yeh, Liu I-min, Lai Tz'u-tsung, Chou Hsü-chih, Hsieh Ling-yun, and Ch'üeh Kung-ts'e.

The *Tung-lin Shih-pa Kao-hsien ch'uan* (the Biographies of the Eighteen Eminent Worthies of the Tung-lin Monastery) gives the names of eighteen persons: Hui-yuan, Hui-yung, Hui-ch'ih, Tao-sheng, T'an-shun, Seng-ying (a mistake for Hui-ying), T'an-heng, Tao-ping, T'an-hsien, Tao-ching, Buddhayasa, Buddhahadra, Liu Ch'eng-chih, Chang Yeh, Chou Hsü-chih, Chang Ch'uan, Tsung Ping, and Lai Tz'u-tsung.

The twenty-sixth volume of the *Fo-tsu t'ung-chi* mentions the one hundred and twenty-eight members of the original White Lotus Society in a section separate and apart from these eighteen worthies. The *Fo-tsu t'ung-chi* then gives the names of some thirty-seven persons who in the authors opinion were original members of the society: T'an-i, T'an-yü, Seng-chi, Hui-kung, Fa-an, and Fa-ching; Fa-ling, Hui-pao, Hui-yao, Seng-ch'e, and Hui-jan (whose biographies are included in the *Tung-lin ch'uan*); T'an-wei and Tao-hung (who are mentioned in the *Lu-shan chi*); T'an-lan and Fa-yeh (who are mentioned in the *Ch'ih-shih ch'uan*); Hui-i, Hui-yen, Hui-kuan, and T'an-kuo (who are mentioned in the biography of Buddhahadra); Yuan-pi (mentioned in the biography of the master T'an-yu, above); Seng-kuang (mentioned in the biography of the master Seng-ch'i, above); Hui-chan, Hui-lan, Ch'ueh-kung Ts'e, Pi Ying-chih (mentioned in the biography of the master Hui-kung, above); Meng Huai-yü (mentioned in the biography of Liu I-min); Wang Chiao-chih, Yin Yin, Mao Hsiu-chih, Ku wei, Wang Mu-yeh, Ho Hsiao-chih, Fan Yueh-chih, Chang Wen-i, and Meng Ch'ang-shih (mentioned in the *Lu-shan chi*); and Meng Ssu-ma and Lu Hsiu-ching. In addition to these names, the *Fo-tsu t'ung-chi* also gives T'ao Yuan-ming, Hsieh Ling-yün, and Fan Ning as the names of "various worthies who did not enter the society." The many names given in the *Fo-tsu t'ung-chi* are perhaps the names of the clerical disciples of Hui-yuan, or just the names of persons who happened to have visited Hui-yuan on Mt. Lu, many of whom had no direct contact with the founding of the White Lotus Society.

Let us take a closer examination of the names given in the *Tung-lin Shih-pa Kao-hsien ch'uan*.

Hui-yung is listed, in the sixth volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, as being the abbot of the Hsi-lin ssu Monastery on Mt. Lu, and as being a close personal friend of Hui-yuan. He is also reported to have desired to be reborn in the western Pure Land by means of his intense cultivation of severe physical austerities, so perhaps he became a member of the White Lotus Society.

Hui-ch'ih was, as we have seen, the younger brother of Hui-yuan. Although he may have desired rebirth in the western Pure Land, he left Mt.

Lu for the state of Shu in 399 (three years before the founding of the society), so he could not have participated in the society's founding.

Tao-sheng and Hui-ying are both recorded, in the fifteenth volume of the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi* and in the seventh volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, respectively, to have lived on Mt. Lu, but it is not recorded that they especially strove for rebirth in the Pure Land.

T'an-shun was, according to the sixth volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan* (in the biography of Tao-tsu), a native of Huang-lung. When young, he studied under Kumārajīva, and afterwards studied under Hui-yuan. He later moved to the Chu-lin ssu Monastery in Chiang-ling (present-day Chiang-ling *hsien*, Hupei), where he became its abbot. According to the *Tung-lin Shih-pa Kao-hsien ch'uan*, he died in 425 at the age of seventy-eight.

T'an-heng is listed in the *Index* to the *Ming-seng ch'uan Mu-lu* (written by the Liang Dynasty monk Pao-ch'ang) as a resident of the Tung-ssu (the Eastern Monastery) on Mt. Lu, even though his biography is not included in the *Meisōdendshō* of Shūshō. According to the *Tung-lin Shih-pa Kao-hsien ch'uan*, T'an-heng was a native of Ho-tung (present-day Yung-ch'i *hsien*, Shansi); he became a monk under Hui-yuan and was widely read in both Buddhist and non-Buddhist literature. Going to Mt. Lu, he is reported to have exclusively practiced Pure Land practices, dying in 418 at the age of seventy-one.

Tao-ping is reported, in the *Tung-lin Shih-pa Kao-hsien ch'uan*, to have been a native of Ying-ch'uan (present-day Yu *hsien*, Honan). At an early age, he became a disciple of Hui-yuan and read both the scriptures *Vinayas*, as well as being conversant in the Chuang-Lao teachings. He is reported to have constantly practiced the *nien-fo san-mei*. At the request of the Governor of Yu-chang, one Wang Ch'ien, Tao-ping was requested in 418 to succeed Hui-yuan as the leader of the monastic community on Mt. Lu, dying in this position at the age of seventy in 435. Thus Tao-ping was the second master of the Tung-lin Monastery on Mt. Lu.

T'an-hsien is described in the *Ming-seng ch'uan Mu-lu* as a (Liu)-Sung Dynasty inhabitant of Mt. Lu and, in the biography of Tao-tsu given in the sixth volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, was described as having a cultivated and refined demeanor. He composed a commentary on the *Wei-mo ching* (the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa*), as well as a work entitled the *Ch'ing-t'ung lun* (An Essay that Penetrates All). In the *Tung-lin Shih-pa Kao-hsien ch'uan*, T'an-hsien was a native of Kuang-ling (present-day Chiang-tu *hsien*, Kiangsu), who compiled the records of the White Lotus Society and wrote the biographies of those who attained rebirth, dying in 440 at the age of seventy-nine.

Tao-ching was, according to both the thirteenth volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan* and the *Tung-lin ch'uan*, a great-grandson of the eminent calligrapher Wang Hsi-chih. At an early age he became a disciple of Hui-

yuan, but only undertook one precept, as well as the *nien-fo* practice, which he cultivated day and night without ceasing. After the death of Hui-yuan, Tao-ching moved to Mt. Jo-hsieh (located in present-day Shao-hsing *hsien*, Chekiang), dying there at the age of fifty-one in 420. According to the twenty-third volume of the *Kuang Hung-ming chi*, the Liu-Sung Dynasty layman Chang Ch'ang composed a eulogy for the Master Tao-ching upon his death, the *Jo-hsieh shan Ching Fa-shih lei*, which is preserved for us in the pages of the *Kuang Hung-ming chi*.

The above five monks—T'an-shun, T'an-heng, Tao-ping, T'an-hsien, and Tao-ching—were direct disciples of Hui-yuan, and so may have become members of the White Lotus Society.

The biography of the monk Buddhayaśa is given in the fourteenth volume of the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi* and in the second volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, but nowhere in these works is it recorded that he ever lived on Mt. Lu. However, according to the *Tung-lin Shih-pa Kao-hsien ch'uan*, he moved to Mt. Lu in 412, and there became a member of the Society. This account is perhaps not factual.

Buddhabhadra, however, did live on Mt. Lu. Acceding to the request of Hui-yuan, he translated a meditation scripture, and later, after leaving Mt. Lu, Buddhabhadra lived in Yang-tu (present-day Chiang-tu *hsien*, Kiangsu), where he translated the *Hsin Wu-liang-shou ching* and the *Kuan Fo san-mei ching*. According to the second volume of the *Nien-fo san-mei Pao-wang lun*, Hui-yuan learned the *nien-fo san-mei* from Buddhabhadra. If this was the case, relations between Hui-yuan and Buddhabhadra must have been very close, but I think it improbable that an Indian Tripiṭaka Master would have joined the White Lotus Society.

Let us now take a close look at some of the individuals who are reputed to have been among the one hundred and twenty-three members of the White Lotus society.

According to the thirteenth volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, the monk T'an-i was a native of Yu-hang (present-day Ch'ien-t'ang *hsien*, Hang-chou *fu*, Chekiang). He initially went to Mt. Lu, where he studied with Hui-yuan, and later left for North-Central China (the Kuan-chung area), where he studied with Kumārajīva. In 417, he went to Mt. Ch'in-wang near K'uai-chi (located in present-day Hang-chou, Chekiang), where he constructed the Fa-hua ching-she (the *Lotus [Sūtra] Vihāra*), dying there in 450 at the age of sixty-nine.

T'an-yu was, according to the *Ming seng-ch'uan Mu-lu*, a resident of the Tung-ssu Monastery on Mt. Lu. According to the sixth volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, he was a native of the Kuan-chung area of North-Central China, and was an official in the employ of the state of Ch'in, rising to the rank of General. He met the master Tao-an and became a monk under his guidance, and later moved to Mt. Lu to study under Hui-yuan. It was T'an-yu's task to write letters for Hui-yuan, and on several occasions he

delivered them to Kumārajīva in Ch'ang-an. He carried out this task for over ten years, moving later to the Chu-lin ssu Monastery (the Bamboo Grove Vihāra, Skt. *Veluvana-vihāra*) in Ching-chou (present-day Chiangling *hsien*, Hupei), where he eventually died.

The monk Seng-chi moved to Mt. Lu sometime during the T'ai-yuan period (376–397), where he studied under Hui-yuan. Later, he became seriously ill and began to concentrate his thoughts on the Buddha Amitābha. Hui-yuan sent a light to him; he took this and set it on a low table for use as an object of concentration, and thus stilled his thoughts. At night, the congregation of monks would assemble and recite the *Wu-liang-shou ching* repeatedly, and as a result it is reported that Seng-chi perceived the Buddha of Unlimited Life in his dream.

Since these above monks were disciples of Hui-yuan, it is probable that they joined the White Lotus Society.

Hui-kung was, according to the *Tung-lin ch'uan*, a native of the city of Feng-ch'eng in Yu-chang (present-day Feng-ch'eng *hsien*, Kiangsi), and was a fellow student of the monks Seng-kuang, Hui-chan, and Hui-lan. These three monks died one after the other, each giving off miraculous signs. Later, Hui-kung himself became seriously ill and turned all of his attention to the Pure Land. At his death, the Buddha came in person and welcomed him to the Pure Land.

Fa-an was, according to the sixth volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, a disciple of Hui-yuan; he was energetic in the keeping of the Precepts, lectured on many various scriptures, and at the same time also cultivated meditation. Sometime during the I-hsi period (405–419), he is reputed to have removed a plague of tigers that was terrorizing the inhabitants of the Hsin-yang *hsien* (is this present-day Ching-shan *hsien*, Hupei?). In their gratitude the villagers turned a local shrine into a Buddhist monastery, installing Fa-an there as its abbot.

Fa-ching was the monk, according to the fifteenth volume of the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi* (in the biography of Hui-yuan), whom Hui-yuan dispatched to Central Asia to search out the Sanskrit manuscripts of Buddhist scriptures. Fa-ling, according to the *Hua-yen ching chi* (an Account of the Hua-yen Scripture), preserved in the ninth volume of the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi*, brought a Sanskrit edition (*hu pen*) of the *Hua-yen ching* (the Avatamsaka) from Khotan to China, this edition of the text being 36,000 *gāthās* in length. Also, the *Introduction to the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya Piṭaka* records that Fa-ling went to Khotan in 392, where he met Buddhayaśa.

Hui-pao's name occurs in the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan* biography of Hui-yuan. Hui-yao is mentioned in the biography of Tao-tsu in the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan* as having constructed a water clock in the mountain (Mt. Lu?). In the waters of a spring he set up some twelve leaves, and when they had all revolved in the current one knew that some twelve hours had passed.

Seng-ch'è is recorded in the seventh volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan* as having studied with Hui-yuan. He widely studied all of the various scriptures, but was most proficient in the *Prajñāpāramitā* texts. At age twenty-three, he lectured on the *Hsiao-p'in Prajñāpāramitā*, and later moved to Chiang-ling, where he died in 452 at the age of sixty-nine.

Nothing is known about the monks Hui-jan and T'an-wei. The monks Tao-hung and T'an-lan were disciples of Hui-ch'ih, the younger brother of Hui-yuan. The monks Fa-yeh, Hui-i, Hui-yen, and Hui-kuan participated in Buddhahadra's translation activities. Of them, the monks Hui-yen and Hui-kuan followed Buddhahadra in his move to Mt. Lu, but there is no record of any interest by them in the Pure Land activities of the mountain.

T'an-kuo was the disciple of T'an-yu, and the monk Yuan-pi was the disciple of Seng-chi. The monks Seng-kuang, Hui-chan, and Hui-lan were fellow students with Hui-kung, but they appear not to have had any direct relationship with Hui-yuan. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the layman Ch'üeh Kung-ts'è died during the reign of the western Chin Emperor Wu.

The layman Lu Hsiu-ching was a Taoist adept (*tao-shih*) and it is reported, in the sixth volume of the *Pien-ch'eng lun*, and in the twenty-third volume of the *Hsü Kao-seng ch'uan* (in the biography of T'an-hsien), that in the year 555 he debated the relative merits of Buddhism and Taoism with the monk T'an-hsien. Since the activities of these two persons are over a century and a half later than the formation of the White Lotus Society, it is of course impossible that they could have participated in its formation. Thus, the obvious conclusion that we must draw is that the biographical information given in both the *Tung-lin Shih-pa Kao-hsien ch'uan* and in the *Fo-tsu t'ung-chi*, at least with respect to the formation of the White Lotus Society, is unreliable and in general poorly compiled.

In the account of the formation of the White Lotus Society, given in the fifteenth volume of the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi*, only the names of laymen such as Liu I-min are given. However, based on this account, we can see that the society was organized primarily with lay membership, and that there were comparatively few clerical members among the disciples of Hui-yuan. Let us then take a closer look at the lay disciples of Hui-yuan.

Liu I-min (*wei* Ch'eng-chih, *tzu* Chung-ssu) was, according to the *Tung-lin ch'uan*, proficient in the Chuang-Lao teachings. Later in his life, he moved to Mt. Lu where he studied under Hui-yuan. Constructing a house for himself on Mt. Lu, he constantly gave himself over to meditation, often perceiving the light emitted by the Buddha. It was here that he died in 401, at the age of fifty-eight. In light of the fact that he composed the vows of the White Lotus Society, he was perhaps the lay leader of the society. He is also reported to have been well versed in the teachings of the *Prajñāpāramitā* scriptures, and was a close friend of the monk Tao-sheng. According to the *Fa-lun Mu-lu* (preserved in the twelfth volume of the *Ch'u*

san-tsang chi-chi), he composed a text entitled the *Shih-hsin wu i* (The Principle of the Emptiness of the Mind), as well as a letter to the monk Chu Tao-sheng.

Chou Hsü-chih (*tzu* Tao-tsu), according to the ninety-third volume of the *Sung Shu*, was at an early age proficient in the Five Classics, and also in apocryphal texts. He also enjoyed solitude, and there would read the texts of Lao-tze and the *Book of Changes*. He later moved to Mt. Lu and took Hui-yuan as his master. Chou Hsü-chih, Liu I-min, and T'ao Yuan-ming were termed the "three recluses of Hsün-yang" (*Hsün-yang san-yin*; Hsün-yang is the present-day Chiang-ning *fu*, Kiangsu). During the reign of the Liu-Sung Emperor Wu, he was formally invited to move to Chien-k'ang (present-day Chiang-ning *fu*, Kiangsu), and it was here that he died in 423 at the age of forty-six.

Tsung Ping (*tzu* Hsiao-wen) is also mentioned in the *Sung Shu*. According to this work, he was skilled in playing the *chün* and in calligraphy. "Energetic and profound in principles," he eventually moved to Mt. Lu, where he studied under Hui-yuan. He later moved to the San-hu (Three Lakes) section of Chiang-ling and built himself a house there, where he lived in seclusion. He declined an invitation from the Emperor Wu, and eventually died at the age of sixty-eight in 443. The second volume of the *Hung-ming chi* preserves a work written by him entitled the *Ming Fo lun* (An Essay Elucidating the Buddha; it has the variant title *Shen pu-mieh lun*, Essay on the Indestructibility of the Spirit). The third volume of the *Hung-ming chi* also contains a series of questions and answers that Tsung Ping had with Ho Ch'eng-t'ien.

Lei Tz'u-tsung (*tzu* Chung-lin) is also mentioned in the ninety-third volume of the *Sung Shu*. In his youth he moved to Mt. Lu, taking the master Hui-yuan as his teacher. He enjoyed studying and became proficient in the three *li*-s (*I-li*, *Chou-li*, and *Li-chi*) and in the *Shih-ching*, the Classic of Poetry. He took the official examinations in 438 and, moving to Chien-k'ang, he opened a school on Mt. Chi-lung where he taught for many years. He eventually returned to Mt. Lu; later he built himself a hermitage called the Chao-yin kuan on Mt. Chung, dying here at the age of sixty-two in 448.

Chang Yeh (*tzu* Lai-min) is mentioned in the *Tung-lin Shih-pa Kao-hsien ch'uan* as a relative by marriage of T'ao Yuan-ming. He studied both Chinese literature and the Sanskrit language, and was very proficient in literary composition. He left his family and moved to Mt. Lu, where he cultivated the Pure Land practices together with Liu I-min, and it was here that he died at the age of sixty-eight in 418. Chang Ch'uan (*tzu* Chi-shih) was a distant relative of Chang Yeh. He is said to have "deeply entered into enlightenment," and died at age sixty-four in 423.

Hsieh Ling-yün is mentioned in the sixty-seventh volume of the *Sung Shu*, where it relates that he was a native of Yang-hsia, Ch'en *chün* (present-day T'ai-k'ang *hsien*, Honan). He was enfeoffed as Duke of T'ang-yueh,

and was renowned in his day for his literary compositions. He died at the age of forty-eight in 434. The story is told that he once sought to join the White Lotus Society, but that Hui-yuan refused him entry because "his mind was dispersed." Hsieh Ling-yün wrote Hui-yuan's memorial inscription (preserved in volume twenty-six of the *Fo-tsu t'ung-chi*). Also, in the fifteenth volume of the *Kuang Hung-ming chi*, there is preserved a piece, the *Wu-liang-shou sung* (Verses in Praise of the Buddha of Unlimited Life), written to cap the verses of his nephew, the monk Hui-lien. Volume twenty-three of this same work preserves a eulogy written by him for Hui-yuan, the *Lu-shan Hui-yuan fa-shih lei*, but in this work, the year of Hui-yuan's death is given as 417 (I-hsi 13), and his age at death as eighty-three. This does not tally with the information given in the inscription on Hui-yuan's memorial stūpa (*Fo-tsu t'ung-chi*, vol. 26), nor with the biography of Hui-yuan given in the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, so the authenticity of this piece is suspect. Volume thirty of the *Kuang Hung ming chi* also contains a four-stanza poem, the *Nien-fo san-mei shih*, composed by the King of Lang-yeh, Wang Ch'i-chih, but perhaps this has been included in the *Nien-fo san-mei shih-chi*.

CHAPTER IV: THE TRANSLATION OF TEXTS; SPURIOUS SCRIPTURES

1. The *O-mi-t'o ching*: Kumārajīva

Kumārajīva was brought from Ku-tsang (present-day Wu-wei hsien, Kansu) to Ch'ang-an in 401, and here he translated, among other important texts, the *O-mi-t'o ching* and the *Shih-chu pi-p'o-sha lun*. The *O-mi-t'o ching* is in one Chinese volume and has the variant title *Wu-liang-shou ching*. This scripture describes in summary form the adornments of the Pure Land of the Buddha Amitābha. From the time of its translation into Chinese, it was immensely popular and came to be read and recited throughout the country. It was retranslated from the Sanskrit into Chinese in 650 by Hsüan-tsang, and this translation is entitled the *Sheng-tsang Ching-t'u Fo She-shou ching*.

The authorship of the *Shih-chu pi-p'o-sha lun* (Skt. *Daśabhūmika-vibhāṣā*) is ascribed to Nāgārjuna. It is made up of some thirty-five chapters, and in its Chinese translation it fills seventeen volumes. This work gives the teachings of the two types of paths, the difficult and the easy path, in its chapter "On Easy Practice," and here it is taught that calling on the names of the ten Buddhas of the ten directions, and thereby attaining the stage of "non-regression," constitutes the Path of Easy Practice. This same chapter also has a *gāthā* which especially praises the Pure Land of Amitābha.

Kumārajīva also has a one-volume work, the *Ssu-wei lüeh-yao fa*, which has the phrase in it, "the meditation on the Buddha of Unlimited Life," but this work is perhaps his own composition, and so may not reflect an Indian original.

Another work, the *Lo-shih fa-shih ta-i*, in three volumes, records Kumārajīva's answers to the questions posed to him by Hui-yuan, and gives his views on perceiving the Buddha in *pratyutpanna-samādhi*, as we have mentioned in the previous chapter.

Nāgārjuna says, with respect to the Pure Land, that there are those who say that each Buddha has his own land, gained as a result of the fruition of his good karma (a *kuo-pao t'u*). Ordinary sentient beings do not have such lands and can only be born within them, or are only able to see such "recompense lands" (*yīng-t'u*), as are manifested to them by a Buddha. In other words, only a Buddha attains such a land. In opposition to this, Kumārajīva's disciple, Tao-sheng, teaches that the Buddhas do not have Pure Lands, for they are beings who are totally liberated from all bondage to physical matter, and one should not say that they actually dwell in such

lands. These "lands" are actually resultant states experienced through the karmic force of all sentient beings; Buddhas merely enter into these "recompense lands" in order to save their inhabitants.

These views are given in volume one of the *Chu-Wei-mo ching*, and in Tao-sheng's *Shih-ssu k'o Ching-t'u i* (Fourteen Points with Respect to the Pure Land), preserved for us in volume twenty-one of Yen-shou's *Tsung-ching lu*. In this work, Tao-sheng stresses his belief that the state of Buddhahood does not include within itself any trace of physical matter (*rūpa*), and that the True Body (*kāya*) of the Buddha is not a physical body, but is only the place where the nature of the Buddha's wisdom abides. As a consequence, one cannot say that this True Body has any such dwelling.

According to the fifth volume of Chi-tsang's *Ta-ch'eng hsuan lun*, the Liang Dynasty monk Fa-yün also taught these doctrines of Tao-sheng. This monk taught that "when speaking with regard to the teacher, one says 'the land of the Buddha,' but the Buddha actually does not have a 'Pure Land'; such a land is only experienced in response to the karmic actions of sentient beings."

Prince Shōtoku, in the first volume of his *Yuimakyō gisho* states that there are two types of lands: the recompense land of all sentient beings, and the response land (*ōdo*) of the Tathāgatas. Pure or impure lands are experienced due to the good or evil karma of sentient beings, so such lands should both be termed the "recompense lands of sentient beings." The Tathāgata is immersed in the principles of the Absolute, and he has long freed himself from the sphere of names and characteristics, so such lands should not be termed his own lands; rather, he merely enters into the recompense lands experienced by sentient beings in order to carry out his work of converting and saving them. It is for this reason then, that these lands are called "lands of response." Prince Shōtoku's theories also teach that the Buddha does not actually have a Pure Land, a theory perhaps adopted by Prince Shōtoku from the theories of the monk Fa-yün.

Also, according to Chi-tsang's *Hua-yen ching yü-i*, a disciple of Kumārajīva—the monk Seng-ying—had the theory that the various lands could be divided into five kinds: the Pure Land, the Impure Land, an Impure-Pure Land, a Pure-Impure Land, and a Mixed Land; a land that was totally pure was termed a Pure Land; a land that was totally impure was termed an Impure Land; a land that was at first impure, but which later turned into a pure land, was called an Impure-Pure Land; a land that was at first pure, but which later turned into an impure land, was called a Pure-Impure Land; and a land wherein both pure and impure aspects subsisted together was called a Mixed Land. We do not have any details of Seng-ying's theories, but Chi-tsang employs this five-fold division very frequently. According to him, all sentient beings and Buddhas have these five types of lands, so that there are ten different types of lands altogether. Chi-tsang therefore holds that both Buddha and sentient beings have Pure-

Impure Lands, and is perhaps trying to reconcile his own theories with those of both Kumārajīva and Tao-sheng.

Volume nineteen of the Sui Dynasty monk Ching-ying Hui-yuan's (not to be confused with the Chin Dynasty master of Mt. Lu) work, the *Ta-ch'eng i-chang*, criticizes these three theories in the section dealing with the Pure Land. Tao-sheng maintained that beings have a land and that Buddhas do not have one; but that the Buddha manifests himself as a phantom, and in this way dwells in the same land as do sentient beings. With respect to this theory, we could say that since it embraces the Absolute and proceeds from characteristics (i.e., is posited from the Buddha's point of view), it is the theory that "embraces the Absolute and which proceeds from characteristics" (*she-shih ts'ung-hsiang lun*). Alternately, Kumārajīva holds that all Buddhas have lands, but that sentient beings do not actually have any; and that they see only one Buddha Land, and that in accord with their karmic attentions. With respect to this theory, we would say that, since it embraces the characteristics [of the lands] and proceeds from the Absolute, it is the theory that "embraces characteristics and which proceeds from the Absolute" (*she-hsiang ts'ung-shih lun*). The third theory, held by a certain person (i.e., Seng-ying), states that both the Buddhas and sentient beings have lands, and is based on the principle that such lands differ in their resultant states according to individual karma. Since this theory acknowledges real lands to both these beings (to Buddhas and to unenlightened sentient beings), this is the theory which "differentiates characteristics and which allows for different, actual [lands]" (*fen-hsiang i-shih lun*).

Volume nine of Chi-tsang's *Fa-hua ching hsüan-lun* criticizes these masters. This work states that Kumārajīva's theory holds that only the trace body [of the Buddha] has a land, but that he loses sight of the basic land; while Tao-sheng's theory holds that only the Dharmakāya Buddha has a land, and loses sight of the fact that there is a trace land. Whatever the case may be, it is clear that at this time there was a lively controversy between Kumārajīva and his disciples with respect to the real nature of the Buddhas' lands.

It is recorded in the sixth volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan* that Seng-ying was a native of Ch'ang-yueh, Wei *chün*, and that he studied with Kumārajīva and learned meditation from him. He also participated in Kumārajīva's translation activities, and is recorded to have upheld all the rules of conduct in his daily deportment, and to have widely praised (i.e., disseminated) the teachings of the scriptures. He transferred all the merit of his various actions to his vow to be reborn in the Land of Peace and Nourishment (Sukhāvatī), and due to his devotion to the Western Pure Land, whether he was walking, standing still, sitting down, or lying down, he would always face the West. Eventually, he became aware that the end of his life was approaching; he went into his room, bathed, lit incense and

bowed in prostration; he then faced the west, joined his palms together, and in this fashion died. We know from this account that he was a sincere seeker of rebirth in the Western Pure Land.

2. The *Wu-liang-shou ching*, the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*, and Related Texts

In the Liu-Sung Dynasty, various scriptures were translated one after the other, the *Wu-liang-shou ching*, the *P'ei-hua ching*, and the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*, and with their translation the major corpus of the Pure Land scriptures was completed.

According to the account given in volume two of the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi*, the monk Buddhabhadra translated the *Hsin* (New) *Wu-liang-shou ching* in two Chinese volumes in the year 421, during the Liu-Sung Dynasty. The translation was carried out in the Tao-ch'ang ssu Monastery in the city of Yang-tu (present-day Chiang-tu hsien, Kiangsu). But this work also records that, in the same year and the same monastery (with the variant, in the Liu-ho-shan ssu Monastery), it was the monk Pao-yün who translated the *Hsin Wu-liang-shou ching*. However, it is inconceivable that two Tripiṭaka masters would translate exactly the same work at the same time and place. Perhaps these accounts mean to tell us that, initially, two persons worked on the translation, that is, Buddhabhadra and Pao-yün, and that later Pao-yün revised the translation. This we may infer from the fact that the second volume of *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi*, in the section "Catalogues of Newly Compiled and Variantly Translated Scriptures," mentions among the different translations of the *Wu-liang-shou ching* only the scripture translated by Pao-yün, and does not mention the text translated by Buddhabhadra at all. Furthermore, these two texts are listed in all the catalogues subsequent to the *Li-tai fa-Pao chi* as missing texts, even though the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi* does not list the text as missing. We know from this, then, that the text ascribed to the hand of Pao-yün was in circulation at that time. Now the present text of the *Wu-liang-shou ching* which is preserved in the Buddhist Canon has traditionally been considered a translation by the monk K'ang Seng-hui, who worked during the Ts'ao Wei Dynasty. It is my opinion that this scripture was actually translated by Pao-Yün, and that the attribution of it to K'ang Seng-hui is a mistaken attribution.

As we have mentioned above, the *Chin-shih tsa-lu* (A Catalogue of Miscellaneous Works from the Chin Period) says that K'ang Seng-hui translated the *Wu-liang-shou ching*, but that this actually refers to the scripture entitled the *Wu-liang ch'ing-ching ping-teng-ch'üeh ching*. This attribution, then, is nothing more than another theory concerning the translator of the *Ping-teng-ch'üeh ching*. We have also mentioned that the

Wu-liang-shou ching translated by Chu Fa-huo is also variously called the *Wu-liang ch'ing-ching ping-teng ch'üeh ching*, as listed in the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi*. But, regardless of this, the *Li-tai san-pao chi* holds that this text is actually a different work, that is, that the *Ping-teng-ch'üeh ching* was translated by the Latter Han Dynasty monk Chih-ch'ien, while the *Wu-liang-shou ching* was translated by K'ang Seng-hui.

Now the scripture translated by Pao-yün was called the *Hsin* (the New) *Wu-liang-shou ching*, in order to show that this work was greatly different from the older *Ta O-mi-t'o ching* and the *Ping-teng-ch'üeh ching*. The two older texts did not have an introduction section, and Amitābha is only given some twenty-four vows. In opposition to this, Pao-yün's scripture has an introductory section, and Amitābha's vows have exactly doubled to forty-eight. In the latter text, too, Ajātaśatru does not attend this sermon, and the Parinirvāṇa of Amitābha and the attainment of Buddhahood by Avalokiteśvara are not mentioned, as in the earlier texts. There are, in addition, many differences between the earlier two texts and this later text, and I think that this is perhaps the reason the later scripture was called the "new" scripture, the *Hsin Wu-liang-shou ching*.

Furthermore, a number of words and phrases used in the *Introduction* to the scripture are very similar to those used in Pao-yün's translation of the *Fo pen-hsing ching*, a biography of the Buddha. Most especially it is his use of the phrase "Fo hua-yen san-meī" (the Buddha Avatamsaka *samādhi*) which testifies to the fact that the monk Buddhahadra, the translator of the full *Hua-yen ching*, participated in the translation of this scripture, too. Our conclusion, then, is that the present *Wu-liang-shou ching* as it is preserved in the Canon was not translated by K'ang Seng-hui, as is traditionally supposed, but is none other than the *Hsin Wu-liang-shou ching*, which was translated by the monk Fa-yün, working in the Liu-Sung Dynasty.

The scripture entitled the *P'ei-hua ching* (Skt. *Karuṇā puṇḍarīka*) was translated by the monk Dharmarakṣa during the Northern Liang Dynasty. He came to Liang-chou (present-day Wu-wei *hsien*, Kansu) sometime during the reign of the Eastern Chin Emperor An, and in 419 (the eighth year of Hsüan-shih, of the Northern Liang Dynasty) he translated this scripture, which is made up of some fourteen chapters, and, in Chinese translation, fills some ten volumes. The second volume of the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi* lists this work, and gives the following comment: "another catalogue says that this was translated by the upadhyaya Kung." The master Kung is the monk Tao-kung, who translated the *Pao-liang ching* sometime during the reign of the Eastern Chin Emperor An, in Ching chou, and who was, in addition, a contemporary of Dharmarakṣa.

There is also another translation of this same scripture, entitled the *Ta-ch'eng P'ei fen-t'o-li ching* (The Mahāyāna Compassion Puṇḍarīka Scripture), of thirty chapters, filling in translation some eight Chinese volumes. All the catalogues list this as a scripture "of an unknown translator," but

this translation of the text was perhaps done by the monk Tao-kung.

Both translations of this scripture are generally the same in their contents. The story of the sūtra centers on a previous incarnation of the Buddha Amitābha, when he was the King "Uncontentious Mind," and the scripture contrasts the person of the Buddha Amitābha with that of the Buddha Śākyamuni, and also contrasts the Pure Land of Amitābha with the Impure Land of Śākyamuni. The figure of Amitābha is representative of those Buddhas who attain to Buddhahood in a totally pure land; the text goes into some detail concerning the marks of the future Buddha Amitābha's giving rise to Bodhicitta, and speaks of his vows, numbered at fifty-two. By virtue of the fact that the Buddha's vows are also fifty-two in the *P'ei-hua ching*, this scripture is presumably related to the *Wu-liang-shou ching*, mentioned above.

This scripture became very popular during the Ch'i and Liang Dynasties, and many episodes and stories were excerpted from it and given an independent circulation. Volume four of the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi*, in the section "A Catalogue of Miscellaneous Scriptures whose Translators are Unknown," lists five works which appear to be independent texts, but were merely excerpts from this longer *P'ei-hua ching*: these are the *Wu-pai wang-tzu tso ching-t'u yuan ching* (The Scripture of the Five Hundred Princes Making Vows for the Pure Land), the *Pao-hai fan-chih ch'eng-chiu ta-p'ei ching* (The Scripture of the Brahmin Ratnasamudra Perfecting Great Compassion), the *Pao-hai fan-chih ch'ing ju-lai ching* (The Scripture of the Brahmin Ratnasamudra Requesting the Tathāgata), the *Kuo-ch'u hsing t'an-p'o-lo-mi ching*, (The Scripture of the Past Cultivation of Dāna Pāramitā), and the *Tang-lai hsien-ch'e chu-o-shih-chieh ching* (The Scripture of the Future Selecting of All Evil Worlds). In addition, the second volume of the *Chung-ching mu-lu* (A Catalogue of All Scriptures), compiled by the Sui Dynasty monk Fa-ching, lists nineteen other scriptures, such as the *Kuan-shih-Yin ch'iu shih-fang fo ko-wei shou-chi ching* (The Scripture of Avalokiteśvara Searching out the Buddhas of the Ten Directions for the Purpose of Receiving Predictions), and records that they are all excerpts from the larger *P'ei-hua ching*. This serves as ample evidence of the great popularity of this work at this time.

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The *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching* is a scripture which explains in detail the existence of the Buddha Amitābha, the two Bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara (Kuan-shih-yin) and Mahāsthāmaprāpta (Ta-shih-chih), and the visualization of all the various adornments of the Pure Land Sukhāvati, which would serve to remove one's karmic hindrances and enable one to attain rebirth in that land.

The *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*, together with the *Wu-liang-shou ching* and the *O-mi-t'o ching*, have come to be termed "the Three Pure Land Scriptures" (*ching-t'u san-pu-ching*), and, especially in Japan, these three texts are the Pure Land scriptures *par excellence*, to the exclusion of almost all other scriptures.

Who is the translator of the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*? The fourth volume of the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi* records that the name of the translator is lost, whereas the third volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan* records that in the first year of the Yuan chia era (424), during the reign of the Emperor Wen of the Liu-Sung Dynasty, this work was translated by the monk Kālayaśas in the city of Chien-yeh, (present-day Chiang-ning fu, Kiangsu). Beginning with Fa-ching's catalogue, the *Chung-ching mu-lu*, all subsequent catalogues have adopted this attribution.

The *Li-tai san-pao chi* states that, in addition to this translation by Kālayaśas, there have also been two other translations of this work, one done in the latter Han Dynasty, and one done in the Eastern Chin Dynasty, both by unknown translators. This account appears to combine both theories of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan* and the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi*, but the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi*'s statement that the translator of this scripture is unknown, and that the work was done in two dynasties, the Latter Han and the Eastern Chin, is without foundation or reason, and we need not pay any attention to it.

This work went through only one translation, and its translator according to the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, is Kālayaśas: only the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi* says that the translator is unknown.

According to the second volume of the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi* and the third volume of the *Liang Kao-seng ch'uan*, the monk Guṇabhadra arrived in Kuang-chou (present-day Kuang-tung city, Kwangtung) by the sea in the year 435, and a while later translated the *Wu-liang-shou ching*, in one Chinese volume, in the Hsin-ssu in Chiang-liang (present-day Chiang-ling hsien, Hupei). This work is another translation of the *O-mi-t'o ching*, which traditionally has been lost, and so has not been preserved for us. However, at the present time, there is a text preserved in the Buddhist Canon entitled the *Pa i-ch'ieh yeh-chang ken-pen teh-sheng ching-t'u shen-chu*, with the annotation following the title that says: "excerpted from the Smaller *Wu-Liang-shou ching*." It further states that it was "re-translated by Imperial Command by the Liu-Sung Dynasty Indian Tripiṭaka Master Guṇabhadra." This *dhāraṇī* text was excerpted from Guṇabhadra's translation of the *Wu-liang-shou ching*, but is not recorded in any of the catalogues listed in the *Ch'u-san-tsang chi-chi*.

According to the *O-mi-t'o ching pu-ssu-i shen-li chüan* (Account of the Inconceivable Powers of the Amitābha Sūtra), The Bodhisattva Nāgārjuna vowed to be born into Sukhāvāti, and in a dream perceived this *dhāraṇī*.

This *dhāraṇī*, in turn, was recited by the Tripiṭaka Master Yaśa to the monk Hsiu of the T'ien-p'ing-ssu Monastery with the following comment: "This scripture has not originally come from a barbarian land" Now this Tripiṭaka Master Yaśa is the Northern Ch'i Dynasty Master Narendrayaśa, and the T'ien-p'ing ssu Monastery is the monastery where he did his translation work in the capital city of Yeh (present-day Lin-chang *hsien*, Honan). If this is the case, then the translation of this *dhāraṇī* should have been recorded in the biography of this Narendrayaśa, and its attribution to the hand of Guṇabhadra is a misattribution.

3. Spurious Scriptures

In China there have been a very large number of works composed to resemble scriptures. The fifth volume of the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi* records the contents of An kung's *Catalogue of Doubtful Scriptures* (An kung; the monk Tao-an), which records twenty-six different titles (in thirty Chinese volumes) which are of doubtful (i.e., non-Indian) origin. The *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi* also lists the contents of the *Hsin-chi i-ching wei-hsien tsa-lu* (Newly Compiled Miscellaneous Catalogue of Doubtful Scriptures and Spurious Compositions), which in turn lists forty-six titles of works connected with bhikṣus and twenty-one titles connected with the bhikṣuṇīs.

Various other catalogues have also set up the two categories, "doubtful scriptures" and "spurious scriptures"; these categories being seen in such catalogues as Fa-ching's *Chung-ching mu-lu* (Sui Dynasty), Yen-tsung's *Chung-ching mu-lu* (same dynasty), and Chih-sheng's *K'ai-Yuan Shih-Shih-chiao-lu* (T'ang Dynasty), and these catalogues list a large number of works within both of these categories.

Spurious or forged texts began to appear from earlier than the Fu-Ch' in period onward, and their number began to increase gradually as time progressed. Most such texts have been lost over the years, but some, listed as spurious in the *K'ai-yuan Shih-chiao lu* and in other catalogues, have found their way into the Canon. Furthermore, spurious texts have been quoted extensively in such anthologies as the *Ching-Lü i-hsiang*, *Chu-ching yao-chi*, and the *Fa-yuan chu-lin*. In addition to this, manuscript finds have been made of these works at Tun-huang and various other places, so we can get at least some idea of their contents and ideas.

A number of such spurious works are concerned with the Buddha Amitābha, such works as the *Shan-wang huang-ti kung-teh tsun ching* (The Venerable Scripture of the Meritorious Qualities of the Good King and Emperor), the *Yao-shih liu-li kuang ching* (The Vaidūrya Light Scripture of the Buddha Bhaiṣajyaguru), the *Hsü-mi ssu-yü ching* (Scripture of the Four Areas around Mt. Sumeru), and the *Shih wang-sheng O-mi-t'o fo-kuo ching* (The Scripture of Amitābha's Buddha Land of Ten Rebirths).

The first of these works, the *Shan-wang huang-ti kung-teh tsun ching*, is first listed in the *An kung I-ching lu* (above, Tao-an's Catalogue of Doubtful Scriptures) where it is stated as being of either one or two volumes in length. Passages from this scripture are quoted in the last volume of Tao-ch'ò's *An-lo chi* (see below, Chapter XII). The passage in question says that if there is a person who practices the way, and who wishes to be reborn in the Western Land of Amitābha, he should call [this Buddha] to remembrance for one or seven days, both day and night, and furthermore during this period of time he should repent [of his transgressions]; and should he hear someone speak of the merits of this Good King, at the end of his life there will appear eight Bodhisattvas who will fly towards him and welcome him, and take him to the Western Land of Amitābha. The teaching of the eight Bodhisattvas, such as Badava, etc. welcoming the devotee to the Pure Land (the same list of eight Bodhisattvas as given in the *P'an-shou san-mei ching*), is also recorded in some earlier texts, such as the *Pa Chi-hsiang shen-chu ching* and the *Pa-yang sheng-chu ching*.

In the fifth volume of the *Li-tai san-pao chi*, it is recorded that the *Pa chi-hsiang shen-chu ching* was translated by the monk Wu Chih-ch'ien, and in the sixth volume of this same work it is recorded that the *Pa-yang shen-chu ching* was translated by the Western Chin translator, the Indian monk Chu Fa-huo. However, the fourth volume of the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi* lists both of these texts in the catalogue the *Shih-i tsa-ching lu* (The Catalogue of Miscellaneous Scriptures whose Translators are Unknown). The text of the *Shan-wang huang-ti kung-teh tsun ching* is in all likelihood based upon these texts.

The fourth volume of the *Kuan-ting ching* (the Abhiṣeka Sūtra), in the section entitled "The Scripture of the *dhāraṇī* by which the Four Hundred Binding Deva Kings Protect One's Person," also teaches that eight Bodhisattvas, beginning with the Bodhisattva Badava, will conduct the spirit of the devotee at his death to rebirth in the West, and the twelfth volume of this same *Kuan-ting ching*, the *Vaidūrya Light Scripture of the Buddha Bhaiṣajyaguru* (see above) teaches that if anyone in the four classes of Buddhist devotees constantly keeps the six days of the monthly fast, and cultivates three long fasts yearly, and if he is energetic in austerities both day and night, and if he vows to be reborn in the Western Land of Amitābha, and so calls to remembrance [this Buddha] for one to seven days, and if furthermore during this period of time he repents [of his transgressions], and should he hear of the merits of the fundamental vows of the Buddha Bhaiṣajyaguru, then, at the end of his life, eight Bodhisattvas—Mañjuśrī, Avalokiteśvara, Mahāsthāmaprāpta, Akṣayamati, Pao-ts'an-shan, Bhaiṣajyaguru, Yao-shang, and Maitreya—will fly to the devotee and welcome his spirit, conducting it to birth in the middle of a lotus.

This teaching is identical to that of the *Shan-wang huang-ti kung-teh ching*, the sole exception being that the deity Shan-wang (the Good King)

is replaced by the person of the Buddha Bhaiṣajyaguru, and that the phrase "the eight Bodhisattvas" is replaced by their being named. We can thus easily see that there is a close connection between these two scriptures.

This is especially the case when we see that, according to the "Newly Compiled Miscellaneous Catalogue of Doubtful Scriptures and Spurious Compositions," preserved in the fifth volume of the *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi* (see above), this *Vaidūrya Light Scripture of the Buddha Bhaiṣajyaguru* is reputed to have been excerpted by the bhikṣu Hui-chien of the Lu-yeh ssu Monastery, Mo-ling (present-day Chiangning *hsien*, Kiangsu), in the year 457, thus proving its spurious (i.e., non-Indian) origins.

The *Hsü-mi ssu-yü ching* (The Scripture of the Four Areas around Mt. Sumeru), also termed the *Hsü-mi-hsiang t'u-shan ching* (The Scripture of the Configurations of Mt. Sumeru), is quoted in the *Erh-chiao lun* by the Northern Dynasty monk Tao-an (preserved in the eighth volume of the Kuang Hung-ming *chi*), in the last volume of Tao-ch'ó's *An-lo chi*, and in the fifth volume of Fa-lin's *Pien-ch'eng lun*. According to the quotation in the *An-lo chi*, at the creation of Heaven and Earth, at a time when there were no sun, moon or stars, and people were very much afflicted, the Buddha Amitābha sent the Bodhisattva Pao-ying-sheng to China to become Fu-hsi, and sent the Bodhisattva Pao-Chi-hsiang to become Nü-kua. At this time, these two Bodhisattvas discussed among themselves what needed to be done, and they ascended to the Heaven of Brahma and there took seven precious stones, and with them made the sun, moon, stars, and the twenty-eight major constellations and so illumined the whole world; and they determined the four seasons, spring, autumn, winter, and summer. The reason that the sun, moon, and all the stars revolve in a westerly direction is that all celestial bodies, and all mankind, bow in reverence to the Buddha Amitābha, who dwells in that direction.

In this work, then, the ancient and famous Chinese gods Fu-hsi and Nü-kua are made messengers of the Buddha Amitābha. Based upon a legend that it was she who created the heavens, Nü-kua is now made the creator deity of the sun, moon, and stars, and the teaching that the sun and moon move in a westerly direction to worship the Buddha Amitābha shows that she is the messenger of the Buddha Amitābha.

These are all contrived legends, based, it would appear, on the *Ch'ing-ching hsing ching*, wherein the Buddha Śākyamuni sends Mahākāśyapa to China to become Lao-tzu, the Bodhisattva Kuang-ching (Vimalaprabha?) to become K'ung-tzu (Confucius), and the Bodhisattva Yueh-kuang (Candraprabha?) to become Confucius' famous disciple Yen-hui. This work was probably created during the Northern Chou Dynasty, a period which saw a flourishing of the debate between the Buddhists and the Taoists.

The *Shih wang-sheng O-mi-t'o fo-kuo ching* is also termed simply the *Shih wang-sheng ching*. The major thrust of this scripture is the teaching of

the ritual of the ten types of right remembrance (of calling to remembrance, of recitations?) which will lead to rebirth in the land of the Buddha Amitābha. This work has been included in the *Dai-Nippon Zokuzōkyō*, and teaches that the Buddha Amitābha dispatches twenty-five Bodhisattvas, headed by Avalokiteśvara, to protect the Pure Land devotee from being plagued and disturbed by evil demons and spirits. This text and passage have been quoted in Tao-ch'ō's *An-lo chi*, and in Shan-tao's *Wang-sheng li-tsan* and *Kuan-nien fa-men* as the textual proof of such protection of the Pure Land devotee.

Furthermore, this scripture has obvious connections with the *Ssu t'ien-wang ching* (the Scripture of the Four Heavenly Kings) and the third volume of the *Kuan-ting ching* (the Abhiṣeka Sūtra; see above), where it is taught that if one keeps all the Five Precepts, then twenty-five good spirits (*shan shen*) will be dispatched to the devotee's front door, there to guard against evil spirits. Also, the *Ching-tu san-mei ching* (quoted in Shan-tao's *Kuan-nien fa-men*) teaches that if one keeps the precepts of abstinence during the six fast days and the eight days commemorating these good kings, then the Buddha will order the six Deva kings of *kāma-dhātu* to dispatch some twenty-five good spirits to the devotee to always protect him. It is perhaps from these above scriptures that the *Shih wang-sheng ching* took its teaching of the twenty-five protective deities. Furthermore, the second volume of Chieh-chu's *Wang-sheng ch'uan* (preserved in the Shimpukuji temple, Nagoya) records that the Indian Jñānadharmā brought a representation of Amitābha and his twenty-five Bodhisattvas to China from India, and if this account is true, perhaps it is this picture which was the direct impulse for the teaching of these twenty-five deities protecting the Pure Land devotee.

The biography of Chi-tsang, preserved in the eleventh volume of the *Hsü Kao-seng ch'uan*, states that in the early years of the T'ang Dynasty Chi-tsang constructed images of twenty-five deities, and that he worshiped them with great devotion.

What deities did these images represent? If they were the images of these twenty-five Bodhisattvas, then we must also say that Chi-tsang was a believer in the teaching of the twenty-five Bodhisattvas' protection of the Pure Land devotee.

The third volume of Seng-hsiang's *Fa-hua ch'uan chi* records that when the monk Chih-yuan of Chiang-nan was about to die, he saw twenty-five holy beings coming to welcome him to the Pure Land, and so was reborn in the Pure Land. This doubtlessly records a belief in the *Shih wang-sheng ching*, and we must realize that this text served as the scriptural basis for the teaching, in Japan, of the devotee's being welcomed into the Pure Land by the Twenty-five Bodhisattvas.

In more recent times, a scripture entitled the *O-mi-t'ō fo ch'üeh chu ta-chung kuan-shen ching* (The Scripture of the Buddha Amitābha Awaken-

ing All the Multitude and Seeing Their Bodies) was discovered among the manuscripts of Tun-huang. This scripture is an elaboration of the *Shih wang-sheng ching*, and so constitutes a further proof of the popularity and spread of the belief in these twenty-five Bodhisattvas, and of their close tie with the Pure Land faith. Volume fifteen of the *Ta-Chou kan-ting chung-ching mu-lu* lists the *Shih wang-sheng ching* as a forgery and, later, the eighteenth volume of the *K'ai-yuan Shih-chiao lu* lists the *Shih wang-sheng ching* together with the above *Ch'üeh chu ta-chung ching* as being forged texts.

There are, of course, other forged texts relating to belief in the Buddha Amitābha, such as the *Sui-yuan wang-sheng shih-fang ching-t'u ching* (volume eleven of the *Kuan-ting ching*), and the *Chan-ts'a shen-o Yeh-Pao ching*. More and more, such texts came to be composed during the years that saw the growth of the Pure Land faith, and this must be seen as a result of the general importance of the faith.

Shan-tao's Exposition of the Method of Contemplation on Amida Buddha, Part 3

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THIS IS A REVISED translation of Part 3 of Shan-tao's *Kuan-nien o-mi-t'o fo hsiang-hai san-mei kung-te fa-men* (Jpn. *Kannen Amidabutsu sōkaizanmai kudoku bōmon*), commonly known as the *Kuan-nien fa-men* (The Method of Contemplation on Amida Buddha, Jpn. *Kannenbōmon*).

The original English version was published in *Ryūkoku daigaku ronshū* 431 (1988): pp. 20–33. Revised translations of the Parts 1 and 2 were published in the *Pacific World*, Third Series, 1 (1999): pp. 77–89 and *Pacific World*, Third Series, 2 (2000): pp. 207–228.

EXPOSITION OF THE MERIT OF THE SAMĀDHI OF CONTEMPLATION ON THE OCEAN-LIKE FIGURE OF AMIDA BUDDHA

**Compiled by
Bhikṣu Shan-tao**

PART THREE: RECOMMENDATION OF THE PURE LAND PRACTICE

45 Question: Śākyamuni appeared in the world and, in order to save ordinary people of the age of five defilements, compassionately explained the painful aspects of the three evil realms which people undergo as the result of the ten evil acts. Also, with the wisdom of equality, he led human beings and devas to turn their minds¹ and attain birth in the Land of Amida Buddha. In various sūtras there are clear references to this teaching of quick enlightenment. Now there are people who openly express their disbelief in this teaching and compete with each other in abusing it. I do not know what retribution such people will receive in the present life and after death.

Please give me scriptural evidence for their sake by quoting fully from sūtras, so that I may benefit them by leading them to repent, believe in the Buddha's Mahāyāna teaching, turn their minds and attain birth in the Pure Land.

Answer: If I am to answer your question based on sūtras, those evil persons are such as I explained above in the section on the five evil natures.² I will now show you a quotation directly from a sūtra as clear evidence.

It is stated in the *Sūtra on the Ten Methods of Attaining Birth*:

The Buddha said to Girisāgarajña³ Bodhisattva, "You should hold this teaching for the purpose of saving all sentient beings."

The Buddha further said to Girisāgarajña Bodhisattva, "This sūtra is called the *Sūtra on the Samādhi of Right Mindfulness and Emancipation through Contemplation of Amida Buddha's Physical Body*. It is also called the *Sūtra of Saving Sentient Beings of Close Karmic Relations Who are Subject to the Eight Adverse Conditions*⁴ in *Śaṃsāra*. You should hold this teaching as such. For those sentient beings who have not yet had good karmic relations with the Buddha-Recollection Samādhi, this sūtra opens the great samādhi-gate. This sūtra closes the gate of hell for the sake of sentient beings. Also, for the sake of sentient beings, this sūtra keeps away those who inflict harm on them and destroys evil spirits, thereby giving peace to all beings in the four directions."

The Buddha said to Girisāgarajña Bodhisattva, "This is the meaning of my exposition."

Girisāgarajña said to the Buddha, "Many sentient beings of the future may abuse [this teaching]. What will be the outcome?"

The Buddha said, "In future there will be in Jambudvīpa⁵ monks and nuns, men and women, who, having seen someone chanting this sūtra, will get angry with this person and entertain enmity in their minds. By the cause of abusing the right Dharma, they will in the present life suffer from bad and serious illnesses or have impaired limbs; or they will be deaf, blind, or dumb;⁶ or they will suffer from harassment by evil spirits, insanity, colds, fever, piles, dropsy or loss of consciousness. These bad and serious illnesses will beset their bodies life after life. Suffering thus from pains, they will not be restful, whether sitting or lying; they will be unable to ease nature. However strongly they may seek death or life, they will get neither of them. All such pains are due to abusing this sūtra. It happens that, after death, they will fall into hell, where they will undergo extreme pains for eighty thousand kalpas, and will not be able to hear even the words 'water' or 'food' for thousands of millions of lives to come. These are the karmic

retributions they will get by their acts of abusing this sūtra. It so happens that when they can come out of hell to be born in the human world, they will be born as oxen, horses, boars or sheep and end their lives in great pain by being slaughtered by men. This is due to abusing this sūtra. Later, when they are born again as human beings, they will always be born in low-class families, unable to enjoy freedom for thousands of millions of lives, or unable to see even the words denoting the Three Treasures for thousands of millions of lives. Such is the painful result one receives by the act of abusing this sūtra. For this reason, you should not expound this sūtra to ignorant people. Only to those people who possess right contemplation and right mindfulness should you expound this sūtra. If one does not revere this sūtra, one will fall into hell. If one reveres it, one will attain right emancipation and be born in the Land of Amida Buddha.”

I have quoted this sūtra as evidence. Hence, I know that those who abuse it and those who revere it will unfailingly receive retribution and reward, respectively, as the Buddha predicted. This you should know.

46 Question: After the Buddha’s death, ordinary people, whether good or evil, who will awaken Bodhi-Mind and aspire to be born in the Land of Amida Buddha, may apply their minds, day and night, until the end of their lives, to reciting [his Name], meditating [on him], worshiping and praising him, and offering incense and flowers to Amida, Avalokiteśvara and other sages, and also to the glorious adornments of the Pure Land. With continuous contemplation, they may or may not attain the Samādhi. What sort of merit will accrue to such people? Please give me scriptural evidence by quoting fully from sūtras, so that I may lead the practitioners who follow the teaching to attain joy and appreciation, receive it in faith and uphold it.

Answer: It is good that you have asked me this question. It will lead to termination of the causal acts for cycles of birth and death in the six realms and forever open the essential gate for the Pure Land of eternal bliss. Not only does your question comply with Amida’s Vows, but also all Buddhas are pleased with it. Now, based on a sūtra, I will answer your question in detail.

It is stated in the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi-sūtra*:

The Buddha said to Bhadrapāla, “Concerning this Buddha-Recollection Samādhi, there are four things to offer up [to Amida]: food, clothes, bed and medicinal drink. They serve as an aid [to the accomplishment of the samādhi] and produce joy.⁷ All the Buddhas of the past attained enlightenment by keeping in mind this

samādhi of recollection of Amitābha Buddha and performing the joy-giving act of offering four things as the auxiliary practice. Present Buddhas of the ten quarters, too, have all attained enlightenment by keeping in mind this Buddha-Recollection Samādhi and performing the joy-giving act of offering four things as the auxiliary practice. Buddhas of the future, too, will attain enlightenment by keeping in mind this Buddha-Recollection Samādhi and performing the joy-giving act of offering four things as the auxiliary practice."

The Buddha said to Bhadrapāla, "Concerning this Buddha-Recollection Samādhi and the joy-giving act of offering four things as the auxiliary practice, I will present a simple illustration connected with this samādhi, thereby showing by comparison the merit of recollection of the Buddha. Suppose there is a man of one hundred years old. From the time of his birth he runs fast. Until he becomes old, he keeps running faster than the swift wind. Is there anyone who can calculate the distance he has traveled?"

Bhadrapāla replied, "No; no one can calculate it."

The Buddha said, "I will further demonstrate to you and other bodhisattvas. Suppose a good man or woman acquires rare treasures which fill the space this man has covered and then donates them for charity. The merit of the donation cannot be compared with that of a person who hears of this samādhi of recollection of Amida Buddha and performs the joy-giving act of offering four things as the auxiliary practice. This person's merit is thousands of millions of times as much as that of the donor. It is indeed impossible to compare."

The Buddha continued, "In ancient times, incalculable and immeasurable kalpas ago, there lived a Buddha called *Siṃhamati*⁸ in the country named Bhadrapāla. There was a *cakravartin* king called *Viśeṣagāmin*.⁹ One day the King went to see the Buddha. Knowing the King's intention, the Buddha expounded to him the Buddha-Recollection Samādhi and the joy-giving act of offering four things as the auxiliary practice. Having heard the exposition, the King rejoiced and immediately donated various rare treasures to the Buddha. The King himself vowed that with the merit of this act he would make all human beings and devas live in peace."

The Buddha said, "When the king died, he was born again in the same family as a prince called *Brahmadatta*.¹⁰ At that time there was a monk, *Ratnottama*¹¹ by name. He always taught the Buddha-Recollection Samādhi to the four groups of his disciples. When the King heard the teaching, he performed the joy-giving act of offering four things as the auxiliary practice, donating treasures to the monk. He also offered clothes to him. The King and his

thousand royal subjects renounced the world to become mendicants under the monk. Intent on learning the Buddha-recollection Samādhi, the King always served the monk with the thousand mendicants. For eight thousand years he practiced day and night without feeling fatigue. When he once heard an exposition of the Buddha-Recollection Samādhi, he instantly attained the superior wisdom. After that he further went to see sixty-eight thousand Buddhas and, at the place of each Buddha, learnt this Buddha-Recollection Samādhi. Then he attained Buddhahood.”

The Buddha said, “Even if there is a distance of a hundred *li*, a thousand or four thousand *li* to travel to hear an exposition of this Buddha-Recollection Samādhi, you should go and seek it. How much more so if there is only a short distance to travel.”¹²

I say to you, aspirants of the Pure Land, that the Buddha’s teaching quoted above is clear evidence. Details are given in the chapter on “The Merit of Offering Four Things.”¹³

47 Question: One may practice assiduously and painstakingly in accordance with the Buddha’s teaching, namely, worshiping, reciting [the Buddha’s Name] and walking around [a statue of the Buddha] six times during the day and the night, contemplating the Buddha and chanting sūtras; one may also observe the precepts with singleness of mind, abhor birth-and-death and, fearful of the suffering in the three evil realms, aspire to be born in Amida Buddha’s Pure Land after the end of life. However, such a person may perhaps still have some lingering evil karma, and so may actually be engaged in the ten evil acts. If one becomes aware of such hindrances, how can one remove them? Please show me the method by quoting fully from sūtras.

Answer: If I am to answer your question based on sūtras, I may quote the *Sūtra on the Ocean-like Samādhi of Contemplation of the Buddha*.

The Buddha said to his father, the King, and multitudes of people: “In the past there was a Buddha named Śūnyarāja.¹⁴ During the period of the Semblance Dharma¹⁵ there were four monks who broke the precepts and committed grave offenses. At that time Śūnyarāja Buddha addressed the four monks from the mid-air at night, saying, ‘Your offenses are called “incapable of salvation.” If you want to eliminate your karmic transgressions, go into the stupa built for me, and, contemplating my statue, repent with sincerity of heart. Then you can eliminate your karmic transgressions.’ The four monks immediately abandoned everything and sincerely followed the instruction. They went into the stupa, beat their bodies before the statue and repented [as they threw their

bodies on the ground] just as a high mountain crumbled. Tumbling on the ground, they cried bitterly facing [the statue of] the Buddha. They did this repeatedly, day and night, until death. After death, they were able to be born in the Land of Buddha Śūnyarāja.”¹⁶

I have quoted this sūtra as evidence. Practicers wishing to repent of their karmic transgressions should follow this method.

The Buddha said, “After my death, if the Buddha’s disciples abandon all evil conditions, seek to abide by the method of reticence and, at six periods during the day and the night, even for a short time and even for a moment during that short time, contemplate the white curl of hair between the eye-brows of the Buddha, then, even if they are unable to see it, their karmic transgressions binding them to cycles of birth-and-death for ninety-six koṭis of nayutas of kalpas, multiplied by the number of the sands of the River Ganges and again multiplied by the number of dust-motes will be destroyed.

“If there is someone who, having heard of the white curl of hair, is not surprised or does not doubt, but rejoicingly believe in it, the karmic transgressions which this person has committed during eighty koṭis of kalpas of *saṃsāra* will be destroyed.

“If monks or nuns, [lay-]men or [lay-]women, have committed the four cardinal offenses,¹⁷ the ten evil acts or the five deadly transgressions or abused Mahāyāna and if they repent of their karmic transgressions by repeatedly prostrating themselves on the ground, as a high mountain crumbles, at six periods during the day and the night, crying bitterly and shedding tears, and join their palms, facing the Buddha, and contemplate the light emanating from the white curl of hair between his eye-brows for one to seven days, then the four kinds of karmic transgressions mentioned above will become light.

“When you contemplate the white curl of hair, if it is dark and you cannot see it well, then go inside the stupa and keep contemplating the white curl of hair for one to three days, with your palms joined, crying bitterly. If one only hears [of the white curl of hair] even for a short time, the karmic transgressions which one has committed during three kalpas of *saṃsāra* will be destroyed.”¹⁸

The Buddha said to his father, the King, and Ānanda, “Now I will show you my entire physical glory. Those who entertain evil thoughts or those who have broken the Buddha’s precepts will see the Buddha in different ways.”

Then five hundred Śākya clansmen perceived the Buddha's body as grey;¹⁹ one thousand monks perceived the Buddha as red clay; sixteen laymen and twenty-four laywomen perceived him as all black; all nuns perceived him as silver color. Then the four groups of people said to the Buddha, "We do not see the Buddha's exquisite body." They pulled out their own hair, threw their bodies on the ground and, crying bitterly and shedding tears like rain, beat their bodies and tumbled on the ground.

The Buddha said, "Good men, the purpose of the Tathāgata's appearance in the world is to destroy your karmic transgressions and offenses. You should now recite the names of the seven past Buddhas and worship them. I will explain to you the karmic transgressions of entertaining wrong views in your previous lives. You should confess and repent them to the multitude of revered monks. In accordance with the Buddha's instruction, you should throw your bodies on the ground before the assembly of the followers of the Buddha-Dharma, as if a high mountain crumbles, and repent before the Buddha. When you have repented, your spiritual eye will be opened. Then you will see the Buddha's body and attain a great joy."

The Buddha said to the monks, "In your former lives, immeasurable kalpas ago, you had wrong views, doubted your masters, did not observe the precepts and yet undeservedly received donations from the devotees. As a result, you fell in the realm of hungry spirits and hell, where you underwent suffering for eighty thousand years. Though you came out of such realms, you were unable to see Buddhas for innumerable lives, but could just hear the Buddha's name. Now you perceive the Buddha's body as the color of red soil and five feet high."

When the Buddha finished these words, the one thousand monks repented [of their karmic transgressions] to the Buddha and threw their bodies on the ground just as a high mountain crumbled, crying sorrowfully and shedding tears like rain. Then, as when wind blows and scatters heavy clouds, the [Buddha's] golden countenance was revealed. Having seen the Buddha, the monks rejoiced and awakened Bodhi-Mind.

The Buddha said to his father, the King, "Those one thousand monks intently sought the Dharma and never got tired. The Buddha gave them predictions for their future attainment of Buddhahood, saying that they would all become Tathāgatas of the same name, Namaḥ Prabhāsa."²⁰

The above rite of repentance appears in the *Sūtra on the Ocean-like Samādhi of Contemplation of the Buddha*, second and third fascicles.²¹

48 The *Sūtra on the Ocean-like Samādhi of Contemplation of the Buddha*, Chapter Twelve, entitled "Strict Observance of the Precepts," tenth fascicle, states:

The Buddha said to Ānanda, "In future there will be sentient beings who will attain this Buddha-Recollection Samādhi or those who will contemplate the Buddha's physical characteristics or those who will attain the Samādhi of the Presence of Buddhas. They should be told to restrain themselves in their bodily, verbal and mental acts, not to engage in wrong livelihood and to be careful not to become conceited. You should know that if they engage in wrong livelihood or become conceited, they have committed the fault of extreme self-conceit.²² They will destroy the Buddha-Dharma and be most likely to induce others to entertain wrong thoughts. They will also bring disruption to the harmony of the Sangha, give rise to heretical views and confuse people. Such people are indeed devils' companions. Even though such wicked persons contemplate the Buddha, they will fail to relish the taste of nectar.

"As the result of the fault of conceit, wherever they are born, their bodies are always short. Born in low-class families, they will be poverty-stricken and destitute, and be possessed of immeasurable evil karma. You should be on guard against such evil tendencies and keep them from arising. If such acts of wrong livelihood should arise, they are like a mad elephant destroying lotus ponds. Acts of wrong livelihood are like this; they destroy roots of good."

The Buddha said to Ānanda, "Those who practice Buddha-Recollection should be on guard and never give in to indolence. If the practicers of the Buddha-Recollection Samādhi fail to be on guard and allow self-conceit to arise, the evil wind of wrong livelihood causes the fire of self-conceit to flare up and burn meritorious elements. Meritorious elements refer to all the innumerable meditation practices and various Buddha-Recollection methods, which arise depending on one's thoughts. They are called merit-store."

The Buddha said to Ānanda, "This sūtra is called 'immovable concentration of thought'; you should hold this sūtra as such. It is also called 'meditation on the Buddha's white curl of hair'; you should hold this sūtra as such. It is also called 'meditation on distinct parts of the Tathāgata's body in both the reverse and normal orders'; also called 'closely contemplating the distinct parts of the Tathāgata's body, even each hair-follicle'; also called 'meditation on the thirty-two physical characteristics and eighty secondary marks and on the light of various wisdoms'; also called 'ocean-like Samādhi of Buddha-contemplation'; also called 'Bud-

dha-Recollection Samādhi-gate'; also called 'sūtra on the Buddhas' bodies adorned with exquisite flowers.' You should hold this sūtra close to heart and be careful not to forget it."²³

49 It is stated in the *Great Collection Sūtra*, Chapter on "Salvation of Dragons":

Once Dragon King Sāgara²⁴ invited the Buddha to his palace for a meal. The Buddha accepted the dragon's invitation. When the Buddha and a multitude of holy monks finished the meal, the Great Dragon King requested the Buddha to give a sermon. At that time, the prince of the Dragon King, named Kamalamukha,²⁵ stood in front of the Buddha. He spread his four limbs on the ground and repented sorrowfully, saying, "What evil karma did I commit in the past for which I now have a body of the dragon?"²⁶

I have quoted this sūtra as the evidence. It shows a method of repentance with sincerity of heart. One should know that similar passages are found throughout the sūtras and so I cannot present them fully. I quote from three sūtras as a guide to the students in the future, not to those who are not sincere. Those who practice should all know that the Buddha did not lie.

50 Further, it is stated in the *Ariṣṭa Sūtra*:

Once there was in Nanda Country a king named Vaiḍūrya.²⁷ He sent a messenger to the Buddha. He prostrated himself at the feet of the Buddha and said, "World-Honored One, our country is far out in the border region and small. Every year invaders plunder our country, the five kinds of grains are expensive, plagues spread, and our people are undergoing hardships. At no time can we live in peace. The Tathāgata's Dharma-store is rich in variety, and all the teachings are deep and broad. Since the King has duties to worry about, he is not able to practice the Way. World-Honored One, please have pity on us and teach us the essential method of practice, so that we can easily perform it day and night and become free from various sufferings in all future times."

The Buddha said to the messenger, "Take this message to the Great King. If he wants to remove hindrances of evil passions and those of karmic effects, he should have one hundred and eight *ariṣṭa* beads pierced through with a string and always carry it. Whether walking or sitting or lying, he should continuously recite the words, 'Buddha, Dharma and Sangha,' with singleness of heart and without distraction of thought. Move one bead with the fingers each time he says so. Repeat this ten times, twenty, a

hundred, a thousand, or even a billion times. If he has done so two hundred thousand times, without contracting physical and mental disorder or entertaining deceitful thought, then, after death, he will be reborn in the Third Heaven, Yama,²⁸ where he will always be naturally provided with clothes and food and enjoy peace and happiness. With a hundred and eight karmic bonds destroyed, he will not follow the current of birth-and-death but proceed towards nirvāṇa and attain the highest fruition.”

The messenger returned [to the palace] and gave this message to the King. With great joy, the King prostrated himself on the ground, worshiped the Buddha and addressed him from afar, “Having received your holy teaching, I will certainly practice as instructed.”

The King immediately ordered the officials and people to make a thousand *ariṣṭa*-beads rosaries. He gave the rosaries to the members of his royal family within the six blood relations. The King always recited the holy phrase. Even when he was in the battlefield, he did not abolish this practice. Further, he had this thought, “The Great Compassion of the World-Honored One responds to all beings. I pray, if with this good act I am to escape from the painful sea where I have long been sunk, O Tathāgata, please manifest your body and expound the teaching to me.” The King held this prayer close to his heart and did not take any food for three days. Thereupon, the Buddha manifested himself and came into the palace with a multitude of holy beings. Then he preached the Dharma to the King.²⁹

I have quoted this passage as further evidence. Since the King had sincerity of heart, his hindrances were removed at each recitation. Knowing that the King’s karmic transgressions had been destroyed, the Buddha manifested himself in response to the King’s desire. This one should know.

NOTES

1. To turn their thoughts to the Pure Land and also turn the merit of their practices over to it in order to be born there.
2. See Part 2 of the translation of "Shan-tao's Exposition of the Method of Contemplation on Amida Buddha," section 39, *Pacific World*, Third Series, 2 (2000): pp. 221–222.
3. Reconstructed from the Chinese name Shan-hai-hui (山海慧, Jpn. Sankaie, Mountain-Ocean-Wisdom).
4. The eight adverse conditions in which one is unable to see a Buddha or hear the Dharma: (1) being in hell; (2) being in the state of an animal; (3) being in the state of a hungry spirit; (4) being in the heaven of long life; (5) being in Uttarakuru, the continent to the north of Mt. Sumeru where people always enjoy great happiness; (6) being deaf, blind, and mute; (7) being knowledgeable about worldly affairs, and eloquent; and (8) living during the period before or after the Buddha's appearance in the world.
5. One of the four continents in Buddhist cosmology. It is located to the south of Mt. Sumeru and is inhabited by ordinary human beings.
6. *Shih-yin-ping* 失陰病 in all the texts; *yin* 陰 might have been used for *yin* 音 (sound). Hence, here translated as "mute."
7. Concerning the word *chu-huan-hsi* 助歡喜, which is often used with *ssū-shih* 四事, I have followed traditional interpretation of taking *chu* 助 to mean "assist" (in the accomplishment of the Amida-Recollection Samādhi). This word corresponds with Tib. *rjes su yi ran ba* (Paul M. Harrison, *The Tibetan Text of the Pratyutpanna-buddha-sammukhāvasthita-samādhi-sūtra* [Tokyo: Reiyukai Library, 1978], p. 186). Since it is established that this Tibetan word corresponds with Skt. *anumodanā* (Lokesh Chandra, *Tibetan-Sanskrit Dictionary*; Hisao Inagaki, *A Tri-lingual Glossary to the Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtras*, [Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1984]), *chu* is no doubt a translation of the suffix *anu-*, although the usual Chinese translation of *anumodanā* (rejoicing) is *sui-hsi* 隨喜 (another Chinese equivalent, *ch'üan-chu* 勸助, actually appears as the name of the chapter of the three fascicle Chinese version of this sūtra, *Taishō*, vol. 13, no. 418). Here Shan-tao takes *chu* as a verb and *ssū-shih* 四事 (four matters) to be the four kinds of things to be offered up to the Buddha. In Shan-tao's Pure Land system as seen in his *San-shan i* (散善義, Jpn. *Sanzen-gi*), this act of offering constitutes one of the five right practices (五正行, Jpn. *goshōgyō*) and is an auxiliary act (助業, Jpn. *jogō*) as compared with the Nembutsu which is the rightly established act (正定業, Jpn. *shōjōgō*). For further details of the significance of Buddha-Recollection Samādhi, see Hisao Inagaki, "Amida Samādhi and

- Nembutsu Samādhi," *The Pure Land*, New Series, no. 2 (1985): pp. 79–89.
8. Skt. Sīṃhamati for Ssŭ-hê-t'ī 私訶提 is attested to by the occurrence of Ssŭ-hê-mo-t'ī 私訶摩提 and Shih-tzu-i 師子意 in the three fascicle Chinese version of the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi-sūtra*, *Taishō*, vol. 13, p. 917c.
9. Ssŭ-ch'in 斯琴; Wei-ssŭ-ch'in 惟斯琴 in the two Chinese versions of the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi-sūtra*, *Taishō*, vol. 13, pp. 902a and 918a; Tib. *khyad par du hgro ba* (Harrison, *loc. cit.* p. 191) suggests Viśeṣagāmin. This is the name of a king in the *Lalitavistara* (*Kan'yaku taishō: Bonwa daijiten*, [hereafter, *Skt.-Ja. Dic.*], [Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1984], p.1249.)
10. Ch. Fan-mo-ta 梵摩達; Tib. *tshans pas byin* (Harrison, p. 192).
11. Ch. Chên-pao 珍宝; Tib. *rin chen mchog* (Harrison, p. 192); according to *Skt.-Ja. Dic.*, *ratnottama* is the name of a Buddha.
12. *Taishō*, vol. 13, pp. 901c–2b.
13. Ssŭ-shih kung-yang kung-tê pin 四事供養功德品; seems to refer to ssŭ-shih-pin 四事品(Chapter on "Four Matters"), *Taishō*, vol. 13, pp. 899c–900a, although this is a short chapter which urges people to practice diligently while keeping in mind four sets of four rules.
14. Ch. K'ung-wang 空王.
15. The period following that of the Right Dharma.
16. *Taishō*, vol. 15, pp. 688c–689a (adapted).
17. The four *pārājika* are the gravest of all offenses for monks. They are: having sexual intercourse, stealing, killing a person, and telling a lie about one's own spiritual attainment.
18. *Taishō*, vol. 15, p. 655b (adapted).
19. Ch. t'an-jên 炭人 (charcoal man) in the *Taishō Tripiṭaka* edition.
20. *Taishō*, vol. 15, pp. 660a–661b (adapted).
21. *Taishō*, vol. 15, pp. 650c ff. and 656b ff.
22. One of the seven kinds of pride or self-conceit; considering oneself to be more worthy or virtuous than one actually is.
23. *Taishō*, vol. 15, pp. 695b and 696b (adapted).
24. Ch. so-chia-lo 娑伽羅.
25. Ch. hua-mien 華面; elsewhere in the same sūtra, *ch'ing-lien-hua-mien* 青蓮華面.
26. *Taishō*, vol. 13, pp. 289a–290a (adapted).
27. Ch. po-liu-li 波瑠璃.
28. Third heaven in the world of desire.
29. *Taishō*, vol. 17, p. 726a–b.

BOOK REVIEWS

***The Formless Self.* By Joan Stambaugh. Albany, N.Y. : State University of New York Press, 1999. xii, 174 pp. Hardcover: \$54.50; paperback: \$18.95.**

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Joan Stambaugh has published books on Nietzsche, Heidegger, Dōgen, and comparative philosophy, as well as a translation of Heidegger's *Being and Time*. In her recent work, *The Formless Self*, she examines the formless self as the ultimate reality, an idea set forth by one medieval and two modern Japanese Zen philosophers. The book's three chapters are correspondingly entitled "Dōgen," "Hisamatsu [Shin'ichi]," and "Nishitani [Keiji]." *The Formless Self* is not an academic work; by her own admission, Stambaugh is not a scholar of Buddhism. Nonetheless, it is a good introduction to Zen thought, guided by the intention "to present Eastern ideas, or at least one Western interpretation of Eastern ideas, to Western readers in a meaningful way." Illustrating the material with examples from everyday experience and Western philosophy, it is insightful, unpretentious, and readable.

Although each of the three chapters purports to present a single philosopher, Stambaugh shifts her attention freely from one to another throughout the book, following the internal logic of her topic rather than, say, its historical filiation. This method gives the impression that all the three philosophers represent in unison a single philosophical position and makes it difficult for Stambaugh to divide her argument cleanly between the chapters. But while there is a certain amount of repetition, Stambaugh achieves a remarkable unity of focus. The three chapters are unified also by the author's admiration for the depth and subtlety of "Eastern thought," underscored by the disappointment with her own tradition. For example, Stambaugh believes that Dōgen's ideas "refreshingly obviate meta-physics, trans-meta-physics, meta-meta-meta-physics and the whole business of 'meta' of which it is to be fervently hoped we have truly had our philosophical fill" (p. 16). Unlike in our Western experience, which is "incredibly limited," in Dōgen we find an "often barely intelligible originality of thought" (p. 42). Although Western "philosophers have to a large

extent exhausted their fascination with substantialist metaphysics" (p. x), they are yet to venture beyond the anthropomorphic way of experiencing (p. 47) in order to develop a Zen-like understanding of nothingness. For example compared to Hisamatsu, Heidegger's treatment of nothingness is "not really sufficient" (p. 126), and (quoting Hisamatsu) "Oriental Nothingness is called [so] solely because it has *not yet* been fully awakened to in the West" (pp. 125–26; italics mine).

For Dōgen, Hisamatsu, and Nishitani the inquiry into reality starts with the search within one's own self. As may be expected of thinkers in the Buddhist tradition, all three take the self to be neither real (substantial) nor merely imagined. This middle view, avoiding both eternalism and nihilism, emerges naturally once the self is examined without self-interest and intellectual preconceptions. Also referred to as the "true" or "formless" self, such self is "one of the many Buddhist names for ultimate reality" (p. xi). Stambaugh uses that name interchangeably with "absolute nothingness," "emptiness," and "Buddha" (p. 86). The key concept involved is that of non-objectification, a state in which the customary, discursive way of thinking has been left behind. Free from objectification and reification, the non-egoistic, or formless, self represents a fusion of the empirical self with the world. We are told that "self is inseparable from world," "the self is the entire universe," and "there is never an entire universe that is not the self" (pp. 5, 19–20; 52–53). For example in the "Genjō-kōan" fascicle of *Shōbōgenzō*, Dōgen tells us that the precondition for the requisite study of the self is the suppression of a narrow self-interest; the reward consists in the insight into the true reality; and although the true reality does not lie beyond the self or the other, it involves the dissolution of the fixed forms we normally ascribe to both. The new self that emerges will have suppressed all traces of the consciousness of itself, including that of being in a sublime state. The closing page of *The Formless Self* offers a simplified version of these insights:

Selfhood is not to be conceived egoistically as a separate self opposed and hostile to everything other than itself. [...] Overcoming and abandoning its anxious sense of itself as an encapsulated separate "I," the self gains the wondrous freedom and openness to emerge in joyous compassion from the shackles of its self-imposed boundaries (p. 165).

In short, rich rewards fall to the share of those who open up to the world. But however simple and unexceptionable this realization may sound, the path leading to it is tortuous, for the formless self is a concept that expresses the conceptually impossible. To start with Dōgen, all things are sharply particular. There is no general thing called water; what each of

us sees when looking upon water is a function of our individual perception (p. 46). This particularity seems to be related to our ability to break the flow of time into discontinuous moments. In Dōgen's interpretation of the Buddhist view of insubstantiality, things are qualified by the moments in which they present themselves. The two are so inseparable that he says that things *are* time (p. 31–32). We capture these “thing-times” in their present, which is also ours—for the self, likewise, is time. The past, present and future are real only in their present-ness. Related to the question of time is another central concern—nondualism. Dōgen equates time with eternity, practice with attainment, and illusion with enlightenment. These identities form a basis for the claim of the universality of Buddha nature, a term referring to the true quality of all existents as revealed in spiritual enlightenment. The concept of universal Buddha nature involves the question of intrinsic versus experiential enlightenment, which constitutes one of the major Buddhist philosophical difficulties. If the whole world—including us—intrinsically has (or as Dōgen puts it, *is*) Buddha nature, why must we exert ourselves to realize it and how is this realization to be understood? A simple answer is formulated in terms of potentiality and actuality: we carry Buddha nature in us like a seed, but need to cultivate it to make it grow. Seen from a slightly different angle, Buddha nature is normally buried under mental delusions and needs to be uncovered in order to come into full actuality. But these interpretations erroneously hypostatize Buddha nature. As a consequence, they fail to establish its universality since both the carriers of the seed and the mental delusions referred to above remain extraneous to it. Another, paradoxical interpretation of Buddha nature as “beyond the opposition of Buddha-nature versus no-Buddha-nature” (p. 24) is not very helpful, either. In contrast, Dōgen's idiosyncratic concept of *keige* can be regarded as one of the most sophisticated attempts at solving the riddle. Normally referring to an obstruction or hindrance, for Dōgen the word means an intensification of our perception of things (*dharmas*). By means of such intensification, a thing or entity comes to be perceived as more than itself, that is, more than it normally appears to be. It is this kind of intensification that is operative in the equalities of time and eternity, illusion and enlightenment. These equalities are based on a particular sense of transcendence, in which the second term of each pair is the quintessence of the first. Dōgen recognizes the universal completely within the particular instead of treating the two as opposites or regarding the universal as a higher category. For example, enlightenment is the *consummation* of delusions (p. 14) rather than their negation or subsumption under permanence and truth. As such consummation, it represents seeing the world in intellectual freshness, without preconceptions, in its suchness (pp. 16–17, 51). The momentariness of things turns into Buddha nature once the moment is allowed to appear in its full weight—or, in Dōgen's words, as self-obstructing or totally self-exerting.

Although Dōgen's view cannot be taken as the final demonstration of the universality of Buddha nature (for why do delusions as such arise at all?), it comes as close to it as the medium of language may ever allow. But this point remains somewhat unclear in Stambaugh's exposition. In fact, she steps back right into the middle of the problem as she qualifies Buddha nature as an "unusual" or discontinuous state. Following Hisamatsu, Stambaugh says that although Buddha nature is nothing holy, transcendent or external to the self, it would be inappropriate to apply the term to "the usual state of human being" (pp. 26–27). Buddha nature is *suddenly* manifested at the very moment of attainment; "it just flashes up at the moment of our seeing" (p. 23). This manifestation or flashing comes about as an abrupt break in our customary mode of experiencing: it is discontinuous with the ordinary (p. 49). But how are we to reconcile this discontinuity with Dōgen's assertion of the nonduality of illusion (our ordinary mode of experiencing) and enlightenment?

In her answer, Stambaugh resorts to what may be termed a doctrine of unconscious enlightenment. Buddha nature, she says, is "realization that we are unable to realize" (p. 50), or realization that we fully possess despite our ignorance of its presence. Everything has or is Buddha nature, "*regardless of whether we know it or not*" (p. 52; italics mine). Underlying this interpretation is a tacit dismissal of what we commonly think, feel, and know, as nugatory. To compound our problem, we are not even aware of its presence. Stambaugh puts it as follows:

The usual state of human being is to be negated, not because humans are sinful or evil, but because they are not awake. They are not even fully and truly alive (p. 26–27).

This assertion does little to advance the matter. One difficulty lies in an unequivocal definition of "the usual state of human being" out of which we are to be forced into full and true aliveness, in the selection of the authority upon which this is to be accomplished, and in the damaging effect of such a definition on those to whom it is applied. A more fundamental issue remains that of dualism. In the end, we still differentiate, if only between those who realize their spiritual blindness and those who do not. By now, Stambaugh's discussion has made a circle around the dilemma of Buddha nature without approaching a solution. Not surprisingly, the conclusion is disappointing:

Even though all things, all forms are not bound to anything specific, they abide in their own dharma-situations. [...] Thus, a certain stasis is achieved in the world of impermanence (p. 47).

The expression “a certain stasis” is tentative and ambiguous. It falls short of providing the basis to support Dōgen’s identification of impermanence and eternity. Perhaps it expresses, in fact, Stambaugh’s implicit recognition of the inconclusiveness of Dōgen’s struggle against dualism.

Like a disturbing undercurrent, the dualistic *aporia* continues to make itself felt through the remaining two chapters of *The Formless Self*. But as in the presentation on Dōgen, only rarely does it come to the surface. Stambaugh’s attention remains focused on the question of self in relation to reality. She starts her presentation of Hisamatsu Shin’ichi, a contemporary Zen philosopher associated with the Kyoto School, with a summary of his public dialogues with Paul Tillich. The latter is depicted unflatteringly as a typical Westerner, fundamentally unreceptive to Zen insights. She then proceeds to examine Hisamatsu’s understanding of “oriental nothingness” (equivalent to the formless self), describes its seven characteristics and the way they are applied in Zen art, and concludes the chapter with reflections on the Zen doctrine of No-Mind. That Hisamatsu’s thought is rooted in his personal experience is intimated in his words, “the nothingness of Zen [...] is my own state of nothingness” (p. 76). It follows that although Hisamatsu’s writings can be approached as religious *philosophy*, subject to strict rules of reasoning and expression and amenable to critical analysis, they may also be viewed—as once suggested by Abe Masao—as free and unhindered self-expression of the experience of awakening. In the latter case, they should probably be read simply in the spirit of aesthetic appreciation. As these two approaches are, to a large degree, mutually exclusive, it would be prudent for any discussion of Hisamatsu to take a clear position on which of the two it adopts. But *The Formless Self* is ambiguous about this point. On the one hand, frequent comparisons throughout the chapter to thinkers such as Kant, Spinoza, Leibniz, Heidegger, Freud, and Jung suggest that Stambaugh reads Hisamatsu critically. On the other, her sense of logical consistency seems to be undisturbed by even the most boldly “free and unhindered” remarks of the Japanese thinker, which suggests that she is treating them, as it were, as poetical metaphors. For example, Stambaugh renders Hisamatsu’s notion of formlessness as the state beyond the dichotomy of seeing and not seeing, being and nonbeing, subject and object, as follows:

What could a seeing that is beyond the dualism of seeing and not seeing be like? An initial, easy answer is that this kind of seeing would not see objects. Then what is seen? A presence. Not a static object, but a dynamic, vibrant presencing. This is perhaps most evident in certain paintings or drawings of landscapes, Western, and Eastern. Chinese landscape drawings hardly depict objects. They largely present emptiness offset by some kind of marginal

figure, perhaps a figure with a large hat crossing a bridge, or a sprig of blossoms, or a bird perched on a branch. For [Hisamatsu], such landscapes [...] present the Formless Self. (p. 57–58).

Although Stambaugh succeeds here in conveying the general feeling of formlessness, the precise character of the formless self remains ambiguous. Do “presence” and “vibrant presencing” refer to emptiness, to the marginal figure in the landscape, or to both? Does a seeing beyond seeing and not seeing imply that the emptiness in the background overshadows the figure to the extent that we no longer see it? Or perhaps, that we see emptiness through the figure that embodies it? Since the paragraph allows multiple interpretations, its message is inconclusive.

As another example related to Hisamatsu, Stambaugh introduces the Eckhartian concept of freedom in poverty which she interprets as “not simply removing the subject-object dualism, but being free of everything including God” (p. 60). The reader may be surprised at the assessment of the removal of the subject-object dualism as “simple,” as well as at the interpretation of freedom from God as going *beyond* such removal. The passage from Eckhart that Stambaugh quotes implies neither such differentiation nor ranking.

The seven characteristics of the absolute nothingness (or the formless self) postulated by Hisamatsu is another problematic area. First, we may be reluctant to accept wholeheartedly his claim that “other art works of Buddhism or the West may possess one or two of them, but only Zen art invariably embodies them all” (pp. 83–84)—the claim that Stambaugh reports without a comment. Secondly, some of the individual characteristics raise questions of their own. For example one of the seven, Stambaugh reports, is freedom from attachment, which means unattachment rather than detachment. Unlike in detachment, where “I simply don’t care about a thing and want nothing to do with it, in unattachment I can very well care about the thing—or person—and take care of it—or him or her—, but I am not bound by it. I can let go of it if that is what is called for.” There is something misleading about this definition. Is caring about a thing and indifference to it (which, effectively, “not being bound by it” amounts to) not a contradiction in terms, at least in the usual understanding of these terms? Or should we see unattachment simply as the strength of character that allows us to do violence to our nature? In the absence of further clarification, Stambaugh’s idea of unattachment is interesting but unconvincing.

The chapter ends with a comparison of the Zen No-Mind with the Western conceptions of the unconscious. Stambaugh suggests that, compared to Hisamatsu, Freud and “even” Jung did not go far enough. The ensuing discussion is replete with technical terms such as “focal attention,” “holding on of ego,” and “a holistic ground which is not a solid ground but

very much in flux." We also encounter a rather unusual definition of meditation as "an activity of intense receptivity to openness" (p. 95). But if the details may be confusing, Stambaugh's central idea is clear enough: our conscious, rational mind is unconscious of what it really is (p. 94), and any system of psychology that does not take the No-Mind as its model should be dismissed as a product of Western backwardness. The wholesale condemnation of Western thought at the beginning and the closing of the chapter contrasts strongly with the exposition within, where remarkable tolerance is exhibited toward the problematic aspects of the "Eastern" philosophy of Hisamatsu.

Stambaugh's presentation of Nishitani in the last chapter of the book is straightforward despite the interpolation of multi-page discussions or rediscussions of Hisamatsu and Dōgen. I will limit my comments to a few controversial points regarding the nature of awakening and its relation to history. Stambaugh believes with Nishitani that to awaken to our true (formless) self or ultimate reality is to see "things as they really are." These are things undistorted by the interference on the part of the subject (p. 111), i.e. things experienced from the standpoint of selflessness (the formless or empty self). Stambaugh clarifies:

Basically, Nishitani wants to get beyond consciousness and self-consciousness that are bound up with the structure of subject-object. That this does not constitute a descent into the psychological unconscious should be clear. He is not talking about any kind of mental state, but about reality. As long as we are dealing with consciousness or self-consciousness we can only represent, objectify and substantialize reality, that is, distort it (p. 103).

Thus, by getting beyond the subject-object structure we arrive at reality, that is at things as they really are. But, one could object, if by looking at the world through consciousness we "objectify and substantialize reality," then do we not, when claiming to look at it "directly," fall into the opposite error of objectifying and substantializing consciousness? Stambaugh seems to be doing exactly this when she reports without objection that "originally a term reserved for a kind of mental concentration, *samādhi* as Nishitani uses it is an *ontological* term designating the ultimate reality of things" (p. 154). The denial that *samādhi* occurs to or within a subject may be motivated by the desire to underscore the experience, in that state, of one's awareness "merging with the world" (pp. 108, 111). But in the absence of elaboration of this anti-subjectivist claim, some readers may find it difficult to accept.

Related to the question of the ontological status of *samādhi* is the position occupied by enlightenment vis-à-vis history, the latter understood as the realm governed by the subject-object structure of conscious-

ness. What does Stambaugh mean by “getting beyond” this structure? We get close to the pith of the matter, I believe, with Hisamatsu’s observation (related by Stambaugh) that “the realization of the ultimate antinomy that is reason” is a moment enabling a breakthrough to awakening. But Hisamatsu and Stambaugh are at pains to explain why and how the breakthrough occurs. The argument breaks off with Hisamatsu’s disappointing admission that, “concerning the relation between the saved-self and the not-yet-saved-self, it is too delicate a matter to speak of either continuity or discontinuity” (p. 134). In light of this statement we are forced to conclude that the relation between the ordinary self and the enlightened one remains a mystery. This bodes ill for the ensuing discussion of the relation between the historical and the suprahistorical. Again, Stambaugh quotes Hisamatsu:

The great activity of the Formless Self ought to work three-dimensionally so that it will not only lead the individual to the Formless Self but truly form the world and create history. Only then will its wondrous activity become full and its great Zen activity become world-forming and history-creating. That is to say, its Zen activity will have the three dimensions, Self, World, and History, which constitute the basic structure of man, closely united within itself (p. 137).

Instead of claiming an essential identity of the suprahistorical (the formless self) and the historical, which the overall argument of Stambaugh’s book would lead us to expect, Hisamatsu charges the suprahistorical with the task of *creating* self, world, and history. The two—the creator and the created—remain independent and distinct. Thus, Hisamatsu falls squarely back on the basic dualism that his concept of formless self set out to repudiate. Nishitani does not do much better on this score. He differentiates between, on the one side, relative affirmation and its negation, and on the other, absolute affirmation coming out directly from absolute nothingness. The first pair can be regarded as the dimension of logic or history, the second—that of the suprahistorical. The transition from one to the other, i.e. the relation between the two, is a central theme in his philosophy. Yet, in a relevant passage of his *Religion and Nothingness*—a passage that Stambaugh does not discuss—Nishitani concedes his inability to explain that transition: it occurs on a level, he simply says, that no longer allows analysis in terms of “why” and “how.” In other words, the basic duality remains unresolved.

In summary, as *The Formless Self* unwittingly demonstrates, a personal experience of enlightenment does not guarantee a smooth superimposition of the reality opening in that experience—the reality of the formless self—over the world rationally observed, the historical world. To

be successful, such superimposition should be explicable and communicable, at least to some extent. For that, it requires the vehicle of language. The Zen writers examined by Stambaugh do try to interpret experience in words and concepts. But, confronted with the intractable problem of dualism, they (at least Hisamatsu and Nishitani) are quick to repudiate the very principle of conceptualization, interpreting their difficulties away as paradoxes to be “broken through” without the use of reason. To be effective, analytical tools must be sharpened rather than used self-destructively and then discarded, and the hesitation of much Zen literature on this point opens an opportunity for philosophers like Stambaugh to make a valuable contribution. I feel that *The Formless Self* does not take sufficient advantage of this opportunity. But while arguing for the extended use of philosophical analysis, I am far from expecting it to unveil the deepest mysteries of Zen experience. When properly recognized and precisely defined, a paradox remains a legitimate paradox. As Stambaugh rightly observes (p. 15), when it comes to ultimate questions none of us ordinary mortals knows anything.

***Indestructible Truth: The Living Spirituality of Tibetan Buddhism.* By Reginald A. Ray. Boston and London: Shambhala Publications, 2000. 494pp. Hardcover: \$29.95**

***Secret of the Vajra World: The Tantric World of Tibet.* By Reginald A. Ray. Boston and London: Shambhala Publications, 2001. 524pp. Hardcover: \$29.95**

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Reginald A. Ray and Shambhala Publications’ recent two volume introduction to the spirituality of Tibetan Buddhism is, frankly, a literary genre-defining classic. Outlining the synthetic middle ground between popular and academic Tibetan Buddhist literature, *Indestructible Truth* (hereafter, *IT*) and *Secret of the Vajra World* (hereafter, *SVW*) have finally set a circumscribed standard of excellence for that field of Tibetan Buddhist studies in which practice and scholarship overlap. These two volumes are valuable to both introductory and expert audiences, as they present to date the first comprehensive, explicitly “non-technical” set of textbooks on Tibetan Buddhism published in North America. This systematic overview is engagingly articulated by a scholar whose own accomplishments and range of expertise these texts aptly demonstrate. Author of the 1994 Oxford University Press *Buddhist Saints in India: A Study in Buddhist Values and*

Orientations, and a frequent participant in Buddhist-Christian dialogue, Ray, who is both a University of Chicago doctorate in Buddhist studies and an *ācarya* in the lineage of Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, holds positions at Naropa University and University of Colorado.

Ray's current compendium, the cumulative fruit of extensive years spent teaching in this field, skillfully achieves its own prescribed goals, including "striking some balance between a Western scholar writing about Tibetan Buddhism and Tibetans speaking about their own tradition in their own voices" (*IT*, p 3), a task relevant to the ethics of strictly academic literature today in addition to this heretofore unparadigmed "non-technical" but scholarly genre. With a general emphasis on illuminating the spiritual landscape of traditional Tibet and its encounter with "the modern West," these texts negotiate well a delicate balance between the emic and the etic, the Buddhist and the critical-scholarly. Throughout his work, Ray navigates methodologically between historical description, philosophical analysis, and invocation of intimate personal anecdotes from contemporary Tibetan Buddhist teachers, such as Chögyam Trungpa and Tulku Thondup, as well as from traditional hagiographies of Tibetan *siddhas* such as Mi la ras pa and sGam po pa. These two companion volumes are frequently cross-referenced, providing helpful tables and timelines throughout, and supplying a near-exhaustive account of all the major sacred sites, personages, practices, lineages, texts, doctrines, and historical events relevant to a broad overview of Tibetan Buddhism.

The organization of this comprehensive account is interesting. The first volume, bearing taxonomical primacy and entry into the system, explicitly addresses "exoteric" aspects of Tibetan Buddhism, such as monasticism and the bodhisattva vow, while the second volume, weighed by taxonomical ultimacy and systematic completion, deals with its more "esoteric" tantric dimensions. Such a taxonomy reflects the inner logic of many Tibetan doxographical and textual taxonomies, particularly those of the "Practice Lineages," such as rNying ma's yogic system of Nine Yānas, and other genres of traditional exposé that are ordered by a hierarchy ranging from Hīnayāna to Mahāyāna to Vajrayāna. Furthermore, although going unthematized by Ray, this pattern follows related styles of Tibetan commentary (*'grel*, Skt. *bhāṣya*) which circumscribe meaning (*don*, Skt. *ārtha*) progressively from "outer" (*phyi 'grel*) to "inner" (*nang 'grel*) to "secret" (*gsang 'grel*).

Indestructible Truth thus sets out in Part One, "The Sacred Environment," to delineate traditional Tibetan views on "the cosmos and its inhabitants" before covering the history of Indian Buddhism's early (seventh to ninth century) spreading to Tibet, corresponding to the "Old Translation" (*snga 'gyur*) transmission of the rNying ma pas, and the later (tenth–thirteenth century) spreading of the "New Translation" (*sar 'gyur*) bKa' rgyud pas, bKa' gdams pas, and Sa skya pas. In chronological format,

the “modern traditions” of dGe lugs pa and Ris med are then discussed prior to an elucidation of Tibetan Buddhism’s “core teachings” and “philosophies” in terms of Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna. Having presented this daunting amount of material in a thoroughly delightful and soulful way, and following a centripetal logic indigenous to tantric systems, the second volume picks up with a progressive unveiling of the Vajrayāna, known by Tibetans themselves as the path of the Secret Mantra (*gsang sngags*).

In his Introduction to *Secret of the Vajra World*, Ray inquires into the dynamic, mysterious “enduring quality of Tibet”:

What is the secret of the world that was traditional Tibet? In this book, I propose that the secret of this vajra world lies in something that transcends Tibet itself, namely its spiritual traditions, and particularly the Tantric or Vajrayana Buddhism that provided the foundation of Tibetan culture for some twelve hundred years. . . . I suggest to the reader that the color, energy, and vivacity of Tibet are owing, in some significant way, to its tantric foundations (*SVW*, p. 2).

The text proceeds to review the more exoteric “spreadings” and “view” of Vajrayāna in Tibet before addressing its internal logic in Part Two, “Entering the Vajra World.” In these chapters, Ray introduces a range of key tantric elements, including recognition of one’s guru as the embodiment of realization, initiation rituals, and preliminary practices (*mngon ’gro*) such as prostrations and *yi dam* visualizations, as well as the alchemy and physiology of the inner yogas. In accord with a progressive esocentrism, Part Three introduces the innermost, secret teachings and practices of Mahāmudrā (*phyag rgya chen po*) and rDzogs chen, which are identified as the essence-and-fruit of New Translation and Old Translation traditions respectively. The reader is subsequently brought back to the context of the modern West, in which matters concerning the trepidations and conversions of American Buddhists are addressed alongside many breathtaking, palpable accounts of the lives and deaths of contemporary Tibetan Buddhist leaders, such as His Holiness the sixteenth Gyalwang Karmapa (*SVW*, pp. 465–80).

As with any systematic overview, it is significant to note that while certain aspects of a given subject matter are structurally normalized through any process of exposition, others tend to be categorially marginalized. In gauging the overall logic and pattern of this system, therefore, what is left out of these texts becomes relevant. In this respect, the discussion of Yogācāra provided in chapter sixteen of volume one focuses on the doctrine of Three Natures (*rang bzhin gsum*, Skt. *trilakṣaṇa*) but does not discuss the matter of Mind Only (*sems tsam*, Skt. *cittamātra*). A basic description of the Bon tradition is also absent. As Ray puts it, the Bon pos

are “not explicitly Buddhist.” (*IT*, p. 184) With respect to Bon and indigenous shamanic practices, therefore, he writes, “They are certainly important to the overall picture of Tibetan religious and cultural life, but devoting chapters to them would have led me too far afield from the central topic” (*IT*, p. 5). Depending on where the line is drawn between Buddhism and Bon, or Bon and “shamanism” (another distinction that might be better clarified), structurally speaking, one might say that Bon is not so far on the periphery of the matters addressed in these texts, and readers will find in the work of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, Per Kvaerne, and Katsumi Mimaki a good range of supplementary materials regarding the Bon religion.

Furthermore, with respect to categorial privileges, it may be noted that a more politically exacting taxonomical treatment of the term “*Hinayāna*” than the one provided (*SVW*, pp. 66–68fn.) might also be in order for all future texts of this genre that will take this compendium as their standard. Overall however, these two volumes pay a great deal of deliberate attention to the subtle dissonances and contextual issues facing Tibetan Buddhism’s integration with “the modern West.” They conscientiously address, among other topics, the influence of “scientific materialism” on western culture (*IT*, p. 57), popular concerns regarding the psychology of Tulku (*sprul sku*) childhood development (*SVW*, ch.16), and contemporary challenges facing retreat practices (*SVW*, ch.17). At times, though, it does appear that controversial issues are avoided, such as the question of purported sexual abuse of power by tantric gurus in America (*SVW*, p. 170), or the complex matter of sexuality, secret sex, and tantric practice generally speaking.

Certain issues symptomatic of non-technical work may pose minimal difficulties for academic audiences. For language students in particular, the somewhat inconsistent blend of phoneticization and transliteration for parenthetical Tibetan and Sanskrit terms in these texts is rather frustrating. Just as this conventional lack of diacritical precision marks a limitation defining this introduction’s own domain of practical scholarship, so too do a certain extent of generalized discourse, as found in such statements as: “According to tradition. . .” (*IT*, p. 186), “Tibetan tradition holds that. . .” (*SVW*, p. 69), or “In Tibet, it is said that. . .” (*SVW*, p. 91). The reader must admit, however, that Ray’s own academic and experiential expertise affords him much leeway in this respect, especially in view of this compendium’s central focus on spirituality. Also suitable for spiritual scholarship is Ray’s frequent reliance on secondary resources and oral commentary, drawing the reader in closer to the voices of modern Tibetans speaking on their own traditions. Such referential ground may indeed be more appropriate to the applied genre outlined by these texts than detailed textual analysis would be.

Perhaps more consequential to a review of this compendium than any such technical matters is the implicit structure of a comprehensive exposi-

tory system that pivots on the term “spirituality,” a prime denominator which bears at least some critique of “western materialism” at its base. (See, for example, *IT*, pp. 365–66, and *SVW*, p. 482) In this respect, while Ray successfully articulates and achieves his goal of supplementing a deficiency of available literature emphasizing the “Practice Lineages” of bKa’ gyud and rNying ma (*IT*, p. 3), the systematic logic of these volumes as a whole, their own conceptual and contextual framework, could use even more elucidation in order to prevent structural criticisms. For example, although the esocentrism ordering the subject matter might appear to reflect a “western” fascination with “eastern” mystical secrets, or even a Tibetan assimilation of American expectations, a simple orientalist line of critique toward this compendium would be inappropriate, as most Tibetan Buddhists do present their own traditions with Vajrayāna at the central axis. The critical reader would benefit therefore, from further emplacement of this compendium’s own taxonomical logic within the framework of Tibetan expository traditions, a platform which might perhaps be used to oppose such a structural critique as incidental to an emic esocentrism and centripetal yogic logic common to some or all of Tibet’s Vajrayāna lineages.

Readers may also be inclined to consider the precise domain and function of the taxonomer “spirituality” in these texts and their context. If this cathected “western” category is to be understood in terms of lived experience of the “ultimate nature of reality” (*SVW*, p. 2), it might follow that the indestructible, *vajra* truth of this presentation is itself esocentric because it must be dis-covered through a kind of perennial, culturally transcendent experience of tantric praxis that corresponds with a secret, romantic, absolute content. In addition to the hermeneutic difficulties posed by non-technical use of the terms “spirituality” or “reality,” the category of “experience” with respect to discourse on Asian religions (see *IT*, pp. 28–34, “The ‘Proof’ of Experience”) also introduces potential structural infractions, as Robert Sharf has pointed out in the case of Zen studies. If such logic goes unclarified, and “spirituality” is taken to be somehow categorially distinct from “history” and “philosophy” in these texts (see *IT*, p. 4), there is some space to assume “spirituality,” or even tantra itself, to be more within the domain of the so-called Practice Lineages who emphasize meditative experience than the other more “scholarly” lineages. This is certainly not the argument that Ray is making however. As Ray points out, ever since Buddhism’s formal inception in Tibet, “the conventional Mahāyāna (Shantarakshita) and the unconventional Vajrayāna (Padmasambhava) orientations worked in alliance with each other, supporting, supplementing, and complementing one another.” (*IT*, p. 98) The historical symbiosis and tension between the principles of the monk and the yogin among Tibetan lineages is in fact explicitly thematized throughout these texts, although according to their overall presentation, an esocentric “tantric core” embodied by tantric praxis, not philosophy or scholarship,

is structurally allotted center stage, as tantra's centripetal secrecy is likewise revealed to be a potent cultural preservative.

In light of this compendium's tremendous array of detailed information, and compounded by its aesthetic readability and evocative, heartfelt sensitivity, Reginald Ray sets a circumscribed standard for that emergent field of "non-technical" Tibetan Buddhist studies which finds its domain both inside and outside the academy. A virtual prototype for future texts of this genre, Shambhala's current series *Indestructible Truth* and *Secret of the Vajra World* will certainly benefit practitioners and academicians alike, as it illuminates the grounds cohering these two interest groups. Useful as comprehensive textbooks for an introductory course, or even for practical guidance in Tibetan Buddhist meditative exercises such as gTong len (*IT*, pp. 351–54), Ray's two volume series skillfully demonstrates the inner wealth and everyday relevance of Tibetan Buddhist spirituality in contemporary diasporic contexts, establishing, indeed, that Tibetan Buddhism is no "anachronism" (*IT*, p. 449).

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The Publication Committee is headed by Dr. Francis H. Cook, retired professor of religion at the University of California, Riverside. Dr. Cook brings to the Committee and the English Tripitaka Project many years of presenting Buddhist thought and theory, including several years of study at Kyoto University. He is also the translator of the series' title *Three Texts on Consciousness Only* (1999).

At the end of 2001, the Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research in Berkeley, California, which is responsible for the American operations of the Translation Project, had a change of command with the retirement of the Rev. Seishin Yamashita from the position of President/Director of the Center. Brian Kensho Nagata was appointed the new President/Director and Rev. Yamashita continues in an advisory position to the Center and the project. The Project expresses its deepest appreciation and gratitude to Rev. Yamashita for his 18 years of leadership and guidance to the BDK English Tripitaka Project.

Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai (Society for the Promotion of Buddhism), the Publication Committee and the Numata Center for Buddhist Translation & Research are continuing to press ahead to publish volumes of the BDK English Tripitaka Series. Through these efforts, we can continue the legacy and dream of founder Dr. Rev. Yehan Numata in making the teaching of the Buddha available to the English-speaking world.

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The Pacific World—Its History

Throughout my life, I have sincerely believed that Buddhism is a religion of peace and compassion, a teaching which will bring spiritual tranquillity to the individual, and contribute to the promotion of harmony and peace in society. My efforts to spread the Buddha's teachings began in 1925, while I was a graduate student at the University of California at Berkeley. This beginning took the form of publishing the *Pacific World*, on a bi-monthly basis in 1925 and 1926, and then on a monthly basis in 1927 and 1928. Articles in the early issues concerned not only Buddhism, but also other cultural subjects such as art, poetry, and education, and then by 1928, the articles became primarily Buddhistic. Included in the mailing list of the early issues were such addressees as the Cabinet members of the U.S. Government, Chambers of Commerce, political leaders, libraries, publishing houses, labor unions, and foreign cultural institutions.

After four years, we had to cease publication, primarily due to lack of funds. It was then that I vowed to become independently wealthy so that socially beneficial projects could be undertaken without financial dependence on others. After founding the privately held company, Mitutoyo Corporation, I was able to continue my lifelong commitment to disseminate the teachings of Buddha through various means.

As one of the vehicles, the *Pacific World* was again reactivated, this time in 1982, as the annual journal of the Institute of Buddhist Studies. For the opportunity to be able to contribute to the propagation of Buddhism and the betterment of humankind, I am eternally grateful. I also wish to thank the staff of the Institute of Buddhist Studies for helping me to advance my dream to spread the spirit of compassion among the peoples of the world through the publication of the *Pacific World*.

Yehan Numata
Founder, Mitutoyo Corporation

In Remembrance

In May of 1994, my father, Yehan Numata, aged 97 years, returned to the Pure Land after earnestly serving Buddhism throughout his lifetime. I pay homage to the fact that the *Pacific World* is again being printed and published, for in my father's youth, it was the passion to which he was wholeheartedly devoted.

I, too, share my father's dream of world peace and happiness for all peoples. It is my heartfelt desire that the *Pacific World* helps to promote spiritual culture throughout all humanity, and that the publication of the *Pacific World* be continued.

Toshihide Numata
Chairman, Mitutoyo Corporation