

NEMBUTSU

NEMBUTSU IN SHINRAN AND HIS TEACHERS :

A COMPARISON

(1)

BY

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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

The Pure Land School, out of which Shin Buddhism developed, started in China in 403 A.D., when the White Lotus Society was organized by Hui-yūan (334-416). The idea of the Pure Land, however, went further back to India, where sūtras pertaining to it were compiled. The idea of Buddha-land, presided over by a Buddha, is as old as Buddhism, and the cults based upon the exposition of particular Buddha-lands, such as the abhirati of Aksobhya Buddha and the Sukhāvati of Amitābha Buddha appeared. When Buddhism reached China, there developed a school which is based upon the sūtras, which depicts how the Pure Land was established by Amitābha Buddha and how glorious is the Sukhāvati, the Pure Land of Amitābha Buddha, and which teaches the means to obtain the rebirth in the Sukhāvati.

After Pure Land Buddhism was introduced into Japan, more than five hundred years lapsed before Shinran (1173-1263) expounded the fully matured teaching¹ of the Shin school. Shinran stated in his main work, *Kyōgyo-shin-shō* (Teaching, Practice, Faith, and Enlightenment), "To attain Buddhahood by the Nembutsu is the True Teaching, Shinshū."² The Nembutsu is the core of Shin Buddhism. The Nembutsu literally meant "to think of Buddha," but Shinran understood it as the expression of faith inspired by the Absolute Power of Amida.

Since the Nembutsu constitutes such an important aspect of Shin teaching and practice, many scholars have studied it extensively. Especially among the Pure Land "theologians" numerous elaborate studies were conducted in the past. However, most of their works remain inaccessible to Western scholars because it has been written mainly in Japanese or Chinese. The few works available to us through English translations are either highly technical or highly dogmatic.

Scholars usually approach the study of Nembutsu in either of two ways: as devotees or as empathizing describers. The Pure Land "theologians," devotees of the Nembutsu teaching, engaged themselves with the subject out of conventional or devotional concern. Shinran's teaching on the Nembutsu should be seen from Shinran's point of view. This requires the investigation to accept at least tentatively Shinran's understanding of the Nembutsu as he expressed it in his writings and claimed it to be "the True Buddhism." By this way, however, one inevitably risks the danger of subjectivity,

not the least of which is dogmatism. In order to achieve objectivity in this study, we must take the subject in its historical development. Shinran himself appeals to historical precedents: "Now, if I am to reveal the True Teaching, it is the Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra."³ The Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra, Shinran was convinced, preserves the true teaching of Buddha, and Shinran explored its meaning in his magnum opus, *Kyōgyō-shin-shō*, a collection of passages revealing the true teaching, practice, faith, and enlightenment of Pure Land Buddhism.

I, Gutoku Ran, a disciple of Śākyamuni, through the śāstra-writers' expositions and the master's exhortations, had forever left the temporary gate of the thousands of practices and various good deeds and departed from the teaching for the birth under the Twin Sāla Trees, and, having converted to the True Gate of the roots of goodness and virtue, I raised the aspiration for the Incomprehensible Birth. However, I have now left the provisional True Gate and turned to the Sea of the Best Selected Vow; having abandoned at once the aspiration for the Incomprehensible Birth, I am now assured of attaining the Incomprehensible Birth. What deep significance is there in the Vow of Accomplishing the Ultimate Salvation.⁴

Through the teachings of the śāstra-writers, Nāgārjuna and Vasubandhu, and the Masters, T'an-luan, (476-542), Tao-ch'o (562-681), Shan-tao (613-681), Genshin, and Genkū, Shinran came to realize the teaching of the Buddha. Shinran, in the *Tannishō*,⁵ is quoted as having said:

If the Original Vow of Amida is true, then Śākyamuni's sermons cannot be untrue. If the Buddha's words are true, then Zendō's comments cannot be untrue. If Zendō's comments are true, how can Hōnen's sayings be false? If Hōnen's sayings are true, what I, Shinran say cannot possibly be false, either. After all is said, such is the faith of this ignorant person, Shinran. Beyond this, it is entirely left up to each one of you whether you accept and believe in the Nembutsu or reject it.⁶

In this strong statement Shinran claims for his teaching of the Nembutsu the source and authority of his Masters, and hence of Śākyamuni himself.

Naturally any devotee will share and accept Shinran's conviction. However,

to evaluate Shinran's claim that he taught the true teaching of Buddhism, one must go all the way back to the Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra itself and show whether Shinran's teaching faithfully develops the true spirit of the Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra. By this approach Shinran's teaching can be understood as Shinran himself intended, and it can be evaluated as to its claim to present the correct and true interpretation of Buddhism as set forth in this authoritative Mahāyāna Sūtra.

In these past extensive scholarly studies of the Nembutsu of Shinran, for some reason this objective dimension has been somewhat neglected. I certainly do not claim pure objectivity for my approach. Having been reared in the devout atmosphere of a Shin Buddhist family and educated in its institutions, I may be unable to study Shinran altogether objectively. I am convinced, however, that this objective approach does not violate Shinran in any way, but in fact, accords with Shinran's own attitude toward Buddhism. By being objective in the approach I do not mean to approach the subject from our contemporary view but rather to approach the subject by placing myself as fully as possible in the time and the place, historical and social situation, of Shinran. As another precaution we must keep ourselves aware that the subject of our study cannot be comprehended solely or primarily by our intellect; it has to be reached "beyond the realm of known and tangible reality."⁷ Therefore, we must try to perceive the subject as did each of Shinran's predecessors. In other words, the subject of the Nembutsu must be understood existentially in each historical context, for the Nembutsu was for them an expression both of (1) "the human yearning to rise above the world and transcend it,"⁸ and of (2) their discovery of such a state of Non-retrogressiveness (Avaivartika).

In sum, the subject of the Nembutsu must be taken as a particular understanding of what constitutes total and authentic human existence, and it must be dealt with in the attitude of the seeker for ultimate liberation. Secondly, we are required to approach the subject from the basic meaning of the Larger sukhāvativyūha Sūtra ; i.e., the eventual salvation of all sentient beings. Finally, we dare not forget that the subject requires us to understand it existentially from the view of men who found themselves in the eschatological period of "mappō,"⁹ not only the historical sense but also in the spiritual sense.

CHAPTER II ANTECEDENTS OF NEMBUTSU IN THE JŌDO TRADITION

In this chapter I shall examine various treatises on the Nembutsu written by the Seven Spiritual Ancestors of the Pure Land tradition. The doctrinal structure of the Pure Land tradition, although having the Tripitaka as its background, is largely based on, as Shinran himself acknowledged, the Seven Spiritual Ancestors :

All these great masters thus have spread
The teachings of our Sacred Books,
All carried out their holy work
By showing us the Truthful path.
O all ye people of this day
With heart devout, sincere, and true,
Hear, listen, and believe
The Dharma these holy masters taught.¹

Shinran listed the Seven Spiritual Ancestors in chronological as well as geographical order: namely, Nāgārjuna, 龍樹 100-200 A.D. and Vasubandhu, 世親 420-500 A.D., of India; T'an-luan, 曇鸞 476-542. Tao-ch'o, 道綽 562-645, Shan-tao, 善導 613-681, of China; and Genshin, 源信 942-1017, Genkū (Hōnen), 源空 1133-1212, of Japan.

(A) NEMBUTSU IN NĀGĀRJUNA

Nāgārjuna was the author of many philosophical treatises pertaining to the Madhyamika school. Among these, however, only three pertain to the doctrine of the Pure Land. These are Daśabhūmi-vibhāsā, Śāstra, 十住毘婆娑論 The Discourses of the Ten Dwellings, Mahāprajñāpāramitā upadeśa, 大智度論. The Twelve Hymns of Adoration, 十二礼讚. The ninth chapter of Daśabhūmi-Vibhāsā Śāstra, translated into Chinese by Kumārajīva in 405 A.D., has especially been regarded as one of the sacred literatures of the Shin Buddhism, along with the Twelve Hymns of Nāgārjuna, 十二礼讚.

According to the ninth chapter of Daśabhūmi-Vibhāsā, Nāgārjuna states:

Although there are numerous ways in the teachings of the Buddha, there are the difficult way and the easy way, as we see in our world. The difficult way is like walking on foot, the easy way like traveling in a boat. The same can be said about the ways of Bodhisattvas. There are those

who are striving toward Avaivartika by means of practicing the austere six-pāramitās, and those who are trying to approach Avaivartika by the way of Faith.²

Thus Nāgārjuna identifies two ways leading to Avaivartika, a state of no-retrogress.³ These are (1) the easy way of faith and (2) the difficult way of practicing the six pāramitās.⁴ Nāgārjuna elucidates the contents of the easy way of faith by saying:

... those who wish to reach Avaivartika swiftly should single-mindedly recite the Name, and those who having already reached Avaivartika, wish to attain Anuttara-samyaksam-bodhi, the supreme Enlightenment, then they should contemplate on the Buddhas of the ten quarters.⁵

In these two quotations we observe that Nāgārjuna understood that the Avaivartika is the state of Bodhisattva and the Anuttara-samyaksam-bodhi is the highest realm of the Enlightenment. At any rate, it is clear that Nāgārjuna understood that the Nembutsu (念佛) is the way to the Avaivartika and to the Anuttara-samyaksam-bodhi.⁶ Note that, in the first part of the above quotation Nāgārjuna emphasizes the Nembutsu in the terms of recitation of the Name as the means to reach Avaivartika, moreover, in the last part Nāgārjuna also recommends the Nembutsu in the terms of contemplation on the Buddhas as the means to attain the Anuttara-samyaksam-bodhi. Thus Nāgārjuna seems to imply that the Nembutsu of contemplation, "Kannen-Nembutsu," is the way to attain the Anuttara-samyaksam-bodhi and that Nembutsu of recitation of the Name, "Shōmyō-Nembutsu," is the way to reach the Avaivartika. Although Nāgārjuna puts more emphasis on the "Kannen-Nembutsu" on the Buddhas, he does not specify Amida Buddha, with whom the Nembutsu came to be identified later. In the following passage, however, Nāgārjuna lists the names of some Buddhas:

There is in the Western World the Buddha whose Name is the Buddha of Infinite Light...and those who hear His Name and believe Him will immediately attain the Avaivartika. In the infinite past, there was the Buddha by the name of 'Kaitoku.' All of the Buddhas I listed here are those who first established their vows by the guidance of this Kaitoku' Buddha. The vow is to save all sentient beings who hear His Name and to enable them to attain buddhahood.⁷

It has been the subject of theological discussion among the Pure Land

theologians whether or not “Kaitoku” Buddha meant Amida. As far as Nāgārjuna was concerned, however the object of the Nembutsu is not limited only to Amida but to all the Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas.

In fact, Nāgārjuna lists all 107 names of Buddhas. It is true, however, that Nāgārjuna does not specify Amida as the sole object of the Nembutsu, but he does imply that by the Nembutsu directed to other Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, devotees would reach the Avaivartika, but when devotees directed the Nembutsu to Amida, they would attain Anuttara-samyaksambodhi.

Once it was asked whether it is possible to attain the Anuttara-samyaksambodhi by only hearing the names of the ten Buddhas and single-mindedly believing in them, or whether it is possible to reach the Avaivartika by hearing and believing in the other Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. The answer was that it is possible to reach the Avaivartika by reciting the names of Amida and other Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and singlemindedly contemplating on them. Amida and other Buddhas also should recite their names with humble devotion. Now, I'll explain this in detail. The Buddha of Infinite Light, Lokeśvararāja Buddha, and other Buddhas (one hundred and three other Buddhas) all reside in the Pure Land now, and enable us to recite their names with humble devotion. Like this the vow of Amida Buddha is the same. Therefore, if anyone recites (Buddha's) Name with devotion and faith, they will attain the Anuttara-samyaksambodhi...⁸

This passage has been known as the chapter pertaining to the 107 Buddhas among the Pure Land theologians. From this passage, it is not clear whether Nāgārjuna regarded the Nembutsu of Amida Buddha more important than that of other Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. In addition to the two points previously mentioned, however, in this passage Nāgārjuna referred the word “vow” to Amida Buddha only. Significantly, this passage is followed by thirty-two hymns praising only Amida Buddha.

The following passage in a hymn praising Amida Buddha enables us to believe that Nāgārjuna really intended this chapter to elucidate the Nembutsu of Amida Buddha more than that of other Buddhas.

...even if a person accumulates good causes, as soon as doubt comes into his mind, he cannot see the Buddha, but the

person of pure faith can attain the full blossom of Enlightenment and see the Buddha.⁹

This is intended to show the difference between the Nembutsu of faith in Amida Buddhas and the Nembutsu of other Buddhas and its superiority over that of other Buddhas. Furthermore, at the beginning of the chapter on the Easy Path, the ninth chapter of Daśabhūmi-Vibhāsā, Śāstra, he compares the way of "Faith in Amida Buddha" to navigation on the oceans and he recommends the Path of Faith to the poorest with the least spiritual capacity, because the way of faith does not require the ascetic practice of six pāramitās. Clearly Nāgārjuna meant the Path of Faith in Amida as the easy way to the Anttara-samyaksambodhi. Scholars comparing Nāgārjuna's Easy Path with the Difficult Path customarily cite three kinds of difficulties. As Nāgārjuna pointed out, the Difficult Way, described as man's walking on his feet, is difficult because first of all a man must choose one way from many (諸). Secondly, he must prepare to endure himself with a long journey. (久). Finally, he must be ready to fight off all possible temptations which might lure him away from reaching his destination. (隨). On the other hand, Nāgārjuna says that the Easy Path is always one way (一), rapid (速), and certain (必). The analogy of "navigation on the ocean or passage by boat" is not original to Nāgārjuna. Nāgasena had already used it in reply to the question asked by King Milinda.¹⁰ When King Milinda inquired of Nāgasena whether it was unreasonable for a man of bad conduct to be saved if he believed in a Buddha on the eve of his death, Nāgasena replied: "A stone, however small, will sink into the water, but even a stone weighing hundreds of tons if put on a ship will float."¹¹ This analogy, used frequently to describe the nature of the "Tariki" (other power) Teaching, assists us to understand the characteristics of the Easy Path and the "Tariki" Teachings. Nāgārjuna used the analogy in asserting that there are two ways to enter Buddhahood, one difficult and one easy. In fact, Nāgārjuna is credited with using the metaphor of a boat or vehicle to distinguish the difficult and the easy ways; "Hīnayāna" and "Mahāyāna," the small and great vehicles, even though the term "yāna" was used before Nāgārjuna's time. Though Nāgārjuna described the Way of Faith in Amida Buddha as the Easy Path, we must note that the term "sukha," translated as "(易)" (easy), meant "purity" or "freedom" of one's mind where no egocentricity prevailed. Therefore, the word "easy" must not be understood literally as an antonym of "difficult." Rather it means not self-power but other power by which one

can reach Enlightenment. It becomes clear that Nāgārjuna used the word “easy” in the sense of being assured by the power of Amida, if we look into his spiritual background. As we come to understand his philosophical background, what he described as the content of Nirvāna, Sunyatā, or Prajñā, was only attainable after having perfected all five pāramitās, such as “dāna” (charity), “śīla” (virtue), “kṣanti” (forbearance), “vīrya” (effort), and “dhyāna” (contemplation). It was his philosophical understanding that the prajñā-pāramitā, the supreme knowledge of the Buddha, was only attainable after successfully fulfilling spiritual disciplines designed to remove all hindrances, attachments, and aversions which cover and distort the real. It is a continuous and relentless moral and spiritual discipline of self-negation. After having fulfilled, or having been exhausted from, these spiritual self-negations of six pāramitās, however, if Nāgārjuna came to understand existentially that it was the power of Amida expressed in His Name and Vow that enabled him to be saved, then it was natural for him to find the way of Faith in Amida as the easy path of self-negation. As he explained it analogically, once man finds himself in the boat there is no opportunity for him to exercise his own power or will. He goes wherever the boat goes. He assumes an attitude of self-submission and self-denial. What Nāgārjuna meant by the easy path was the way of complete self-negation negated by the power of Amida, i.e., the Way of Faith in Amida, complete “Nembutsu-state.”

As to the metaphysical understanding of the meaning of the easy path (易行), I quote Dr. Nishida:

The Nembutsu is called as the easy-path, but it must not be understood literally as easy to think or to act. It is to find our identity in the universe and in its self-identity. In other words, we as creature factors of the creature world, must find our self-identity with the transcendent one. For this we must exhaust all our conceptual thoughts, and must go through absolute self-denial. We must hit the self-contradiction in the depth of our Self, as existential failure and salvation. But this is not realized by ourselves but by the call of the absolute-Amida. Self-denial is not possible through our own Self...To understand the easy path (易行) as ‘easy’ or not ‘difficult’ is unsavable misunderstanding.¹²

(B) NEMBUTSU IN VASUBANDHU

Vasubandhu and his brother Asaṅga are the founders of the Yogācāra school. Of the numerous works credited to Vasubandhu, the most important ones are Abhidharma-kośa, with his own commentary (bhāṣya) and Tri-mśakakārikā (thirty verses). What concerns us here, however, is his Sukhāvativyūhaupadeśa (lōdoron) (淨土論),¹³ Discourse on the Land of Purity. In Jōdoron, Vasubandhu presents five contemplative practices necessary for attaining Birth and Bodhi. They are worship, praise, aspiration, contemplation, and merit-transference. Of these five, the first four pertain to entering the Pure Land and are therefore called the Gate of Ingress. The fifth pertains to returning to the defiled world and is called the Gate of Egress.

This gāthā I have made, all but
To believe in Amida Buddha.
May I with others obtain birth
In his land, Bodhi to achieve.¹⁴

The meaning of this gāthā is to show how we should meditate on the World of Peace and Happiness (安樂世界), believe in Amida Buddha, and aspire to be born in His country. How do we meditate and how do we obtain faith? If a good man or a good woman practices the 'Five Contemplative Gates' (五念門), and if the end of the practice is attained, they will surely be born in the Country of Peace and Happiness and be able to see Amida Buddha. What are these 'Five Contemplative Gates?' The first is the 'Gate of Worship' (禮拜門), the second the 'Gate of Praise' (讚歎門), the third the 'Gate of Aspiration' (作願門), the fourth the 'Gate of Perception' (觀察門), and the fifth is the 'Gate of Merit-Trans-ference' (廻向門).¹⁵

As to the way to worship Amida Buddha, Vasubandhu explains that one must do so by "bodily action" (身業). This means that when one worships Amida Buddha he must do so by physically observing certain rules of worshipping. Then Vasubandhu explains that the "Gate of Praise" (禮讚門), is the way one praises Amida Buddha through his oral action. This later came to be known as the Nembutsu of "Shō-myō" (an oral recitation of the Name of Amida Buddha). By the "Gate of Aspiration" (作願門), he means that in order to be born in the "Country of Peace and Happiness," one must single-heartedly and exclusively aspire for it (作願心常作作願一心專念異竟往生安樂國

土). As for the condition of being born in the "Country of Peace and Happiness," he says that one must aspire for it single-heartedly and exclusively and must practice deep meditation. The "Gate of Perception" (觀察門), is the way in which one perceives Amida.

How do we perceive? We perceive Him by our wisdom. We rightly see Him in our mind and practice as truly as directed.¹⁶

(故云何觀察智慧觀念正念觀彼欲如實修行毗婆舍那).

There are three ways of perception according to Vasubandhu. The first is to perceive the virtues of the adornments of the land of Amida Buddha (佛土莊嚴功德); the second is to perceive the virtues of the adornment of Amida Buddha (阿彌陀仏莊嚴功德); and the third is to perceive the virtues of the adornments of his Bodhisattvas. Finally, he explains that the "Gate of Ekō," "Merit-Transference," is the way in which one achieves the great compassionate heart, not only for himself, but also for the sake of those who are sunk deep in the mire of sorrow.

As we carefully examine the way in which Vasubandhu presents these "Five Contemplative Gates," it is clear that the first four are meant as the practices by which one can enter the Pure Land. In other words, these practices are for the sake of one's own entrance into the Pure Land. In the last, however, he points out that one does not practice these four gates only for the sake of one's own entry into the Pure Land, but also for the sake of others. Vasubandhu emphasizes that the primary object of practicing these four types of the "Nembutsu" is merit-transference. As I stated before, concerning these "Five Contemplative Practices" (五念門), "nem" means contemplation ("Smṛti" in Skt.) on Buddha which means "Nembutsu." These Nembutsu (念佛) are the ways of practice for those who are still in this world of "sahā" (娑婆), and yet aspiring for the Pure Land.

For the Bodhisattvas who attain the Avaivartika by fulfilling the "Five Contemplative Practice (Gates)," Vasubandhu introduces another "Five Gates." It is true that the concept of Bodhisattva later became very widened in its definition and applied to those who aspire for the Buddhahood whether they are laymen or Bhikshus. However, according to the way Vasubandhu presents the Five Contemplative Practices and again later another concept of the "Five Gates," Vasubandhu understands that the term "Bodhisattvas" applies only to the ones who had fulfilled the first "Five Contemplative Practices."¹⁷ In the case of Nāgārjuna, as we recall, the Bodhisattva was meant for those who fulfilled the pāth of hard work, the practices of six pāramitās, and

attained the Avaiartika. It is safe to assume, therefore, that the second concept of the "Five Gates" is only for the Bodhisattvas who have fulfilled the first "Five Contemplative Practices (Gates)." In this sense, they are to be regarded as the resultant virtues of having accomplished the first "Five Gates." In other words, the first "Five Gates" are the cause and the second "Five Gates" are the effect which Bodhisattvas enjoy as they enter the Enlightenment. These are the "Gate of Approach" (近門); the "Gate of Congregation" (大會衆門); the "Gate of Premises" (宅門); the "Gate of House" (屋門); and the "Gate of Strolling in the Garden and Forest" (園林遊戲地門).

Of these five gates, the first four perfect 'Virtue of Ingress' (入巧德) and the fifth, the 'Virtue of Egress,' (出巧德). The First Gate of Ingress is called the 'Gate of Approach,' because Amida is worshipped so as to be born in His country. As birth is gained in the County of Peace and Happiness, it is called the First Gate of Ingress. The Second Gate of Ingress is called the 'Gate of Congregation,' because Amida is praised in the manner as signified in His name. The Tathāgta's name being pronounced and the Way practiced with the light of wisdom of an Enlightened One, and because by doing so, the bodhisattva can become one of the number of the great congregation. This is why it is called the Second Gate of Ingress. The Third Gate of Ingress is called the 'Gate of Premises,' because the bodhisattva single-heartedly and exclusively desires to be born in the country of Amida, carrying out deep and serene Samādhi. By doing so, the bodhisattva can enter the Lotus World. Therefore, this is called the Third Gate of Ingress. The Fourth Gate of Ingress is called the 'Gate of House,' because the bodhisattva single-heartedly observes the wonderful adornments of Amida's country, carrying out the practice of perception and by doing so the bodhisattva can enter that country and enjoy there many a pleasure of perfect enlightenment. This is why it is named the Fourth Gate of Ingress. The Fifth Gate of Ingress is called the 'Gate of Strolling in the Garden and Forest,' because with the great compassion the bodhisattva sees the sufferings of all sentient beings. Thus, he incarnates himself in the garden of birth and death and in the forest of delusion, where he manifests miraculous powers and leads them to the Way of Teaching.

This is all due to the power of the vow of Amida Buddha. Therefore, it is called the Fifth Gate of Egress.

Thus the bodhisattva, entering through the four gates, perfects his 'Self-Help' (自力). This we must know. Then, he goes out by the Fifth Gate and perfects his 'Help-to-Others' (利益他) by transferring his own merit to others. This we must know. The bodhisattva, practicing thus the works of Five Gates, perfects the 'Self-Help' and the 'Help-to-Others,' thus at once attaining the Highest Perfect Knowledge (阿耨多羅三藐三菩提).¹⁸

As we examine the Jōdoron closely, in spite of his detailed explanation of the "Five Gates of Meditation" and its resultant "Five Gates of Virtues" of the Enlightenment, what is most important and basic is the "Ichinen" (一念), "Single-mindedness" or "single-heartedness." In other words, the "Five Gates of Meditation" and the "Five Gates of Virtue" are the five phases of the activity of faith of Vasubandhu, and these five phases of the activity are reduced to the "single-mindedness." This is what is known among "Pure Land" theologians as the "Simplified Gate" (ryakumon) as distinguished from the "Widened Gate" (kōmon), whose description is given in an enlarged category of five differentiated kinds. The "Pure Land" theologians claim that these two gates are but two phases of the same thing, -i.e., the power of Amida's Vow-and therefore each can enter into the other (kōryaku-sōnyū 広略相入). Furthermore, they say that they may condense any of these five into one single-mindedness, which is faith, (or open out into the five practices). Also if we look into the content of the five practices, we see that the first four refer to what we gain for our own good and the last practice to what we gain for the good of others. In other words, we find two merits in these five practices.

In his Jōdoron, Vasubandhu first emphasizes the idea of "Ichi-nen" (一念), "single-hearted faith," and then sets forth the five phases of Practices of this "single-hearted faith." The idea of "Ichinen" or "single-hearted faith" is so strongly put forth in the Jōdoron that it later developed into the idea of the Nembutsu of "Ichinen" or "single-hearted faith." It is also observable that the idea of "Ichinen" of Vasubandhu is a natural outcome of the idea of the "Easy-path" of Nāgārjuna, (i.e., the "Easy-path" of Nāgārjuna is here given expression by Vasubandhu in the "single-heartedness of faith.")¹⁹ In spite of such emphasis on the idea of the "Ichinen" or "single-heartedness" of faith (which later was expanded into the idea of the Nembutsu of "Ichinen"

or the Nembutsu of one-thought”), as far as Vasubandhu himself was concerned the “single-heartedness” of faith was a prerequisite for anyone to understand the true teaching of Buddha, and “single-heartedness” still had to be expanded into the higher understanding of the teaching through various “Gates of Practice” until one reaches the highest realm of Enlightenment, the Anuttara-samyaksambodhi.

(C) NEMBUTSU IN DONRAN

Donran, or T'an-luan, is said to have been brought up under the Taoistic influence and was in fact a well-established Taoist scholar when he met Bodhiruchi, a Buddhist scholar from India. His initial desire was to seek a way to attain long life. Even after he was convinced by Bodhiruchi on Buddhism, he was still concerned with overcoming the question of the transiency of life. Therefore, it seemed quite natural for him to have become such a serious seeker of the Way of Pure Land Buddhism.

There are two works of Donran which exerted tremendous influence on the development of the idea of the Nembutsu. They are the Ōjōronchū (2 volumes), A Commentary on the Jōdoron of Vasubandhu, and the San-Amidabutsuge. The former, correctly called Muryōjukyō-Upadeśa-Ganshōge-Chū, is conveniently called Ronchū. This Ronchū is not only a commentary on the Jōdoron but also a philosophical treatise on the doctrine of the Jōdo school. Indeed the basic tenet of Shinshū derives much from this work and makes it essential that we examine it thoroughly.

Among the Seven Spiritual Masters of Nembutsu-thought, Donran is the first who used the word “Other Power,” and his basic contribution to the Nembutsuthought is his exposition of the concept of “Parināmana”²⁰ of “Other Power,” the power that works upon one from without. Indeed, to view Buddhism from the perspective of the Self-Power versus the Other Power goes back to Donran himself.

When commenting on Vasubandhu in his Ronchū, Donran refers to Nāgārjuna's Igyōbon, Book on the Easy Practice. As Nāgārjuna did, Donran also classifies the Buddhist teachings into the two paths, the “difficult” and the “easy”, and regards the Jōdoron of Vasubandhu as an exposition of Nāgārjuna's Igyōbon, “Easy Practice.” Donran gives the following five reasons why the “difficult practice” is hard to follow: (1) it is difficult because one is not always certain on what constitutes good deeds, especially when influenced by other thoughts; (2) it is difficult because one, being too hasty to accumulate good deeds for his own benefit, tends to neglect producing compassion toward

others; (3) it is difficult because there is always a danger that any wicked person who does not have a sincere desire to attain the Bodhi might abuse the teaching; (4) it is difficult because one might attach oneself to only the virtues of the bodhisattvahood and neglect all other duties; (5) it is difficult because one, depending solely on his own "self-power," forgets the "Other Power," the "Power of Amida Buddha." As to why the "easy practice" is easy to follow, Donran says that "it cannot be otherwise because all rests on the Vow of Amida Buddha."²¹ Thus, he clarifies that the "Teaching of Jōdo School" is none other than the "easy practice" of the Other Power. Again, at the end of Ronchū, in order to explain the meaning of the word "速" or "at once" of the phrase "速得成就阿耨多羅三藐三菩提" or "at once attain the Anuttara-samyaksambodhi (Highest Perfect Knowledge)" in the Jōdoron, Donran quotes the Eighteenth, Eleventh, and Twenty-second Vows, and the "Self-power," and the "Other Power."

The Jōdoron says that by practicing the Ways of the Five Spiritual Gates, 'Self-help' and 'help others enjoy' are perfected. But if we clearly look into the root of things, Tathāgata Amida is the 'strongest condition.' When we discuss 'to help others enjoy' (他利之), and 'to help others' (利他), there is a different signification. If things are viewed from the side of the Buddha, it is 'to help others.' Viewed from the side of the beings, it is 'to help others enjoy.' Now we talk about the power of the Buddha and thus we say 'to help others.' This we should know. Of all things, our birth in the Pure Land and the words of the bodhisattvas and others of that land arise from the power of the vows of Tathāgata Amida. Why so? If these are not arising from the power of the Buddha, then all the Forty-eight Vows are of useless measures. Now let me take the three vows and explain their significations. The Vow states, 'When I have attained Bodhi, if the beings of the ten quarters put trust in me with the sincere mind and wish to be born in my country, and think ten times, and if they are not born, may I never obtain the Highest Perfect Knowledge.'... Because of the power of the Buddha's Vow we think (nen) ten times. Because of this Nembutsu, we can be born in the Pure Land....²² Here, again, in a parable, I will show what the 'Self-Power' and the 'Other Power' are. As we fear the Three Evil Realms, we observe the

prohibitive precepts. As we observe the prohibitive precepts, we practice deep meditation. Because of the deep meditation, we gain divine powers. Because of the divine power, we can travel to all quarters. Such is the course which we call the 'Self-Power.' Or, also an inferior person rides on a donkey and cannot rise up to heaven. However, by conveniently riding in the steps of a chakravartin, he can at once go up to heaven and travel to all four heavens without any hindrance. This is what is called the 'Other Power.'²³

As we see, the fact that Donran begins his Ronchū with the "Other Power" and ends it with the "Other Power" means that the central theme of the Ronchū is to expand none other than the idea of the "Other Power." The way Donran explains the "Other Power" with the parable of "riding on the boat" at the beginning and that of "riding on a donkey" at the end of the Ronchū is identical with the way Nāgārjuna explains the content of the "easy practice." Therefore, it is clear that Donran uses the term "Other Power" synonymously with "easy practice." Needless to say, to ride on a vehicle does not mean to deny self-power. Rather, it means to nullify the self-power. Once he is on board, there is no room where one can exercise his self-power, and he is there with all the pluses and minuses of his existence. This, Zonkaku says in his Rokuyō-shō:

The person of wealth and of non-wealth, they are all equal.
The Sight of Truth does not discriminate those who have accumulated the good and those who have not. Whether he is to be liberated from the world of life and death or not solely depends on the 'Other Power.'²⁴

Such is the characteristic of the "Other Power," and the allegory of the vehicle used here is most appropriate to illuminate its meaning. This idea of the "Other Power" is minutely explained in his "Eight Questions and Answers" which are given at the end of Book I and also in the so-called "Verification by the Three Vows" which we find at the end of Book II. Commenting on "with all beings," (the wording that comes at the end of the gāthā of the Jōdoron), Donran says that the beings described are none other than those immersed in evil and sin; i. e., the lowest of the lowest grade. Then, at the end of the Book II, touching upon the question of why we attain Enlightenment and the moment faith sits with us, he says that "all goes back to the Great Compassionate Heart of Amida Buddha."²⁵

Taking up the three vows,—i.e, the Eighteenth, the Eleventh, and the Twenty-second—he particularly stresses the great power that works upon us. In his “Eight Questions and Answers,” he says that the sin-ridden are the object of salvation, and where he talks about the verification by three vows, he points out that salvation comes from the Great Compassionate Heart of Amida Buddha. This is to say, salvation comes not from within us but from without :

Now, as we think of (the Eighteenth Vow), we may say that even all the common mortals of the lowest grade will be born in His land. And also, the Kammuryōjukyō tells us about the nine kinds of beings who will be born in His country. In this it says : ‘The beings who obtain the lowest grade are those who have committed such evil deeds as the Five Deadly Sins and the Ten Sins and who are garbed in various evil deeds. Such a stupid person, guilty of the evil deeds done, will be born in Evil Realms, suffering there endless pains for many kalpas. Such a stupid person, at the moment of departing from the life, meets a Good Teacher of the Way, who soothes and encourages him in various ways, preaching to him the wondrous Law and making him direct his thought to the Buddha. Pressed by pains, he has no time ‘to think of the Buddha’ (Nembutsu 念佛). The good friend says to him : ‘If you cannot direct your thought (toward the Buddha), pronounce the Name of the Buddha of Eternal Life.’ Thus, with the sincerest mind he keeps on pronouncing the Name uninterruptedly. He, with the thought accompanied for ten times, says ‘Namuamidabutsu.’ Because of the pronouncing of the Buddha’s Name, he, by every repetition, expiates the sins which bind him to birth and death for eight thousand million kalpas. As he quits this life in the flash of a moment, he is born in the World of Highest Happiness. (極樂世界).²⁶

As to the three vows, Donran says that the Eighteenth and the Eleventh tell us how we enjoy birth in the Pure Land, and the Twenty-second how we come back to this world to save others. These two merits, he points out, are both the gifts of Amida Buddha.

The Eighteenth Vow—Because of the power of the Buddha’s Vow, we think—the Nembutsu (念佛)—ten times. Because of this

Nembutsu, we can be born in the Pure Land. Born in the Pure Land, we are free from birth and death in the Three Worlds. Transmigration done away with, we at once attain Light.

The Eleventh Vow—Because of the power of the Buddha's Vow, we attain the Right Established State. As we attain the Right Established State, we unfailingly attain Nirvāna and there is no more the vortex of suffering. This is how we at once attain Light.

The Twenty-second Vow—Because of the power of the Buddha's Vow, one surpasses the bodhisattvas of ordinary grades, sees the final stages of the bodhisattva practice realized, and works out virtues of great compassion as in the case of Bodhisattva Samansabhadra. Thus viewed, the 'Other Power' is the Supreme Cause. How can it be otherwise?²⁷

As we see in the above quotation, Donran made it clear that, all things considered for the salvation are solely due to the "Other Power." There is no room where one can exercise his self-power. As in the case of Nāgārjuna, the "Five Gates of Practices" are no longer due to one's own effort but to the Power of Amida's Vow. Even our thinking of the Buddha, the Nembutsu, is "because of the power of the Buddha's Vow."

(D) NEMBUTSU IN DŌSHAKU

Dōshaku, or Tao-ch'ō, is considered to be the fourth of the Seven Masters of the Nembutsu school. He lived near the end of the Age of the Two Dynasties of South and North and in the early part of the T'ang Dynasty. In order to understand Dōshaku's thought it is extremely important to have some knowledge about the social condition of the China of that period, particularly from the perspective of the time in which he lived. A prevailing feeling of despair and hopelessness over seemingly endless political disorder within each ruling house and bloody warfare between the two dynasties was clearly reflected in Dōshaku's interpretation of Buddhism. In addition to the prevailing feeling of hopelessness of the time, his religious sensibility drove him to the conviction that he was unable to practice any deed worth being called good. In fact, as Professor Yamamoto claims, "to practice good looked in his eyes a mere play of thought or an ideal if viewed seriously and conscientiously from what one could attain and actualize."²⁸

It is no question that this prevailing feeling of hopelessness and Dōsha-

ku's personal conviction caused him to become an ardent follower of the Way of the Nembutsu. In fact, throughout his main work, the Anrakushū, A Collection of Lines Concerning the Country of Pace and Happiness, he expresses the idea of the "Mappō," "Closing Age," and his deep awareness of evil nature:

Therefore, it is said in the Daijugatsuzōkyō that 'in the age of the Mappō countless people practice the Way and seek the Enlightenment, but no one has yet attained the end.' It is the age of the Mappō now, it is the age of 'Five Corruptions' (五濁). There is only the gate of the Pure Land Path we may hope to pass through.²⁹

Dōshaku, in the Anrakushū, deals with the Kammuryōjūkyō, which was "a sūtra popular in the Age of the Two Dynasties of South and North and that of T'ang."³⁰ His understanding of the sūtra clearly reflects both the prevailing feeling of the age of the "Mappō" that the influence of the Buddha had been weakened by the passing of time and his own conviction that he was not capable of practicing any good deeds for his own enlightenment. In other words, Dōshaku does not read the sūtra as a follower of the "Shōdōmon," "Path of Sages," but rather in the light of "jōdomon." "Gate of Pure Land." Consistent with Nāgārjuna, he divides all the teachings of the Buddha into the two categories, the "Path of Sages" and the "Path of the Pure Land School." and adds that it is hard to go by the "Path of Sages," but easy to take the "Path of the Pure Land School." In the case of Nāgārjuna, however, the concept of the "easy practice" was not clearly explained. In fact, the "easy practice" was even extended to other Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Donran, on the other hand, viewed Buddhism subjectively and affirmed that the Power of Amida's Vow is the "Other power" and denied the "Self-Power" as an obstacle to the salvation. Dōshaku, though having been influenced by his two predecessors, namely, Nāgārjuna and Donran, made a unique contribution to the development of the Nembutsu School by introducing the first comparative study of the sūtras. The method he employed in the comparative study of the sūtra is known as the Kyō-han-ron³¹ among the Pure Land theologians and has influenced his followers. Even in this attempt to critically study the sūtras, however, he still incorporates the prevailing feeling of the "Mappō" and his own deep self-reflective mood of being an evil-natured man. Perhaps it is impossible not to be influenced by the mood and trend of the times in which one lives.

And, as I have pointed out already, the "age-consciousness" of his days and the "awareness of his own wicked nature" (罪障之自覺) are the two main factors running through his whole Kyō-han-ron.

The question was raised: All sentient beings possess the Buddha nature. Since many kalpas have gone and during that time they must have met many Buddhas. Why is it that they still go through the cycle of birth and death and cannot get out of the house of fire? As an answer let me say this: According to the Māhāyāna scriptures, it is because they have not arrived at the two kinds of excellent Dharma that they still go through the cycle of birth and death and cannot get out of the house of fire. What are these two Dharmas? One is the 'Path of Sages' and the other the 'Path of Pure Land.' At present the 'Path of Sages' is very difficult to follow. The reason is that, first, it has been long since the time of Śākyamuni Buddha, and, secondly, the Teaching is too deep and our understanding so shallow. This is why the Daijugatsuzōkyō states: 'In this Age of Mappō, myriads of people practice the Way and seek the Enlightenment, but there is no one yet who has attained the end.' It is the 'Age of the Mappō,' the Closing Age of Dharma, and the Age of Five Corruptions. The only way out is through the single gate of the pure Land Path. Therefore, the Larger Sūtra states: 'Even though sentient beings may have done evil deeds all through their lives, if they at the very moment of departing from this life pronounce my Name with the ten thoughts in their minds, they shall be born in my Land. If not, I shall not obtain the Highest Perfect Knowledge.'... If we are to talk of our evil acts, they are but storms and tempests. Therefore, all Buddhas out of their great compassion urge us to the pure Land. Even though we may have committed evil deeds throughout our lives, if really understand this (Buddha's compassion) and practice the Nembutsu wholeheartedly, all hindrances will spontaneously go away, so that we will definitely be born in the Pure Land. How thoughtless we are. We all lack such aspiration.³²

It has been pointed out by Nāgārjuna, Vasubandhu, and Donran that the main object of the Pure Land School is the salvation of the common people

who, according to Donran's words, are the "common mortals of the lowest grade." In fact, the main theme of the Mahāyāna Tripiṭaka is the salvation of such karma-laden mortals. It was also pointed out by Professor. Inagi that "even in the time of the Buddha the contents of His sermon directed toward the ordained was different from that of His sermon directed toward the nonordained."³³ These two different approaches used by the Buddha Himself gave rise to the concept of the Easy Way and the Difficult Way in Nāgārjuna and later was expounded by Donran as the concept of the Self-Power and the Other Power. Now it is further expounded as the concept of the "Path of Sages" and the "Path of Pure Land" by Dōshaku. Again, we must note that these teachings of the Easy Way, the Other Power, and the "Path of Pure Land" led toward the salvation of laymen, or common mortals, which is the main theme of the Nembutsu-thought. As to the meaning of the "Zai-ke" (在家), the "non-ordained," Zendō has the following to say: "Those who are non-ordained are always indulging themselves in constant satisfaction of their five desires. Even though they aspire "pure mind," it is like a picture drawn in water."³⁴ Such is the fate of the "Zai-ke" people who have no way of liberating themselves from suffering and are, therefore, the object of Amida's infinite compassion. In the case of Dōshaku, we see that throughout his entire system the primary emphases are the deep realization of his unsavable nature and the eschatological anxiety of the "Mappō." In other words, these two factors are the "warp and woof" which make up his system. Consequently, Dōshaku regards the "Path of Sages" as the difficult way because (1) it has been too long since the time of Sākyamuni Buddha, and (2) the teaching is too deep and complex for our simple and shallow understanding. By denying man any possibility of attaining enlightenment through his self-power, individually or collectively, Dōshaku emphasized the teaching of the "Path of Pure Land" (the "Easy Way" and the "Way of Other Power") as the only hope for men living during his time. In his main work, the Anrakushū, Dōshaku explains that faith is the very basis of the "Path of Pure Land." As we recall, Donran classified faith into three phases. But unlike Donran, who approaches faith from a strictly negative side, Dōshaku views the content of faith in both negative and positive ways. Furthermore, Dōshaku makes it clear that these three minds, "Junshin" (sincerity), "Isshin" (one-mindedness), and "Sōzokushin" (continuity), are but three different aspects of the One Mind of Amida's Vow.

Again, the question was asked: If a person by only pronouncing

(with sincerity)³⁵ the Name of Amida Buddha can eliminate the darkness of ignorance of the sentient beings of the ten quarters, and can enable them to attain birth in the Pure Land, then why is it that there are still sentient beings who in spite of their pronouncing the Name and directing their thoughts toward Him are still remaining in the darkness of ignorance with their wishes not quite fulfilled? The answer states: It is because the practices are not true and perfect, therefore, they do not understand that the Tathāgata is the 'Real State Body'³⁶ and as well as the 'Body Manifested into Being for Our Sake.'³⁷ And there are also three kinds of 'non-appropriateness.' First, the faith is not true and unsteady. Second, the faith is not one-minded and undecided. Third, the faith lacks of its continuity and it is interrupted by other thoughts in-between. These are all related with each other. If the faith is continuous, then it is one-minded. If it is one-minded, then it is true. Therefore, with these three minds, if one cannot attain birth, then there is no one else to attain birth in Pure Land.³⁸

As we see in the above quotation, what Dōshaku meant by faith is certainly not the faith of our self-power but the faith of "Other Power." His understanding of the Power of Amida's Vow expresses itself as the Nembutsu of faith and leaves no room for any practice or effort of our own power. In other words, Dōshaku thus makes it clear that faith, pure faith, is that state of mind wherein one is completely taken in by the Amida's Power and that the Nembutsu is but an expression of the Power of Amida's Vow itself.

(E) NEMBUTSU IN ZENDŌ

The fifth of the Seven Masters of the Nembutsu School is Zendō or Shan-tao, who, like Dōshaku, lived in the period of the two dynasties of To and T'ang. In fact, he is said to have studied under Dōshaku. As in the case of Dōshaku, therefore, Zendō was tremendously influenced by the general spirit of the age. Throughout Zendō's thought there runs a deep conviction of being a "common mortal," and without a clear understanding of this concept it is impossible to appreciate his thought. One of his main works, the Kangyōshō, A Commentary on the Kammuryōjukyō, we find a revolutionary interpretation of the Kammuryōjukyō in which he sets forth his view of a "common mortal." Unlike his predecessors, who interpreted

the sūtra in terms of the "Path of Sages," Zendō reads it from the viewpoint of a "common mortal." In viewing Queen Vaidehī (to whom the sermon of the Kammuryōjukyō was delivered) as an incarnation of a Bodhsattva, others had regarded the sūtra as applicable only to persons of high states. Zendō, on the other hand, understood that the true purport of the sūtra was for Queen Vaidehī as a common mortal, who, in common with us, is immersed in sin and evil. In another work, the Gengibun, On the Deep Meaning, Zendō states, "We, of being ignorant and foolish, have sunk deep in the Karmic Sea from the time immemorial..."³⁹ In the same book he also states, "Buddha delivered this Kammuryōjukyō not for sages but for us, common mortals."⁴⁰ In the Jōbungi, a "prefatorial part" of the Kangyōshō, he describes a common mortal and states, "Common mortals are heavy in their sins and deep in their delusions."⁴¹ Again, in the Sanzengi, A work on the Dispersed Mind, he laments on his own nature and states, "I am but a common mortal of such evil and sinful nature who has been floating up and down in the stream of life and death from the time immemorial, and have never been able to get out of it."⁴² Finally in the Ōjōraisan, A Collection of the Important Lines Concerning Birth in the Pure Land, he says:

I am but a common mortal who is deeply immersed in ignorance
and delusion, and possess hardly any good deeds and always
float between the three worlds and never get out of the burning
house.⁴³

In the above quotation, Zendō clearly indicates that the true aim of the Kammuryōjukyō is not for men of higher grade but for men of lower grade, i.e., common mortals. In addition he is convinced that he himself is a common mortal who has been drawn into the sea of Karma and has never been able to save himself from it. Indeed, this common mortal at the very least is unaware of the deep Karma of his evil and sinful nature, and the very worst is consciously and willfully committing such grave sins. This makes him the lowest form of life among the lowest grade. And a common mortal having no chance of saving himself is precisely the one for whom Amida Buddha established his saving vows. Therefore, Zendō argues, what makes a common mortal direct his thought to Amida Buddha (the cause of the Nembutsu) and what makes him attain birth in the Pure Land (the effect of his Nembutsu) is all in all, due to Amida's work alone. A common mortal who is aware of his sin and is capable of coping with it has a chance of saving himself. But the type of person whom Zendō called the

lowest grade lacking all means of deliverance is the person who is not even aware of the fact that he has no means of deliverance. Indeed he is not even concerned with the fact that he does not have the slightest chance of deliverance. This, Zendō emphasizes, is where the true meaning of the Original Vow comes in. Etymologically, the Original Vow, the “Hongan” (本願), is the translation of Pūrva Pranidhāna. “Pūrvā” means “former, prior, preceding, previous to, earlier than” or, according to another source, it means “Prior to one’s becoming aware of.”⁴⁴ Therefore, according to some Chinese translation, the word “shukugan” (宿願) is used. “Shukugan” means the vow made in the past. The Buddha suffers when people suffer, so any problem with sentient beings is the problem of the Buddha. In other words, having foreseen the problems we sentient beings face, the Original Vow was already established for us by Amida Buddha. Before we come to an awareness of our wicked natures, we find ourselves already taken into the Original Vow as the object of His Salvation. Therefore, there is no need for one to concern himself about being saved or not being saved. In this sense, the idea of the “Other Power” is also present in Zendō’s thought, although, for the words “Other Power,” he employs “Power of Vow” (願力), which has the same meaning.

Question : Why is it said that by ‘desiring’ we cannot be born ?

Answer : On hearing others speak of the land in the West as inconceivably full of happiness and pleasure, one will harbor a wish, desiring thereby also to be born. Such a one so says and the thought does not hold on. Hence the word ‘desire.’ Now the Ten Pronouncings of His name of this Kammuryōjukyō are perfect with ‘ten vows and ten practices.’ How are they perfect? ‘Namu’ is to ‘trust in with our entire self.’ It also means to ‘raise our thought and direct it toward the Buddha.’ The word ‘Amidabutsu’ is none other but the ‘practice.’ Because of this we can surely be born.⁴⁵

As we see in the above quotation, Zendō shows that in order to attain birth in the Pure Land there is no room for our own power but only for the Power of Amida. With respect to the “Namu Amida Butsu,” he explains that the Nembutsu means to “trust in with our entire self the Amida Buddha, who has already accomplished all the practices required for the birth in the Pure Land for us sentient beings.” In other words, in Zendō the Nembutsu has the same meaning as the Power of Original Vow. “Namu

Amida Butsu" is in fact the work of the Original Power of Amida, within which everything is accomplished. Therefore, nothing is required of a sentient being for his salvation except to "trust in."

Question: If all practices are carefully carried out, the merit thereof being directed toward birth in the Pure Land, all get born. Why is it, with the light of the Buddha covering all, that only those who say the Nembutsu are taken in? What does this mean? Answer: There are three meanings for this. First, it is the 'Shin-en' (親縁), the 'close condition.' If sentient beings practice the Nembutsu and pronounce the Name of the Buddha orally, the Buddha immediately hears it; if they always revere the Buddha in their bodily actions, the Buddha immediately sees it; if they always think of the Buddha in their minds, the Buddha at once knows it; if they always direct their thoughts toward the Buddha, the Buddha also thinks of the sentient beings. These three actions are not separate, but the same. Therefore, it is called the 'Shin-en' (親縁), the 'close condition.' Second meaning is what is called the 'Gon-en' (近縁), the 'near condition.' If the sentient beings wish to see the Buddha, the Buddha at once answers this wish and manifests Himself before their eyes. Therefore, it is called the 'Gon-en.' Third meaning of what is called the 'Zōjō-en' (増上縁), the 'strong condition.' If the sentient beings pronounce the Name of the Buddha and think of the Buddha, their sins of long past kalpas immediately get expiated. At the very last moment of their lives, the Buddha Himself appears with other Bodhisattvas and receives them. All other evil karmas cannot hold them. Therefore, it is called the 'Zōjō-en.' All other practices may well be called good deeds, but if they are compared with the Nembutsu they all are ineffective. Therefore, we find many phrases which praise the merit of the Nembutsu in many sūtras. The Forty-eight Vows of the Muryōjūkyō, for instance, clearly state that by pronouncing His Name exclusively the sentient beings can attain the birth in the Pure Land. And, as it is stated in the Amida-kyō, we by pronouncing exclusively His Name one to seven days can be born. Also it is stated that all the efforts of all the Buddhas of the ten quarters who are as

many as the sands of the Ganges are all for this end. And again the sūtra states in its articles concerning the Settled (定) and the Dispersed (散) Mind that by pronouncing His Name exclusively one can attain the birth in the Pure Land.⁴⁶

Thus Zēndō insists that the Nembutsu cannot even be compared with other virtuous practices. As long as a deed is one's own, however virtuous it may be, it is always mixed with falsehood, because, as Zēndō points out, "evil nature is hard to do away with, this is as with snakes and scorpions." All of our virtues are impregnated with poisons and with practices that are false; these cannot be called true actions.⁴⁷ Therefore, such practices of faith, no matter how strenuously and urgently carried out, cannot but be impregnated with poison. There are all what Zēndō calls the "Mixed Practice." On the other hand, the Nembutsu of the "deep mind" alone is the "Right Practice."

The second is the 'deep mind.' This is none other but the 'true faith.' This is to believe and know that we are common mortals fully clad in illusion and scanty in virtue and that we transmigrate through the Three Worlds and are not able to get out of this house of fire. Now we believe and know that the Vow of Amida Buddha definitely enables us to be born in His land as we pronounce His name down to ten times or even once, and even down to the fraction of a single thought, not a speck of doubt exists. Hence the 'deep mind.'

The 'Right Practice' is that practice carried out exclusively as shown in the sūtras concerning our birth in the Pure Land. This is called the 'Right Practice.' What could it be? This is single-heartedly and exclusively to recite this Kammuryōjukyō, the Amidakyō, the Muryōjukyō, etc., and singleheartedly and exclusively to think, observe, and direct our thoughts toward the two adornments of His Buddha country that are the fruit of the vows taken. As we worship, we single-heartedly and exclusively worship that Buddha. As we pronounce His Name, we single-heartedly and exclusively pronounce His Name. And as we praise and give offerings, we single-heartedly and exclusively praise and give offerings. Such are called the 'Right Practices.'⁴⁸

As to the "Right Practices," Zēndō proposes two classifications, viz, the

“Right Established Action” and the “Assisting Actions.” The “Right Established Action” is to pronounce single-heartedly and exclusively the Name of Amida Buddha and, without regard to place, manner, or time, repeat it without any break in time. This “Right Established Action” is the essence of Amida’s Vow. Any other type of worshiping, including sūtra-recitation, are what he calls the “Assisting Actions.” As Zendō indicates, the Nembutsu of the “deep mind” (not the other virtuous deeds mixed with such poisonous practice), is the only way to attain birth in the Pure Land, because the Nembutsu is not our effort, but the effort of Amida Buddha and possesses the fruit of Amida’s Vow. The Power of Amida’s Vow works on sentient beings and causes them to direct their thoughts toward the Buddha and enables them to recite the Name. Therefore, our birth in the pure Land is assured.

(F) NEMBUTSU IN GENSHIN

Genshin (942-1017) is the first Japanese whom Shinran regarded as the spiritual leader of the Nembutsu school in Japan. However, the Jōdomon school in Japan goes back as early as the Nara period. Furthermore, prior to Genshin, we know that there were people like Gikaku and Jie who were profoundly interested in the exposition of the tenet of the Jōdomon. But, Genshin, the founder of the Eshinryū branch of the Tendai school, is largely credited for the systematization of the Jōdomon school. Although Genshin was regarded as the learned scholar of the Tendai sect, he lived a life of the Nembutsu and confessed that the only teaching he could rely on for his salvation was the teaching of the Pure Land School. As the most learned scholar of that time, Genshin is known to have authored as many as one hundred and fifty books. Among them we are primarily interested in his Ōjōyōshū, A Collection of the Important Lines Concerning Birth in the Pure Land, which presents his understanding of the Nembutsu.

The content of the Ōjōyōshū (six volumes) is customarily divided into ten chapters, and each chapter deals with the difference of birth according to the difference of the purity of faith. According to Hōnen, these ten chapters are divided into the following three categories: (1) the broad category, which includes all practices other than the Nembutsu; (2) the simplified category, which includes certain types of the Nembutsu practices; and (3) the essential category, which deals with only the Nembutsu practice. In other words, Hōnen classifies the ten chapters into three categories according to the spirit of the Three Vows, namely, the Nineteenth Vow, the Twentieth Vow, and the Eighteenth Vow. The Nineteenth Vow, as we

have already seen, encourages all types of practices as useful in delivering oneself from the cycle of birth and death. The Twentieth Vow emphasizes the Nembutsu practice, but it is the Nembutsu of one's self-power. The Eighteenth Vow deals exclusively with the Nembutsu of the Other Power and denies all self-power but to accept the power of the Original Vow which denies even self-denial. In short, we may say that the main contribution of Genshin to the Nembutsu-thought is his clear demarcation of what one will be subjected to solely in accordance with the degree of the purity of his faith. As in the case of Zendo, Genshin also viewed the Way of the Nembutsu from the standpoint of the faith and divided the Nembutsu practice into the "Exclusive Practice" and the "Mixed Practice." The "Exclusive Practice" is the Nembutsu based on a faith which is pure and single-hearted while the "Mixed Practice" is the Nembutsu which is still tinted by self-trust and some doubt. Unlike his predecessors, Genshin made it clear from the spirit of the Muryōjūkyō that there are two different realms to which one is subjected according to the effect of his faith. These he termed the "Recomposed Land" and the "Temporary Land." The "Recomposed Land" is the realm that can be entered by those who live the life of the Nembutsu in answer to the vow and the practice of Amida Buddha. The "Temporary Land," on the other hand, is the place that is destined for those who seek birth through self-effort or half-trust.

In spite of his reputed position as an accomplished scholar, Genshin viewed himself as a humble and ignorant man. Perhaps the conclusion that he also was an evil and wicked man resulted after sincerely and honestly examining his own nature in contrast to his perfect ideal, Amida Buddha. The fundamental thing Genshin and earlier followers of the Nembutsu-thought have in common is their deep sense of self-denial. In addition to this sense of self-denial, they each possess a sense of the "Mappō." Being no exception to this we find Genshin stating in the beginning of his *Ōjōyōshū* (往生要集):

The teaching and practice for attaining birth in the Pure Land are like the eyes and legs for the people who live in this defiled age, this time of the 'Mappō.' Not to mention those who are ordained or not ordained, born of a noble family or a humble family, no one follows the Way. (It is true) that there is no one Way. There are the esoteric and exoteric teachings, and many practices of causes and effects, material and intellectual.

(Even) those who are intellect and diligent cannot yet accomplish the Way. Therefore, how can a person like me, ignorant and stubborn, even think of attaining? This is why I believe in the Only Way of Nembutsu, and from the view of the Nembutsu, I gather here some important lines of the sūtras and śāstras. As I open the pages and as I practice the Nembutsu, I find it easy to understand and practice.⁴⁹

Regarding the Nembutsu as the Other Power, which is the work of the power of the Original Vow itself, Genshin says :

(It is true) that every light that shines out of Amida illuminates all over the ten quarters and all beings indiscriminatingly and those who say the Nembutsu are all taken in and not abandoned. Even though I too live in this light, yet my delusion prevents me from seeing Amida. Yet, Amida never tires out in His compassion and keeps shedding light upon me.⁵⁰

Genshin claims that Amida is boundless in His compassion and it is out of His compassion He has established the Original Vow in which all practices and causes required for the attainment of birth in the Pure Land have been accomplished. Amida is extending his accomplishments through the Nembutsu to all sentient beings. Yet it is this "I," out of ignorance and self-trust, who stubbornly refuses to accept the Merit of the Nembutsu and always thinks that there must be some merit in what is being done through self-effort. Genshin is not denying the other virtuous practices, but he strongly urges that we should take the Single Way of Nembutsu.

(Once) the question was raised : Every good practice has its own merit. What is the reason that we are urged to follow the Single Way of Nembutsu? I shall answer the question. The Nembutsu is urged not to ban all other virtuous practices, but because the Nembutsu is not hard practice for any person, man or woman, noble or humble, at any place or any time. Even at the last moment of life we may seek to be born and the Nembutsu is the most effective Way...Secondly, the Muryōjūkyō states that the karmas of the three classes of people may differ ; some shallow and others deep. However, all equally state our exclusive and single-hearted thought in the Buddha of Eternal Life. Thirdly, the Forty-eight Vows include a vow, specially dealing with the Way of Nembutsu, and which states : 'Or think

ten times, (if they are not born), may I never obtain the Highest Perfect Knowledge.' Fourthly, the Kammuryōjūkyō states: 'Those who are extremely heavy in their sins have no other means except pronouncing (the Name) and thinking of the Buddha (Shōmyō-Nembutsu), so as to attain birth in the Pure Land...'⁵¹

Genshin dares not say that everyone who is extremely heavy in his sin (極重惡人) is a wicked man, but as far as Genshin is concerned, he unquestionably considers himself to be the lowest grade of man. The only way for him to be saved, therefore, is the Way of Nembutsu, for in the Nembutsu such evil beings already have been saved. In living the life of Nembutsu he neither depends upon his own merit nor finds his evil karma a hindrance. Rather, he is completely taken into the Power of Amida. The Nembutsu, if it is pure, must be without any trust in one's own merit. The Nembutsu of Genshin is the Nembutsu of the Other Power which penetrates through and crushes down the thickest wall of one's self-trust.

(G) NEMBUTSU IN GENKŪ

Genkū (or Hōnen 1133-1212) is the last of the Seven Spiritual Masters of the Nembutsu-thought and the founder of Jōdo sect. In fact, it was Genkū who had systematized "the Nembutsu-thought in an actual faith or the religion in Japan."⁵² It also should be noted that Genkū lived during a period of political and ecclesiastical turbulence and expressed a profound feeling of the "Mappō" throughout his writings. As I have already pointed out, in all of his predecessors of Nembutsu-thought, it is common to detect this profound sense of the "Mappō," the last age of the Buddha-dharma. Particularly we find this to be the case in Genkū himself. In order to fully appreciate his thought it is important for us to know the political and ecclesiastical conditions of Japan and to understand why the Nembutsu-teaching came to be accepted by people of that time. In Japanese Buddhism, C. Eliot states:

He was the son of an official in the province of Mimasaka, who was killed by an enemy and died bidding his son to take no revenge and become a priest. The boy showed such talents that a local priest persuaded his mother to allow him to be sent to study at Hieizan. In the letter commending him to the attention of the authorities of the Sacred Mountain, he was called an image of Monjusū and quickly justified the description by his extraordinary ability. After being ordained a priest he

retired to Kurodani on the outskirts of Kyoto resolving to seek no preferment and to devote himself to prayer and study, entirely renouncing the world. He is said to have read through the whole of the Tripitaka five times but, though the fame of his wisdom and learning spread widely, he did not find any doctrine which satisfied him. This was the period of the civil wars of Hogen and Heiji and the rise of Kiyomori, and naturally a religious and gentle soul like Hōnen felt that the great need of mankind amidst such troubles was religious peace... The age tended either to superstition which sought merely to avoid temporal misfortunes or to the difficult doctrines of the Kegon, Tendai, and Shingon schools... These were difficult roads for the ordinary men, and besides how amid riots and rebellions, in which the clergy played a prominent part, was one to believe statements such as that Samsāra is really nirvāna and that this troubled life is really identical with peace and enlightenment? ⁵³

We have noted that, before Genkū, the Nembutsu Teaching had a long history and included exponents such as Kuya, Genshin, and Ryōnin, not to mention other spiritual predecessors in India and China. It was Genkū, however, who succeeded in inspiring many followers and organizing them into a religious body. According to the tradition, at the age of forty-three, Genkū was inspired deeply by the Ōjoyōshū of Genshin which later led him to the Sanzengi of Zendō. Particularly, the following passage from the Sanzengi opened his eyes to the Way of the Nembutsu:

One is to pronounce single-heartedly and exclusively the Name of Amida Buddha, whether walking or standing still, whether sitting or lying, and without regard to the length of time for even a moment. This is called the 'Right Established Action.'⁵⁴

It is evident throughout his writings that Genkū is convinced that in such a turbulent and degenerate age, the Way of Sages (the Way of Self-Power) is impossible for common people to follow. Thus the only way possible for salvation is by the Way of Other Power, the Nembutsu Teaching.

The chief work of Genkū is the Senjyaku Hongan Nembutsu Shū, A Collection of the Lines Concerning the Nembutsu of the Best-Selected Vow, commonly called the Senjyakushū (two volumes). As the title itself indicates, in this work Genkū attempts to clarify the meaning of the Nembutsu

of the Best-Selected Vow. By the Best-Selected Vow he means that the Original Vows made by Bodhisattva Dharmākara are the cause of our birth in the Pure Land. In this sense, all the Forty-eight Vows are the best-selected vows. In the beginning of the book, however, he clearly states: "Namu Amida Butsu! The cause for attaining birth in the Pure Land is no other than this Nembutsu (Namu Amida Butsu)."⁵⁵ It is evident that what Genkū meant by the best-selected vow is the Eighteenth Vow the Nembutsu of the Other Power.

The reason for the two paths shown in the Anrakushū, namely, the 'Path of Sages' and the 'Path of the Pure Land,' is to enable us to abandon the 'Path of Sages' and to choose the 'Path of the Pure Land.' For this there are two reasons. First, it has been long since the time of Śākyamuni Buddha; second, the teaching is too deep and our understanding too shallow. Thus, (it is customary) to set up two paths in this school. And, it was not Tao-ch'ō alone; T'an-luan, T'ien-tai, Chia-tsai, Tzu-en, and others all shared this view.⁵⁶

Thus, Genkū, in the first chapter, defines his position by saying that for common people who live in this age of the "Mappō," the "path of Sages" is too difficult to follow. Therefore, they should choose the "Path of the Pure Land."

There are many ways leading to birth in the Pure Land. According to Zendō, however, there are two kinds. One is the Right Practice and the other the Mixed Practice. In the Right Practice there are two phases, namely, 'to open' and 'to close.' First, when we open the Right Practice, there are five kinds, namely, the right practice of recitation, that of perception, that of worshipping, that of pronouncing His name, and that of praising and giving offerings. Secondly, if we close it, we get two kinds, namely, the 'Right Action' and the 'Assisting Action.'⁵⁷

Among the practices which Zendō explains in the Sanzengi, Genkū contends that only the pronouncing of the Nembutsu is the right cause for birth in the Pure Land. All others are sundry practices. Therefore, he urges that everyone should abandon all these practices and confine himself to the right practice. "Why is it," he asks, "that out of the five, only the pronouncing of His Name is the Right Action?" He answers, "Because it is in

accordance with Amida's vow... The point is that the pronouncing of the Nembutsu is the practice of Amida's Original Vow. Therefore, anyone who practices this practice rides on the vow, and thus he without fail will attain birth in the Pure Land."⁵⁸ In the third chapter, Genkū explains the content of each of the Forty-eight Vows, and thereby shows that the true purport of the vow lies in our birth in the Pure Land through the Nembutsu.

The question is raised: As we view all the vows, the coarse and the bad ones are taken out and the good and the refined taken in. This is understandable. Why is it that the Eighteenth Vow selects out and abandons all other practices, taking in only the single practice of the Nembutsu and making this one as the Amida's Original Vow for attaining the birth in the Pure Land? The answer is as follows: Though we cannot quite understand the holy will which is beyond our knowing, I may try here to explain this from the two different points. The first is the point of being superior or being inferior. The second is that of being difficult or easy. First, I may say that the Nembutsu is superior and others inferior. The reason for this is that His Name is the source of all virtues. Therefore, all that are with Amida Buddha..., are all inherent in the Name of Amida Buddha. So the virtue of His name is the most superior... Secondly, as to the difficult and the easy, the Nembutsu is the easy, while all others are difficult to practice.⁵⁹

Consistently throughout his writings Genkū stresses the importance of pronouncing the Nembutsu by saying that the practice of the Nembutsu is superior and easy in comparison with all other practices. Although he does not say that mere pronouncing of the Name of Amida Buddha is the only way, he nevertheless emphasizes the importance of his practice so strongly that some of his disciples interpreted his teaching as having placed sole virtue on the sheer frequency of reciting the Name. They thought that the more they recited the Name the more merit they could acquire, thereby adopting only the outer forms of practice and missing the central point.

What Genkū means by the Nembutsu, the true Nembutsu, is the Nembutsu as the expression of one's faith. In other words, faith comes out as the Nembutsu on our lips. As faith is aroused within the mind, it expresses itself naturally as one's reciting the Name. In the Sanshinshō, the eighth chapter of the Senjyakushū, he states:

The Three Minds that I am here quoting are the most important to those who practice the Way. The reason for this is, as it is stated in the Kammuryōjūkyō Sūtra,⁶⁰ those who possess the Three Minds unfailingly attain birth in His country. Therefore, we must know that with the Three Minds we attain birth in His country. The Ōjōraisan Commentary states: ⁶¹ 'If there is one mind lacking, then there will be no birth.' Therefore, we know clearly that even one lacking we cannot be born in the Pure Land. In other words, those who wish birth in the Pure Land need to be perfect in the Three Minds. Of the three, the 'sincere mind', means the 'true mind.'⁶²

Next, it is the 'deep mind.' It means the 'deep-believing mind.' What we should know is that it is our doubt that binds us to make this house of birth and death and it is our faith that enables us to enter the castle of Nirvāna.⁶³

In citing Zendō's three phases of faith, Genkū makes explicit that birth in the Pure Land is not possible unless the Nembutsu is the expression of faith. He underscores this point by insisting that it is our doubt that shuts us into the world of suffering, whereas our faith bridges us to the Pure Land. Even prior to our desire for birth in the Pure Land, Amida had already established the cause of our birth in the Pure Land, and this cause, His Original Vow, is now given as the Nembutsu to us. Therefore, doubt means the mind's relying on one's self-power, and this clearly rejects the cause that Amida out of His compassion had already established as the way to the Pure Land. On the other hand, faith means the "mind of no mind" wherein one's self-relying mind is taken over by Amida's power. In other words, faith means the state of mind wherein everything about self is denied and only the Nembutsu is active.

Once the question was raised in regard to the Nembutsu: Now, there are two kinds of the Nembutsu: the Nembutsu one recites when his mind is calm, and the Nembutsu when his mind is disturbed. Which one of the Nembutsu is superior? The answer was: The merit of the Nembutsu is all the same. Therefore, there is no difference between the two.⁶⁴

If the Nembutsu is simply something that we recite, there would be a difference between the Nembutsu that sages or wise men recite and the Nembutsu that common people recite, or the Nembutsu of calm mind and

that of disturbed mind. Since the Nembutsu does not belong to the one who recites, there is no difference at all. This means that the Nembutsu is the expression of one's faith as the manifestation of Amida's Original Power itself. Therefore, the Nembutsu of Genkū may also be said to be the Nembutsu of the Other Power.

CHAPTER III

NEMBUTSU IN SHINRAN'S WRITINGS

(A) THE LIFE OF SHINRAN

Shinran was born May 21, 1173, at Hino, a place some miles to the southeast of Kyoto. The Fujiwara family could not hold rein over the warrior clans who were now gaining power. Civil wars, natural calamities, and internal stuggles prvailled. First the Heike clan¹ rose to power and was then followed by the Genji clan,² which was superseded by the Hōjō clan.³ In spite of continual internal conflicts it was clear that the warrior clans were in control of political power, and this meant the end of aristocratic rule. In the midst of this political turmoil and confusion there were "signs of revival of the indigenous spirit, a revolt of the crude ideas and chivalric temper of the warriors and peasants living in the eastern provinces against the over-refinement of the aristocrats of Miyako."⁴ However, the end of political confusion was to come at only a later time.

Economically it was a time of transition when the old aristocratic families lost control of their manors to the feudal lords in the face of rising military power. As far as the peasants were concerned, it was simply a change of rulers. Nevertheless, they were slowly becoming aware of their own power and tried to protect their lives and their properties by organizing themselves. On the one hand, they were the victims caught in the middle of a bloody struggle between the aristocratic clans and the newly rising warrior clans. On the other hand, however, out of the necessity to protect themselves, they learned to organize and to stand together against merciless exploitation.

Ecclesiastically it was a time of decay and corruption. The old established Buddhist schools of Nara and Hiei, which had enjoyed royal protection and prestige for so long, lost their original religious spirit. Unable to adjust to the new situation, they were desperate to preserve their prestige and material wealth. Many of the established ecclesiastical institutions even organized private armies of "monk-soldiers" and engaged in bloody conflict, not only with political opponents but also occasionally among themselves. Their corruption and moral decay were beyond repair and it was just a matter of time before something had to be done. The time for reformation and respiritualization of Buddhism was ripening fast.

It was in such a time that Genshin's *Ōjoyōshū* came out. In the *Ōjoyōshū*, Genshin sums up the feelings of people of his days by saying that it is the time of "Mappō," the "Latter Days of the Dharma." The thought of Mappō, Latter Days of Dharma, prevailed among people of that time. Genshin urged people by saying, "The fateful days have arrived; we, the weak and evil beings of the 'Mappō,' are unable to save ourselves through practicing the Way of Sages. Therefore, we must accept the faith in Amida Buddha and recite the Nembutsu." Here we see evidence that the idea of a simple faith in the salvation of Amida Buddha was well accepted by the people of all classes.

As we look at Shinran's life, we notice that it can be divided into three stages which correspond to his concept of "Sangantennyū," or "Three-Vows-Turning-In," which is the central theme of his main work, *Kyō-gyō-shin-shō*. The three vows stand for the Nineteenth, the Twentieth, and the Eighteenth Vow of the Forty-eight Vows which are revealed in the *Amitāyur-buddha-dhyāna Sūtra*. Each of the three vows corresponds to a stage in Shinran's spiritual development.

The first stage of his spiritual life is the period when he was studying in Mt. Hiei Monastery. It is said that by the time he was eight he left his parents and in the following year, 1182, he became an ordained monk. According to a letter he addressed to his wife, Eshinni, he was obviously one of the so-called "Dōsō," lowest-ranking monks in the Tendai school. It was the time of hard study and ascetic discipline which were required to accumulate good karmas and to return to obtaining Enlightenment. It was the way of the Six Pāramitās of Self-Power. This was the period which Shinran later described as the Way of the Nineteenth Vow, which emphasizes the importance of self-effort and self-practice. Such practices, however, can be observed only by those who can afford them; namely, those aristocratic people who have no worry about the immediate needs of life. They are impossible for those who are poor yet sincerely desire salvation, Shinran must have realized this from his own experience as a "dōsō." In addition, having lived in an atmosphere of corruption and moral decay in Mt. Hiei Monastery, he must have been disappointed by the fact that there were very few priests who took the Way of Self-Power seriously and conscientiously. Shinran calls it the "temporary gate of various practices and virtuous deeds" (万行諸善の仮門).

The second stage, which corresponds to the Way of the Twentieth Vow,

is the period during which Shinran was introduced for the first time to Nembutsu under Hōnen. After having gone through agonizing soul-searching, Shinran is said to have joined Hōnen at the age of twenty-nine, in 1201 A. D. It must have been a difficult decision to leave a powerful institution such as the Hiei Monastery and to join the Nembutsu-movement of Hōnen, which was considered to be a threat to the established schools of Buddhism. In fact, according to his writings, Shinran may have felt some premonition of the coming persecution which was to take place four years later in 1204, resulting in the exile of Hōnen and others, including Shinran, and the execution of some others.

Even after Shinran joined Hōnen in his Nembutsu-teaching, his soul-searching did not end. Describing this period of spiritual struggle, Shinran states in his Wasan: "Though I now take to the True Way, no true heart find I e'er in me. Deceit and untruth speak in flesh; nothing pure is there ever to see."⁵ Even after he was led to the teaching of Nembutsu, by which Amida assures his birth in the Pure Land, Shinran could not rid himself of reliance on his self-power. This is what Shinran later called the Way of the Twentieth Vow, which is the Nembutsu of "Self-Power": the Nembutsu to which one ascribes the merit of his pronouncing His Name, regarding it that the pronouncing itself brings about birth into the Pure Land.

In the last stage, called the Way of the Eighteenth Vow, Shinran firmly established his faith in the Nembutsu of Other Power. Only when one is taken into the Nembutsu of Amida Buddha can he truly overcome himself as a sin-ridden common mortal and become free from that self who always discriminates against others and takes pride in itself. Only in such a stage can man accept others as fellow common mortals and at the same time he can truly see through their disguises of false selves.

We have been unable to find out when Shinran reached this final stage of the Nembutsu of faith. He likely reached this point slowly by being led by his deepening experience of life, and it seems likely that he came to this mature faith around the age of forty while he lived among peasants in his exile. During his exile he doubtlessly had occasion to witness a truly noble humane quality in the humble and sincere attitudes of those ignorant and illiterate peasants who were supposed to be the lowest of low-grade people. Having spent his entire life with the noble and aristocratic people of Kyoto and the so-called holy people of the monasteries and temples whose lives were full of falsities and deceptions, it must have been a shocking experience

for him to discover such positive human qualities in the peasants' rather passive and reconciled attitudes—attitudes resulting from being viewed as the lowest of low-grade and karma-fettered. The Tannishō quotes Shinran as saying:

Even the virtuous are born in the Pure Land, how much more so are the evil ones. However, people always say, even the evil ones get born in the Pure Land: why not the virtuous? At first sight this seems to make sense, but it is contrary to the purport of the Vow, the Way of the Other Power. The reason is that those who practice good by their self-power lack the mind to rely whole-heartedly on the Other Power.⁶

Without an encounter with the people of Echigo, whom others called and who thought themselves to be "the evil doers." Shinran could not have had such a deep religious experience of the Nembutsu. He was even more convinced of Amida's assurance of birth in the Pure Land because he was an evil-doer himself.

In 1212, Shinran and others were pardoned from their exiles. However, Shinran did not return to Kyoto until 1235, when he was sixty-three years old. In 1262, Shinran died at the age of ninety. According to the Kaijashō, before he died he said: "After I die throw my body into Kamogawa River and let fish eat my remains."

(B) SHINRAN'S WRITINGS

Shinran's works are considered to be as follows: Kyō-gyō-shin-shō, Jōdomonruijushō, Jōdosangyō-ōjōmonrui, Gutokushō, Songōshinzōmeimon, Ichinentanen-mon-i, Yuishinshōmon-i, Nyushutsumonge, Wasan, Private Letters, and Tannishō. Along with these there are many treatises and commentaries concerning his teachings. Among the works cited above all are regarded as Shinran's, except the Tannishō. All references to Shinran's writings are contained in the Shinshū Seikyō Zenshū Hensanjō, (5 volumes), (abbreviated hereafter as SSZ).

Among these writings, the Kyō-gyō-shin-shō (教行信証) is the magnum opus of Shinran. In reference to the Kyō-gyō-shin-shō, Sir Eliot said, "It is a collection of 143 passages from various works such as the Avatamsaka and Nirvāna Sūtras which, in Shinran's opinion, justified his views, and is regarded as the fundamental textbooks of the Shin Buddhism."⁷ However, as far as Shinran was concerned, he not only supported his views by collecting passages from various sūtras, but he also developed a systematic

presentation of the True Teaching of Pure Land Buddhism. Shinran also mentions that his deep-felt feeling of gratitude to the Buddha and the Seven Patriarchs compelled him to write the *Kyō-gyō-shin-shō*.

How grateful I am, this humble Shinran, to have now been able to meet with holy scriptures of India and the expositions of the masters of China and Japan, which are difficult to meet, and to have already been able to hear them which are difficult to hear. I reverently believe in the Teaching, Practice, and Attainment of the True Teaching, and acknowledge deeply the Tathāgata's profound compassion. Hereby I rejoice at what I have heard and praise what I have received.⁸

Among these Masters, Shinran was particularly grateful to his predecessor and teacher, Hōnen. Throughout his writings, his feeling of deep debt to Hōnen and his teaching of the Nembutsu is apparent. In the "Chapters of Transformed Buddha and Land" he states the following:

The *Senjyaku-Hongan-Nembutsu-Shū*⁹ contains the essentials of the True Teaching and the profound doctrine of the Nembutsu. Those who read it can easily understand its purport. It is indeed an incomparable and supreme collection of fine passages, and unsurpassed and profound scripture. Out of thousands of persons who received his teachings personally or otherwise, over many days and years, very few were allowed to read and copy the book. But I was allowed to copy his book and his portrait. This is the fruit of virtue of the exclusive thought and the right action. This is the sign of an unfailing promise of gaining birth in the Pure Land. With the tears of joy I have noted this.¹⁰

Shinran claims that his main concern was to have what Hōnen taught to be understood correctly. Therefore, Shinran took Hōnen's *Senjyaku-Hongan-Nembutsu-Shū* and tried to clarify the essential point of the Nembutsu.

Kyō-gyō-shin-shō is the common name for the *Ken-jōdo-shinjitsu-kyō-gyō-shō Monrui* (顯淨土真實教行証文類), a collection of passages revealing the true teaching, practice, and enlightenment of Pure Land Buddhism. This magnum opus of Shinran is the basic scripture for Shin Buddhism ("Honden" 本典). The text consists of six chapters, viz., "Preface to a Collection of passages Revealing the True Teaching, Practice, and Enlightenment of Pure Land Buddhism" (顯淨土真實教行証文類序); "A Collection of Passages Revealing the True Teaching of Pure Land Buddhism" (顯淨土真實教文類); "A

Collection of Passages Revealing the True Practice of Pure Land Buddhism” (顯淨土眞実行文類); “A Collection of Passages that Reveal the True Faith of the Pure Land Buddhism” (顯淨土眞実方便化身土文類); “A Collection of the Passages Revealing the True Buddha and Land of the Pure Land Teaching” (顯淨土佛土文類); “A Collection of Passages that Reveal the Transformed Buddha and Land of Expediency of Pure Land Buddhism” (顯淨土方便化身土文類).

The Jōdomonruijushō (淨土文類聚鈔), a short collection of passages concerning Pure Land Buddhism, is the condensed form of the Kyō-gyō-shin-shō and is also the work of Shinran himself. The original manuscript is now preserved in the Higashi Honganji Temple of Kyoto.

There are some divided opinions among scholars concerning the composition date of the Kyō-gyō-shin-shō. However, it is generally agreed that the first draft was written while Shinran was still in exile, when he was between the ages of forty and sixty. Additions and corrections were made by Shinran from time to time until he was seventy-five or eighty years old. Those who believe that the Kyō-gyō-shin-shō was composed and published in 1223 base their opinions on the passage in the chapter, “Transformed Buddha and Land.” The passage reads as follows: “至我元仁年甲申, until the first year of Gennin (1223), the year ‘kinoe-saru,’ in Japan.” On the other hand, those who claim that the Kyō-gyō-shin-shō was not completed until his latter days, after his return to Kyoto, base their opinions on the Rokuyōshō written by Zonkaku which reads as follows: “此の書大概類聚の後, 上人幾くならず帰寂の間再治に及ばず: As the master passed away not long after he had almost finished the compilation, he could not rewrite it.”

As already noted, the Kyō-gyō-shin-shō is a collection of the important passages from all the sūtras and commentaries that have bearings on the tenets of Shin Buddhism. Shinran systematizes all the collected materials into the four categories of “Teaching” (kyō), “Practice” (gyō), “Faith” (shin), and “Attainment” (shō). “Teaching” stands for the teaching of the Buddha, “Practice” for the cause of our attaining Buddhahood, “Faith” for the trust we place in virtue arising out of the practice which is the cause, and “Attainment” for the fruit that results from the cause which can be either the practice or the faith.

In Book I, which is the book on “Teaching,” Shinran quotes a passage from the Muryōjukyō which affirms that the sole cause of Śākyamuni’s appearance into this world is to reveal the Way of the Nembutsu. Thus, Shinran

contends that all the teachings Śākyamuni delivered in his lifetime can be condensed into the Way of the Nembutsu.

In Book II, the book on "Practice" Shinran explains the true meaning of the Nembutsu. He states that Amida Buddha expresses profound compassion and wisdom in His Name. Therefore, the Name of Amida Buddha constitutes the very guarantee of our unconditional salvation and is the object of our faith. In other words, the Name of Amida Buddha, "Namu Amida Butsu," contains the fruit and the substance of Amida's Vow or Will to save all beings. By giving us this Name, Shinran says, Amida Buddha transfers all the merits required for our birth in the Pure Land to us, common mortals, who are not capable of practicing any other rigid practice.

In Book III, Shinran expounds the meaning of "Faith." He says that faith is our whole-hearted trust in the Name of Amida Buddha from which comes salvation. When one hears this Holy Name and trusts in it, he is assured of his salvation. In a strict sense, this hearing itself is not our own doing but Amida's. Therefore, faith and practice are one and the same thing.

In Book IV, which is based on "Attainment," Shinran explains the fruit of these two causes of "Practice" and "Faith." He says that the fruit of these two causes can only be enjoyed by us when we are born into the Pure Land. Nevertheless, the devotees of the Nembutsu of the Other Power are already in the "Right Established State," a state promised in the Eleventh Vow.

In Book V, the book on the "True Buddha" and the "True Land," Shinran further explains the fruit of the two causes of "Practice" and "Faith," and describes the "Land of Infinite Light," i. e., the Pure Land. The "Infinite Light" symbolizes Amida's wisdom, while "Infinite Life" symbolizes His compassion. Thus, the "Land of Infinite Light and Life" comes to mean the Enlightenment of Amida Buddha.

In Book VI Shinran discusses the "Transformed Buddha" and the "Transformed Land" (along with the above mentioned, Teaching, Practice, Faith, Attainment, Buddha, and Land) from the standpoint of the Path of Sages, which is based on our self-power, and points out that in the age of "Decadent Dharma" these self-power teachings of the Path of Sages are beyond our capability. Therefore, he urges us to forsake the Path of Sages and to arrive at the Way of Pure Land, which is the Way of Nembutsu.

The Wasan, though mainly directed toward common people, contains very important doctrinal expositions of the Nembutsu. The Kōsō-wasan in parti-

cular contains the substance of the sūtras and the expositions of the Seven Masters. The Shōzōmatsu-wasan contains the expositions of Shinran's faith and the Nembutsu.

Wasan (和讚) literally means in Japanese (wa) hymn or words (san) of praise. The Wasan was written in easy Japanese in contrast to the Kansan (漢讚), which was written in Chinese. Consequently, the Wasan was used by monks and scholars to express their religious sentiment for the general public rather than for the intellectuals of that time. Shinran, in one of his Wasans called Genze Riyaku Wasan (現世利益和讚), explains the word "wasan" as follows: "'Wa' means 'to make soft' and 'san' means 'to praise.'" Shinran uses "softened hymns of praise" frequently in order to make the import easier to understand. Unquestionably Shinran uses the "wasan" to communicate with common people who were unsophisticated or illiterate. A Wasan consists of four lines, and each line is made up of five to seven syllables. Shinran intended to have Wasans sung or recited by the common people. In the Haja Kenshō Shō (破邪顯正抄) (Notes on Destroying the Wrong and Revealing the Right), Zonkaku makes a revealing comment:

These illiterate, ignorant persons cannot realize the profound principles in the scriptures, nor can they discriminate the abstruse tenets in the commentaries. For this reason, Shinran softened the import of the sūtras and commentaries to some extent so that ignorant people could understand. Thus he gave them the wasans, telling them to recite them from time to time together with utterances of the Nembutsu.¹¹

There are altogether four collections of the Wasan: (1) Jōdo-wasan,¹² the Pure Land Hymns; (2) Kōsō-wasan, the Patriarchs' Hymns; (3) Shōzōmatsu wasan,¹³ the hymns on the ages of Right Dharma, Semblance Dharma, the Decadent Dharma; (4) Kotaishi Shotoku-hosan, praise of Prince Shotoku.

The Jōdo-wasan is made up of seven parts. Shinran praises the virtues of Amida Buddha and this part is almost a translation of San Amida Butsu-Ge of T'an-luan.

There are also the hymns which praise the ideas expressed in the Triple Sūtra of Shin Buddhism. The Triple Sūtra of Shin Buddhism, which Shinran himself selected as the standard canon of Shin Buddhism, forms the Mahāyāna Tripiṭaka. They are: the Larger Sukhāvātīvyūha Sūtra (大無量壽經); the Amitāyur-buddha-dhyāna Sūtra (觀無量壽經); and the Smaller Sukhāvati-

vyūha Sūtra (阿弥陀經).

The Kōsō-wasan contains hymns relating the personal histories and the thoughts of the Seven Masters. There are ten verses concerning Nāgārjuna, ten on Vasubandhu, thirty-four on T'an-luan, seven on Tao-ch'ō, and twenty-four on Shan-tao, ten on Genshin, and twenty on Genkū.

The Shōzōmatsu-wasan consists of five parts: (1) the Shōmappō-wasan or Sanjisan, Hymns on the Three Ages; (2) the Giwaku-wasan; (3) the Kotaishi-shotoku-san; (4) the Gutoku-hitajukkai-san; and (5) the Zen-kōji-san. The first contains fifty-eight hymns; the second, twenty-three; the third, eleven; the fourth, sixteen; and the fifth, five. The collection concludes with the Jinenhoni-shō (自然法爾抄), a small work on the tenet of Sihin Buddhism.

The Shōzōmappō-wasan explains that there are three periods of Dharma. The first period, called the "Shōbō" (正法), is the period of "Correct Dharma," which lasted five hundred years from the time of Buddha's death; the second period, called the "Zōpō" (像法), the period of "Counterfeit Dharma," lasted for the next one thousand years; and the last period, called the "Mappō" (末法), the latter period of the Dharma, is the period in which we live. In this period of "Mappō," it is difficult to attain the Enlightenment by our own power and effort. The only possible way is to rely on the All-Compassionate Heart of Amida Buddha.

The Giwaku-wasan deals with the subject of doubt as the word "giwaku" (疑惑) literally means "doubt" or "question."

The Shotokutaishi-san contains the hymns praising Prince Shotoku, whom Shinran held in high esteem.

The Tannishō (歎異抄) literally means "notes lamenting differences." The foreword states that the text is devoted to correcting the beliefs of the followers of Shinran who deviated somewhat from the true faith of Shinran.

There have been some differences of opinion among scholars regarding the authorship of the Tannishō. But, judging from the content, it seems safe to assume that the Tannishō was the work of some disciple who had been close to Shinran. Chapters IX and XIII seem to justify the claim that the author was Yuien. For instance, in both chapters Shinran is presented as the one who answers the questions brought up by Yuien himself, and Shinran answers in calling the name: "Dear Yuien,..."

The book is made up of two parts with eighteen chapters. The first part presents the words of Shinran himself, while the second part contains criticisms. Although the Tannishō is not the work of Shinran, it is an

extremely important source for gaining the insight into Shinran's life in the Nembutsu.

The Private Letters, called Goshōsoku-bun (御消息文), is a posthumous collection of Shinran's private correspondence. These are the Mattō-shō (末燈抄), the Goshō-soku-shu (御消息集), and the Ketsumyaku-monju (血脈文集).

The Mattō-shō (A Torchlight to the Latter Days) contains three papers treating doctrinal subjects. In addition, it contains eighteen private letters, some of which were sent to his disciples scattered in the Kanto area in answer to their questions concerning the Nembutsu and faith. Other letters were written to his family and friends and concern matters of his personal life and daily events.

All these documents are very important because they shed light on Shinran's life of the Nembutsu and faith. It is my intention in the following chapter to extract from all these sources Shinran's comments on the Nembutsu.

The Jōdomonruijushō means "A Collection of the Passages Concerning Birth in the Pure Land" and consists of one volume. In this book Shinran gives a general outline of the tenet of Shin Buddhism which he expounded in detail in the Kyō-gyō-shin-shō. Therefore, it is called Ryakumonrui, which means the "Abridged Collection of the Passages." In contrast with the Kyō-gyō-shin-shō, which reviews the whole field of Buddhist teaching in a detailed and extensive manner, Shinran deals here only with those scriptures directly connected with the Shin school. He eliminates all other scriptures. Furthermore, in his book Shinran treats faith as identical to practice. This stands in contrast to the Kyō-gyō-shin-shō, where he treats faith and practice as two separate categories.

Also, this book includes the gāthā entitled the Nembutsu-Shoshinge. The Nembutsu-Shoshinge means the "gāthā on the right faith in the Nembutsu." In this gāthā, the four categories of Teaching, Practice, Faith, and Attainment of the Kyō-gyō-shin-shō are now confined into the two categories of "Practice" and "Faith." By combining the four categories of Teaching, Practice, Faith, and Attainment into three categories, then to two categories, and finally into the one final category of Faith, Shinran makes it obvious that the aim of the Shin school is faith alone.

The Jōdosangyō-ōjōmonrui means "A Collection of the Passages from the Three Sūtras that Refer to Birth in the Pure Land" and consists of one volume. In this book, Shinran deals exclusively with the question of our

birth in the Pure Land about which allusion is fully made in the Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra (Muryōjukyō, in Japanese). Shinran cautions us to read the three sūtras, the Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra (Muryōjukyō), the Amitāyūr-buddha-dhyāna Sūtra (Kammuryōjukyō), and the Smaller Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra (Amīdakyō) with unprejudiced minds so we can understand the hidden meanings. In this book, Shinran addresses himself to undecided people who are not quite convinced about the teaching of the Nembutsu of the Other Power. Therefore, he is particularly interested in elucidating what is true and what is not. Shinran also discusses the varying effects of faiths in terms of three different births. He points out that there are three different faiths; namely, the faith of the Eighteenth Vow, of the Nineteenth Vow, and of the Twentieth Vow. Consequently, there can be three different births.

The Gutokushō (2 volumes) literally means "Gutoku's notes." Shinran often calls himself Gutoku, which means ignorant or foolish. By this he means that because he is such an ignorant person he has no other way to save himself except to rely on Amida's Vow of salvation. Thus he expresses his true feeling of being powerless to save himself and of being grateful to Amida, who assures him of birth into the Pure Land. The Gutokushō, consisting of two books, is often called the Nikanjo, meaning literally "a book in two volumes." Book I covers Buddhism in general terms. Shinran says that there are two "leaps" (cho 超) and two "exits" (shutsu 出) in Buddhism—the vertical (ju 堅) and crosswise (oh 横). He classifies all the teachings of Buddhism under these two categories. All pseudo-Mahāyāna teachings belong to the vertical exit (jushutsu), and all true Mahāyāna teachings belong to the vertical leap (jucho). Within the Jōdomon school there are two categories, but only Jōdo-shinshū belongs to the crosswise leap (ocho), while the other sects of the Jōdomon school belong to the crosswise exit (oshutsu).

Book II deals with the meaning of the "three minds" of the Kammuryōjukyō. In this book Shinran views the content of faith from the standpoint of Shan-tao and his Sanzengi.

The Songōshinzōmeimon (尊號真像銘文) deals exclusively with some of the technical terms of sūtras, commentaries, and other writings. However, Shinran explains each term from the standpoint of his own faith rather than from the standpoint of tradition, or customary understanding. "Songō" means literally the "name of the Sacred One," which Shinran

represents as the "Namu Amida Butsu" itself. "Shinzō" here means "portrait" or "image." According to Shinran, it is a "portrait" of Amida Buddha rather than a portrait of Śākyamuni Buddha. "Meimon" simply means "note." Shinran begins this book with his explanation of the meaning of Amida's Forty-eight Vows and His Name. He focuses on the explanation of the meaning of faith by emphasizing that faith is not our doing but rather is the acceptance of Amida's Vow. Together with the portrait of Amida Buddha, Shinran praises highly those services rendered by the Masters who propagated the Way of Nembutsu.

The Ichinetanen-mon-i, "Notes on the Heterodoxies of Ichinen (one thought) and Tanen (many thoughts)" is the collection of notes and explanations that Shinran gave to the Ichinetanen-funbetsu-no-koto written by Ryukan, who was the founder of the Chorakuji, sub-sect of the Jōdo-shū. In this book, Ryukan introduces the ideas of the "Ichinen-ōjō" and the "Tanen-ōjō." The "Ichinen-ōjō" means that a single Nembutsu is all that is needed for birth in the Pure Land. On the other hand, the "Tanen-ōjō" is based on the idea that for birth into the Pure Land, the manifold pronouncing of the Nembutsu is required. Repudiating these ideas, Shinran quotes various authorities and then rejects them both. He says that it is wrong even to discuss the number of the Nembutsu, for true Nembutsu is the Nembutsu of Other Power, not that of our own self-power.

The Yuishinshōmon-i is a commentary on the Yuishinshō of Seikaku, whom Shinran esteemed highly. The Yuishinshō explains that our own deeds are not the right cause for our birth into the Pure Land. Instead, the Nembutsu and faith in the Nembutsu is the way into the Land.

The Nyushutsunimonge, "A Gāthā on the Two Gates of 'Ingress' and 'Egress,'" is a hymn composed in Chinese. In this book, Shinran explains the concept of the two gates of "in" and "out" which Vasubandhu introduced in the Jōdorōn. Vasubandhu classifies all the teachings of Buddha into the five gates. The first four are for "Entering," and the last one is for "Outgoing." As we have already discussed, this two-gate theory was a revolutionary idea of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Before Vasubandhu, all the teachings emphasized the way of "entering" into Buddhahood rather than the way of "outgoing" to help other sentient beings. Shinran expounds the idea of the two gates further and says that these are but two aspects of the work of Amida himself and one, therefore, the same way. Because of Amida's grace, he says, we are now in a position to practice the Way.

(C) NEMBUTSU IN SHINRAN'S WRITINGS

According to Shinran :

The utterance of the Name is the supreme and truly wonderful Right Act, the Right Act is the Nembutsu ; the Nembutsu is 'Namu Amida Butsu,' Namu Amida Butsu' is the Right Recollection. This we should know.¹⁴

In the earliest history of the Pure Land School, the Nembutsu was practiced in its literal sense. The devotees thought of the Buddha in their mind, "Kannen" (觀念), formed His images before their eyes, "Kansō" (觀相), and perhaps recounted all the Buddha's excellent virtues. This is "thinking of the Buddha," the Nembutsu (念佛), in its literal sense, and demands both a great deal of mental concentration and exacting exercise. Long arduous training in meditation is required before one can absorb even a small portion of the Buddha's excellent personality into his own spiritual system. It is, indeed, a difficult exercise in self-effort, "jiriki" (自力). Nāgārjuna stated: "Although there are numerable ways in the teachings of the Buddha, they can be classified roughly as the Difficult Way and the Easy Way."¹⁵ He meant that the difficult way is the way of practicing the Six Pāramitās¹⁶ while the easy way is the way of faith in Amida Buddha.

Donran explained Nāgārjuna's statement in more detail. On the one hand, according to Donran, the Difficult Way to achieve Enlightenment depends on one's own power, "jiriki" (自力), and involves the prerequisite of achieving an acceptable performance of pāramitās. On the other hand, he describes the Easy Way of achieving Enlightenment, the Way of the Other Power, "tariki" (他力), as a tireless, compassionate effort on the part of Eternal Amida Buddha.

Later Zendō, in his Sanzengi, claimed that there are five right practices, "goshōgyō" (五正行), which assure one's birth into the Pure Land : viz., (1) reciting sūtras, (2) contemplating Amida and His Land, (3) worshipping Him, (4) uttering the Nembutsu, and (5) adoring Him and giving offerings before Him. Of these five practices, Zendō called the utterance of the Name "Shōjōgō" (正定業), "Right Act," and referred to the other four as "Jōgō" (助業), "Auxiliary Act."

The passage quoted from the Kyō-gyō-shin-shō at the beginning of this chapter illustrates that Shinran understood the nembutsu to be the utterance of the Name of Amida Buddha. The Nembutsu (buddhanusmṛiti in Sanskrit) means literally "thinking of the Buddha," or "to keep in memory." Later

the word came to include any practice one could employ to achieve the Enlightenment. The Nembutsu in Shinran, however, does not mean the utterance of the Name by one's own efforts but rather the utterance of the Name by its own power through one's mouth. Shinran called this interpretation "Tariki Nembutsu." Regarding "Tariki Nembutsu," the Anjin-ketsujō-shō states the following:

The Nembutsu as practiced by the 'jiriki' followers put the Buddha away from themselves far in the West, and thinking that they are worthless beings, they would now and then recollect the Original Vow of the Buddha and pronounce His Name (Shōmyō). This being so, the most intimate relationship between the Buddha and all beings fails to establish itself here. When a pious feeling however slight moves in their hearts, they may be persuaded to think that their rebirth is approaching. But when they are not too anxious to say the Nembutsu and whatever pious feeling they have grows weaker, the assurance of their rebirth wavers. Inasmuch as they are common mortals, it is only on exceptional occasions that they cherish pious feelings; and they thus naturally have an uncertain outlook in regard to their rebirth. They may have to wait in this uncertain state of mind until the time actually comes for them to depart from this life. While they occasionally pronounce the Name with their mouth, they have no definite assurance for the Pure Land. This position is like that of a feudal retainer who only occasionally comes out in the presence of the lord. Such a devotee is ever worried over as to how to court the favour of the Buddha, how to be reconciled to Him, how to win His loving consideration between the devotee's unsettled mind and Buddha's great compassionate heart. The 'Jiriki' devotee thus puts himself at a distance from Buddha. As long as he keeps up this attitude of mind, his rebirth in the Pure Land is indeed extremely uncertain...¹⁷

Although we do not know who wrote this short treatise, it beautifully defines the "Tariki" teaching. In the "Tariki" teaching, the "jiriki" followers have a less intimate and trusting relationship to the Buddha than do the "tariki." The "jirikj" endeavor is to court the favor of Amida by doing meritorious deeds, including the reciting of His Name. This condition

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points to a certain irreconcilable and fundamental separation between Buddha and His devotees. The Tannishō quotes Shinran as saying:

As for me, Shinran, there is nothing left but to receive and believe the teaching of the Venerable Master—that we are saved by Amida merely through the utterance of the Nembutsu. I am entirely ignorant as to whether the Nembutsu is really the cause of Birth in the Pure Land, or whether it is the karma which will cause me to fall into hell.¹⁸

The Nembutsu is non-practice and non-good for those who practice it. It is non-practice for us, because it is not the practice which we do out of our own contrivance; and it is non-good because it is not the good which we do out of our own contrivance. It is entirely due to the Other Power and is free from self-power. Thus the Nembutsu is non-practice and non-good for those who practice it.¹⁹

Thus, Shinran totally repudiates the “jirki” on their view of salvation and emphasizes the Nembtsu as the out-flowing of Amida’s Original Vow. In the opening of the Tannishō, Shinran is quoted as saying, “When we believe that we are to be born in the Pure Land being saved by Amida’s inconceivable vow, there rises up within us the desire to utter the Nembutsu. At that moment we share in the benefit of ‘being embraced and not forsaken.’”²⁰ At this spiritual moment, when one is grasped by the power of Amida’s Vow, the sacred Name is inspired from the depths of one’s being and expresses itself as the Nembutsu. Shinran stated in his Analect, “this is the primordial sense of the Buddhānusmṛiti in Shin Buddhism.”²¹

In an outline of the Triple Sūtra of Shin Buddhism, Professor Fujimoto states:

In the Chinese Triple Sūtra it is founded by a word joy (pramudita), but the joy is spiritual stir in the plane of reflection caused by the Faith. It is natural to express the fullness of Faith in terms of the reflective joy.²²

Emphasizing the Nembutsu as the out-flowing of Amida’s Original Vow, Shinran is quoted as having warned:

Upon meeting illiterate persons uttering the Nembutsu, certain persons frighten them by asking, ‘Do you believe in the inconceivability of the Name?’ Without clearly explaining the details of the two inconceivabilities, they confuse the minds of the

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people. This matter should be considered over and over and be well discerned... we utter the Nembutsu with the belief that we shall be released from Birth and Death by the inconceivability of the Great Vow of Amida's Compassion. If we understand it in this way, our discriminations are not involved in the least. Thus, we shall be born in the True Land of Recompense in accordance with the Vow.²³

In other words, once one experiences the primordial sense of Buddhanusmriti, the Nembutsu will flow through one's mouth as naturally as calling the sacred Name of Amida Buddha. It is not a question of choosing the Nembutsu or faith, because they are one and the same. There cannot be true Buddhanusmriti either in mind or mouth without the primordial faith behind it. These two, the Nembutsu and the faith, cannot be separated.

It is a grave misunderstanding if a person believes that a simple recitation of the Sacred Name alone is the cause of his rebirth. Shinran is very precise concerning this point. He claims, "The true Faith is necessarily accompanied by the utterance of the Name, but the utterance of the Name is not always accompanied by the Faith endowed by the Vow-Power."²⁴ Thus, he rejects the idea that the Nembutsu possesses a divination-effect. For the persons who practice the Nembutsu it is "non-practice" and "no-good." The Nembutsu is the Mahā-caryā of Amida; therefore, it is the "unimpeded Single Path."²⁵ In Shin Buddhism, the practicing of the Nembutsu has no significance other than as an expression of gratitude for Amida and His Vows. Even before we think of Amida, Amida thought of us in His Compassion and Wisdom, and, in order to liberate us from a karmic fetter, Amida already established His Vows and Caryās (means) for us. Thus, Shinran understands the Nembutsu not as one's reciting the Name of Amida, but as the expression of gratitude and praise of Amida's Power. In the Wasan, Shinran expresses his deep-felt gratitude:

Who'er pronounce His Holy Name
And are fully garbed on faith, faith true,
Think ever of Him and a heart
To express thanks is with them too.
Who'er deeply can put trust
Upon His Vow and do his part
Say Namuamidabutsu.
No matter when, with grateful heart.²⁶

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Shinran emphasizes the Nembutsu as "Hō-ōn Nembutsu," the expression of one's gratitude, and no more. On the other hand, he does not deny that the Nembutsu should encourage our doing good deeds as an antidote against committing evil, thereby gradually elevating our moral lives. Only in this limited sense did Shinran encourage his followers simply to recite the Nembutsu.

It should be clear by now that for Shinran the Nembutsu means the Tariki-Nembutsu, the Nembutsu of Amida's power and His Mahā-caryā itself. None of our own efforts or practices are involved in the Nembutsu because the Nembutsu is essentially the expression of our gratitude for His Name. What, then, is the significance of the Name and Amida's Vow? In order to answer this it becomes necessary for us to inquire into Shinran's understanding of what constitutes the Name and Amida's Vow.

(D) NEMBUTSU AND VOWS

From the Mahāyāna Tripiṭaka, Shinran selected the following three Sūtras as the standard canon of Shin Buddhism: (1) the Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra, the Larger Sūtra on the Eternal Buddha or the Daimuryōjyūō; (2) the Amitāyur-buddha-dhyāna Sūtra, the Meditation Sūtra on the Eternal Buddha or the Kammuryōjyūō; and (3) the Smaller Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra, the Smaller Sūtra on Amida or the Amidakyō. Along with these three canons, there are several sacred volumes of literature by the Seven Spiritual Masters. These are: (1) the Book on the Easy Path by Nāgārjuna; (2) the Sukhāvativyūha-upadeśa or the Discourse on the Land of Purity by Vasubandhu; (3) the Twelve Hymns of Adoration by Nāgārjuna; (4) the Commentary on Vasubandhu's Discourse on the Land of Purity by Donran; (5) the Treatise on Peace and Bliss of the Land of Purity by Dōshaku; (6) the Four Commentaries on the Amitāyur-buddha-dhyāna Sūtra by Zendō; (7) the Subordinate Commentaries by Zendō; (8) the Essentials of the Rebirth by Genshin; and (9) the Nembutsu as the Supreme Choice of the Original Vow by Hōnen. Between the Triple Sūtras and the Sacred Literatures of the Seven Spiritual Ancestors, Shinran regards the Larger Sūtra as the principal sūtra of Shin Buddhism. In this sūtra Śākyamuni disclosed the story of Tathāgata Lokeśvararāja, his disciple Dharmākara, and his Forty-eight Vows. The Forty-eight Vows are the promises that Dharmākara made in the presence of Lokeśvararāja and all other deities refusing to attain the highest enlightenment until these forty-eight promises were fulfilled. These vows are known by Amida followers as His Original Vows.

The First Vow begins: "O Bhagavat, if in my land, after my obtaining

Buddhahood there should be hell, hungry ghosts or brute creations, may I not attain the Supreme Bodhi,"²⁷ Each of the vows has the same format, and in accordance with its particular content, each vow is given an appropriate title.

The First Vow is called "The Lack of the Three Evil Realms,"²⁸ because it proclaims the eradication of the three evil realms in the Sukhāvati, the Land of Happiness. Every vow follows an identical pattern. It starts with a condition: "If in my Land, after my obtaining Buddhahood," and concludes with "may I not attain the Supreme Bodhi." Each vow focuses on the ideal of Mahāyāna Buddhism: the enlightenment of all beings. To this end the Bodhisattva Dharmākara has staked his Supreme Bodhi. In other words, every vow is the expression of the profoundest compassion (Māhā-karunā). In one of his Wasans, Shinran proclaims:

Inquire into Every Vow of the Tathāgata,
And it reveals that it aims to save us,
Suffering beings with merits He amassed;
O Great Compassion has it succeeded in!²⁹

Traditionally, the Forty-eight Vows have been classified into three categories: (1) the vows pertaining to the perfection of Dharmākara himself as a Buddha of Sambhogakaya (the Twelfth, Thirteenth, and Seventeenth Vows), (2) the vows pertaining to the consummation of the Pure Land (the Thirty-first and Thirty-second Vows), and (3) the vows pertaining to the benefits given to sentient beings (the remaining vows). These vows can also be seen from the view of Dharmākara as the ideal for all Buddhists. From this functional aspect, these vows can be put into three categories: (1) the vows intended to annihilate suffering and to assure bliss (the first sixteen vows), (2) the vows to accomplish the ways and means to liberate sentient beings (the second sixteen vows), and (3) the vows to provide various benefits to sentient being (the last sixteen vows). From these Forty-eight Vows, however, Shinran selects three vows, "Sangan" (三願), to be of central importance to Shin Buddhism. They are the Eighteenth, Nineteenth, and Twentieth Vows. The Eighteenth Vow is as follows:

If after my obtaining Buddhahood, all beings in the ten quarters should not desire in sincerity and trustfulness to be born in My country, and if they should not be born by only thinking of Me (Nembutsu) for ten times, except those who have committed the five grave offenses³⁰ and those who are

abusive of the true Dharma, may I not attain the Supreme Bodhi.³¹

The Nineteenth Vow:

If after my obtaining Buddhahood, all beings in the ten quarters awakening the mind of Bodhi and practicing all deeds of merit should cherish the desire in sincerity to be born in My country and if I should not, surrounded by a large company, appear before them at the time of their death, may I not attain the Supreme Bodhi.³²

The Twentieth Vow :

If after my obtaining Buddhahood, all beings in the ten quarters hearing My Name cherish the thought of My Country and planting all the roots of merit and turn them in sincerity over to being born in My Country, and if they should fail in obtaining the result of it, may I not attain the Supreme Bodhi.³³

Shinran views these three vows from the standpoint of faith. He classifies the Eighteenth Vow as the Nembutsu of the Other Power, the Nineteenth Vow as the Way of Self Power, and the Twentieth Vow as the Nembutsu of the Self Power. In addition, he identifies each vow with the three sūtras of the Shin Buddhism; i.e., the Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra, the Amitāyurbuddha-dhyāna Sūtra, and the Smaller Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra.

Furthermore, Shinran considers the Nineteenth Vow, which is All Essential, as the way to the Eighteenth Vow by calling it the "Essential Gate" (要門). The Twentieth Vow, which is All True, he calls the "True Gate" (眞門) to the Eighteenth Vow, and then the Eighteenth Vow as the "Gate of the Vow" itself. Thus, Shinran regards both the Nineteenth and Twentieth Vows as the preparatory ways to the Eighteenth Vow.

I, Gutoku Ran, a disciple of Śākyamuni, through the śāstra-writers' expositions and the Master' exhortations, had forever left the temporary gate leading for the Birth under the twin Sāla Trees, and, having converted to the Incomprehensible Birth. However, I have not left the provisional True Gate and turned to the Sea of the Best Selected Vow ; having abandoned at once the aspiration for the Incomprehensible Birth, I am now assured of attaining the Inconceivable Birth. What deep significance is there in the Vow of Accomplishing the Ultimate Salvation!³⁴

As it is pointed out in the above statement, Shinran simply reverses the

numerical order and subordinates the Nineteenth and the Twentieth Vow to the Eighteenth Vow. This is called "Sangantennyū", (三願転入), which means literally "three vows turning in." For Shinran, the Eighteenth Vow is the chief and most important of the three vows assuring one's birth into the Pure Land of Amida. Thus the Eighteenth Vow is called the Kingly Vow, "Ō-Hongan" (王本願), or the Selected Original Vow, "Senjyaku-Hongan" (撰択本願).

Because the "Sangantennyū" of Shinran is the core of his teaching, it is vitally important to examine its process and to comprehend his reasoning. The "Sangantennyū" not only reflects Shinran's spiritual insight but also fully expresses the essence of Sākyamuni's Teaching in its purest form. D. T. Suzuki states:

Some may wonder how the Mahāyāna could have expanded itself into the doctrine of pure faith which apparently stands in direct contrast to the Buddha's supposedly original teaching of self-reliance and enlightenment by means of Prajñā. The Shin is thus not infrequently considered altogether unbuddhistic.⁸⁵

It is true that Shinran emphasizes the importance of faith (śraddhā), but the "śraddhā" is understood as the work of Amida's Mahā-caryā and not that of devotees. In other words, for Shinran, faith was not his own achievement but rather the consummation of the Mahā-caryā within him. Therefore, Shinran rejects any dualism between the "caryā" and "śraddhā." His rejection of the traditional dualistic interpretation of the "caryā" and "śraddhā" on the basis of the "parināmana of the Tathāgata" was, in fact, the "Eternal Moment" of the ascetic practices and disciplines of his monastic life.

From a structural viewpoint, however, Buddhism is based on the framework of the Four Noble Truths. It is true that "few Mahāyāna authors have ever touched upon the Four Noble Truths, as if they assumed the doctrine was indicated exclusively to Hinayānistic audience by Śākyamuni."⁸⁶ Consequently, the Mahāyānistic works in general leave some readers with the impression that most of the Mahāyānistic schools have hardly any relation or affinity with the original teachings of Sākyamuni. Shin Buddhism, particularly, has been the target of such criticism. Upon close examination of Shinran's work, however, we realize that the Four Noble Truths are actually the basic principle of Shinran's teachings. This is even evident in the title of Shinran's main work, the Kyō-gyō-shin-shō which means "Sūtra-

Caryā-Sraddhā-Adhigama.” It is in the light of the Four Dharmas that Shinran introduces the Triple Sūtra as the “āgama” (Sacred Teaching), which reveals the first and second of the Four Noble Truths. “Caryā” and “Śraddhā” correspond with the third Noble Truth, which shows how to cope with the suffering of life. Then “Adhigama” reveals the last of the Four Noble Truths—the state of the Enlightenment. Shinran’s revolutionary interpretation of the Four Noble Truths is revealed in his approach to the subject of the “caryā.” By the “caryā,” Shinran means the Mahā-caryā of the Tathāgata, not a person’s own practice. He stresses the concept of “anātman” to such an extent that one’s whole being and practice are identified with the “caryā” of the Tathāgata. It is also evident that Shinran’s particular emphasis is not only on the “prajñā” but also on the “karunā” aspect of the Tathāgata. The utterance of the Sacred Name, “Namu Amida Butsu,” is the work of the Mahā-caryā of the Tathāgata and His Karunā. Guided by the light of “Name Amida Butsu,” Shinran reverses the order of the three vows and places central importance on the Eighteenth Vow.

As we examine the Nineteenth Vow, we see an obvious emphasis on self-effort in terms of the accumulation of meritorious works. Regarding this, Shinran states:

The passage of the fulfillment of this vow is the passage of the ‘Three Classes of Men;’³⁷ it is the passage of the ‘Nine Grades’³⁸ of men with meditative and non-meditative practices in the Meditation Sūtra.³⁹

That is to say, the Nineteenth Vow is intended for those who still harbor the idea that salvation cannot be attained without effort on their part. Shinran calls it the expedient teaching of the “Yomon” (要門), “Essential Gate,” and simply disqualifies himself from practicing the way of expedience. He writes in one of the Wasans:

It is hard to check our evil thoughts.
The mind, like asps and scorpions runs,
Deeds righteous are mixed with poison;
Deceitfulness us ever stuns.⁴⁰

Self-actualization, when it is taken as an end in itself, is impossible to achieve. After having submitted himself to ascetic practices and disciplines of monastic Buddhism on Mt. Hiei, Shinran reached the above conclusion. The more one strives and practices, the further away one seems from self-actualization. The more earnestly Shinran practiced the ways to Enlighten-

ment, the keener became his self-awareness of his karmic existence. The Tannishō quotes Shinran as saying:

As for me, Shinran, there is nothing left but to receive and believe the teaching of the Venerable Master that we are saved by Amida merely through the utterance of the Nembutsu. I am entirely ignorant as to whether the Nembutsu is really the cause of birth in the Pure Land, or whether it is the karma which will cause me to fall into hell. I will have no regrets even though I should have been deceived by Hōnen Shonin, and, thus, by uttering the Nembutsu, I should fall into hell. The reason is that, if I could become Buddha by performing some other practice and fell into hell by uttering the Nembutsu, then, I might feel regret at having been deceived. But since I am incapable of any practice whatsoever, hell would definitely be my dwelling indeed.⁴¹

The above passage is said to be the part of Shinran's answers to some of his followers who came to Kyoto and sought his personal clarification concerning the meaning of Nembutsu. In a rather curt, brusque manner, Shinran completely denies his ability to practice any other means except the Nembutsu. This relentless insight into his own egocentric nature led him to accept the Nembutsu as the only way into the Pure Land. That is to say, he despaired even of his own despair.

It is from this basis that Shinran considers the Twentieth Vow as the expedient way of the "Shinmon" (眞門) "True Gate," which reads:

If, after my obtaining Buddhahood, all beings in the ten quarters upon hearing My Name should cherish the longing for My Land and, planting all the roots of merit, turn them in sincerity over to being reborn in My Land, and if they should fail in obtaining the result of it, may I not attain the Supreme Bodhi.

This vow contains the self-power practice of the Nembutsu which embodies the spirit of the Smaller Sūtra. Shinran classified this teaching as "Shinmon" (眞門), "True Gate."

In this corrupted age the priests and laymen must promptly enter the 'True Gate of the Perfectly Accomplished Utmost Virtues' (円修至徳眞門) and aspire for the 'Incomprehensible Birth' (難思往生). In the expedient teaching of the 'True Gate'

there are the roots of goodness and roots of virtue, and also the 'meditative exclusive mind' (定專心), the 'non-meditative exclusive mind' (散定專心), and the 'meditative and non-meditative mixed mind' (定散專心). The person of the mixed mind are the sages and common mortals of Mahāyāna and Hinayāna, whether good or evil, all recite the Name without knowing which is the 'right acts' or the 'auxiliary acts' (助正間雜心). Indeed, the teaching of the 'True Gate' is for abrupt deliverance, but the men who follow it are for gradual deliverance; they practice exclusively but with a mixed mind. The meditative and non-meditative exclusive minds are the minds which turn to the power of the Original Vow with the belief in the retribution of one's sins and meritorious acts. These minds are called the 'exclusive minds' of self-power. The roots of goodness refers to the Tathāgata's Blessed Name. The Blessed Name is consummated with thousands of goodness and is the source of all goodness. The roots of virtue refers to the Tathāgata's Virtuous Name. One who utters this Virtuous Name even once accomplishes the virtuous names of Buddhas of the three periods in the ten quarters.⁴²

Shinran explains at length why the Twentieth Vow is thought of as the expedient teaching of the True Gate. It was a common practice, even among the direct disciples of Hōnen, to recite the Name as many times as possible because the Nembutsu was understood in terms of performing meritorious practices. Some of Hōnen's disciples even sought solitude in remote places so they could concentrate on the recitations of the Name. Questions pertaining to numbers of recitations of the Name came up persistently, even during Shinran's time. This is why Shinran takes extra effort to clarify the vital difference between the self-power practice of the Nembutsu of the Nineteenth Vow and the Other Power practice of the Nembutsu of the Eighteenth Vow. The Eighteenth Vow, we recall, reads:

If, after my obtaining Buddhahood, all beings in the ten quarters who have sincerity and faith in longing to be reborn into My Land and think of Me ten times, if possible, should not be reborn; may I not attain the supreme Bodhi; except those who commit the five grave offenses and those who are abusive of the true Dharma.⁴³

The Eighteenth Vow is known by five names. These names are: (1) the "Vow of Attaining Birth through the Nembutsu" (念佛往生之願); (2) the "Selected Original Vow" (選択本願); (3) the "Vow of the Three Minds of the Original Vow" (本願三心之願); (4) the "Vow of Sincere Mind and Sincere Faith" (至心信樂之願); and (5) the "Vow of Faith in the Phase of Going" (往相信心之願).

The first of these names was given by Zendo; the second, by Honen; the others by Shinran himself. In the literal meaning of the above passage, the devotees are required "to have sincerity, faith in longing to be born into the Pure Land, and the Nembutsu (Smriti) ten times, if possible." This has been a controversial point. A proper understanding of both the three minds (三心)-sincerity, faith, and longing-and the Nembutsu ten times were points of controversy even among the followers of Shinran. Immediately following this passage, however, Shinran quotes another passage from the Larger Sūtra, which is known as the "Hongan Jōju Mon" (本願成就文), "passage Concerning to the Fulfillment of the Original Vow." He maintains that "If all sentient beings, hearing the Name and having joy in Faith even once—through the Buddha's sincere endowment—desire to be born in His Land, they can instantaneously obtain Birth and dwell in the Non-Retrogressive State..."⁴⁴ This, Shinran claims, is the meaning of the Eighteenth Vow. According to Shinran, the three minds are not the conditions or requirements for birth into the Pure Land, but are the single-hearted faith which is the expression of joy for having heard the Amida's Name. The "Nembutsu ten times" must not be understood literally but should be understood as the expression of the "Eternal Moment of Faith," which is the "State of Avaivartika." Furthermore, the verses following the "Fulfillment Passage" state, "Due to the Vow-power of the Buddha, whosoever hears of His Name, longing after rebirth, is to reach His Pure Land, obtaining the spiritual stage of Avaivartika."⁴⁵ To further clarify this point, I shall quote the Anjin-ketsumyō-shō:

The purport of all the three sūtras of the Jōdo school is to manifest the significance of the Original Vow, 'Hongan' (本願) in Japanese, 'pūrva-pranidhāna' in Sanskrit. To understand this Vow means to understand the Name, and to understand the Name is to understand that when Amida, by bringing to maturity His Vow and Virtue in the stead of all beings, effected their rebirth, even prior to their actual attainment. What made up

the substance of His Enlightenment was no other than the rebirth of all beings in the ten quarters of the world. For this reason, devotees of the Nembutsu, that is, of the 'Tariki' are to realize this truth each time they hear Amida's Name pronounced that their rebirth is indeed already effected, because the Name stands for the Enlightenment attained by Dharmākara.⁴⁶

Shinran understood that the Original Vow is Amida's Will-power (in this case, Amida's Compassionate Heart) and is with Him from the beginningless past. The Original Vow is Amida Himself expressed in the human terms. Furthermore, Amida, as the Infinite Light and Infinite Life (Prajñā and Karunā) manifests Himself in the Nembutsu. Amida's Original Vow expresses itself through the Name that awakens our faith and from our mouths faith is expressed as the Nembutsu. When Shinran looked at the Eighteenth Vow from this perspective, the questions of the three minds and of the Nembutsu ten times were no longer viewed as pertaining to the true faith, but became questions of what Shinran called "hakarai." The word "hakarai" literally means "to contrive," "to calculate," "to lay down a plan," or "to have an intention" for one's rebirth into the Pure Land. Shinran consistently disavowed the "hakarai" because it was the essence of "jiriki" which obstructed the way of absolute faith in the Original Vow of Amida. Concerning "jiriki," Shinran states the following in an epistle given to his disciple, Shoshin-bo :

Concerning the question raised by a Nembutsu follower of Kasama: As our masters of China and India have pointed out, there are the 'jiriki' and the 'tariki' teachings. By the 'jiriki' is meant that the devotees, each according to his karmic condition, think of a Buddha other than Amida, recite His Name, and practice good deeds relying on their own judgments, that they plan out their ideas as regards how properly and felicitously to adjust their activities of the body, mouth, and mind for the rebirth in the Pure Land. By the 'tariki' is meant whole heartedly to accept and believe the Original Vow of Amida's Eighteenth Vow whereby He assures those who pronounce this Name to be born in His Pure Land. Since it is the Vow made by Amida, it has a sense which is beyond our common sense, as has been taught by my holy master. What is meant by

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'sense,' 'gi' (義), is 'hakarai,' contrivance or intention. If a devotee exercises his own intention, it is the 'jiriki,' the self-power. Therefore, his doing has 'sense.' The 'tarikiki' devotee, however, has placed his faith wholeheartedly in Amida's Original Vow and is assured of his rebirth in the Pure Land; hence he is free from sense of his own. This being so, you are not to think that you would not be greeted by Amida in His Land because of your evil karma. As ordinary beings you are endowed with all kinds of evil passions and destined to be sinful. Nor are you to think that you are assured of rebirth in the Pure Land because of your goodness. As long as you rely on your 'hakarai,' intention, you would never be welcomed to Amida's Pure Land of Recompense...⁴⁷

It is true that the way in which Shinran read the Eighteenth Vow is somehow contradictory with a literal reading of a given passage. However, Shinran was not interested in the literal translation of the passage. For Shinran, Amida's Vows were not merely hopeful promises made by some supernatural being. Rather, they were his only hope for rebirth in Amida's Pure Land. He writes, "To extirpate evil nature in me is beyond hope; So venomous is my heart, like a serpent or scorpion: Even if a good deed is done, it is seasoned with poison."⁴⁸

According to Shinran, the purport of the three sūtras of the Jōdo school is to manifest the significance of the Original Vow. He identifies the Amitāyur-buddha-dhyāna Sūtra with the self-power practice of the Nembutsu and other meritorious deeds of the Nineteenth Vow ["Yomon" (要門), "Essential Gate"]. The Smaller Sūtra is identified only with the self-power practice of the Nembutsu of the Twentieth Vow ["Shinmon" (眞門), "True Gate"]. Finally, the Larger Sūtra is identified with the Other Power practice of the Nembutsu of the Eighteenth Vow ["Gugan-mon" (弘願門), "Gate of Universal Vow"].

According to the Larger Sūtra, Amida Buddha established the True (the Eighteenth) Vow and the Expedient (the Nineteenth and Twentieth) Vows. In the Meditation Sūtra, Śākyamuni Buddha revealed the expedient and true teachings. In the Smaller Sūtra only the "True Gate" is expounded and not the expedient goodness. Hereupon, the true essence of the Three Sūtras is the Best Selected Original Vow. The essential of the expedient

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teachings of the Three Sūtras lies in the practice of various good deeds.⁴⁹

In the thought of Shinran, to understand the Vow means to understand the Name. To understand the Name is to understand that Amida, by bringing to maturity His Vow and Deed for all beings, effected their rebirth prior to their actual attainment. The substance of Shinran's Enlightenment was none other than the rebirth of all beings in the ten quarters of the world. For the devotees of the Nembutsu, the Name is a constant reminder of what Dharmākara had already established for them. Nembutsu devotees have the same realization when they bow before the holy statue of Amida Buddha. The statue represents Amida Buddha in the state of Enlightenment which He attained by vowing that He Himself could not attain Enlightenment until all beings were assured of their rebirth. Also, when any reference is made to the Pure Land, devotees should remind themselves that it is the realm established by Dharmākara, not for the Buddhas, but for the sake of all sentient beings whose rebirth is assured by Amida's Vows and Enlightenment. As far as the devotees themselves are concerned, therefore, they have nothing in their natures which will enable them to practice either worldly or unworldly good, since they only know how to commit evil deeds. But because Amida completed innumerable meritorious deeds (which constitute the substance of Buddhahood), even we who are ignorant and addicted to wrong views are not destined for the Pure Land. Shinran expresses his feeling in one of the Wasans :

No repentance, no shame I feel ;
No true heart do I ever possess.
But His Name. gift to us, resounds,
Through quarters ten with heart boundless.
With mind of asps and scorpions vile,
How can I hope to practice good ?
Without His grace, the gifts from Him,
Life'll end but in relentless mood.⁵⁰

It was this conviction of his faith which led Shinran to declare that :

The power of the Buddha's Original Vow enables those who hear the Name and desire to be born, all to reach His Land, where they naturally attain the Unretrogressive Stage... Therefore, the Utterance of the Name enables the sentient beings to destroy all the ignorances and fulfill all the

aspiration.⁵¹

(E) NEMBUTSU AND SHŌMYŌ

Concerning the Nembutsu, Shinran admits that we are the ones who utter the Name, but we do not do this to accumulate meritorious deeds. Shinran is very specific on this point and states that we utter the Name only to express our gratitude after having heard of the Original Vow. Therefore, the Nembutsu does not mean "Shōmyō" or "reciting the Name," but rather "Monmyō" or "hearing the Name." We first learn of the Original Vow through "Monmyō," or "hearing the Name"; then "Shōmyō," or "reciting the Name," follows as the expression of our gratitude. This subject will be further examined in the next chapter.

At this point we must clearly understand that although one may believe in Amida's Original Vow and pronounce His Name, if one stresses the merit of the Name in order to assure himself of rebirth without perceiving that Amida's meritorious deeds are already done for him, he would indeed be committing "a grievous fault." Once the belief is awakened within the devotee, he will utter the Name, "Namu Amida Butsu," to symbolize the truth of his rebirth assured by Amida's Enlightenment. The substance of Buddhahood is the act of our rebirth, and, consequently, that one utterance of the Name means the assurance of rebirth into the Pure Land.

It has been pointed out that Nembutsu-thought developed through three stages within the Jōdo school of Japan: (1) the Nembutsu of "Kannen," or "contemplation"; (2) the Nembutsu of "Kōshō," or "oral practice"; and (3) the Nembutsu of "Shin," or "faith." As I mentioned in the previous chapter, it is generally believed that Genshin's Nembutsu was that of "Kannen," whereas Hōnen's Nembutsu was that of "Kōshō." It was perhaps the inevitable historical culmination of the Nembutsu-thought that Shinran emphasized neither the Nembutsu of "Kannen" nor "Kōshō," but rather the Nembutsu of "Shin."

After examining Shinran's "Sangantennyū" closely, however, we come to realize that the Nembutsu of "Shin" was not only a product of an historical "logic" but also an integral development arising out of his deep realization of his eschatological existence.⁵²

To those who live in the Last Age,
This fifth, this of five hundred years,
No hope is for deliverance;
To such a one who Him not hears.

Though Ways were shown by Śākya Buddha,
None could well gain the true fruitage.
So was it shown that none could Light
Attain in this Last Coming Age.⁵⁸

The Daishū-kyō states that “in the Age of Decadent Dharma, no matter how many sentient beings practice the Way, no one will attain Enlightenment. The present age is the Age of Decadent Dharma, the evil age with five defilements. The gate of Pure Land Buddhism is the only path leading to Enlightenment.”⁵⁴

As the above quotation points out, Shinran realized that his inability to do good, his inability to understand the teachings of Buddhism or his inability to practice them successfully and thereby attain salvation are the result of his being “thrown” or born into a particular time of history the “Age of Decadent Dharma.” In a strict sense, Shinran did not deny the inherent Buddha-nature within sentient beings. However, because of the period of “Mappō”—the “Age of Decadent Dharma” when man’s physical, mental, moral, and spiritual capacities have been corrupted—man’s inherent Bodhi-mind is so hopelessly buried that he simply cannot achieve liberation by his self-power. Of course, the Bodhi-mind was never understood in terms of an assurance that a man’s nature was divine if good. But the Bodhi-mind did point to man’s inherent potentiality for the Buddhahood, contingent upon an intensive culmination through internal and external conditioning. Shinran understood that there was a time when man could seek external conditions through which he could cultivate his Bodhi-mind internally and thereby successfully attain Nirvāna. In the period of the “Mappō,” however, Shinran was convinced that external conditions were so corrupted that there was no hope for man to save himself except through the Other Power of Amida Buddha.

D. T. Suzuki pointed out that “Mahāyāna Buddhism is a religion which developed around the life and the personality of the Buddha, rather than a religion based upon the words of his mouth.”⁵⁵ He further states that “the person is greater and more real than the words and the words gain validity because of a person behind them.”⁵⁶ During the “Age of Shōbō,” the “Correct Dharma,” the personality of the Buddha and His teachings were still alive in the minds of His followers; thus they could successfully practice His teachings and thereby attain Nirvāna. But as time passed, the personality of the Buddha became obscured and His teachings became more and more

abstract and complex. By the time of the "Age of Zōbō," especially in the "Age of mappō," the presence of his personality and teachings is completely lost. Perhaps, it is an inevitable result of the schematization that any religion would follow. As Suzuki maintains :

Words or letters are needed to communicate events detached partly or wholly from personality, and, therefore they are more or less impersonal, and to that extent ineffective to move the spirit itself. Religion is nonsensical unless it comes in direct contact with the spirit. This contact is only possible when a real personality stands before you or when His image or memory lives forever vividly and inspiringly in you.⁵⁷

Shinran, having been born in the Age of Decadent Dharma, found himself totally unable to practice the teachings of the Buddha for the sake of the Enlightenment and came to understand the faith in the Original Vow as the only way to be saved. In other word, when he saw himself from the light of Buddha's Life and Personality, he understood that he was completely unable to transcend his eschatological existence and came to understand too that this is precisely the reason for Amida's Original Vow. Consequently, for Shinran, the Nembutsu had to be the Nembutsu of Faith, not that of "Kannen" (Contemplation) or of "Kōshō" (Oral Recitation).

Now we will examine the structure of the Nembutsu that Shinran understood as the Nembutsu of Shin, Faith. Shinran, in his *Kyō-gyō-shin-shō*, defines the Nembutsu as follows : "The utterance of the Name is the supreme and truly wonderful Right Act ; the Right Act is the Nembutsu ; the Nembutsu is *Namu Amida Butsu*."⁵⁸

Etymologically, the "Namu Amida Butsu" consists of six characters or syllables : "na-mu-a-mi-da-but(su)" in Japanese, and "nan-wu-o-mi-to-fo" (南無阿弥陀佛) in Chinese. "Namu" is "namas" in Sanskrit and literally means "adoration" or "salutation." In regard to the "Amida," the Smaller Sūtra states the following :

Cariputra, for what reason do you think in your mind, Buddha is called *Amidā* (abha)? Cariputra, the light of that Buddha is boundless and shines without impediments all over the land of the ten quarters. Therefore, He is called *Amitā* (abha). Again Cariputra, the life of that Buddha and His people is endless and boundless in *asamkhyā-kalpas*, so He is named *Amitā* (ayus).⁵⁹

"Amida" thus means "Amitābha," the Infinite Light, and "Amitāyus," the Infinite Life. The "Namu Amida Butsu" means "Adoration for Amida Buddha of Infinite Light and Infinite Life." However, "the interpretation the Shin people give to the 'namu-amida-butsu' is more than literal, though not at all mystical or esoteric. In fact, it is philosophical."⁶⁰ For example, Shinran interpreted the meaning of the "namu" as follows:

The word 'namu' means 'Kimyō.' The character 'ki' means 'to come,' and again means 'to rely joyfully' (帰説) and 'to trust without misgiving' (帰説). here is read 'sai' (説): the character (説) which is thus read 'etsu' and 'sai' means 'to tell,' 'to state,' i.e., 'to state one's thought.'

The character 'myō' means 'act,' 'summoning,' 'causing,' 'teaching,' 'expounding,' 'exhorting with sincerity,' 'providing the compassionate means,' and 'calling.'

'Kimyō,' therefore, is the Original Vow's summoning which commands us to trust it.

'Hotsugan-ekō,' (発願廻向), refers to the mind in which the Tathāgata, having already raised the Vow, endows the Practice (for the Birth) to sentient beings.

'Sokuze-gogyō,' (卽是其行), is namely (the practice of) the Selected Original Vow.

'Hittoku-ōiō,' (必得往生), means the realization of the Rank of Non-retrogression. The sūtra states it as 'sokutoku' (to attain instantaneously), and the commentary states it as 'hitsujō (必定), 'Certainly Assured State.' The word 'soku' (卽), describes the instantaneous determination of the true cause for (Birth in) the Recompensed Land upon hearing the Vow-Power. The word 'hitsu' means 'clearly,' 'to make so,' and 'distinctively;' it describes the state of the realized Adamantine Mind.⁶¹

In the above passage, Shinran gives his interpretation of "Namu-amida-butsu," which was expounded by Zendō in his Gengibun. I will leave close examination of these two interpretations of the meaning of the "Nembutsu," given by Zendō and Shinran, to a later chapter. However, it is evident from this passage that Shinran understood Amida not as a static object of adoration but as a dynamic source of power. Shinran is especially articulate in defining the meaning of "kimyō." He defines "ki" as "to come" or "to rely." It means "to depend on" or "to rely on." Concretely speaking, it

means "to abandon the whole self and to leave it up to Amida." This is the decision of the "I," but it is neither an emotional nor a volitional decision. It is a decision which involves the whole being.

As we examine closely the content of "kimyō," we notice that there is a kind of "Copernican revolution"; i.e., a complete reversal from the self as the center to Amida as the center. The self is completely denied, and at the same time Amida as "an absolute otherness" is confirmed. Simultaneously, "Kimyō" means absolute self-denial and, simultaneously, absolute affirmation of Amida. Dr. Suzuki writes :

When Amida is regarded as the object of adoration, He is separated from the devotee standing all by Himself. But when Namu is added to the Name the whole thing acquires a new meaning because it now symbolizes the unification of Amida and the devotee, wherein the duality is lost or absorbed in Amida so that His individuality is no longer tenable as such. This unity is there as 'Namu' plus 'Amidabutsu,' but the Namu (ki) has not vanished. It is there, as if it were not there. This ambivalence is the mystery of the Nembutsu.⁶²

Dr. Suzuki points out that there is no separation between subject and object, namely "I" as devotee and "Amida" as the object of adoration. For Shinran, however, there is no unification of Amida and the devotee, but rather the total self-surrender of the devotee to the "summoning command of the Original Vow." The "Namu" or "kimyō" is no longer the act of the devotee but becomes the Act of Amida. The self-denial itself is the Act of Amida in His very promise of salvation. Furthermore, when the Amida's Original Vow acts upon the devotee, it acts in the form of self-denial. Therefore, self-denial is the decision of the devotee, and at the same time it is Amida's Act itself.

Shinran explains this point as follows: "Hotsugan-ekō refers to the Mind in which the Tathāgata, having already raised the Vow, endows the Practice to sentient beings."⁶³ "Namu" or "kimyō," which literally means "to take refuge in Amida Buddha," means that Amida, knowing that sentient beings are unable to perform the good deeds necessary for attaining Birth, raised the Vow and performed Bodhisattva practices in order to turn all the merits over to them. Therefore, the act of "namu" itself is the act of "Amida's Calling" (弥陀招喚). This is related to Shinran's meaning for "soku" (即). Shinran says: "'Soku' (即) means instantaneousness, which is

not a mere momentariness in time; again it means 'to accede' or 'to settle,' i.e., 'to settle in the order of steadfastness.'"⁶⁴ In other words, the act of "namu" on the part of the devotee is the Act of Amida's Calling simultaneously. What Shinran meant by "Amida is the Act" (阿弥陀佛即是其行) is precisely this point. There is no Amida Buddha aside from the Act of His Saving. Thus, Shinran understood the Amida as a dynamic and continuous "Act of Saving, which is the Selected Original Vow."⁶⁵

At this point let us examine the structure of the Nembutsu-situation. For Shinran, Amida Buddha is understood as the Act of the Selected Original Vow. Therefore, when one is to "rely on" (kimyō), he is to become the act of Amida Buddha. The object of "kimyō" is the Amida Buddha, and the Act of "kimyō" is also the Act of Amida Buddha itself. In other words, the Act of the Original Vow is the Amida Buddha and also the act of "kimyō." The "namu-amidabutsu" constitutes the two aspects of the Act of the Original Vow. In short, the "namu-amida-butsu" is no other than the Amida's Self Revealing Act, and the Nembutsu-situation is the Activity of Amida Buddha. Therefore, the "namu-amida-butsu" is the Self-Enjoyment of Amida Himself (自娛樂) and the absolute Freedom (自在) is the absolute Quietude (寂) of Amida. According to D. T. Suzuki, this is understood as follows:

But when 'Namu' is 'Amida,' 'Amida' is 'Namu.' 'Ki' is 'hō.' 'Hō' is 'ki'. This is silence. When this silence takes place, when 'myōgō' is absolutely identified with Amida, then 'myōgō' ceases to be the name of Somebody, who exists outside the one who calls that 'myōgō' up. This is the perfect identity or absolute identity.⁶⁶

The Nembutsu is Amida's coming to our active life and our acceptance of Amida. Furthermore, Amida becomes Amida only through the Nembutsu wherein He fulfills His "Act of Saving" sentient beings. This is the metaphysical structure of Shinran's Nembutsu.

It is true that for Shinran the Nembutsu was not a philosophical answer to his religious search, but was an existential answer to his eschatological existence. But without understanding the metaphysical structure of the Nembutsu, we cannot discuss the Nembutsu in Shinran. Shinran states:

As I reverently contemplate the 'phase of going, of the merit-transference, there are the great practice and the great faith. The great practice is to utter the Name of the Tathāgata of

Unhindered Light. (無碍光如來名). This practice embodies all good and contains all virtues. It enables sentient beings to attain the all-complete merits very quickly. It is the treasure-sea of the virtues of True Thusness (眞如) or bhūta-tathatā in Sanskrit, or One Truth (一実). Hence, it is called the great practice.⁶⁷

In this passage, Shinran called the Shōmyō-Nembutsu—the Nembutsu by the utterance of the Name of Amida—the great practice of Amida. This means that Shinran clearly understood the metaphysical essence of Mahā-karunā of Amida in the Nembutsu-practice. Regarding the Nembutsu as the great practice of Amida and all Buddhas, Shinran wrote a passage in his Kyō-gyō-shin-shō. This particular passage referred to the Seventeenth Vow, called the Vow that the Name shall be praised by all Buddhas (諸佛称名之願). For Shinran, however, as long as the Nembutsu is true Nembutsu, it does not matter whether Buddhas or sentient beings utter the Name. This is how Shinran understood the Nembutsu.

(F) NEMBUTSU AND MONMYŌ

As I have pointed out already, Shinran based his teaching upon the three sūtras: the Larger Sukhāvativyūha, the Amitāyur-dhyāna, and the Smaller Sukhāvativyūha Sūtras. He states in the Kyō-gyō-shin-shō, however, that of these three sūtras he considers the Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra to be the most important: “The Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra is the truest teaching of salvation given out by Śākyamuni Buddha for sentient beings who are ignorant and wicked. This is the Shin Sect of the Pure Land.”⁶⁸ The essence of this sūtra is the Eighteenth Original Vow, which is established by Amida specifically for the salvation of the ignorant and wicked. When Shinran realized the innermost meaning of the doctrine of salvation through Amida with His All Embracing Love for sentient beings, he found his faith firmly established in the truth that leads all sentient beings, however ignorant, to the direct path of the Pure Land. Shinran writes this in his Wasan:

Why did the Tathāgata come to start His Vow? It is because He desired to save those sentient beings who sink deep into the delusions of birth and death, and (have been long forsaken by the other Buddhas as helpless beings). By transferring all His merits to them, and this compassion He has now perfected.⁶⁹

This does not mean that wise men are excluded from the saving Vow of

Amida. Indeed Shinran emphasizes that in the "Age of the Mappō," the "Age of Decadent Dharma," people are so helplessly corrupted that no person can achieve his liberation by his self-power: The Tannishō quotes Shinran as saying:

Even a good man is reborn in the Pure Land, and how much more so with a wicked man! But people always say that even a wicked man is reborn in the Pure Land, how much more so with a good man! Though this latter way of thinking appears at first sight reasonable, yet it is not in accord with the purport of the Original Vow, of the Other power. The reason is as follows: He who undertakes to perform a good deed by relying on his own power, has no wish to invoke the Other Power, he is not the object of the Original Vow of Amida. If, however, by discarding his reliance on self power, he invokes the Other Power, he can be assured his rebirth in the Pure Land of Recompense. We who are fully burdened with passions and illusions have no means to escape the bondage of birth and death no matter what kinds of austerities we practice. Seeing this Amida felt a great pity and established the compassionate Vow for us. The Original purpose of Amida for establishing this Vow is thus for the attainment of Buddhahood by the wicked. Therefore, the wicked who put firm faith in the Other Power are precisely the ones for whom the right cause of the Vow of Rebirth is set up. For this reason Shonin said that even if a good man is reborn in the Pure Land, how much more so with a wicked one!⁷⁰

If we read this passage superficially, it sounds somewhat antinomian in spirit. It was for this reason that the Tannishō (from which this passage is quoted) was kept from the public for some time. But when we understand Shinran's deep realization of his eschatological existence, it is not as shocking or dangerous as it sounds. After all, if we really face up to our true natures, how many of us "in our outer garbs" try to show ourselves "as wise, good and diligent," while inside "we are so bent to rage, greed, anger, and deceit?"⁷¹

In another Wasan, Shinran writes:

Though I now take to the True Way,
No true heart find I ever in me.

Deceit and untruth speak in flesh ;
Nothing pure is there ever to see.⁷²

Such is the nature of man. Shinran says that in our wickedness, evil, and hopelessness, Amida established the Vow for us all. Dr. Nishida states as follows: "...we hit the self-contradiction in the depth of ourself, as existential failure and salvation. But this is not realized by ourselves but by the call of the absolute! Self-denial is not possible through our own Self. So, the religious man speaks of grace."⁷³

The Light of Wisdom of Amida shines upon us and enables us to see what we really are and to appreciate the meaning of the Nembutsu. Shinran writes: "In the world of impermanence of pain and suffering, which is like a house on fire, where beings full of evil passions are inhabiting, all is vain, all is empty, there is nothing true and reliable except the Nembutsu, which only is true."⁷⁴

This keen, relentless insight into his own nature and his eschatological age led Shinran to the salvation by faith in the Original Vow of Amida, with which the Larger Sūtra exclusively deals. He states: "To mention the true teaching, the Larger Sūtra is it. The sole purpose of the Sūtra is to reveal the Original Vow of the Tathāgata; that is to say, the Name of the Buddha is the essence of it."⁷⁵

There are many teachings of Sākyamuni Buddha, Shinran claims, but the truest teaching is expressed only in the Larger Sūtra, because there the salvation of the ignorant and wicked is promised. All the other sūtras are the means to lead men to a belief in the Name, Namu Amida Butsu. Shinran understood that the Original Vow and the Name refer to the same source, i. e., the saving power of Amida. The Original Vow is the cause. and the Name is the result. The Name is endowed with the inconceivable power to save all sentient beings and is transferred to us the potent cause of our rebirth in the Pure Land. Upon hearing the Name, therefore, we are instantly saved forever and set free from the bondage of birth and death. It has been noted by many scholars that Shinran placed emphasis on the Nembutsu not as the "Shōmyō," "reciting the Name," but as the "Monmyō," "hearing Name."

Hearing the Name of the Buddha Amida,
If one praises it with deep joy,
He will instantly obtain the great supreme benefit,
As he is filled with treasures of merit.⁷⁶

“Hearing” is of utmost importance in Shin Buddhism. In regard to the importance of the “hearing the Name,” Kakunyo⁷⁷ declares: “In the sūtra and its commentaries alike great stress is put upon the importance of hearing. Accordingly it is apparent that by hearing well, faith and practice necessary for our Rebirth is instantly transferred from the Buddha.”⁷⁸ The significance of “hearing the Name” has a special meaning for Shinran: “Thus is told in the sūtra: Hearing means that sentient beings, upon hearing the primary purport and the gist of the Buddha’s Vow, retain no shadow of doubt in their minds concerning their being saved.”⁷⁹ In the “Passag of Fufillment of the Original Vow’ of the Larger Sūtra, to which Shinran is referring here, “hearing the Name” meant the establishment of faith, the forsaking of one’s self-power and a reliance entirely upon the Other Power i. e., the Power of the Original Vow. The Amida, out of His Campassion to save the ignorant and wicked, who are beyond the hope of redemption, established the Vow which was embodied in His Name. Because of this, our salvation is possible by “hearing the Name.” Of course,” to hear the Name” means to hear out the reason that our rebirth is assured by the Other Power of the Tathāgata under a spiritual leader. It does not mean merely to hear the sound of reciting the Name, even though that have some psychological effect.

As Dōshaku pointed out in his Anrakushū, the followers of the Holy Path are supposed to go through three stages in order to attain its ultimate end, i. e., hearing, thinking, and practice. They first hear the teaching of the Buddha; they next think about it; and they then put it into practice in order to obtain Buddha-wisdom. This is what Shinran called the “Jiriki,” meaning relying on one’s own efforts to extirpate all evil passions. Contrary to this, Shinran says that only “hearing the Name” is necessary because thinking and practicing are already done by Amida. In this declaration Shinran’s unique and profound understanding of the Nembutsu is well demonstrated. According to Shinran, Amida has already done everything necessary for our salvation and with the Name He transferred them to us. Therefore, all one has to do is to “hear the Name”: “To hear the Original Vow and harbour no doubt of it is hearing. Hearing is the word that expresses believing.”⁸⁰ In other words, for Shinran “hearing” is “believing” and “believing” is “hearing.”

It is evident that Shinran was fully aware that as long as the Nembutsu is understood as “Shōmyō,” “reciting the Name,” there still is some residue

of "Jiriki," "self-power (effort)," attached to it. However, the Nembutsu as the "Monmyō," "Hearing the Name," conveys the meaning of the "Tariki," "Other Power of Amida," more fully. He asks:

Why, in the Passage of Fulfillment, is 聞 (hearing the Name) used instead of 称 (reciting the Name)? Because we are incompetent to obtain the benefit of Rebirth with our merit obtained by reciting the Name. Then what is the significance of hearing? It is to hear under a spiritual leader, the primary purport and the gist of the Original Vows. As soon as hearing is settled a joy grows, whereupon one is assured of his Rebirth and abides in the condition of non-retrogression.⁸¹

In this way "hearing the Name," when it is perfected, brings one to a possession of joy, an assurance of Rebirth, and an "abiding in the condition of non-retrogression." All of these occur at the same moment one "hears the Name." Hence, hearing is believing.

At the moment of hearing, the Name penetrates deep into one's heart and establishes itself as believing. In other words, we may say that the Buddha's intuition, and not ours, takes place in the inmost seat of our hearts, and coincides with the hearing of the Name. Therefore, hearing and/or believing expresses the inconceivability of the Other Power, which works chiefly for the salvation of the ignorant through the Name. Regarding this, Shinran states: "The 'Tariki' or 'Other Power' is the Power of the Original Vow of Tathāgata," and all the Powers of the Original Vow are embodied in the Name, and the Name is given to us as the right cause of our Rebirth. So the Name is the object of hearing or believing, but at the same time the believing or hearing is caused by the Other Power; that is, the Other Power is the motive-power of our believing. In the words of Shinran: "The true believing heart necessarily contains the Name." There is no faith apart from the Name. "If all sentient beings in the ten quarters hear the supremely meritorious Name of the Buddha Amida and attain into the true believing heart, they will obtain a great joy in what they hear."⁸²

(G) NEMBUTSU AND FAITH

One of Shinran's most unique and important doctrines is the doctrine of "parināmana," or "transference," which means to transfer the merit of Amida to us. Shinran proclaims: "Observing the Shinsū of Pure Land with deep reverence, I find in it two kinds of transference: One is 'to be born in Amida's country' (往相); the other to return to this world' (還相)."⁸³

These two kinds of transference are inherent in the Name, for the Name is the embodiment of the Original Vow. Faith is understood here not as our own faith but as "faith that is transferred by the Power of the Original Vow." This faith, therefore, consists essentially of the Name of Amida. "There is no other way possible to us," Shinran says, "to be born in the Buddha's country of Peace and Bliss than to attain true faith through the Name, which is the supreme and invaluable jewel."⁸⁴ When we hear the Name we have faith, which is pure and immaculate. Because it is a gift of the Buddha and not an outcome of our ingenuity, it is always the same in anyone who harbors it.

In other branches of Buddhism the meritorious effect of the Name is expressed, but the Name and faith are considered as separate. To recite the Name is understood as the way to obtain faith and, therefore, faith is still based on the self-power of reciting the Name. Consequently, faith varies from person to person according to the criterion of self-power. Kakunyo states in the Godenshō as follows:

Faith varies so long as it is based on self-power; for we all have different intellectual capacities and the faith based upon them cannot be identical; whereas the faith based on a power other than the self is one that is given by Buddha to us, ignorant beings, regardless of our moral attainments.⁸⁵

The idea of "parināmana" is basic to the doctrine of Shin. In the Wasan Shinran writes: "Faith is awakened by the power of the Vow. The attainment of Buddhahood by the Nembutsu is, therefore, natural."⁸⁶ For this reason there is no need of waiting for the Buddha to come to receive us at our deathbed. The faith given to us is powerful enough to assure our attainment of Buddhahood; it is ineffable, inexpressible, and inconceivable. Regarding this point, Kakunyo states: "If this faith is understood as 'true mind' it cannot be a deluded heart of the ignorant, it is entirely the Buddha-mind, and when His Buddha-mind is transferred to the heart of the ignorant it is called faith."⁸⁷

The true faith is established instantaneously upon hearing the Name born of the Original Vow. Therefore, "what is essential in Shin is that the assurance of Rebirth in one-thought-moment is the origin of the sect."⁸⁸ This "one-thought-moment" (念佛申さんと思ひたつ心のおこる時) is the faith called "Ki-hō ittai" "(機法一体)," or "the Unification of Amida and the devotee."⁸⁹ The devotee, through the Power of Amida, becomes aware of

his own evil nature and the true Heart of Amida. Without a trace of doubt in his mind, he immediately takes refuge in Amida with deep reverence and singleness of heart, and at this moment his faith is established. Out of this genuine faith joy flows, as is generally the case with the mystical experience of religious souls. For when faith is established, Rebirth is assured; the body and mind are steeped in joy and the devotee now recites the Name while he lives in vital faith. This experience is also accompanied by mystery and ecstasy. D. T. Suzuki states:

This ambivalence is the mystery of the Nembutsu... When this is experienced, the devotee has the 'steadfastness of faith,' even before he is in actuality ushered into the Pure Land. For the Pure Land is no more an event after death, it is right in this 'sahalokadhātu,' the world of particulars.⁹⁰

This is explained by Shinran as "single-hearted" faith, which implies an abrupt faith. This doctrine of "abrupt faith" is not new, but is based on the "Passage of Fulfillment." Shinran's interpretation of the phrase "即得往生," especially, has deep significance, and he explains it in his Ichinentanen-shomon as follows:

'即' means instantaneousness, which is not a mere momentariness in time; again it means 'to accede or 'to settle,' i.e., 'to settle in the order of steadfastness;' '得' is 'to have already gained what is to be gained;' if one obtains true faith, he is instantaneously taken up into, '撰取,' the mind of the Buddha, who is the unobstructed Light, and never forsaken. '撰' is 'to accept,' and '取' 'to welcome, to receive' into the saving Light, he is simultaneously settled in the order of steadfastness; this is called 'to obtain Rebirth' '往生'⁹¹

"即," pronounced "soku" in Japanese or "chi" in Chinese, is used here to express "crosswise-passing-over" "横超," This denotes that the stream of bad karma, which binds us to the five evil paths is passed over crosswise with the Other Power; that is, our bondage to birth and death is cut off abruptly by the Other Power. In other words, "crosswise-passing-over" means "to be assured instantaneously of Rebirth."⁹² "Chi" or "soku," therefore, means the abrupt working of the Other Power through us.

Here, Shinran deliberately ignores the traditional understanding of the Bodhisattvahood. For instance, the Dasabhūmi Vibhāsā Sāstra states: "The Bodhisattvas can abide in the condition of non-retrogression of the

first grade of the 'Dwelling-Stage' only when they deliver themselves from the hindrances of discrimination and attachment to the Dharma as well as to the self after they have disciplined for 10,000 kalpas."⁹⁸ Although the Shin devotee of the Nembutsu is not free from the above hindrances, he can instantly abide in the condition of non-retrogression without cutting off evil passions, when he, hearing the purport of the Name, lives in "the faith of one-thought-moment." This is because, when his faith is established, the bad karma that binds him to the six evil paths⁹⁴ and the four forms of birth⁹⁵ is made ineffective by the inconceivable work of the Name. This is true even if he does not discipline himself for any time whatever. In the Mattō-shō Shinran declares: "As soon as faith is awakened our Rebirth is assured while we are still on earth." Why is this so? The following quotation answers this question:

The Buddha with His compassionate heart, originally intended to save the short-lived beings such as we; and His intention was embodied in His Vow. The Vow has already been fulfilled, and the Buddha is at present abiding in Buddhahood. Hence the assertion: 'As soon as faith is awakened our Rebirth is assured!' If it is necessary to recite His Name many times in order to be saved, how could those who are constatly exposed to death-threat or those whose days are numbered avail themselves of the Vow? But this is not the case with the Original Vow.⁹⁶

Thus, for Shinran, the great event of Rebirth is promised to anyone at any time of his life at the moment he rejoices in hearing the Name. In the Shuji-shō, Kakunyo writes: "If a devotee, at any time of his life, awakens one thought of trusting himself to the Buddha, under the instruction of a spiritual leader, he should regard this moment as the end of his earthly life."⁹⁷

In the case of Shin Buddhism the assurance of Rebirth does not come only at the hour of death, but at the very moment when faith is awakened. Thus, Rebirth is assured in the one-thought-moment of faith and happens abruptly. This is why "Rebirth is one-thought-moment" (一念発起入必定). And this one-thought-moment of faith continues to work effectively to the end of the devotee's life. It is because of this that Shinran contends "the faith of Shin has double benefits." On the one hand, the devotee is able to settle into the order of steadfastness in this world, and, on the

other hand, he is assured of realizing Nirvāna in the Pure Land. Shinran writes: "Since we have heard the compassionate Vow which is supra-mundane how could we be the ignorant mortals fettered to Birth and Death? Though we continue to live in the same impure bodies filled with sins, our minds live already in the Pure Land to enjoy their free play."⁹⁸ "This is how we are benefited by faith," Shinran says, "and from this point onwards we are no longer miserable beings." This does not, however, change the conditions of a transitory and ephemeral world. However, reflecting upon himself, one feels happy to know that even if he remains as sinful as ever, he is already protected here and now by the saving Light of Amida. This feeling of protection is expressed by Saiichi, one of the myōkōnins of Shin :

I work in this world in company with all Buddhas,
 I work in this world in company with all Bodhisattvas ;
 Protected by 'Oya-sama' I am here ;
 I know many who have protected me along this path,
 I am sporting in the midst of the Namu-amida-butsu.
 Namu-amida-butsu ! ⁹⁹

The Kegon-sūtra says that even in a particle of dust myriad of Buddhas live and are now preaching the Good-Law. A deep affirmation of faith in Amida's boundless compassion enables one to see around him the Buddhas in everything. As an expression of this faith, the devotees, with deep joy and gratitude, go out into the world to help others and to work for the betterment of humanity. Shinran expresses his feeling of joy as follows: "Going on board the ship of the great compassionate Vow and floating out on the broad ocean of Light, there the wind of supreme merit blows softly, and the waves of various evils and misfortunes die away."¹⁰⁰

For Shinran, the actual experience of salvation is the realization of Enlightenment. He, in fact, describes this experience of faith with the words "等正覚," which literally mean "to be equal to the ultimate Enlightenment" realized in Amida's country. However, Shinran, in spite of his use of such terms as "等正覚" makes it evident that the True Attainment can be realized only in the Pure Land. In other words, even if this "faith experience" of settling in the order of steadfastness" is something like a "satori-experience," it cannot be recognized as the True Attainment. It is in fact a "fore-taste" of the ultimate goal. In the Kyō-gyō-shin-shō, Shinran explains this point in the following way :

Whereupon, the darkness of 'avidya' is dispelled and straight-forward we can go onto our ultimate goal, the Land of Immeasurable Light, wherein we are to attain Mahāparinirvāna. And after the Attainment has been achieved we come back again to this world to help others obtain the same Attainment we have, with a great compassionate heart like that of Samantabhadra.¹⁰¹

NOTES

CHAPTER I

¹ D. T. Suzuki, "The Shin Sect of Buddhism," *The Eastern Buddhist*, Vol. VII, No. 3-4 (July, 1939), p. 227. "Of all the developments Mahāyāna Buddhism has achieved in the Far East, the most remarkable one is the teaching of the Pure Land School." Without question the appearance of Shin Buddhism marks a high point of the gradual ascent and culmination of the Pure Land system which had been growing through the history of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

² Kyō-gyō-shin-shō, *Shinshū Seiten Zenshō* (SSZ), Vol. II, p. 57. Shinran quotes Hassho, who was believed to be Zendō's incarnation. Cf. *Goe Hoji San*, Taisho, Vol. II.

³ 夫願真實教者則「大無量壽經」是也——, Kyō-gyō-shō, SSZ, Vol. II, p. 30.

⁴ 是以愚禿積鸞仰論主解義依宗師動化, 久出萬行諸善之假門永離双樹林下之往生, 回入善本德本真門偏發難思往生之心然今特出方便真門轉入撰括願海速離難思往生心欲遂難思議往生…
p. 197.

⁵ 歎異抄. *Tannishō*, which means "Notes, Lamenting Differences." As there is no mention of the author's name in any of the texts of the *Tannishō*, the problem of authorship has concerned scholars of *Shinshū* for centuries. However, it is generally believed that Yuien, a direct disciple of Shinran, was the author of the book.

⁶ *Tannishō*, SSZ, Vol. II, pp. 774-775.

弥陀の本願まことにおはしまさば, 釈尊の諸教虚言なるべからず。佛説まことにおはしまさば, 善導の御積虚言したまふべからず。善導の御積まことならば, 法然のおほせそらごとならんや。法然のおほせまことならば親鸞の申すむねまたむなしかろべからずさうらう歎・詮ずるところ愚身の信心におきてはかくのごとし。このうへは念佛をとりて信じたてまつらんとも, またすてんとも面々の御はからひなりと云々。

⁷ Rudolph Bultmann, *Kerygma and Myth*, ed. by Hans Werner Bartsch and translated by Reginald H. Fullerr, p. 18.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁹ *Mappō*, 末法. In the *Kyō-gyō-shin-shō*, Shinran says, "In the age of the Latter Days of the Law, no matter how many sentient beings practice the Way, no one will attain Enlightenment. The present age is the age of decadent dharma, the evil age of the five defilements." These five defilements, the characteristics of the *Mappō*, are (1) the impurity of living in the present age, (2) the impurity of false teachings, (3) the impurity of evil

passions, (4) the impurity of mind and body, and (5) the shortening of the human life span. Kyō-gyō-shin-shō, SSZ, Vol. I, p.1204. The Mappō, 末法, means literally “the Latter Days of the Dharma.” It is the last period of the three-fold scheme of periodization of Buddhism. The first period, called the Shōbō, 正法, was the time of Gautama’s nirvāna; the second period, called the Zōbō, 像法, the period of “false Dharma,” lasted for the next one thousand years; then final period, called “Mappō, is the period of final termination and decay of the effectiveness of the Buddha’s teachings and will extend for ten thousand years.

CHAPTER II

¹ Kyō-gyō-shin-shō, Shinshū Shōgyō Zenshō (SSZ), Vol. I, II, p. 46. Cf. Kyō-gyō-shin-shō, Ryukoku Translation Series, Vol. V. All references to the Seven Spiritual Ancestors, Hichiso in Japanese are from Shinshū Shōgyō Zenshō, 5 Volumes (Kyoto: Ohyagikobundō, 1958), hereafter abbreviated SSZ. All translations from Japanese texts cited in my paper are my own, unless otherwise stated.

² Dasabhūmi-vibhāsā Sāstra, Jūjūbibasha-ron in Japanese, SSZ, Volume I, p. 254.

³ Avaivartika in Sanskrit, transliterated into “阿惟越致地” or translated “不退轉” in Chinese. Avaivartika literally means “not falling back” or “not retreating.” It refers to the Rank of Non-Retrogression in which one is assured of realizing Enlightenment. In other words, it also means that one who has obtained faith of the Other Power is unretrogressive in realizing Enlightenment. In the Pure Land scriptures, however, reference is sometimes made to the attainment of this rank in the Pure Land.

⁴ Six Pāramitās or Rokuharamitsu “六波羅密.” Sat-pāramitā in Sanskrit. “Haramitsu” (波羅密) is a transliteration of the Sanskrit “pāramitā,” which is translated as “到彼岸” in Chinese, meaning “gone to the opposite shore.” The Six Pāramitās are one of the essential disciplines to be observed by all Bodhisattvas. They are the following :

(1) Fuse-Haramitsu, “布施波羅密”, dāna-pāramitā in Sanskrit, charity; giving things to the needy, removing others’ fear, and enlightening others by preaching the Dharma.

(2) Jikai-H., “持戒波羅密”, sila-p., observance of the Buddhist precepts.

(3) Ninniku-H., “忍辱波羅密”, ksānti-p., forbearance, not being proud when praised or respected, not getting angry when abused or injured, being patient in the face of cold, heat, hunger, illness, etc., and keeping

mind from evil passions and wrong views.

(4) Shōjin-H., “精進波羅密”, *vīrya-p.*, effort, constant application to good practices.

(5) Zenjō-H., “禪定波羅密”, *dhyāna-p.*, meditation, cessation of evil thoughts and attaining the tranquility of mind by practicing meditation.

(6) Chie-H., “智慧波羅密”, *prajñā-p.*, wisdom, removal of ignorance and enlightenment to the reality of things.

⁵ Dasabhūmi-vibhāsā Sāstra, SSZ, Vol. I, p. 255.

⁶ Anuttara-Samyaksaṃbodhi has been transliterated “阿耨多羅三藐三菩提” meaning “Highest, Perfect Bodhi.” Refers to the Buddha’s Enlightenment.

⁷ Dasabhūmi-vibhāsā Sātra, SSZ, Vol. I, pp. 257–258.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 258.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 260.

¹⁰ A Greek ruler in Sagara about 115 B. C.

¹¹ Junjiro Takakusu, *The Essentials of Buddhist Philosophies* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, T. H., 1947), p. 166.

¹² Kitaro Nishida, *Nippon-bunka no Mondai* in Japanese, pp. 90–91.

¹³ Jōdoron: The original name of the work is the Muryōjūkyō-Upadaisha-Ganshōge-Chū, (無量壽經優婆提舍願生偈註). When Shinran calls “Jōdoron,” he means “A Commentary” by T’an-luan on this. However, as the name is long, the work is commonly called the “Ōjōronchū” or “Ronchū.” This was translated into Chinese by Bodhiruci.

¹⁴ Jōdoron, SSZ, Vol. I, p. 270.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 270–271.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 271.

¹⁷ They are worship, praise, aspiration, contemplation, and merittransference. These are originally the practices required of a Bodhisattva who aspires for the Pure Land, but Shinran considered them as the practices which Dharmākara performed for us.

¹⁸ Jōdoron, SSZ, Vol. I, p. 277.

¹⁹ Kosho, Yamamoto, “The General Outline of the Canons and Texts used in Shinshū,” *Shinshū Seiten*, (The Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii), 1955, p. 331.

²⁰ Parināmana: It is translated “ekō” (廻向) in Chinese, meaning “merit-transference.” Originally in the Mahāyāna Buddhism it was understood that merit created anywhere by any being may be turned over to any other beings or towards the enhancement and prevalence of Enlightenment in

the whole world. Thus, it has become the virtue of a Bodhisattva. In other words, a Bodhisattva practiced asceticism not only for the increase of such qualities among his fellow-beings or he suffers pains in order to save others from them and at the same time to make them aspire for Enlightenment. This doctrine of "parināmana" is in fact a unique feature of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Before this, the accumulation of merit or the practice of good deeds was something which exclusively concerned the individual himself; the doer was responsible for all that he did, good or bad. In other words, he was satisfied with the karma of his work. The doctrine of "parināmana" really marked a great turning point in the development of Buddhist thought. It is based on the deeper insight of reality that everything is so intimately related with each other, and there is no individual apart from others. Therefore, as long as there are others who are in suffering, there will be no true happiness nor true peace. With Shin Buddhism, however, this doctrine would be further developed where the source of "parināmana" lies with Amida.

²¹ Ronchū, SSZ, Vol. I. p. 279.

²² Ibid., p. 347.

²³ Ibid., p. 348.

²⁴ Rokuyōshō, SSZ, Vol. II, p. 281.

²⁵ Ronchū, SSZ, Vol. i, p. 348.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 308.

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 347-348.

²⁸ Yamamoto, K., The Holy Scripture of Shinshū, p. 335.

²⁹ Anrakushū, SSZ, Vol. I, p. 410.

³⁰ Yamamoto, K., The Holy Scripture of Shinshū, p. 334.

³¹ Kyō-han-ron, 教判論, Logic of Critical Study of the Teaching.

³² Anrakushū, SSZ, Vol. I, p. 410.

³³ Inagi, S., Tariki Hongan-ron (Kyoto: Hyakka-En, 1971), p. 102.

³⁴ Jōbungī, SSZ, Vol. I, p. 446.

³⁵ According to the original text, the characters used here are "称念" which literally means "to pronounce (称)" and "to think (念)." Therefore, it means more than just "to pronounce."

³⁶ Real State Body, 実相身, according to the translation made by K. Yamamoto.

³⁷ Body Manifested into Being for Our Sake, 爲物身, according to K. Yamamoto.

- ³⁸ Anrakushū, SSZ, Vol. I, p. 405.
- ³⁹ Gengibun, SSZ, Vol. I, p. 450.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 452.
- ⁴¹ Jōbungī, SSZ, Vol. I, p. 455.
- ⁴² Sanzengi, SSZ, Vol. I, p. 534.
- ⁴³ Ōjōraisan, SSZ, Vol. I, p. 649.
- ⁴⁴ Williams, A., Sanskrit-English Dictionary, p. 643.
- ⁴⁵ Gengibun, SSZ, Vol. I, p. 457. Translated by K. Yamamoto.
- ⁴⁶ Jōzengi, SSZ, Vol. I, pp. 521-522.
- ⁴⁷ Sanzengi, SSZ, Vol. I, p. 534.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 537.
- ⁴⁹ Ōjōyōshū, SSZ, Vol. I, p. 729.
- ⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 809.
- ⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 881-882.
- ⁵² Yamamoto, K., The Outline of the Ōjōyōshū, Shinshū Seiten, (The Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, 1955), p. 340.
- ⁵³ Hōnen, The Buddhist Saint: His Life and Teaching, printed at the Chionin in Kyoto, 1925, quoted by C. Eliot in Japanese Buddhism (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1969), p. 261.
- ⁵⁴ Sanzengi, SSZ, p. 537.
- ⁵⁵ Senjya-ku-shū, SSZ, Vol. I, p. 390.
- ⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 932.
- ⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 934.
- ⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 936.
- ⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 943-944.
- ⁶⁰ Kammuryōjukyō.
- ⁶¹ Ōjōraisan.
- ⁶² Senjyaku-shū, SSZ, Vol. I, p. 966.
- ⁶³ Ibid., p. 967.
- ⁶⁴ The Nembutsu Ōjō-yogi Shō, SSZ, Vol. p. 594.

CHAPTER III

¹ The Heike clan, under the leadership of Taira Kiyomori, won the civil wars of the Hogen (1156) and Heijo (1159) eras, and assumed the control of Japan.

² The Genji clan defeated the Heike through a series of wars, and in 1185 destroyed the Heike at the fight of Dan-no-ura.

³ The Hōjōs acted as regents of the military of the military government

which was established by Yoritomo Minamoto, the head of the Genji clan, but in 1219 they took over the power from the Genji clan.

⁴ Masaru Anesaki, *History of Japanese Religion* (Vermont: Charles & Tuttle, 1963), p. 167.

⁵ Shinran, *The Wasan*, SSZ, Vol II, p. 527.

⁶ Tannishō, SSZ, Vol. II, p. 775.

⁷ Sir Charles Eliot, *Japanese Buddhism*, p. 271.

⁸ Kyō-gyō-shin-shō, SSZ, Vol. II, p. 1.

¹⁰ Senjyaku Hongan Nembutsu Shū, 撰撰本願念佛集, A Collection of Passages Concerning the Nembutsu of the "Best-Selected Original Vow" is the work of Hōnen. It consists of sixteen chapters containing selected passages from the Amida Sūtra and of Zendō's commentary together with his own explanations. It is said that upon the request of Kanezane Kujio, the Regent of that time, he wrote this book in 1198. However, he forbade his disciples to publish it during his lifetime, and it was not made known to the world until a few months after his death.

¹⁰ Kyō-gyō-shin-shō, SSZ, Vol. II, p. 202.

「撰撰本願念佛集」者真宗簡念佛奧義，撰在于斯見者易論，誠見希有最勝之華文無上甚深之宝典也。涉年涉日蒙其教誨之人雖千萬云親云疎，獲此見寫之徒甚以難。爾即書寫制作圖書真影是專念正業之德也。是決定往生之徵也。

¹¹ Hajya-kenshō Shō, SSZ, Vol. III, p. 169.

¹² Jōdo-wasan includes Genze-riyaku-wasan.

¹³ Shōzōmatsu-wasan includes Sanjō-wasan, Giwaku-san, Shotoku-hosan, Hitanjukkai-san, Zenkōji-san, and Jinenhoni-shō.

¹⁴ Kyō-gyō-shin-shō, SSZ, Vol. II, p. 8.

¹⁵ Dasabhūmi-vibhāsā Sāstra, SSZ, Vol. I, p. 254.

佛法有無量門，如世間道有難有易陸道步行則苦，水道乘船則樂。

¹⁶ Six Pāramitās, Ropparamitsu in Japanese, Sat-pāramitā in Sanskrit, is transliterated as "Haramitsu" "波羅密" or "到彼岸" in Chinese, meaning "gone to the opposite shore." The Six Pāramitās are the essential disciplines to be observed by all Bodhisattvas. They are the following: (1) Fuse-Haramitsu, 布施波羅密, (dāna-pāramitā), charity; giving things to the needy, removing others' fear, and enlightening others by preaching the Dharma, (2) Jikai-H., 持戒波羅密, (sila-pāramitā), observance of the Buddhist precepts, (3) Ninniku-H., 忍辱波羅密, (ksānti-pāramitā), forbearance; not being proud when praised or respected, not getting angry when abused or injured, being patient in the face of cold, heat hunger, illness, etc., and keeping mind from

evil passions and wrong views, (4) Shōjin-H., 精進波羅密, (vīrya-pāramitā), effort; constant application to good practices, (5) Zenjō-H., 禪定波羅密, (dhyānapāramitā), meditation; cessation of evil thoughts and attaining the tranquility of mind by practicing meditation, (6) Chie-H., 智慧波羅密, (prajñāpāramitā), wisdom; removal of ignorance and enlightenment to the reality of things.

¹⁷ Anjin-ketsujo- shō, Eastern Buddhist, translated by D.T. Suzuki, Vol. VII, July, 1939, p.248. The author is unknown, but this short treatise contains a remarkably clear exposition of the Tariki teaching. Anjin means “peaceful mind,” ketsujo “final settlement,” and shō “treatise,” therefore, the whole title may be rendered “On the Final Peaceful Settlement of Mind.”

¹⁸ Tannishō, SSZ, Vol. II. p. 774.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 774.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 773.

²¹ Analect, SSZ, Vol. II, p. 969.

²² Ryugyo Fujimoto, An Outline of the Triple Sūtra of Shin Buddhism, Vol. I, p. 66.

²³ Tannishō, SSZ, II, p. 793.

²⁴ Kyō-gyō-shin-shō, SSZ, Vol. II, p. 68.

²⁵ Tannishō, SSZ, Vol. II, p. 779.

²⁶ Shōzōmatsu-wasan, SSZ, Vol. II, p. 519.

²⁷ Shinshū Seiten, compiled and published by the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, SSZ, Vol. I, p. 8.

²⁸ Butsugen Kato, Ō-Hongan-ron, p. 90.

²⁹ Shōzōmatsu-wasan, SSZ, Vol. II, p. 520.

³⁰ Five grave offenses: The Chinese translation for this is Go-gyaku-zai, 五逆罪, or Muken-go, 無間業, Muken, 無間, refers to “anantaryā” in Sanskrit which means “uninterrupted” or “incessant.” In other words, those who committed the five deadly sins or offenses are doomed to the Avici Hell, the hell of incessant pains. The “five deadly sins” are (1) patricide, (2) matricide, (3) killing an Arhat, (4) disuniting the Buddhist Order, and (5) causing, with ill will, the blood to flow from a Buddha’s body. The original Sanskrit and Chinese for this are as follows: Panca anantaryā-karmani, 五無間業, (1) matri-ghata, 害母業, (2) pitri-ghata, 害父業, (3) arhat-ghata, 害阿羅漢, (4) saṃghabheda, 害僧業, (5) Tathāgatasyantike dusta-rudhirotpadana, 惡心出佛身血.

³¹ SSZ, Vol. I, p. 9.

³² SSZ, Vol. I, p. 10.

³³ SSZ, Vol. I, p. 9.

³⁴ Kyō-gyō-shin-shō, SSZ, Chinese Edition, p. 1219.

是以愚禿癡仰論主解義依宗師勤化久出万行諸善之假門永離雙樹林下往生回入善本德本真門，偏發難思往生之心然今特出方便真門轉入起扱願海速離難思往生心欲遂難思往生果遂之誓良有由哉。

³⁵ D.T. Suzuki, *The Shin Sect of Buddhism, The Eastern Buddhist*, Vol. VII, p. 227.

³⁶ Ryosetsu Fujiwara, *Sangyō Gaisetsu*, p. 56.

³⁷ The "Three Classes of Men" or "Sanpai," 三輩, refers to the three classes of aspirants for birth in the Pure Land described in the Larger Sūtra. They are "johai," 上輩, upper class of men, "chūhai," 中輩, the middle class of men, and "gehai," 下輩, the lower class of men.

³⁸ The "Nine Grades of Men" or "Kubon," 九品, refers to the nine categories of men in the three classes as described in the Meditation Sūtra. The Sūtra distinguishes three classes of men, i.e., "jōbon," 上品, "upper grade," "chūbon," 中品, middle grade, and "gebon," 下品, "lower grade;" and further subdivides each into grade into three, i.e., "jōshō," 上生, "upper birth," "chūshō," 中生, "middle birth," "geshō," 下生, "lower birth."

³⁹ Kyō-gyō-shin-shō, SSZ, Vol II, p. 73.

此願成就文者即三輩文是也。「觀經」定散九品文是也。

⁴⁰ Wasan, *Shinshū Seiten*, Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, p. 249.

悪性さらにやめがたし。心は蛇蝎の如くなり、修善も雜毒なる故に虚仮の行とぞなすけたる。

⁴¹ Tannishō, SSZ, Vol. II, p. 774.

⁴² Kyō-gyō-shin-shō, SSZ, Vol. II, p. 157.

夫濁世道俗応速入円修至徳真門，願難思往生，就真門之方便有善本有徳本復有定専心，復有教専心，復有定散専心雜心有大小凡輩一切善惡各以助正間雜心，稱念名號。

⁴³ SSZ, Vol. I, p. 9.

⁴⁴ Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra, SSZ, Vol. I, p. 24.

其佛本願力，聞名欲往生，皆悉到彼國，自致不退転。

⁴⁵ Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra, SSZ, Vol. I, p. 26. 諸有衆生，聞其名號，信心觀喜，至心廻向，願生彼國，即得往生，住不退転。

⁴⁶ Anjin-ketsujō-shō, *Eastern Buddhist*, translated by D.T. Suzuki, Vol. VII, p. 249.

⁴⁷ Mattō-shō, SSZ, Vol. II, p. 658.

⁴⁸ Gutoku-hitan-jukkai Wasan, SSZ, Vol. II, p. 527.

悪性さらにやめがたし。心は蛇蝎の如くなり、修善も雑毒なる故に虚仮の行とぞなすけたる。

⁴⁹ Kyō-gyō-shin-shō, Ryukoku University Translation, p. 173.

然今拠「大本」超発眞実方便之願、亦「觀經」顯彰方便眞実之教「小本」唯聞眞門無方便之善、是以三經眞実撰択本願爲宗也。復之經方便卽是修諸善根爲要也。

⁵⁰ Gutoku-hitan-jukkai Wasan, Shinshū Seiten, Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, p. 249.

⁵¹ Kyō-gyō-shin-shō, SSZ, Vol. II, p. 8.

⁵² As Paul J. Ingram points out: "Buddhist tradition in general has had very little interest in history or in the meaning of historical events." It is true that the eschatological view did not play an important role in Buddhist thought before Kamakura period. However, this does not mean that there was no such thought expressed in the Buddhist tradition. On the contrary, if we look deeply, we come to realize that there has been historical consciousness running throughout the history of Buddhism. This historical view, the "Sanji-kan" (the three-fold scheme of periodization) was first introduced in the Saddharmapundarika-sūtra and other various Mahāyāna-Sūtras such as the Karmavaranasūtra, the Mahākarunāka-sūtra, and the Karunā-pundarika Sūtra.

⁵³ Shōzōmatsu-wasan, SSZ, Vol. II, pp. 516, 522.

⁵⁴ Kyō-gyō-shin-shō, Ryukoku Translation Series, p. 202.

大集經云我末法時中億々衆生起行修道未有一人得者、当今末法是五濁惡世唯有淨土一門可通入路。

Gojoku, 五濁, Five Defilements: "panca-kasaya" in Sanskrit. The five marks of degeneracy which are apparent in the period of the world-change in which man's life span decreases from 20,000 until it becomes 10. They are as follows: (1) kojoku, 劫濁, (kalpa-hasaya), impurity of kalpa, (2) kenjoku, 見濁 (drjstikalpa) impurity of views, (3) bonnōjoku, 煩惱濁 (kelesa-kalpa), impurity of evil-passions, (4) shujōjoku, 衆生濁 (sattva-kalpa), degeneration of the mind and body of sentient beings, and (5) myojoku, 命濁 (ayuh-kalpa), shortening of man's life span.

Mappō, 末法, Decadent Dharma: This is the last period of the Sanji-kan, the three-fold scheme of Buddhist periodization. The three-fold scheme of the periodization is as follows: The first period is called Shōbō, 正法, the period of "correct Dharma," and it lasted five hundred years from the time of death of Gautama Buddha. The second period is called "Zōbō," 像法, the period of "Semblance Dharma" which lasted for the next one thousand

years. The last period is called "Mappō," 末法, the period of "Decadent Dharma" which lasts for ten thousand years. It is so stated in the Larger Sūtra, "If I am to reveal the length of time of the Sūtras remaining in the world, the lifetime teaching of Sākyamuni Buddha has gone through the Age of Right Dharma for five hundred years and the Age of Semblance Dharma for the next one thousand years, and entered the Age of Decadent Dharma which will last for ten thousand years. In the last age, the sentient beings will decrease in number until there are none, and all the sūtras will perish. Tathāgata, out of compassion for afflicted sentient beings, especially retains this Larger Sūtra for a hundred years."

⁵⁵ D. T. Suzuki, *The Shin Sect of Buddhism*, p. 227.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 227.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 229.

⁵⁸ *Kyō-gyō-shin-shō*, Ryukoku Translation Series, p. 44.

⁵⁹ *The Smaller Sūtra*, SSZ, Vol. I, p. 9.

⁶⁰ D. T. Suzuki, *Mysticism: Christian and Buddhist*, p. 161.

⁶¹ *Kyō-gyō-shin-shō*, Ryukoku Translation Series, p. 50.

⁶² D. T. Suzuki, *Mysticism: Christian and Buddhist*, p. 162.

⁶³ *Kyō-gyō-shin-shō*, SSZ, Vol. II, p. 22.

⁶⁴ *Ichinen-tanen-shōmon*, SSZ, Vol. II, p. 605.

⁶⁵ *Kyō-gyō-shin-shō*, SSZ, Vol. II, p. 22.

⁶⁶ D. T. Suzuki, *Shin Buddhism*, p. 55.

⁶⁷ *Kyō-gyō-shin-shō*, SSZ, Vol. II, p. 5.

⁶⁸ *Kyō-gyō-shin-shō*, SSZ, Vol. II, p. 2.

⁶⁹ *Shōzōmatsu-wasan*, SSZ, Vol. II, p. 520.

⁷⁰ *Tannishō*, SSZ, Vol. II, p. 775.

⁷¹ *Gutoku-hitan-jukkai wasan*, SSZ, Vol. II, p. 527.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 527.

⁷³ Kitaro, Nishida, *Philosophy of Nothing*, p. 233.

⁷⁴ *Tannishō*, SSZ, Vol. II, p. 792.

⁷⁵ *Kyō-gyō-shin-shō*, SSZ, Vol. II, p. 2.

⁷⁶ *Jōdo-wasan*, SSZ, Vol. II, p. 489.

⁷⁷ Kakunyo (1270-1351), the eldest son of Kakue a grandson of Kakushinni. He was the third abbot of the Honganji, and was accredited with such works as the Kudenshō, the Gaijashō, and the Godenshō, etc.

⁷⁸ Kakunyo, *Saiyō-shō*, Shinshū Seiten, compiled and published by the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, p. 286. *Saiyō-shō* literally means "notes on the

essentials,” in which Kakunyo explains the significance of the Eighteenth Vow.

⁷⁹ Kyō-gyō-shin-shō, SSZ, Vol II, p.72.

⁸⁰ Ichinen-tanen Moni, SSZ, Vol. II, p.605. The Ichinen-tanen Moni or the Ichinen-tanen Shomon is Shinran’s work. Its literal meaning is the “Notes on One Thought and Many Thoughts.”

⁸¹ Gwangwan-shō, SSZ, Vol. III, p.47. Gwangwan-shō is the work of Kakunyo in which he explains the five essential vows of Amida, namely the Eleventh, Twelfth, Thirteenth, Seventeenth, and Eighteenth Vows.

⁸² Jōdo-wasan, SSZ, Vol II, p.488.

⁸³ Kyō-gyō-shin-shō, SSZ, Vol. II, p.2.

⁸⁴ Shōzōmatsu-wasan, SSZ, Vol. II, p.516

⁸⁵ Goden-shō, SSZ, Vol. III, p.645.

⁸⁶ Jōdo-wasan, SSZ, Vol. II, p.488.

⁸⁷ Saiyō-shō, SSZ, Vol. III, p.50.

⁸⁸ Kudenshō, SSZ, Vol. III, p.33.

⁸⁹ D. T. Suzuki, *Mysticism: Christian and Buddhist*, p.162.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.163.

⁹¹ Ichinen-tanen Shomon, SSZ, Vol. II, p.605.

⁹² Gutoku-shō, SSZ, Vol. II, p.455.

⁹³ Dasabhūmi-vibhāṣā-Sāstra, SSZ, Vol. I, p.253.

⁹⁴ The six evil paths are: (1) Hells, (2) the world of hungry ghosts, (3) the animal world, (4) the world of fighting demons, (5) the human world, and (6) Heavens.

⁹⁵ The four forms of birth are: (1) Those born from a womb, (2) the egg-born, (3) the moisture-born, and (4) those that come into existence through transformation.

⁹⁶ Mattō-shō, SSZ, Vol. II, p.673.

⁹⁷ Shuji-shō, SSZ, Vol. III, p.43.

⁹⁸ Shōzōmatsu-wasan, SSZ, Vol. II, p.520.

⁹⁹ D.T. Suzuki, *Myōkō-nin*, p.150.

¹⁰⁰ Jōdo-wasan, SSZ, Vol. II, p.34.

¹⁰¹ Kyō-gyō-shin-shō, SSZ, Vol. II, p.34. Saṃantabhadra, “Fugen” in Japanese, is originally the name of Bodhisattva known as representing the Buddha’s Principle, Meditation, and Practice. He is one of the two attendant Bodhisattvas of Śākyamuni Buddha, the other being Manjusri who represents Knowledge, Wisdom, and Enlightenment.