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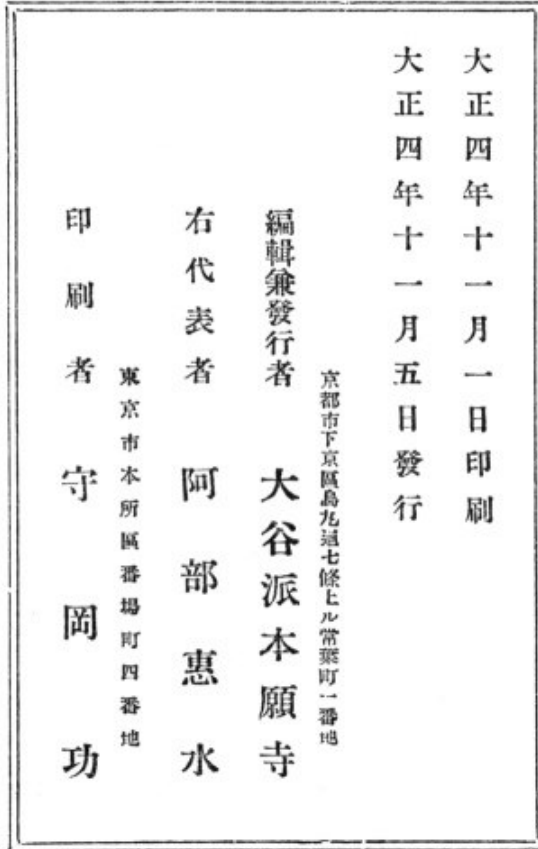
'Shinran Shonin – Forgotten Mystic of Pure Land Buddhism'

Issue Twenty Seven

Compiled by Marilyn Hughes

The Out-of-Body Travel Foundation!

www.outofbodytravel.org



Text of Shinran Shonin

(To have your Questions, Articles, Poetry or Art included in future editions, submit to: MarilynHughes1@outofbodytravel.org!)

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Having worked primarily in radio broadcasting, Marilynn Hughes spent several years as a news reporter, producer and anchor before deciding to stay at home with her three children. She's experienced, researched, written, and taught about out-of-body travel since 1987.

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The Out-of-Body Travel Foundation Journal:

'Shinran Shonin – Forgotten Mystic of Pure Land Buddhism'

Issue Twenty Seven

By Marilyn Hughes

This issue's forgotten mystic, Shinran Shonin, is a forgotten but profoundly important mystic of Pure Land Buddhism.

Life of Shinran Shonin

**EXCERPTS FROM THE PRINCIPAL TEACHINGS OF
THE TRUE SECT OF PURE LAND**

By Yejitsu Okusa, 1915 - sacred-texts.com

Shinran Shōnin was born on April 1 in the third year of Jōan, 1173 A.D., in the village of Hino near Kyōto. His family was of the Fujiwara clan that occupied at the time the most important position in the empire, and his noble father, Arinori Hino, held an honorable office at the imperial court. The Shōnin was the eldest son, and from this fact we can easily see what an auspicious prospect he had before him; for could not he, as heir to a noble family, occupy a high official rank, wield his influence as he willed, and indulge in the enjoyment of a worldly life? But the death of his parents, while he was yet a child, made him depend upon his uncle, Lord Noritsuna; and this unfortunate circumstance left a very deep impression on his young mind, which, naturally sensitive, now brooded over the uncertainty of human life. At the age of nine, he left home to lead a monkish life at a Buddhist monastery called Shōren-in at Awada-Guchi, where

Jiyen Sōjō, the high priest, took him as disciple, shaved his head, and gave him the Buddhist name, Han-yen.

After this, the Shōnin went to the Mount Hiye, and staying at the Daijō-in which was in the Mudō-ji, pursued his study under various masters in the deep philosophy of the Tendai Sect, and disciplined himself according to its religious practices. He also sought to enlarge his knowledge by delving into the doctrines of all the other Buddhist sects; but he was unable to reach the true way leading to a release from this world of pain. He went even so far as to invoke the aid of the gods as well as the Buddhas to make him realise an immovable state of tranquillity; but all to no purpose.

While thus vainly seeking his way of release, many years passed on; and he came to be looked up and paid high respect by all his teachers and friends as one whose deep learning and unimpeachable morality were incomparable. His priestly rank advanced, and when he was twenty-five years old, he was made Monzeki (chief priest) of the Shōkō-in. All these successes, however, were far from satisfying his noble spirit, which was ever hankering after the truth. His spiritual vexations increased the more. When will the light come to this poor yet earnest truth-seeker?

His twenty-ninth year which he attained in the first year of Kennin (1201 A.D.), still found him in a state of mental uncertainty. Determined to arrive at the settlement of all his doubts, he went daily to the

Rokkaku-dō, Kyōto, for one hundred days beginning with Jan. 10 of that year, and offered his final prayers to Avalokiteṣvara Bōdhisattva (Kwannon Bosatsu) to suffer him to see the light. At last, he had a vision of the Bosatsu, and through his instruction he went to Yoshimidzu in order to be taught by Hōnen Shōnin. Now, according to his doctrine, all sentient beings were sure to be saved and embraced in the light of Amida and to be born in the Land of Happiness, eternal and imperishable, if they, however sinful, only believe in the name of the Buddha, and, forsaking all their petty cares of the world at present and to come, abandon themselves to his saving hands so mercifully extended towards all beings, and recite his name with singleness of heart. It was through listening to this doctrine that our Shōnin came to remove from his mind every shadow of his spiritual doubt. Then, for the first time, he came to perceive that Amida was the name of his true Father, and could not help realising that, during these twenty-nine years of his existence, his life had ever been actuated by this Father's will to save, and that this true Father, from the very beginning of all things, had been unintermittently at work to save his sinful children through his eternal mercy. The Shōnin was filled with joy and gratitude unspeakable. To commemorate this occasion of his spiritual regeneration, he was given by his master a new Buddhist name, Shakkū. Abandoning his former adherence to the faith of the Tendai Sect, he now embraced the Pure Land Sect; that is to say, forsaking the uncertainty of "self-salvation" (*jiriki*, meaning "self-power"), he became a believer in the efficacy and

surety of salvation through a power other than his own (*tariki*, meaning "other-power").

After this, he resigned his priestly position as Monzeki, and becoming a mere Buddhist monk in black, he built an humble hut at Okazaki, where he continued to receive further instructions from Hōnen Shōnin. His faith grew ever deeper until he thoroughly understood the signification of his master's doctrine. In October, 1203 A.D., our Shōnin decided to follow the advice of Hōnen Shōnin to enter upon a conjugal life and to give the world an example concretely illustrating their faith that the householder could be saved as much as the celibate monk. He was, therefore, married to Princess Tamahi, daughter of Prince Kanezane Kujō, formerly prime minister to the Emperor.

He was thirty-one years of age while the Princess eighteen. This marriage, in fact, was undertaken to settle the religious doubt then prevailing as regards the final redemption of those secular householders, who, living with their family, have not completely destroyed the root of passion. Prince Kujō was one of those who were in doubt about this point, and our Shōnin made the practical demonstration of his belief by marrying one of his daughters and living the life of a man of the world. In the year following, a son was born to him, who was named Han-i.

In 1205 A.D., our Shōnin was given by his revered master a copy of his work entitled, "The Sen-Jyaku Hon-Gwan Nen-Butsu Shū – which we have reason

to consider a memorable event in the life of Shinran Shōnin; for it was to a very selected few that the master was pleased to give his own writing,—only to those disciples of his who distinguished themselves in learning and virtue. Our Shōnin assumed yet another name this year in accordance with his master's wish. The name was Zenshin, meaning "good faith." In this wise, the relation between the Shōnin and his master grew closer and closer, every one recognised in him a spirit that harbored a most powerful faith equal to that of his master.

Fortunately or unfortunately, this fact led to a series of sad events in 1207 in the life of the Founder of the True Sect. The beginning of it was the conversion of two court ladies into the faith of Pure Land, who finally entered a nunnery. This greatly offended the feeling of the court and set it against Hōnen Shōnin and his followers. Taking advantage of the court's displeasure, those Buddhist monks belonging to the Kōfuku-ji monastery at Nara, who were for years observing the spread of the Pure Land Sect with unmitigated jealousy, now maliciously denounced its chief propagators to the court and asked for an imperial order to forbid the preaching of the doctrine of the Pure Land Sect. The court at last lent its ear to this vicious counsel and ordered Hōnen Shōnin to leave the Capital for Tosa Province. Our founder, too, as the foremost disciple of the venerable Hōnen, could not escape the misfortune and was banished to Kokubu in Echigo Province.

Our Shōnin had now to be separated from his revered master as well as from his beloved family. We can well understand what sorrowful feelings were then astir in his heart, which, however, was not so darkened as to be altogether insensible to the other aspect of this sad event. Perceiving the gracious design of the Buddha even in the midst of the calamity, he thought in this wise: "Echigo, which is so remotely situated, could perhaps never have chance to listen to the Good Law of the Buddha if there were not such an opportunity as this. My banishment serves an excellent purpose of proselytism. If I happen to find even one soul embracing the same faith as mine in that remote province, I shall regard it as owing to the wisdom of my venerable master." Thus thinking, he departed for his destination with cheerful spirits.

Therefore, all the way along his long journey, our Shōnin made use of every occasion to give utterance to his faith and to make his people interested in the Good Law. When finally he reached his place of banishment in Echigo, he was ever active in his missionary work, going about in his neighboring villages and exercising his personal influence

over the country people. In the meantime, Princess Tamahi, who, being left behind in the Capital, had spent days and nights in sorrow and without consolation, made up her mind to share with her husband the provincial loneliness in the faraway

snowy region of Echigo, and let herself suffer the misery of banishment.

Five years passed, and in November, 1211, the court issued an order to terminate the banishment of our Shōnin. The message carried by Lord Norimitsu Okazaki did not arrive at the destination until December of the same year.

To his receipt of the message, our Shōnin signed himself Gutoku (which means "simple-hearted bald man"). He inwardly wished, by thus designating himself, to determine his own status among followers of the Buddha, which was neither that of a monk nor that of a layman,—his was indeed a most peculiar one. What other signification he wanted to give to this unique title was that he was one of those simple-hearted Buddhists who were not wise, nor intelligent, nor learned. He used to believe himself as an ignorant and sinful soul, as it implied in the literal sense of the title, Gutoku. This critical valuation of himself was an aspect of his religious belief. Afterwards, he had another name given himself, Shinran, by which he is popularly known now.

When he received the message of release, he wished at once to proceed to the Capital and see his venerable master; but being prevented by various circumstances, it was not until January of the following year that he could start from Kokubu. When he reached Kōdzuke on his way to Kyōto toward the middle of February, an unexpected news made him plunge into the deepest sorrow and

despair; for it was the news of the death on January 25 of his revered master, Hōnen Shōnin, whom he wished to see fervently for once before his final passing. His heart-breaking was so great, indeed, that he threw himself down on the ground and cried most piteously. He now abandoned his plan to proceed to the Capital, and making his way for Hidachi Province, he visited several towns along his route and preached his faith to the people.

Since January, 1217, he settled at Inada of Hidachi Province, and began writing his "Kyō-Gyō-Shin-Shō" (*The Teaching, Practice, Faith, and Attainment*), in which are laid down the fundamental principles of the True Sect of Pure Land. This was his first literary work, and the greatest, for on this is built the entire structure of the True Sect. After the passing of his master, there were many of his disciples, who failed to grasp the spirit of their master and grossly misrepresented its vital signification. To save the latter from a wreckage, therefore, and to make known the true purport of the Pure Land Sect (that is, the True Sect of Pure Land) free from all possible misinterpretations, he wrote this most significant book. It was completed in the year 1224, when our Shōnin was fifty-two years of age.

In the year following (1225 A.D.), the Shōnin built a temple at Takada of Shimodzuke Province. In 1226, the temple received the name, Senju Amida Ji, by an imperial order. After this, the True Sect of Pure Land began to draw its circles of propagation wider and

wider around these two centers, Inada and Takada; and many men and women of good family gathered about him, who led them to the truth of the Buddhist faith. For twenty years in these localities he had thus been indefatigably engaged for the cause of the True Sect of Pure Land, when he conceived an idea to visit the Capital in 1232. He was then sixty years old.

He left his monastery at Takada to the care of his disciple, Shimbutsu; and accompanied only by two of his disciples, (while his wife remained alone at Inada,) he started for Kyōto where he had been long absent. In Kyōto he had no fixed residence, and moved from one place to another, among which we may mention Gojō-Nishinotōin, Okazaki, Nijō-Tominokōji, etc. He was never tired of preaching the Good Law of the compassionate Buddha to whomever that came to him for spiritual guidance and helpful instructions; and to those who could not pay him a personal visit, he sent letters dwelling upon the joyful life of a devout Buddhist. Towards the end of his life the Shōnin wrote various messages for the sake of uneducated followers of his faith, in which he expounded the essentials of the True Sect in the plainest possible terms.

In 1262, he reached the high age of ninety, and began to show symptoms of an illness on November 23; but he complained of nothing particularly, except speaking of the deep love of Amida and reciting his name with profound devotion. On the twenty-seventh, he bid farewell to his disciples, saying that

he would be waiting for them in Pure Land when the time come for them to join him there. After this, he kept on reciting the name of Amida. On the following day, according to the example shown by the Great Muni of the Shākya at the time of his Nirvāna, he had his head turned towards the North, facing the West, and lying on his right-hand side, in a room at the Zembō-in; at noon his reciting came quietly to an end, showing that he finally returned to the Land of Light, when it is said that an odor of indescribably sweet fragrance filled the room and a flash of white light was seen across the

Western sky, as if unfolding a long piece of immaculate linen.

His remains were cremated on the twenty-ninth at the Yennin-ji, south of Toribeno, and his ashes were buried at Ōtani, Higashiyama, over which now stands tombstones.

The Shōnin was apparently a manifestation of Amida-Butsu, he was indeed a saving light who came among us some seven hundred years ago to dispel the darkness of this world. His life of ninety years on earth was an imprint eternally engraved on the hearts of sinners not yet freed from impurities. He lived among us to typify the life of a sinful soul, who could yet be saved through his faith in the boundless love of Amida, and left a unique example for us who are intoxicated with the wine of passion. So, our Shōnin did not follow the steps of an ancient sage, who, leaving his home and severing all the family ties,

would fly away from this world, in order to cleanse the heart, to sanctify the conduct, and to be thoroughly imbued with the purest religious sentiment, and who by virtue of these unworldly merits was permitted to be born in the country of the Buddha. The Shōnin, on the contrary, married Princess Tamahi and lived a family life, even after his confirmation in the Buddhist faith.

Four sons and three daughters were born through this union. The first, third, fourth, and fifth children were sons who were named respectively, Han-i, Zenran, Myōshin, and Dōshō; while the second, sixth, and seventh were daughters, whose names were: Masahime, Saga-hime, and Iya-hime. The Shōnin could not help but deeply love these children, so dear to the heart of the father that he once confessed with a truly human weakness: "I am the one who, not knowing how to be blessed by the saving love of Amida, is drowned in the tempest of passion and has lost his way in the mountains of worldliness." The founder of the True Sect, thus unlike most religious leaders, was a husband and father, who loved his family with all his heart and found his salvation in the eternal love of Amida.

It is due to this fact that in the True Sect of Pure Land there is no distinction made between the monk and the layman as regards their outward religious practice; while in all the other Buddhist sects the monk leads a life of celibacy and refrains from eating the animal's flesh, the followers of the True Sect have

no such special order among them, for their "monks" marry and eat meat. Their religious life, therefore, consists in continuing to live an ordinary, everyday human life, not necessarily struggling to free themselves from the so-called "defilements" of the flesh, and in leaving the grave matter of salvation entirely in the saving hands of Amida; for theirs is only to be grateful for the Buddha's saving love and to express this gratitude by the observance of all the moral laws and the efficient execution of their respective duties. This faith and this way of living were exemplified by our venerable Shinran Shōnin, the Founder of the True Sect of Pure Land.

The Shōnin had many devoted disciples, among whom the following were the most noted: Shōshin, Shimbutsu, Jun-shin, Muyishin, Myōhō, Yuiyen, Nyūsai, Saibutsu, Kakushin, Ren-yi, etc. There were among these disciples some who had at first entertained an idea to murder the master, imagining him to be the enemy of Buddhism; but as soon as they approached the Shōnin, his personality so powerfully impressed them that they at once abandoned the evil design and became the most devoted of his disciples. There were, again, others who grew more attached to the master, because he was revealed to them in a vision as an incarnation of Amida. It is not, therefore, difficult for one to realise even in these remote days with what veneration he was regarded by these people; indeed, who could refrain from revering him as a Buddha? In spite of these facts, the Shōnin refused to regard these devoted followers of his as

disciples, but considered them as his best friends embracing the same faith, or as his younger brothers growing under the guidance of the one spiritual father. He respected and loved every one of them as such, declaring: "I, Shinran, have no disciples in faith." It is evident then that the master entertained no thought of styling himself as a religious leader or teacher, he only regarded himself as a blessed child living in the all-embracing love of Amida.

In his old age, he wrote many books, in which he praised the love and virtue of the Buddha, confessed his faith, and propounded the principles of the True Sect of Pure Land; and it is through these writings that we have now access to the inner life of our Founder. Among chief works of his besides the one already referred to, "The Kyō-gyō-shin-shō," we mention the following: "The Gutoku-shō," "The Jōdo-monrui-jushō," "The Nyū-shutsu-nimon-ge," "The Jōdo-sangyō-wōjō-monrui," "The Wōgen-yekō-monrui," "The Jōdo-wasan," "The Kōsō-wasan," "The Shōzōmatsu-wasan," "The Yui-shin-shō-mon-i," "The Songō-shinzō-meimon," "The Ichinen-tanen-shōmon," etc.

Besides these, we have two volumes of his letters collected by his disciples, which are entitled, "The Mattō-shō" and "The Go-shōsoku-shū." Still later, Nyoshin Shōnin, grandson of the master, compiled sayings of the latter under the title, "The Tan-i-shō." By the aid of these books, we are able to look into his faith and conviction as it was alive in his heart; and

our exposition of the doctrine of the True Sect will be according to these works.

**Life of Shinran Shonin, EXCERPTS FROM THE
PRINCIPAL TEACHINGS OF THE TRUE SECT OF PURE
LAND, By Yejitsu Okusa, 1915 - *sacred-texts.com***

The Out-of-Body Travel Foundation Journal:
Question and Answer Forum!

Please Send Your Questions to:

MarilynnHughes1@outofbodytravel.org

For Future Inclusion in this Section!

Question from Robert Strong, Coast to Coast AM Listener, USA: My name is Robert Strong, I listened to you speak last night on Coast to Coast. I am new to the listening audience, but I find that what you spoke about was very interesting. I know in my life that the two things holding me back from being the person I want to be is my selfishness and patience. I want to become closer to God and do his will. I find that there are days that I do this, but a majority of the time I don't. I am a teacher and coach. I want to get where I need to be in God's eyes. I also want to gain inner peace. I was wondering if you could help me with this. I feel meditation would be great to help achieve this. I have never had an OBE. How do I get started with meditation? How do I know what path I am to lead? Can you help me get on track? What recommendations would you make? Thanks for your time and effort.

Sincerely,

Robert Strong

Marilynn: What a great question and I am SO motivated to help you because you are a teacher! I

used to substitute teach and all it did was give me such a profound admiration for the day in and day out patience required by teachers to do their job.

You've got the first step covered, you realize you struggle with selfishness and impatience - you're already halfway there! That's great. One of the forms of meditation that I find helpful is actually a Buddhist one. Mindfulness. Thich Naht Hahn is a great Buddhist Master who has some tapes out teaching mindfulness meditation. There's also a great one that I've used and my kids have used called 'The Art of Meditation' by Daniel Goleman, Ph. D. He actually teaches Breath Meditation, Body Scan Meditation, Walking Meditation (great for kids), and the Mindfulness Meditation. Then he guides you through each. It's a very good place to begin.

One thing to keep in mind, and I think you'll catch onto this if you read 'The Mysteries of the Redemption' which you can download freely, is that whenever you recognize a vice in yourself, the practice you must begin is to intentionally with discipline of the mind practice the opposite virtue. So you stop yourself when you're about to behave selfishly and choose to discipline yourself to do something selfless instead. Same with impatience, you discipline yourself to stop - and then choose to practice its opposite.

Easy for me to say, Right? Hahahahaha. You're the teacher. I get it.

*Let me know if these things are helpful for you, and
keep me posted!*

*Hope this helps,
MarilynnHughes@outofbodytravel.org
www.outofbodytravel.org*

The Out-of-Body Travel Foundation Journal:

Different Voices!

This is our section devoted to the writings and opinions of others, which may not reflect the views of author, Marilyn Hughes. Inclusion of any author's writings or work does not denote an endorsement or recommendation in regards to their writings.

Some of these will be individual writings of others on subjects of spiritual interest, other people's out-of-body experiences - some which may agree with and/or contradict the experiences of the author, poems, journals of spiritual transformation, and critiques - both positive and negative opinions and/or analysis, of the author's work.

We choose to include ALL of these because we feel that the ability to discuss our similarities and differences openly is 'ALL GOOD' as GANDHI used to say.

We welcome and encourage your submissions for possible future inclusion in this section, although we stress that we are a non-profit organization and payment is not available:

MarilynnHughes1@outofbodytravel.org

We have found that some of the best critiques, analysis, writings and experiences come from people all over the world in different walks of life who are pursuing their spiritual path with passion and are completely unknown.

THANK YOU ALL, whether you agree or disagree with our work, FOR YOUR COMMITMENT TO SEEK THE TRUTH IN WHATEVER WAY THAT TRUTH MAY COME TO SEEK YOU!

Excerpts from:

**THE PRINCIPAL
TEACHINGS OF THE
TRUE SECT OF PURE
LAND**

By Yejitsu Okusa,

**III. WHY CALLED THE TRUE SECT OF
PURE LAND?**

By the True Sect of Pure Land is meant the true teaching in the doctrine of Pure Land, that is to say, the way of truth that assures one's rebirth in the Pure Land of Amida.

We can imagine the existence of three paths leading to the Pure Land of Amida, one of which is broad and safe, while the other two are rough and narrow. This broad and safe one is the true way that assures our rebirth in Pure Land.

The Pure Land of Amida is a land of perfect beauty founded upon the truth of goodness, and not a particle of impurity could be brought in there. Therefore, however apparently good and praiseworthy in this world, human morality issuing out of a heart ever full of defilement cannot be said to be a good which is truly free from every trace of

impurity; and it will be an impossibility to be born in Pure Land through our human will and moral discipline; nay, if indeed a person wants to be born there, he must absolutely renounce his self-will.

Through what power shall we be allowed to be born in Pure Land? The question has been answered in the very beginning of things, for the will of Amida entertains no doubt as to this point. That pure and beautiful land of happiness is for us; Amida, wishing to have us join him in Pure Land, is ever showering his light upon us in order to make us grow in wisdom and to become conscious of our sinfulness and falsehood, whereby we might come to entertain the desire of being born in the land of truth and goodness. It is thus entirely due to the effulgence of Amitābha (the Infinite Light) that we have at all grown conscious of the darkness existing in our hearts and awakened an aspiration after a land of eternal light. Amida who has brought up our minds to this state while we were altogether unaware of his existence, is now beckoning us, saying: "Hear my name of truth and goodness, awaken your consciousness of the impurity and falsehood darkening your hearts, and have your destiny absolutely entrusted into my hands that will save you from sin and ignorance." Those who listen to this call of Amida, and growing aware of their sinfulness, surrender themselves to the will of the Buddha, and grasp his hand of salvation with absolute confidence, are embraced in the truth and goodness of his love that saves; and after death they will no more be the

owner of such a defiled mind and body as they have now, but being born in the land of happiness and purity, will be given infinite wisdom and love. If it is not for the love of Amida that wills to save all beings, we shall have no opportunity to be born in his Land of Purity. Therefore, the true way of being born in the Buddha-country lies in crossing this sea of suffering on board the boat of love steered by Amida. This way is called the "Gugwan," by which is meant the Buddha's will to save all beings.

But there are some who can not resign themselves entirely to the Buddha's will to save; though approaching the true way, they are not yet quite ready to surrender themselves to Amida, whose arms are extended towards them for their salvation, but desire to be born in Pure Land through the merit of reciting his name with singleness of heart. These people, believing there is no other way of being born in Pure Land but through the reciting of Amida's name, place too much emphasis on the reciting itself and have the tendency to repeat the name of the Buddha as many times as they could. These are the people who want to be in Pure Land partly through their own efforts. They would be born on the outskirts of it if their hearts remain serene at the time of their death. We call, however, this way the "Shimmon," or real gate.

There are still others who can not enter even upon the path of the so-called "Shimmon"; for they so strongly believe in their own efficiency that they desire to be

born in the Pure Land of Amida through the accumulation of merits gained by their own moral and religious deeds. Such people would be born on the outskirts of Pure Land if by the accumulation of merit their hearts remain undisturbed. This way is known as the "Yōmon," meaning the gate of importance.

These two gates or ways, the "Shimmon" and the "Yōmon," are not the true road leading to Pure Land. As there is mixture here of one's own impure will, one is barred from the Pure Land proper; only by the love of the Buddha, one is able to approach a region lying on the outskirts. To such one, the time will come when he will realise his own fault after years of self-discipline in the outlying district of Pure Land, and then he will for the first time come to the path of truth. It is, then, evident that these two gates are merely provisionary, narrow ones furnished for those who are unable to enter at once upon the path of truth, while the "Gugwan" way is the only, true, ultimate one directly carrying us to the abode of Amida.

When a man thus perceives the existence of these three different roads to Pure Land, he must guard himself against going astray, and follow the true, straight road of the "Gugwan." The doctrine that teaches this, is called the True Sect of Pure Land, or briefly the True Sect.

IV. SALVATION.

IN the True Sect of Pure Land, we have the true, all-embracing love of Amida to save all beings from ignorance and pain. It is the net of boundless compassion thrown by the Buddha's own hand into the sea of misery, in which the ignorant rather than the wise, the sinful rather than the good, are meant to be gathered up. This love and compassion is eternally abiding with the Buddha, whose will to save all beings knows no temporal limitations; and on this account the Buddha is called *Amitāyus* (Eternal Life). His power to save is manifest in his light. Though invisible to our defiled eyes, this light is constantly shedding its rays upon all sentient beings ever leading us onward to the awakening of faith. Those who have awakened this faith in the love of Amida which saves, are at once embraced in his light and destined to be born in Pure Land after death. This light is the will of Amida under whose merciful care all beings are made to grow; it reaches every part of the universe, knowing no spatial limitations. Therefore, the Buddha is also called *Amitābha* (Infinite Light). His will to save is, thus, infinite not only in time but in space, hence his two attributes, *Amitāyus* and *Amitābha*. In China and Japan, he is briefly known as Amida, meaning the Infinite.

Amida is the Father of all beings;

he is the Only One; he has, from the very beginning of all things, been contriving to save the world, and once

incarnated himself in the person of Dharmākara Bhikshu to deliver the message of happiness among us. Amida made the Bhikshu invoke forty-eight vows as recorded in the Amitāyus-sūtra, the main idea of which is that "I will make every one enjoy a rebirth in Pure Land if he listen to my name and believe in my will to save and rejoice in it." It is said that, before making this wish, the Bhikshu cogitated for a period of five kalpas; that, in order to fulfil the wish, he accumulated innumerable merits by practising the six virtues for innumerable kalpas with a heart full of love and compassion and free from all defilement; and, finally, that the fulfilment of this vow took place ten kalpas ago. Amida is now summoning us to his Land of Purity by showing us his name that saves.

This world of ours is a defiled world filled with sin and suffering; neither the wise nor the ignorant are free from sin, the noble as well as the poor are suffering from pain. He that declares himself to be sinless must be either an insane man or an idiot. Even when, judging from our own ignorant conditions, we imagine ourselves happy, we may be deceiving ourselves; for in the Buddha's eye our apparent happiness may be a real pain. In such a world of impurity as this, it is impossible to find a true state of peace and happiness. Fame, wealth, love, learning, — so many evils are ever leading us downward into the abyss of utter darkness. Where can we then find a region which harbors no pain? There stands Amida pointing to his Land of Purity and Happiness (*Sukhāvati*), where our worldly sufferings and

tribulations are no more. In this land there always smiles the spring of peace. No pain, no sin, but all beauty, goodness, and joy. Those born there enjoy a happiness that knows no ending; they are endowed not only with infinite wisdom and liberty, but with pure love and compassion which has the power to save all beings from the world of pain. All this happiness enjoyed by those who are in Pure Land is the outcome of Amida's love and will to save.

Amida thus grudges nothing for our deliverance from sin; with various contrivances, good and excellent, he ever leads us to the way of salvation, and it is through his grace that we have in ourselves the reason of salvation and are allowed to enjoy its fulfilment. Now, Amida has two ways of showing his grace towards us: the one is called the "wōsō yekō," which means that the Buddha supplies us not only with the cause of our rebirth in Pure Land, but with its result; and the other is called the "gensō yekō," meaning that he confers upon us the power to come back to this world of pain even after our rebirth in Pure Land, in order to deliver our fellow-beings from sufferings. In the "wōsō yekō" there are four things to be distinguished, which are teaching, practice, faith, and attainment. The following scheme will make us understand this better:

The Wōsō yekō	1. Teaching, as set forth in the Amitāyus-sūtra (in two volumes).	Cause.
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	2. Practice, or reciting the name of Amida.	
	3. Faith, or believing in his will to save...	
	4. Attainment, or being born in Pure Land and becoming a Buddha...	
The Gensō yekō	Coming back to the world of suffering to save the fellow-beings	Effect.

This will be explained more in detail:

The Teaching. Amida once assumed a human form and appeared on earth in order to save us from sin and ignorance; and Shākyamuni was he. The most important of all his teachings is the Amitāyus-sūtra translated into Chinese in two volumes, 252 A.D., in which is brought forth the true signification of salvation by Amida. In fact, the very object of his appearance on earth was to teach this sūtra and to establish the foundation of the True Sect of Pure Land. In other words, therefore, we can say that the True Sect is the direct revelation of Amida Buddha.

The Practice. We are now acquainted with the name of Amida according to the discourse by Shākyamuni, and we know that in this name is embodied the significance of Amida's will to save; for to hear the name is to hear the voice of salvation, saying, "Trust in me, for I will surely save you,"—a word coming directly from Amida. Such, indeed, being the sense embodied in the name of Amida, we must express deep feeling of gratitude by reciting his name as he wills when we have been able to hear the call of our Father so full of love and compassion. In Sanskrit, the recitation runs: "Namo 'mitāyushe Buddhāya" or "Namo 'mitabhāya Buddhāya," but in Japanese briefly "Namu Amida Bu."

While all other deeds of ours are more or less defiled, the reciting of "Namu Amida Bu" is an act free from impurities; for it is not we that recite it, but Amida himself, who, giving us his own name, makes us recite it.

The Faith. When we hear the name of Amida, we cannot help but believe in the certainty of our salvation, and this belief, too, comes from the grace of Amida. For (1) when we come to think of his will to save, we are unable to deceive ourselves as to our inner life full of falsehoods, and to behave as if we were thoroughly wise. This must be, because the will of Amida, pure and free from falsehood, descends upon us.

(2) The moment we hear the name of the Buddha and surrender ourselves to his will, we grow convinced of

our own salvation through his grace and gain peace of mind; this will, however, be impossible, if not for the fact that Amida's will to save everyone who enters into his love affirms itself in us.

(3) The moment we believe in our salvation through his grace, we awake within ourselves a desire to be born in his Pure Land, and are happy in the conviction that it will be done as we desire. This must be due to the influence upon us of Amida's overflowing love which invites us to join him in Pure Land. Therefore, we conclude that, that we come to rely upon Amida for our salvation is entirely due to his grace and not to personal efforts. Indeed, this feeling of dependence, or this faith in Amida, is no more nor less than his own will.

The Attainment. The instant the belief is confirmed in our salvation through Amida, our destiny is settled that we are to be reborn in Pure Land and become a Buddha. Then it is said that we are all embraced in the light of Amitābha, and, living under his loving guidance, our life after the confirmation of faith is but filled with joy unspeakable, which is a gift of the Buddha. Then we have no need to pray the gods or Buddhas for more happiness in this life; for are we not already enjoying all the happiness that could be obtained here? If we still have to suffer misfortune, it is the outcome of evil deeds committed by ourselves in the past; and this no amount of praying will remove. It is only after our rebirth in the Land of

Happiness that we are allowed to lead a life absolutely free from pain.

At the end of our earthly life, we cast aside every trace of this defiled existence; and upon being born in the Land of Purity and Happiness, we attain to the enlightenment of the Buddha. And it is not necessary at this moment of rebirth to keep our last thoughts on earth in tranquillity, and wait for the coming of the Buddha to take us into his country. As we have already been living encircled by the rays of Amitābha Buddha, however disturbed our last moments, we are sure to be led into Pure Land through the mysterious operation of the Buddha's light.

The Land of Happiness is the garden of Nirvana. Those who are born there, gain the great enlightenment of Nirvana, enjoy a life everlasting, and are forever free from the bondage of birth and death. Not only this, they are then able to manifest themselves over and over again in the world of suffering in order to deliver their fellow-beings from sin and ignorance. All these innumerable happinesses we can enjoy come from no other source than the grace of Amida Butsu.

V. FAITH

WHAT kind of faith does the True Sect require of its followers? Not much, only to surrender themselves to the will of Amida; and his will is: "Trust in me with singleness of heart, and you will assuredly be saved." Let us, therefore, surrender ourselves to his will and

harbor no other thought than to be embraced in his arms of grace, wishing to be saved in the life to come. Amida is the leader of all the Buddhas. It is he who holds the key to all the mysteries of existence. When we bow before him in all humility, we shall be protected from evils by all the gods and Buddhas. All those followers of the True Sect who pray to a Buddha or Bodhisattva other than Amida are either misunderstanding, or do not fully believe in, the love of Amida, that saves all beings without exception. A faith one entertains for an absolute being must also be absolute and unconditional. Let us, therefore, rely upon no other mystery than Amida himself, who is the mystery of mysteries; and it is he alone that can save us unconditionally and supremely.

The name of Amida is the most worshipful one in the whole universe; and all the roots of goodness and all the stock of merit are gathered up in this name; and the reciting of it is the noblest thing to do in the world, the best of all good deeds one could think of. When we recite the name of Amida, we grow conscious of the inferiority of all other deeds to the reciting itself. However noble, honorable, and beautiful a moral or religious deed may appear to our vulgar eyes, it has no power to lead us into the Pure Land proper where abides Amida himself, for we have nothing to add, even an iota, to the love of Amida which alone can save us from sin. All that we can do is to surrender ourselves,—our sin, our ignorance, our destiny, and our all,—into the all-embracing love of Amida, and to express our inmost

feeling of gratitude for the grace of the Buddha by reciting his name.

To thus resign oneself to the will of Amida and to follow his guiding hand to salvation, is the faith required by the True Sect of its followers. In this faith we recognise two things: (1) that we are such sinful beings as are destined to be inhabitants of Hell, that we are prisoners forever to be confined in the world of pain, that our eyes of wisdom are closed and our legs of morality broken and we are spiritual invalids; (2) that it is the love of Amida who has cherished the thought of saving these sinful creatures and taken vows that he will not stop his efforts until every single being is carried to his Pure Land, that however sinful, all who believe in Amida and his will to save will surely be born in the Land of Happiness. How could we then but rejoice in the surety of our salvation through his grace?

In these two facts of faith all the followers of the True Sect agree, and know that this is altogether due to the will of Amida himself. and that we are absolutely dependent upon him. So long as we are not aware of our salvation through Amida, we may think that we are something, not altogether a negligible quantity; but we find ourselves entirely at fault, when we come to realise the merciful design of the Buddha to save us through his will of goodness and truth, our spiritual eyes are open to the inner darkness of our hearts, full of impurities and falsehoods; and we are most penitent over our utter ignorance. While we were not

acquainted with Amida's will to save, we thought we were lonely travellers not knowing whither to go, or like helpless orphans who have no loving parents, no greeting home. But the moment the name of Amida opens our hitherto unknown spiritual region in us, we are deeply grateful and happy. We now know that we are his children, he is our worshipful father who protects us every moment of our existence, that the home we are going to abide is already magnificently built, and that we, led by the guiding hand of our father, are approaching our home step by step. Such in brief is the faith entertained by the followers of the True Sect of Pure Land.

VI. LIFE.

THE True Sect of Pure Land is a religion for the home, teaching to be loyal to master, filial to parents, affectionate to wife and children, to be industrious in work, doing all things that contribute to the general welfare, and believing in Amida's will to save. There is no necessity, according to the doctrine of the True Sect, to flee from the world and to discipline oneself in certain religious austerities; one may lead an official life, engage in business, or be a soldier, or farmer, or fisherman, each diligent in his chosen occupation, and believing in Amida with devoted heart. The life of the follower of the True Sect is not difficult; only let him, while continuing on his sinful and ignorant life, be most deeply grateful for the grace of Amida, who loves us so much as he is willing to save us as we are, ignorant and sinful; let us then

recite his name from fulness of heart and be ever industrious in our daily work.

The will of the Buddha is manifest everywhere and in everything, it is present in the person of our teacher, parents, brother, wife, children, friends, and also in the State or community to which we may belong; the Buddha is protecting, nourishing, consoling, and instructing us in every possible way. What we owe to the Buddha is not only when we are carried into his Pure Land, but even when we are living our daily life on earth, for which latter fact we must also be deeply grateful. Let us not forget how much we are owing to our present surroundings, and to regard them with reverence and love. We must endeavor as much as we can to execute our duties faithfully, to work for the growth of Buddhism, for the good of the family, state, and society, and thus to requite even a thousandth part of what we owe to Amida. To work thus for the world with a sense of gratitude is the true life of the Buddhist.

The Buddhist never loses an inward feeling of joy as he most deeply believes in his rebirth in Pure Land through the grace of the Buddha; but as far as his outward appearance go, let him have nothing particularly to distinguish himself as such from other people. A Buddhist officer, or Buddhist soldier, or Buddhist man of business has nothing remarkable about him as to single him out as Buddhist from among his fellow-workers; he obeys the moral laws, moves according to the regulations of the state, does

nothing against habits or customs of his times and country, so long as they are not morally offensive; the only thing that distinguishes him most conspicuously from his non-Buddhist fellow-beings, is his inward life filled with joy and happiness, because of his faith in Amida's love to save all beings. For what constitutes the true Buddhist is his inner life, and not his outward features.

*EXCERPTS FROM THE PRINCIPAL TEACHINGS OF
THE TRUE SECT OF PURE LAND, By Yejitsu Okusa,
[1915] - sacred-texts.com*

Shinran and His Work

By Arthur Lloyd

CHAPTER XI.

The Salvation of Sentient Beings.

(§§ 52–59.)

"Amida," "says the Shinshuist, saves us by the exercise of His two great attributes of Mercy and Wisdom" (*hi-chi no ni-toku wo motte warera wo sukuu* § 52). He saves the world by Wisdom, when He allows a part of himself to become incarnate in one of the *Nirmanakaya* or *Keshin* forms, to become the spiritual teachers of suffering humanity. In this way many of the Buddhas and Saints in the past have laboured with Him, or rather He has laboured in them, and in none more conspicuously than in Sakyamuni, who is the Teacher *par excellence* of the Buddhist world. He saves by Mercy by virtue of His Incarnation as Hōzō Biku, His sufferings, His exaltation, His enthronement in Paradise after He had reconquered, as man, all that He had voluntarily surrendered, as the Supreme Buddha.

Whichever way he chooses, His object is still the same,—to save from sin and its attendant miseries His poor children who are fast "bound in misery and iron," so fast that they cannot get out of their prison-house without some one to help them.

Buddhism believes in birth-sin, the guilt of which it does not become less awful to contemplate when it is accepted as the inevitable consequence of previous sins, a guilt contracted from many sources, in the course of a long series of previous lives. It is from this guilt, this Karma, that Amida would save us. If we listen to His voice, and trust in His mercies, we pass from death to life, death loses its hold on us, there is no returning to this vale of sin and misery. If we refuse, there is no vengeance, no unending misery of hell awaiting us. There is rebirth, there may be rebirths, and some of these rebirths may be in Hell. But Hell is not a place of endless sojourn. There is death in Hell, as there is on Earth, as there is in every place but the Heaven where the invisible Dharmakaya sits enthroned. And everywhere may be heard the voice of Amida: and they that hear shall live.

And what is the Voice?

To the Shinshuist it is summed up in the six Chinese characters *Namu Amida Butsu* (#). This *Myōgō*, or Sacred Name, as it is called, is to the Shinshuist all that the Crucifix is to the Catholic, or the Sacred Monogram I.H.S. It is the Symbolical Embodiment of all that Amida, in fulfilment of His Great Vow, has done for man. Indeed, it is more. It is what the Passover was to the Jews, what the Holy Sacrifice is to the Christian. It is itself the answer to the question, "What mean ye by this Sacrifice?" (§§ 52, 53). Wherever the *Myōgō* is seen written or carved, or

wherever (for the *Myōgō* has this advantage over the Christian monograph that it appeals to the ear as well as to the eye, and can be heard as well as seen)—wherever the Nembutsu is recited, it bears witness to that which Amida has done. They who hear it for the first time enquire about the reason, and they to whom the sound is a familiar one pause to remember its meaning with gladdened hearts. There is said to be in the *Myōgō* all the Strength of the Great Vow.

When a man thus hears the recital of the *Myōgō*, he places himself by faith in a position of entire and absolute trust in the Mercies of Him whom he believes to have done such great things for him. By this act, a vital union (if I may so call it) is effected between the believer, who is sinful, and Amida, who is sinless, a union which cannot be effected without the cutting of sin and evil. From the moment that the believer puts his whole trust and confidence in Amida, the roots of his sins are cut, the past Karma destroyed, and if he does not enter Paradise at once, yet he is placed in safe keeping in the Sacred Heart of Amida. (*Dai-jihi, dai-chie no Busshin ni ireru koto ni narimasu.*)

It is after this initial step has been taken, after the believer, by an act (*Ketsujō*) of Faith, has taken advantage of that which the Mercy of Heaven has provided for Him that the Wisdom of Buddha comes into play. For the Faith which has been placed as a seedling in our hearts must be watered and refreshed by teaching and doctrine, and that teaching the

Shinshu Buddhist finds, or thinks he finds, in the Scriptures which contain the undoubted teachings of Sakyamuni, the man that came, according to Shinran, to testify in India to Amida and Hōzō Biku.

CHAPTER XII.

Of Faith in General, (i).

(Extracts from ancient writers.)

I have judged it best in this chapter, instead of following the order of the questions and answers in *Shinshu Hyakuwa* (of which a short analysis will be found in the next chapter) to give from another book, the *Shinshu Seikun*, already cited, a catena of passages taken, mainly, from Japanese writers of the Middle Ages. If the Christian reader, bearing in mind what I have said of the wonderful parallels between the story of Amida, incarnate for man's salvation in Hōzō Biku, and that of Christ, will read these passages in a Christian sense, he will, I think, find them to be not devoid of edification. He will also, I believe, acknowledge that the devout worshipper of Amida, even though he may never actually have heard the name of Christ, may yet be far nearer to the Kingdom of God than many a man who calls himself a Christian, but shuts his eyes to the pure light of the Christian Faith. I shall take the liberty of interspersing among the extracts comments and criticisms of my own, but I shall do so in such a way as to make what is my own clearly distinguishable from what I have derived from ancient Japanese sources.

127. "They who travel along the Way make Faith their starting point."

Genshin 942-1017.

127. "It is said in the Nirvana Sutra that the Believing Heart is the Cause of Supreme Perfect Enlightenment. There are in truth innumerable causes of Enlightenment, but if you understand what a Believing Heart is you embrace them all."

Anon. *
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127. "In the House of Life and Death we stay for a while with doubt and fear: into the City of Nirvana we make our entrance through Faith."

Genkū 1133-1212.

"Among the Shōnin's followers (i.e. Shinran's), the Believing Heart means Trust, and Trust is the same thing as Peace of Mind."

Rennyō 1415-1499.

[In this sentence, the word for "trust" is *tanomu*. *Tanomu* is used as a verb meaning to "entrust somebody with something" or to "commit some particular duty to some one's care." The believer in Amida entrusts his salvation to Amida's care, and after that he has peace of mind (*anshin*). The word *tanomu* is really the παρατίθεναι in 1. St. Pet. iv. 19. cf. also 2. Tim. i. 12.]

128. "That which is called Faith (the Believing Heart) is Faith in the Imputation (to us) of the Virtue of the Great Vow."

(Rennyō.)

[I have here given "imputation" as the equivalent for the word *ekō* #. The word, which is used commonly for Masses for the dead, means "to divert from one person towards another." So the Virtue of the Great Vow is diverted or transferred from Amida to the believer. Cf. Romans iv. 18-25.]

128. "Faith is the implicit and absolute Belief in a man's words. For instance, if a man, whom we know and hold in confidence, should tell us of what he has seen,—here were mountains and yonder was a river,—we should believe what he tells us, even though we had not seen the country ourselves. Nay, though others should come and tell us a different story, if we had confidence in the first narrator, we should still believe his story, whatever the rest might say. Thus is it with our Faith. We believe in Mida's Holy Vow, because it is S'akyamuni that has told us of it, and we can have no two minds about it."

Shinran 1168-1257.

130. " The New Birth (*ōjō*) of all Sentient Creatures has been perfected by Amida: but Sentient Creatures remain in doubt and disbelief, and are consequently still entangled in the wheel of existence (*ruten* #). The

Sun shineth to every quarter under Heaven, but the blind see it not, and are not enlightened, because their eyes are holden. Thus also, though our New Birth (*ōjō*) is all settled so far as Amida's Enlightenment of us is concerned, our want of belief causes us, poor sinful creatures, to remain in the wheel of Life and Death."

Rennyō.

131. "In order that we may discern things, we want more than eyes, we must have the light of the Sun. Our New Birth is not the work of our own mind, it comes from the Mind of the Tathāgata. But here, as it is a question that regards His own words, we need not ask whether we have light on them or not, whether the darkness has been dispelled or not, whether the Tathāgata vouchsafes to us His enlightenment or not. "If I cannot procure Salvation for all Beings I will not accept the Buddhahood for myself," said the Tathāgata, when, as Hōzō Biku, He had reached the Stage of Perfectionment. The Sun has risen, shall we doubt whether Night still lingers? If the Sun has risen, the Night has gone, and the Sunlight alone is shed abroad. It is therefore of the utmost importance for us clearly to discern the enlightenment gained for us by the Tathāgata. For, if the Tathāgata, in the Person of Hōzō Biku, did not gain salvation (*shōgaku*) for us, our New Birth is a matter of uncertainty. But inasmuch as Hōzō Biku, who made the Vow, that he would not accept Buddhahood unless the New Birth were made

possible for all Sentient Creatures, is really identical with Amida the Tathāgata, why should we have any doubt?"

Shinran.

[I would suggest, as a parallel passage to this, 1. Cor. xv. 12–18. I feel sure that the reader cannot fail to be struck by the constant, and, to my mind, significant echoes of Pauline doctrine that insist on making themselves heard.]

135. "There are three words that are practically identical, to entrust (*tanomu*), to believe (*shinzuru*), and Salvation (*on-tasuke*). For it is the Mystery of the *tarik*i Faith that there is no room in it for doubt, – only for thankfulness."

Shinran.

135. "Just as a Son receives his father's goods (as a present earnest of future inheritance), even so do we receive, in the present life, the Merits of Amida's labours for us (i.e. *ōjō*). All Amida's prolonged labours were undertaken for the Salvation (*on-tasuke*) of each single individual amongst us, so that they are a matter for individual and personal gratitude, whenever the layman hears the recital of Amida's Vow made for his sake."

Shinran.

137. "Even though the Mind of Faith (*kimyō no kokoro*) should rise up within us, that is none of our doing. It is the Mercy and Compassion of Amida that is shining in our hearts."

[Cf. Eph. ii. 8; and especially 2 Cor. iv. 6. "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus." The parallelism is all the more striking because of the use of the word φωτισμός by St. Paul.]

137. "The word *shinjin*, "believing heart," may also be read as "straight heart." It is found in the believer, and is therefore supposed to come from the believer. But this a mistake. It comes from the Heart of the Tathāgata. For, if faith came from the crooked heart of man, it could not be 'straight.' It is only because it is the gift of Amida that Faith can be described as 'straight.'"

Anon.

[The character for *shin* in *shinjin* is 心, and means both 'belief,' or 'faith,' and 'straightness,' and 'honesty.' *Shinjin* therefore means both a 'believing heart,' and also an 'honest heart.' The quotation is from an anonymous book, *Shinshūkyō yōshū*. It is described in *Shinshu Seikun* p. 563.]

245. "The word *Is-shin* (One Heart) signifies the Union of Hearts, that is, the Union of our heart with that of Amida. The *Jūgiron* of the Tendai sect says truly that

in the world there is always a lover and a beloved, and that love is perfected when lover and beloved meet. Amida is the lover, we are the beloved, and when we turn with our whole heart to Amida and surrender ourselves to Him, our hearts become one with His, and *i-sshin* is realized. But a heart which is distracted over many things cannot realize this Union—that privilege is reserved for those hearts that are devoted to the thankful remembrance of Amida's Mercies (the Nembutsu)."

Genkū.

[Cf. St. Luke x. 40-42]

146. "In the Gate of Holy Path (*Shōdōmon*, see above chap. ii, p. 12) men work out Wisdom, and thus escape from life and death: by the Gate of the Pure Land, men return to foolishness, and thereby enter into Life (*ō-jō*). They put no trust in Wisdom, they profess themselves to be merely helpless, and unwise persons. But they put their whole trust in the Great Vow, and thus enter into Life.

Genkū.

[1. Cor. i. 17-25. When the rich young man came to Christ, the Master told him that if he would enter into life he must keep the commandments. That was the *Shōdōmon*. When He told him to abandon all the riches wherein he trusted, and "come follow me,"—that was the *Jōdomon*—"thou shalt have treasure in Heaven." S. Matth. xix. 16-22]

147. "When a man hears the preaching of the Pure Land, and, believing in it, feels a thrill of pleasure run through his frame, it shows that in some past life he has already heard something of that of which he now receives the full message. And now that he believes, he receives the New Birth. But if he hears as though he heard not, and gives no credence, he is one that has. but newly come up to the sphere of humanity from one of the three paths of evil. The impediments of sin have not yet been removed, and there is as yet no turning of Faith in his heart. Inasmuch as he does not yet believe he cannot yet escape from the bonds of life and death.

Genkū.

[There are in Buddhism six grades of Sentient Existence. 1. Heaven (where dwell gods and angels), 2. Man, 3. the Animals. All these have virtues and good qualities of their own. But below these come (4), Monsters of Greediness (*gaki*), and (5) Monsters of Lust and Violence (*shūra*), and these may be in human form, though devoid of the qualities of Humanity. Below all (6), are the demons that inhabit the Hells (*jigoku*). These last three are known as the *san-akudō*, or 'three bad spheres of existence.' It is the privilege of Man that to him the Gospel can be preached, for Man, though "lower than the Angels," has the hope of being "crowned with glory and honour." It is for this reason that we so often find the expression *ukegataki jinshin wo ukeru*, "to receive a human body which it is so hard to receive." This extract also illustrates another

doctrine which I have frequently come across in Shinshu writings, to wit, that the call contained in the recital of the Holy Name must in the end prove effectual. We may hear it once and again, and turn away, but it will have found a lodgment in the mind and ultimately (it may be a long time later), when the call comes, it will have a familiar and a welcome sound. (Rom. viii. 29. 30).]

166. " There are two ways of embarking on (the ship of) the Great Vow, and two ways of not embarking. To take the latter first, we do not embark on the Great Vow, when (i) we commit sin. For, in that case, we feel that our Salvation (*ōjō*) will not be secure, even though we repeat the Nembutsu. So we hesitate to take the decisive step. But (ii), we also refrain from embarking, when the religious mind (*dōshin*, lit. the heart of the Way, the virtuous mind) is aroused in us. For then we feel that, inasmuch as we are so very religious, we shall obtain Salvation for our own virtue and without any need of reciting the Nembutsu. We place our own Virtue first, and the Great Vow second, and so we neglect the Act of Faith.

Next, as to the two ways of embarking. (i). We embark, when we have committed as in. For then we feel that the commission of sin settles our fate and determines our condemnation to Hell. At that moment we hear the recital of the Sacred Name, and the thought, "Oh the joy of the assurance of Salvation!" comes to our mind, and we take the step of Faith, and embark. And (ii) the step is taken when

we have the religious mind. For then we say, 'this virtuous feeling will not cause my salvation. This feeling has existed from a remote past, and yet I have not been freed from the bonds of life and death. I will not therefore ask myself whether I have religious sentiments or not, I will not revolve in my mind the weight or otherwise of the sins I have committed. I will only turn my thoughts to the Salvation which can be obtained by the Invocation of the Holy Name.' When a man thinks thus he embarks on the ship *Tariki Hongwan* (Faith in Another's Power – the Power of the Great Vow)."

Of Faith in General, (ii).

Summary of the Questions and Answers in *Shinshu Hyakuwa*.

(§§ 52-70).

§ 52. Amida, it is said, has two qualities (*toku*) whereby He saves us—Mercy and Wisdom. We, sentient Beings, travail in pain (*kumon shite orimasu*), being fast bound in a kind of slavery to sin and evil, and from this we cannot free ourselves, because the fetters have been fastened on us by the Karma of an immemorial past. And Karma has relations not only with the past. It affects our present condition, it brings with it an endless chain of re-birth, life, and death, which stretches away into the boundless future. From this bondage Amida delivers us. He looses the bonds of sin and evil by the Might accruing to Him from His Great Vow, with His Light He illuminates our minds,

giving us supernatural and glorious Wisdom, of His Mercy he places us in a position equal to His own, practically giving us power to become 'sons of God.' For the above reasons the Shinshuist speaks of his Salvation as the Salvation of Amida.

§ 53. Of the "Might accruing to Amida from His Great Vow" we have already spoken when dealing with the Story of Hōzō Biku. That Might is enshrined in the Sacred Name, handed down to us by the living voice (*Koe*) of a great company of devout believers, inciting us to a Mind of Belief and Trust, and filling us with supernatural grace in consequence of the efficacy of the prayers which we ourselves recite after we have laid hold of salvation.

§ 54. Sin is an abstract thing (*mukei*), in the sense that it has so many forms and shapes that it is impossible to lay hands on any one thing and say that this is the Original Form of Sin. Its effect is, as stated above, to enchain us with fetters of habits, easily formed but almost impossible of rupture, and involving us in much pain and distress of mind. But the moment we put our trust in Amida, the fetters are snapped, peace of mind ensues, we are at peace, because we have entered into the Heart of Buddha, and being at peace, our actions become quiet and peaceable, and the liability to consequent misery is removed.

§ 55. The process by which this result is attained is the putting into operation of Amida's Mercy and Wisdom, and is embodied in the Name and Person of *Namu Amida Butsu*. We must suppose that in the

Mind of the Everlasting Buddha there must have been from everlasting a plan of Salvation for men, originating in his Everlasting Compassion. But Salvation is not complete unless the Faith of those saved be subsequently nourished and illuminated by the Divine Truth and Life. This is given to us by the manifest and manifold operation of the Boundless Wisdom of the Nyorai.

§ 56. Is devoted to the exposition of the meaning of the *Myōgō*, or Sacred Name of *Namu-Amida-Butsu*.

§ 57. Both Shinran and Rennyō insisted on the supreme importance of Faith. "If a man," says the latter, "does not know the importance of Faith, treat him as an outsider. Whoever knows what Faith is, and understands it (from practical experience) treat him as belonging to the Shinshu."

§ 58. Faith comes by hearing. Whenever a man hears the Gospel (*iware*) of Amida, the knowledge will come to him that he is deeply involved in sin and evil, and that it is impossible for him, try as he will, to save himself from the sin in and around him. That is one side of the 'Gospel message'. Simultaneously, however, with this 'conviction of sin' comes the firm conviction that Amida does save us, and that His Vow remains sure. Then, in a moment, doubt disappears and we find ourselves rejoicing in the Merciful Heart of Amida.

§ 59. What feelings are ours when we have thus learned to believe (*Mida Butsu wo shinzuru*

Kokoromochi)? Before conversion, our lives have been spent in the midst of evil, and our minds have been dragged down to the low level of our surroundings. The Voice of the Preacher, telling us of Amida Butsu, acts as a *Sursum Corda*. It tells of our Father, of his gracious invitation, of the arrival of the lifeboat.

Then our heart utters the Nembutsu, but not as a prayer. It is an act of Thanksgiving for the spiritual mercies we have received. We are filled with *shinjin kwanki*, "joy in believing."

§ 60. The object with which we put our trust in the Power of Amida's Saving Vow is that we may be turned from darkness to light, and receive the fruits of Saving Knowledge (*bukkwa*). It is our only chance.

Nishi ye yuku
 Michi yori hoka wa
 Ima no yo ni
 Ukiyo wo idzuru
 Kado ya nakaran.

"In this poor life at last,
 I see no other gate, by which to flee
 From sin and pain that wreathes this Transient-World,
 But that which leads West to the Paradise
 Of Amitābha.

§ 61. Faith is given to us: it is not of ourselves. It is the believer's own mind that believes; but that which fixes the mind in belief is the having understood (*tettei suru*) the Great Merciful Heart wherewith

Amida saves us. The faith which turns with repentance (*kijun sure*) to the commands of Amida is not faith in one's self (*jiriki*). It is distinctly faith in Another (*tariki*).

§ 62. It is true that the word *shinjin*, may be translated as "believing heart," and also as "straight heart." But the *tariki* Faith must not be understood to teach that a man is to turn even with an honest and true heart to Amida and ask to be delivered or rescued from this or that evil. To wrestle in prayer of this kind (*nejikakarite*) is a *jiriki* form of devotion. It may bring deliverance from the particular evil or misfortune, but it does not bring that feeling of rest and peace (*dai-kwairaku-shin*) which is known as *anshin* or *ando*. The *tariki* believer knows that Amida saves him, that He invites him, that He will provide, and knowing this, he comes in perfect trust, and leaves everything in Amida's hands.

§ 63. It may be asked, Is not this 'coming in perfect trust' a form of *jiriki*? Not so. (It is a case of 'turn thou us, O Lord, and so shall we be turned.') Amida turns us to Himself, fills, us with His grace, and bestows faith upon us.

§ 69. Where then does Karma operate? "It is a case of *ta-in-ji-kwa*, 'others have laboured and ye have entered into their labours,' which is not the law of Karma." This objection is sometimes heard.

It is true that Faith is a gift which comes from Amida, given without our efforts. But it is our work to *receive*

and *accept* it (just as it is the "work of God to believe on Him whom He hath sent"). *Karma* has three constituent parts, known as *in*—the primary cause—e.g. the seed, *en*—the secondary cause; e.g. the Sun and rain, and *gwa* the fruit. Amida's gift is *in*, our acceptance is *en*, our Salvation is *gwa*.

§ 65. The faith which we thus receive and accept

comprises all the spiritual Power which was acquired and stored up by Hōzō Biku in the performance of the labours necessary for the fulfilment of the Great Vow which He undertook for man. Among the Powers thus acquired by Hōzō we must include the power to smite sin and evil, and the power to draw men to Himself into the paths of righteousness.

§ 66. Of this power we are assured by Faith, the Symbol of the Sacred Name being the quasi-sacramental pledge to assure us thereof. Faith is the stamping of Amida Himself upon the heart of the believer.

§ 67. Some may think that it is necessary first to cleanse the heart from all defilement, and then to receive the inestimable gift. that is not so. The depraved heart (*mōshin*) of the sinner cannot cleanse itself by its own efforts. If it were possible for it to do so, there would be no room for the exercise of Mercy. It is a comforting fact that Saving Faith can be received by the sinner whilst yet in his sin. This fact throws the greatness of Amida's compassion into more striking prominence.

§ 68. But, when a sinful man turns to the light, one of the first results must be the filling of his mind with abhorrence of his own sins. Can a man, whose mind is troubled about these things, enter that Heart of Buddha to which access is gained by the *tariki* faith? Certainly not. Mere contrition or troubling about the soul, or constant introspection cannot save. All that is required is Conversion, the turning of the heart to Amida, (*kijun suru*). The rest will come in due and natural course.

§ 69. We must beware lest we presume to say of any living man that, because he has received this lively Faith, therefore he has attained to the perfection of Buddhahood. All we can say is, that the perfect seed has been planted, that the sowing is complete. 'His seed remaineth in him,' but it needs the sun and rain to bring its fruit to perfection.

§ 70. And, similarly, we must be on our guard against those titles of honour which men give at times to those who are supposed to have made progress in holiness. These titles, intended as honours, should serve for our humiliation. For what have we that we have not received? All the Virtues implied by these honorific titles have been bestowed on us by Him, who is the Divine Mercy. Still, as Genkū, says,

Mi wa koko ni
Mada ari nagara
Gokuraku no
Shōjū no kazu ni

Iru zo ureshiki.

"The happiness!
To know that whilst our bodies still are here,
In this poor world, our selves are numbered
Amongst the Holy Ones of Paradise."

I have the less hesitation about offering this somewhat sketchy analysis to my readers since I have learned that a more careful translation of the whole Catechism is being prepared by a missionary friend in Tokyo.

CHAPTER XIV.

After Justification.

(§ 71, 72, 73, 74, 75)

We have now reached that portion of the Shinshu Catechism which deals with *Zokutaimon*, i.e. with the earthly life of the believer after he has received justification by Faith in Amida, has cast all his cares upon Him, and has entered into the Sacred Heart of Buddha. We shall find it necessary to consider many questions relating to Grace and Sanctification, and again we shall be astonished by the similarities between the Shinshu and the Christian systems of Theology.

And first, let me summarize what I have been taught, as a Christian, concerning God's grace. It will enable me to describe more accurately the Shinshu position.

Grace consists in the direct illumination of the mind, and the inspiration of the will, by God. It is necessary for all good actions: it is indispensable to the just man, because, without it, he cannot persevere in the state of grace, or work out his own salvation: it is equally necessary to the man outside the covenant of grace, because, without it, he can not only not turn to the safe refuge of religion, but cannot even do any action that is good. All that is ethically good in human life comes through the grace of God. But the grace of God is over all his works: there is not one that is excluded from it. It is God's spiritual sunshine that gives light to the just as well as to the unjust. It is not limited to priests and monks, nor to that class of people whom the Japanese call *Shūkyōka* (religiously minded persons): it illuminates and inspires the statesman in his cabinet, the merchant at his desk, the carpenter in his workshop: it is the inner soul (as it were) of all good actions, secular as well as religious, and there is no man, be he the most despicable of creatures, who does anything in accordance with the promptings of God's grace, that shall fail to receive from the all-just tribunal of Heaven his due meed of praise and encouragement. If I may express myself in Buddhist terminology, the grace of God is the source (the *in* #) of all good karma.

Turning now to the *Shinshu Hyakuwa*, I find (in § 71) that the earthly life of a believer after receiving the Believing Heart may be compared to a day spent on the road along which one travels to enter into the full happiness of the Fruits of Enlightenment. (*Shinjin wo etaru ue no jinsei-seikwatsu wa, Bukkwa no kōfuku ni iru dōchū no hi-okuri de arimasu*).

The travellers along this road dwell continually in the Glory of Mida's Light ("One the Light of God's own Presence, O'er His ransomed People shed"); and they are continually under the protection of all "gods, Buddhas, and Bodhisattvas," the beings who hold in the Buddhist mind a place analogous to that occupied in the Christian system by ministering angels forth sent to minister to the heirs of salvation. The consequence of the clear light in which they dwell is that they are able to estimate rightly the importance of human virtue, that they set their minds to becoming active promoters of the peaceful welfare of society, rightly deeming that social duties are so important and weighty in their nature that the believer cannot afford to neglect them. This state of mind is that which is known in the Shinshu theology as *Zokutaimon*—the frame of mind which enables a man to discharge his duty towards his neighbour.

In the succeeding paragraph (§ 72) we are brought to the question of works done before justification. The *Zokutaimon*, we are asked, is it something that is obligatory upon a man *before* he receives the justifying faith in Amida, or is it merely something to be done after justification?

The author begins with a somewhat suggestive expression. *Shin wo ete hajimete Shinshu no UTSUWA to naru no desu.* "It is not until a man has received faith that he becomes a VESSEL, of the Shinshu." There is a sort of Pauline echo about the phrase which is not without significance. Before the acceptance of faith a man cannot be said to be *Shinshugyōja*, a practising believer of the Shinshu Faith. The *Zokutaimon* of the Shinshu Faith is therefore, properly speaking, an obligation which does not come into full force until a man has definitely accepted the Faith in Amida as laid down in the *Shintaimon* portion of the Shinshu creed.

Still, we are told, there are men who are within (*kamei # suru*) the fold (*hani #*) of the Shinshu, who have not yet made a personal acceptance of the faith upon which the Shinshu system is based, just as there are amongst ourselves persons who by Infant Baptism have entered into the congregation of Christ's Church without any very definite heart-acceptance of their Christian privilege. For such persons, because they belong to the Shinshu, it is more than expedient that they should understand and practise the religious obligations of life. It is a most important religious principle that, so long as men have to be in the world, they should do their duties as citizens of the world, and these duties ought not to be shirked as indifferent, even though a man have not yet received the grace of a Saving Faith. (*Koto ni seken futsu no seikwatsu ni majiwarite tsutawaru shūfū # de aru kara,*

nao nao mishin no aida wa dō de mo yoi to iu wake de wa arimasenu.)

The next paragraph (§ 73) treats of the authorities that may be quoted for this view of the *Zokutaimon*. It need not delay us here, it is fully treated of in *Shinshu Seikun*, and seems to have only an academic interest.

In § 78, the question is asked, if we may look upon the duties of the *Zokutaimon* as being natural obligations, or merely as voluntary duties, binding upon such men only as have made some sort of profession of religion. And to this the answer is, that whilst certain of the duties in this section are indeed nothing but natural duties, incumbent on all men as members of human society, there are certain others which concern believers only. These may be summed up in the one word *hō-on*, #, a phrase to be more fully discussed in our next chapter.

This section of the Catechism, (for Mr. Nishimoto now goes off into a consideration of the *hō on*,) closes with a warning against spiritual pride. (§ 75).

It is customary, in some sects of Buddhism, to give to men who have a peculiar reputation for sanctity, certain distinguishing titles such as "living Buddha," &c, &c. Mr. Nishimoto has already in § 70 given us some of these distinguishing names and titles of honour. Here he gives us two more, *Shōjōjū*, and *Zennin*, "righteous man," and again reiterates the warning against presumption or pride.

We must not expect, we are told, that the acceptance of Faith will work any outward change in us, either in our body, or in our life. Still there will be a change. When we have made the surrender of Faith, a living Fire has been kindled in our hearts, and the flames of Faith within will show themselves in the smoke of Conduct without (*shin-kwa uchi ni areba, gyō-en hoka ni arawaru*). We live in Amida's light as in an Ocean, and Amida's light dwells in us, and the consequence of this interpenetration, an idea not unknown to the Christian, is that, whether we try to be such or not, we are lights shining in the world (*shizen to tokkō no kagayaki ga gozaimasu*. cf. Phil ii. 15). As men, living among men, we have a variety of duties to perform, and are brought into multitudinous relationships with our fellow creatures, which we cannot shirk or escape from. But these responsibilities are not peculiar to ourselves. We share them with all our fellow-men, and this thought should keep us humble.

At the same time, it should be added, for our encouragement, when we look at the inner man of him that has accepted the principle of Faith, we find there a happiness and a peace, such as one who has not yet believed cannot possibly understand. That internal happiness and peace will necessarily show itself in the quiet, peaceful strength that will characterize our daily lives.

Shinran and His Work, By Arthur Lloyd, [1910]
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The twenty seventh issue of the 'The Out-of-Body Travel Foundation Journal' we continue a series of issues covering forgotten mystics from different religious traditions, this issue following Shinran Shonin – Forgotten Mystic of Pure Land Buddhism.

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