

YOUNG MAN SHINRAN - A REAPPRAISAL OF SHINRAN'S LIFE

By

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SUMMARY

Shinran (1173-1262), a great religious thinker of his time, had the courage that comes from a deeply-rooted faith to question religion in a society which was traditionally Buddhist.

Refusing to be a passive witness to the degeneration of Dharma, and moved by an ever-searching quest for spiritual liberation, he was brought, in the midst of this society, to discover the way to Nembutsu.

Many modern scholars, among whom are those of the Shinshū Kyōdan Institute (whose study and research have been consecrated to the religious philosophy of Shinran), have studied the religious thought of Shinran. Basing their work on the hagiographic studies of the Institute, some of them have held to a purely theoretical approach, while others have proceeded to a philosophical-religious analysis of Shinran's thought. Both groups have neglected to unite their efforts in a common goal: that of clarifying the thought of the great religious reformer.

The author, who believes that it was the first half of Shinran's life which was the determining factor, has tried to analyze the living dynamics which came, on the one hand, from a society and a historical context deeply marked by the decline of Buddhism, and on the other hand; from the personal experiences of the great thinker. It is from this interrelationship and

confrontation that Shinran's religious thought developed and through which the matrix of his thinking as a mature man was constituted.

Through an analysis of this type, we can understand the strength, the subtlety and the fullness of Shinran's thought.

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Refusant d'être le témoin impuissant de la dégénérescence du Dharma et dans une quête toujours plus poussée de libération spirituelle il a été amené, en oeuvrant au sein de cette société, à découvrir la voie qui mène au Nembutsu.

De nombreux savants modernes et parmi eux ceux de l'Institut Shinshû Kyôdan (dont les études et recherches sont consacrées à la philosophie religieuse de Shinran) ont étudié la pensée religieuse de Shinran. Se fondant sur les seuls éléments présentés dans les études hagiographiques de l'Institut, les uns s'en sont tenus à une approche purement théorique, tandis que les autres procédaient à une analyse philosophico-religieuse de sa pensée, négligeant d'unir leurs efforts dans un but qui leur était cependant commun: celui d'élucider la pensée du grand réformateur religieux.

L'auteur, pour qui tout s'est joué dans la première moitié de la vie de Shinran a tenté, lui, d'analyser la dynamique des forces vives émanant d'une part, d'une société et d'un contexte historique fortement marqués par le déclin du Bouddhisme et d'autre part, des expériences personnelles du grand penseur, car c'est de cette corrélation

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C'est grâce à cette analyse que l'on peut appréhender la force, la subtilité et la plénitude de la pensée de Shinran.

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EXPLANATORY NOTES

- 1) During his lifetime Hannen changed his name to Shakkû, then to Zenshin, later to Fujii Yoshizane and finally to Shinran. For the sake of clarity the name Shinran has been used throughout this thesis.
- 2) Shinran's doctrine has been referred to as Jôdo Shinshû to distinguish it from Hônen's doctrine, Jôdoshû, although this name had officially been given to the sect only in 1872.
- 3) Shinran counted his age in the Japanese way, that is, by counting the first fraction of a calendar year as one full year. This method has been adopted in this study.
- 4) For the various writings and letters of Shinran, the translations made by Professor Yamamoto Kôshô as well as those by the Ryûkoku University Translation Center have been quoted, although this has not been specifically mentioned at each occurrence. For the "Godenshō", the joint translation of Dr. Sasaki Gesshō and Dr. Suzuki T. Daisetsu has been employed.
- 5) Shinran did not refer to his followers as his disciples. However, in order to distinguish between follower and disciple, I have used the term "disciple".

6) Abbreviations used in the footnotes are:

S S Z Shinran Shônin Zenshû

S S G Z Shinshû Shôgyô Zensho

PREFACE

Shinran (1173-1262) was a product of his age. His angst in the "degenerate age of the Dharma", his subsequent quest for spiritual liberation and his ultimate discovery of the path of Nembutsu did not occur outside the general social temper of his time. Nor did his religious thought develop in hermetic isolation from the traditional intellectual fabric of Japanese Buddhism. A large corpus of work has already been produced on Shinran's religious thought by modern academics, especially by those of the Shinshû Kyôdan (Institute) which devotes itself to the study of Shinran's religious philosophy. But in terms of the formative history of the religious leader, Shinran's early stage of life deserves more attention. What factors were at work behind his new religious insights that, in effect, enjoyed a vigorous life after his own death inspite of his lifetime conviction that he was merely a humble disciple of his master, Hônen (1133-1212) ?

This thesis delves into the dynamic interrelationship between Shinran's historical and contemporary social environment and his experiences during the first half of his life, which together constitute not only the basis but also the matrix of his mature thought. The subtlety and boldness of Shinran's philosophy can be better comprehended through

such an analysis rather than by relying solely upon the arguments presented in the hagiological studies of the Shinshû Institute. The numerous studies on Shinran heretofore written have been limited to either a purely historical approach or religious-philosophical analysis. Unfortunately, these two approaches, while researching the same subject, have not as yet united their individual strengths to attain their common purpose: the elucidation of Shinran's thought.

During his ninety-year lifetime, Shinran wrote twenty-nine original books (excluding his letters) all of which remain intact to this day. However, primary documentation relating to the first half of his life is practically nonexistent. This is no mere historical accident but rather a reflection of the institutional demands and restraints which have acted upon most scholars of Shinran's philosophy.

The Shinshû Institute has focused its efforts on the single-minded study and transmission of Shinran's mature thought for more than seven hundred and fifty years. Because members of this Institute perceived Shinran's final philosophy to be a self-contained system and the highest product of his intellectual development, it seemed unnecessary to them to preserve materials relating to Shinran's formative years and to the teleological process of his intellectual development. In fact, what is available today is only material that hails and beatifies Shinran as a god-like man; material which seems to have been written merely to preach to the already

convinced. Within the Institute itself advances were made only on the synchronic study of Shinran's final beliefs regarding the way of Salvation and not on the diachronic process by which Shinran reached these conclusions.

Lacking autobiographical material on Shinran, historians, on the other hand, further their research through contemporaneous historical sources. Today they are still attempting to objectively restructure the development of Shinran's thought in order to attain a picture of a human Shinran and not merely to buttress a religious vision of a defied figure. Although the objective evaluation of Shinran made by the historians has permitted a greater understanding of the historical existence of Shinran as portrayed within those studies carried on by the Institute, it cannot yet be said that there has been a formal exchange or sharing of research between the academic historians and the Institute.

To synthesize the above-mentioned analytical paradigms of the Institute and the historians in a study of the first half of Shinran's life, and to then reevaluate Shinran's extensive work in the light of the conclusions arrived at, is undoubtedly one of the most pressing and exciting requirements for the future study of Shinran. This thesis is an initial attempt to come to grips with this subject using such an approach. Because this is a Master's thesis, there has necessarily been a time limit and the examination within this thesis concludes when Shinran was forty-two years of age.

The study of the latter half of Shinran's life, however, will most probably be my life-long task.

I wish to thank Professor Bamba Nobuya for giving me not only his kind and painstaking guidance but also his moral support throughout my research; Professor Nagatomi Masatoshi, Harvard University for having read the entire manuscript and given me invaluable suggestions, and for assisting me in my research at the Yenching Library, Harvard University. I would also like to acknowledge all materials for the thesis which were obtained from the Yenching Library.

I would also like to thank Mr. Don Haslam, Mr. Mark Sedgwick, Mrs. Martha Munaretto, and Miss Carol Hyland who gave me generous and great assistance in the preparation of this thesis.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge my gratitude to Professor Murakami Sokusui, Ryûkoku University, for his inspiring ideas on the initial stage of my study of Shinran and his doctrine, Jôdo Shinshû.

INTRODUCTION

Japanese Buddhism had matured by the end of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth centuries. The great philosophers and religious reformers of this era were Hōnen (1133-1212) and Eisai (Yōsai) (1141-1215) who paved the way for later modifications of Japanese Buddhism. Their basic doctrines were then reformed by Shinran (1173-1262), Dōgen (1200-1253), Nichiren (1222-1282), and Ippen (1239-1289) who gave Buddhism a Japanese character through their understanding and reinterpretation of the religion. The period, associated with the above six monks, is referred to in the history of Japanese Buddhism as the "Reformation". The sects founded on the new interpretations given to the doctrines in the Kamakura period, namely Jōdoshū of Hōnen, Jōdo Shinshū of Shinran, Zenshū of Eisai (Rinzai Sect) and Dōgen (Sōtō Sect), Nichirensū of Nichiren, and lastly, Jishū of Ippen, are referred to as Kamakura Buddhism. The reforms of these six monks proved to be the turning point in Japanese Buddhism for they ushered in the greatest period of religious reform in the history of Japan.

The reform began during the transitional period between the Heian and the Kamakura eras when Japanese society was in a state of chaos. The entire population regardless of class lived in fear and uncertainty. Up to this time the Imperial

Household and aristocracy had enjoyed a leisurely life of love and poetry, observing their annual social functions and continuing to procure their promotions in the court. The extent of their religion had been to ask that the egoistic pleasures of material possessions would continue for eternity, and to this end they had the Shingon (Mikkyô) pray for them. On the other hand, the aristocrats who were also attracted by the Tendai (Jôdokyô) and by the idea of creating the world of the Pure Land in this life, had indulged extravagantly in the ecstatic idea of equating present hedonistic self-indulgence with rebirth in the Pure Land. The social unrest of the period, however, clearly eroded the material wealth of the aristocracy and consequently all hopes for a splendid and transcendent worldly existence by the upper class died.

As a result set against these hard times, an intense religious revival activated within the aristocratic class a strong yearning for a compensating spiritual existence. In common with the people of the lower class, such as soldiers, merchants and peasants whose lives were little more than a struggle for survival, the aristocracy perceived the chaotic and crumbling social structure as a reflection of their own spiritual poverty, which in turn, aroused a desire in them to attain a deeper transcending spiritual life. Accordingly they turned to new religious forms. The upper and lower classes now sought salvation in the religion of Buddhism -

salvation from material and spiritual human sufferings which the lower classes attributed to sinfulness, and the upper classes to ignorance. The Tendai and Shingon sects of the period which had incorporated magic and ritual into their doctrines were unsuccessful in attracting followers, for they could supply neither peace of mind nor promise of salvation from suffering for the psychologically tortured populace. Critical social conditions such as these served as a setting for the emergence of such religious leaders as Hōnen, Dōgen, Nichiren and Shinran. Out of this fertile matrix flowered the genius of Japanese Buddhism.

A man's experience in any degree of emotional need or of sensation alone does not of itself produce a new ideology. Words are required for concepts to be expressed, and once expressed they become a vehicle for the cultural thought of a particular period. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries Buddhism became more than a religion; it became the vehicle of Japanese thinking. Shinran was the great reformer of Japanese Buddhism in a society that hitherto had completely and strongly held to traditional Buddhist thought. In order to understand his teachings thoroughly, in addition to investigating the above-described social setting, we must pursue his life experience because it too forms the basis of his thought. In this study Shinran's history begins with his birth (one year old), until his forty-second year. It takes into account his social experiences and intellectual

development, with special reference to his family affiliations and to his association with Hōnen. The major project of this thesis is to survey the relationship between Shinran's character formation and his thought development in the light of his familial and social environments, and by doing so to reexamine Shinran's religious quest and the part this quest played in the reformation of Japanese Buddhism.

CHAPTER I

SHINRAN - A MAN WRAPPED IN A SHROUD OF MYSTERY

i. Shinran in the biographies

Even though Shinran is a towering and definitive figure in the historical development of Japanese Buddhism, there has been a continuous tradition of academic and religious commentary which has either ignored him or even questioned his very existence.

In 1702 the Zen monk Shibān (1625-1710) edited the Honchō Kōsō Den in 75 volumes. Although this massive work contains the biographies of 1,364 famous Japanese monks from the time of the introduction of Buddhism to Japan in 552 A.D. until the eighteenth century, no mention of Shinran is in evidence. Yet in 1702, four hundred and forty years after Shinran's death, Shinshū Kyōdan (the sect of Jōdo Shinshū, the sect which was founded by Shinran) had grown to such an extent that its name was familiar to the majority of the Japanese population. In fear of possible oppression by the Bakufu (Japan's feudal government; the Shogunate), because of the threatening growth of its organization, the sect of Jōdo Shinshū voluntarily presented an oath of loyalty to the Bakufu in July of 1651 in which the Monto (the members of Jōdo Shinshū) promised to respect the authority of the Shōgun. As a result, in June of 1680, the Memorial Tablets of Ieyasu and the four Shōguns who succeeded him were entrusted to the

Honganji, the headquarters of Jōdo Shinshū, and this temple became the religious protector of the Tokugawa clan.¹

Therefore, it is inconceivable that the omission of any mention of the existence of the sect of Jōdo Shinshū or of Shinran could be merely due to simple ignorance on the part of Shibān.

As illustrated above, Shinran has sometimes been omitted from mention in history texts, and even recently, two hundred years after Shibān, the very fact of his existence was once more placed in question. This time it was through the separate work of two monk-historians of the twentieth century who both employed new methodological tools of historical research. In the Study of Shinran by Naganuma Kenkai² published in 1910 and Shinran in History by Nakazawa Kenmyō³ in 1920, both authors referred only to diaries and recordings of third persons who had actually been contemporaries of Shinran. These studies purported to prove that Shinran never existed.

The fact that Shinran was married, which necessarily made him an apostate monk, and the fact that the members of Jōdo Shinshū founded on his faith were a group composed of

¹Akamatsu, Toshihide and Kazuo Kasahara (ed.). Shinshūshi Gaisetsu (Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1963), p. 332.

²Naganuma, Kenkai. "Shinran Shōnin Ron". Shigaku Zasshi (Tokyo: Tokyo University, 1910), XXI-3-12.

³Nakazawa, Kenmyō. Shijō no Shinran (Kyoto: Bunken Shoin, 1920).

common, ordinary people, must have given Shiban, a Zen Buddhist, sufficient reason to intentionally omit the name of Shinran from the list of famous Japanese monks. As for the doubts raised by Naganuma Kenkai and Nakazawa Kenmyô, I believe they were an iconoclastic, scholarly challenge directed against the mist of fiction which surrounds the life of Shinran and which is still maintained as true by the religious authority of Honganji.

In contrast to Naganuma Kenkai and Nakazawa Kenmyô, two other historical scholars, Yamada Bunshô and Tsuji Zennosuke, proved beyond doubt the historical existence of Shinran; the former through his discovery of important biographical materials described in his monograph Shinran and His Group⁴, and the latter through a study of Shinran's handwriting which in turn formed the basis of Tsuji's erudite and renowned work, The Study of Shinran's Penmanship.⁵ The earliest record of Shinran, written by Kakunyo, the great grandson of Shinran, further attests to his existence, and although the four biographies⁶ written by Kakunyo were couched in a language that tended to glorify Shinran as a

⁴Yamada, Bunshô. Shinran to Sono Kyôdan (Kyoto: Hôzokan, 1948).

⁵Tsuji, Zennosuke. Shinran Shônin Hisseki no Kenkyû (Tokyo: Kinkôdô, 1920).

⁶See page 9 for a list of Shinran's more important biographies.

hero, throughout the biographies Kakunyo (1270-1351) has supplied valuable supportive data which has since been verified and confirmed as accurate. As a result of recent confirmation of this data, Shinran's existence can no longer be questioned.

Shinran as described
in the biographies:

In attempting to dispell the myths
surrounding Shinran's existence, a
critical examination of his life

must first be undertaken. There are four basic biographies of Shinran and five supplementary works written by his family descendents, Kakunyo, Zonkaku and Rennyō.⁷ The nine

⁷Kakunyo (1270-1351), the third Hosshu (Chief Abbott) of Honganji. He was the great-grandson of Shinran. When he was seventeen years old, he was ordained as a monk by Shinshō who at that time held a very high priestly position at Nara. His study of the Yogacharya philosophy was carried on under Gyōkan Hōin. Once he was thoroughly equipped with all the Buddhist teachings, he was finally initiated into the faith of the True Sect (Jōdo Shinshū) under the guidance of Nyoshin (1239-1300), the grandson of Shinran and the father of Kakunyo, who was then holding the second patriarchal chair at Honganji.

Zonkaku (1290-1373). The eldest son of Kakunyo. At the age of fourteen he went to Nara and then Hieizan to study. Later he helped his father in the latter's religious activities. In 1322 he became Chief Abbott, replacing his father, Kakunyo.

Rennyō (1414-1499). The eighth Chief Abbott of Honganji. At the age of sixteen, he began to study under Sonnō at the Shōrenin. In 1447, he went on an organizing pilgrimage to the sacred places of Shinran in the Kantō district, eastern part of Japan. In 1457 he became the Chief Abbott of Honganji. He made an effort to preach using simple language, and contributed to building the Jōdo Shinshū in cities and villages. He is regarded as the restorer of the Jōdo Shinshū.

works in question are listed below:

1. Honganji Shōnin Denne by Kakunyo (seventy-five years of age at the time) (November 2nd, 1343); found in the Shōganji collection, Chiba Prefecture.
2. Honganji Shōnin Shinran Denne by Kakunyo (seventy-seven years of age at the time) (October 14th, 1346); found in the Higashi Honganji collection, Kyoto.
3. Zenshin Shōnin Denne by Kakunyo (twenty-six years of age at the time) (December 13th, 1295); found in the Senjuji collection, Mie Prefecture.
4. Zenshin Shōnin Denne by Kakunyo (twenty-six years of age at the time) (October 12th, 1295); found in the Nishi Honganji collection, Kyoto.
5. Hōonkōshiki by Kakunyo (Date of composition unknown) (Copied by Rennyo, fifty-four years of age at the time) (mid-October 1468); found in the Higashi Honganji collection, Kyoto.
6. Hōonkōshiki (popularized Version) by Rennyo (Date of composition unknown); found in the Nishi Honganji collection, Kyoto.
7. Tandoku mon by Zonkaku (seventy-seven years of age at the time) (May 13th, 1366); found in the Nishi Honganji collection, Kyoto.
8. Tandoku mon (popularized Version) by Rennyo (seventy-seven years of age at the time) (December 8th, 1461); found in the Nishi Honganji collection, Kyoto.

9. Gozoku shō by Rennyo (sixty-four years of age at the time) (early November, 1477); found in the Hōunji collection, Mie Prefecture.

The biographies numbered 1 through 4 were written by Kakunyo and are similar in content. Kakunyo's purpose in writing these biographies was "to record the events of Shinran's life, to explain his teachings, and to examine his faith and thought".⁸ As biographies, "these works are not considered to be very useful but as far as explaining Shinran's thought, they are excellent".⁹ This is because these works are exegetical, polemical studies and modifications of Shinran's religious theories written by an orthodox and ambitious relative/follower rather than unbiased accounts of Shinran's earthly existence. The Bokieshi (Biography of Kakunyo)¹⁰, a record of the period during which the above biographies first appeared, discloses the fact that these works were widely read and even revered. The biographies of Shinran during the Kamakura period took the form of the then extremely popular "picture book" type. Each chapter was depicted visually, and often the drawings were removed from the books and displayed for the benefit of

⁸ Nakazawa, Kenmyō. Shinshū Genryūshiron (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1951), p. 160.

⁹ Ibid., p. 162.

¹⁰ Bokieshi (Biography of Kakunyo). In 1351 written by Jūkaku (1294-1360) who is the second son of Kakunyo.

illiterate sect believers.¹¹

Biographies numbered 5 and 6 contain instructions for the ceremonial observances of the anniversary of Shinran's death, and they emphasize that Shinran was the true transmitter of Hōnen's thought. Biographies 7 and 8 praise Shinran's accomplishments. Biography number 9 also contains the record of Shinran's accomplishments and urges his followers on to greater faith. The biographies numbered 5 to 9 were intended to be an in-depth study of Shinran's later life. Although they are overly laudatory accounts, they do contain certain factual biographical information. It is this writer's opinion that these particular biographies were intended by the authors solely as vehicles of propaganda for preaching the doctrines of Shinran in an effort to explain the importance of the faith and to proselytize the unconverted.¹²

According to this interpretation and in order to throw further light on Shinran qua historical figure, a study of his early life and family environment must be undertaken.

¹¹Nakazawa's op. cit., p. 164,

¹²The first four works on the above list cannot be said to be completely valueless in terms of biographical information. This is due to the fact that the author, Kakunyo, wrote the early version at a time (1295) when immediate disciples of Shinran were still living in the eastern part of Japan, and it can be assumed that Kakunyo's information came from their lips. Therefore, we can at least accept the dating for the various events in Shinran's life as it appears in these volumes as credible material.

Historical back-
ground of Japan:

The political situation of the time was extremely turbulent. For some twenty years preceding Shinran's birth, unstable political conditions had prevailed. The era that saw the nobility and aristocracy controlling politics came to an end after the civil wars of Hogen in 1156 and Heiji in 1159. As a result, Taira no Kiyomori (1118-1181) became Prime Minister in 1167, and members of the Heike (Taira) clan joined the nobility to monopolize key positions in the bureaucracy. Taira no Kiyomori had the powerful backing of his colossal wealth which had been built through trade with China by him and by his father Tadamori (1095-1153).¹³ He also had the backing of a strong Samurai class which became militarily proficient through the wars of Hogen and Heiji. These two powerful assets overwhelmed the enervated, delicate rulers of the nobility and aristocracy, who had tenaciously held to their offices for many years. Taira no Kiyomori of the Heike clan cunningly took advantage of the ill-feelings that existed between Emperor Nijō (1142-1165) and ex-Emperor Goshirakawa (1127-1192), and manipulated the situation to his own advantage. He also exploited the position of his daughter, who had married into the Imperial family, in order to draw himself closer to his goal of becoming Emperor. As a result of having his daughter

¹³ Ishimoda, Shō and Eiichi Matsushima. Nihonshi Gaisetsu I, (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1955), p. 173.

Tokuko become the wife of Emperor Takakura (1166-1181) in 1172, Taira no Kiyomori raised himself to a height somewhat equal to that of the Emperor. It took him only ten short years to place himself in such a high position, and people came to murmur that those who were not of the Heike clan were considered sub-human.¹⁴

The fortunes of the Heike clan flourished while those of the Fujiwara family, who comprised the nobility and aristocratic élite, inexorably declined. Consequently, the future for Shinran's family, the Hino, whose lineage was of the Fujiwara clan, became dismal.

The power that the Heike held had been seized as the victor's spoil during the civil wars between the Hogen and Heiji, a power struggle between rulers. Though the Heike became the rulers, the political superstructure which they inherited was not structurally transformed. The members of the Heike clan simply stepped into the key posts of the existing Ritsuryōkokka (political framework under a code of laws), taking over the entire system as their own, and meeting head-on the confrontations that arose with former officials. However, in rural areas, there was a movement by the rising Samurai class to free itself from the Ritsuryōkokka system itself. The people of these regions

¹⁴ Genpei Seisuiiki quoted from Ishimoda and Matsushima's op. cit., p. 173.

naturally were antagonistic toward the new power wielders, claiming that the Heike were supporting the retention of the Ritsuryōkokka system. By the time Taira no Kiyomori had seized political power, the Ritsuryō system, which structured the politics of Japan, had already reached the limits of its viability.

The fact that Taira no Kiyomori overlooked this matter was the beginning of his tragic downfall. Thus, Kiyomori and the Heike clan stood alone against the hostility and resistance of those in the center and in the peripheral regions. More specifically, in 1177, when Shinran was five years of age, the frustration and anger of both forces were touched off by the discovery of the secret anti-Heike plot in Shishigatani, Kyoto, after which the leader/monk Shunkan (1142-1178) and others were executed. Following this event, Taira no Kiyomori stationed spies throughout the confines of Kyoto in an effort to expose those who were anti-Heike.¹⁵ However, this action bred fear in the populace and heightened even further the feelings against him, while at the same time strengthening the resistance. The more Taira no Kiyomori became aware of the anti-Heike movement, the more repressive his political measures became.

In 1179, when Shinran was seven, several thousand soldiers of Heike raided the city of Kyoto. The ex-Emperor

¹⁵ Ishimoda, Shō and Eiichi Matsushima, op cit., p. 175.

Goshirakawa was imprisoned, and Fujiwara Motomichi (1160-1233) took Kanpaku Fujiwara Motofusa's (1144-1230) place as Chief Advisor to the Emperor. The country was in such a state of chaos that a three year old Emperor, Emperor Antoku (1178-1185), acceded to the throne. To make matters more involved, the young Emperor was the grandson of Taira no Kiyomori, which allowed enough justification for Kiyomori to elbow his way to the position of Emperor. In the apparent continued success of the Heike clan, a problem pregnant with grave danger gestated. Just when all anti-Heike power seemed to have been checked and brought under control, the organized forces operating within certain temples became a threat. It was said that Kōfukuji temple of Nara alone had a force of sixty thousand men.¹⁶ The immediate threat to the Heike was the temples of Nara and Hieizan. So in November of 1180, the Heike burned Onjōji temple, followed by Tōdaiji temple in December.

This event only served to leave the people of Nara in a state of further shock and discontent. The Heike clan had reached the zenith of success and prosperity by the time Emperor Antoku acceded to the throne. However, the year 1180 once again brought strife and insurrection to Japan, and the success of the Heike clan began to wane. In April of 1181, Minamoto no Yorimasa (1105-1180), in collaboration

¹⁶Ibid., p. 176

with the forces of the temples of Nara, Onjôji, Kôfukuji and Enryakuji, and exploiting the second son of ex-Emperor Goshirakawa Mochihitoô (1151-1180) as Commander-in-Chief, made an attack on the Heike. After a month of battle, Yorimasa lost and Mochihitoô died in action. In August of that same year, Minamoto no Yoritomo (1147-1199) raised another attack in Izu, and in September, Kiso no Yoshinaka (1154-1184) led still another army in revolt in Shinshu, the central districts of Japan. In 1181, amid such turmoil and restlessness, Taira no Kiyomori died, which brought his fourteen-year political regime to an end.

Besides the catastrophes of political chaos, numerous natural calamities marked these times. In November and December of 1173, Kiyomizudera and Rokuharamitsuji respectively went up in flames. Great earthquakes followed in April of 1176; and again in April of 1177 one-third of the city of Kyoto disappeared in a blazing inferno. June of 1181 brought a drought, followed by a great wind storm and flood in the fall which caused poor harvests that lasted into the following year. Such was the time when Shinran entered his priesthood.

ii. Circumstances leading to Shinran's monkhood

Referring to the day Shinran finally entered the priesthood, Kakunyo in the Shinran Denne wrote:

The Shōnin in his worldly relation was a scion of the Fujiwara family ... Arinori (Shinran's father) who was a high court officer belonging to the service of the Empress Dowager of the time; and the Shōnin was born (1173 A.D.) as the son of this noble personage. In consequence of his distinguished birth, his early prospects were full of promise. If he desired, he could have become a high dignitary at the Imperial court and enjoyed whatever prosperity he would have aspired to the end of his life. But his heart was inclined towards things unworldly; for he wished to devote himself to the holy cause of Buddhism and to increase the spiritual welfare of all beings. This looked-for opportunity came when he was nine years old. Accompanied by his uncle Lord Noritsuna, of the third court rank, junior grade, he went to the monastery of the venerable Jiyen. Jiyen had held till then a high ecclesiastical position called Daisōjō. The Shōnin had his head shaved by this noble priest and was given the Buddhist name, Hanyen.¹⁷

From the outset of this biography it appears that neither of his parents were present at their nine year old son's ordination ceremony, the probable reason for which will be explored later in this study; instead, he was accompanied by his uncle.

According to the above-quoted biographical account of Shinran, the sole reason why he entered his new life was because "his heart was inclined toward things unworldly".

¹⁷Kakunyo. Honganji Shōnin Denne SSZ IV, p. 3.

Therefore, Shinran forsook his promising future in this world, and decided instead to follow the Law of Buddha. It is true, as we have just seen, that the social and historical setting of Shinran's childhood was congenial to a Buddhist calling. Nevertheless, if the chaotic conditions of the world alone can motivate a man to enter religious life, then all his contemporaries would have chosen the same course. Though within Buddhist doctrine one may affirm that it was the realization of impermanence which attracted Shinran to the monastery, this in itself does not constitute a convincing explanation. It is more probable that this critical decision was made for the nine year old (in the Western way of counting, seven year old) boy by his guardians. To understand this situation, we must now return to investigate Shinran's family background.

In another biography written much later by Ryôkû (1666-1731), Takada Kaisan Shinran Shônin Seitôden (Takada sect, Life of Shinran)¹⁸, Ryôkû relates that Shinran's father, Arinori, died when Shinran was four and his mother, Kikkônyo, died when he was eight years of age. If this is a true account, it would explain the absence of his parents at his

¹⁸This biography was written in 1751, four hundred and eighty nine years after Shinran's death. The author makes note that the source from which he obtained the material was Shimotsuke Engi (Origin of Shimotsuke), written by Junshin (?-1597), a direct disciple of Shinran. Unfortunately, this material is missing and therefore, the authenticity of the biography is open to question.

ordination ceremony. Shinran entered the priesthood within the next year at the age of nine. However, the validity of this theory is questionable, especially the point concerning the year of his father's death. A reliable source, the Daimuryôjukyô by Zonkaku (1290-1373)¹⁹ states:

On December 15, 1350, the reading instructions written here in red were finished. The original of this book was prepared in observance of the forty-ninth day since the death of Mimurodo no Daishinnyûdô, Arinori, father of Shinran. This was written by Kenyû (Shinran's younger brother, and the second son of Arinori) and copied by me (Zonkaku). The title of this book was written by Shinran.

This could only mean that Shinran's and Kenyû's father (Kenyû was Shinran's younger brother) died after Kenyû was of an age to write the reading instructions for the Chinese characters in the Daimuryôjukyô. This attests that Kenyû had sufficient academic ability to read difficult passages. Therefore, Kenyû was at least an adolescent at his father's death. Kenyû being Shinran's younger brother, we can now deduce that Arinori lived until Shinran had reached adulthood.

Why the false date of Arinori's death became popularly accepted may perhaps be explained as follows: when Shinran was four years old, in 1176, something calamitous happened to his father who was in the service of the Emperor's mother or of the Emperor's wife. Around 1176 there had been a succession of four Emperors. The names of the mothers or

¹⁹ See footnote 8.

wives or grandmothers of these four Emperors were:

1. Fujiwara Masako (1121-1181) (Mother of Emperor Konoe (1138-1155)),
2. Fujiwara Teishi (1134-1176) (Empress of Konoe),
3. Fujiwara Masuko (1139-1201) (Empress of Konoe; second wife of Emperor Konoe),
4. Taira no Shigeko (1142-1176) (Mother of Emperor Takakura (1142-1176)).

By tracing the genealogy of the Hino family (Shinran's family name), we arrive at a point where we can say with certainty that Arinori was in the service of the Emperor Goshirakawa and his family, as had been his forefathers, who had served the successive Emperors for many generations. Further investigation discloses that Arinori also served Taira no Shigeko, Emperor Takakura's mother, for Emperor Takakura was the seventh son of Emperor Goshirakawa.

Kenshunmonin Tairano Shigeko died in 1176 (2nd year of Angen), which coincides with the legendary year of Shinran's father's death. From these facts we can deduce that Arinori did not die but merely lost his job and retired, thus explaining the aforementioned claim.

According to the genealogy of the Hino family, Arinori held an extremely low position within the court. His rank was fifth court, senior grade and as was a custom of the time, only the third rank or above was said to be of any importance.²⁰ Seishonagon (?-?), the famous court lady and

²⁰ Kageyama, Haruki. Hieiizan (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1960), p. 104.

authoress of Makura no Sôshi (Pillow book) wrote that country folk and those of the fifth rank are disgusting, and Murasaki Shikibu (918-1016?), authoress of Genji Monogatari (Tales of Genji) wrote, "Those of the fifth rank do not even count rank".²¹ Being held in such low esteem is probably another reason for Arinori's decision to retire when Shinran was only four years old. Furthermore, in addition to the prevalent social attitudes, we should also examine Arinori in terms of his relationship with his two brothers, Noritsuna (?-?) and Munenari (?-?). From the standpoint of Japanese family structure, because Arinori was the youngest child he was considered the son of the least importance. One brother, Munenari, a highly educated and ambitious man, held the rank of junior third. Even at the age of sixty-one he still struggled against great odds for personal promotion in the court hierarchy, and despite the jealousy of influential members of the nobility and court nobles, he succeeded in his quest. As we shall see, he was a man of great self-confidence and ability with a strong character and temperament who courageously challenged the social system by refusing to be deterred by its barriers. Arinori's other brother, Noritsuna, was a poet as well as political advisor to Emperor Goshirakawa. He was in a

²¹Seishônagon. Makura no Sôshi
Murasaki Shikibu. Murasaki Shikibu Nikki, quoted from
Fujiwara's Shinshûshi, p. 113.

position important enough so as to have a direct and traceable influence on Japanese history. Noritsuna ranked as a fourth level, army officer, a grade lower than Munenari but higher than Arinori's fifth court rank, senior grade, which was the lowest position within the palace.²² However, regardless of Arinori's social status, it still seems highly unnatural that he should have abandoned his work while shouldering the responsibility for his four year old son Shinran.

Conflicting record
of genealogy and

Shinran's grandfather:

The following quotation is an excerpt
from Shinran's biography in which his
family genealogy is traced:

The Shōnin (Shinran), in his worldly relations, was a scion of the Fujiwara family. The twenty-first descendant of Prince Amatsu Koyane was the Grand Minister Kamatari, and five generations after him there was Lord Uchimaro of the junior first court rank who was General of the Imperial Guards and a State Minister. Then, six generations after Uchimaro, there was Lord Saishō Arikuni, General of Police. When five more generations passed, there was Lord Arinori.²³

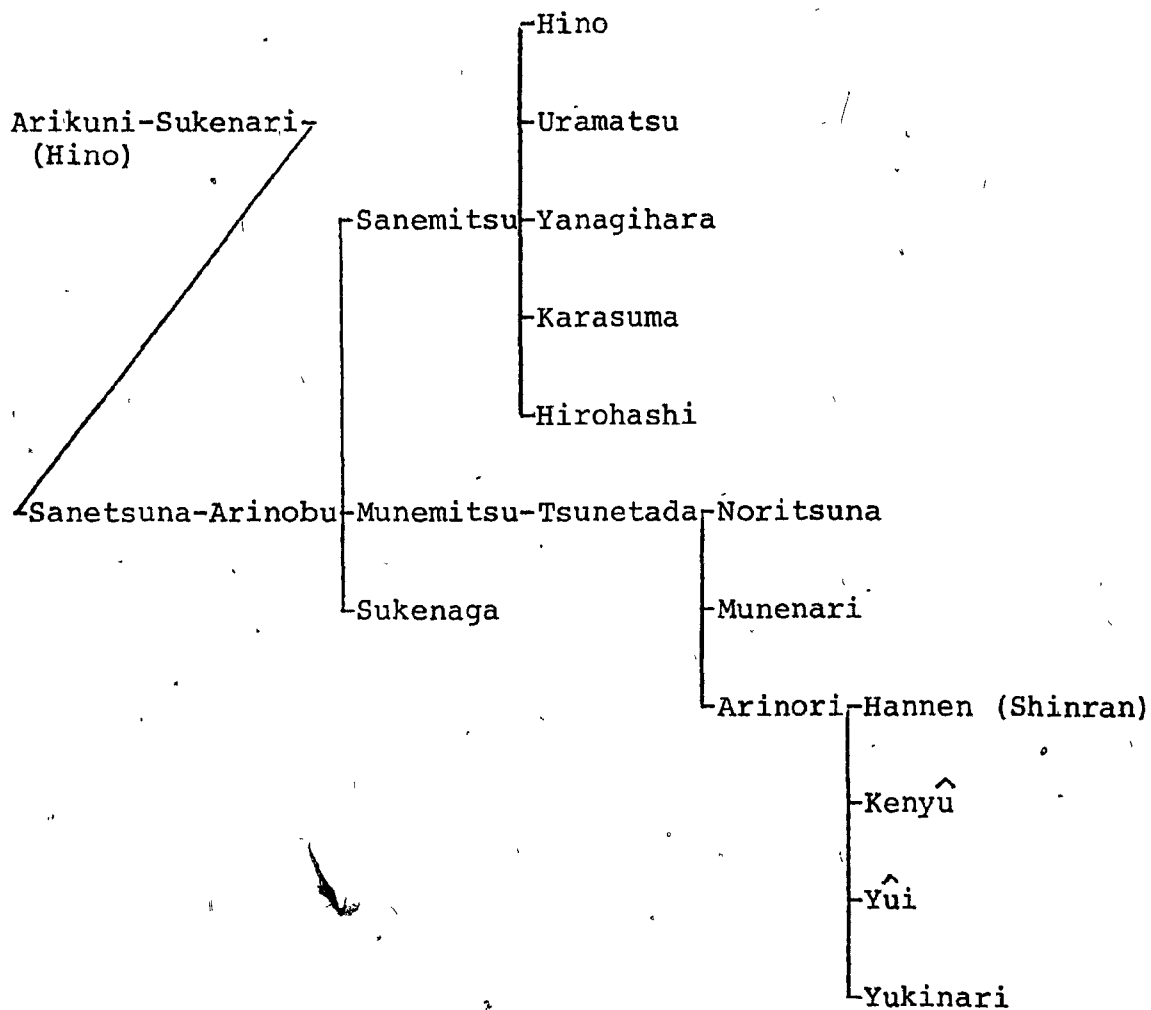
Four other sources from which Shinran's genealogy can be traced offer additional factual information. They are:

²² Matsuno Junkō. Shinran - Sono Kōdō to Shisō
(Tokyo: Hyōronsha, 1971), p. 26.

²³ Kakunyo. Honganji Shōnin Denne SSZ IV, p. 2.

1. Sonpibunmyaku, sub-titled Hinoke Honganji Keizu Fujiwara Hokke. Editor Tōin Kinsada (1340-1399).
2. Sonpibunmyaku, sub-titled Teijiryū Fujiwara Nanke.
3. Hinouji Keizu, collection in Takada Senjuji, Mie Prefecture.
4. Ōtaniichiryū Keizu, collection in Nishi Honganji, Kyoto.

From a comparison of the four sources mentioned above, we arrive at the following genealogical outline:



According to the Gunshoruijū, Arikuni (? - 1011) held the position of Sangi (state councillor) during the time of Fujiwara Michinaga (966-1027). Two generations later, Arinobu (? - 1099) was a particularly outstanding person and the clan prospered to such an extent that the main house developed into five family branches from the time of his oldest son, Sanemitsu (? - 1147). The names of these families were Hino, Uramatsu, Yanagihara, Karasuma and Hirohashi. It can be seen from the genealogy that each generation had several poets and literary figures associated with it. Until recently, it has been falsely believed that Shinran's family line was Arinobu - Arinori - Hannen (Shinran). In other words, Arinobu was long considered to be Shinran's grandfather when in actuality Arinobu was his great-great grandfather. Arinobu died in 1099 and Shinran was born in 1173. If we consider Arinobu as Shinran's grandfather, and if Shinran's father Arinori was born even as late as the year of Arinobu's death, Arinori would have been seventy-five years of age at the time Shinran was born in 1173. That Arinori's first son was born when Arinori was at the old age of seventy five and that he subsequently fathered three other children are most unlikely. Indeed, it was on this basis that Shinran's genealogy was held in doubt until the discovery of the above-mentioned Fujiwara Nanke genealogy by Yamada Bunshō.²⁴

²⁴Yamada, Bunshō. Shinran to Sono Kyōdan (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1948). p. 29-40.

According to the Nanke genealogy, Shinran's grandfather was Tsunetada, a man who was censored for licentious behavior. As can be seen from the Hino genealogy, although all the other ancestors of Shinran were distinguished men, Tsunetada was the sole black sheep who held the clan back from rising to greater power. The diary of Kujō Kanezane (1149-1207), a disciple of Hōnen, illustrates this point quite clearly. In 1182 Tsunetada's second son, Munenari, took the Hōryaku, an examination for promotion to a higher court position, which meant that Munenari was a very capable person.²⁵ The diary reads: "Munenari's family is extremely vulgar and therefore such ambition on his part is unbecoming".²⁶ Four months later when Munenari passed the examination, another member of the nobility, Fujiwara Teika (1162-1241) wrote the following in his diary: "Munenari has a surpassing literary ability. However, it is surprising that a person of such a disreputable family could ever pass the examination".²⁷ Probably because of this link with his family background, Munenari's promotion was delayed until he was sixty-one, which was a very late age for such an honor.

²⁵ Gyokuyō. September 7-18, 1182, quoted from Akamatsu's op. cit., p. 22-23

²⁶ Gyokuyō. August 3, 1212, quoted from Matsuno's op. cit., p. 24.

²⁷ Meigetsuki. December 26, 1212. Meigetsuki, Vol. 2, (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1911-1912). p. 227.

It is understandable then that Tsunetada (?-?) was simply omitted from the Hino genealogy because it would have been considered a shame and a disgrace to list such a man in the family tree. In Japanese genealogies there was a practice of simply erasing the names of women and of those whom they wished would remain unknown in the future. We can therefore gather that the omission of reference to Tsunetada probably stemmed from such a practice. If Munenari, a man of accomplishment, had such grave difficulty in his own promotion, it must have been even harder for Arinori, whose rank was lower than Munenari's and whose position, as mentioned before, was regarded as an empty one. Moreover, Arinori lost even this position when lady Taira no Shigeko died. I would put forward the theory that the conjuncture of all these circumstances forced Arinori to retire at a relatively early age.

As is readily apparent from the Hino's family genealogy, none of Shinran's relatives were in a sufficiently high social position to assure Shinran a decent future. Although both uncles succeeded in rising to elevated positions, this was only as they reached retirement age so that neither had a sufficiently consolidated position to promote the social progress of their young nephew. Shinran's only hope in preparing for his life ahead lay in education. And to have a good education during this time meant going to a temple. It was to this end that his uncle/stepfather, Noritsuna, and

his other uncle, Munenari, focused their efforts. Consequently, Shinran was given a rigorous education in a stern family environment.

Nine years of age is an extremely early time for even a precocious child to make a lifetime decision. However, many Japanese monks of that period entered the monkhood at a similar early age: Hōnen (1133-1212) at nine, Eisai (1141-1215) at eleven, Jien (1155-1225) at thirteen, Myōei (1173-1232) at nine, Dōgen (1200-1253) at thirteen, Nichiren (1222-1282) at twelve, Eison (1201-1291) at eleven, Ninshō (1217-1303) at eleven and Ippen (1239-1289) at ten years of age. Shinran therefore was not particularly young. In such cases we should not view a young boy who leaves home to enter the monkhood at an early age as tragic but instead should attempt to appraise the situation with some degree of historical relativity. It is safe to say that the decision had been made for the boy by adults who had the child's best interest at heart; having said this, all other judgments on such matters must be weighed by the standards applicable to the period in which these events transpired.

Finally, it should also be noted that it was only the Buddhist temples of Hieizan and Nara that Taira no Kiyomori was not able to bring under Heike hegemony. The temples of Nara and Hieizan survived the political turmoil to maintain their own independent position and power. As the aristocrats' power had declined, Shinran's family was especially threatened

on account of the Mochihito Incident vis-à-vis Taira no Kiyomori; thus it was natural that Nara and Hieizan should be viewed as sanctuaries for Shinran. Furthermore, they afforded him the best opportunity of education, the only way for a son of the declined nobility to prosper. Not only Shinran, but in fact many sons of the nobility turned to the temples after the mid-Heian period, as samurai gradually replaced aristocrats in high governmental posts.

A religious vocation was particularly attractive in light of the challenge posed to the aristocracy by the victorious samurai forces. There was not only a crisis of political authority but also a questioning of the very justification for the defeated and decadent court nobility ever purporting to have constituted an aristocracy.

"Aristocracy" originally meant government by the best citizens and "nobility" is derived from naturī noscere: to know. Although these are European terms, they well reflect the institutional demand that every ruling group justify its position by means of some form of superiority. Now that the aristocracy had been stripped of even the pretences of exercising temporal power, they sought psychological justification for existence and popular acceptance of their higher social position in the world of religion and ideas. They would counter the authority of the Heike based on military power and actual physical control of the Japanese people with superior spiritual authority. Because the aristocracy would

be defeated in any military confrontation with the samurai, they wrapped themselves in the protective cloak of spiritual authority and invoked heavenly retribution for any attack on their persons or their status.

The close ties which developed between the temples and the aristocracy enabled the temples, firstly, to free themselves from all bindings with the nation and to exist independently; secondly, to have prayers, as the aristocracy had no arms for their own protection and wanted the temples to offer prayers for them; and thirdly, as a result of the new relationship, enabled the whole temple system to undergo change. With the financial assistance of the very wealthy aristocratic families, new temples were built, only to have the high positions therein held exclusively by descendants of the aristocracy.²⁸ In time, all important posts of the Buddhist temples were monopolized by the nobility and aristocracy.

Again, there are other factors arising from Shinran's family background which might explain his entering a monastery. Mochihito^o, being of very high birth as a son of an Emperor, was only seen by an exclusive few in the court. When he died in action, there was no one immediately available who could identify him. Munenari, Shinran's uncle, who had been Mochihito^o's tutor, was summoned by the Heike to identify

²⁸Kawasaki, Tsuneyuki and Kazuo Kasamatsu (ed.). Shūkyōshi (Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppan, 1964), p. 136.

Mochihito^o's body and thus authenticate the fact of his death.²⁹ This untoward duty fell upon Munenari. Although Mochihito^o's death was thus confirmed, months later rumors still persisted that Mochihito^o was alive and well. The rumors, unfortunately, were baseless. The death of Mochihito^o dimmed all future hopes for the Hino family, and it has been suggested that this was the direct cause of Shinran's entering the monastic life.³⁰ Some scholars have stated that the chief reason Shinran's family was put in an awkward and unfavorable position when Minamoto no Yorimasa rose against the Heike clan was that Shinran's mother was probably born of the opposing Genji (Minamoto) family.³¹ This assumption is based on the historically proven fact that Shinran's grandmother (Tsunetada's wife) was of the Genji clan, but since very little is known of the social background of Shinran's mother, one can go no further and the question must for the present remain unsettled.

Thus in this world of political chaos, what was the locus of the Hino family and those who surrounded Shinran? Although the Hino family were members of the nobility, they had not directly participated in the political intrigues of the period, nor in the violent bloodbaths of the era.

²⁹Akamatsu, Toshihide. Shinran (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kôbunkan, 1961), p. 21-22.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Fujiwara's op. cit., p. 11-13.

Accordingly, although death by political vendetta was not imminently foreseeable, Shinran's uncles undoubtedly felt that the young boy would have more secure future within the confines of a monastery.

CHAPTER II

SHINRAN AND TENDAI THOUGHT ON MT. HIEI (HIEIZAN)

i. Saichô - Founder of Hieizan

Shinran began his monastic life at the age of nine and spent a quarter of his lifetime in the monastery of Hieizan. During these formative years his unique character took shape, and the foundation was laid upon which his future Weltanschauung would rest.

The founder of Hieizan entered the monkhood under the guidance of Gyôhyô (722-787) who belonged to Kokubunji. In his childhood he was known as Hirono, but, in 780, after ordination at the age of fourteen, he changed his name to Saichô (767-822).¹

Saichô received the precepts at Tôdaiji in Nara on April 6, 785² when he was nineteen. This was only five months after the capital was transferred from Nara to Nagaoka on November 11, 784. Presumably, Saichô was impressed by the nature of impermanency, upon viewing the hard life of the populace and the deteriorating old capital which had been the political and social focal point for more than seventy years, but which had begun to precipitously decline only several months earlier.

¹Ono, Tatsunôsukey. Nihon Bukkyô Shisôshi (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kôbunkan, 1961), p. 90.

²Mibu, Taishun. Eizan no Shinpû, Nihon no Bukkyô, Vol. III, (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobô, 1967), p. 30.

Since his master, Gyôhyô, belonged to a national temple, Saichô studied the teachings of Kegon, the government-approved Buddhism. He was particularly inspired by the idea expressed in Daijô-kishin-rongi in which Hôzô (643-712)³, an orthodox follower of Kegon, expressed his high regard for the Tendai teachings.

Tendai teachings differed from those of the Kegon School in that they emphasized the development of human character rather than the acquisition of knowledge. Kegon tended to remain aloof from the mundane and to concentrate on formal prayer and the performance of certain rituals. Study of Kegon was characterized by wide exposure to both abstract discussion and the intellectual interpretation of the teachings of Buddhism.

Saichô was attracted toward the Tendai teachings and strived to deepen his knowledge of the Hokekyô. There were few books to help him in this task although some had been introduced into Japan by the Chinese monk Ganjin (686-763) in 754.⁴ Saichô's exploration of Tendai led him to conclude that Buddhism is a religion rather than a subject of academic interest. Saichô thereafter devoted himself to spreading this view.

³Dengyô Daishi Zenshû Vol. I, (Tokyo: Tendai-shû Seitenkankôkai, 1912), p. 41.

⁴Kawasaki, Tsuneyuki and Kazuo Kasahara. Shûkyôshi (Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppan, 1964), p. 52.

Saichō and
his study:

In January 803, at the request of
Wake no Hiroyo (?-?), Saichō delivered
a lecture on the Tendai teaching at
Takaozan in Kyoto. This greatly impressed the audience which
included the Emperor Kammu. As a result of this exposure,
Saichō was brought to the attention of Emperor Kammu (737-806),
to whom Saichō later presented a statement of his personal
view, which reads: "Sanron and Hossō are Ronshū, but Tendai
is Kyōshū".

Ronshū is the school of Buddhism which bases its doctrines
on what has already been interpreted of Shakya's words and
teachings, while Kyōshū is the school which is founded directly
on the sutras without the mediation of interpretations. Saichō
spoke of the Buddhism practiced by Sanron and Hossō, which were
then the powerful schools in Japan, as being merely a Buddhism
of vacuous scholarly pursuit, and maintained that the Tendai
which was directly founded on Hokekyō, the words and teachings
of Buddha, was really a Buddhism of practical religion.⁵

The lecture at Takaozan and the subsequent interest of the
Emperor opened the gate for Saichō to go abroad and pursue his
studies. Accordingly, in September of the same year, Saichō
left Japan to study in China.⁶

⁵ Ibid., p. 54.

⁶ Mibu Taishun's op. cit., p. 89.

It was the very high regard that Saichō held for the ideology of Chigi (Chih-I 538-598) which led him to opt for China.⁷

Of course, by the time Saichō went abroad in 803, Chigi, the founder of the Tendai (T'ien-tai) sect had already been dead for more than two hundred years. The sect was named "Tendai" after a mountain in Tendai, China where Chigi underwent religious training. In essence the Tendai doctrine represented a novel interpretation of the Hokekyō.

Saichō studied the Tendai teachings from Dōzui (?-?) and Gyōman (?-?), and in June of 805, after a short stay of less than two years, received his precepts from Dōzui.⁸ As did most of the monks of that day, Saichō then returned to Japan

⁷The eight celebrated monks sent to China by the court in this period (early Heian), Saichō, Kūkai, Engyō, Jōgyō, Ennin, Eun, Enchin, and Shūei, had no facilities for studying the Chinese language before their departure for China; moreover, their sojourns in China were generally too brief for them to learn to speak Chinese. They communicated with the Chinese by depending mainly on the written language. Consequently, they resorted to collecting Buddhist documents and acquiring Buddhist ceremonial articles instead of listening to lectures on Buddhist doctrine. Saichō took with him an interpreter, but the others did not. They had to admit their inability to converse orally; one of them says, "I could write Chinese, but not speak it. Therefore, when I had a question to ask, I wrote it out"; and another says, "I could not speak the Chinese language, but could write it. I had a pad brought to me (whenever I wanted to ask a question) and wrote on it."

Nakamura, Hajime. Tōyōjin no Shihōhō, Vol. III. (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1960), p. 6.

⁸Hashikawa, Tadashi. Nihon Bukkyōshi (Tokyo: Kokushikōza Kankōkai, 1933), p. 67.

with many books on Buddhism. The literature was mainly on the doctrines of Buddhism and is said to have comprised two hundred and thirty books in four hundred and sixty volumes.

At about this stage Saichō's religious thought began to mature. That which is referred to as "Jiki Sōō no Ronri" forms the basis of his thought and Saichō's development of this principle reflects his deep consciousness of history as well as the maturing of his own faith. Saichō's religious thought was to have a strong influence upon the development of Japanese Buddhism. Indeed, it served as the vehicle of Kamakura Buddhism, the religious reformation, which swept over Japan some two hundred and fifty years after Saichō's death. We will now turn to examine Jiki Sōō no Ronri as it appeared in Hieiizan.

ii. The logic of Jiki Sōō

Saichō's historical consciousness:

Upon his return to Japan, Saichō introduced the highly eclectic Tendai teachings, and, as was the custom of the time, presented Emperor Kammu (737-806) with several copies of the sutras. On these he wrote a few words to the effect that "In this degenerate world, it is hard for a person to become saintly, and that in calamitous times, both

heaven and earth will mourn together."⁹

This thought was first expressed by Saichô at the age of nineteen when he was studying at Nara. Saichô did not change his outlook on the material world. This cognizance was precisely the understanding of the Mappô (degenerate age) ideology which he repeatedly mentioned in his writings of later years: "The ages of Shôhō and Zōhō have passed; we are now already in the age of Mappô. Therefore, those days when one actively practiced Buddhism have already long been past."¹⁰

Throughout Saichô's life from the commencement of his religious training, he always believed that the period in which he was living was very near the age of Mappô. In other words, "Jiki Sôô no Ronri", - the doctrine of how to discover the teachings of Buddhism most suited to a degenerate age and people - formed an integral part of Saichô's training in Buddhism.

The idea of "Jiki Sôô no Ronri" contributed greatly to the introduction and development of the Pure Land teachings, which had been developed in China at an earlier time as the kind of logic most suitable for the Mappô age.

⁹ Mibu, Taishun's op. cit., p. 91

¹⁰ Shugo Kokkai Shô, Dengyô Daishi Zenshû. (Tokyo: Tendaishû Seitenkankôkai). Vol. II, p. 342.

It was the monk Ennin who brought back with him to Hieizan from China the Nembutsu sanmai no Hô. He also introduced the Jyôgyô sanmai no Hô and built the hall Jyôgyô sanmaidô for its practices. In his book Jakkôdoki,¹¹ Ennin expresses the view that in a degenerate age such as the Mappô, all are drawn away from the Way to Enlightenment and the Pure Land. Indeed, he emphasizes that the sutras indicate one path to man's rebirth in the Pure Land, and this way is through the teachings of Amida.

The ideology of the Pure Land was related to Ryôgen (912-985) and was set down by him in the book "Kubon Ôjôgi".

According to Jikeidaishi Den, Ryôgen regarded Amida as the teacher and master of the degenerate age, and it is said that he died uttering the name of Amida. The ideology stated in the "Kubon Ôjôgi" as further developed by Ryôgen appears in his Kanjin Ryakuyô Shû.¹²

The ideology of Jiki Sôo no Ronri was prevalent at Hieizan during the time Shinran studied there, and had a profound effect on the development of his thinking. At the same time, "Taishi Shinkô" was the prevalent religious consciousness of society. What influence the outer or social consciousness had on the inner religious ideology of Hieizan and on Shinran will now be detailed.

¹¹Jikeidaishi Den. Zoku Gunshoruijû, Vol. 8-2. (Tokyo: Zoku Gunshoruijû Kanseikai, 1904), p. 683-699).

¹²Ibid., p. 741-742.

iii. Taishi Shinkô - Adoration of Prince Shôtoku -
Prince Shôtoku, father of Japanese Buddhism

When Shinran entered Hieizan the Mappô ideology and worship of Prince Shôtoku were prevalent within Japan. Prince Shôtoku (544-622) who is generally credited with the early adoption of Buddhism in Japan also found the teachings of that religion compatible with his own political views and aspirations, and, accordingly, incorporated them in the Seventeen Article Constitution which he later authored.

The Kamakura era was a time of great social discord, and there existed within the nation an almost mystical yearning to revert to original Buddhism and to the teachings of Buddha.

Accompanying these anxieties concerning the degenerate age of the Dharma, the Japanese people felt further anguish and insecurity with regard to Buddhism in terms of Japan's isolation from India. Indeed, Japan was so distant from India, the country of origin of Buddhism that the people were afraid the teachings of Buddha would not be transmitted to them accurately.¹³ Consequently, they named Prince Shôtoku, Buddha

¹³ Shinran has written words in praise of Hônen who endeavored to spread Pure Land Buddhism in Japan. He has referred to Japan as "far-off islands" therein.

Genkû (i.e. Hônen), Master of the sect, well versed in Buddhism. Pitied ordinary men, whether good or evil spreading the teaching of Shinshû, i.e. true religion in the far-off islands. He propated the Selected Original Vow in the evil world.

of Japan or father of Japanese Buddhism, since he was the very first to believe in Buddhism and they came to have reverence for him and to worship him as Kannon Bodhsattva. Even temple architecture began to reflect this outlook. Shinran was at Hieizan when Taishishinko reached its peak and it is known that he practiced Sanrô at the temples associated with the name of Prince Shôtoku.

In the middle of the Heian era it became popular for people to shut themselves up for days in a room wherein a statue of a Buddha was enshrined....in order to pray for inspiration.¹⁴

Since the people of the Kamakura period believed that Prince Shôtoku was the first to fully comprehend the essence of Buddhism in Japan, a tendency arose to associate him with the glories of a past age. Such was the religious environment when Shinran entered Hieizan. Hieizan you will remember was founded by Saichô who was extremely conscious of the problems of the Mappô period. We will now turn to Shinran's monastic life in Hieizan.

¹⁴ Akamatsu, Toshihide. Zoku Kamakura Bukkyô no Kenkyû (Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1966), p. 32.

iv. Shinran's life at Hieizan

No autobiographical reference is to be found in Shinran's writings relating to any part of his twenty years at Hieizan. Neither is reference to this experience generally made in any of the writings of Shinran's contemporaries. The one and only reference is in the brief twenty-four character letter of Shinran's wife Eshin-ni to her daughter.¹⁵ From this letter it is learned that Shinran held the position of Dōsō at Hieizan.¹⁶

Two things must be borne in mind in examining the probable life of Shinran in Hieizan. Through the study of original documents which Shinran cited in his massive lifework, one is able to give the source of Shinran's ideology: Shinran's posture toward his studies at Hieizan will thus become clear and it can help one to better understand his ideology.

The second step is to search for Shinran's reason for descending Mt. Hiei. By looking through the various materials written by Shinran himself relating to the reason of his descending, we can presume the probable life Shinran had led

¹⁵ This letter was only discovered in 1921 by Washio Kyōdō. As a hindsight, the Shinshū Kyōdan had not known of its founder's first twenty-nine years of life, which covers a fourth of his entire life, for more than seven hundred and fifty years. It is now, after seven hundred and fifty years, almost impossible to have complete factual knowledge of this period.

¹⁶ Eshin-ni Monjo, No. 3, SSZ III, p. 186.

in Hieizan. By so doing, it will help to understand better the activities of his life.

My attention is now directed particularly toward Shinran's activities in the process of forming his ideology. Therefore, the second step mentioned above will be employed to make clear Shinran's religious life in Hieizan. The fact that Shinran was a DÔSÔ and his relation with Prince Shôtoku will be discussed in detail because there exists a letter written by his wife which mentions abandoning his position at Hieizan and the decision to descend from Mt. Hiei.

..... a hundred days at Rokkakudô, and prayed for salvation. Then, on the dawn of the ninety-fifth day, Prince Shôtoku appeared in a dream, indicating the path to enlightenment by revealing a verse He called on Master Hônen to be shown the Way of Salvation.¹⁷

As mentioned above, according to the letter by his wife, discovered in 1921 by Washio Kyôdô, Shinran was a Dôsô. To begin with, we will see what the position Doso had meant and what religious duties were required of this title.

The observances
at Hieizan:

From the diaries of court nobles who
were the contemporaries of Shinran,
it is learned that at the time of

his entry there were basically three classes in the hierarchy of monks at Hieizan: Gakushô, Dôshû, and Dôsô. The position

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 187.

of Gakushō was filled by those monks who came from among the nobility, and Dōshū by those monks who were formerly retainers of court nobles. The Dōshū were to serve the Gakushō and act as the monastery's caretakers.¹⁸ The Dōsō were the lowest class of monks and their duties consisted of practicing Fudan Nembutsu¹⁹ (chanting over extended periods of time).

The practice of Fudan Nembutsu was considered to be a method for attaining self-realization, and in the Buddhist tradition self-realization can be achieved only after all attachments and illusions have been dispelled. Shinran's religious training at Hieizan was directed toward this end. The usual pattern for novitiates entering the monkhood as explained previously began around the age of ten. We know Shinran was nine. Five years later he was ordained, and, as was the fashion, after another five years of studies he finally took the precepts and was considered a fully fledged monk. For the next twelve years he followed a course of study that dealt in great detail with the three Buddhist practices of Shikan, Shanagyō or Shugyōgyō.²⁰

¹⁸ Murakami, Toshimi. Shinran Dokuhon (Kyoto: Hyakkaen, 1968), p. 16.

¹⁹ Hyōhan ki. September 24, 1167. Shiryō Taisei, Vol. XX, (Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, 1965), p. 265.

Shōu ki. October 29, 988. Shiryō Taisei, Vol. S. 1. (Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, 1965), p. 80-81.

²⁰ Kageyama, Haruki. Hieizan (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1960), p. 104.

v. Shinran's debt to Prince Shôtoku

During this period we know from Shinran's book Kyô Gyô Shin Shô, that he had for some time been struggling to overcome his awakened adolescent sexual desires and had often experienced deep remorse because of these feelings.²¹ It was likely this struggle that prompted him to engage in the practice of Sanrô. The location in which he practiced Sanrô is believed to be associated with Prince Shôtoku.²² On this basis alone and with limited historical data, part of which refers to the practice of Sanrô, modern scholars conclude that Shinran was simply following the fashion in his worship of Prince Shôtoku.

Although there may be some truth in this, it is my opinion that there was a more profound reason for Shinran's high regard of Prince Shôtoku. My position will shortly be explained through reference to the letter of Eshin-ni and to the Mukoku which Nabata Takashi²³ has discovered to have come from the hand of Shinran himself. Further, through an examination of Prince Shôtoku's relationship to Buddhism

²¹Kyô Gyô Shin Shô, SSZ I, p. 153, Mattôshô, SSZ III, p. 109.

²²One of the six forms of Bodhisattva. He serves all beings with the gem of satisfaction and the wheel of law. Murakami's op. cit., p. 22.

²³Nabata Takashi. Shinran Shônin no Rokkakudô no Ge ni Tsuite. Shinshû Kenkyû No. 8. (Kyoto: Shinshû Rengô Gekki, 1963).

it should be possible to underscore some of the similarities between the characters and thought of Shinran and his mentor. In elaborating the common points between these two men, one in fact is led to understand one of the reasons why Shinran held Prince Shôtoku in such great esteem.

Awakening to his own self:

The circumstances underlying Shinran's practice of Sanrô and his spiritual experience of Prince Shôtoku are set

forth in Eshin-ni's letter:

This letter attests to the fact that your father (i.e. Shinran) was Dôsô at Hieizan, that he left the mountain and confined himself to the Rokkakudô for one hundred days, and that Prince Shôtoku appeared and showed him the way, while praying for the salvation of all beings, in the dawn of the ninety-fifth day. In order that you can read it for yourself, I have written this and am sending it to you ...

... Shinran left Mt. Hiei, remained in retreat a hundred days at Rokkakudô, and prayed for salvation. Then, on the dawn of the ninety-fifth day, Prince Shôtoku appeared in a dream, indicating the path to enlightenment by receiving a verse.²⁴

Further evidence of the depth of Shinran's experience of Prince Shôtoku is found in Shinran's Mukoku:

When the devotee finds himself bound by his past Karma to come in contact with the female sex, I will incarnate myself as a most beautiful woman and become his object of love and throughout his life I will help him meet the task of embellishing this world, and on his death I will become his guide to the Land of Bliss.²⁵

²⁴ Eshin-ni Monjo, No. 3, SSZ III, p. 186-187.

²⁵ Shinran Muki, SSZ IV, p. 201.

So moved was Shinran by these spiritual events that he subsequently authored a hundred hymns of praise to Prince Shôtoku.

There is no article which specifically identifies Shinran's Amida Buddha with the Amida of Prince Shôtoku.²⁶

Buddhism in Japan which had been given governmental protection from its beginning was extremely privileged in that many monks, again aided by government, were enabled to travel to China to pursue advanced scholarly pursuits in Chinese Buddhism. With their return, the fruit of their studies was directly imported to Japan. The man who, at the earliest stages (600 A.D.) advocated such a program and worked diligently toward it was Prince

²⁶Ishida Mizumaro contends that the Prince did not have any knowledge of Pure Land teaching. "It is not possible to see faith in the Amida Buddha in the Prince. True, there is mention of Amida Buddha in the Hokeyô upon which he commented; however, there is no comment whatsoever in the Yakuô Honji Bon regarding this sutra which teaches that females are born to paradise. It should be said that the Prince did not have sufficient knowledge of Pure Land teaching rather than say he had no faith in it." Ishida, Mizumaro. Jôdokyô no Tenkai (Tokyo: Shunjûsha, 1965), p. 51

Shōtoku.²⁷ There are several books purportedly by Prince Shōtoku, the authorship of which is still being debated, but which prove, regardless of authorship, that he, upon his own initiative, had studied Buddhism from monks such as Eji (?-623) and Ekai (?-?) who were from Korea. It was through Prince Shōtoku that doors were opened for Buddhism to enter and remain in Japan. The outstanding characteristic of this program was that Buddhism was hailed not only as learning, but also as religious thought.

The results of his endeavors can be traced today in two documents. One is the oldest commentary on the sutras written by a Japanese which is referred to as the Sangyō Gisho. The commentaries are on the three sutras of Hokekyō, Yuimakyō and Shōmangyō. In the commentary of Yuimakyō, there appears a citation of a book which was published in

²⁷When Emperor Suiko acceded to the throne in the year 593, we see that Prince Shōtoku, in cooperation with Grand Minister Soga no Umako who had taken charge, endeavored to govern the country by the teachings of Buddhism. In order to import into Japan the Buddhist culture of Zui, they had delegated Kenzuishi to China. This gesture was the first since that of Emperor Yūryaku some one hundred years prior to this to re-open Japan-China relations. Naoki, Kōjirō. Kodai Kokka no Seiritsu. Nihon Rekishi, Vol. II (Tokyo: Chūōkōronsha, 1962), p. 92.

After the death of Prince Shōtoku in the year 623, the monk Esai and four others had returned from China; in 632, monk Nichimon returned and in 640, student Takamuku no Ayahito Kuromaro returned. Thus the fruit of Prince Shōtoku's endeavors began to appear only after his death. Ienaga, Saburō, Asuka Hakuō Bunka, Nihon Rekishi. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1962), p. 321-327.

China after the death of Prince Shôtoku, and for this reason there are some who claim the Sangyô Gisho was not written by Prince Shôtoku.²⁸ In spite of this the style of writing throughout the commentaries of all three sutras is alike in terms of syntax and diction. It is believed therefore that the Sangyô Gisho was a joint work of Prince Shôtoku and the study group he instituted and that the work was completed only after the Prince's death.

Because it is a compilation of the three sutras of Hokeyô, Yuimakyô and Shômangyô, the Sangyô Gisho offers an excellent insight into Buddhist knowledge. A first glance at what is common to these three sutras is something of value and utility to the Prince. Having been in a position to rule the country, he had chosen Hokeyô wherein it was taught that the morals and laws of society were not in contradiction with the teachings of Buddhism. In order to show that he, a layman, could also believe in Buddhism, Prince Shôtoku dwelled on the Shômangyô and Yuimakyô wherein the layman believers Shôman, a woman, and Yuima, a man, were the actual figures.

As regards the more spiritual aspect of these three sutras, the underlying common theme is Ichijô Shisô (Innate Buddha Nature). Hannyakyô, Kegongyô, Daimuryôjukyô and Nehangyô also deal with this same theme. The Ichijô movement insisted that

²⁸Fukui, Kôjun. Sangyô Gisho no Seiriesu o Utagau, Indogaku Bukkyôgaku Kenkyû IV-2, (Tokyo: Nihon Indogaku Bukkyôgakkai, 1961).

the Buddhist teachings enable every living being to attain Buddhahood, not by the mere formal practice of laws or training for the benefit of one's own self, but by actions which benefit others. That Prince Shōtoku chose to make his commentaries on sutras which were based upon layman Buddhism, and Ichijō Shisō substantiates the hypothesis that he accepted Buddhism into Japan as a religious thought.

Now the second point wherein the Prince's understanding of Buddhism as a religion is found is in his will. "All happenings of this world are temporary phenomena; Buddha alone is the Eternal Truth". Ienaga Saburō says that this will, unlike the debated Sangyō Gisho, is authentic material with which to know the Prince. Ienaga Saburō highly evaluates this testament as a revolutionary proposition which uprooted and replaced the generally-held ancient outlook on the world. This proposition however was left dormant until the beginning of the thirteenth century, some five hundred years after Prince Shōtoku's death, when religious leaders of Pure Land Buddhism such as Hōnen and Shinran emerged. Ienaga Saburō referred to these wise words of the Prince as the "Logic of Negation" and called Shōtoku the first philosopher/thinker of Japan.²⁹

For five hundred years there was no one in Japan who carried forward the Prince's thought. Towards the end of the

²⁹ Ienaga, Saburō. Nihonshisōshi ni Okeru Hitei no Ronri no Hattatsu (Tokyo: Shinsensha, 1969), p. 41.

Heian period "ennui" became prevalent among the nobility. The common people grew weary of the evils arising from disharmony within society. Had the environment been a settled and harmonious one, Weltschmerz would not have appeared. The samurai were so involved in striving to garner greater power that they were little concerned with the spiritual side of life. However, when they finally achieved control of the society, they began to reflect upon the deep sinfulness in the life they had led and on the trail of blood which lay upon their consciences. Theirs was clearly a denial of their own past actions rather than criticism of the previous social order.

Insofar as the taking of life was foreign to the Buddhist way of life, the consciousness of sin was present in the minds of the common people who based their survival on a hunting strategy. That such a lifestyle was sinful was a major contradiction that could only be blamed on one thing: the choice of the individual. The conception is exactly what Prince Shōtoku referred to when he stated in his will that all happenings of this world are temporary phenomena. Prince Shōtoku counselled that:

All happenings of this world are transitory;
Buddha alone is the Eternal Truth.³⁰

Dismiss evil doings.³¹

³⁰ Tenjukoku Shūchō quoted from Kawasaki, Tsuneyuki and Kazuo Kasahara (ed.), Shūkyōshi (Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppan, 1964), p. 17.

³¹ Nihon Shoki quoted from Hashikawa's op. cit., p. 18.

Material things are perishable and cannot be preserved; however, the Three Treasures are permanent and can be eternally retained.³²

Man indulges in greed and it is rare that he pursues the Way of Truth. Moreover, he cannot detach himself from death or life and therefore cannot reach Nirvana.³³

Man in his craving for knowledge is ensnared by his five senses and in his ignorance is blinded to the Truth.³⁴

As can be readily seen from the following excerpt,

Shinran's point of view parallels that of Prince Shōtoku's:

Truly I know. Sad is it that I, Gutoku Ran (i.e. Shinran), sunk in the vast sea of lust and lost in the great mountain of desire for fame and profit, do not rejoice in joining the group of the Rightly Established State, nor do I enjoy coming near the True Enlightenment. What a shame! What a sorrow!³⁵

The difference between the two men was primarily their lifestyles. Prince Shōtoku was regent of Japan during one of the most chaotic periods in its history.³⁶ Although he lived in a worldly environment of politics, he nevertheless pursued the teachings of Buddhism successfully without the

³² Daijōji Garan Engi quoted from Fujishima, Tatsuō and Shunsei Nogami (ed.). Dentō no Seija. (Kyoto: Hyakkaen, 1961), p. 277.

³³ Ibid., p. 278.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 278.

³⁵ Kyō Gyō Shin Shō, SSZ I, p. 153.

³⁶ Ishimoda, Shō and Eiichi Matsushima. Nihonshi Gaisetsu I, (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1955), p. 57-60.

benefit of monastic life. Shinran admired Prince Shōtoku because he had interpreted the teachings in terms of human sālvation that were well within the reach of the common man.

Prince Shōtoku of the seventh century and Shinran of the thirteenth century are completely set apart by time but one can find continuity in their thoughts. Shinran, upon the discovery and realization of a continuity in the Prince's thought and his own, composed some two hundred or more hymns to praise the Prince.³⁷

With regard to Shinran and Prince Shōtoku I have pointed out the ideology common to both. This common ideology became the main vehicle of thought contributing to Shinran's turning to Hōnen. Prince Shōtoku was the prime influence in Shinran's turning to Hōnen. The actual facts of Shinran turning to Hōnen, found in Shinran's own writings, will now be discussed.

³⁷ Throughout his life Shinran wrote five hundred and thirteen hymns, three hundred and nineteen of which are directed to praising eight people. Two hundred and two are hymns to Prince Shōtoku and the remaining one hundred and seventeen are hymns to seven patriarchs. More specifically, they are ten hymns to Nagarjuna, ten to Vasubandhu, thirty-four to T'anbuan, seven to Tao-cho, twenty-six to Shan-tao, ten to Shinghin and twenty to Genkū (Hōnen). There are two volumes of hymns to the Prince. One is a compilation of seventy-five hymns purely in praise of Prince Shōtoku written when Shinran was eighty-three years of age. The second is one hundred and fourteen hymns arranged in chronological order written at the age of eighty-five.

vi. Five materials relating to the period of Shinran's turning

Five sources of material deal with the period immediately preceding Shinran's joining of Hōnen's group and with the period during which Shinran was with Hōnen.

- (a) Shinran Muki.³⁸ There are two copies of the account of Shinran's dream or vision, one written by Shinran himself and another by one of his disciples (date of recordings unknown).
- (b) Kangyō Amidakyō Shūchū.³⁹ Shinran's commentaries on the two sutras of Kangyō Amidakyō, the earliest of which seems to have been written before he was forty-five.
- (c) Shinran's own recollection of his relationship with Hōnen can be found in a sentence in Kyō Gyō Shin Shō.
- (d) Shinran's wife's letter addressed to her daughter.
- (e) The account of the dream/vision recorded in Shinran Denne by Shinran's great grandchild, Kakunyo.

³⁸Senjuji Collection, Mie Prefecture. SSZ IV, p. 201-202, p. 246-251.

Shinran Muki means "the recording of Shinran's dream". This vision or dream was not so named by Shinran but only by later historians.

³⁹Twenty-nine original books written by Shinran exist today. If all his letters as well as copies Shinran made of the books written by patriarchs were to be included, there would be a total of fifty books. With the exception of two books which are said to have been written before the age of forty-five, all were written between the ages of fifty-two and eighty-eight.

Akamatsu's op. cit., p. 78-85.

Now, in conjunction with Shinran Muki and with reference to (b), (c), (d) and (e), we will examine the experiences Shinran had while with Hōnen's group.

With respect to Shinran Muki, there exists one copy of it made by Shinbutsu (1207-1257), Shinran's disciple,⁴⁰ and another recently discovered by Hiramatsu Reizō⁴¹ which is judged to be an original writing of Shinran. The Shinran Muki reads as follows:

When the devotee finds himself bound by his past karma to come in contact with the female sex, I will incarnate myself as a most beautiful woman and become his object of love; and throughout his life I will be his helpmate for the sake of embellishing this world, and on his death I will become his guide to the Land of Bliss. This, continued the Bodhisattva, is my vow. Thou, Zenshin, shalt announce the signification of this my vow to the world and make all sentient beings know of it. He addressed them as commanded by the Bodhisattva, and when he imagined that he had come to the end of his address, he awoke from his dream.⁴²

The content clearly refers to marriage. Now, where and at what age and in what year did Shinran have this vision or dream? Both Shinbutsu's copy and that which Hiramatsu discovered are undated. However, in Shinran Denne, it is recorded as having happened early in the morning on April 5, 1203.

⁴⁰ Shinbutsu died when Shinran was eighty-six. This means that Shinbutsu had made a copy of the account while Shinran was still alive and therefore it is highly probable that the recorded content is accurate.

⁴¹ Hiramatsu, Reizō. Takada Hōko Shinhakken Shiryō ni yoru Shiron. Takada Gakuō 46, Takada Gakkai, 1959.

⁴² Shinran Muki SSZ IV, p. 201.

On the fifth day of the fourth month in the third year of Kennin (1203) - Shōnin twenty-nine years old - the Shōnin (Shinran) had a vision at night ... According to the record, "Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara of the Rokkakudō ... et seq."⁴³

Shinran Denne, however, is in error in stating Shinran's age as twenty-nine in the third year of Kennin (1202) because by Japanese reckoning, Shinran would then have been thirty-one years of age. If on the other hand Shinran did have his vision when he was twenty-nine, it should have been recorded as the first year of Kennin (1201), which is the year Shinran joined Hōnen's group.⁴⁴ If it had been in 1203, it would have been the year previous to that in which Hōnen obtained the signatures of his disciples on the Seven Chapter Defence Statement presented on behalf of his group.

These ambiguities will be discussed in more detail in a later chapter.

⁴³ Shinran Denne Chapter III, Rokkaku Musō, SSZ IV, p. 201.

⁴⁴ Kyō Gyō Shin Shō SSZ I, p. 381.

vii. The two dreams

Among the five sources listed in the previous section, those which most directly relate to the turning of Shinran to Hōnen are the recollections of the two dreams - that is the Shinran Denne and Eshin-ni's letter. First the Shinran Denne shall be studied.

Shinran Denne
and the content
of the dream:

As explained in Chapter I, the
contents of Shinran Denne bearing
on Shinran's deeds and movements

are believed to be accurate and trustworthy; only a couple of the dates and years recorded therein fail to serve as absolutely reliable guides.

Unfortunately, the latter is the case with the date of Shinran's dream. Furthermore, even the dates appearing on the existing copies of Shinran Denne do not correspond with each other. There are three extant versions of the Shinran Denne over which the historians debate:-

Nishihonganji collection, the Senjuji collection and the

Higashihonganji collection.⁴⁵ The dates relating to the "date of the dream", "Shinran's age at the time", and "Shinran's turning to Hōnen" according to the three copies may be compared in the following Table:

Collection	Year of conversion Shinran's age	Year of Mukoku Sexagenary Cycle	Remarks
Nishi-honganji	1201 Shinran 29	1203 Kigai	Year copied unknown - perhaps same period as Senjuji collection
Senjuji	1203 Shinran 29	1203 Shinyū	Copied December 13, 1295
Higashi-honganji	1203 Shinran 29	1203 Shinyū	Written by Kakunyo, 1343

⁴⁵ Matsuno's op., cit., p. 72

Each of these three collections has its own authentic points as well as shortcomings. Although the copies of the Nishihonganji and Senjuji collections were made at a very early date, they are still copies and not the original of Kakunyo. Though copies, if made in the same period it is likely that they are true to the original, and no problems should arise. These two copies were made in the same year as the original was written - but there are indications of additions and corrections made in the years that followed, showing that they thus fail to be absolutely true copies of the original. As for the copy retained in the Higashihonganji collection, this is again a copy although made by Kakunyo himself of his original approximately fifty years later. Contradictions are found in the content and although copied by the author himself in his own handwriting, this copy also cannot be considered completely accurate.

As noted in the above Table, the Higashihonganji and Senjuji collections correspond with regard to dates. However, each is twice in error because first the date given by Shinran himself for his conversion to Honen's group is "the year 1203, age twenty-nine",⁴⁶ and second, the year 1203 of the Sexagenary cycle is Kigai and not Shinyû. If the calculation is based upon Shinyû of the Sexagenary cycle, then the year would be 1201.

In contrast to the two above-mentioned collections, the copy in the Nishihonganji collection contains no contradictions on this matter; nonetheless it is not without questionable points. The Nishihonganji collection tells that the dream occurred to Shinran after turning to Honen's group. This is in direct contradiction to Eshin-ni's letter, the one other important source pertaining to the dream. Eshin-ni wrote to her daughter that one hundred days after his dream, Shinran turned to Honen.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Kyô Gyô Shin Shô SSZ I, p. 811.

⁴⁷ Eshin-ni Monjo SSZ IV, p. 187.

"The Dream of Rokkakudô", Shinran's dream cited in the
"The Dream in Rokkakudô" - Shinran Denne and the dream
Are they separate dreams? Shinran Denne and the dream
referred to by Eshin-ni are
quoted below. The Shinran Denne reads:

According to the Record, Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara of the Rokkakudô. He (i.e. Bodhisattva) spoke to Zenshin (Shinran) in an authoritative voice. "When the devotee finds himself bound by his inherent Karma to come in contact with the female sex, I will incarnate myself as a most beautiful woman and become his object of love, and throughout his life I will be his helpmate for the sake of embellishing this world, and on his death I will become his guide to the Land of Bliss". "This", continued the Bodhisattva, "is my vow. Thou, Zenshin (Shinran), shalt announce the signification of this my vow to the world and make all sentient beings know of it."⁴⁸

and Eshin-ni's letter reads:

He left Mt. Hiei, remained in retreat for a hundred days at Rokkakudô, and prayed for salvation. Then, on the dawn of the ninety-fifth day, Prince Shôtoku appeared in a dream, indicating the path to enlightenment by revealing a verse. He immediately left Rokkakudô in the morning, and he called on Master Hônen to be shown the way of salvation. And just as he had confined himself for a hundred days at Rokkakudô, he visited Hônen daily for a hundred days, rain or shine, regardless of the obstacles. He heard the Master teach that in order to be saved in the afterlife, regardless of whether one were good or evil, only the recitation of Nembutsu was necessary. Since he carefully kept this teaching in his heart, he would say the following when people talked about Nembutsu: "Wherever Hônen goes, I shall follow him, no matter what others may say - even if they say that I would go to hell, because I have wandered since the beginningless beginning and I have nothing to lose."⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Shinran Denne, SSZ IV, p. 201.

⁴⁹ Eshin-ni Monjo SSZ IV, p. 187.

After careful comparison of the above two passages, the following should be noted: the dream in Shinran Denne is referred to as "the dream of Rokkakudô" while Eshin-ni refers to it as "the dream in the Rokkakudô". From this it can be presumed that the two dreams may not have been one and the same. This constitutes not merely a difference of expression, but of content as well. Now, had the dream(s) anything to do with Shinran's conversion and his marriage?

First it is proposed to examine the content of the dream referred to by Eshin-ni, the dream which caused Shinran to visit Hōnen daily for one hundred days. Eshin-ni says that the content of the dream has been written separately and is enclosed in this letter, but unfortunately this portion is nonexistent. Fujishima Tatsuō,⁵⁰ while avoiding conclusive statements, suggests the content to be the following:

The words Taishi Byōkutsu Ge appearing at the end of Jōgū Taishi Gyōki which Shinran copied must be those words of Prince Shōtoku of which Eshin-ni talks. They remain today in Shinran's original handwriting and these same words appear as well in the Kōtaishi Shōtoku Hōsan (A Hymn to Prince Shōtoku)⁵¹ which Shinran composed. Even after Shinran's death this hymn was treasured and used by the early Shinshu

⁵⁰ Fujishima, Tatsuō. Shōtokutaishi to Shinran Shōnin quoted from Matsuno Junkō Shinran - Sono Kōdō to Shisō (Tokyo, Hyōronsha, 1971).

⁵¹ Kōtaishi Shōtoku Hōsan SSZ II, p. 229.

Institute. Moreover, there is evidence that the characters expressing special devotion to Prince Shōtoku were written on the portrait of the Prince many times.

The words Taishi Byōkutsu Ge appear in such contexts as the following:

I am the reincarnation of Bodhisattva Kanzeon in this world. Similarly, my wife is the reincarnation of Daiseishi. The mother who bore and raised me is the reincarnation of Amida, the great possessor of Mercy. These reincarnations are for the purpose of saving men of the degenerate age and to be confined here in this historical place is again for that purpose.⁵²

Characteristic of this hymn is first the symbolization of Amida, Kanzeon and Seishi as a secular mother, husband and wife respectively; second, the symbolization by means of Prince Shōtoku's family, and, third, the belief that Amida will save all people of the Mappō world.

The Shinran who confined himself to the Rokkokuō had attained scholarly heights in his twenty years of monastic life at Hieizan but he had nonetheless never gone through an experience of faith. However, there are ample grounds to presume that he had studied, though only through the scattered disembodied knowledge available to him, both the teachings of the Pure Land and those of Hōnen, who based his life on Faith rather than on conventional religious practices. A man such as Shinran, upon having this dream, could very

⁵² Taishi Byōkutsu Ge SSZ VI, p. 213.

well have gone to Hōnen each day for one hundred days to discuss spiritual matters. In other words, Shinran was at a decisive point in choosing a life of faith.

If this is correct then it cannot be said that the dream mentioned by Eshin-ni is the same as that dream which is said to have occurred two years after Shinran's turning to Hōnen.

Shinran Muki
and marriage:

Did Shinran Muki have something to do with Shinran's marriage? I believe that the two can be related. As

mentioned in Eshin-ni's letter, the dream clearly dealt with Shinran's turning to Hōnen. Moreover, if attention is directed to the following portion of Shinran Muki,

When the devotee finds himself bound by his inherent Karma to come in contact with the female sex, I will incarnate myself as a most beautiful woman and become his object of love ...

one can argue as does Miyazaki Enjun⁵³ that because this statement is put in the future tense, Shinran must have been single at the time. The other point to be noted is that Shinran, after having turned to Hōnen's group realized that his master Hōnen believed in Buddhism for all laymen of the degenerate world, whereas Shinran himself continued strictly to observe what in effect were exclusive religious practices.

⁵³ Miyazaki, Enjun. Shinran to Sono Montei (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1951), p. 26.

After the one-hundred-day dialogue with Hōnen, Shinran was convinced of the worth of Hōnen's teachings, that faith must take priority over practice in the lay Buddhism of the degenerate age. Because he witnessed his master, Hōnen, observing the practices despite his teaching, Shinran must have questioned what faith really was. I believe that this search for true Faith caused him to have the dream.

viii. Shinran and Hōnen

In Eshin-ni's letter to her daughter she continues to explain Shinran's fate as follows:

Just as he had confined himself for a hundred days at Rokkakudō, he visited Hōnen daily for a hundred days, rain or shine, regardless of the obstacles. He heard the Master teach that in order to be saved in the afterlife, regardless of whether one were good or evil, only the recitation of the Nembutsu was necessary. Since he carefully kept his teaching in his heart, he would say the following when people talked about the Nembutsu: "Wherever Hōnen goes, I shall follow him no matter what others may say even if they say that I would go to hell, because I have wandered since the beginningless beginning and I have nothing to lose.

A careful study of the above shows that Shinran had Prince Shōtoku in his mind while practicing Sanrō and then in the year 1201 decided to go to Hōnen (1133-1212) with whose name he was already familiar. Hōnen was then sixty-nine.

⁵⁴ Eshin-ni Monjo, No. 3, SSZ III, p. 187

Twenty-six years had passed since that day when Hōnen was forty-three and voiced invocations of Senju Nembutsu after reading the commentary work of the Sutra, Kammuryōjūkyō. During the ten years prior to Shinran's conversion in 1201, Hōnen quickly established his position as leader of his group by holding a debate/discussion on Pure Land Buddhism in 1186, with the monks of Hieiizan and Nara who were the authorities on Japanese Buddhism. In 1189, Kampaku Kujō Kanezane was converted to Pure Land Buddhism by Hōnen. The following year, in 1190, Hōnen gave a lecture on the Three Sutras of Pure Land Buddhism at Tōdaiji in Nara, the seat of one of the authorities of Japanese Buddhism. In 1191 the daughter of Kujō Kanezane, Kishūmonin Tōko, was converted to Pure Land Buddhism and finally in 1191, Hōnen wrote the declaration on the founding of the Pure Land sect, the Senjaku Hongan Nembutsushū. Shinran thus joined the group three years after the Pure Land sect was founded.

What sort of an ideological environment existed in Hieiizan when Shinran made his decision in favor of Hōnen? How did he gain access to the knowledge of Pure Land Buddhism? How did he know the name of Hōnen? What made Shinran turn to Hōnen? These are the questions I shall discuss below in great detail.

I would like to comment on how Shinran knew of Hōnen and of his teachings. It has already been mentioned that Shinran was a Dōsō of Jōgyōzanmaidō at the time when he left

Hieizan for Hōnen. In those days there were three Jōgyōzanmaidō. According to Fujiwara Yūsetsu, they were Jōgyōzanmain, Nishijōgyōdō and Ryōgonzanmaidō.⁵⁵ In which sanmaidō did Shinran live? Shinran was ordained by Jien (1155-1225).⁵⁶ As Fujiwara Yūsetsu⁵⁷ conjectured, Shinran probably kept in touch with Jien after entering Hieizan where he could also be Dōsō of Ryōgonin since Jien was a Kengyō which takes charge of the temple's affairs of Ryōgonin. The Jōgyōdō of this Ryōgonin is the place where Ryōnin (1037-1132), the founder of Yūzū Nembutsu used to live.⁵⁸

Pure Land
Thought in
Hieizan:

I think it is possible to regard Ryōgonzanmaidō as the place where Shinran first encountered Hōnen's

name. It should be noted that Hōnen's master was Eikū (?-1179) under whom Hōnen studied for six years.⁵⁹ According to Kotokuden (Biography of Hōnen),⁶⁰ Eikū was Ryōnin's disciple. Therefore, the relationship of Genshin-Ryōnin-Eikū-Hōnen and

⁵⁵ Fujiwara, Yūsetsu. Shinshūshi Kenkyū (Tokyo: Daitō Shuppan, 1939), p. 14.

⁵⁶ Kakunyo. Hōnganji Shōnin Denne, SSZ IV, p. 3.

⁵⁷ Fujiwara's op. cit., p. 95

⁵⁸ Matsuno, Junkō. Shinran (Tokyo: Sanseidō, 1959), p. 2.

⁵⁹ Tsuji, Zennosuke. Nihon Bukkyōshi (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1960), Vol. 2-1, p. 29.

⁶⁰ Kakunyo. Shūi Kotoku Den, SSGS III, p. 679.

Shinran was originated at Ryōgonzanmaidō in Yokawa (Jōgyōdō of Ryōgonzanmain was located in the north-east of Yokawa Sasuidō).⁶¹

Genshin (942-1017), who lived in Yokawa, was one of the founders of Japanese Jōdokyō and author of Ōjōyōshū, and lived in Yokawa Kurodani. The reason to regard Genshin as the founder of Japanese Jōdokyō is dependent upon Shinran's material:

Genshin widely expounded on Buddha's lifetime teachings,

But he took refuge exclusively in the Land of Serene Sustenance and recommended it to all. Discerning that the faith of exclusive practice is deep and the faith of sundry practices shallow, He (Genshin) distinctly showed the difference between the Recompensed Land and the Transformed Land.

Men with extremely heavy sins should only utter Buddha's name.

I, too, am in His embracement;

Though I cannot see (His Light), my eye being obstructed by evil passions,

The Great Mercy always shines upon me untiringly.⁶²

Shinran also says in Kyō Gyō Shin Shō:

With regard to various practices for Birth in the Pure Land, Master Doshaku called them "thousands of practices", Master Zendō called them "sundry acts", and the Meditation Master Ekan called them "various practices". Master Genshin followed Ekan, and Genkū Shōnin depended on Zendō.⁶³

and the Preface of Kyō Gyō Shin Shō reads:

⁶¹ Matsuno's op. cit., p. 3.

⁶² Kyō Gyō Shin Shō, SSZ I, p. 90.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 291.

How happy am I Gutoku Shaku Shinran, to have now been able to meet with the holy scriptures from India and the commentaries by Chinese and Japanese masters, which are difficult to meet, and to have already been able to hear teachings which are difficult to hear!⁶⁴

Therefore, Shinran concentrated on reading the works of Indian and Chinese thinkers of Pure Land Buddhism such as Ryūju (Nagarjuna), Tenjin (Vasuband'hu), Donran (T'an-luan), Dōshaku (Tao-ch'o), Zendō (Shan-tao), etc., while he was in Enryakuji. Their thoughts were essential to an understanding of the history of Japanese Pure Land Buddhism.

Shinran says in a passage from the Sangantennyū⁶⁵ in Kyō Gyō Shin Shō:

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 7

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 309.

...Thus I,⁶⁶ Gutoku Ran (i.e. Shinran), a disciple of Shakyamuni, through the Sāstra-writers'⁶⁷ expositions and the masters'⁶⁸ 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 Sala 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 not assured of attaining the inconceivable Birth. What deep significance is there in the Vow of Accomplishing the Ultimate Salvation!

Hōnen left Hieizan at the age of forty-three. He founded an order of monks in Higashiyama, Kyoto in 1175 and began preaching Nembutsu. Hōnen had left Hieizan before Shinran entered the order; nonetheless, it appears likely

⁶⁶After having completed the exposition of both of the true and expedient Pure Land teachings in the first five chapters and in the foregoing sections of this chapter, the author now looks back at the process through which he had come to the Other Power teaching of the Eighteenth Vow. The process is made up of three stages as follows:

- i. The Essential Gate of the Nineteenth Vow for Birth under the Twin Sala Trees (i.e. the explicit teaching of the Meditation Sutra).
- ii. The True Gate of the Twentieth Vow for incomprehensible Birth (i.e., the explicit teaching of the Smaller Sutra).
- iii. The Gate of the Universe Vow (or the Eighteenth Vow) for the Inconceivable Birth (i.e., the teaching of the Larger Sutra).

Hence, it is called "Sangantennyū" lit, "three-vows-turning-in". In presenting this process of conversion, the author urges us to quickly cast aside the self-power and turn to the Other-Power for refuge. He does not mean that every aspirant must necessarily go through the same process.

⁶⁷Refers to Nagarjuna and Vasuband'hu, particularly the latter.

⁶⁸Refers to Donran, Dōshaku, Zendo, Genshin and Genku.

that Shinran was well aware of the Senju Nembutsu group which was established before his entry into monkhood.

The important disciples who succeeded to Hōnen's teachings and took initiatives in developing Senju Nembutsu were Shinkū (1146-1228) (Leader of Shirakawa Monto), Genchi (1182-1238) (Leader of Murasakino-Monto), Shōkō (1162-1238) (Founder of Chinzei-ha), Shōkū (1177-1247) (Founder of Seizan-ha), Chōsai (1184-1261) (Leader of Shogyō Hongangi), Kōsai (1163-1247) (Leader of Ichinengi), Ryūkan (1148-1227) (leader of Tanengi), and Shinran.

They all became Hōnen's disciples after 1190, the year in which Hōnen became fifty-eight years of age. They had been following the development of Hōnen's thought for fifteen years since he had left Hieizan to live at Yoshimizu, east of Kyoto in 1175. Shinran was undoubtedly among them for he understood Hōnen's Senju Nembutsu so thoroughly that he could copy his master's work only four years after he had entered the order.

The process by means of which Shinran was indoctrinated into Hōnen's teachings during his residence at Hieizan has been described. Shinran was aware of Hōnen's name as well as of his teachings from quite an early period. Shinran there suffered the contradiction of being able to further his higher-level learnings while not being able to experience a meaningful religious experience. To one who lived under such a contradiction, Hōnen's teachings, as we shall see,

appeared exceedingly attractive. Moreover, Prince Shōtoku inspired Shinran to extricate himself from the situation of contradiction because Prince Shōtoku, although not a monastic, had sincerely practiced Buddhist faith and because the Prince possessed a philosophy bearing on the very depth of Pure Land Buddhism. It can be said that the thought and actions of Prince Shōtoku enabled Shinran to decide on descending the mountain and following Hōnen.

The ideology of Saichō's "Jiki Sōō no Ronri", which later was to be defined as the logic of the Japanese Pure Land teaching, strongly influenced Hieizan as the age of Mappō approached. When Shinran was studying at Hieizan, he was immersed in the Tendai teaching that contained this logic. Along with his studies he practiced the Nembutsu Sanmai no Hō, already well established and rooted there.

The teachings of Pure Land Buddhism that were rife in Hieizan and the logic of Jiki Sōō no Ronri that substantiated the teaching further led Shinran to contemplate the ideology of putting faith before acts.

CHAPTER III

SHINRAN AND HÔNEN'S GROUP

i. Hônen and his teaching

Hônen (1133-1212) was one of the first Buddhists to give an independent stature to Pure Land Buddhism in Japan and he himself named this new sect Jôdo shû.¹ In order for a new sect of Buddhism to attain independence, Kyôsôhanjaku is indispensable. Kyôsôhanjaku is a concept that arose in the history of Chinese Buddhism, as explained in Dr. Leon Hurvitz's Chih-I.² Indeed, this concept serves as the basic idea and condition for the formation of a new and independent religious sect. In establishing a new Buddhist school, the characteristic of the founder's thinking heretofore never taught must be made apparent. Moreover, his doctrine must not be his alone, but must directly spring from the teaching of Buddha. In addition, it must both respect and revere the doctrine.

The period in which Hônen established the new sect of Jôdo shû was the transitional era from the ancient to medieval in Japanese history. It was the end of the Heian period (794-1191), the age of Mappô.

¹ Senjaku Hongan Nembutsushû, SSZ VI, p. 6.

² Leon Hurvitz. Chih-I (538-597), An Introduction to the Life and Idea of a Chinese Buddhist Monk (Belge: Mélanges Chinois et Bouddhiques, Vol. I-XII, 1963), p. 214.

Doctrine
of Hōnen

Hōnen's basic teachings are described in his major book Senjaku Hongan Nembutsushū. He placed the theme words Namuamidabutsu in the beginning of this book in order to emphasize their importance in his philosophy. Hōnen's thought was systematized according to the Kyō, Ron and Shaku,³ and this process of thought development is called Sha-hei-kaku-hō.⁴ After selecting and discarding various Buddhist doctrines one by one, Hōnen relied on Nembutsu alone as Buddha's Vow to lead to rebirth. To arrive at this understanding, Hōnen first divided Buddhism into Shōdōmon (Holy path which leads to salvation through-self help) and Jōdomon (the path of Pure Land, which brings salvation through the grace of Amida) and then discarded the former as being inappropriate to people in the Mappō period. He divided the various practices of Jōdomon into two groups: Right practices and other various practices,⁵ the Right practices to be

³ Kyō - The scriptures which convey the Buddha's Teachings edited by Buddha's disciples.
Ron - Commentary on a sutra or philosophical treatise Bodhisattva.
Shaku - Commentary on a sutra or philosophical treatise by patriarchs.

⁴ To discard, to close, to seal, to abandon. These are the four words used in a passage in Senjaku Hongan Nembutsushū which urges believers in the Nembutsu to discard the Way of the Sages, to close the gate of meditation and good deeds, to seal the gate for the Way of the Sages, and to abandon various practices, and instead, to have faith in Amida Buddha.

⁵ Doi, Tadao. Hichiso Shōgyō Gaisetsu. (Kyoto: Hyakkaen, 1957), p. 37.

chosen and the other practices to be deserted. Right practices then were divided into Five Right practices.⁶

They were:

- 1) reciting sutras,
- 2) contemplating Amida, His land, and the Bodhisattvas therein,
- 3) worshipping Amida,
- 4) uttering Nembutsu,
- 5) adoring and giving offerings before Amida.

These Five Right practices were chosen because they were easy enough for people to observe during the Mappô period. Hônen further grouped these Right practices into two groups in such a way that four of the practices were supplementary to the Act of Right Assurance of Shômyô.⁷

Hônen's doctrines found in the Senjaku Hongan Nembutsushû are elaborations of the doctrines of the two Chinese monks, Dôshaku (Tao-ch'o) and Zendo (Shan-tao) (Dôshaku's disciple). The doctrine of the former was called Shôjô Nimonhan (the Way of the Sages and the Way of the Pure Land). While the Way of the Saints refers to the school of Buddhism which teaches that enlightenment is to be attained by one's own efforts, this Pure Land school, on the other hand, teaches

⁶Ibid., p. 44

⁷Senjaku Hongan Nembutsushû, SSZ VI, p. 33
Shômyô is the vocal invocation of the name of Amida.

that only through the Vows of Amida Buddha can the Pure Land be reached in this period of the "degenerate age of the Dharma". The doctrine of the latter was called Tongyō Ichijō (the one-vehicle, sudden teaching). It is sudden because rebirth in the Pure Land is rapidly achieved; it is regarded as one vehicle because it is open to all men. Hōnen followed their doctrines of Dōshaku and Zendō; however, he made Nembutsu easier to practice, while showing that it was more efficacious than other practices. He thus found the way to practice Nembutsu for himself as well as for all his contemporaries of the confused world of the Mappō. Hōnen's philosophical position led him to develop a strong critique of the Path of Sages which emphasized wisdom as the fundamental pre-condition for spiritual rebirth.

Hōnen explains in his book why Nembutsu is indispensable for salvation, but not how to practice Nembutsu. Nor does he explain how good and evil deeds affect the desire to be reborn in the Pure Land through Nembutsu. Hōnen remarks on this matter:

Whether you may be a habitual hard sinner or an occasional light sinner, and though you may already know you will be saved, remember not to commit venial sins. Even sinners, whether their sins be serious or not, can be reborn into the Pure Land.

Utter Nembutsu as many times as possible, although you may know a mere one or ten times is enough. Although the utterance of a mere one or ten times is enough for salvation, there is no doubt of salvation of one who has uttered Nembutsu a great number of times. ⁸

⁸Kuroda no Hijiri ni Nokosu Sho, SSZ V, p. 295.

In his words, it is not clear how frequently Nembutsu as well as human righteousness and evil influence salvation. With regard to uttering Nembutsu, Hōnen himself was very open-minded. Senju Nembutsu was not supposed to be banned by conventional regulations.

Do not be bothered with the standards of the world; live by uttering Nembutsu.

If you are ordained and cannot utter Nembutsu, take a wife and say the invocation. If you are married and cannot utter Nembutsu, enter the priesthood and say the invocation.⁹

Hōnen himself kept the monastic life and he recited Nembutsu seventy thousand times a day. Since there were no definite regulations regarding frequency of uttering Nembutsu as well as the Right acts to achieve salvation, confusion bordering on moral anomaly arose among the ignorant and misguided who began to question the dichotomy in Hōnen's doctrine.

ii. Shinran receiving honor from Hōnen

Shinran's decision to turn to Hōnen was mentioned as being courageous. Shinran wrote as follows with regard to his decision:

⁹ Ibid., p. 275

I, Gutoku Ran (i.e. Shinran), abandoned the Sundry Acts and took refuge in the Original Vow in the Kanoto no tori year of Kannon (1201).¹⁰

Shinran's disciples later wrote of this decision, and quoted Shinran thus:

.... To those who practice Nembutsu single-heartedly and exclusively, the turning of the mind occurs only once. The turning of the mind takes place when one who has hitherto been of the Original Vow now realizes, by being endowed with Amida's Wisdom, that Birth cannot be attained with his mind which he has cherished so far, and thus, he converts this old mind and trusts the Original Vow. This is what the turning of the mind means.¹¹

Shinran firmly believed that conversion in religion is a matter which happens only once in one's life.

As for me, Shinran, there is nothing left but to receive and believe the teachings of the Venerable Master - that we are saved by Amida merely through the utterance of Nembutsu ...

... I will have no regrets even though I should have been deceived by Hōnen Shōnin, and, thus, by uttering Nembutsu, I should fall into hell ...

... If the Original Vow of Amida is true, then Shakyamuni's sermons cannot be untrue. If Buddha's words are true, then Zendo's comments cannot be untrue. If Zendo's comments are true, how can Hōnen's sayings be false?¹²

The above constitutes Shinran's response to his disciples when he was asked about the Way to Birth in the Pure Land: In

¹⁰ Kyō Gyō Shin Shō, SSZ I, p. 382.

¹¹ Tannishō, SSZ IV, p. 30.

¹² Tannishō, SSZ IV, p. 4

addition to expressing his own determined thoughts, Shinran refers to his master, Hōnen, three times. The nature of the Master/disciple relationship that existed between Shinran and Hōnen is revealed, and the course of development of Shinran's thought is better appreciated if it is noted that Hōnen permitted Shinran to copy his writings and subsequently attached a title to the manuscript. This could only occur if master and pupil were working in harmony.

Shinran describes his life as a member of Hōnen's group in the major work of his later years, Kyō Gyō Shin Shō.

In the Kinotono-ushi year of Genkyū, with the master's permission, I copied his Senjakushū. In the same year, on the fourth day of the middle part of the early summer month, Master Genkū kindly wrote with a brush the following words on my copy: the title inside the book "Senjakuhongan Nembutsushū", "Namuamidabutsu Ōjō Shigō Nembutsu. Ihon" and "Shaku no Shakkū". On the same day, I borrowed the master's portrait and copied it.

In the same second year, on the ninth day of the latter part of the urū¹³ seventh month, he wrote the following words on it: "Namuamidabutsu" and "Nyakuga jōbutsu jippō shujō, Shōga Myōgō geshi jusshō, nyakufu shōja fushu Shōgaku; hibutsu kongenzai jōbutsu, tochi honzei jūgan fuko, shujō shōnen hittoku Ōjō". That is, "if, after I have attained Buddhahood, the beings of the ten quarters who utter my name, making even as few as ten utterances, should not be born, may I never attain Perfect Enlightenment." He is at present a Buddha. It should be noted that His Original Vow with the persistent desire for salvation is not in vain. Those sentient beings who utter Nembutsu with Faith will unfailingly attain rebirth.

¹³In the lunar calendar one year contains 360 days. The difference between the calendar and the actual changes in the moon was adjusted by adding another month at a certain interval. The urū (or leap) month was set up seven times in nineteen years.

On the same day, he also wrote on the portrait my new name, "Zenshin", which was according to a revelation in my dream, and by which my former name "Shakkū" was changed. The master was then seventy-three years old.¹⁴

Shinran copied his master Hōnen's book by day and by night and drew his portrait on which Hōnen gave his autograph. One can realize the importance of this action only when one is aware of the meaning of the tradition of Zen Buddhism called Shishi-sojō.¹⁵

Master's
book:

Shishi-sojō is the handing down of teachings from master to disciple, a tradition of pedagogy which originated in ancient India. Long ago it became part of the Japanese teaching method. Often one comes across a reference in biographies to the effect that "he made up his mind at the age of such and such, became a disciple of master so and so, studied for so many years, and left." Becoming a disciple, studying for many years and then leaving means that the person not only attended his master's lectures but that he lived his everyday life in close contact with the master and his writings. Hōnen observed Shinran's behavior, as was the custom between master and pupil, and eventually, after many years, he and his disciple entered into discussions and exchanged questions

¹⁴Kyō Gyō Shin Shō, SSZ I, p. 381.

¹⁵The fact that Shishi-sojō was originated and practiced in India was given to me through courtesy of Dr. Nagatomi Masatoshi, Professor of Harvard University.

and answers on scholarly issues. When their questions were exhausted, their discussions ended, the master recommended that his disciple either find a greater teacher than himself or that he study on his own. When this event occurred the master would give his disciple the "Daiken", a copy of the master's book over which the disciple had labored for many years. Sometimes the disciple would return to his birth place and open his private school, and sometimes, he would go to study with a new master who had been recommended by his former master. In such master-disciple relationships, the master allows a disciple to copy his book for he is happy to see that his teachings are to be carried on. As for the disciple, he must gain his master's trust through personal devotion, sincerity and aptitude. This practice is called Shishi-sôjô.

Hônen's book *Senjaku hongan Nembutsushû* was written on the request of Kujô Kanazane who practically sponsored him, and it was not meant to be widely read according to legend.¹⁶

"Once read, let it lie tucked away from the eyes of others". This was said not because of any reason to be secretive.

Hônen concluded the above sentence with the following words:

... In order for those who do not comprehend the doctrines of Buddhism, not to fall into evil ways.¹⁷

¹⁶ *Senjaku hongan Nembutsushû*, SSZ VI, p. 184.

¹⁷ Ibid.

It was clearly for the initiated few only.

The Senjakushū denied the framework and existence of then contemporary Japanese Buddhism. Also, it disputed the teachings of Buddhism and its traditions. For this reason Hōnen permitted only those who really and truly understood to copy the manuscript. Moreover, this work was not shown to the public before Hōnen's death, and only six disciples, namely Kōsai, Benchō, Ryūkan, Shōkū, Chōsai and Shinran, were allowed to copy it.¹⁸ Deeply conscious of the significance of Shishi-sōjō, and the honor which was being bestowed on him by Hōnen, Shinran writes of his experience in copying his master's book in moving terms:

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. However, I was allowed to copy his book and his portrait.¹⁹

One may conclude from the above that it was the experience of copying his master's book which Shinran believed assured him rebirth in the Pure Land, and that stirred within him the joy and gratitude that was responsible for the strengthening of the ties between the two men.

One other incident reveals the master/disciple relationship and its effects upon Shinran's life and thought.

¹⁸ Akamatsu, Toshihide: Shinran (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1961), p. 89.

¹⁹ Kyō Gyō Shin Shō, SSZ I, p. 382.

Meaning of
character "SÔ"
(i.e. monk):

Five months before his copying of
the book, Shinran had already proved
that he had the makings of a faithful
servant. On November 7, 1204, Hōnen answered charges made by
Enryakuji. Enryakuji sent Hōnen a warning that "as monks,
the behavior of Hōnen and his disciples was outrageous".²⁰
Hōnen accepted Enryakuji's charge and invited all of his
disciples to affix their signatures to his reply. This reply
is called Hichikajō Kishōmon, the "Seven Chapter Defence
Statement", and its purpose was to prevent the obstruction
of the spread of Senju Nembutsu. In this defence statement,
Shinran signed his name SÔ Shakkū.

This signature, with the added SÔ has been considered
evidence indicating that Shinran did not have a wife at that
time.²¹ Since the word "SÔ" means a holy monk, it is
generally deduced that Shinran was not married.

The two monks Shinkū (1146-1228) and Shōkū (1176-1249)
who strictly obeyed the rules and who were considered holy
monks among Hōnen's disciples did not sign their names adding
the character "SÔ". One hundred and ninety-three monks put
their signatures to the Seven Chapter Defence Statement in

²⁰ Nakamura, Hajime et al. (ed.). Asia Bukkyōshi IV
(Tokyo: Kōsei Shuppansha, 1972), p. 111.

²¹ Umehara, Ryūshō: Shinranden no Shomondai (Kyoto:
Kenshingakuen, 1951), p. 113.

a period of three days²² and there were nine, including Shinran, who signed themselves as "SÔ". The biographies of the others who signed themselves "SÔ" are incomplete, but one point deserves attention and this is that the signatures adding the character "SÔ" are concentrated in one section of the statement. Sonren's signature appears first on the second day (eighty-first of the signatures) followed by Senun, Kengan, Busshin, Shijun, Ryôshin, Shinran and Zenren, all of which carry the character "SÔ". The ninth signature is by Keien which appears on the third day (one hundred and eighty-third signature).

It cannot be concluded from this that those who signed "SÔ" are holy. Matsuno Junkô notes that it may only have been a matter of following those who signed before them.²³ However, if we direct our eyes once again to Shinran's writings, we gain further insight. Shinran writes of himself in the Kyô Gyô Shin Shô:

I have collected the essentials of the True Teaching and have gleaned the important passages of Pure Land Buddhism. I only think of Buddha's deep Benevolence, and do not care about people's abuse. Those who read this will eventually attain the serene Faith of the Vow-Power either by the cause of faithful obedience or by the condition of doubt and abuse, and realize the Supreme Fruition in the Land of Serene Sustenance.²⁴

²²Dainihon Shiryôshû 4-9, (Tokyo: Tokyo Teikokudaigaku, Shiryôhensansho, 1909), p. 567.

²³Matsuno, Junkô. Shinran (Tokyo: Sanseidô, 1959), p. 41-42.

²⁴Kyô Gyô Shin Shô, SSZ I, p. 383.

Shinran clearly sees oppression as a source of energy for activities related to the spreading of Pure Land Buddhism. The use of "Sô" did not merely reflect Shinran's celibacy. Rather, the signing of his name with "Sô" was an opportunity for Shinran to display his character. Regardless of whether he was married or not, I would like to interpret the meaning of "Sô" in Shinran's signature as follows.

As stated above, the "Seven Chapter Defence Statement" was a courageous response to the charges made by Enryakuji. One may suppose that by inserting "Sô" in his signature, Shinran challenged the charge that Hônen's disciples were nothing but a group of delinquent monks. As E. H. Erikson²⁵ points out, when a young man places his trust in a person, he in turn wishes to prove his own trustworthiness to that person. Is it not true that two years after Shinran joined Hônen's group he had a fine opportunity to express the extent of his trust in Hônen?

That which sustains a strong master/disciple relationship is the great respect which the disciple holds toward his master. Shinran has words of praise for Hônen, among them the seventy hymns Shinran wrote to him throughout his lifetime.

²⁵... clearly the adolescent looks most fervently for men and ideas to have faith in, which also means men and ideas in whose service it would seem worthwhile to prove oneself trustworthy.
E.H. Erikson. Identify: Youth and Crisis (New York: W. W. Norton, 1968), p. 128-129.

Although Zēndō and Genshin encouraged it, if our teacher, Genkū (Hōnen) had not propagated it, how could the people of a defiled world and on far-away islands learn of the true intent of the Pure Land teaching?²⁶

In other words, Shinran affirms that it was not through the knowledge gained by reading Zēndō (San-tao, 613-681) and Genshin (942-1017) alone that he was converted to Pure Land Buddhism, but also, and more particularly, through the influence of Hōnen, the man who actually practised Pure Land Buddhism.

Shinran witnesses a great development in his religious and academic thought as a result of the deepening of the relationship between Hōnen and himself within the framework of the master/disciple relationship.

iii. Shinran's earnest pursuit of his studies under
Hōnen

In order to fully comprehend Hōnen's teachings, Shinran had to refer to the doctrines of Zēndō who was considered the leading man in Pure Land Buddhism in China. This was because Hōnen was led to realize the teachings of Nembutsu through his reading of Kangyōsho (Kuan-Ching-su), a commentary work of Kammuryōjukyō authored by Zēndō. Shinran, in fact,

²⁶ Jōdo Kōsōwasan, SSZ II, p. 128.

held Zendo in high esteem and commended him by saying "he was the only one who clarified Buddha's real intent".²⁷

These words specifically mean that only Zendo among the patriarchs of China most rightly promoted Pure Land Buddhism. Shinran also wrote twenty-six hymns to Zendo. In addition, he named seven men, including Zendo, who were responsible in bringing about the teaching of Nembutsu in India, China, and Japan.²⁸

Material was discovered in 1943 which shows that Shinran did research on Zendo during his six years with Honen. The evidence is in the form of commentary on the two sutras, Kammuryojukyo and Amidakyō, a work to which Shinran devoted his heart and energy. Most of the studies in which Shinran involved himself had their foundations in the studies he acquired in Hieizan. The earliest of Shinran's writings now extant were written after he reached twenty-nine years of age. Additionally, manuscripts in Shinran's hand that concern his studies under Honen are a great rarity. For such reasons the Kangyo Amidakyō Shūchū constitutes a most valuable documentation of Shinran's early development.

²⁷ SSZ I, p. 90.

²⁸ Seven Patriarchs of

India: Nagarjuna (ca. 2nd-3rd cent. A.D.)
Vasubandhu (ca. 4th cent. A.D.)
China: Tan-Lun (476-542)
Tao-ch'ō (562-645)
Shan-tao (613-681)
Japan: Genshin (942-1017)
Honen (1133-1212)

The interpretation of the two sutras in this commentary lacks originality of thought characteristic of Shinran's later works. It is a commentary done as a self-study citing former works and interpretations.²⁹ To comment on Kammuryôjukyô, both Ôjôronchû and Rakuhômonrui were cited, and, for Amidakyô, both Shôsanjôdokyô and Amidakyôgisho were cited. Zendô's writings were cited as well throughout the commentary on the two sutras. Zendô's writings comprise five books in nine volumes, i.e., Kangyôsho in four volumes, Hôjisan in two volumes, Kannenbômon in one volume, Ôjôraisan in one volume and Hanjusan in one volume.³⁰ With the exception of Hanjusan, the other books have been referred to a great number of times. By this, it can be thought that Shinran attempted to understand the two sutras in the light of Zendô's interpretation.

One more point to be noted is the citation of Rakuhômonrui. This book was compiled during the Sô (Sung) dynasty of China in 1200. In the year 1200 Shinran was twenty-eight years of age and still studying at Hieizan. It is not certain when this book was imported into Japan but Shinran used it for reference until about 1207, that is until about thirty-five years of age.

²⁹Yasui, Kôdô. Comments of Kangyô Amidakyô Shûchû written by Shinran, SSZ VII, p. 159.

³⁰Hanjusan was lost after its importation to Japan and only discovered in the temple of Ninnaji in Kyoto in 1217. Therefore, it is presumed that Hanjusan was not available for Shinran to read. It may be remarked that the year 1217 was five years after Hônen's death. Shinran was forty-five when he was in the Kantô area.

It is a wonder that in the Japan of more than seven hundred and fifty years ago, a book published in a foreign country was used for reference material within some ten years of its publication. Thus, it can be seen that Shinran was eager for and aware of new developments in his contemporary world. Moreover, Shinran's uncle Munenari was a Confucianist which possibly enabled the fast procurement of literature from China.³¹ The reason for the citation of this book, Rakuhōmonrui, in the commentary seems to be that Shinran wished to learn more concerning the thought of his contemporaries in China with regard to the teachings of Pure Land Buddhism. It may be remarked at this point that Rakuhōmonrui was once again used as reference by Seikō, another of Hōnen's disciples, in his Jōdoshū-yōshū, which was written thirty years later in 1237, when Shinran was sixty-five.

³¹Ashikaga Enjutsu. Kamakura Muromachi Jidai no Jukyō, Confucianists of the Kamakura-Muromachi Period). (Tokyo: Nihon Koten Zenshū Kankōkai, 1932), p. 25. This reference book mentions that the Confucianists of Japan after the mid-Kamakura Period were importing Chinese literature at an amazingly fast speed. For example, Chū-yō-shō-kū, a book published in China in 1189 was already being read in Japan by the year 1200.

Shinran's commentary work, Kangyô Amidakyô Shûchû:

Turning now to Shinran's commentary work itself, we find that this book

or scroll, is composed of thirty-six sheets of paper (length 29.7 cm; width 28.8 cm), laid end to end, twenty-eight sheets devoted to the Amidakyô. Allowing a slim margin to attach one sheet to the other, each sheet actually measures 28.2 cm by 38.8 cm. On this sheet of paper with a top and bottom margin of 1.9 cm respectively, seventeen characters of the sutras are copied on each line, and between spacings of 2.4 cm there are sixteen lines to a sheet.

Utilizing the white spaces at the top and bottom margins, the spaces between the lines, as well as the back of the paper, Shinran wrote his commentaries on each of the characters of the sutras. Due to lack of space, the lines of the commentaries written were not necessarily all in one direction; red color was employed to denote important passages; and some portions of the commentaries were written in such small print that a magnifying glass is required to read them. This scroll of thirty-six sheets thus measures more than 10 meters in length. The novelist Inoue Yasushi said "Whoever has seen this, even a child of three, would be struck with awe and respect by the greatness of the work."³² The statement is not limited to literary expression. This commentary work was

³²Inoue, Yasushi. Kanmuryôjukyô San, The Honganji Shimpô, January 1, 1975 (Honganji Shimpôsha).

later, forty-six years after Shinran's death, copied word for word by Zonkaku (1290-1373) who was Shinran's great-grandson. The original copy exists today³³ but on the postscript Zonkaku notes the number of days spent on the labor of copying, from March 1317 to September 1318, a period of one year and seven months. One can imagine the enormous concentration given and effort spent by Shinran in writing the original.

In my opinion, this massive and extensive work, being on two of the Three Sutras of Pure Land Buddhism, is an indication of Shinran's concentrating his whole being in search of solutions to his self-imposed dialectic with regard to the teachings to which he had been recently converted.

Shinran and
Hōnen:

For one hundred days, "whether rain or shine and regardless of obstacles, Shinran heard the Master teach in order to be saved". It is said that as a result of this, Shinran decided to ask to be placed under Hōnen's tutorage. It seems that it was not only because Shinran was convinced by the results of the question/answer dialogue with Hōnen, but also because of the faith he had put in Hōnen that he desired further instruction from the master.

³³Kangyō Amidakyō Shūchū, Zonkaku's Copy, Senjuji Collection, Mie.

Shinran often mentioned in his writings that for him true faith meant believing in a specified person. This is shown in the following quotation from "Nehangyô" which he used twice in Kyô Gyô Shin Shô: "There are two kinds of faith. One believes that there is a Way. The other believes that there is one who gains the Way."³⁴

Shinran mentioned repeatedly that, in his opinion, one person who gained the Way³⁵ was his master Hônen. Furthermore, Shinran's wife, Eshin-ni wrote the following letter to her daughter.

Just as he had confined himself for a hundred days at Rokkakudô, he visited Hônen daily for a hundred days, rain or shine, regardless of the obstacles. He heard the Master teach that in order to be saved in the after-life, whether one were good or evil, only the recitation of Nembutsu was necessary. Since he carefully kept this teaching in his heart, he would say the following when people talked about Nembutsu: "Wherever Hônen goes, I shall follow him, no matter what others may say - even if they say that I would be damned, because I have wandered since the beginningless beginning and I have nothing to lose."³⁶

Material is now available which deals with relationships between Hônen and his disciples, and Shinran's scholarly pursuits while under Hônen's tutelage. This material Kammuryôjukyô Chû and Amidakyô Shûchû was already mentioned previously. Shinran quotes a passage from a Chinese work

³⁴ Kyô Gyô Shin Shô, SSZ I, p. 303.

³⁵ Tannishô, SSZ IV, p. 4.

³⁶ Eshin-ni Monjo, SSZ III, p. 189.

entitled "Rakuhômonrui".³⁷ This passage is from the Story of Rebirth of Chyô Shô-Gyoku, who was a slaughterer in Funshû (Fen-chou), China. In those days, a butcher was held in contempt by his fellowmen because it was commonly believed that a man who practiced this profession would never be able to achieve a peaceful death. By quoting the Chinese work, Shinran showed that it indeed is possible for butchers, and, by extension, sinners, to be saved. Later, Shinran mentioned this in the discussions he held with his disciples.

He also said, "If the Original Vow is to be trusted only through the observance of disciplinary rules, how could we ever escape samsara?" Sinful beings as we are, only when we meet with the Original Vow, can we, indeed, put reliance on it. Besides, no evil can ever be committed without its proper cause within us.

Again the Master said, "There is no difference among those who live by casting nets or angling in the sea or rivers, those who sustain their lives by hunting beasts and birds in the fields and mountains, or those who pass their lives by trading or tilling the soil."³⁸

Here, we can see the beginning of his principal teaching / Akunin Shôki and Shukugô. This means in Shinran's teaching that under Amida, everyone, without distinction, is equally capable of being saved.

³⁷ Kammuryôjukyô Chû, SSZ VII, p. 203.

³⁸ Tannishô, SSZ IV, p. 20.

In a letter he wrote at the age of eighty-eight, Shinran mentioned the memory of his master as follows:

Surely I call to mind the word of the late Hōnen Shōnin, who said: "A faithful of the Jōdo School gets born in the Pure Land as one ignorant." Besides, I often came across cases in which he pleasingly smiled as he saw pitiable persons who could not remember things."³⁹

Thus, Shinran brought himself to study varying human contacts through scholarship as well as through life experiences.

After joining Hōnen's group, his sole guiding light was the study of Buddhism as evidenced by the following sentence: "Shinran abandoned the various other Acts and took refuge in the Original Vow (Amida's Vow)."⁴⁰ After twenty-nine years from childhood to the end of his life in Hieizan, Shinran began to affirm his activity through his own will.

Of course, the commentary work which he finished does not show the same depth of understanding of Pure Land Buddhism and maturity of faith as his later works. But as repeatedly mentioned throughout the commentary, Shinran abandoned the monastic life in Hieizan and turned to Pure Land Buddhism. This is putting faith before practice. But as far as Shinran's scholarly pursuits were concerned, even after turning to Hōnen, one can presume that Shinran continued in the same strong manner which fostered him in the twenty years of monastic life in Hieizan.

³⁹ Mattōshō, SSZ III, p. 74-75.

⁴⁰ Kyō Gyō Shin Shō, SSZ I, p. 381.

iv. Shinran and the other disciples of Hōnen

In addition to the master/disciple relationship between Shinran and Hōnen, there is another relationship that must be looked into - that of Shinran to the other disciples and followers of Hōnen. How was Shinran influenced by others in Hōnen's group and vice versa, how did he influence them?

The adolescent
Shinran - the
radical:

Shinran was one who joined Hōnen's group late because in year 1201, when he turned to Hōnen, the group had already been in existence for twenty-seven years. The number of followers and the energy directed toward spreading Hōnen's philosophy appears to have been at its peak. This is seen from one of the writings of Jien, the Chief Abbott of Hieizan wherein he wrote "Hōnen is preaching from all four corners of Kyoto, and the teaching of Nembutsu is spreading and flourishing day to day among the people."⁴¹ Also when Shinran turned to Hōnen, the group was in its last period - for only six years after Shinran joined, Hōnen was banished, and the group was as good as disbanded. Seven years later Hōnen died at the age of eighty and the group was without a master.

It was such a group that Shinran, a young man of twenty-nine, of impressionable age, joined. Those who were called

⁴¹Jien. Gukanshō. Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikei Vo. 86, (Tokyo: Iwanamishoten, 1962), p. 260.

disciples and followers were comprised of both monks and laymen. Thus, among those who signed the Seven Chapter Defence Statement, one hundred and ninety were monks. In Shinran's own letters he writes:

... The late Hōnen, who said "A faithful person of the Jōdo School gets born in the Pure Land as one ignorant". Besides, I came across cases in which he pleasingly smiled as he saw pitiable persons who could not remember things. He would say as they came up to him that he would unerringly be born in the Pure Land.⁴²

Shinran also writes in retrospect of Hōnen's words:

Saburō Tamemori of Tsunoto was a man from Musashi. The three, Ōgo Sanehide (warrior), Shinoya, and Tsunoto Tamemori (warrior) are the Master's first disciples.⁴³

According to Akamatsu Toshihide, Shinkū, Junsai and Genchi were born of the Imperial Family.⁴⁴ All these people are said to have "lived happily and harmoniously"⁴⁵ with each other as brothers and good friends. These words of wonder and envious admiration were written by a reputable monk, Myōei, who did not view the religion of Hōnen and his group as being heretical. Matsuno Junkō in his "Shinran" makes reference to these words of Myōei and writes as follows: "Hōnen's hermitage in Yoshimizu undoubtedly forms the Sangha

⁴² Mattōshō VI, SSZ III, p. 75.

⁴³ Saihō Shinanshō, SSZ V, p. 367.

⁴⁴ Akamatsu's op. cit., p. 70.

⁴⁵ Matsuno's op. cit., p. 135.

of a commune toward which Buddha had aimed. The distinctions of the mundane world such as age and social status simply did not exist here". The disciples mixed well with each other by frankly expressing their opinions, speaking of their experiences, and being very assiduous people. Shinran lived a full life with his fellow confrères within an environment of mutual encouragement and each day Shinran saw himself grow spiritually. It must have been the happiest period of his life.⁴⁶

As Matsuno Junkô says, we keep speaking in the form of supposition because there is no material to fall back on which tells of this period. It is unfortunate that we have only the "biography of a great man" written twenty-two years after Shinran's death.

There is one writing, however, by one of Shinran's immediate disciples, which although written after Shinran's death, takes the form of a dialogue concerning the profession of faith.

When Shinran stated, "Zenshin's (i.e. Shinran) faith and the Shōnin's (i.e. Hōnen) faith are one", his (i.e. Hōnen) fellow-disciples, such as Seikan-bō and Nembutsu-bō, refuted him strongly by saying, "How in the world can Zenshin-bō's faith be one with the Teacher's (Hōnen) faith?" "It would be absurd," the Master (Shinran) replied, "if I said that my Teacher's wisdom and learning, which is extensive, and mine were one. But in regard to Faith for Birth, there is no difference at all, and his faith and mine are one." As they still

⁴⁶Ibid.

had doubt, "How could it be?" there was, after all, nothing to do but decide before the Teacher (Hōnen) which side was right. When they explained the whole matter, Hōnen Shōnin said "Genkū's faith is the Faith given by the Tathāgata and Zenshin-bō's faith is also the Faith given by the Tathāgata. Hence, they are one. Those who have a different faith will by no means go to the same Pure Land where I, Genkū, am to be born."⁴⁷

This dialogue attempts to settle the problem of doubt with regard to faith, a very basic phenomenon in religion. As Matsuno Junkō points out, the ardor for assiduity in the followers is self-evident.

To my mind, however, Shinran appears to have been quite a radical person. I state this with reference to the passage above, wherein it seems Shinran initiated the dialogue. Shinran's radicalism can also be seen in the previously mentioned incident of year 1204 where he signed his name adding the character "Sō". Again, among Hōnen's many disciples, Shinran was one of the seven to be exiled in 1207 besides the four who received death penalties.

If I were to adduce further examples to substantiate my point, I would call attention to Chapter II, "Pure Land Thought in Hieizan", wherein are listed the names of those of Hōnen's disciples who in their later years all became leaders of one sect. They are Shinkū, Genchi, Shōkō, Shōkū, Chōsai, Kōsai, Ryūkan and Shinran, and it is seen that Shinran's name is among them. Among these men only Chōsai and Kōsai

⁴⁷Tannishō, SSZ IV, p. 34-35.

and Shinran were exiled in 1207.

Once again it could be noted that Hōnen only allowed those who truly understood the quintessence of his teaching to make a copy of the Senjakushū. They were Kōsai, Benchō, Ryūkan, Shōkū, Chōsai, and Shinran. Among these men Kōsai was exiled with Shinran. In comparison with fellow disciples, Shinran thought in a more radical manner, a matter which will be treated at greater length in the next section. It seems that we find in Shinran an impatience and haste typical of a young man who has to make up for the time lost in joining Hōnen's group so late.

Whether we argue that Shinran, in contrast to the other disciples, may have been more or less radical, we must still do further study to determine whether this radicalism developed from Shinran's understanding of and belief in Hōnen's teachings.

The two interpretations on the teaching of Hōnen - Ichinengi and Tanengi:

It has been noted that Hōnen's logic of salvation, that is, the Way to Rebirth into the Pure Land which he advocated, is attained through the practice of Nembutsu. However, as to how one will practice Nembutsu, Hōnen left it to each individual's will and capacity⁴⁸ which led those of his group into the debates of

⁴⁸See footnote 8, page 74.

Ichinengi (one-invocation) and Tanengi (many-invocations).⁴⁹
The existence of these two interpretations as to how Nembutsu should be practiced caused the group to be suppressed by other Buddhist sects.

One of the leaders who upheld the many-invocations interpretation was Ryūkan who was twenty five years older than Shinran. Because of the lack of material, we can only estimate the year in which he turned to Hōnen,⁵⁰ but it is known that from a young age he was in Hieiizan,⁵¹ in an environment of religious practices and study. Ryūkan was such a brilliant disciple that Hōnen spoke of him, together with another disciple Seigaku, as being the men who would carry on his teaching of Nembutsu.⁵² At a later date, Shinran, in answer to his disciples and regarding the correct interpretation of the teaching of Nembutsu, spoke of Ryūkan and Seigaku as follows:

⁴⁹ Emperor Gotoba asks Seigaku "there seem to be disputes among the Senju Nembutsu followers recently on Ichinengi and Tanengi. Tell me, which of these two is the correct interpretation?"
Kokon Chomonshū, Nihon Kotenbungaku Taikei, Vol. LXXXIV, (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1957), p. 102.

⁵⁰ Ryūchū. Kettō Jūshuin Gimonsho Jōdoshū Zensho, Vol. 10, (Tokyo: Jōdoshū Seiten Kankōkai, 1913), p. 26.

⁵¹ Ryūkan Risshi Ryakuden, Ibid., Vol. 17, p. 586.

⁵² Myōgishingyōshū, quoted from Matsuno's op. cit., p. 228.

They are the blessed persons on this earth. As they have already been born in the Pure Land, their writings are the very best, second to none. They are the persons who are well in accord with the word of the Venerable Master Hôhen.⁵³

Further, Ryûkan's writing, Jiriki Tariki, and Seigaku's Yuishinshô, are held in high esteem by Shinran as can be seen from the following message to his disciples:

To be born in the Pure Land is beyond the Power of us common mortals. Even persons happily endowed with wisdom do not take it for granted. Even the saints of Mahayana and Hinayana do not rely on their own power, but fully trust on that of the Vow. Especially with such as you, it will be but a happy few who hear there is this Vow and who meet with this Namuamidabutsu. In all, do not think this and that but look well into the Yuishinshô and the Jiriki Tariki which I sent up to you sometime ago.⁵⁴

Shinran, at the age of seventy eight in the year 1250, wrote the commentary work Ichinen Tanen Bumbetsuji (The Defining of Distinctions Between One-Invocation and Many-Invocations).

Ryûkan preached the many-invocations method of Nembutsu which entailed the repeated voicing of invocations to Amida.⁵⁵ He believed and practised this through his life.⁵⁶ He taught that the many-invocations method is an expression of man's

⁵³ Mattôshô No. 19, SSZIII, p.108 .

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 107.

⁵⁵ Gokuraku Jôdoshûgi II. Ryûkan Risshi Ibunshû, Hirai Shôkai. Ryûkan Risshi no Jôdokyô (Tokyo, Kanazawa-bunko Jôdoshûten Kenkyûkai, 1941), p. 30.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 63.

strong desire to be reborn into the Pure Land and that Sanshin (The Three Minds - Sincere Mind, Deep Mind, and Mind of Aspiring for Rebirth by Merit Transference) is an absolute prerequisite for Nembutsu; that hypocrites, no matter the number of times they voice the invocations, are never rewarded with the Pure Land but can only be born into the Transformed Land.⁵⁷

There were those who denied man's aspirations and desires for rebirth into the Pure Land as well as the efficacy of the practice of Nembutsu to attain rebirth. These men held the one-invocation theory which claimed that it is Amida who wants to save man and that Amida's wish or Vow causes man to invoke the name of Amida. They considered Nembutsu to be a Rightly Established Act. In other words, man invokes Nembutsu through the working of Amida, a result of his being drawn to Amida's Vow.⁵⁸ When Amida's wish for man to be reborn in Paradise and man's plea to be reborn become one, man experiences Nembutsu - the uttering of Amida's name. Seigaku, who was mentioned by Hōnen as one of the men to carry on the latter's teaching, and, Kōsai, who was sent to exile with Shinran, both advocated this theory.

Shinran also shared the one-invocation theory. This is clearly seen from the following words:

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 27, 31.

⁵⁸ Seigaku. Yuishinshō, SSGZ III, p. 740.

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When we believe that we are to be born in the Pure Land being served by Amida's inconceivable Vow, there rises up within us the desire to utter Nembutsu. At that moment we share in the benefit of being embraced and not forsaken.

We should know that Amida's Original Vow does not discriminate whether one is young or old, good or evil, and that Faith alone is of supreme importance, for it is the Vow that seeks to save the sentient beings burdened with grave sins and fiery passions.

Therefore, if we have Faith in the Original Vow, no other good is needed because there is no good surpassing Nembutsu. Nor should evil be feared, because there is no evil capable of obstructing Amida's Original Vow.⁵⁹

The interpretation of Hōnen's Nembutsu teaching which required only one invocation for salvation led to heresy. Heresy with regard to the doctrines resulted in social disorder. Some of those that upheld the one-invocation interpretation spoke slanderously of those believing in the many-invocations interpretation - that repetitious Nembutsu was a show of doubt in Amida's Vow and that the act of many invocations was an expression of disbelief in the virtue of Nembutsu.⁶⁰ They further claimed that after making one invocation, even acts of Five Evils Ten Evils⁶¹ were allowed,

⁶⁰Seigaku, op. cit., SSGZ II, p. 754.

⁶¹Ten Evils - 1) killing; 2) taking what is not given; 3) adultery; 4) lying; 5) harshness of words; 6) slander or calumny; 7) idle talk; 8) greediness; 9) anger; and 10) wrong views.

Five Evils (Five Deadly Sins) - 1) killing one's mother; 2) killing one's father; 3) killing an Arhat; 4) disuniting of the community of monks; and 5) causing, with ill-will, the blood to flow from a Buddha's body. These five are the gravest sins which cause one to fall into hell named Avici, or the hell of incessant pain.

thus making it easier for the heresy to undermine the morals of society.

Shinran's interpretation on the teaching of Nembutsu:

Shinran has a letter in which he writes conclusively with regard to his own view of the practice of Nembutsu:

First of all, when it is said that the cause of birth in the Pure Land is perfected by one (invocation of) Nembutsu, it will surely be so. But even at that, this does not mean that we ought not to say Nembutsu more than once. This point is minutely entered into in the Yuishinshō. Please look well into the book. When it is said that any Nembutsu said more than once is for the good of others in the ten quarters, this could also be. We say for the good of others in the ten quarters, but should you take it that Nembutsu said twice, thrice, etc. works ill for birth in the Pure Land, I may say you are wrong. Inasmuch as there is the "Vow that vows our birth in the Pure Land through Nembutsu", it makes little difference whether we say it several times or say it once. All will result in our rebirth in the Pure Land. So have I heard. We should never say that as one Nembutsu unflinchingly assures us birth in the Pure Land, Nembutsu said several times hinders it. Please look well into the Yuishinshō.⁶²

Let us see how and why the theories on one-invocation and many-invocations arose in the first place. Each prominent disciple who succeeded Hōnen and propagated Hōnen's teachings spent his life at one time or another in the austere environment of deep study and religious duty and practice either at Hieizan or Nara. Consequently, whether consciously or unconsciously, his experience of study served as the basis

⁶²Mattōshō, SSZ III, p. 131.

for developing Hōnen's teaching.⁶³ Shinran was one of these men. He took a strong stand in the debating with Hōnen's group regarding Ichinengi and Tanengi, in favor of the former. What made Shinran support the radical doctrinal interpretation of the one-invocation theory lies in the fact that, although he had spent twenty years at Hieiizan, the practice of voicing many invocations each day did not lead him to experience the joy of faith. He therefore learned that the practice of many-invocations was not the means to acquire Faith, and to say Nembutsu without Faith was meaningless. It was undoubtedly essential for Shinran to have Faith in Amida and then with the joys of having such Faith, later to say Nembutsu. Once one had Faith, which was a faith of rebirth into the Pure Land, the practice of many invocations was not the sole prerequisite for salvation. Shinran thus arrived at the interpretation of the one-invocation.

Hōnen and his prominent disciples, including Shinran, were especially reproached because, regardless of the one-invocation or many-invocations interpretation each held, they took an adamant stand in denying the practices of other religious sects reflecting their strong faith in Nembutsu. All the disciples seemed thus to be promoting heresy and social disorder.

⁶³ Yuishinshō, SSGZ II, p. 744.

v. Government suppression of Hōnen's group

There were numerous debates over Hōnen's doctrine within the group. The cause of these debates was rooted in the fact that there existed both understanding of the doctrine in conformity with Hōnen's own understanding, as well as heretical views of the doctrine. Hōnen himself wrote of the existence of heresy within his group in the last portion of the Seven Chapter Defence Statement (Kishōmon) of 1204. He says "In these ten years there have been some whose conduct has been unbecoming as believers in Buddhism". During the same period, i.e. between 1194 and 1204, we find among those who joined the group the minds who, after Hōnen's death, were instrumental in developing Pure Land Buddhism.⁶⁴ This contradiction caused Hōnen great anguish.

Before discussing in greater detail the repression of Hōnen's group and its effects upon Shinran, a general outline of the process of repression will be given. The individual followers of the teachings of Nembutsu suffered well before the formal and direct repression of Hōnen's group.⁶⁵ The

⁶⁴For example, Genchi (joined 1195), leader of Murasaki no Monto School; Seigaku (joined 1197) who wrote the Seven Chapter Defence Statement under Hōnen's dictation; Shinran (joined 1201); and Chōsai (joined 1202), leader of Shogyō Hongangi School.

⁶⁵In 1199 Minamoto no Yoriie stripped off, burned and destroyed the religious habits of fourteen monks in Kamakura. The year 1199 was three years before Shinran joined Hōnen's group. Azumakagami May 12, 1200, Azumakagami Vol. I (Tokyo, Meichokankōkai, 1965), p. 490.

repression of Hōnen was made on two separate occasions. It was the second occasion which led to Hōnen's sentencing to exile. The first incident occurred in 1204 when Hōnen wrote the Seven Chapter Defence Statement (Kishōmon) to the charges made by Hieizan. The charges were (1) that the teaching of Nembutsu was not founded on the profound doctrine of Shingon and Tendai and therefore that it was a fallacy; (2) that it was heretical for the Nembutsu followers to deny all practices other than Nembutsu, and to burn the holy sutras; and (3) that, though it might not be such an extreme act, the whole attitude of disregarding all but Nembutsu is a sin.⁶⁶

The first and the fourth articles of the Seven Chapter Defence Statement were in response to the charges laid. Article 1. I will forbid my followers who are without deep knowledge and complete study to deny the doctrines of Tendai and Shingon and further, to speak slanderously of the Bodhisattvas other than Amida. Article 4. I forbid my followers to indulge in drinking alcohol and eating meat despite their claim that there are no such prohibitions in the teachings of Nembutsu; and, despite the fact that they scorn those not belonging to the group, those who follow closely the Sundry Practices; and I finally forbid them to indulge in evil doings because they believe in Amida. In

⁶⁶Chokushūden. Jōdoshū Zensho, Vol XVI, (Tokyo: Yamakibō Busshoten, 1961), p. 99.

addition to the Seven Chapter Defence Statement, Hōnen dictated a letter of apology addressed to Hieizan; one of the disciples took the dictation.⁶⁷

The disciples reacted to this in an unexpected manner. There was resentment among them at their Master's yielding and humiliating attitude, saying, "The Master speaks opposite to what he has taught us and is two-faced. No matter what the probable interpretation of the Seven Chapter Defence Statement by the people, the Master's original and real intent is different."⁶⁸

Kōfukuji report to the Imperial throne:

The second oppression took place eleven months after the Seven Chapter Defence Statement was presented to Hieizan. The continuous, rash and imprudent conduct of Hōnen's disciples caused irritation among several Buddhist sects who in concert suggested to the Imperial throne the abolition of Nembutsu. The negligence and blunders of the Nembutsu group were itemized in nine articles. Emperor Gotoba, after some questioning, rejected the demand on the basis that there had been a letter of apology presented by Hōnen previously. Emperor Gotoba's decision seems to have been made keeping separate the Nembutsu doctrines and the

⁶⁷ Seigaku (1167-1235)

⁶⁸ Akamatsu's op. cit., p. 106.

conduct of Hōnen's followers.

In October 1205, Kōfukuji⁶⁹ filed a complaint in Nara against Hōnen and his group, a complaint which became known as Kōfukuji Sōjō (Kōfukuji Report to the Throne). The object of this complaint was to invoke government suspension against Hōnen's group by forbidding Senju Nembutsu. This Sōjō or report to the throne was compiled by eight Buddhist sects: Sanron, Jōjitsu, Hossō, Kusha, Kegon, Ritsu, Tendai and Shingon.

The Sōjō was composed of nine articles in which Hōnen and his group were charged with the following faults:

- 1) They founded Jōdoshū without any authorized transmission of the teaching from master to disciple or any Chokkyo (Imperial sanction).
- 2) They made a new painting of Buddha in which only Senju Nembutsu believers were lit by Buddha's light and the others were not.
- 3) Senju Nembutsu believers did not pay respect to any other Buddha, not even to Shakyamuni Buddha, but only to Amida Buddha.
- 4) Senju Nembutsu believers treated the non-recitation of sutras, including Hokekyō, as wrong doing, so wrong that one would go to hell. They also despised various virtues such as building towers and statues.

⁶⁹Kōfukuji: The head temple of the Hossō sect, furthermore, one of the seven big temples of Nara founded by the Fujiwara family in 669.

- 5) Senju Nembutsu believers did not pay due respect to any other religion.
- 6) Senju Nembutsu believers ignored the theory of Kammuryô-jukyô upon which Jôdoshû was based, resulting in the denial of all activities except Senju Nembutsu and the holding of wrong thoughts about Jôdo (i.e., Pure Land).
- 7) Senju Nembutsu emphasized only Shômyô Nembutsu which was the least important Nembutsu. That is, Nembutsu consists of Kôshô and Shinnen, the latter being classified further into Hannen and Kannen. Shômyô Nembutsu was regarded as the simplest action in Nembutsu.
- 8) Senju Nembutsu believers ignored the regulations on activities which were strictly forbidden to monks, that is to say, the regulations such as those banning gaming (Igo or Sugoroku), clandestine romances (Nyobon) and meat-eating (Nikujiki).
- 9) Senju Nembutsu believers did not get along with the other sects and did not attend Buddhist services. Therefore, there was a concern that if Senju Nembutsu became popular and widespread in the country, there would be no Buddhist service to pray for national security.

The architect and drafter of these accusations was Jôkei (1155-1213) who was the best known scholar of the Hossô sect. He stressed the preaching method of Hônen and his group, the contents of its teachings and the behavior of the disciples. When he pointed out the eighth fault, i.e., the violation of

regulations of monkhood, he said, "The deed of sinning against Buddha has been committed not only by the Senju Nembutsu believers but also by some of the monks of the Path of Sages in the Decadent Dharma. Some of the Senju Nembutsu believers keep and observe the Buddhist commandments."⁷⁰ His argument was quite persuasive. He did not accuse the group outright and unsparingly. Therefore, presumably his charges were directed against some evil, eccentric and ignorant people rather than against Hōnen himself and Hōnen's group.

When finally they were sentenced to exile, Shinran wrote regarding the prosecution:

Hereupon, scholars of Kōfukuji presented a petition to the Throne in early spring in the Hinotono-u year of Shōgen, during the reign of ex-Emperor Gotoba-in (Takanari by name) or the reign of Emperor Tsuchimikado-in (Tamehito by name). Lords and vassals who opposed the law and justice bore indignation and resentment against the Nembutsu teaching. Thus, Master Genkū, the great promulgator of the True Teaching, and his disciples were, without proper investigation of their crime, indiscriminately sentenced to death, deprived of their priesthood and exiled under criminals' names. I was one of them. I am neither a priest nor a layman.⁷¹

Shinran was clearly angry at the ex-Emperor for treating the whole group so badly.

⁷⁰No. 8 of the Sōjō.

⁷¹Kyō Gyō Shin Shō, SSZ I, p. 380.

vi. Reasons for the oppression

There are a few questions to be asked of Shinran's recollections: (1) why it took fifteen-odd months to issue an official decision on the ban of Nembutsu (February, 1207) from the time Kōfukuji filed its suit in October, 1205; why the decision was delayed that long; (2) why the banishment was a decision based on Emperor Gotoba's personal grudge against the Nembutsu group; (3) after the sentence of exile was passed, why Shinran made a remark such as, "I am neither priest nor... layman". What did he mean by the word "layman"? Once these three points are clarified, one can better appreciate the rationale for the repression.

The understanding of Nembutsu by the Emperor - the process that led to the decision of exile:

The diary of Sanjō Nagakane (?-?) who was a Kurōdo no tō, the official head in the Imperial court responsible in dealing with lawsuits,

reports and actions, throws much light upon the question of delay in the matter of official response to the Kōfukuji Report. Nagakane was the fifth generation of the Sanjō family to be appointed to the office. His diary is defective in that there are two short-comings. First, in the fifteen months from the filing of the Report to the final decision, the portion relating to March 1206 and the months after October 1206 is missing. During March of 1206 an intrigue

took place within the Imperial court, of which more is said below. In addition, the portion relating to the four months previous to the official decision was destroyed. The second short-coming is the fact that Nagakane, the author of the diary, was a man who had been sympathetic to the doctrines of Nembutsu⁷² and therefore, the authenticity of the diary could be questioned. There is again a further point which must be kept in mind. Kujō Ryōkei, the second son of Kujō Kanezane was Regent at the time Kōfukuji filed its Report. Kujō Kanezane had been a convert to Hōnen's teachings and was said "to have died upon learning of Hōnen's banishment".⁷³ It can be presumed therefore that Regent Kujō Ryōkei was sympathetic with Nembutsu. Keeping the above in mind, we will now examine the attitude taken by the Imperial court toward Nembutsu and the final decision in favor of exile.

To begin with, we will look at the attitudes of both Nagakane and Ryōkei with regard to the Report filed requesting the ban of Nembutsu. In his diary of February 14, 1206, Nagakane writes, "Even though the behavior of the followers may be heretical, the leader Hōnen's teaching is the Way of Rebirth into the Pure Land. It means that the thriving of Nembutsu is the flourishing of Buddhism, and my heart weighs

⁷² According to Matsuno Junkō, Sanjō Nagakane was a man especially patronized by Kujō Kanezane. Matsuno's op. cit., p. 101.

⁷³ Jien. Gukanshō, Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikei, Vol. 86, (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1967), p. 296.

heavily to be in the position to have to penalize the Nembutsu group ... I must have been born with a sinful past."⁷⁴ Regent Ryôkei also writes, "The present criticism of Senju Nembutsu stems from the shallow knowledge of a few of the followers and accordingly, the teachings of the leader Hônen should not be criticized. Only those of followers with heretical views should be penalized."⁷⁵ As is evident, the opinions of these two men are very sympathetic toward the doctrines of Nembutsu; however, Hônen's doctrines are not discussed specifically with concrete expressions. Nagakane, on February 19, 1206 had a meeting with Jôkei,⁷⁶ the writer of the Kôfukuji Report, but here again there is no evidence of a concrete discussion with regard to the doctrines. The meeting between Nagakane and Jôkei took place after a lapse of four months from the time the Report was filed. Two days after this meeting, i.e. on February 21, 1206, in order to expedite the decision from the throne, Kôfukuji dispatched envoys directly to Regent Kujô Ryôkei, bypassing Nagakane, requesting a conference. Ryôkei denied the meeting on the grounds "that he could not disregard routine regulations"⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Sanchôki February 14, 1206. Shiryô Taisei Vol. 31 (Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten 1965), p. 86.

⁷⁵ Akamatsu's op. cit., p. 110.

⁷⁶ Sanchôki February 19, 1206. Shiryô Taisei op. cit., p. 87.

⁷⁷ Sanchôki February 21, 1206. Shiryô Taisei op. cit., p. 88.

and sent the envoys to go through the proper channel which meant seeing Nagakane. Nagakane explained the Emperor's position as follows to the envoys. "Your request concerns the glory of Buddhism and is therefore presently being deliberated. Nevertheless, your claim that Hōnen and his group will destroy Buddhism cannot be understood because Nembutsu also is Buddhism. The two men Anraku and Gyōkū⁷⁸ will be penalized as being heretics."⁷⁹ After this, there is no diary for March and in the following two months of April and May, Nagakane makes no reference whatsoever to Nembutsu.⁸⁰

Reference to Nembutsu in the diary is made next on June 13, 1206. Emperor Gotoba gave a mandate to the members of his court. "Kōfukuji filed a suit claiming that Hōnen and his disciples have spoken slanderously of other Buddhist sects in order to propagate their teaching of Nembutsu. This is an act that would destroy Buddhism. If the court agrees with the request and penalizes the Nembutsu group, it would mean

⁷⁸ Nagakane writes of Gyōkū in detail as follows, "Gyōkū adhered to the teaching of Ichinengi which maintained that after a single utterance of Nembutsu, one was allowed to break the laws which forbade killing and stealing; Gyōkū further criticized other sects and insisted merely on the utterance of Nembutsu." Sanchōki, February 30, 1206. Shiryō Taisei op cit., p. 96.

⁷⁹ Sanchōki February 22, 1206. Shiryō Taisei op. cit., p. 89.

⁸⁰ Emperor Regent Kujō Ryōkei suddenly died in March 1206 and it was rumored that he had been assassinated. Nihon Rekishi Daijiten Vol. 4, Nihon Rekishi Daijiten Henshūinkai, ed. (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō, 1968), p. 38. For this reason, it is probable that Nagakane did not wish to refer to or to mention anything on Nembutsu.

that we would involve ourselves in the crime of destroying Nembutsu which is one of the teachings of Buddhism. Your deliberations on the matter are required."⁸¹ Nagakane, commissioned with this task, diligently went around the officials soliciting their individual opinions, but his efforts were in vain and he "returned home utterly exhausted".⁸²

In Nagakane's diary, however, five names appear in connection with the Report.⁸³ Matsudono Motofusa thought it would be well to approve the Kōfukuji Report because the heretics of the Nembutsu sect had already been sentenced for punishment, but that care ought to be taken not to penalize the good Nembutsu followers. Sanjō Sanefusa believed that because the heretics of the Nembutsu group were to be punished, this was reason enough that the Report should be approved and that the action in itself would not mean the destruction of Buddhism. Ōinomikado Yorisane had the same opinion as Motofusa, Hanayamain Tadatsune agreed with Sanefusa, and Takatada expressly said that due to his illness he could not give his opinion on the matter. Opinions given by the members of the Imperial court did not mention nor touch on the doctrines of Nembutsu. It is most probable that they were not anywhere near comprehending the teachings.

⁸¹ Sanchōki June 19, 1206. Shiryō Taisei op. cit., p. 129.

⁸² Sanchōki June 21, 1206. Shiryō Taisei op. cit., p. 130.

⁸³ Sanchōki June 19, 1206. Shiryō Taisei op. cit., p. 130.

Upon establishing Pure Land Buddhism as an independent religious sect, Hōnen narrowed it to only the teaching of Nembutsu, discarding, closing off and sealing, and abandoning the teachings of other sects.⁸⁴ Hōnen's intent for Nembutsu to flourish naturally meant the decline of other sects. The Imperial court, however, maintaining that Nembutsu was also Buddhism, tried to keep a balance with the conventional religious sects. Not really understanding the Nembutsu teaching and therefore the nature of what was to be deliberated, the discussions continued on and the court's decision was delayed for a long fifteen months. The decision which finally ensued in February 1207, however, was to spring from an event which was quite unexpected.

The result after spending over a year on the deliberations - the Emperor's personal grudge against the Nembutsu group:

The unexpected event which gave a sudden turn to this matter was the discovery of adultery between Emperor Gotoba's ladies-in-waiting and the two men Anraku and Gyōkū who had previously been sentenced for heresy on February 20, 1206. The event took place toward the end of the year, after December 9, 1206, in the absence of the Emperor.⁸⁵ Upon his return on December 28th, the Emperor learned of this outrage

⁸⁴ Senjaku Hongan Nembutsushū, SSZ VI, p. 173.

⁸⁵ Shijūhachikanden, Jōdōshū Zensho, Vol. XVI, (Tokyo: Yamakibō Busshoten, 1961), p. 964.

and was infuriated. He immediately took action and twenty-seven days later, on January 24, 1207, he proclaimed the ban on Nembutsu. On February 18th Anraku and Gyōkū were executed, and in addition, during the same month Shinran and others, headed by Hōnen, were banished. Thus, the doctrine of Pure Land Buddhism as a new religious sect was suppressed by political power merely on the basis of bad conduct of the heretics.

As Shinran remarks, this suppression by the rulers was clearly a private act of the Emperor⁸⁶ and the Buddhist institutions of Kōfukuji and Hieizan. My argument that the suppression was due to the Emperor's personal grudge against the Nembutsu group does not give a full explanation on why the Emperor penalized the leader Hōnen, thus denying the whole group, and why he did not sentence only the heretics. In order to better understand this point, the third question raised previously, i.e. the meaning of "I am neither priest nor ... layman" must be treated.

Shinran's social outlook - The meaning of the word "layman":

The actions of the Nembutsu group had, in fact, been feared by the people at the time Hieizan and Kōfukuji filed the suit requesting a ban of Nembutsu. People referred to the Nembutsu

⁸⁶Refer to p. 118, Political and Social Background for my reason for including the Buddhist institution as rulers.

followers using the phrases "the black robe" and "the voice of hymns".⁸⁷ It is said that the echoes of the chanting by the followers sounded to the people as "an eerie haunt of a ruined country" in chaos.⁸⁸ This fear changed the weak image of Pure Land Buddhism: the image of which had been created, for example, by the ladies of the Imperial court who had been impressed favorably by the doleful melody of the chants, the many women converts, and the comparatively easy practice of Nembutsu. The followers also crowded "around Kiyomizudera, the Gion vicinities, and the many temples in Kyoto" and a great number of them "forming a party or swarming together in a group" seemed to boast of their increasing strength.⁸⁹ Such acts represented a force serving to deny the weak image of the Pure Land teachings in the degenerate age.

Such movements of the Nembutsu followers were not only to be found in Kyoto where the Emperor resided but also in Kamakura where again there was a law banning the practice

⁸⁷ Nembutsu Tsuihō Senji. Shōwa Teihon Nichiren Shōnin Ibun, Vol. III, (Yamanashi: Sōhonzan Minobukuonji, 1953), p. 263.

⁸⁸ Nomori Kagami Vol. II, Minamoto, Arifusa, Nomori Kagami. Nihon Kagakutaikai, Vol. 4, Sasaki, Nobutsuna (ed.), (Tokyo: Kazama Shobō, 1956), p. 86.

⁸⁹ Satō, Shinichi and Yoshisuke Ikeuchi, Chūsei Hōsei Shiryō, Vol. I, (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1955), p. 101.

of Nembutsu by the Bakufu.⁹⁰ In May of 1200 Minamoto no Yoriie (1171-1204) had burned away the religious habits of fourteen monks. On the other hand in Kyoto, the Imperial court, without a military force with which to retain authority and with a government holding merely the ideologies of politics, did not have the power to exercise this kind of oppression.

Political and social background:

The political authority of the country in late Heian times was to be found in Hieizan and the various temples in Nara, and in the nobility.⁹¹ When either of these groups acted, the other had, of necessity, to join in the action for fear of otherwise weakening its half of this joint control. If the political chaos of Japan in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries had been one centered only within the ruling class, such as the rivalry or usurpation of political or ruling power, it might have given the nobility, by acting independently and not cooperating with Hieizan and Kōfukuji of Nara, the opportunity of monopolizing political power. However, the chaotic political situation in Japan was eventually to completely upset the existing social superstructure, and

⁹⁰ Azuma Kagami May 12, 1200. Azuma Kagami, Vol. I, (Tokyo: Meicho Kankokai, 1965), p. 490.

⁹¹ Katō, Shūichi. Shinran - 13 Seiki Shisō no Ichimen. (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1960), p. 26.

to replace it with a new feudal government headed by the Kamakura Shogunate. The new political superstructure was characterized by the seizure of ruling power by the samurai, who were employed as protectors of the property and estates of the nobility.⁹²

In such a political scenario, the rulers could not afford to lose any of their power, and, therefore, for their own survival, one power-wielder had to participate in the actions of the other. Thus, by cooperating with Hieizan and Kōfukuji of Nara, it was possible for both the nobility and the temples to jointly retain their authority. For Hieizan and Kōfukuji of Nara, it was through the cooperation given by the nobility that they were able to retain their position and maintain their traditional authoritarian position vis-à-vis Japanese Buddhism. The ex-Emperor Gotoba, of course, being of the nobility, had no direct dealings with the Buddhist group. Nevertheless, having had no other choice, he took severe measures against Hōnen's group.

It was in this political and social background that adultery was committed by the two heretics of the Nembutsu group and the Emperor attempted the repression of Nembutsu through the banishment of the leader, Hōnen. In the Imperial proclamation of June 13, 1206 previously mentioned,

⁹² Ishimoda and Matsushima. Nihonshi Gaisetsu I, (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1955), p. 171

the Emperor viewed Hōnen's teachings and the conduct of the followers as a separate entity which seemed to follow sound reasoning. Also, despite the fact that the Report filed by Hieizan and Kōfukuji had been a result of debates concerning the doctrine, the Emperor applied pressure merely at a political level. In other words, the position taken by these power groups was an artful machination. Any repression by one in the system on another who shows an attitude opposed to the system can be said to be "grudgelike". Distinguishing himself from and taking leave of the world of political rulers (laymen) who could pass judgement on one another, was most likely what Shinran had meant with his words "I am neither priest nor.... layman".

From the day Shinran's exile had been decided, he was treated as a criminal by the authorities. This means that his humanity had been denied. From this day on, Shinran had to take upon himself the task of regaining his stolen humanity which entailed more and intense burning of energy for the will to live. Keeping this in mind, we will now discuss Shinran's exile and its effects upon his future thought and action.

CHAPTER IV

SHINRAN'S EXILE AND ITS IMPACT UPON HIS THOUGHT

i. Exile

Shinran declared that he was neither priest nor layman. He further referred to his own being as Gutoku. This term had previously been used by Saichō, the founder of Hieizan, in speaking of himself. It is probable that Shinran had made himself aware of this state of being in his days at Hieizan but he has not written in connection with this particular point. The first appearance of the term "Gutoku" as pertaining to himself is in his recollections of the day his exile had been decided.

The name
Gutoku:

Shinran's state of mind during this time is best illustrated by his remark, "I called myself Gutoku."¹ The meaning of Toku is based on Tokukoji or Tokujin in the last sutra of Buddha, the Nehangyō.² Tokukoji means a person who does not keep the Dharma and who breaks the priestly commandments. Tokujin is a person who, without the slightest intention of practicing Buddhism, becomes a monk in order not to starve in the age of Mappō - the degenerate age of the

¹ Kyō Gyō Shin Shō, SSZ I, p. 381.

² Nehangyō, Taishō Daizō Kyō, Vol. 12, (Tokyo: Taishō-Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1925), p. 383-384.

Dharma. This Nohangyô was most frequently quoted in Kyô Gyô Shin Shô next to Jôdosanbukyô, another sutra important to Shinran, and therefore according to these definitions, Toku was an appropriate name for Shinran.³ From his exile in 1207, he continued to substitute the term Toku for his common name of Fujii Yoshizane. In all his writings after his exile, Shinran signed his name Gutoku. In Buddhism Gu does not merely mean ignorance or dullness but rather unrepentance in the face of a crime.⁴ In the following excerpt from his book we can see that his spirit of rebellion was rooted in his deep faith in the other world.

Those who would abandon this defiled world and aspire to the Pure Land, who are perplexed over the practices and beliefs, who are darkened in mind and lacking in wisdom, and who have heavy sins and many hindrances, should particularly rely on the Tathagata's urging; never fail to take refuge in the supreme Direct Way, exclusively follow this Practice, and uphold only this Faith.⁵

While at Hieizan, Shinran was introduced to the word Gutoku through the study of the book of Mappô Tômyôki written by Saichô. So impressed was he by Saichô's philosophy that he incorporated the work in its entirety into his own book,

³ Among the followers of Jôdokyô, there have been those who, before Shinran, have called themselves Gutoku. Yamada, Bunshô. Shinran to Sono Kyôdan, (Kyoto: Hôzôkan, 1948), p. 109.

⁴ Murakami, Toshimi. Shinran Dokuhon. (Kyoto: Hyakkaen, 1968), p. 21.

⁵ Kyô Gyô Shin Shô, SSZ I, p. 5.

the Kyô Gyô Shin Shô.⁶

During his Buddhist training, Shinran had at times doubted his own capabilities, and now the life he was forced to lead seemed to intensify these doubts even further. Making a comparison between the two ways to salvation he writes:

There is a difference between the compassion of the Path of Sages and that of the Pure Land Path. The compassion of the Path of Sages is to pity, sympathize with and care for beings. But it is extremely difficult to save them as one may wish. The compassion of the Pure Land teaching, it should be understood, lies in becoming Buddha quickly through the utterance of Nembutsu and benefiting with the mind of the Great Compassion and Great Mercy, sentient beings as we wish. As it is difficult to save others as we may wish, no matter how much love and pity we may feel in this life, this compassion is not enduring.⁷

An analysis of the above reveals his changed attitude on the subject of compassion resulting from his life in Echigo. A closer look at both the people and the environment of Echigo will help explain the impact they had on Shinran's thought.

It is commonly thought that Shinran's exile lasted for five years.⁸ We know that the place of exile was called

⁶Ibid., p. 314.

Modern scholars doubt that Saichô was the author of the Mappô Tômyôki. However, Shinran sincerely believed that he was. Inoue, Mitsusada. Nihon Kodai no Kokka to Bukkyô. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1971), p. 125.

⁷Tannishô, SSZ IV, p. 8.

⁸See footnote 1.

Echigo or Kokufu in Echigo no kuni.⁹ In later years, through the Tannishō written by Yuien, one of Shinran's disciples, we are informed about the circumstances surrounding the event:

Hōnen Shōnin and seven disciples were banished and four disciples were executed. The Shōnin was exiled to Hata in Tosa Province under the criminal name of Fujii Motohiko, male, aged 76. Shinran was exiled to Echigo Province under the criminal name of Fujii Yoshizane, aged 35. Jōmon-bō was exiled to Bingo Province, Chōsai Zenkō-bō to Hōki Province, Kōkaku-bō to Izu Province, and Gyōkū Hōhon-bō to Sado Province.¹⁰

Exile regulations
and the village,
Echigo:

According to Engishiki the three
places of banishment were Kinru,
Chūru and Onru¹¹ and the type of

punishment was to be determined by their distance from Kyoto. If the exiles were monks or nuns, they were deprived of their religious status prior to being exiled, for the law of banishment was not applicable to those who were in the priesthood.¹² Exiles were treated severely; regardless of age, sex or rank, they were given only one daily meal and this consisted only of small amounts of rice (Isshō no kome)¹³

⁹Shinran Shōnin Ketsumyaku Monjo, January 25, 1212, SSZ III, p. 176.

¹⁰Tannishō, SSZ IV, p. 41.

¹¹Engishiki, Kurosaka, Katsumi (ed.). Kokushi Taikai Vol. 26, (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1929-1966), p. 721.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Isshō is 1.8 liter; Kome means rice.

and salt (Isshaku no shio).¹⁴ In the spring they were provided with grain for planting and from the second year on they were expected to be self-supporting, that is, no longer dependent upon materials and food supplied by officials.¹⁵

Shinran did not expressly indicate his place of exile, but we are able to estimate the location by studying the topography of Kokufu in Echigo no kuni. This area faces Kotahama on the Japan Sea coast, a section of Japan which has the heaviest annual snow and rainfall. Because of such monsoon-like weather conditions, Kokufu in Echigo no kuni has winter weather for half of the year and is greatly overcast for another third. The other boundary of the Kotahama area is the Kubiki plain from where one can see the high mountains of the Myôkô range. In such surroundings Shinran engaged in a life of agriculture, something he had never done before. Good crops of course depend solely on favorable climatic and soil conditions, and only after a good harvest could Shinran hope to sustain even a bearable existence.

There are no statements in Shinran's works which glorify nature. However, one can find the word "sea" ninety-four times in the Kyô Gyô Shin Shô. From this fact it is reasonable to infer that he probably saw the Japan Sea often, and

¹⁴ Isshaku is 0.018 liter; Shio means salt.

¹⁵ Engishiki, Kurosaka, Katsumi (ed.). Kokushi Taikei, Vol. 26, (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kôbunkan, 1929-1966), p. 669.

after a hard day of manual labor this might well remind him of his master Hōnen who was also sentenced to exile by the sea in Tosa. The continual roar of the sea must have stirred his heart, especially as he had been brought up far from the sea in the inland city of Kyoto.

Shinran's life in Echigo would surely have been a difficult one, living as he did in an isolated land where human relationships were so important and yet so convoluted. One interesting fact should be remarked with regard to Shinran's exile - the exile itself was never officially noted. Thus there is no substantiation for Shinran's own words when he says "I have been sent to exile".¹⁶ Exile is a drastic measure taken against those who have violated the laws of their country. Despite the seriousness of the punishment, neither the fact of Shinran's exile nor even his name is found in the Azuma Kagami, the official record of the government during the Kamakura era; nor is anything to be found in the diaries of the aristocrats who were Shinran's contemporaries. A further discrepancy can be noted between the Shinran Denne (Life of Shinran) which states the place of exile to have been Kokufu in Echigo no kuni and the Engishiki, the official government record on exiles, wherein no place with such a name is mentioned. It has been established that in Echigo no kuni, Sadogashima (Sado island) was the designated place of

¹⁶Kyō Gyō Shin Shō, SSZ I, p. 381.

exile.¹⁷ Kokufu, mentioned in the Honganji Shōnin Shinran Denne, has a more salubrious climate. In order to reconcile or explain the above discrepancies with which one is presented, we must initially become aware of the personalities of the Echigo functionaries at that time.

Shinran's banishment was proclaimed in February 1207.¹⁸ The then regional administrator of Echigo was Munenari, who was Shinran's uncle and who had been appointed to the office only on January 13, 1207.¹⁹ It can be assumed that it was Munenari who arranged for Shinran to go to a place slightly more comfortable than Sado. Also, Kujō Kanezane, who was a devout follower as well as the benefactor of Hōnen and who also possessed extensive land holdings in Echigo,²⁰ knew Shinran before his banishment. It is known that Shinran had been banished to a location where the benefactor of his master owned some land. It can thus be deduced that it was through the intercessions of these two powerful men that Shinran served his exile other than in the place officially designated, and it is this which caused the discrepancies in

¹⁷ Engishiki No. 29. Kokushi Taikēi, Vol. 26, (Tokyo: Kokushi Taikēi Kankōkai, 1938), p. 721.

¹⁸ Kyō Gyō Shin Shō, SSZ I, p. 381.

¹⁹ Hirano, Danzō. Echigo to Shinran Eshin-ni no Sokuseki. (Niigata: Kakimura Shoten, 1972), p. 120-121.

²⁰ Dainihon Shiryōshū Vol. IV-8. Teikoku Daigaku Shiryōhensansho (ed.). (Tokyo: Tokyo Teikoku Daigaku, 1912), p. 893.

the records. Thus Shinran was not a simple martyr hounded by the political and religious establishments, but rather both a victim and a beneficiary of the aristocratic social structure.

The people
of Echigo:

It is easy to picture the kind of
people he met in his daily life:

simple peasants, each with his spade
or hoe in hand. They all subsisted on what they could
cultivate and harvest themselves. He would also have met
hunters and fishermen as well as travelling peddlers who
came by, regularly, once a year.²¹ According to the books
of this period, direct productive labor was looked down upon
as a shameful occupation.²² People such as farmers, fisher-
men who lived off fish, and the merchant class were held in
very low esteem. Their sources of status, their occupations,
were considered as base as overt criminal activity.²³ In
addition to these people Shinran probably would have met the
servants of local lords, called Genin, who were sometimes

²¹ Ôtani Honganji Yuisho Tsûkan No. 4. Bussho Kankôkai
(ed.), Dainihon Bukkyô Zensho, Vol. 132. (Tokyo: Bussho
Kankôkai, 1918-1930), p. 321.

²² Jûi Ôjôden in Bussho Kankôkai (ed.). Dainihon Bukkyô
Zensho, Vol. 51. (Tokyo: Bussho Kankôkai, 1916), p. 86.

²³ Zennen Okitegaki, August 13, 1285 in Honganji Monjo,
quoted from Matsuno, Junkô. Shinran (Tokyo: Sanseidô, 1959),
p. 180,

bought and sold as if they were animals.²⁴ Like all of these simple folk he too would have engaged in direct production. Sometimes he may have bartered his vegetables for fish or meat from them; he may have been taught how to cultivate his land by them in exchange for instructions on written Japanese. He may even have talked to the local children about the capital, Kyoto, and the life of the aristocrats. In any event, this is how I picture Shinran passing this period of his life.

Despite the fact that these people were classified as an oppressed class, they were the basis on which the economic and productive structure of the Kamakura era was built. Since social status and profession were inextricably bound together in that feudal era, families that engaged in direct production could not be upwardly mobile but remained in this occupation for generations; their life was fixed from birth; there was no way to change their social status. Therefore, having no hope, these people had to resign themselves to living as social untouchables. Furthermore, because their social status was tied to their occupation and was therefore accompanied by behavior considered despicable, such as hunting and fishing, they were required to repeat this stigmatized activity against their own desires in order to eke out a living. Not only was their social status restricted, but their sexual relationships,

²⁴See footnote 22.

the only remaining province of free will, were also meddled with. Shinran's wife, Eshin-ni, remarked in a letter to her daughter Kakushin, as follows:

The servants I have arranged to be transferred to you include the following: a woman called Kesa, aged 36; her daughter, Nadeshi, who is 16 this year; and another daughter, 9 years of age, making a total of three. Also the daughter of Kesa's stepmother, and her daughter, Inumasa, aged 12. A woman called Kotori, aged 34, and a man named Antōji. I had the boy who is 3 this year, born to Kesa and a male servant of another household, taken by the father. The women servants of our place usually enter into matrimonial relationship with the male servants of other places, so it leads to complications. When the above is added together, there are a total of seven people, six women and one man.²⁵

Since the law at that time even gave instructions as to the responsibility for raising newly-born children among the Genin, one can appreciate that matrimonial relationships caused frequent human problems. For example, if a Genin had a baby boy, the child's father was responsible for raising him; if it was a girl the mother raised the child.²⁶ Witnessing the oppression of these people, Shinran for the first time actually encountered and experienced a world in which merely surviving entailed the perpetual repetition of a socially defined sin.

²⁵ Eshin-ni Monjo 1, SSZ III, p. 183.

²⁶ Goseibai Shikimoku, Satō, Shinichi and Yoshisuke Ikeuchi, Chūsei Hōsei Shiryōshū: Kamakura Bakufu hō, Muromachi Bakufu hō (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1955), p. 24.

Having arrived in Echigo, Shinran no longer had a teacher from whom he could learn of Buddhism and faith. He may therefore have sought for someone with whom he could discuss these matters. To learn how to survive in the snow-country of Echigo, however, must have been of primary importance. He first had to get used to the layman's life he was now faced with. The reason why he had rejected his life in Hieiizan at the age of twenty-nine to join Hōnen's group was that, despite the fact that it was possible to further his theoretical education at Hieiizan, the place had become degenerate and materialistic and consequently it was not possible to successfully search for salvation there. Yet in exile, Shinran enjoyed the amenities of neither an aristocrat nor of a high-ranking Buddhist monk. He had to work hard for the food, shelter, and time required to think which he had unquestioningly accepted in the past. It is ironic that Shinran, who had once given up the world for the security of a monastic life, was thrown back into the world by the same political forces he had sought to avoid.

ii. Shinran's marriage

Notwithstanding the lack of source material on how Shinran lived his daily life in Echigo, we know for certain that he was living a married life. In this chapter, because marriage has such a moulding influence on a man's life, it

is proposed to examine the woman in Shinran's life and to discuss her personality and when and where Shinran married her. The date of birth of Shinran's children and the study of their family background throw much light on these matters, and by learning more of the circumstances surrounding Shinran's married life, one can obtain a further insight into his Weltanschauung, his views on life, world, and religion, which form a basis for the study of the evolution of his thought.

Nun Eshin: Initially, we consider the woman whom he married. It is known from what is available that Shinran fathered several children, and that the name of the woman he married was Eshin-ni. "Eshin" is a Buddhist name and the "ni" at the end of her name signifies that she was a nun; but her origin and real name are unknown. She may have either adopted the Buddhist name after her marriage to Shinran or may have already been a nun under that name when she was married. The possibility of the latter, however, is greater because historical records show that Senju Nembutsu was very popular in the Hokuriku, Tôkai and Tôzan regions of Japan around the year 1207, the year Shinran was banished into exile in Echigo (Hokuriku region), and that a great number of monks and nuns were active in the religious movement of Senju Nembutsu.²⁷

²⁷ Saihô Shinansho, SSZ V, p. 267-272.

There are ten letters written to Shinran by Eshin-ni which are extant today and from which we may extrapolate an understanding of the woman. It is learned from these letters that she kept a diary; also, from the contents and her penmanship, historians deduce that she was a woman of culture. Again, judging from her language, one is justified in presuming that she once lived in Kyoto, the capital of Japan at that time. Two distinct speculations as to Eshin-ni's origin exist: either she was of a powerful family, the Gōzoku,²⁸ or she was a woman of vitality and capability from the peasant class.²⁹

²⁸ Nakazawa, Kenmyō. Shijō no Shinran (Kyoto Bunkendō Shoten, 1923), p. 20.

²⁹ Hattori, Shisō. Shinran Note (Tokyo: Fukumura Shuppan, 1967), p. 143.

Notes made by Hattori (Marxist/historian) were based on the letters such as the following from which he envisaged Eshin-ni to be a healthy woman with a robust attitude toward life.

... I myself do not have many more years left to live, so such things should not overly concern me, but I am not living all by myself ... here we have with us the little girl and boy of my daughter Oguro, who are without parents, and all of Masukata's children also live with me, so I somehow feel like a mother to them ... (Eshin-ni at eighty-three years of age).

I am very happy to be able to write you. I never thought that I would be able to live to this year, but I have already reached eighty-seven years of age. ... I have accumulated the years to an unbelievable age, but I never cough nor drool. I have never had to have my back and legs rubbed. I work just like a dog everyday ... There are many things I want to write about, but the messenger says he is leaving early tomorrow morning, so I am writing this letter in the middle of the night ... I will close now. Please send me some needles. You may give it to this messenger. Would you enclose it in your letter to me. (Eshin-ni at eighty-seven years of age):

Umehara Ryūshō gives his reason for Shinran's marriage to Eshin-ni as being the financial aid Shinran might have received from the in-laws in eking an existence off the land during his years of exile,³⁰ and that therefore she must have been of a Gōzoku family. I am also of the opinion that she was from a family of power because in her marriage, she had brought along with her several Genin or servants of her own. Furthermore, it is my belief that Eshin-ni had been a nun before her marriage, firstly, because of the noble diction she used in writing her letters; secondly, from the frequent religious references such as the following in a letter which she had written to her daughter: "I believe that my husband (Shinran) is the Bodhisattva reborn"³¹; and thirdly, because of the fact that there were a great number of monks and nuns in the Echigo region at that time.

Shinran's
married life:

Now, we shall examine the marriage period itself. It is said that Shinran and Eshin-ni had four boys and three girls. The year of birth is known for two of these children - one son, Shinren, was born on March 3, 1211 and a daughter,

³⁰ Umehara, Ryūshō. Shinran Den no Shomondai, (Kyoto: Kenshin Gakuen, 1951), p. 219-220.

The opinion expressed is based upon the premise that Shinran married after his arrival in Echigo.

³¹ Eshin-ni Monjo, SSZ IV, p. 189

Kakushin-ni, was born sometime in 1224. Calculating from the minimum time required for gestation, we can estimate that Shinran and Eshin-ni were married at least around or before April or May of 1210. This year was Shinran's fourth year in Echigo. He would have been thirty-eight and Eshin-ni, twenty-nine years of age. The records that exist today, however, reveal that they already had three other children before Shinren. It is possible that four children including Shinren were born in the four years after Shinran came to Echigo, but this would mean that Shinran and Eshin-ni were married soon after Shinran's arrival in Echigo. Accordingly, some historians suggest that Shinran may have had more than one wife or that Eshin-ni was already married to Shinran before he went to Echigo.³² It is imperative to delve further into this topic. Five records of genealogy exist showing the family of Shinran, his wife and children:

- 1) Kudenshō edited by Kakunyo in 1331;
- 2) Sompibunmyaku edited by Tōin Kinsada in 1450;
- 3) Honganji Keizu edited by Kujō Uemichi in 1536;
- 4) Ōtani Ichiryū Keizu edited by Jitsunyo in 1541; and
- 5) Hogo Uragaki edited by Kensei in 1568.

Among these, the first and the fourth records correspond in that they list the children's names in identical order.

³²Furuta, Takehiko. Shinran (Tokyo: Shimizu Shoin, 1970), p. 108.

- | | |
|---------|---------------------------------|
| | 1. Hani (male) |
| | 2. Oguro no Nyôbô (female) |
| | 3. Zenran (male) |
| Shinran | 4. Shinren (March, 1211) (male) |
| | 5. Masukata (male) |
| | 6. Takano Zenni (female) |
| | 7. Kakushin (1224) (female) |

There is a moot point concerning the above form of recording, in that it does not follow the traditionally-held Japanese method of grouping the males and listing them before the females.³³ The customary format was not followed in the present case, which inclines this writer to presume that 1 and 2 were of one mother, while 3 to 7 were of another mother. If Oguro no Nyôbô, 2, had been recorded after Masukata, 5, there would have been no room for question. Until the year of Shinran's marriage is made clear, we will have to keep both hypotheses in mind.

Regardless of whether Shinran had one wife or more than one, Shinren was born in 1211 and there were three other children born previously. Let us look further back in time at Shinran's life environment, to the period in which he may have married.

Eshin-ni left her name to be remembered in posterity as the wife of Shinran. She can be presumed to have been the

³³Matsuno, Junkô. Shinran - Sono Kôdô to Shisô (Tokyo: Hyôronsha, 1971), p. 160.

woman Shinran met after he arrived in Echigo; yet, as has been argued above, she may not have been Shinran's first wife.

As mentioned previously, to survive in exile was so demanding of one's time and energy that it allowed for little else. Yet even in hardship Shinran eagerly awaited the news from Kyoto which was brought once a year by itinerant merchants. He expressed this as the showering treasures which revived his hopes for the future. At the same time as Shinran was facing the possibility of physical as well as intellectual undernourishment, he felt a strong desire for emotional sexual support. Through understanding Shinran in this perspective, it is possible to appreciate the number and strength of human passions which were acting on the great religious thinker as he reached middle age. However, from his life of submission in exile, Shinran gradually gained strength, as can be seen in the following passage which seems to have been written in retrospect of that period.

With regard to "ocean". The river of miscellaneous practices and good deeds performed by common men and sages since the beginningless past, and the sea of evil passions, as numerous as the sands of the Ganges, of those with the five deadly sins, the abusers of Dharma, and those devoid of good roots, are turned into the water of the great treasure-ocean of the true virtues, as numerous as the sands of the Ganges, of the Great Compassion and Wisdom of the Original Vow. Hence, the metaphor of "ocean".

Truly I understand (the import of the passage of) the sutra which says, "The ice of evil passions melts and becomes the water of virtue."

The ocean-like Vow does not keep the corpses of miscellaneous good deeds practised by middle and lower sages of the Two Vehicles; how then can it keep the corpses of false and perverted good deeds and of defiled and impure minds of human and heavenly beings?³⁴

Shinran's vigorous vitality and his realization of his own limitations and sinfulness brought about a fuller maturity in his thought and religion.

iii. Shinran's mature thought - From negation to Affirmation

Discovery of universal salvationism:

In order to appreciate the socio-historical factors which established the parameters within which Shinran's thought was conceived, I have focused my attention on various abstract levels of Shinran's social environment during the first half of his life, i.e., his personal circumstances, the contemporary social environment which directly influenced his personal circumstances, and on a third level of analysis, the temporal juncture in the history of Japan that gave rise to the social environment. I have also stressed the role of Hōnen's thought since it is this tradition of thought which,

³⁴ Kyō Gyō Shin Shō, SSZ I, p. 78.

as Shinran himself states,³⁵ had the greatest influence on Pure Land Buddhism. Shinran's thinking matured in the process of transcending the temporal and spiritual suffering he experienced in the first half of his life, and was guided by Hōnen's teaching of Pure Land Buddhism: the sole factor which prevented his withdrawal into the solitude and isolation of self-defeat.

Shinran was born into a family of court nobles but he left court life during childhood in order to enter the priesthood at Hieizan. Twenty years were devoted to a life of reflection and Buddhist study which, unfortunately for him, could not open the way to spiritual salvation. After suffering severe disappointment in the practice of Nangyōdō,³⁶ the attainment of enlightenment by one's own efforts, he finally abandoned Saichō's belief that "the practice of Buddhism should be such as to lead all human beings equally to enlightenment of Amida's wisdom without any discrimination". He turned in desperation to Hōnen's group, an act of faith which resulted in his political banishment.

³⁵ Tannishō, SSZ IV, p. 5-6.

How much faith Shinran had in Hōnen can be seen by his own words. I will have no regrets even though I should have been deceived by Hōnen Shōnin, and thus by uttering Nembutsu, I should fall into hell ... If the Original Vow of Amida is true, the Shakyamuni's sermons cannot be untrue. If Buddha's words are true, then can Zendō's sayings be false? If Hōnen's sayings are true, then what I, Shinran, say cannot possibly be false either.

³⁶ Nangyōdō literally means the difficult way to enlightenment.

The zenith of his thought, which was reached after such fundamental decisions, was that man is a being who can only face his environment in a quiet manner; that man, while being tossed around by his environment, simultaneously through his own Shukugô, the inherent Karma, reacts upon it and creates his own reality; therefore, although living in the same environment, each individual will live a different life because of his different attitudinal prism.

It was the problem of Karma that intellectually exercised Shinran. He believed Karma was inherent in all human beings, endlessly causing sins and wrong doings as long as one lived. In every action we were bound by it, for example:

Suppose you could do anything just as you please; then you could kill, if you were told to kill a thousand persons in order to be born in the Pure Land. But you do not kill because there is no Karmic condition within you to kill even one person, and not because your mind is good. Even though you have no thought of injuring others, it may so happen that you kill a hundred or thousand persons.³⁷

All human affairs are nothing but a samsaric³⁸ circle conditioned by inherent Karma.

A good mind arises due to the influence of the inherent good, and evil things are thought and done due to the works of inherent evils. We should know that the committing of a trifling sin, as minute as a particle of dust on the tip of a rabbit's or a sheep's hair, is without exception due to our inherent evil Karma.³⁹

³⁷ Tannishô, SSZ IV, p. 21

³⁸ Series of births and deaths or a cyclic transmigration in Birth-and-Death.

³⁹ Tannishô, SSZ IV, p. 20.

Shinran believed that, in the degenerate age of the Dharma, one who pursued the Way was a monk regardless of whether his head were shaved or his body cloaked in clerical robes. In quoting "Mappô Tômyôki" on the Kyô Gyô Shin Shô, which he believed to have been written by Saichô, Shinran wrote:

Question: All sutras and vinaya prohibit widely the breaking of the moral precepts and those acting against them are not allowed to enter the Sangha. The question is with regard to the breaking of the precepts. As I think of the Latterly Age, I see no observance of the moral precepts. How could it be that one feels pain, having no wound?

Answer: All that took place in the Age of Right Dharma, the Age of Image, and the Latterly Age is expounded in all the sutras. Whether one is a Buddhist or not, who will not open his eyes and see that covering one's own wrong deeds does not hide the Right Dharma? But the Latterly Age, about which we speak there can be but bhikshus who are barely bhikshus in name, because it is very difficult in this age to perform good deeds, and because of this, these bhikshu in name, through the compassion of Amida, will be made the true treasures of the world. If in this Latterly Age there is one who observes the precepts, it is very strange indeed. It would be as if a tiger were in the street.⁴⁰

This philosophy shows the beginning of a new kind of logic. Shinran by his position was trying to make salvation more accessible. However, the development of his theory was based on a monastic type of existence, and it would take his life of exile to refine these ideas to the point where they embraced all mankind.

⁴⁰Yamamoto, Kôshô. (tr.). Kyô Gyô Shin Shô. (Tokyo: Karinbunko, 1958), p. 283.

When Shinran lived with Hōnen's group, his master chanted Nembutsu seventy thousand times a day and kept all the priestly commandments, even though the world around was in the degenerate age of Dharma. Thus Hōnen's group had not as yet freed itself from ideological Buddhist practice. Moreover, in Echigo, Shinran was forced to live among the miserable and oppressed who lived off animals. Since he had been obliged to leave his master, Hōnen, he must have been forced to reflect introspectively in order to seek the answers to his constant questioning. "Is it true that unless these people are saved, I shall not be saved?" At this point Shinran was separated from his family and social background, and while experiencing the traumas of exile he once again changed his conception of compassion from that which he had believed firmly at the time he joined Hōnen's group. Shinran was neither an ambitious Buddhist monk nor an intellectual. He was simply a believer of Buddha's teachings who shared the farm labor with his fellow men. Thus, this experience made him identify the people as a plurality. For example, he believed the people to be as "the ocean of multitudinous beings"⁴¹ or "the sentient beings in the worlds which are as numerous as dust particles".⁴² Shinran simply felt a "oneness" with nature and with his fellow man, and it was this experience

⁴¹ Kyō Gyō Shin Shō, SSZ I, p. 117.

⁴² Ibid., p. 127.

that extended his idea of Amida's salvation from an individual framework to that including all living things. Thus, according to his teachings, even the average man as sinful as Tokonogerui from a social point of view, as well as the religious élite, was assured salvation through Amida's compassion.

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 Nembutsu. At that moment we share in the benefit of "being embraced and not forsaken".⁴³

Nembutsu is the unimpeded Single Path. The reason is that the gods of heaven and earth bow in reverence to the followers of Faith, and maras and non-Buddhists cannot hinder them. Nor can any sin or evil exert Karmic influences upon them. Nor can various good deeds surpass Nembutsu.⁴⁴

He went further, even so far as to making such statements:

We should know that Amida's Original Vow does not discriminate whether one is young or old, good or evil, and that Faith alone is of supreme importance, for it is the Vow that seeks to save the sentient beings burdened with grave sins and fiery passions. Therefore, if we have Faith in the Original Vow, no other good is needed because there is no good surpassing Nembutsu. Nor should evil be feared because there is no evil capable of obstructing Amida's Original Vow.⁴⁵

His teaching was not intended merely for a specific time in history, but as a true teaching, meant to alleviate the eternal grief and suffering of all people in every age who were promised salvation through faith without discrimination.

⁴³Tannishō, SSZ IV, p. 3-4.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 10.

⁴⁵See footnote 43.

Shinran taught these people who were enduring a wretched existence that "human suffering was the only condition necessary for receiving Amida's compassion". He said that before Amida all were equal in their practice of Nembutsu. Although he did not take the dramatic role of a crusader or a savior, he made himself, as it were, a blind man's cane. Thus, Shinran was re-emerging from exile as a creative leader with the support of the common people in his place of exile.

iv. Shukugō: Karma-controlled human destiny

One of Shinran's disciples recorded the following as his Master's words:

"We should know that the committing of a trifling sin", said the late Master, "as minute as a particle of dust on the tip of a rabbit's or a sheep's hair, is without exception due to our past evil karma"... "... Suppose you could do anything just as you please; then, you could kill, if you were told to kill a thousand persons in order to be born in the Pure Land. But you do not kill because there is no karmic condition within you to kill even one person, and not because your mind is good. Even though you have no thought of injuring others, it may so happen that you kill a hundred or a thousand persons."⁴⁶

From the above quotation, including the evidence of our present circumstances, it can be said that all acts are a result of sins committed in the past, and no matter how small that act may be, whether it be as minute as something on the

⁴⁶Tannishō, SSZ IV, p. 20.

tip of a hair of a rabbit or sheep it is still the result of sins committed in the past. Shinran concludes that this world is hell, as will be seen in the following words:
"Since I am incapable of any practice whatsoever, hell would definitely be my dwelling anyway."⁴⁷

If we say that living in this world now is living as a result of inherent sins, it follows that living now is also living by committing sins. Human beings have been living by sinning from the beginningless past. This is the meaning of the term "Shukugō" which Shinran had used in dialogue with his disciples.

Logic of faith
and Shinran:

The term Shukugō, however, does not appear in any of Shinran's own writings or letters, and one can wonder

how the term was embodied in his ideology. Shinran said that living and acting now is a continuation from the beginningless past to the eternal future from sin to sin. A passage from the Kyō Gyō Shin Shō mentions this point:

The Buddha's intention is difficult to fathom. But I humbly presume His intent as follows: From the beginningless past to this day and this moment, the ocean of multitudinous beings has been defiled, evil and filthy, and does not possess the pure mind; again, they have been deluded, flattering, and deceitful, and do not possess the true mind.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 6.

⁴⁸ Kyō Gyō Shin Shō, SSZ I, p. 116.

On the other hand he says:

All the ocean-like multitudinous beings, since the beginningless past, have been transmigrating in the sea of ignorance, drowning in the cycle of existences, bound to the cycle of sufferings, and having no pure, serene faith. They have, as a natural consequence, no true serene faith.⁴⁹

The awakening of our consciousness to this claim is born out by the comparison of sin and ignorance with the opposite Absolute Truth. For Shinran, the Absolute Truth, the Eternal Truth was none other than Amida's Original Vow. Becoming aware of one's sinfulness may lead to knowing the Eternal Truth; the contrary can also be said, and I believe that this is religious faith.

The Deep Mind is the mind of deep faith. It has ... two aspects. The first is that which believes deeply and determinedly that we are really sinful ordinary beings, fettered to Birth-and-Death, continuously drowning and transmigrating since innumerable kalpas ago, and have no means for emancipation. The second is that which believes deeply and determinedly that the Forty-eight Vows of Amida Buddha embrace the sentient beings, enabling those who trust His Vow-Power without doubt and apprehension to attain Birth assuredly...⁵⁰

The above-quoted passage is referred to as "Nishu Jinshin" which is a term used in the Jōdo Shinshū faith and which serves as the basis for its theory of salvation. There are two aspects (Nishū) of the Deep Mind (Jinshin), one of which is called Ki no Jinshin where one learns of the reality

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 120.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 103.

of one's own sinfulness, and the second of which is called HÔ no Jinshin where one believes in Amida's Vow which, without fail, will always save these sinful and evil souls. These two aspects of the Mind do not arise in the heart at separate times but rather arise simultaneously, and are born from faith. To repeat again, by becoming aware of Ki no Jinshin which is the perpetuation of sin, we are able to believe in HÔ no Jinshin, Amida's Vow, and this precise Logic establishes the Salvation of Jôdo Shinshû which is said to be a Faith of Other Power.

From negation
to affirmation:

Shinran employed the word Shuku
meaning "have" and "dwell in" in order
to relate the inherent sin and ..

ignorance in human beings. Although we think we have acted in a manner such as explained in this passage, "When our minds are good, we think it is good, and when our minds are bad, we think it is bad",⁵¹ the act is nothing more than a continuation of the past acts, and an act en route to the future. When one reflects upon oneself, one's past acts (Shukugô) naturally become the object of consideration. Thus, despite the meaning "dwell in" in the phrase, it can be said that the phrase is applied for reflecting upon one's present self as well. Subsequently, Shinran repeatedly told his disciples that only

⁵¹Tannishô, SSZ IV, p. 22.

through comparison with the Absolute, Eternal Truth that was Amida's Vow, are we able to attain awareness. The more one tries to believe that Amida's Vow is Eternal Truth, the realization that one is in the midst of continuous sinning makes one sad and dejected, and having one's back turned toward Amida's Pure Land is, as it were, seeing one's self in a reflection.

It is hard to leave our native land of sufferings where we have been transmigrating from immemorable kalpas ago up to the present. We feel no longing for the Pure Land of Serene Sustenance where we are yet to be born. How powerful and intense, indeed, are our evil passions!⁵²

This awareness, in turn, teaches us that the more sinful a man is, the more Amida's Vow is drawn to him. Since sins committed by man had been from the beginningless past, so Amida's Vow had also been from the beginningless past.

In one of the academic books that Shinran wrote with his heart and soul, there is a passage in which he makes a frank confession and penitence. This is the passage which is believed to be the most unreserved confession in the history of Japanese Buddhism. It reads:

Truly I know. Sad is it that I, Gutoku Ran, sunk in the vast sea of lust and lost in the great mountain of desire for fame and profit, do not rejoice in joining the group of the Rightly Established State, nor do I enjoy coming near to the True Enlightenment. What a shame! What a sorrow!⁵³

⁵² Ibid., p. 12.

⁵³ Kyô Gyô Shin Shô, SSZ I, p. 153.

The more serious and profound this penitence and confession, the more joyful and elated one will be to know of Amida's Vow, the Eternal Truth, which was vowed for the salvation of man who is nothing more than sin itself.

What a joy it is that I place my mind in the soul of Buddha's Universal Vow and I let my thoughts flow into the sea of the Inconceivable Dharma. I deeply acknowledge the Tathâgata's Compassion and sincerely appreciate the master's benevolence in instructing me. As my joy increases, my feeling of indebtedness grows deeper.⁵⁴

Moreover, Shinran says that the merit of Amida's Vow would fill the ocean of multitudinous beings. He had come to believe that there was an Amida Buddha who had mercy on even those who practiced the Buddhism of Sages which he had denied after twenty years of his religious training. In a letter to his disciples, he wrote:

The Path of Sages is the Way by which those already enlightened mean to lead us in and is represented by such superb teachings of the Mahayana School as the Busshin-shû, the Shingon-shû, the Hokke-shû, the Kezon-shû, the Sanron-shû, and others. The Busshin is the Zen Buddhism that now much flourishes. Also, the Path of Sages is represented by such teachings as the Hossô-shû, the Jôjitsu-shû, the Kusha-shû, and others, which are either pseudo-Mahayana or Hinayana. These are all of the Path of Sages. We say "pseudo" because the already enlightened Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas reveal themselves, for the time being, in several forms so as to urge us to the Way.⁵⁵

Shinran thus was able to find and accept the innate value of things. His turning point from negative to positive logic

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 383.

⁵⁵ Mattôshô, SSZ III, p. 61.

is his thought on Shukugō. His deep sadness in realizing that he was living in continual sin was precisely what made him know of the joy that Amida's Vow would completely embrace such sadness with Eternal Truth. This revelation established his Logic of Salvation. The words to his disciples explaining that one can continue living with confidence though knowing one was in the midst of continuous sinning are as follows:

Nembutsu is the unimpeded Single Path. The reason is that the gods of heaven and earth bow in reverence to the followers of Faith, and maras and non-Buddhists cannot hinder them. Nor can any sin or evil exert karmic influences upon them. Nor can various good deeds surpass Nembutsu.⁵⁶

Through faith, a person who was in sin will know joy called the "unimpeded Single Path" which is truly free. I believe the above is Shinran's "Ideology of Past Acts".

Shinran, as mentioned previously, had not mentioned the term "Shukugō" in any of his books or letters but the use of this term was for the purpose of teaching the True Faith.

⁵⁶Tannishō, SSZ IV, p. 10.

- v. Akunin Shōki: If a good man can attain salvation, even more so a wicked man.

In writing the Kyō Gyō Shin Shō, the Nehangyō was the second most cited reference after the Daimuryōjukyō, one of the "Three Sutras of Pure Land Buddhism".⁵⁷ The reason for this frequency was the recognition that Buddha's object of salvation was the Nanke no Sanki, the three groups of men difficult to be saved.⁵⁸ I have concluded that the other reason for the frequent citation from the Nehangyō was Shinran's realization that Shinran himself was one of Nanke no Sanki, that man difficult to be saved.

The "Akunin" who is symbolized as the man in the Nanke no Sanki is the very object of salvation, "Shōki", that Buddha is seeking for. This is the ideology of Akunin Shōki, which was Shinran's view of man that bore his ideology of Shukugō, and the starting as well as the returning point in Shinran's thought.

Unlike the word "Shukugō", the word "Akunin Shōki" appears in Shinran's as well as in his disciples' writings. The expression is found in the Kyō Gyō Shin Shō as well as

⁵⁷Tsuchihashi, Shūkō. Shinran Shōnin to Nehangyō. Ryūkyoku Daigaku Ronshū, Vol. 355-356. (Kyoto: Ryūkyoku Daigaku, 1961), p. 309.

⁵⁸The three groups of men are 1) those who have committed the five sins forbidden by the teaching of Buddha; 2) those who mock Buddhism; and 3) those who have no innate righteousness.

the Ronchû, Ôjôyôshû, Kammuryôjukyô, Monjiki, and the Nehangyô, making a total of eleven appearances.

Self-examination
of man:

Shinran's disciples were informed
that:

Amida made his Vow out of compassion for us who are full of evil passions, and who are unable to set ourselves free from samsara by any practice. Since the purpose of his Vow is to have evil persons attain Buddhahood, the evil person who trusts the Other Power is especially the one who has the right cause for Birth in the Pure Land. Hence, the words, "Even a good person is born in the Pure Land, how much more so is an evil person".⁵⁹

It becomes evident through this type of writing that faith and trust were not limited to any one specific class of society. We wonder what kind of people specifically Shinran had in mind when he referred to "Akunin" or "evil persons". In one of his letters Shinran provides a clue to his concept of an "evil person".

So we ought not to think we cannot be taken in by the Tathâgata because we are bad. Think we are bad because we are by nature fully illusion-clad.⁶⁰

In another letter, he said that these people were the very people that Buddha was trying to save. It reads:

⁵⁹ Tannishô, SSZ IV, p. 6.

⁶⁰ Mattôshô, SSZ III, p. 64.

Illusioned as we are, we may unknowingly be doing what we ought not to do, saying what we ought not to say, and thinking what we ought not to think. Should we, on the ground that nothing hinders us, entertain dark thoughts toward others, do what we ought not to do, and say what we ought not to say, it is not that we are driven to evil by illusion, but that we do so on purpose. This can never be.⁶¹

As just explained by Shinran, man's actions all stem from man's spiritual darkness and ignorance. Shinran says that man is such where any kind of sin and all the things done with the exercise of one's will are, in fact, not the will of one's self but the play of fate that makes man commit sins. This then is the essence of Shinran's definition of Akunin or the evil person.

It has already been mentioned that the word "Shôki" means the people whom Buddha especially sought to save. The character "Ki" in the terminology of Buddhism means man, and as a term in the doctrine of the Jôdo Shinshû, "Ki" or "man" is divided into three types: 1) Shobi no ki, 2) Juhô no ki, and 3) Shôtoku no ki. "Shobi no ki" generally denotes the concept of every man as an evil person. "Juhô no ki" is the man who has faith. "Shôtoku no ki" is the man who is compared with the Absolute Truth from the standpoint of religion.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 103.

Meaning of
evil man:

Here, let us look at Shinran of the
"Shôtoku no ki" where he compared
himself with the Absolute Being.

He says:

The Deep Mind is the mind of Deep Faith. It has,
again, two aspects. The first is that which
believes deeply and determinedly that we are really
sinful, ordinary beings, fettered to Birth-and-Death,
continuously drowning and transmigrating since
innumerable kalpas ago, and have no means for
emancipation.⁶²

To his disciples he said:

I know absolutely nothing about good and evil. If
I were able to know good so thoroughly that the
Tathâgata would recognize it in His mind as good,
then I could say I know good. Were I able to know
evil so thoroughly that the Tathâgata would recog-
nize it as evil, then I could say I know evil.⁶³

In such manner, Shinran defined all men, including
himself, as evil in terms of the Tathâgata. He then went on
to write in his Kyô Gyô Shin Shô that man who is evil is the
object whom Buddha seeks to save.

Hereupon, the Meditation Sutra says: "Teach me
how to observe the land resulting from the pure
actions". "The land resulting from the pure actions"
refers to the Recompensed Land established by
fulfilling the Original Vow. "Teach me how to
meditate" is an expedient. "Teach me how to receive
properly" refers to the Adamantine True Mind.⁶⁴

Continuing on, he said:

⁶² Kyô Gyô Shin Shô, SSZ I, p. 103.

⁶³ Tannishô, SSZ IV, p. 38.

⁶⁴ Kyô Gyô Shin Shô, SSZ I, p. 276.

"Contemplate clearly the Person in the Pure Land who has accomplished the pure action". This means to believe in the Tathâgata of Light Unhindered in the Ten Quarters who came into existence by fulfilling the Original Vow ... "You are a common mortal with inferior mental capacity". This reveals that even an evil man can be born in the Pure Land ... "Buddhas and Tathâgatas have a distinguished expedient". This shows that meditative and non-meditative good deeds are of the expedient teaching.

It says: "She saw the Land through Buddha's Power". This implies the Other Power. It says: "If the sentient beings after Buddha's death ..." This shows that the sentient beings in the future are the very object of salvation.⁶⁵

The ideological development² of the "Akunin Shôki" resulted from the special study of the Nehangyô and was based upon the "Jiki Sôô no Ronri"⁶⁶ which he studied at Hieizan. This specialized study served as a stepping stone which enabled him to turn to the Pure Land teaching; and further, by living his life in exile, he arrived at the ideology which he fostered. Shinran thus taught that the ordinary finite man can be saved by Amida Buddha, the Eternal Truth and infinite compassion, i.e., by the exhaustive teaching of the Other Power. The transcendental character of Amida offered merciful salvation to all. Be they rich or poor, noble or outcast, Shinran's doctrine made it possible for man regardless of his social position to enjoy the happiness of the Pure Land and to experience the ecstasy of true

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶See Chapter II-ii, Logic of Jiki Sôô, p. 36

contentment. Salvation no longer required the development of self-power but only adoration of Amida Buddha. This teaching Shinran held to be the most suitable for the period and its people. Jiki SÔÔ no Ronri was the result of an emotional and intellectual odyssey through lyrical humanity and the troubles of physical passions, and it entitled all sinners (evil men) to attain salvation. At about this stage Shinran began to show maturity in his religious thought which earned him the title of religious reformer. That which is referred to as Jiki SÔÔ no Ronri forms the basis of his thought and this resulted from a deep consciousness of history as well as from the maturing of his own faith. His thought exerted a strong influence upon what was to become Japanese Buddhism; it served as the basis for Kamakura Buddhism, which has been referred to as the religious reformation of Japan.

CHAPTER V

SHINRAN'S KAMAKURA REFORMATION

i. Significance of new religious salvation in Kamakura

During the Kamakura Period (1192-1333) the old traditional power was replaced by a new authority. In the process of this change, in the midst of resistance and revolts, people experienced insecurity and suffering for the degenerate age. At the same time, the people were liberated from the authoritative pressures and met with the opportunity to awaken to individual self awareness. This was apparent even in the political structure. The two governments of Emperor and warriors coexisted at the same time, a situation to be traced to this period alone in Japanese history. Warriors who originally were bodyguards to the Imperial court members now had ruling power. The values previously held had been completely changed and became the starting point of a social revolution.

The infiltration of the warriors into the ruling class began with the Heike clan. The political power of the Heike, however, remained under that of the Emperor's. By establishing kinship through marriage with the Imperial family, and by procuring a military force, the Heike clan soon had a free hand in the Imperial government. As opposition against the arrogant Heike clan increased, Emperor Goshirakawa, who wanted to regain power, tried to oust the Heike from their seat of power and to this end, but unable to do so on his own, enlisted

the aid of the Genji clan. This was the beginning of a tragedy for the Imperial power:

Minamoto no Yoritomo (1147-1199), whom the Emperor trusted as an obedient and trustworthy watchdog, metamorphosed into a wolf. Soon after the Heike were subjugated in year 1185, Yoritomo refused to remain any longer under the control of the Emperor. The Genji clan that defeated the Heike proved to itself that it could at any time fight the Imperial family. The Genji eventually took away from the Emperor. Shugo (police and military powers) and Jitô (control of land and collection of taxes) and established a government in Kamakura.

Liberation and the rise of new order:

Common soldiers fighting in the battlefield, who had been looked

down upon by the Imperial court members as Azuma Ebisu, men of no education living in the east, were now assigned to the ruling posts of Shugo and Jitô. The class of people who had been disregarded as the lowly born and those whose work was looked upon as sinful were now given the possibility of rising in society. In other words, the whole society was awakening to a new identity.

It was time also for religion, the organizations and doctrines of which were tied to the old authority, to change. For those who now realized their individual humanity, it was important to seek a religion which would constructively give strong incentive to living rather than merely teaching matters

that would reflect upon their lowly birth and sinful work. This was the Kamakura Period, a turning period, when all people were groping in confusion and reaching for faith. Faith, in turn, was a great liberating influence in the lives of many. The men who spent their lives in spreading this new Way to Salvation were of course, Shinran, Hōnen, Dōgen, Nichiren and many other monks of the Kamakura Period. We will now compare the views upheld by the above monks.

ii. Development of a teaching suitable to the period and to its people

Masutani Fumio has stated that "... in the Kamakura Period, Japan, for the first time, found that Buddhism which was originally a foreign doctrine had become the accepted religion in the daily lives of the common Japanese people."¹ This was made possible through the practical application of Jiki-Sōō no Rōnri by such Buddhist leaders of the Kamakura period as Hōnen, Shinran, Dōgen, Nichiren and Ippen. It is proposed in this chapter to compare the legacy of Dōgen and Nichiren with those of Hōnen and Shinran, and in this way to observe the development encompassing the Gyō (religious practices) and Shin (faith) of these four seminal figures, so that Shinran's importance as a religious reformer in the Kamakura Period can be better evaluated.

¹Masutani, Fumio. Shinran, Dōgen, Nichiren (Tokyo: Shibundō, 1961), p. 24.

Kamakura Buddhism
and the religious
men:

These four men of the Kamakura Period
had all at one time in their lives

studied in Hieizan - i.e., Hōnen from
the age of thirteen to forty-three, Shinran from nine to twenty-
nine, Dōgen from thirteen to fifteen and finally Nichiren from
the age of twenty-one to thirty-two. The traditions of thought
developed by these four men share a common characteristic in
that from the cornucopia of Buddhist teachings and practices,
each had drawn one single teaching and practice to make parti-
cularly his own. It is suggested that the reason for this
stems from the fact that all four men, as mentioned above,
studied in Hieizan.

Now Hieizan considered all Buddhist teachings and prac-
tices to be of equal value. But from such an eclectic
scholastic position as that of Hieizan where Sundry Practices
were prevalent, both Hōnen and Shinran left in search of the
pure faith. Dōgen too left Hieizan for a more meaningful
life in the pursuit of one practice. Nichiren, who practiced
Hokekyō, remarked that "those in Japan who are not followers
of Dengyō Daishi (Saichō, the founder of Hieizan) are evil
men"² and he too left the syncretistic atmosphere of Hieizan,
where there co-existed teachings and practices other than the
Hokekyō which Saichō adored.

²Senjishō. Shōwa Teihon Nichiren Shōnin Ibun, Vol. II.
Risshō Daigaku Nichiren Kyōgaku Kenkyūsho (ed.). (Yamanashi:
Sōhonzan Minobukuonji, 1953), p. 1016.

The four men who thus "descended from the mountain" demonstrated their critical spirit and discernment toward the existing conditions of history, society and man in the thirteenth century, and each chose a Buddhist teaching and practice to meet his perception of the actual needs of the people of his time. Each leader re-interpreted and developed Buddhism based on one chosen teaching and practice and together these came to be called the "new Buddhism" of Japan" or "Kamakura Buddhism". This Kamakura Buddhism is also referred to as the "Religious Reformation" of Japan and such representative leaders of this period as Hōnen, Shinran, Dōgen and Nichiren are collectively known as the religious reformers of Japan.

The ultimate choice
- the theory of
practice of Kamakura
Buddhism:

The outstanding characteristic of
Kamakura Buddhism, excepting Zen, was
the emphasis on one sole teaching and
practice as best fitting the age,
common man and country. Each of the men have remarked as
follows:³

In the practice of Buddhism, it is imperative to know oneself thoroughly as well as the period in which one is living.³ - Hōnen.

The priests and laymen of this age should consider their own limited capacity.⁴ - Shinran.

³Nembutsu Taii. Wagotōroku Vol. II, Jōdoshū Zensho IX (Tokyo: Jōdoshū Shūten Kankōkai, 1908), p. 510-511.

⁴Kyō Gyō Shin Shō, SSZ I, p. 313.

The proper way of studying Buddhism is first of all always to study the age and to see man and his age through the eyes of Buddhism.⁵ - Nichiren.

These men and Dôgen further remarked on the Kamakura Period in which they lived and their contemporaries as well as on Japan as follows:

The world has already entered the degenerate age of the Dharma. Man is ignorance.⁶ Two thousand five hundred years after the death of Shakyamuni, this age is full of conflict; in it, it is most difficult to master the practices of Buddhism.⁷ - Hônen.

More than two thousand years after the death of Shakyamuni the age of the Right Dharma and Image Dharma has long passed. Believers in Buddhism who follow after the death of Shakyamuni are sad.⁸ We are of far-off islands scattered in the ocean.⁹ - Shinran.

Contrasting we who are of a far-off island in the present degenerate age, with those of the age of the Right Dharma and Image Dharma, there is a difference of heaven and earth.¹⁰ - Dôgen.

More than two thousand years have passed since we entered the degenerate age; we are of a far-off island, and as well man is ignorance itself.¹¹ - Nichiren.

⁵ Senjishô, Shôwa Teihon Nichiren Shônin Ibun, op. cit., p. 1003

⁶ Nembutsu Ôjô Yôgisho. Wagotôroku, op. cit., p. 497.

⁷ Nembutsu Taii. Wagotôroku, op. cit., p. 511.

⁸ Shôzômatu Wasan, SSZ II, p. 157.

⁹ Shôshinge, SSZ I, p. 91.

¹⁰ Eiheikôroku Vol. V. Dôgen Zenji Zenshû I. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobô, 1969), p. 539.

¹¹ Kaimokushô. Shôwa Teihon Nichiren Shônin Ibun, op. cit., p. 556.

Each of the men referred to his age as one of conflict, to man as ignorance itself, and to his country as a far-off island. As seen above, with acute discerning power and critical spirit they situated the age, land and man, and reinterpreted these to form a new Buddhist doctrine.

Hōnen, Dōgen and Nichiren, the faith and religious practices:

Pure Land Buddhism and the practice of Nembutsu which was chosen by Hōnen have already been discussed above in Chapter III-i, Hōnen and his teaching.¹²

Characteristically, Hōnen divided his understanding of the religion between "the reality of this earth and the Pure Land" and "man and Buddha". He turned his back on the secular world and centered his teachings around rebirth into the Pure Land in an after-life; he denied man's ability to achieve salvation by self-cultivation, and taught that man must appeal only to the Mercy of Amida. Hōnen further urged believers to abandon many Buddhist practices which were at that time considered of deep significance. He emphasized only the Shōmyō Nembutsu, the Easy Path, which was the invocation of Nembutsu. The following are the words which most accurately express Hōnen's thought:

¹² See Chapter III-i, Hōnen and his teaching, p. 71

See Amida with your eyes, invoke the name of Amida with your mouth, await the coming of Amida in your heart, ... and pray for your right-mindedness at your deathbed.¹³

Dōgen opposed these teachings of Hōnen.

In his sermons and written works, Dōgen denied the existence of an after-life and clearly emphasized the dutiful performance of religious practices through which enlightenment could be attained in this world. In other words, Dōgen maintained that soul may be transformed into body and that eternal truth may be embodied in the history of this world of reality. In order to attain such enlightenment, Dōgen chose Shikan Taza (themeless meditation) which he taught as concentration on the practice of developing self-power. He thus clearly took a completely opposite stand to Hōnen, who taught that the attainment of life hereafter was only accessible through "other power" and the practice of the Easy Path. Dōgen argued for his position in these words:

Rather than remaining lackadaisical with the excuse that the world is in a degenerate age, one should ask when can one be enlightened if he will not endeavor for Bodhi-mind.¹⁴

In denying the belief in the Easy Path, Dōgen said:

¹³Hichikajō Kishōmon, No. 5. Wagotōroku, op. cit., p. 509.

¹⁴Shōbō Genzō Zuimonki. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1965), p. 24.

What the people of today mean by practice is the doing of an easy practice. This is clearly wrong and inconsistent with the teachings of Buddhism. What is the Buddhist teaching that is popular among the people of this age which is easy to comprehend and practice? It is neither the law of this world nor the laws of Buddha. It is nothing but a highly confused delusion of man.¹⁵

Dōgen has these further words with regard to the practice of Nembutsu:

Do you know what meritorious virtues could be attained by such practices as chanting and saying Nembutsu? It is truly sad that you think of Buddhist meritorious virtues as merely being the moving of your tongue and voicing of sound. Moving your mouth and voicing without even resting can be equated with the frogs making unceasing noises day and night in a spring rice paddy, and there is nothing to be gained.¹⁶

Dōgen thus strongly criticized the principal teaching of the abandonment of this world and rebirth into the life hereafter through Nembutsu. He, like Hōnen, however, also referred to the period he was born into as the "degenerate age", man as evil and Japan as a far-off country.¹⁷ He contended that such a social and historical matrix prompted man to seek eternal and infinite truth. Dōgen's thought did not perceive Buddha as one relative person to whose power appeal was made.

¹⁵ Gakudō Yōjinshu, Vol. V, Dōgen Zenji Zenshu I, op. cit., p. 474.

¹⁶ Ibid., Vol. VI, p. 475.

Note that a rice paddy as such does not exist in spring for after the harvest in October, the fields are left bare until the following June when the new crop will be planted. Dōgen's metaphor is thus intended to depict the meaninglessness of the easy path.

¹⁷ See footnote 10.

The difference in Honen's and Dogen's fundamental attitudes toward reality is quite radical. In the teachings of Honen, the breaking-away from and the transcending of reality is emphasized while for Dogen an active confrontation with reality is the only fruitful posture before the human condition.

Having examined the teachings of both Honen and Dogen, we are in a better position to appreciate the religious views of Nichiren. The characteristic of Nichiren's teachings is the importance or weight he gives to one specific sutra - the Hokekyo. Nichiren had studied the teachings of Tendai in Hieizan; however, he criticizes Hieizan which taught the Hokekyo, the particular sutra¹⁸ of the Tendai sect, for also synthesizing and developing the teachings of other Buddhist sects. He therefore ventured to revive the essence of the Hokekyo. In so doing, he tried to purify and make concise the Buddhist doctrine, as had Honen and Dogen. As well, Nichiren reflected and criticized the degenerate age, the ordinary man and the distant land. He maintained belief in and practice of the teachings of the Hokekyo, which was, among the Buddhist teachings, the ultimate way to attain eternal truth in this finite society. The faith and practice which Nichiren taught can be understood better by the following quotation:

¹⁸Particular Sutra. Treatise of a sect upon which its doctrines are based.

The basis upon which one enters the Way of Buddha is faith. Though without enlightenment, he who has faith is a man of Shôken;¹⁹ he who has enlightenment but not faith is a Sendai.^{20, 21}

In other words, Nichiren emphasized faith as did Hônen before him. However, the faith of which Nichiren spoke, as will be explained in more detail later was measured by the degree of one's practice of the faith. In other words, he claimed that more practice was evidence of deeper faith; hence practice per se took priority over faith. Therefore, Nichiren's emphasis on faith above practice was not necessarily the same as that which Hônen had taught.

The practice so emphasized by Nichiren will now be contrasted and compared to the practice that Dôgen emphasized. As mentioned before, the practice which Dôgen taught was one for the realization of eternal truth within an individual. Nichiren's practice was that which would build an ideal nation in this worldly society through the teachings of the Hokekyô. The latter teaching was historical in that it had revolutionary implications for society.

¹⁹ Shôken, i.e., correct view, which refers to a correct understanding of Shitai. Shitai are the four noble truths, a basic concept in Buddhism which explains the cause of suffering and the Way of deliverance therefrom - 1) all existence is suffering; 2) the cause of suffering is illusion and desire; 3) the realm free from suffering; and 4) the means for the attainment of Nirvana.

²⁰ Sendai. The "unsavable", i.e., one who has no capacity for salvation.

²¹ Hokke Daimokushô. Shôwa Teihon Nichiren, Shônin Ibun, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 392.

Nichiren's faith and practice can now be discussed with reference to opinion rendered by scholars on Nichiren. Nichiren claimed himself to be the Hokekyô no Gyôja²² particularly during the latter half of his life. This very term explains the social aspect of his active practice. Tokoro Shigemoto, a scholar of Nichiren, explains this expression as follows:

Nichiren never refers to himself as the Hokekyô no Shinja²³ For Nichiren, to believe means to express in action what he believes. The depth of faith is substantiated by practice. Nichiren, who calls himself the Hokekyô no Gyôja places importance on practice over and above faith.²⁴

Practice that was preferred over faith differed with Hônen's practice of Nembutsu. Hônen's Nembutsu was a practice that sprung forth after there was faith, and through such practice, one was able to reach Enlightenment. If put in more doctrinal terms, Hônen's practice was an "Ôsô no Gyô" (i.e., practice for being born in the Pure Land).

Nichiren's practice, on the other hand, was the basis upon which faith was born and Enlightenment reached, and subsequently practice constituted the proof of true Enlightenment.

²² Gyôja of Hokekyô. A Buddhist ascetic, one who practices discipline. In the Kaimokushô which Nichiren authored at the age of fifty-one, he employs the expression "the Gyôja of Hokekyô" twenty-seven times.

²³ Shinja of Hokekyô. A follower.

²⁴ Tokoro Shigemoto. Nichiren. Nihon Shisô Taikai XIV. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1971), p. 485-510.

This can be referred to as "Gensô no Gyô" (i.e., practice in order to come back to this world and save others).

Nichiren speaks of practice and faith as follows:

One must strive for the ways of both practice and learning. When practice and learning cease, there will be no Buddhism. By your own practice and learning, teach others. Practice and learning originate from faith. If you have strength, be it a word or sentence, utter it.²⁵

In another work he writes:

In reading the Hokekyô, some only mouth the words and do not read with their body; the heart may be reading but the body is not; to read with both body and heart is indeed sacred.²⁶

Tamura Yoshirô speaks of the roots of the social and historical character of Nichiren's practice as follows:

It is the teachings found in the portion from Hosshi-bon, Vol. 10 to Zokurui-bon, Vol. 22 of the Hokekyô. Here, it praises: "Those who bear and endure the sufferings of this world, exalt the truth, and strive in the realization of ideal society (i.e. Jiyu no Bosatsu) are Bosatsu born to this world as messengers of Buddha". Therefore, it teaches, "Do not fear suffering and pursue your practice."²⁷

One of the reasons Nichiren called himself "Hokekyô no Gyôja" and saved his energy for revolutionary activities in this world derives from this passage. His consciousness with regard to his own words, "the messenger sent to build

²⁵ Shohôjissôsho. Shôwa Teihon Nichiren Shônin Ibun, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 728-729.

²⁶ Tsuchirô Goshô. Ibid., p. 509-510.

²⁷ Tamura Yoshirô. Nihon Bukkyôshi Nyûmon. (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1969), p. 120.

a nation of Buddhist ideals in this world of reality", drove him to act like a prophet, and this, needless to say, antagonized the rulers and administrators. The reason why Nichiren was persecuted more than Hōnen, Shinran and Dōgen also lies in these facts. This persecution produced in him a higher consciousness of being righteous, and of being the "Hokekyō no Gyōja" as well as the apostle of martyrdom. Thus, Nichiren was perceived by the people to be a religious militant who could challenge the rulers and administrators.

iii. Shinran's faith, Jinenhōni

The faiths and practices of Hōnen, Dōgen and Nichiren must be briefly summarized before they may be compared with that of Shinran. Hōnen, Dōgen and Nichiren each criticized and rejected prevalent Buddhist notions concerning the degenerate age, man, and Japan's isolated location.

Hōnen denied the finiteness of man and of reality and searched for Eternal Truth in Buddha and the Pure Land. Dōgen and Nichiren too, just as Hōnen, searched for their ideal in a Buddha who is the Eternal Truth. However, what distinguished Nichiren and Dōgen from Hōnen was their attempt to materialize the ideal they found in Buddha in this world. In short, neither Dōgen nor Nichiren denied the reality of this world. Dōgen in particular attempted to surmount his finite "self" in order to experience the attainment of

Eternal Truth. The method he practiced to attain this end was themeless meditation (Shikan Taza).

Nichiren sought to transform this finite world into an ideal land, and, to this end, he employed the faith and practice taught in the sutra of Hokekyō. This sutra preaches social reform in order to establish an ideal society. The Hokekyō teaches further that, as proof of faith, there must be praxis. Nichiren's faith thus aroused him to act for the reformation of society. The efforts of Dōgen and Nichiren to transcend their historical selves through practice and faith can be viewed as the Buddhistic confrontation with finite reality.

Shinran's faith and practice:

Shinran followed in the footsteps of his spiritual mentor Hōnen in affirming the teachings of Nembutsu. He also accepted Hōnen's absolute unbridgeable gap between this world and the Pure Land, and between the ordinary man and Buddha. However, Shinran differed from Hōnen in denying man's ability to attain Buddhahood through his own efforts.

In response to Jōshin-bō, explaining "the element of denied self-power", Shinran replied as follows:

My dear Jōshin-bō,

May 5th

I fully understand what you mean to say. Now you write to inquire about your doubts regarding the religious questions and say that as we are taken in and protected by the Unhindered Light the moment faith gets established, the cause for being born in the Pure Land is always established. This is good. You thus talk nicely, but all such, it seems to me, would end in presumption on our part. For once we are wonder-struck, there should no more be any worrying presumption on our part. It is hard to understand that there is much desire to flee from this world and less cause to be born in the Pure Land. The desire to flee from this world and the cause to be born in the Pure Land are all one. All seem to be but a halfway presumption. When your faith is set in the inconceivable wisdom of Amida Buddha, you will not particularly need worrying about this and that. Please only do not be worried at what other people say. Only put trust in the Vow of the Tathāgata. Please do not presume upon this and that.

With reverence, I remain,

Shinran (sealed)

P.S. The Other Power means not presuming this and that.²⁸

As can be seen from this communication, Shinran emphasized the importance of having faith. Shinran went beyond Hōnen's teachings in rejecting the practice of Nembutsu required for Rinjūshōnen, Rinjūraigō. Rinjūshōnen means to be free from lust, hatred and ignorance at the time of death; and Rinjūraigō denotes the coming of Amida at our deathbed to take us with Him to the Pure Land. With regard to Rinjūraigō Shinran said:

²⁸ Mattōshō, SSZ IX, p. 84-86.

The followers of true faith sit in the Right Established State because of Him who takes us in and who abandons not. Therefore, there can be no waiting for the last moment of life and looking for Amida's coming to take us in at our deathbed. No sooner is faith established, then birth in the Pure Land becomes a decided fact. There is no waiting for the set formality of Amida's coming to take us in at our deathbed. The word "right-mindedness" tells the establishing of faith as vowed in the Vow. Because of this faith, we unfailingly attain Unsurpassed Nirvana. This faith is called "One Mind". This One Mind is called "Adamantine Mind". This Adamantine Mind is called "Great Bodhi Mind". This is the Other Power of the Other Power.²⁹

As seen from the above passage Shinran denies the possibility of man's attainment of self-power as taught by Dōgen and Nichiren and insists instead upon absolute dependence on Buddha's Mercy or Other Power. In Shinran's view:

It is very wrong when with a mind of self-power, one says that one is equal to the Tathāgata.³⁰

The practice of Shōmyō Nembutsu of which Shinran spoke was neither the practice to be undertaken to be born in the Pure Land nor the practice to return to this world in order to save others, but was a prayer of thanksgiving for all living beings.

The epitome and culmination of Shinran's thought is found in this passage which Shinran himself refers to as Jinenhōni.

²⁹ Mattōshō, SSZ IV, p. 99.

³⁰ Ibid.

We say "Jinen". "Ji" means "of itself". It has nothing to do with the doing of one who practises Nembutsu. "Nen" means "to cause to". "To cause to" has nothing to do with the doing of one who practises Nembutsu. As it is so vowed by the Tathāgata, we say "hōni" (Law). As it is the Vow of this Tathāgata, we say "to cause to" "hōni". As "hōni" comes of this Vow and as there is nothing to do with the doing of one who practices Nembutsu, we say by virtue of this "Law", we are made "to be caused to". In all, we see for the first time that there is now on our part no doing to talk about. That is why it is shown "non-reason is reason". "Jinen" means from the very start "to cause to". The Vow of Amida Buddha has from the very start nothing to do with the doing of one who practises Nembutsu. His Vow was so vowed that we should trust in His Holy Name "Namuamidabutsu" and that He then takes us in. Therefore, when we think neither good nor bad, there can be this "jinen". So have I heard. What is vowed is to make us Unsurpassed Buddhas. An Unsurpassed Buddha has no form. As there is no form to conform to, we say "jinen". When things are said in terms of form, there can be no "Unsurpassed Nirvana". To make us know of this formlessness there first came out to be this Amida Buddha. So have I heard. We hear of Amida Buddha. This is but to make us know of this "jinen". When this fact is understood, we ought not always to talk this and that about this "jinen". Should we ever be talking about this "jinen", it will come to mean that "non-reason is reason" will still have "reason". This will arise out of the unfathomable depths of wisdom of the All Enlightened One.

December 14th,
Second year of Shōka.

Shinran
at the age of eighty-six.³¹

Shinran thus taught that the ordinary finite man can be saved by Amida Buddha, the Eternal Truth and infinite compassion, i.e., by the exhaustive teaching of the Other Power. The transcendental character of Amida offered merciful salvation to all. Be they rich or poor, noble or outcast, Shinran

³¹Mattōshō, SSZ IX, p. 72-74.

doctrine made it possible for man regardless of his social position to enjoy the happiness of the Pure Land and to experience the ecstasy of true contentment. Salvation no longer required the development of self-power but only adoration of Amida Buddha.

CONCLUSION

We have attempted to trace the dynamic interaction characteristic of Shinran's life circumstances up until his forty-second year. Rather than restricting itself to intellectual history, this paper has situated Shinran, the religious thinker, within the social and political movements of his time -- the decline of aristocratic court domination and the burgeoning of a self-confident, samurai-controlled medieval society. The conflict-laden personal position of a sensitive Buddhist monk in quest of spiritual security has also been described. Shinran's career choice was not an autonomous one but was imposed on him by others. Needless to say, the basis for one's personality is affected by one's personal circumstances and the surrounding historical environment; thus, there is always an element of compulsion present. In establishing an identity for oneself, one must define oneself by actions which confront this heteronomous environment. The first forty-two years of his life were divided into three periods: his life in the monastery of Hieizan, his conversion to the teachings of the Pure Land and resulting experiences with Hōnen's group, and lastly, his life in Echigo. For Shinran, the immediate environment was initially his troubled family environment which gave cause to his entry into Hieizan, and then life in the Hieizan monastery itself.

Life in the monastery demanded austere religious practices and Shinran was required to identify himself as a monk from the early and impressionable age of nine. Before his entry into the monastery he was under the tutelage of his uncle Munenari. Munenari being a man ever eager for personal improvement and bureaucratic advancement, a strict ethical environment was always made to surround Shinran.

At the same time there existed a background completely opposed to that just mentioned above. Shinran had a father who, upon losing his job and retiring, abandoned his four year old son; he also had a grandfather, who, considered to be licentious man because he not only brought shame upon the family but also lowered the family social status, was omitted from the family genealogy records. Consequently, Shinran had to come to grips with these mixed family traits.

Shinran was faced with the contradiction of being born in the degenerate age of Buddhism, and yet living his daily life in this religion. Using the language of the psychologist Erik Erikson, the conflict between these two heteronomous adversities was a "curse"¹ which Shinran had to overcome.

According to Erikson, this curse is formed between the ages fifteen and thirty-three and is borne by the individual throughout his life as something that one day has to be

¹Erikson, E.H. Insight and Responsibility: Lectures on the Ethical Implications of Psychoanalytic Insight. (New York: Norton Company, Inc., 1964), p. 202.

overcome and transcended. The technical expression, an "account to settle", is used to denote the curse.²

Shinran must have intensely feared that he had inherited the laziness, weakness, and sinfulness of his father and grandfather, for his uncle/stepfather Munenari, on the other hand, had given Shinran a sense of excelled destiny and responsibility over others. He must have known moments of deep spiritual despair as his limited self in Hieizan continuously and unsuccessfully sought for a road to salvation in a degenerate, disintegrating world; and he must have borne the full brunt of anxiety, for, as a monk, he had to reconcile these contradictions and could not sublimate his spiritual angst into a pursuit of secular goals. It can be said that Shinran, in the anguished process of establishing his identity in the degenerate age, swung like a pendulum between the one extreme of identifying his inner soul with that of his disgraced father and grandfather when he failed to reach spiritual heights and the other extreme of identifying with the strict ethics of his uncle and with those of Hieizan.

Shinran's anguish in Mappô, a period of moral degeneracy is shown in the following passage taken from Kyô Gyô Shin Shô.

²Ibid.

So the time as ours is close to the last days of the Age of Image. What took place in the days already will be equal to those of the Latterly Age. So, in the Latterly Age there can only be teachings in word, with no practice and attainment. If there are any moral precepts, there will be the breaking of the precept. Already there is no precept. How can we say we break the precept when there is no precept to break? There is already no breaking of the precept. How can there be any observance of the precept? That is why the Daishūkyō says that after the death of Buddha, non-observance of moral precepts goes all over the province.³

Because of his troubled family background, the absence of moral precepts was not only an ethical dilemma but painfully affected his personal identification of self.

Shinran's life at Hieizan lasted twenty years, but being only a young boy of nine at the time he entered, one can speculate about the degree of his first understanding of religious practices. There is no material which gives factual information on when or at approximately what age Shinran had begun his earnest and regular religious exercises in search of spiritual reconciliation, save for one sentence from Eshin-ni's letter which reads "Your father was a Dōsō at Mt. Hiei".⁴ No further reference to Shinran's life at Hieizan can be found, and therefore, for an understanding of the development of Shinran's personal identity from boyhood to adolescence, we have had to turn to the later period when he had already joined Hōnen's group.

³Kyō Gyō Shin Shō, SSZ I, p. 317-318.

⁴Eshin-ni Monjo, SSZ III, p. 186.

E. Victor Wolfenstein, has defined a revolutionary in a hypothetical context as

one who escapes from the burdens of Oedipal guilt and ambivalence by carrying his conflict with authority into the political realm.⁵

If we consider and apply this hypothetical definition to Shinran, something like the following can be said. Shinran was attempting to escape from the social and moral degradation of his father and grandfather, but he felt deep personal guilt over his failures to succeed. He also felt the age was one of moral collapse and degeneration. From the synthesis of Buddhism in Hieiizan, that all forms of religious practices are one and the same and are of equal value, Shinran chose the teachings of the Pure Land with which he related himself most closely, that of salvation regardless of social class, provided one believed in Amida Buddha. He thus seriously confronted himself with the most fundamental tenets of his faith.

As a consequence of this defining confrontation, Shinran prepared himself to leave Hieiizan by engaging in a final, one-hundred day dialogue with Hōnen, after which he was able to make his departure.

To settle the confrontation about personal salvation for himself as a follower in Hōnen's group, he expended his energy

⁵Wolfenstein, E. Victor. The Revolutionary Personality: Lenin, Trotsky, Gandhi. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 307.

in the writing and completion of his commentaries, the "Kangyô Amidakyô Shûchû". The intellectual work required in writing this was so physically draining that it was equivalent to doing physical penances in the Buddhist practices. Kangyô Amidakyô Shûchû was the first step in the attainment of his doctrine of salvation through the teachings of the Pure Land.

Also, it has been inferred that Shinran married sometime after the completion of this work. It can be said that the marriage was a deliberate challenge against the curse he had been conscious of - the moral weakness of his father and grandfather and fear about his own reservoir of strength, the depth of which was questioned upon the realization in Hieizan of his limits and sinfulness. Just as the completion of the commentaries was a major step in attaining his faith, so too was his marriage a proof of his belief in the Original Vow of Amida which was taken to save all people and to whose Mercy one must completely trust and submit.

As a result of the politically and religiously inspired oppression of Hônen and his group, Shinran was banished to Echigo where totally new experiences awaited him. There, he

⁶Yasui, Kôdo. Commentaries on Kangyô Amidakyô Shûchû, SSZ VII, p. 159.

was integrated into the daily life of a class that constituted the very lowest strata of thirteenth-century Japanese society. It was a seminal encounter with the common people who were commonly referred to as "sinful beings" - fishermen who "lived by casting nets or angling in the sea or rivers",⁷ hunters, those "hunting beasts in mountains",⁸ farmers who "passed their life by trading or tilling the soil"⁹, and low people (slaves) who were traded like beasts.

The more earnestly Shinran aspired to spiritual ideals and kept to his religious practices as a monk, the more he became aware of his own limitations and sinfulness, which made him further conscious that there was no escape but to resign his body and soul even more absolutely to the Mercy of Amida. The position of the simple folk of the lower class whose only means for worldly survival was equated with evil was not too distant from that of Shinran, the déclassé monk who, no matter how hard he tried, failed to benefit from the orthodox path to spiritual fulfillment. The social condition of the people in Echigo seemed to Shinran the embodiment of his other nameless self.

Shinran's attempt to overcome his own intensely personal fears and cowardliness by the will-power of faith necessitated

⁷ Tannishô, SSZ XIII, p. 23.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

a relentless and radical examination of his religion. This can be traced in Shinran's own writings. The fact that most of his works are written in the first person singular rather than plural shows that he was not a man who stood before people to preach or teach, but rather one who listened and believed. Thus Shinran, through a sincere and difficult confrontation with his own faith, gained a sympathetic understanding of the dilemma of those whose structural position in society inevitably and cruelly denied them salvation within the religious orthodoxy of the time. He remained in Echigo with these people for a further two years after the expiration of his exile sentence. Only in 1214, at the age of forty-two, did Shinran move to Kantô with his thirty-three year old wife, Eship-ni, and his three children, a move which was like a welcome summer after a long hard winter and spring.

EPILOGUE

Shinran's exile in Echigo ended on November 17, 1211. He was thirty-nine years old. Having regained his freedom, he chose to remain in Echigo. The probable reasons for this decision are that Shinren (1211-?), his eight month old son, was too young to travel and the month of November in the snow country of Echigo was also no time for moving. It can be further surmised that, while awaiting spring, the news of Hōnen's death (January 25, 1212) reached him. Whatever the reasons may have been, Shinran stayed in Echigo for another two years and only in 1214 did he begin his journey to the Kantō district. There is no material which indicates why he chose Kantō. Marxist/historian Hattori Shisō conjectures that Shinran joined the farming population of the Hokuriku district (of which Echigo was a part) in migrating to Kantō;¹ however, there is nothing to substantiate this theory.

In the Kantō area of this time, the power of the court aristocracy in Kyoto was waning and the waxing power of the samurai was in the process of structuring the Bakufu. However, these conditions did not completely shift the locus of power from the old élite to the new because the former, represented mainly by the nobility, retained some modicum of influence over the emerging power-wielders. One of the

¹Hattori, Shisō. Shinran Note. Hattori Shisō Complete Collection, Vol. XIII (Tokyo: Fukumura Shuppan, 1973), p. 356.

manifestations of this was that the nobility could banish such people as Hōnen and Shinran on the basis of claiming that "they have long been a menace to society". On the other hand, there are records showing that the new ruling class, represented mainly by the samurai and centered in Kamakura, accepted some of those who were considered to be menacing by the aristocracy, one of whom, for example, was the monk Eisai. Such a phenomenon was an indication that Kamakura was different from Kyoto in at least some aspects.

Kamakura was equipped with a formidable fighting force but its lack of developed culture made it imperative to turn to Kyoto. A politically and culturally developing location such as Kamakura was a new environment for Shinran, but unlike Eisai, there was no protection nor aid extended to Hōnen and Shinran by the Kamakura government. The teachings of Hōnen and Shinran met with inimical feelings and were opposed at high levels.

Shinran lived in the Kantō from 1214 to around 1234, that is, the period from when he was forty-two to around sixty-two years of age. Throughout these twenty years, he spread the Nembutsu teaching among the farming population until his followers numbered approximately ten thousand. Simultaneously, he was writing the six volumes of his lifework and masterpiece, the Kyō Gyō Shin Shō.²

²Kasahara, Kazuo. Shinran to Tōgoku Nōmin. (Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppan, 1957), p. 272.

When the number of followers of a new sect increases, there always emerges the twin problems of first, enforcing orthodoxy and secondly, of allaying the suspicions of political rulers who fear the potential power, if mobilized, of those united under one religious faith. The oppression directed toward the Nembutsu group, which began in the Kantô area in 1234, had already existed in Kyoto for several years.

Then, in 1234, Shinran at the age of sixty-two left the Kantô area to return to his birth-place in Kyoto and there began a productive period of intensive writing. Most of the material he was now writing was directed towards the spreading of the faith in the Kantô area. With the absence of Shinran in the Kantô area continuous arguments arose with regard to various points of his teachings and while there was fear and conflict among the followers, the oppression of the group by the ruling powers grew stronger. Shinran wrote in a letter to one of his disciples who feared the suppression of Nembutsu:

Now, in connection with that which goes with Nembutsu, I hear you feel uneasy. In all, it sorrows me. After all, all that there is for you to reside in your place seems to have now come to an end. Please be not grieved at the hindrances thrown in the way of Nembutsu. What might not happen to those who cause checks to Nembutsu? But no disheartening thing can possibly happen to those who say it. Please never try to disseminate Nembutsu under help of other persons. It will all be by the will of Buddha that Nembutsu prospers in your place.³

³Shinran Shônin Goshôso. SSZ III, p. 147-148.

Shinran avoided any conflict as seen above and delegated his son Zenran to go to Kantô.⁴ Whether he was sent as Shinran's deputy is uncertain. However, knowing that Shinran's next-of-kin was in Kantô in the midst of this confusion seemed to the disciples at first as having a guiding star,⁵ someone who might be capable of institutionalizing the sect. But as it turned out, the disciples were far superior to Zenran. Each was a leader of a group in his own right while Zenran lacked a charismatic personality to which the disciples could appeal for advice and leadership. Zenran himself soon realized that he could never be the leader he had intended to be. He did not give up, however, and in order to unify and control all the disciples in the Kantô area, he claimed that, as the son of Shinran, that which he taught was the true teaching of his father, and filed a complaint with the Kamakura government stating that anyone who made himself a leader at his expense would cause chaos in society. Dismayed by such a preposterous attitude, the disciples in Kantô were thrown deeper into confusion. In desperation and in order to learn the truth, the disciples went to Kyoto to see Shinran personally. One of them, Yuien, noted Shinran's words on the occasion as follows:

⁴Miyaji, Kakuei. Shinran Den no Kenkyû. (Kyoto: Hyakkaen, 1968), p. 211-245.

⁵Ibid.

Your sole reason for making the long journey here, having crossed the borders of more than ten provinces at the risk of your lives, is to learn from me how to be reborn in the Pure Land. Notwithstanding, you gravely err if you secretly suppose I know any other way to the Pure Land than through Nembutsu, or know of scriptural passages (facilitating rebirth in the Pure Land). If that is what you think, you should see the many excellent scholars at Nara and Mt. Hiei and question them intently on the way to be reborn in the Pure Land.

For me, Shinran, there is no reasoning; I believe only what my venerable teacher taught: "Just call the Name and you will be saved by Amida". Nembutsu may lead me to rebirth in the Pure Land or may land me in hell - I simply don't know. But even if I were deceived by my teacher, the Blessed Sage Hōnen, and landed in hell as a result, I would never regret it. This is why. Were I the kind of person who could become a Buddha through other, strenuous religious practices and yet landed in hell through Nembutsu, I might regret having been deceived by my teacher. But because I am absolutely incapable of any other religious practice, hell is definitely my place.

If the Grand Vow of Amida be true, the teaching of Shakyamuni cannot be false. If the teaching of Shakyamuni be not false, the commentaries of Zendō must be true. If the commentaries of Zendō be true, how can the words of Hōnen be false? And if the words of Hōnen be not false, can the words which I, Shinran, speak be vain? That, in short, is the faith of this ignorant person. More I cannot say. You yourselves must make the choice, whether to believe in Nembutsu or to cast it aside.⁶

Shinran's severeness of response was perhaps a reflection of his disheartened sense of betrayal by his son, Zenran. Shinran late disinherited Zenran in order to retain the true faith.

⁶Tannishō, SSZ IV, p. 4-6.

Shinran was gradually approaching the last period of his life. Now in his old age, he met with another source of anguish. Just before Shinran sent his son to the Kantô area, his family broke apart⁷, i.e., in 1254 his wife Eshin-ni, leaving her son Zenran and daughter Kakushin-ni behind in Kyoto with Shinran, went to Echigo with her other children Oguro no Nyôbô, Shinren, Masukata and Takanozenni. After Zenran had left for Kantô, Shinran's widowed thirty-two year old daughter, Kakushin-ni and her ten year old son Kakuei (1247-1207), returned to her father's home. Shinran, at the age of eighty-five, one year after he disowned his son, was practically blind but a letter addressed in a trembling hand to one of his disciples in Kantô asking the disciple to take care of his widowed youngest daughter and her future, still remains. This letter is dated November 12th. To his daughter Kakushin-ni, too, there remains a letter dated November 11th advising her that he has written to his disciple in Kantô asking him to look after her well-being.⁸ Some historians consider these letters to be Shinran's will. If in fact these letters were written just before his death, the year would have been 1262 and the letters would date only sixteen days before his death. Shinran, who for the sake of

⁷Tanishita, Ichimu. Kazoku no Mondai, Shinran Shônin no Kyôgaku to Denki. (Kyoto: Hyakkaen, 1963), p. 278.

⁸Akamatsu, Toshihide. Shinran. (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kôbunkan, 1961), p. 344.

love and sex lived a life of a lay Buddhist, underwent in his old age the lay sufferings of a family head and died at the age of ninety on November 28, 1262 in a lonely and shabby state.

Ten years after Shinran's death in 1272, a grave was built by his disciples. Kakushin-ni was commissioned to be the caretaker of her father's grave and her services were remunerated with financial aid from the disciples in Kantô. Shinran's last wishes, that his family be provided for, were thus fulfilled. The purpose served by the grave, at least for the disciples in Kantô, was that of a unifying shrine for all the Nembutsu followers of Shinran. Private ownership by one individual was therefore not to be allowed.

Because the grave became a collective symbol for all the followers, the position of the caretaker attained great importance and prestige and subsequently, on the death of Kakushin-ni, a squabble ensued over who was to assume the position. Kakuei, the first-born son of Kakushin-ni, at first continued the work but eventually he was deprived of this position by his step-brother, Yuizen (1252-1317). Yuizen managed to secure the grave as a private institution instead of administering it in trust for the disciples. He further forbade the Nembutsu followers to pay visits to the grave. At this time, through the joint efforts of Kakunyo, the first-born son of Kakuei, and many disciples, the grave was eventually placed under the administration of Kakuei and the

Nembutsu followers. It was once again a communal possession. However, the problem as to who was to become caretaker/administrator of the grave remained. When Kakuei died in 1307, Kakunyo firmly believed that he was to inherit his father's former position. However, the disciples, having been through a bitter experience with Yuizen, would not entrust the position to Kakunyo merely because he was related to Shinran (greatgrandson), or because he had rendered indispensable services in regaining the grave from Yuizen. When his wishes to become caretaker and administrator of the grave were manifested, he was handed a twelve-point contract by the disciples to which strict and absolute adherence was demanded. Even with this, the disciples this time were extremely cautious and did not readily entrust the duty to Kakunyo or to any one man.

With the cooperation of his first-born son, Zonkaku (1289-1373),⁹ Kakunyo went to the Kantô area to solicit from the local Nembutsu followers their approval for his plan to build a temple and to appoint himself to the position of administrator of Shinran's grave.¹⁰ To Kakunyo, to have to seek such approval on top of being handed the twelve-point contract was extremely humiliating.

⁹ Kasahara, Kazuo. Kakumei no Shûkyô. (Tokyo: Jinbutsu Ôraisha, 1964), p. 93-95.

¹⁰ Circulating among the direct disciples of Shinran, Kakunyo garnered a great deal of first-hand information regarding the facts of Shinran's life. This was the material which enabled him to write the Honganji Shônin Shinran Denne. This massive biography was written to heighten the authority of Honganji.

Nevertheless, not as caretaker/administrator of the grave commissioned by the disciples but as the successor to Shinran, he built a temple over Shinran's grave and named it Honganji. He declared himself successor of the Hōnen-Shinran-Nyoshin (1238-1300)¹¹ line of Shinshū Teaching. Besides being the direct descendant of Shinran, he declared himself the third successor of Shinran following Nyoshin. All these events took place exactly fifty years after Shinran's death.

Such arrogant actions and attitude on the part of Kakunyo seemed to the disciples to resemble that of Yuizen's. The disciples therefore wanted Kakunyo's first son, Zonkaku, to take charge of the grave. Zonkaku showed little interest on his part but encouraged by all of the followers, he finally agreed to become the caretaker. Zonkaku concluded it would in the long run bring merit to Honganji. Nonetheless, he never assumed the position because Kakunyo was adamant in his opposition and, even at the expense of disinheriting his first-born son,¹² persisted in organizing a religious body having Shinran's grave as its focal point - the Honganji temple. Many of the disciples refused to comply with Kakunyo's plans and tried to maintain the Nembutsu followers as a religious

¹¹Shinran's grandson and Kakuei's cousin.

¹²Zonkaku did not follow Kakunyo as the fourth successor; instead, his younger brother Zennyō became Abbott of Honganji.

commune to confront Honganji. In order to maintain the viability of the commune or group, the disciples had to challenge the strict adherence of Honganji in limiting the successors of the Abbots to Shinran's direct descendants. They also challenged Honganji's claim of inheriting Shinran's teachings as originally taught, and above all, the claim to the possession of Shinran's grave. The disciples added new teachings to those of Shinran in order to attract new followers. Small Nembutsu groups such as the sects of Bukkôji, Gôshôji, Kinshokuji, Sammonto and Senjuji merged to form a united front against Honganji. These were the sources from which originated the ten schools of the Shinshû religion as it exists today.

Now on the other hand Honganji, which was established by Kakunyo, the self-declared third successor of Shinran and Abbott of the temple, and the fourth to the seventh Abbots that succeeded Kakunyo,¹³ continued to dismiss the teachings of all other Nembutsu groups, such as those mentioned above, as heretical. They held strictly to keeping the Office within the blood-related kin as well as to the inherited "pure teachings". Needless to say, while the multiple sects following the teachings of Shinran were scrambling amongst each other for followers, the history of Japan had as well been changing. The regional powers of Shugo and Jitô separated

¹³Zennyô (1333-1389), Shakunyo (1350-1393), Gyônyo (1376-1440), and Zonnyo (1398-1459).

from the central government and concentrated on governing and developing their regions. As a result, the peasants improved their agricultural techniques and production levels and consequently their standard of living. What they produced over and above their private needs was now sold in the urban markets. These people, who were engaged in direct production that heretofore had been denigrated, now formed a self-governing community and organized themselves under their own laws. They were thus able to protect their own lives and to control the development of their own region.

In periods when the governing systems of society are powerful, the capabilities of individuals tend to be overlooked or dismissed, and the populace could be satisfied with the mere promise of salvation after death by Amida. However, when the powers of the organized community increased, as described above, the populace realized their own united potential for secular advancement. They also demanded some comprehensive and tenable proof of their spiritual salvation while still on this earth.

Shinran's doctrine never contained such proof, but only promised salvation. Nevertheless, the various religious groups other than Honganji had begun to find means to answer the wishes of the people. To this end, the monks gave themselves power to grant or to deny salvation to followers as well as the right to expel anyone from the Nembutsu group. By taking such measures, the people were given present proof of future

salvation in the afterworld. These were the new teachings, mentioned above, of the various religious groups that were added to the teachings of Shinran. It is obvious that these teachings were heretical. Yet because of the great number of followers such religious groups ~~persisted~~, none felt shame for the heresy they taught and practised. Rather, it seemed more absurd for Honganji to disregard the changing spiritual needs that had taken place throughout approximately two centuries after Shinran's death, but instead to adhere dogmatically to the original teachings of Shinran.

Eventually, however, there emerged a personality who gave new interpretations to Shinran's teachings. This man was Rennyo (1415-1499), the eighth Abbott of Honganji. He became Abbott at the age of forty-three. He was born of the union between Zonnyo (1397-1459), the seventh Abbott and his lady-in-waiting. The mother had stayed with him only until he was six years of age and he never had the opportunity to see her again. Rennyo married Nyoryô when he was twenty-eight, but by then conditions at Honganji had fallen to such a sorry state that they did not even know where their next meal was coming from. Rennyo married five times throughout his lifetime and had thirteen sons and fourteen daughters.¹⁴ His wives died one after the other and at no time did he have more

¹⁴The five wives were Nyoryô (?-1455), Renyû (?-?), Nyoshô (1448-1478), Shunnyo (?-?), and Rennô (1475-1518).

than one wife. Each of the ~~wives~~ he married was in her twenties and his last child was born when he was eighty-four years of age, the year before he died. This man of unusual vitality was a realist and with his firm grasp on the present was able to foresee future historical trends.

The first step Rennyō took for the propagation of his teachings was to write his epistles, the Gobunshō (Ofumi). This was not a literary work such as the commentaries on the sutras; nor was it merely a translation of Shinran's words, but it was rather a contemporary interpretation of Shinran's teachings. In writing this, Rennyō turned back to the point in time when Buddhism found embodiment in Shinran's words and letters. Therefore, Rennyō proceeded from that point on in his own creative manner to put into words his interpretation of Shinran's teachings. This was the Gobunshō in which he often employed the following words which were never used by Shinran: "We place complete reliance in thee for the life to come".

Rennyō also eagerly read at least seven times the "Anjin Ketsujōshō" (writer unknown), a book which taught Shinran's teachings with heretical interpretations. He even said of this work, "I do not tire of reading this book over these forty or more years. It is like discovering gold." For the Abbott of Honganji, where purity of bloodline and teaching were predominant, to find delight in reading such a heretical book must be seen as an attempt to express anew

the traditional doctrine but in fresh words. The Gobunshô was handed from follower to follower to be copied and Rennyô's teachings thus percolated down to the masses. Rennyô himself frequently read to the faithful his Gobunshô, which was written in a language which was readily comprehended by the common people. This was the first such activity attributable to Honganji since its establishment. The results however did not necessarily coincide with Rennyô's objectives.

What had appealed to the common people through the ages in Shinran's teachings was the denial of all worldly power due to the transcending character of religion. More exactly, the appealing factor was the denial of differences existing between the rich and the poor, the high and low, all based upon greed for material wealth and power; whether they be wealthy men, aristocrats, commoners or even those engaged in menial labor, all men were in essence equal within this religion. This concept of religion transcending all worldly circumstances was, in Rennyô's era, used as a weapon in the resistance movement of the populace. The process of such a development will be explained below.

Rennyô, in proselytizing the masses, took advantage of the structural organization of communal bodies.¹⁵ As

¹⁵By using the already existing organized set-up, it was easier to maintain control of the followers. Also, it was more convenient to have the offerings made to Honganji by each organized unit.

mentioned above, the common people had become aware of their potential to fight the undue oppression of regional rulers and powers, and they now used Shinran's teaching of the equality of all men as one of the reasons to oppose the repressive political establishment. Such a movement helped unite and thus strengthen Nembutsu followers. Also, to those whose salvation into the Pure Land was already ensured, death was of no fearful consequence and this confidence proved advantageous in battle. The resistance movement was so intensified that Dogô and Kokuji, regional rulers of relatively small units, could no longer cope with the rising mass movement. Dogô and Kokuji, rather than press on with force, avoided confronting the aroused opposition of the people by becoming on their own initiative followers of Honganji and they thus protected their positions.

In such manner, Honganji began to count warriors among its adherents and these warriors, in turn, taking advantage of their membership, used the military help of fellow-followers to increase their own power.¹⁶

Under such circumstances, Rennyo forbade his Nembutsu followers to be used by such power-seeking individuals. He also forbade the acceptance of the aid of the warriors in the

¹⁶The resistance movement in which Honganji had directly used the existing structural set-up of the people is called Ikkô-ikki. During the Edo period, there were a great number of peasant uprisings, but these are not known as Ikkô-ikki.

peasants' resistance movements. In other words, Rennyō taught his followers to obey the orders of the rulers and to pay the land tax to the government, or in the words of another period, to render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's.

With only the authority of the Abbott, Honganji lacked power of persuasion over the warrior/followers who bore arms. In order to avoid the development of an organization of followers as pawns of these warriors in their fight for political power, Rennyō took a heretical stand. He armed himself with the power to grant or deny salvation, as well as the power to expel followers from the Nembutsu group, powers which had been arrogated by some sect leaders years back.¹⁷ By such means he stopped the activities of the resistance group which initially was his first objective and subsequently rapidly increased the number of followers of Honganji. The reason for such results was that the salvation ensured by none other than the Abbott himself of Honganji, where purity of bloodline and teaching was upheld, was in fact considered the most genuine. Leaders of other Nembutsu groups could no longer compete with Honganji to increase their respective followers and consequently ended up, leader and followers, alike by joining Honganji.

While other groups had taken a century and a half to establish themselves and grow, Rennyō forced them overnight

¹⁷The leaders of such small Nembutsu groups as Bukkōji, Gōshōji, Kinshokuji, Sammonto, and Senjuji had previously asserted such a power.

to join Honganji. Rennyo retired at the age of seventy-five and died ten years later. Yet even on his death there were marks on his feet from the string of his straw sandals, which could only mean that Rennyo was busy visiting far-off regional areas to propagate his teachings when death finally called.

The great achievement made during the lifetime of Rennyo was the restoration of Shinran's teachings as well as the reaffirmation of the dominance of Honganji. However, on the one hand, the exaltation of the doctrines of the Pure Land sect by the writing of the Gobunshō and on the other hand, the economic and political enlargement and strengthening of Honganji through compromise with the ruling class, were clearly of a contradictory character. However, Rennyo possessed the great ability to maintain the apparent compatibility and growth of the two without contradiction.¹⁸

After Rennyo's death, Honganji maintained ever closer ties with the political rulers and the nobility and thus strengthened its social position. There were already many warriors who had infiltrated the ranks of the followers in order to use their membership within Honganji as a stepping-stone to seek personal power over the country. For this reason, seventy years after Rennyo's death, Honganji came to be looked upon as a secular political rival and was challenged

¹⁸Miyazaki, Enjun. Shinran to Sono Kyōdan. Nippon no Bukkyō Kōza Bukkyō, V. (Tokyo: Daizō Shuppan, 1967), p. 180.

as such by one outsider who also sought complete control over the country. This latter power-seeker was Oda Nobunaga (1558-1630), who had placed almost the whole nation under his thumb. Nobunaga thought that his control of Honganji would result in his absolute and complete sovereignty over the country, especially in view of the fact that there were many regional leaders who had become followers of Honganji while either awaiting an opportunity for their own political advancement or becoming followers of one who might emerge as a sole sovereign power.

Kennyō (1543-1592) was the eleventh Abbott of Honganji at this time. He ordered the Nembutsu followers to meet the challenge of Oda Nobunaga in order to preserve and protect Honganji and the doctrines of the Pure Land sect; he said that to shed blood in this fight for independence was the seal of faith in the teachings of Shinran. And thus the war between Oda Nobunaga and Honganji continued for eleven years until the fall of Honganji in 1580. However, Kennyō's first-born son Kyōnyō (1558-1614), notwithstanding his father's defeat, continued fighting.

Toward the end of the war, the warriors among the followers who had fought for Honganji in the regional areas began to defect to the power-center which held the greater possibility of control for the whole nation. Nobunaga claimed complete authority over the country and in time, Honganji lost all its fighting potential.

In 1592 Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536-1598) called before him at Kyoto, Kennyo who was then moving from one place to another. Hideyoshi allotted some land to Kennyo and ordered the Honganji (the present Nishi Honganji) to be built upon it. Kennyo, however, died in that year and was succeeded by his first-born son, Kyōnyo. Kennyo's wife, Nyoshun-ni (?-1598) insisted that Junnyo (1577-1630), their third-born son, was to succeed as the twelfth Abbott in accordance with her husband's will, and as a result, Junnyo became Abbott.

The followers of Honganji sympathized with Kyōnyo who, having gone a separate way from his father, unsuccessfully fought Oda Nobunaga and was now again forced to give up the position of twelfth Abbott. Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542-1616) then allotted land to Kyōnyo, ordered the Honganji (the present Higashi Honganji) to be built (year 1600) and made Kyōnyo first Abbott thereof.¹⁹ This act of Tokugawa Ieyasu dividing Honganji into two virtually reduced the economic power of Honganji by half, and this after Honganji's military power had already been destroyed by Oda Nobunaga.

When Tokugawa Ieyasu, after Toyotomi Hideyoshi, gained recognized sovereignty over the whole country in 1603, he incorporated all temples into the feudal ruling system. The

¹⁹ Kyōnyo is referred to as the twelfth Abbott at Higashi Honganji.

temples and the populace were tied by the Terauke system²⁰ and the temples themselves were joined by the Honmatsu system. Each Japanese citizen without exception had to be registered as a member of a Buddhist temple. When moving, it was imperative that they carry with them a certificate showing that they had been a member of a specific temple. Because such a system was employed at the political level, there was no further necessity for Honganji or other Buddhist temples to work for the propagation of their teachings. The whole country had organizationally become a unified religious group and individuals were forced by political pressure to join the temple which had the local territorial monopoly.

The Honmatsu system was one which arranged the numerous temples disorderly scattered around the country into a unified hierarchy of Honzan (the Head Temple), Honji, Chuhonji, Chokuhonji, and Magohonji, and thus established a vertical tie in their relationships. These two systems which were imposed were of course for the purpose of politically strengthening the feudal system. In other words, by the Terauke system, the temples were made to watch or supervise the populace and by the Honmatsu system, each temple was under the efficient surveillance of another. Therefore, the

²⁰The Terauke Seido or system dates back in history to 1613 when those Japanese Christians in Kyoto, as proof of giving up their Christian religion, got the Buddhist temples to certify that they were followers of the Buddhist teachings.

Tokugawa Bakufu, by the close surveillance of the Head Temple, was able to keep an eye not only on all other temples but also on the populace as a whole.

With the political rulers of the beginning of the modern age, Nobunaga, Hideyoshi and Ieyasu, the former power of the Pure Land sect was erased. Even after the middle of the seventeenth century when the development of the feudal system was perfected, and under the ingenious and closely articulated political organization of the Tokugawa Bakufu, Honganji continued to restrict the succession of Abbots to within its direct blood-related line. Well into the modern age when in all phases of Japanese history there was a current of reform and renovation, it was never possible for the Pure Land sect to flourish as it had done in the medieval ages. With the coming of the present age and during the Second World War, the Pure Land sect was even forced to amend the readings of the Kyô Gyô Shin Shô and other holy scriptural passages by political leaders. However, there were Abbots throughout the modern and present ages who tried to exalt the teachings of Shinran and engage in the fundamental reformation of Honganji; they were, taking Nishi Honganji for example, its twenty-first Abbott, Kôson (1850-1903) as well as his fourth son, Sonyû (1886-1939), or its twenty-second Abbott Kôzui (1876-1948). They all tried to reform the management of Honganji as well as to criticize the governmental policy on religion. Indeed, they at times succeeded in

changing these policies. However, none was forceful enough to be able to become a modern-day Rennyo. They did have some influence in the process of policy decisions on religion at the governmental level, but it was far more common for the lines of influence to run in the opposite direction. Also, these Abbots co-opted to hold high positions in government. By such a process, the tradition of work such as Rennyo's, in which he had given the teachings of Shinran to the people as a rock to which all could cling in living their lives on this earth, was negated. In other words, there was no initiative taken to resurrect the thought of Shinran's teachings.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

- Shinran: the first forty-two years -

A.D.	Japanese year period	Shinran's age	Events in the life of Shinran	Japanese historical events
1173	Shōan 3	1	Shinran born	Golden age of Heike family
1174	" 4	2		Ex-Emperor Goshirakawa travels to Itsukushima
1175	Angen 1	3	Hōnen begins Nembutsu	In September, disastrous fire in Kyoto
1176	" 2	4		Ex-Emperor Goshirakawa receives precepts at Hieizan
1177	Jishō 1	5		Anti-Heike group's meeting detected
1178	" 2	6		
1179	" 3	7		Genji family rises in arms for anti-Heike cause
				Taira no Shigehira sets fire to Kōfukuji and Tōdaiji
1180	" 4	8		Emperor Antoku ascends throne
1181	Yowa 1	9	In spring Shinran enters priesthood under guidance of Jien, takes Buddhist name "Hannen", begins ascetic exercises in Hieizan until 29 years of age	Taira no kiyomori dies Severe famine in Japan

A.D.	Japanese year period	Shinran's age	Events in the life of Shinran	Japanese historical events
1182	Juei 1	10	Eshin-ni (Shinran's wife) born	
1183	" 2	11		
1184	" 3	12		Heike family overthrown Emperor Gotoba ascends throne
1185	Bunji 1	13		
1186	" 2	14		Kujô Kanazane (Jien's brother and convert of Hônen) appointed as regent
1187	" 3	15		Eisai goes to China for second time
1188	" 4	16		
1189	" 5	17		Fujiwara family falls
1190	Kenkyû 1	18		Tôdaiji rebuilt Saigyô dies
1191	" 2	19		Eisai returns from China
1192	" 3	20	Jien appointed as Tendai Chief Abbott	In May, Ex-Emperor Goshirakawa dies In July, Minamoto no Yoritomo appointed as Grand Minister
1193	" 4	21		
1194	" 5	22		Zen prohibited by Government

A.D.	Japanese year, period	Shinran's age	Events in the life of Shinran	Japanese historical events
1195	Kenkyū 6	23		
1196	" 7	24	Jien resigns as Tendai Chief Abbott	Kujō Kanazane, Chief Advisor of Emperor purged from post Kujō family falls
1197	" 8	25		
1198	" 9	26	Hōnen writes "Senjaku Hongan Nembutsushū"	Eisai writes "Kōzen Gokoku Ron" Emperor Tsuchimikado ascends throne
1199	Shōji 1	27		Minamoto no Yoritomo dies
1200	" 2	28	Nembutsu prohibited by Government	Dōgen born
1201	Kennin 1	29	Shinran changes view on ascetic exercises and allies with Hōnen's group	
1202	" 2	30		Minamoto no Yoriie appointed as Grand Minister Eisai founds Kenninji
1203	" 3	31		Minamoto no Sanetomo appointed Shōgun Minamoto no Yoriie confined in prison

A.D.	Japanese year period	Shinran's age	Events in the life of Shinran	Japanese historical events
1204	Genkyû 1	32	"Hichikajô Kishômon" issued in Shinran's name "Shakkû"	Minamoto no Yoriie killed Enryakuji and Kôfukuji petition for prohibition of Nembutsu
1205	" 2	33	Shinran copies master's book "Senjakuhongan Nembutsushû" and completes Hônen's portrait In July, changes Buddhist name to "Zenshin"	Fujiwara Teika edits "Shin Kokin Wakashû"
1206	Kennin 1	34		Myôei founds Kôzanji in Kyoto
1207	Shôgen 1	35	Nembutsu prohibited by Government Hônen exiled to Tosa, Shinran exiled to Echigo	Kujô Kanazane dies
1208	" 2	36		
1209	" 3	37		
1210	" 4	38		Genshin "Ojôyoshû" published Emperor Juntoku ascends throne

A.D.	Japanese year period	Shinran's age	Events in the life of Shinran	Japanese historical events
1211	Kenryaku 1	39	Shinren (Shinran's son) born In November, Shinran and Hōnen released from exile; Hōnen returns to Kyoto, Shinran remains in Echigo	Shunjō returns from China
1212	" 2	40	In January, Hōnen dies	Kamo no Chōmei writes "Hōjōki"
1213	Kenpō 1	41		
1214	" 2	42	Shinran leaves for Kantō with wife and children	Dōgen becomes disciple of Eisai
1215	" 3	43		Eisai dies
1221	Shōkyū 3	49	Shinran's first draft of "Kyō Gyō Shin Shō"	
1222	Teiō 1	50		Nichiren born
1223	" 2	51		Dōgen goes to China
1224	Gennin 1	52	Shinran's daughter Kakushin-ni born	
1234	Bunreki 1	62	Shinran returns to Kyoto with family	
1253	Kencho 5	81		Dōgen dies
1254	" 6	82	Shinran's wife Eshin-ni returns to Echigō with children	

A.D.	Japanese year period	Shinran's age	Events in the life of Shinran	Japanese historical events
1256	Kōgen 1	84	Shinran disowns eldest son Zenran	
1262	Kōchō 2	90	On February 28, Shinran dies at younger brother's house	

N.B.

As was the habit of Shinran, all dates are calculated from one year of age. This chronological table in accordance with the research topic is concerned only with those years beginning with Shinran's birth - 1173 to his forty-second year, 1214; after which only major dates are indicated.

GLOSSARY

I General

- A -	Busshinshū 仏心集	Dōshū 堂衆
Akunin (shōki) 悪人 (正機)	- C -	Dōsō 堂僧
Amida 阿弥陀	Chiba 千葉	- E -
Amidakyō 阿弥陀經	Chokkyō 勅許	Echigo (no Kuni) 越後 (の国)
Amidakyōgisho 阿弥陀經義疏	Chokuhonji 直本寺	Engishiki 延喜式
Amidakyōshūchū 阿弥陀經集註	Chūhonji 中本寺	Enryakuji 延暦寺
Angen 安元	Chūru 中流	Eshin-ni Monjo 惠信尼文書
Anjinketsujōshō 安心決定鈔	- D -	- F -
Anshō (no Zenji) 暗証 (の禅師)	Daijōin 大乗院	Fudan Nembutsu 不断念仏
Azumaebisu 東夷	Daijōkishinron (gi) 大乘起信論 (義)	Funshū (Fen-chou) 汾州
Azumakagami 吾妻鏡	Daiken 題檢	- G -
- B -	Daimuryōjūkyō 大無量壽經	Gakushō 學生
Bakufu 幕府	Daishūkyō 大集經	Gion 祇園
Bodhisattva 觀音	Daisōjō 大僧正	Genji Monogatari 源氏物語
Bokieshi 慕歸檢詞	Dengyō Daishi Den 伝教大師伝	Genkyū 元久
Bukkōji 仏光寺	Dogō 土象	Gensō no Gyō 還相の行

Gobunshō (Ofumi)
御文章 (御文)

Godenshō
御伝鈔

Gōshōji
毫摂寺

Gōzoku
豪族

Gozokushō
御俗鈔

Gu
愚

Gukanshō
愚管抄

Gutoku
愚禿

Gyō
行

- H -

Hanjusan
般若讚

Hannen
繫念

Hannyakyō
般若經

Hata
幡

Heianjidai
平安 (時代)

Heiji
平治

Hichikajō Kishōmon
七ヶ条起請文

Hieiizan
比叡山

Higashi Honganji
東本願寺

Higashiyama
東山

Hinoke Honganji Keizu
日野家本願寺系圖

Hinoto no U
丁印

Hinouji Keizu
日野氏系圖

Hogen
保元

Hogo Uragaki
反古裏書

Hōjisan
法事讚

Hokeyō (no Gyōja)
法華經 (の行者)

Hokurikū
北陸

Honchō Kōsōden
本朝高僧伝

Honganji (Keizu)
本願寺 (系圖)

Honji
本寺

Honmatsu
本末

Hō no Jinshin
法の深信

Honzan
本山

Hōnkokōshiki
報恩講式

Hōryaku
方略

Hōryūji
法隆寺

Hosshibon
法師品

Hossō (shū)
法相 (集)

Hōunji
法雲寺

- I -

Ichijō
一乗

Ichinengi
一念義

Igo
囲碁

Isshaku no shio
一寸の塩

Isshō no Kome
一升の米

Izu
伊豆

- J -

Jakkōdoki
寂光土記

Jikei Daishi Den
慈恵大師伝

Jiki Sōō no Ronri
時機相成の論理

Jinenhōni
自然法爾

Jiriki Tariki
自力他力

Jishū
時宗

Jitô 地頭	Kannen (bômon) 観念法門	Kôfukuji (Sôjo) 興福寺(奏上)
Jiyu no Bosatsu 地涌の菩薩	Kannon Bosatsu 観音菩薩	Kokufu 国府
Jôdo 浄土	Kanoto no Tori 辛酉	Kokubunji 国分寺
Jôdomon 浄土門	Kanpaku 関白	Kokujuin 国人
Jôdo Shinshû 浄土真宗	Kantô 関東	Kôsai 高戈
Jôdoshû 浄土宗	Kanzeon 観世音	Kôshô 口称
Jôdoshûyôshû 浄土宗要集	Kegon (gyô) 華嚴(經)	Kotahama 居多浜
Jôdo Wasan 浄土和讃	Kegonshû 華嚴宗	Kôtaigôgû Gon no Daishin Goi no ge 皇太后宮権の大進 五位の下
Jôgûtaishi Gyoki 上宮太子御記	Kennin 建仁	Kôtaishi Shôtoku Hôsan 皇太子聖徳奉讃
Jôgyô (Sanmaidô) 常行(三昧堂)	Keshin 化身	Kotokuden 古徳伝
Jôjitsu (shû) 成実(宗)	Keshindo kan 化身土卷	Kubon Ôjôgi 九品往生義
Juhô no ki 受法の機	Ki 機	Kudenshō 口伝鈔
- K -	Kigai 癸亥	Kurôdo no Tô 藏人の頭
Kai (Ritsu) 戒(律)	Ki no Jinshin 機の崇信	Kusha (shû) 具舍(宗)
Kamakura 鎌倉	Kinoto no Ushi 乙丑	Kubikigun 頸城郡
Kangyô Amidakyô Shûchû 観經阿彌陀經(集註)	Kinru 近流	Kyô (shû) 經(宗)
Kangyô (sho) 観經(疏)	Kinshokuji 錦織寺	Kyô Gyô Shin Shô 教行信証
Kanmuryôjukyô (chû) 観無量壽經(註)	Kiyomizudera 清水寺	

Kyōdan

教団

Kyōsōhanjaku

教相判釈

Kyoto

京都

- M -

Magohonji

孫本寺

Makura no Sōshi

枕の草子

Mappō (Tōmyōki)

末法(燈明記)

Mie

三皇

Mimurodo no
Daishinnyūdō

御室戸の大進入道

Mirokubosatsu

弥勒菩薩

Mojihosshi

文字法師

Monjiki

閉持記

Monto

門徒

Mukoku

夢告

Myōkō

妙高

- N -

Nagaoka

長岡

Namuamidabutsu

南無阿弥陀仏

Nanke no Sanki

難化の三機

Nara

奈良

Nichiren (shū)

日蓮(宗)

Nijō

二条

Nikujiki

肉食

Nishi Honganji

西本願寺

Nishujinshin

二種深信

Nehangyō

涅槃經

Nembutsu (sha)

念仏(者)

Nembutsusammai no hō

念仏三昧の法

Nyobon

女犯

Nyoirin (Kannon)

如意輪觀音

- O -

Ōjō

往生

Ōjōketsujō

往生決定

Ōjōyōshū

往生要集

Ōjōraisan

往生礼讃

Ōjō no gyō

往生の行

Onjōji

圓城寺

Onru

遠流

Ōtaniichiryū Keizu

大谷一流系図

- R -

Rakuhōmonrui

樂邦文類

Rinzai (zen)

臨濟(禅)

Rinjū Raigō

臨終來迎

Rinjū Shōnen

臨終正念

Risshū

律宗

Ritsuryō Kokka

律令國家

Rokkakudō

六角堂

Rokuharamitsuji

六波羅密寺

Ron 論	Sendai 關提	Shinran shōnin zenshū 親鸞聖人全集
Ronchū 論註	Senjakuhongan Nembutsushū (Senjakushū) 選撰本願念仏集 (選撰集)	Shinshū (Kyōdan) 真宗(教団)
Ronshū 論宗	Senjuji 專修寺	Shinshū 信州
Ryōgenin 楞嚴院	Senju Nembutsu 專修念仏	Shinyū 辛酉
Ryōgonzanmaidō 楞嚴三昧堂	Sha hei kaku hō 捨閉關拋	Shishisōjō 師資相承
- S -	Shak Yamuni 釈迦牟尼	Shinshū shōgyō zensho 真宗聖教全書
Saishō 宰相	Shaku 釈	Shitai 四諦
Saishūkyōjūeshi 最須敬重絵詞	Shanagyō 遮那行	Shōdōmon 聖道門
Sado 佐渡	Shikan 止觀	Shōganji 照願寺
Samurai 侍	Shikantaza 只管打坐	Shōgen. 承元
Sangantennyū 三願転入	Shimotsuke Engi 下野縁義	Shōgun 將軍
Sangi 参議	Shinaga 磯長	Shohi no ki 所被の機
Sangyōgisho 三經義疏	Shinbutsudo kan 身仏土卷	Shōhō 正法
Sanmontoha 三門徒派	Shingon (shū) 真言(宗)	Shōjōnimonhan 聖浄二門判
Sanrō 参籠	Shinnen 心念	Shōka 正嘉
Sanron (shū) 三論(宗)	Shinran Denne (Shinran shōnin Den) 親鸞伝絵 (親鸞聖人伝)	Shōki 正機
Sanshin 三心		Shōmangyō 勝曼經
Seishi Bosatsu 勢至菩薩		Shōmyō (Nembutsu) 称名(念仏)

Shōnin
上人

Shōsanjōdokyō
称讚浄土教

Shōtoku no ki
性得の機

Shugyōgyō
修業行

Shukugō
宿業

Sō
僧

Sō (Sung)
宋

Sonpibunmyaku
尊卑文脈

Sōtō (shū)
曹洞(宗)

Sugoroku
双六

- T -

Taishi byōkutsu ge
太子廟齋偈

Taishi shinkō
太子信仰

Takada Senjuji
高田専修寺

Takada kaisan seitō den
高田開山正統伝

Takaozan
高雄山

Tandokumon
歎徳文

Tanengi
多念義

Tannishō
歎異抄

Teijiryū Fujiwara Nanke
貞嗣流藤原南家

Tendai (T'ien-t'ai)
天台

Tendai no Shōshikan
天台の小止観

Tō (Tang)
唐

Tōdaiji
東大寺

Toko no Gerui
屠古の下類

Toku(jin)
秃(人)

Tokukoji
秃居士

Tongyōichijō
頓行一乘

Tosa
土佐

Tōzan
東山

- Y -

Yokawa (Sasuidō)
横川(砂碓堂)

Yoshimizu
吉水

Yuimakyō
唯摩经

Yuishinshō
唯信鈔

- Z -

Zen (shū)
禅(宗)

Zenshin shōnin Den
善信聖人伝

Zōhō
像法

Zokuruibon
嘱累品

Zennin
善人

- 6 -

GLOSSARY

II Names of Persons

- A -	Dōzui (Tao-sui) 道邃	- F -
Akamatsu Toshihide 赤松俊秀	- E -	Fujii Motohiko (Hōnen) 藤井元彦 (法然)
Antōji あんどうじ	Eisai (Yōsai) 栄西	Fujii Yōshizane (Shinran) 藤井善信 (親鸞)
Antoku 安徳	Eison 叡尊	Fujiwara Masako 藤原聖子
Arikuni 有国	Eji 恵慈	Fujiwara Masuko 藤原多子
Arinobu 有信	Ekan 恵灌	Fujiwara Michinaga 藤原道長
- B -	Ekū 恵空	Fujiwara Motohisa 藤原基久
Benchō 弁長	Enchin 円珍	Fujiwara Motomichi 藤原基道
Busshin 仏真	Engyō 円行	Fujiwara Teika 藤原定家
- C -	Ennin 円仁	Fujiwara Teishi 藤原呈子
Chigi (Chih-I) 智顛	Enō 依能	Fujishima Tatsurō 藤島達郎
Chōsai 長西	Erikson Erik H	- G -
- D -	Eshin-ni 恵信尼	Ganjin (Chien-chen) 鑑真
Dengyō Daishi (Saichō) 伝教大師 (最澄)	Eun 憑運	Genchi 源智
Donran (T'an-luan) 曇鸞		Genji 源氏
Dōshaku (Tao-ch'ō) 道綽		Genkū (Hōnen) 源空 (法然)

Goshirakawa 後白河	Inoue Yasushi 井上靖	Kammu 桓武
Gotoba 後鳥羽	Inumasa いぬまさ	Karasuma 烏丸
Gutoku Ran (Shinran) 愚禿鸞 (親鸞)	Ippen 一遍	Kennyō 顯如
Gyōhyō 行表	- J -	Kenshunmonin 建春門院
Gyōman (Hsing-man) 行滿	Jien 慈円	Kengan 顯願
- H -	Jitsugo 実悟	Kenyū 兼有
Hanayamain Tadataka 花山院忠隆	Jōkei 貞慶	Kesa けさ
Hani 範意	Jōmon bō 淨閑房	Kikkōnyō 吉光女
Hannen (Shinran) 範宴 (親鸞)	Jōshin bō 淨信房	Kishūmonin Tōko 宣秋門院任子
Hattori Shisō 服部之飛	Jūkaku 從覚	Kiso Yoshinaka 木曾兼仲
Heike 平家	Junnyō 准如	Kōkaku 好覚
Hino 日野	Junsai 遵西	Kōsai 幸西
Hirohashi 広橋	Junshin 順信	Kōson 光尊
Hōnen 法然	- K -	Kotori ことり
Hōzō 法藏	Kakuei 覚恵	Kōzui 光端
- I -	Kakunyo 覚如	Kujō Kanezane 九条兼実
Ienaga Saburō 家永三郎	Kakushin 覚信	Kujō Ryōkei 九条良経
Inoue Mitsusada 井上光貞	Kamatari 鎌足	Kūkai 空海

Kyōnyo
教如

- M -

Masukata
益才

Masutani Fumio
増谷文雄

Matsudono Motofusa
松殿基房

Matsuno Junkō
松野純孝

Minamoto Yorimasa
源頼政

Minamoto Yoshichika
源義親

Mochihitoō
以仁王

Munenari
末業

Murasaki Shikibu
紫式部

Myōei
明恵

Murakami Sokusui
村上速水

- N -

Nadeshii
なでし

Naganuma Kenkai
長沼賢海

Nagatomi Masatoshi
永富正俊

Nakamura Hajime
中村元

Nakazawa Kenmyō
中沢見明

Nichiren
日蓮

Ninshō
忍性

Noritsuna
範綱

Nyoryō
如了

Nyoshin
如信

Nyoshun
如春

- O -

Oda Nobunaga
織田信長

Ogurono Nyōbō
小黒の女房

Ōinomikado Yorisane
大炊御門頼実

- R -

Rennyō
蓮如

Ryōchū
良忠

Ryōgen
良源

Ryōkū
良空

Ryōnin
良忍

Ryūju (Nagarjuna)
龍樹

Ryūkan
隆寛

Ryōshin
良信

- S -

Saichō
最澄

Sanjō Sanefusa
三条実房

Sanjō Nagakane
三条長兼

Sanjō Takatada
三条隆忠

Sanemitsu
実光

Saneshige
実資

Sanetsuna
実綱

Seigaku
聖覚

Seishōnagon
清少納言

Senun
仙雲

Shakkū (Shinran)
綽空(親鸞)

Shiban
師奩

Shinbutsu
真仏

Shinran
親鸞

Shinren
信蓮

Shôkô 聖光	Tôin Kinsada 洞院公定	Yuizen 唯善
Shôkû 証空	Tokuko 徳子	Yukinari 行成
Shôtoku Taishi 聖徳太子	Toyotomi Hideyoshi 豊臣秀吉	- Z -
Shûei 泉叡	Tsachimikado 土御門	Zonkaku 存覚
Shunkan 俊寛	Tsuji Zennosuke 辻善之助	Zonnyo 存如
Sô Shakkû (Shinran) 僧 縛空 (親鸞)	Tsunetada 経尹	Zendô (Shan-tao) 善導
Sonyû 尊由	- U -	Zenren 善蓮
Sukemitsu 資光	Uramatsu 哀松	Zenshin (Shinran) 善信 (親鸞)
Sukenari 資業	Umehara Ryûshô 梅原隆章	
Suzuki Daisetsu 鈴木大拙	- W -	
- T →	Wake no Hiroyo 和氣広世	
Tadamori 忠盛	Washio Kyôdô 鷲尾教導	
Taira no Kiyomori 平清盛	Wolfenstein, E. Victor	
Taira no Shigeo 平滋子	- Y -	
Takano (Zenni) 高野 禅尼	Yamada Bunshô 山田文昭	
Takakura 高倉	Yamamoto Kôshô 山本晃紹	
Tamura Yoshirô 田村 茅郎	Yanagihara 柳原	
Tenjin (Vasubandhu) 天親	Yômei 用明	

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