Yoshifumi UEDA, ed., *The True Teaching, Practice and Realization of the Pure Land Way. A Translation of Shinran's Kyōgyōshinshō*. Kyoto: Hongwanji International Center, Vols. I–III, 1983, 1985, 1987. 472 pp., with Appendixes.

The International Center of Nishi Hongwanji has, since 1983, begun publishing its long awaited translation of Shinran's major academic treatise, known best as the *Kyōgyōshinshō* 教行信証. The first three of a four volume set are now available. This major project has been many years in the making and will play an important role alongside the other five shorter works of Shinran already translated by the center. Up until this publication, that segment of the English reading world interested in Shinshū has had only the incomplete (four of six chapters) D. T. Suzuki translation published in 1973 by Higashi Hongwanji for reference, which is now out of print.

The editor's preface to this earlier translation explains that Suzuki accomplished the first draft of his translation at the age of ninety in only three months. Expressing an admirable degree of detachment, Suzuki is quoted as saying, "This work was not done for the purpose of spreading Shinran's teachings." But it has been precisely because of what many in Shinshū today consider Suzuki's stance as an outsider, that his translation has suffered the greatest criticism. In the case of Ueda Yoshifumi and the group of translators at the International Center, one need not entertain any doubts about their status squarely inside the tradition of Shinshū as it is taught and practiced at Nishi Hongwanji. While this fact lends an undeniable authority to this translation, it also results in certain excesses not found in the Suzuki edition.

I will not attempt to compare the two translations here, but I would like to make a few comments about the explanation of Shinran's thought found in the *Kyōgyōshinshō* as given in the introductions to these three volumes. Before I begin that discussion, a short note about their format. Unlike the copious notes that the Eastern Buddhist staff appended to the Suzuki translation, the notes here are quite brief but do provide precise citations for quoted scripture in the *Taishō Tripiṭaka* and the *Shinshū shōgyō zensho* 真宗聖教全書, which are lacking in Suzuki's work. Although one is referred to glossaries in other volumes published from the Center, many students of Shinran will read only his *Kyōgyōshinshō*, Shinran's most famous work. Hence one hopes there will be forthcoming in the final volume an exhaustive list of terminology, for phrases like "Vow-mind" or "truly settled" have been used here with no explanation. The translated text is divided into numbered "passages" which are also listed in what essentially becomes a very useful detailed table of contents at the beginning of each volume. Unfortunately there is no correspondence between these passage numbers or the inclusion of any page notations which would refer the reader to a standard edition of the text such as found in the *Taishō* or the *Shinshū shōgyō zensho*. Recognizing that Shinran's readings of Chinese Buddhist texts were often unorthodox, where these are "significant," standard non-Shinshū readings are also included in a special appendix entitled, "Notes on Shinran's Readings."

The introductions show a good grasp of some of the historical issues in Shinran's mind when he composed the text. In particular one appreciates the discussion of the problem of practice, for this must be central in any discussion of Pure Land thought, or Kamakura Buddhist thought for that matter. However, while what seems to be an inordinate amount of space is devoted to the question of whether or not the chapter on *shinjin* 信心 should be seen as an extension of the chapter on practice, the issues of *ichinen-tanen* 一念多念 (translated here as once-calling & many-calling) and whether or not other practices outside the nenbutsu can contribute to the attainment of birth in the Pure Land are simplistically reduced to "emphasis on faith versus emphasis on practice" (vol. I, p. 29). According to this discussion, if one leaned more toward faith he would have less interest in practice because he would not require it, having complete trust in the Buddha's promise of grace. This faith position is said to represent the *ichinen* group of Hōnen's followers; and while never explicitly stated here, many have concluded that Shinran belongs in this camp (cf. Takahatake's *Young Man Shinran*). The problem with the authors' treatment of this crucial issue is that it completely ignores the most famous advocate of the *ichinen* position, Kōsai 幸西, who in fact did not speak of faith as his fundamental standpoint but rather defined *ichinen* as an instantaneous mystical union with the Buddha-mind.

The next discussion about other practices contributing toward birth is also somewhat one dimensional. The authors seem to have solid faith that Hōnen took the same position as Shinran, namely that all other practices must be abandoned when entering the Pure Land path. We are told that only through the criticism of Myōe's 明恵 *Saijarin* 摧邪輪 was the doctrine of birth through other practices introduced among Hōnen's followers, that to "recognize the validity of various practices in Amida's Vow violates the fabric of Hōnen's teaching" (vol. I, p. 31), and even that the disciples who remained with Hōnen the longest (Seikaku, Shōku) all reject this notion. In fact Hōnen himself is undeniably ambivalent on this point, generating an interesting discussion in Akamatsu's *Zoku Kamakura bukkyō no kenkyū* (1966, p. 199ff). In fact both Seikaku and Shōku remained, like Hōnen, solidly within their Tendai heritage until their deaths. Shōku, only thirty-five when the master passed away, went on to distinguish himself by mastering the tantric teachings and practices on Mt. Hiei. From Vasubandhu to T'an-luan to Shan-tao, a standard set of five practices became orthodox in the tradition as the Pure Land sūtras themselves advocate a number of different practices. But even more relevant is the fact that Gyōnen's 凝然 *Jōdo hōmongenrushō* 浄土法門源流章 shows Hōnen accepting a great number of disciples studying and practicing the whole range of what was available in Buddhism. There is no mention of Hōnen ever rejecting anyone for displaying less than total devotion to the nenbutsu. One final point on this matter—the writings of Hōnen's other disciples all discuss non-nenbutsu practice as something auxiliary to nenbutsu in terms of the stated goal of birth in the Pure Land. In other words, the two forms of practice were not seen in conflict with one another. This is not surprising since the *Larger Sukhāvati Sūtra* itself encourages the practitioner to transfer the merit accrued from his entire experience of practice toward the

goal of birth. Even if one were to accept the Shinshū position that the source of all religious practice is the Vows(s) of the Buddha, this implies these Vows are also responsible for practices other than chanting nenbutsu. In any case, if, as the introduction itself points out, the "attainment of practice lies in realizing *shinjin*" (vol. I, p. 35), why take such a hard line about the nature of the raft?

This relationship between practice and *shinjin* is thoroughly discussed here and is generally well presented. The reviewer would only like to point out that the distinction drawn between the temporal nature of the religious goal of *shinjin* versus the temporal nature of practice (p. 35) is unconvincing, particularly when the word *ichinen* is translated differently in "one utterance of practice" (*gyo no ichinen* 行の一念) versus "one thought-moment of *shinjin*" (*shin no ichinen* 信の一念). The shift of the word *nen* to mean specifically chanting in the context of Pure Land practice at this time does not preclude the mental dimension of its original meaning of *smṛti* and certainly the phrase *ichinen* in any context would mean momentariness. The conclusion offered here is simply, "The thought-moment of *shinjin* is a temporal expression because it includes the meaning of attainment or realization." If this is not confusing enough, when this discussion is picked up again in Vol. II, *shin no ichinen* is now described as the "encounter . . . which transcends time" (p. xxxv) instead of being offered as a genuine temporal experience. Does all this mean that the experience of *shinjin*, because it is "in the briefest instant of the immediate present," is part of some "real time" ontologically different from "merely another event in samsaric time"? If this is true, is it so for any spiritual "attainment or realization"?

The most eyebrow raising statement here, however, occurs on page 40 of Vol. I. Shinran's misreading of Chinese sources is legendary, prompting a variety of contemporary opinions that run the gamut from an image of him as a poor student who never really learned Chinese properly, to an old man with impaired eyesight, to a creative genius. In this work we have what can only be called the religious perspective. Accepting with complete authority Shinran's statement that "My heart and mind stand rooted in the Buddha-ground of the universal Vow, and my thoughts and feelings flow within the Dharma-realm," the authors tell us that "From his perspective within the ocean of the Vow, the truth harbored in these texts and scriptures has flowed entirely from Amida's Vow-mind." Thus, "it may be said that Shinran's readings are the most faithful to the original—the source—meaning of the texts. He did not alter the texts ignoring the original meaning as some have charged; quite to the contrary, he read the source meaning of the scriptures more deeply and clearly than the original authors, and in order to bring it out, he changed the traditional readings where he felt that there were inadequate." We are thus reminded that this translation of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* is being published by, and is thus representative of the goals of, the Nishi Hongwanji church.

However pedantic scholarly concerns may seem before such a monolith of faith, the problem of Shinran's misreadings nevertheless remains. Like the many apocryphal sūtras that dot the landscape of Chinese Buddhism, Shinran's creations reflect a new vision of the Buddha-dharma, but we need not

feel guilty about calling a spade a spade. The impact of the *Ta-che'eng ch'i-hsin lun* 大乘起信論 or the *Kuan wu-liang shou ching* 觀無量壽経 are not lessened by identifying them as apocryphal, as their enormous historical impact is testimony to their own powerful religious insight. The scholar will find much that is curious in these essays, such as the statement about realizing one's spiritual status vis-à-vis Amida's salvific vow, "to become one for whom the Vow is intended is to become a being of evil" (vol. II: p. xxxviii). There is also the discussion in the third volume about the relationship between *shinjin*, birth in the Pure Land and the attainment of nirvana where attaining *shinjin* is defined as attaining the bodhisattva stage of non-retrogression and birth in the Pure Land at death is equalled to reaching nirvana, but we are also told the non-retrogression stage where one will "necessarily attain nirvana is itself 'supreme nirvana' " (p. xviii). Might this be the origin of the Japanese custom of referring to the deceased as a Buddha (*hotoke*)? The point that one's *kleśas* must be totally eliminated to reach Buddhahood is never raised here; nor is the fact that the Shinshū promise to return to this world from the Pure Land for compassionate activity precludes entry into nirvana. These contradictions along with the problem of how someone so advanced as a seventh or eighth *bhūmi* bodhisattva (i.e. at the stage of non-retrogression by virtue of attaining *shinjin*) can look upon his own nature as hopelessly corrupt or evil remain significant if one views Shinshū within the context of Mahāyāna Buddhist doctrine. But Shinshū has thrived for centuries despite these enigmas, in itself a fascinating statement about the Japanese religious mentality.

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