

## Reading the *Kyōgyōshinshō*: Reading the General Preface②

### I . Section 1 of the Preface: The Ultimate Source of Universal Liberation

#### A) A Look at the translations

**本文**：竊かに以んみれば、難思の弘誓は難度海を度する大船、無碍の光明は無明の闇を破する恵日なり。 (『聖典』149 頁)

**DTS:** As I humbly reflect, Amida's Prayer for universal deliverance is beyond my understanding. It is the great boat that crosses the ocean of impassability. Amida's Light knows no hindrance. It is the sun of transcendental wisdom (*prajñā*) which illuminates the darkness of ignorance (*avidyā*). (p. 42)

**CWS:** I reflect within myself: The universal vow difficult to fathom is indeed a great vessel bearing us across the ocean difficult to cross. The unhindered light is the sun of wisdom dispersing the darkness of our ignorance. (p. 3)

**Inagaki:** When I humbly contemplate matters, I realize that the inconceivable Universal Vow is the great ship that carries us across the sea of samsara which is difficult to cross, and that the unhindered Light is the sun of wisdom that breaks the darkness of ignorance. (p. 3)

**Yamamoto:** As I humbly turn matters over in my mind, I see that His inconceivable *vow* is a great galleon that passes us across the impassable flood of birth and death and that His unhindered light is a merciful sun that breaks the gloom of ignorance. (p. 3)

**試訳:** As I consider the bit of insight I have gained, I can see that the universal vow hard to conceive is the great ship that takes us across the ocean difficult to cross and the unobstructed light is the sun of wisdom that dispels the darkness of our ignorance.

#### D) About “the ocean difficult to cross” (*nandokai* 難度海)

1) Basis for the phrase in the *Shizhupiposhalun* 十住毘婆沙論

One rides on the ship of the eightfold path and is able to cross the ocean difficult to cross. One takes oneself across and also takes others. I bow before the person who naturally exists.

From the verses in praise of Amida in the chapter on easy practice in *Shizhupiposhalun* 十住毘婆沙論

SSZ 1:261

2) What makes our lives “difficult to lead”?

#### E) About the vow as a “great ship” (*taisen* 大船)

1) How does the vow serve as a “ship” that carries us?

2) Soga Ryōjin's discussion of the ship

Even among the followers of Shin Buddhism, there are those who, hearing the voice of the Tathāgata floating nearby on the great ocean of birth and death, riding on the great ship of the original vow and calling out to them, agonize solely over how they might get onto that ship. They discover themselves struggling aimlessly outside the ship of the vow, presently drowning in the vast ocean of birth and death, even as they hear the faint voice of the Tathāgata from aboard and sincerely think of the Tathāgata's original vow. These are the ones who fruitlessly lament the darkness of their eyes of wisdom while wishing for the torch that lights the long night of ignorance, those who uselessly cry over the weight of their sins while thinking of the raft that will carry them over the great ocean of birth and death. Then just what is the reason that they are not liberated in spite of thinking of the original vow that liberates sentient beings? Because the original vow that they are imagining is not the actual original vow, but instead the vacuous object of their own yearning and desires. Because their hopes cannot be proven in reality. And there is no actual proof [of the realization of their hopes] because they are lacking true *shinjin*. The object of an aspiration is in the future, while the object of faith is in the present. The object of an aspiration is in the objective realm, while the object of faith is in the subjective one. Future birth in the Pure Land and the Tathāgata who teaches in the Pure Land are not the object of direct faith, but are really nothing more than the object of our aspirations. Really the immediate proof of faith, the object of actual experience, is nothing other than one's subjective experience of the power of the original vow and present liberation. . . .

When I forget liberation through the Tathāgata, I am drowning in the vast ocean of birth and death. When I think for a moment on liberation through the Tathāgata and hear the great order calling me to come, I am at that time a person on board the ship of the vow. We do not imagine liberation while drowning in the great ocean of birth and death, but instead hear the great order of liberation aboard the ship of the vow. The moment that we hear it is the moment of faith and the moment of liberation. The ship of liberation is not in front of our eyes but below our feet. Truly thinking of the ship of liberation is the recognition that we have been freed in the present moment. To take the argument a step further, while the ship of liberation, the voice of liberation, and the liberator appear to be three, they are in fact just one. Those who get caught up on the difference between these three will likely be unable to hear the great path of liberation throughout their lives. That is, the ship is the original vow of the Tathāgata's causal stage, the voice is the name of the completed stage, and the liberator is the awakening substance set in motion by [Amida's] attainment of enlightenment ten *kalpas* ago. Those tepid Pure Land Buddhists, who are caught up in these three names and yearn in vain for their savior billions of worlds away to the west, in squeezing out their sad, disconsolate voices, are expressing their present suffering and their empty desire for future liberation by calling

the *nenbutsu*. This is because they seek the liberator outside of the voice of liberation and because they seek the ship of liberation outside of the voice. However, what we come into direct contact with is neither simply a ship nor simply a savior, but nothing other than the voice of liberation.

#### F) About a verse with similar imagery in *Shōzōmatsu wasan* 正像末和讚

It is the torch that lights the long night of ignorance. Do not lament that your eyes of wisdom are dark! It is the raft that carries one over the great ocean of birth and death. Do not cry over the weight of your sins!

*Shōzōmatsu wasan* 正像末和讚, *Teihon Shinran shōnin zenshū* 定本親鸞聖人全集 (hereafter, TSZ),  
vol. 2, “Wasan hen” 和讚篇, p. 176

#### G) About “unobstructed light” (*mugekō* 無碍光)

For this reason, the Buddha of Immeasurable Life is called the Buddha of Immeasurable Light, the Buddha of Unlimited Light, the Buddha of Unobstructed Light, the Buddha of Unequalled Light, the Buddha Who Is King of Blazing Light, the Buddha of Pure Light, the Buddha of Light of Joy, the Buddha of Light of Wisdom, the Buddha of Uninterrupted Light, the Buddha of Light Difficult to Conceive, the Buddha of Ineffable Light, the Buddha of Light That Transcends That of the Sun and Moon.

*Daimuryōjukyō* 大無量壽經, SSZ, vol. 1, p. 16

World-Honored One, I, with single mind, follow the direction of the Tathāgata of Light Unobstructed Throughout the Ten Directions and aspire to be born in the land of peace and contentment.

*Jōdoron* 淨土論, SSZ, vol. 1, p. 265

Question: If you hold that the light of the Tathāgata of Unobstructed Light is immeasurable and free of hindrances in shining upon the lands of the ten directions, why is it that the sentient beings in this world are not shone upon by that light? If there are places where the light does not shine, then isn't the light actually obstructed? Answer: The obstruction is in sentient beings and is not an obstruction of the light itself. For example, although sunlight shines all over the four continents under the heavens, a blind person does not see that light. That does not mean that the light is not shining all over. Also, it is similar to how in spite of the fact that thick clouds might downpour a deluge, a hard rock may not be soaked through. That does not mean that the rain lacks the capacity to moisten.

*Jōdoron* 淨土論, SSZ, vol. 1, p. 265

#### H) About “the sun of wisdom” (*enichi* 惠日)

If you wish to understand the principle of non-arising, you should just think of the Buddha's name. The clouds of defilement and suffering will be dispersed entirely and the sun of wisdom will shine

brightly. If you wish to see the principle of true suchness, you should just contemplate the tuft of hair on the Buddha's forehead. The clouds of ignorance will be dispersed entirely and the mirror of wisdom will shine out on high.

*Jingtu wuhui nianfo songjing guanxingyi* 淨土五會念佛誦經觀行儀, by Fazhao 法照, T 85: 1264

#### H) About “dispelling ignorance” (*mumyō o hasuru* 無明を破する)

## II. Section 2 of the Preface: The Teachings Coming into the World

### A) A Look at the translations

**本文:** しかればすなわち、淨邦縁熟して、調達、闇世をして逆害を興ぜしむ。淨業機彰れて、釈迦、韋提をして安養を選ばしめたまえり。これすなわち権化の仁、齊しく苦惱の群萌を救済し、世雄の悲、正しく逆謗闡提を恵まんと欲す。 (『聖典』149 頁)

**DTS:** This being so, when the conditions were maturing for the Pure Land, Devadatta succeeded in persuading King Ajātaśatru to commit a deadly crime. Thereupon, Śākyamuni came out into the world to make the mind of Vaidehī turn toward the Land of Peace and Happiness. This showed that here was a being ready to accept the teaching of the Pure Land.

Thus we see that these incarnated ones' benevolent spirit is to save all beings from misery and suffering and that the compassionate heart of the Bravest of the World extends even to criminals of the highest degree, blasphemers of the Right Dharma, indeed, to those who are utterly devoid of any stock of merit. (p. 42)

**CWS:** Thus it is that, when conditions for the teaching of birth in the Pure Land had matured, Devadatta provoked Ajātaśatru to commit grave crimes. And when the opportunity arose for explaining the pure act by which birth is settled, Śākyamuni led Vaidehī to select the land of peace. In their selfless love, these incarnated ones—Devadatta, Ajātaśatru, Vaidehī—all aspired to save the multitudes of beings from pain and affliction, and in his compassion, Śākyamuni, the greatest hero, sought indeed to bless those committing the five grave offenses, those slandering the dharma, and those lacking the seed of Buddhahood. (p. 3)

**Inagaki:** When the opportunity to reveal the Pure Land Way became ripe, Devadatta incited Ajātaśatru to commit grave offenses; and when a person to be saved by the Pure Land practice appeared, Śākyamuni led Vaidehī to choose her birth in the Land of Peace and Provision. All this shows that human incarnations of sages equally sought to deliver the multitudes from suffering and that the World Hero, out of pity, especially wished to save those who commit the five grave offenses, abusers of the [Right] Dharma, and those without any potential for good (*icchantikas*). (p. 3)

**Yamamoto:** And as the time was now ripe for the Way to the Pure Land, *Devadatta* instigated

*Ajatashatru* to commit the *Deadly Sins* and as time was now meet for the Way to the Pure Land, *Shakyamuni Buddha* let *Vaidehi* seek her refuge in the *Land of Peace and Rest*. This was none other but that the ‘Buddha in Human Form’ desired to deliver all those lost in the mire of sorrow and pain and that the all-compassionate heart of the ‘World’s Hero’ wanted to have pity upon the sinners of the deadly sins, upon censurers of the Right Dharma, and upon the *Icchantikas*. (p. 3)

試訳: Since this is the case, the conditions ripened for the pure realm and Devadatta led Ajātaśatru to bring about heinous injuries. The person ready to engage in the pure practice appeared and Śākyamuni caused Vaidehī to choose the land of peace and nourishing. These are, in fact, human beings appearing provisionally to do the benevolent work of the Buddha, uniformly liberating the multitude of suffering beings and the compassion of the hero of the world truly intending to benefit those who have committed the five grave offenses, slandered the Dharma, and lack all conditions for becoming a Buddha.

**B) The tragedy at Rājagr̥ha as the opportunity for the liberation of the unliberatable**

- 1) Bimbisāra and Vaidehī’s poor choices
- 2) The relationship between Devadatta and Ajātaśatru
- 3) Ajātaśatru’s decision
- 4) Vaidehī’s response
- 5) Ajātaśatru’s wrath
- 6) Vaidehī’s self pity and ultimate choice of the Pure Land

**C) About “Devadatta’s leading Ajātaśatru to bring about heinous injuries”**

- 1) About “the conditions ripened for the pure realm” (*jōhō en jukushite* 淨邦 縁熟して)
- 2) The heinous injuries brought about by Ajātaśatru

**D) About “Vaidehī’s choice of the Pure Land”**

- 1) The meaning of *ki* 機 (person)

There are three meanings in the term *ji*. First, *ji* means hidden potential. Therefore, the *Yijing* states, “*ji* is the potential for movement, the precursor of the fortuitous.” Also, the *Agamas* state, “Sentient beings have the potential (*ji*) for the good dharma, so the Sage comes in response. When sentient beings are about to give rise to good, this positive potential is ready to move. When that is then attained, it is the *ji*. When one is about to give rise to good, this is also the *ji*. The fruition serves as encouragement.” This passage clarifies the potential to give rise to good. This term is quite broad. As with a bow, which has the potential (*ji*) to make shooting possible. Because of this, if one looses the arrow, it will shoot. When it shoots, the arrow moves. If it does not shoot, it will not go forward. Sentient beings have the capacity to give rise to good. Because of this, the Sage responds and the good arises. If he does not respond, it will not arise. Therefore, *ji* is said to be hidden potential.

Second, an old commentary on the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* states, “*Ji* has the significance of relating. In what way? Sentient beings are possessed of both good and evil, so relate to the Sage’s compassion. Therefore, *ji* has the significance of relating. Third, *ji* has the significance of appropriateness. As with compassionate kindness (*cibei* 慈悲), wishing to remove the suffering of ignorance is truly appropriate to compassion and wishing to bestow the contentment of dharma nature is truly appropriate to kindness. Therefore, *ji* has the significance of appropriateness.

From fascicle 6 of the *Fahuayuanyi* 法華玄義 by Zhiyi 智顥 (538-597)

T no. 1716, 33:746c24-747a6

2) The land of peace and nourishing (*an'yō* 安養)

The śrāvakas and bodhisattvas of the country of immeasurable life have indescribable virtue and wisdom. Also, that country is wondrous, with peace and contentment, and pure, just in this way. Why don’t you try to do good, think of the natural attainment of enlightenment, and fully realize the lack of both rank and limit. You should each try to make efforts and seek this for yourselves. You ought necessarily transcend, cut off, become able to go, and be born in the country of peace and nourishing. Unconventionally severing the five evil modes of existence, the evil ways of being are closed off spontaneously. One advance toward enlightenment without limitation. It is easy to go, yet no one is there. That country does not conflict. It is where one is drawn by nature.

From fascicle 2 of the *Larger Sutra*, SSZ 1:31

3) Vaidehī’s choice as caused by Śākyamuni (*erabashimetamaeri* 選ばしめたまえり)

E) Shinran’s understanding of these people as “provisional appearances” (*gonke no nin* 権化の仁)

1) Precedent for such a view in the commentary on the *Contemplation Sutra* by Yuanzhao 元照 [Devadatta] had committed three heinous sins and entered hell while still alive. Ajātaśatru killed his father and harmed his mother, so together they have committed all five of the five heinous sins. These are all the deeds of great provisional appearances. Whether positive or negative, there is none that does not benefit living beings, because they are performed in order to end the occurrence of heinous acts in the world in the future.

From fascicle 2 of *Guanwuliangshoujing yishou* 観無量寿經觀經疏 by Yuanzhao (1048–1116)

T no. 1754, 37:287b12-14

2) Shinran’s position in the *Hymns on the Significance of the Contemplation Sutra*

Amida and Śākyamuni extended expedients / Such as Ananda, Maudgalyāyana, Pūrṇa Maitrāyaniputra, Vaidehī, / Devadatta, Ajātaśatru, Bimbisāra, / Jīvaka, Moonlight, and Rain Coming.

Each of these great sages together with each other / Made expedients to lead / Foolish, ordinary,

lowly sinners / Into the vow that does not leave behind even heinous evil doers.

*Jōdo wasan* 淨土和讃, TSZ 2 (“Wasan hen”):48

- 3) What does “uniform liberation” entail?

**F) About liberation of the heinous sinners, slanderers of the Dharma, and *icchantika***

- 1) This passage is not just about the *Contemplation Sutra*, but the *Nirvana Sutra*, too
- 2) Vaidehī’s liberation in the *Contemplation Sutra*
- 3) Ajātaśatru’s liberation as the liberation on an *icchantika*