

## Reading the *Kyōgyōshinshō*: About the Title and Author's Name②

### III. Translations of the Title

**Original** : 顯浄土真実教行証文類

**DTS**: Collection of Passages Expounding the True Teaching, Living, and Realizing of the Pure Land. (p. 42) (from the title to the preface)

**CWS**: The True Teaching, Practice, and Realization of the Pure Land Way. (p. 1)

**Inagaki**: A Collection of Passages Revealing the True Teaching, Practice, Faith, and Enlightenment of the Pure Land Way. (p. 1)

**Yamamoto**: A Collection of the Lines that Show the True Teaching, Practice, and Attainment of the Pure Land School. (p. 3) (from the title to the preface)

**Draft Translation**: A Collection of Passages That Clearly Show True Teaching, Activity, and Enlightenment in the Pure Land Way

### IV. About the Name “Gutoku Shaku Shinran”

#### A) The meaning of *gutoku* 愚禿 (foolish stubble-headed)

- 1) Foolishness (*gu* 愚) as an inherent human quality, not a relative comparison
- 2) “Stubble-headed” refers to a bad monk who does not keep the precepts

#### B) The meaning of *shaku* 釈 (disciple of Śākyamuni)

- 1) Roots in China: Shi Dao'an 釈道安 (312/314–385)
- 2) Shinran's use after official expulsion from the priesthood

#### C) Shinran's Earlier Names

- 1) Wakamatsumaru 若松丸
- 2) Hannen 範宴
- 3) Shakkū 綽空

#### D) Shinran's Cloister Name (*bōgō* 房号)

- 1) Zenshin-bō 善信房

#### E) Recent Discussions of When Shinran Started to Use the Name Shinran

- 1) Traditional stance: After exile
- 2) Problems and limitations with that stance
- 3) Recent position: While studying with Hōnen
- 4) Reasons in favor of that position

## Reading the *Kyōgyōshinshō*: Reading the General Preface①

### I. Six Sections of the Preface

#### A) About the Ultimate Source of Universal Liberation

- 1) The ship of the vow
- 2) The sun of wisdom

#### B) About the Teachings Coming into the World

- 1) The tragedy at Rājagṛha as the opportunity for the teachings to be preached
- 2) The object of the teachings: “Abhorrent sinners, those who slander the Dharma, and those lacking in all roots of goodness”

#### C) About the Immediate Source of Our Liberation

- 1) The name as wisdom
- 2) Insight and acceptance as a “liberative principle”

#### D) About Our Relationship to that “Activity and Acceptance”

- 1) Serving the message in the name
- 2) Revering the principle

#### E) Shinran’s Commands to Us

- 1) Rejoice at the opportunity of encountering the vow
- 2) Don’t get caught up in uncertain ideation
- 3) “Listen to and consider” the true words of the teachings

#### F) Shinran’s Statement of His Intentions in Writing the *Kyōgyōshinshō*

- 1) The joy of now encountering what must be encountered, having already heard what must be heard
- 2) In order to express his joy at what he has heard and praise what he has been able to attain

### II. 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 illumines 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.

**B) About “hisoka ni omonmireba” 竊以**

- 1) The meaning of the character *hisoka* 竊
- 2) The meaning of *omonmiru* 以
- 3) Precedents for this usage in Shandao’s *Commentary on the Contemplation Sutra* and *Fashizan* 法事讚

**C) About “the universal vow hard to conceive” (*nanshi no guzei* 難思の弘誓)**

- 1) The limits of human ideation
- 2) Translations of *guzei* 弘誓 and the problems with the phrase “universal deliverance”

**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* 正像末和讃**

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