# Reading the *Kyōgyōshinshō*: Reading the General Preface⑮

## Ⅰ．Section 4 of the Preface: About Our Relationship to that “Activity and Acceptance”

### A) A Look at the translations

**本文：**爾れば、凡小修し易き真教、愚鈍往き易き捷径なり。大聖一代の教、是の徳海に如く無し。穢を捨て浄を忻い、行に迷い信に惑い、心昏く識寡なく、悪重く鄣り多きもの、特に如来の発遣を仰ぎ、必ず最勝の直道に帰して、専らこの行に奉え、唯だ斯の信を崇めよ。

**DTS:** This being so, this teaching is the true one which is easy to practice for all of us who are small and helpless; it is the shortest passage to walk for us who are stupid and ignorant. Nothing surpasses this teaching of the Great Sage, which was given by him while on earth and which is indeed the ocean of merit.

Let those who, aspiring for purity, wish to give up defilements, let those who are at a loss as to the right practice and the right faith, let those whose minds are darkened and whose understanding is deficient, let those who are troubled with evils and hindrances weighing heavily on them—let them all be reverently mindful of Śākyamuni’s command to come to the Pure Land, let them be sure of taking refuge in the most excellent path of truth, and let them devote themselves exclusively to living it and piously embrace this faith only.

**CWS:** This, then, is the true teaching easy to practice for small, foolish beings; it is the straight way easy to traverse for the dull and ignorant. Among all the teachings the Great Sage preached in his lifetime, none surpasses this ocean of virtues. Let the one who seeks to abandon the defiled and aspire for the pure; who is confused in practice and vacillating in faith; whose mind is dark and whose understanding deficient; whose evils are heavy and whose karmic obstructions manifold—let such persons embrace above all the Tathagata’s exhortations, take refuge without fail in the most excellent direct path, devote themselves solely to this practice, and revere only this shinjin.

**Inagaki**: This is indeed the true teaching which is easy to practice even for ordinary, inferior people and is the shortest way that is easy to follow for dull and stupid people. Of all the lifetime teachings of the Great Sage, nothing surpasses this oceanlike virtue. Those who wish to leave this defiled world of samsara and aspire to the Pure Land, those who are confused about religious practices and faiths, those who are dark in mind and lacking in wisdom, and those who are burdened with heavy evil karma and many hindrances should, by all means, esteem the Tathāgata Śākyamuni’s exhortation and follow the supreme direct path to enlightenment; they should exclusively hold fast to this practice and only uphold faith.

**Yamamoto:** Therefore this is the true religion that all *common mortals and petty persons* can easily practice and this is the shortest way that the ignorant can take. Of all the teachings of the ‘Great Sage’, nothing can equal this sea of virtue. O thou who desirest to abandon this world of filth and seek birth in the Land of Purity, thou who art lost in practices and in faiths, thou whose mind is beclouded and lacks light, whose sins weigh, and who are garbed in hindrances! Now that especially thou art shown the Way by Shakyamuni Buddha, take at all costs to this best and direct Way and exclusively follow this *Practice* and revere but this *Faith!*

**試訳:** Since this is the case, it is the true teaching easy for base, ordinary people to cultivate, the shortcut easy for the ignorant and dull to take. In the teachings delivered in the course of the life of the great sage, none compare with this ocean of wondrous qualities. Those who wish to abandon the defiled and aspire to the pure, lost in practice and confused in faith, with dull minds and a paucity of insight, heavy evil and many obstructions, should in particular respect this urging of the Tathāgata and necessarily return to this most excellent, direct path, exclusively serving this practice and just respecting this acceptance and understanding.

### D) On the significance of the third sentence

1) On our deluded way of being

The person that is being discussed here is the person of self power who does the meditative and non-meditative good acts within the Pure Land Gate. . . . In the *Jushinroku* 樹心録, passages such as the one from the *Gutokushō* that says, “First, the truth of despising is the Gate of the Path of Sages, the Path of Difficult Practice,” are quoted. Based on this, it holds that for the Path of the Sages, despising [this world of endurance] comes first, while in the Gate of the Pure Land, which is said to be the truth of aspiring [for the Pure Land], aspiration comes first, so since the current passage says, “wish to abandon the defiled and aspire to the pure,” with despising the defiled coming first, it holds that this passage refers to the person of the Gate of the Path of Sages, but that is not the case. When the *Gutokushō* says, “First, the truth of despising . . .” it means despising birth and death and aspiring to nirvana. That is not what the current passage is discussing. To “wish to abandon the defiled and aspire to the pure” means despising the *sahā* world and aspiring to the Pure Land. It is referring to the person within the Pure Land Gate. It is mistaken to think it refers to the person of the Gate of the Path of Sages. Based on Hōnen’s teaching, the people of the Path of Sages are brought into the Gate of the Pure Land in one way or another, and aspire for the Pure Land in this *sahā* world. The following portion next speaks of those whose minds that want to do meditative and non-meditative good, saying, “lost in practice and confused in faith.”

Kōgatsu-in Jinrei 香月院深励 (1749-1817),

*Kyōgyōshinshō kōgi shūsei* 教行信証講義集成, 1: 162-163

*gon* 忻 = The form of the character refers to quick, shallow breathing in a state of happy excitement. Most dictionaries define the character as meaning “to have one’s mind opened up,” or “to enjoy” and do not provide the meaning “to aspire.”

*mei* 迷 = The form of the character indicates being faced with multiple possible paths and being at a loss as to which one to take.

*waku* 惑 = The form of the character indicates a variety of different thoughts arising in the mind and the confusion that arises from them. The upper portion of the character also has the meaning of a fortified area and is sometimes used to mean “to partition off.”

*kon* 昏 = The form of the character refers to the darkness at dusk.

*ke* 寡 = The form of the character indicates a person agonizing alone under a roof. The character is used to refer to widows and widowers.

2) On the rarity of Shinran’s use of the imperative and its significance here

3) Sources for “respect the urging of the Tathāgata” and “serve”

Further, since the Buddha’s hidden intent is both broad and profound, it is difficult to gain clarity about the gates of the teachings. Even the three types of wise ones and the ten sages are not able to understand it through their considerations, so how possibly could one like myself, so easily influenced and having not yet stepped on the bodhisattva path, dare to claim to understand their gist? Respectfully considering, Śākyamuni urges us from this side and Amida welcomes us from that country. Called from there and sent from here, how could we not go in that direction? One should just with an earnest mind, serve the Dharma and, taking the completion of one’s life as a certainty, abandon this defiled body, thereby immediately realizing the constant contentment of Dharma nature there.

Shandao 善導, “Xuanyifen” 玄義分, *Guanjingshu* 観経疏, SSZ 1: 443

One respectfully receives Śākyamuni’s urging, where he teaches us to turn to the western direction. Also, based on the calling of the compassionate mind of Amida, one now accepts and follows in the intent of the two honored ones, without concerning oneself with the two rivers of fire and water, not forgetting thought after thought, riding on the path of the power of that aspiration, such that having abandoned one’s life, one can be born in that country, encounter the Buddha, and experience limitless joy.

Shandao 善導, “Sanshanyi” 散善義, *Guanjingshu* 観経疏, SSZ 1: 541

4) Sources and significance of “this excellent, direct path”

Since [the teaching of the single vehicle] had been kept in the Buddha’s mind, unknown to any others, it is called “hidden.” Since the direct path of the single vehicle comprehensively encompasses all myriad tracks, it is said to be “essential.”

Zhiyi 智顗, *Fahuawengu* 法華文句 (commenting on the phrase “the hidden essence of

the myriad Buddhas” in the “Chapter on Expedients” in the *Lotus Sutra*), T 34: 63a11-13)

We can truly recognize the following. In the parable of the two rivers, about “the white path four or five inches wide,” when it says “white path,” the “white” is in contrast to “black.” “White” refers to the white karma of encompassing and selection, the pure karma of bestowing of virtues in the form of going [to the Pure Land]. “Black” refers to the black karma of ignorance and afflictions, the sundry good of humans, devas, and those of the two vehicles. The “path” is in contrast to “track.” “Path” refers to the direct path of the singular reality of the original aspiration, the unsurpassed, great path of great, complete nirvana. “Track” refers to the small track of the myriad goods and sundry practices of the two vehicles and the three vehicles.

Shinran in the chapter on *shinjin*, *Seiten*, pp. 234-235; TK, 130-131

Since the single vehicle of the original aspiration is the ultimately instantaneous, instantaneously fast, all-pervading, entirely perfected teaching, it is the absolutely non-dual teaching, the path of the singular reality of true suchness. This should be recognized.

Shinran in *Gutokushō*, *Seiten*, p. 428

How does the bodhisattva accept and follow in the singular reality? The bodhisattva fully realizes that all sentient beings are returned to the single path. The single path is the great vehicle. The myriad Buddhas and bodhisattvas divide this into three for the sake of sentient beings. For this reason, the bodhisattva accepts and follows in non-opposition.

Quotation from the *Huayenjing* 華厳経 in the chapter on practice, *Seiten*, p. 197, TK, 77

5) What should be the guiding force of our lives?

*sū* 崇 = The form of the character indicates the top of a tall mountain that one “looks up to.” The lower portion of the character refers to “leader” or “chief.” The character means to look up to as a guide or leader.