A Study of Attainment (shō) in Shinran's Kyōgyōshinshō

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I. Subjectivity and Ideals of Attainment

A. Essence of Attainment: a subjective truth for Shinran alone

Attainment (*shō*, 證) signifies the attainment of Enlightenment or *satori*¹⁾.

1) S. Miyamoto. *Kyōgyōshinshō shōkankōdoku*, 教行信證，證卷講讀 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1957), p. 1-103, also *Kenjōdo shinjitsu shōmonrui Kōdoku*, 顯淨土眞實證文類講讀 (Kyoto: Higashi Honganji, 1969) p. 1-171.

Occasionally it has been described as the wisdom of attainment, at other times, the realm of Enlightenment. However, it is not a question whether attainment is wisdom itself or the realm of Enlightenment since both are inseparably united.

Traditionally, attainment has been considered as *adhigama*, since it is a subjective experience. To indicate this, the following expressions are used synonymously with attainment: Koshō (己證, self-attainment), Naishō (内證, internal attainment), Jinaishō (自内證, self-internal-attainment), Shinshō (真證, true attainment), Honshō (本證, original attainment), Jikaku (自覺, self-enlightenment) and Hongaku (本覺, original enlightenment). In each of these terms we can hear the inner voice encouraging the individual to endeavor and open the way. In the same manner we have the Buddhist term Kyūdo (求道), meaning 'to search for the path', for if an individual seeks, he shall receive and if he endeavors, he will achieve attainment. This is because the essence of Enlightenment lies within the self that seeks and endeavors.

One day after the historical Buddha delivered his first sermon at Deer Park at Sarnāth, he was engaged in meditation in a forest when a group of thirty young couples arrived for a picnic. One of the young men did not yet have a wife, so he brought with him a woman of the street. During the course of the day, that woman stole the belongings of the rest and fled. The youths, in search for her wandered around and happened to encounter the meditating Buddha. They asked him if he had seen the woman and in reply he reprimanded them, asking which was of more important, to search for a woman or to seek themselves, since internal truth can only be revealed by means of one's own exploration. Here lies the great freedom of human life, to not seek external affairs, but only seek oneself²⁾. Within this teaching to seek for oneself, as set forth to the youths, shines the essence of attainment (shō).

As the *Tannishō* (歎異抄 or the Tract on Deploring the Heterodoxies) states, "when we carefully observe Amida's vow, issuing forth from five aeons of meditation, it is 'for Shinran alone'." The phrase 'for Shinran alone' is an appropriate expression of the subjective experience of his attainment (證の主體性).

B. Right Enlightenment, the path for all

The characteristic of Buddhist Enlightenment lies in the fact that it is an equal Enlightenment for all sentient beings. Even in Jōdo Shinshū, which advocates birth into the Realm of Purification by means of faith granted by Amida, acknowledgement is made that one attains Enlightenment equivalent to that of Amida. Furthermore, the ultimate goal is that everyone will become a Buddhas if they have faith in the Original Vow (本願 or Hon-gan) and recite the *nembutsu* (念佛)³⁾. Buddhist Enlightenment of *Satori* whether it be expressed in terms of *shō* (證), *go* (悟) or *kaku* (覺), has to be Enlightenment of the correct pathway or right Enlightenment. Just as the historical Buddha became Enlightened by means of the path of the Middle Way (中道) and presented the Eight-fold right path (八正道) as the Middle Way⁴⁾, so Buddhism considers 'rightness (正, sammā)' as its motto. This aspect is one of the most important characteristics of Buddhism among the world religions.

The Eight-fold right path consists of right standpoint, right judgment, right speech, right actions, right livelihood, right efforts, right beliefs and right meditation. This path is considered to be the great universal way for contemporaries as well as the ancients. It is the free and open path to universal Enlightenment for all, bearing no discrimination between male and female, superiors and inferiors, races or professions. The reason why the method to

2) Mrs. Rhys Davids, *The Birth of Indian Psychology and its Development in Buddhism* (London: Luzac & Co, 1936) p. 79, "he (the Buddha): *varaṃ attānaṃ gaveyyesātha*; 'better that you thoroughly sought after the self?'"

Mrs. Rhys Davids, *Gotama the Man* (London: Luzac & co., 1928) p. 118: "I was much more concerned with a right view on that hidden thing, the very 'man' (attan). I said: "would you not rather be seeking the 'Man', than the woman? I am sorry at the loss, but this is so much more important".

3) 12th chapter of *Tannishō*, 歎異抄.

4) S. Miyamoto, "The Buddha's First Sermon and Its Original Patterns of the Middle Way" in *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies* Vol. XIII no. 2 (March 1965) pp. 845-855.

attain Buddhist Enlightenment is presented as the Middle Way is because Buddhism is the great path of human life that coincides with common sense.

C. Three Principles of Attainment (*shō*) ...Benefit of others,
Nirvāṇa and Purification

Shinran (親鸞, 1173-1262), in the beginning of the *Shō* volume of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* (教行信證) stated that "attainment (*shō*) signifies benefitting others and Nirvāṇa" and when he discussed the Buddha of the Realm of the True Buddha (Shinbutsudo, 眞佛土), he related this to the concept of purification. Purification, as Shinran described it, refers to the purification body of the Tathāgata and the purification of the Pure Land. Emptiness (空, 空性, *suññatā*) in Buddhism signifies 'as-it-isness' (*yathā bhuccā*), 'not-upside-down' (*a-vipallatthā*) and purification (*parisudhā*)⁵. In contrast to these three principal aspects of emptiness (空の三原則), the principles of attainment are: benefitting others, Nirvāṇa and purification. In the study of Buddhist teachings there is no more appropriate way to express the contents of attainment than by means of these three principles.

The historical Buddha in his first sermon declared that he became an Enlightened One by discovering the Middle Way. On the basis of his subjective experience, he taught this to his first five disciples and they subsequently were Enlightened, opening their eyes of Dharma (法眼を開く). Then the Buddha instructed the five disciples "for the benefit of the world and for the happiness and benefit of the people, go transmit the teachings and preach good Dharma (佛陀の傳道宣言)⁶, exhibit the noble practice and Enlighten them to the true Dharma." In this instance, "for the happiness and benefit of the people, to go and teach" signifies that the ultimate objective of the Buddhist transmission is to benefit others (利他, *rita*: 世のため, 人のため, 大衆の利益幸福

5) S. Miyamoto, "Kūshisō oyobi sono hattatsu" (空思想及びその發達, 阿含における空住經典の譯並に研究) in *Nippon Bukkyō Gakkai kaihō* Vol. 17 (1951) pp. 100-123.

6) Vinaya piṭaka, Mahā-vagga 1, 2, i, Vol 1 p. 21. See S. Miyamoto, "Hokkekyō no gensho seiritsu to Buddha no dendō-sengen (法華經の原初成立と佛陀の傳道宣言)" in *Hokkekyō no seiritsu to tenkai* (Kyoto: Heirakuji, 1970) pp. 317-352.

のため). In this statement the threefold presentation of the historical Buddha consists of: 1) to preach good Dharma, 2) to demonstrate the noble practice, 3) to make others Enlightened to the Dharma. However, the emphasis was placed upon 'go' and thus this has been called the historical Buddha's declaration of transmission. Of course, the most important first sermon of the historical Buddha, the first turning of the Wheel of the Dharma, was preached prior to this declaration. In that case, it is appropriate to say that was a declaration of Enlightenment by means of the Middle Way. The important point concerning the first sermon, or his declaration of Enlightenment (初轉法輪), is the statement: "O Bhikkhu, the Tathāgata abandoned the two extremes (pain and joy) and reached the state of awareness of the Middle Way. This means to open one's eyes, create wisdom and enter into the state of serenity, divine wisdom, awareness and Nirvāṇa." Thus, within this statement the pattern is clearly indicated that awareness is embraced within Nirvāṇa. This pattern of awareness of the true path which leads to Nirvāṇa has been continuously transmitted. Dōgen (道元, 1200-1253), in his *Shōbōgenzō* (正法眼藏), used a similar pattern of development of initial aspiration (motivation), practice, bodhi (awareness) and Nirvāṇa (發心・修行・菩提・涅槃), in the same tradition.

In the past, I have discussed *mokṣa* and *Nirvāṇa*⁷⁾ in detail, pointing out that the concept of *mokṣa* was the ultimate goodness or happiness of the Āryans. The historical Buddha himself, in search of that goodness, followed the Āryan ideals, became a monk, practiced and finally attained *mokṣa*. However, Buddha's new Enlightenment was one step beyond the Āryan *mokṣa*, and it was the beginning of a new Buddhist concept of Nirvāṇa. In other words, the historical Buddha emphasized the freedom of *mokṣa*, the awakening of bodhi and the peace of Nirvāṇa. The term Buddha (*Sammāsambuddha*) was a new terminology not clearly indicated in earlier Āryan culture. This realm of the Enlightened was described as the realm of serenity and peacefulness, which

7) S. Miyamoto, "Gedatsu to Nehan no kenkyū (解脱と涅槃の研究, 近代世界學者の研究を評釋して)" in *Bungaku Kenkyūkakiyō* Vol. 6 (Tokyo: Waseda Univ.) pp. 1-41.

is the old etymological origin of Nirvāṇa.

In this manner, the concept of 'benefitting others for the happiness of the people' and the concept of Nirvāṇa, which embraces true awareness, both from their initiation indicate the nature of the Enlightenment of the historical Buddha, a most essential Buddhistic truth. It also presents a most appropriate example for the analysis of the nature of attainment (shō) visualized by Shinran. Shinran's realization of the path of attainment (shō) signified the benefit of others and Nirvāṇa; to which he added the purification derived from the concept of Emptiness. He thus presented a view of attainment characterized by these three principles, an endeavor fitting directly within the realm of Buddhist truth. In the Kamakura period (1185-1333) of Japan, Shinran (1173-1262) survived with his wife Eshin-ni (恵信尼, 1182-1268) through his persecution, dwelling in the remote wilderness of the Kanto area. The fact that such a man was able to make a tremendous intellectual contribution, represents one of the universal accomplishments of Japanese Buddhism.

D. Different Usages of the Term Attainment (shō)

Shinran's handwritten autobiography can be found within the *Keshindo* (化身土) volume of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*. According to this autobiography, Shinran was persecuted along with his master Hōnen (法然, 1133-1212), and five years had passed since he was exiled to Echigo. Master Hōnen was released, but shortly thereafter at the age of 80, he passed away. Shinran also described how he first became a disciple of Hōnen at the age of 29. Shortly after that he was allowed to copy the *Senjakuskū* and a portrait of the master, while also changing his name from Shakkū (禪空) to Zenshin (善信). As far as we know, *this is the only genuine autobiography* (自傳, *Jiden*) of Shinran in existence today.

Traditionally, Eun called this portion of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, *Gojo* (後序) or the epilogue, and scholars have followed his classification. But I consider this to be of such importance that it should be termed a *Jiden* (自傳) or an autobiography rather than merely an epilogue⁸. the Text begins:

"When we observe the present situation, various noble teachings have, for a

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long while, decline in their practice of attainment (行證, *gyōshō*), while within the true sect of the Pure Land, the path to attainment (證道, *shōdō*) now has prospered.”

He thus differentiated between the practice of attainment (*gyōshō*) referring to the noble teachings and the path of attainment (*shōdō*) of the Pure Land.

Also in the introduction of the *Shin* (Faith) volume, he stated:

When I consider, obtaining a serene joyful faith (至心信樂, *shishin-shingyō*) is derived from the vow of the Tathāgata. The revelation of the mind of true faith is a manifestation of the skillful means of the compassion of Buddha. However, the people of this end of the Dharma era and the masters of recent eras were submerged into an absolute emphasis upon the innate potentiality within oneself and tended to neglect the true attainment (眞證, *Shinshō*) of the realm of purification. These individuals are confused by their own minds in disciplinary practices and are blind to the indestructible true faith.

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- 8) S. Miyamoto, “Kyōgyōshinshō no Kihonkōzō, jishaku, monrui, jiden (教行信證の基本構造, 自釋・文類・自傳)” in *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku kenkyū* Vol. XVIII no. 2 (1970) pp. 475-485.

It is best to follow Zonkaku's method of classifying the *Kyōgyōshinshō* into three divisions (序・正・流通, *jo*, *shō* and *ruzū*) as explained in the *Rokuyōshō* (六要鈔). According to the *Kyōgyōshinshō* compiled in *Bukkyō taikēi*, the priest Soon Kōryū offered a commentary on the five traditional theories of classification and added his own theory. In these five traditional theories, there are slight variations regarding the treatment of the autobiographical section. My attempt however, to separate the epilogue section into autobiography and the epilogue itself is the first such attempt.

Shinran at the age of 35 was exiled to the province of Echigo. The rest of his life from that time on was unsettled and he suffered from social persecution. He could not be prominently active in the public eye and as a result, official historical documents relating to his life are not available. Even as recent as the early Taishō era, there were scholars who seriously questioned Shinran's historicity. As a result of the studies of Shinran's handwriting, however, carried out by Bunshō Yamada in his *Shinshūshi kenkyū*, (眞宗史研究), and Zennosuke Tsuji's study of the *Bandōbon* (坂東本, that is, Shinsan's Manuscript, National Treasure) his historicity has been verified. In October of the 10th year of Taisho, Eshin-ni's letters were discovered and Kyōdō Washio published *Eshin-ni monjo no kenkyū*, 惠信尼文書の研究, (12th year Taisho), thus the family life of Shinran and Eshin-ni was clearly revealed.

Here Shinran, objectively admonishing his contemporaries, uses the phrase "true attainment (*shinshō*) of the realm of purification" (*jōdo no shinshō*, 淨土の眞證).

However, by the end of the volume of *Shin* (Faith), preceding the tragic events of the Rājagṛha castle, where Ajātaśatru imprisoned his father and led his mother, Vaidehī (Idaïke) to grieve, Shinran displays his deepest self-reflection. The late Sir Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) portrayed this tragedy of the *Kanmuryōjukyō* (Meditation-sūtra) as the tragedy of a faithful dancer of the palace caught between Jainism and Buddhism, and he termed this event, "*Dancer's Worship*" (*Natāpāja*). Many years ago, in January, 1927, I recall having the pleasure of appreciating the drama at the Tagore home in Calcutta, during which Tagore read the prologue and his niece played the role of the dancer.

Shinran, at the end of the *Shin* volume, perhaps related his own situation to those tragic events, stating in grief: "I am sincerely aware alas, that ignorant Shinran is submerged within the vast ocean of human desire and confused by the great mountain of fame, not preferring to join the promised ones, nor enjoy approaching the attainment of true attainment. It is shameful and regrettable." Thus he lamented. And in this manner, Shinran used the term 'attainment of true attainment (*shinshō no shō*, 眞證の證)' as well as 'practice of attainment (*gyōshō*) of the holy teachings' 'path of attainment (*shōdō*) of the true sect of the Pure Land' and 'true attainment of the realm of purification (*jōdo no shinshō*). He went further in the *Shōshinge* (正信偈) verses of his volume *Gyō* (Practice) stating:

When one reaches the realm of purification, one will attain (shō) the body of Dharma nature.

One attains the realization (*shōchi*, 證知) that birth and death are Nirvāṇa.

Again in the *Shin* volume he states:

Ultimate faith is the true cause to attain (*shō*) Nirvāṇa.

The pure realm of the great vow does not have any discriminative differentiation and in the flash of a moment, most swiftly one will transcendently attain (*chōshō*, 超證) the ultimate fruit of Buddhahood.

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Since the followers of the *nembutsu* will reach the ultimate indestructible mind of faith, therefore, on the eve of one's death, with one recitation of the *nembutsu*, they can transcendently attain Mahā-parinirvāṇa; for this, they can be called Maitreya.

Here we note, he even used the term transcendental attainment (*chōshō*).

II. Significance of the Composition of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*
and Its Fundamental Structure.

A. *Kyō•gyō•shō* (Teaching, Practice, Attainment) and
Kyo•gyō•shin•shō (Teaching, Practice, Faith and Attainment)

Shinran initially titled his major work the *Kyōgyōshō* (顯淨土真實教行證文類, *Ken-jōdoshinjitsu-kyōgyōshō-monrui*), but later added the volume entitled *Shin* (Faith), hence the contents of the work is known as the *Kyōgyōshinshō* (教行信證, teaching, practice, faith and attainment.)

In Chinese Buddhism, the term *Kyōgyōshō* was used in close relation to the three periods of the Dharma. According to this belief, at the time of *shō-bō* (正法, true Dharma), the teaching, practice and attainment were complete, during the period of *zōbō* (像法, Imitation Dharma), teaching and practice alone existed, while during the *mappō* (末法, end of the Dharma) period, the teaching alone remained. Such a tradition was transmitted to Japan and the terms *Kyōgyōshō* (教行證) became important in Japanese Tendai (天台) Buddhism as a means of classifying Buddhist life.

The various Buddhist leaders of the Kamakura period were aware of the terminology *Kyōgyōshō*. Nichiren (日蓮, 1222-1282), for instance, wrote the *Kyōgyōshōgoshō* (教行證御書), in which he challenged the view that during the period of *mappō* the teachings alone would remain and stated that real attainment (現證, *genshō*) also existed for the followers of the Lotus. As another example, Dōgen, (道元, 1200-1253), in his *Shōbōgenzō* used the term widely throughout his work, calling the *Dhammapada* verse 183, the *Kyōgyōshō* of hundreds of thousands of Buddhas. That verse says: “*sabbapa-*

passa akaraṇam kusalassa upasampadā, sacittapariyodapanam etam buddhāna sāsanaṃ"; or "Not to do any evil, to cultivate good, to purify one's mind, this is the teaching of the Buddha." (translated by Nārada Thera)⁹ He also stated in *Shoakumakusa* (諸惡莫作):

Many Buddhas and many masters have never defiled the *Kyōgyōshō*. At the same time, the *Kyōgyōshō* has never hinder the Buddhas and masters.

Elsewhere in a chapter on the Teaching of the Buddha (佛教) he wrote:

The bodhisattvas attain supreme Enlightenment by the *kyōgyōshō* of the Six Pāramitās. That attainment is neither of doing nor non-doing, beginning nor newly created, (new attainment) nor eternal attainment, essential practice nor non-doing, but rather it is simply the attainment of supreme Enlightenment.

Shinran in the title of his principal work used the term *Kyōgyōshō* and in the introduction, wrote: "Respectfully have faith in the *Kyōgyōshō* of Shinshū," because in his youth he had studied Tendai doctrine and respected the tradition of *Kyōgyōshō* just as his contemporaries Dōgen and Nichiren. When he left Mt. Hiei however, and joined the movement of the master Hōnen, his true motive, as he described it in his autobiographical section (jiden, 自傳), was to "Abandon all other practices and take homage in the teaching of the Original Vow" (棄雜行兮, 歸本願). The essence of Shinran's life was to take refuge in the Original Vow, or the establishment of Faith (*shinjin*). This became the central core of his belief.

When we observe the introduction to the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, we can notice that from the very beginning, the name (*myōgō*) and faith, practice and faith, were mentioned side by side. When we proceed further to the volume of Practice (行, *Gyō*), it maintains the structure of the original work and also appears to be a concise *Kyōgyōshinshō* in itself. This volume begins with the sentence: "When I sincerely consider the nature of *ōsō-ekō* (往相廻向, the given path to attainment), there are two means: Practice and Faith." Shinran not only discusses the 17th vow (the original vow of practice) here but also analyzes such vows as the 18th (the original vow of faith), the

9) The Dhammapada, translated with Notes by Nārada Thera (London: The Wisdom of the East Series: John Murray, Albemarle Street, W., 1954), p. 53.

11th (original vow of attainment) and the 22nd or the vow of *gensō-ekō* (還相廻向, the given path of the return from Attainment). By doing this, he attempted to prove the idea "that *tariki* (他力, other power) means the Tathāgata's power of the Original Vow." In this manner, he proceeded through the 18th, 11th and 22nd vows and finally reached his famous interpretation of the ultimate ocean of faith of the Original Vow. He stated that the vast ocean of the Original Vow is the absolute teaching and that indestructible faith is the absolute cause; and thus he clearly emphasized the significance of faith. In this volume on Practice, just as in the *Kyōgyōshinshō* introduction, Shinran most carefully presented practice and faith side by side in various manners. Furthermore, this volume is concluded with the verse *Shōshin nem-butsuge*. (正信念佛偈), which summarizes the teachings of the three sutras and seven patriarchs (三經・七祖).

It was in this manner that Shinran maintained the tradition of *Kyōgyōshō* within his work, however, in place of including faith within the sphere of practice, he chose to advance and clearly separate practice and faith. Because of this he gathered numerous source materials related to faith and then added the new volume on Faith (信, *Shin*) to his work. Here lies the uniqueness of Shinran's exploration, which was not confined to the relationship between practice and attainment (行と證), but advanced to analyze the relationship between faith and attainment (信と證). This is not surprising because from the time Shinran joined Hōnen's movement, he became dedicated to the faith of paying homage to the Original Vow and his entire life became related to the matter of faith.

Almost every Buddhist master of the Kamakura period emphasized the role of faith. Dōgen stated in *Bodaibunpō* (菩提分法): "with faith (*shin*), we can enter the vast ocean of the Buddhist Dharma. When faith is established, Buddhahood is established." And Nichiren stated: "Faith can replace wisdom", "with faith, one enters attainment" and "let me attain Enlightenment with this body (即身成佛) by means of strong faith (Jūōsantansho, 十王讚歎鈔)." By such means these leaders directly connected faith and attainment. As these examples indicated, Dōgen in his use of the term present attainment (*genjō*,

現成), and Nichiren in his discussion of the attainment of Enlightenment with this body, the emphasis was placed upon faith in the present life. Shinran alone however, most carefully explored the significance of the role of faith and made it the subject matter of his special volume on the subject. This provided a unique unprecedented contribution to Buddhist intellectual history.

B. The Autobiography of Shinran and Eshin-ni's Letters¹⁰⁾

In human society, pioneers in any given field frequently are forced to suffer attack and persecution. Therefore, Shinran, who intellectually explored the new system of *Kyōgyōshinshō*, which transcended the tradition of *Kyōgyōshō*, must have endured inexpressible suffering. According to the ten or so letters left by Shinran's wife, Eshin-ni, during their marriage, they spent more than twenty odd years of unsettled life, wandering with their children from Echigo to Kanto. During this difficult period, the major portion of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* manuscript was completed. Even after his return to the capital Kyoto, where materials were available to finish the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, he did not have any permanent abode but rather moved from one temporary residence to another. When Shinran was 82, because of severe economical hardship in his family, his wife Eshin-ni took four children with her back to Echigo, leaving only the youngest daughter Kakushin-ni (覺信尼) in Kyoto. It was this daughter that attended Shinran's death when he reached the age of 90. The following is Shinran's own account of his life of persecution and difficulties as described in his autobiography :

When I observe the present situation of Buddhism, the practice and attainment of the noble path has declined, while the path of attainment of Jōdo Shinshū has prospered. Therefore, the priests of the various temples do not comprehend the difference between the true teaching and conventional teaching. Many of the Confucian scholars of the capital do not properly understand the paths of right and wrong. Because of this condition, the scholarpriests of the Kōfukuji

10) Chiken Sumita, *Kyōgyōshinshō no kenkyū* (教行信證の研究), (zenshū) Vol. 1 (Nagoya: Dōbō Univ. 1955) pp. 173-174 and 267-273; Shinryū Umehara, *Eshin-ni monjo no kōkyū*, 恵信尼文書の考究 (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō. 1960) pp. 1-136.

Temple in the year 1207, appealed to the court to ban the *nembutsu* practice. Thus from Emperor to subjects, individuals engaged in an act contrary to the true Dharma thereby creating hatred and anger. As a result, Genkū, the great master of our Shinshū tradition and several of his followers were charged with this crime. Without proper trial some were executed while others were deprived of their title of priesthood, returned to the laity and exiled to remote lands. I personally was among these exiled and am no longer either a priest or layman (非僧非俗, hiso-hizoku). I thus call myself "toku" (bald-pate). The master and his other disciples spent five years in exile and finally, in the year 1211, were allowed to return to the capital upon Imperial order. There the master resided in the western part of Higashiyama at a place called Ōtani in the northern part of the Toribeno area. However during the year 1212 (Hōnen was 80, Shinran 40), the master passed away. According to the biography of the master, numerous miracles were documented at the time of his death.

When I recall the past, *Gutoku Shaku no Ran* (Shinran) in the year 1201 (Hōnen was 69, Shinran 29), abandoned the noble practices and took homage in the Original Vow. During the year 1205 (Hōnen was 73, Shinran 33), I was allowed to handcopy the master's *Senjakushū*. The same year, my master in his own hand wrote the title of *Senjaku hongan nembutsushū* upon my copy, also writing *Namu Amida butsu* and *Ōjōshigo nembutsu ihon*, as well as my name, Shakkū. On the same day I was given permission to copy the master's portrait. Later during that year, when I requested the master to inscribe my copy of Masters portrait, he wrote a verse. It was on that same day, following the indication of a dream, that my name Shakkū (緯空) was changed to Zenshin (善信), which the master wrote for me. These events occurred during the master's 73rd year.

The *Senjaku hongan nembutsu shū* (選擇本願念佛集), principal work of the master, was initially composed upon the request of *Tsukinowa*¹¹⁾. An outline of Shinshū and the profound philosophy of the *nembutsu* are contained within it. The work can easily be understood by the reader and is a unique masterpiece, a deeply profound sacred study. For a long period, numerous individuals received instruction from the master but only a few were allowed to copy this important work. Under such circumstances, I was permitted to copy the work and also granted permission to copy the master's portrait. This was a great reward and the sign of my *ōjō* (attainment; rebirth: birth in the Pure land: birth in the

Raalm of Purification). Holding back my tears of joy, I have recorded these past events.

It was a great joy for me to firmly place my mind within the universal realm of the Buddha's vow and to allow my mind to wander into the ocean of the incomprehensible realm of the Dharma. Thus I profoundly realize the concern and compassion of the Tathāgatha and appreciate my great indebtedness to my master. My joy deepened and my sense of filial piety grew stronger than ever. Thus I have recorded the essence of Shinshū teaching and collected the essentials of the realm of purification. The thought now passes through my mind regarding my profound indebtedness to the Buddha's virtue and I do not feel concerned about the criticisms of the people of the world. Those who read this work I believe, can find it a cause for faith. Even their doubts can be an indirect cause leading them to the peaceful attainment and enjoyment of Amida's vow. According to the *Anrakushū*, 'we should gather the true teaching and assist individuals in attaining the realm of purification. Those who live first should lead those who follow, and those who are born later should follow those who preceded them. In a ceaseless continuation we will exhaust the endless ocean of birth and death.' Therefore, the priests and laity during this distant era should mutually respect each other and just as the *Kegongyō* verse states, "Observing the practice of the path to attainment, those who have the mind of good and those who have the mind of evil, all are embraced by the bodhisattvas."

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- 11) *Hōnen the Buddhist Saint, His Life and Teaching* (法然上人行狀繪圖), translated by Rev. Harper Havelock Coates and Rev. Ryugaku Ishizuka (Kyoto: Chion-in, 1925, Taisho 14, in Commemoration of the 750th Anniversary of the Founding of the Jōdo Sect) Vol. II, p. 214. "On the fifth day of the fourth month in the same Year (Genkyū 2, 1205), Hōnen visited Kanezane Fujiwara at his residence in *Tukinowa*, and discoursed with him on the Law for some time", and at pp. 218-219, Note 5 "*Tsukinowa* 月輪: Name given to a large tract of land including the whole of the precincts of the present Sennyūji Temple and the mountain side and valleys E. of the Tōfukuji Temple in Kyōto. Kanezane Fujiwara's residence was here; so he was commonly called *Tukinowa-dono* (月輪殿), the word here used in the original". Kanezane's half brother Jien (慈圓) was the author of *Gukanshō* (愚管抄), which my friend Dr. Johannes Rahder, Yale University (now retired), translated into English: *Miscellany of Personal Views of an Ignorant Fool* (Acta Orientalia Vol. 15, 1936, Shōwa 11).

C. Shinran's Wife Eshin-ni and the Notion of *Gummō* (*Gunmō*)

Judging from the strong dynamic handwriting of Eshin-ni's letters and her sentence style, which expresses her logical and humanistic feelings, she was a woman capable, like the great mother earth, of embracing the intellectual poetic Shinran. After spending 5 years in exile in the region of Echigo, Shinran spent more than 20 years in the Kanto area, during which time he studied and was able to establish the new order of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*. The strength of the weed which sprouts forth in the spring after surviving the test of the long winter's cold (termed *gummō* (群萌), in Japanese), is the word which most applicably expresses Shinran's endurance of his persecution. Particularly *shō* or attainment represents the realm where the encounter between the relative and absolute (相對と絶對) occurs. It was within this realm that Shinran used the term *gummō*, which we should profoundly reverence. In this *Shō* volume, he states attainment signifies the benefitting of others (*rita*) and Nirvāṇa. He further points out that man, preoccupied by his ignorant desires and absorbed into the pollution of birth and death, such a man (*gummō*) will certainly be able to attain Enlightenment by means of faith in the *nembutsu*, which is granted by Amida. When one reaches the realm of attainment, which stands at the extremity of human existence, and engages in the work of assisting others, this action itself is a result of the Original Vow. Shinran expressed his gratitude towards Vasubandhu's *Jōdoron*, (淨土論), and Donran's *Ōjoranchū* (往生論註), or (淨土論註), stating that we *gummō* of pollution and endurance are inspired by these great master's works.

Today it is said that life in our contemporary society can best be described as endurance, therefore, who live in the modern world must recognize the fact that Shinran described man as the *gummō* of pollution and endurance in the chapter on Attainment.

Shinran's autobiography and Eshin-ni's letters should be read side by side. Particularly we can note that Shinran's closing quotation of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* was taken from the teaching of Bodhisattva practice given to Zenzai dōji (or 善財 (Sudāna) 童子, by a woman named Gopā in the *Kegongyō* or Gaṇḍav-

yūha. This profound quotation that states 'even an individual, who in the midst of his practice has raised the mind of relative morality, will be embraced by the bodhisattva', formed the conclusion of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*. In the original text of the *Kegongyō*, this particular section relates to the love story of Gopā and by including it in the conclusion of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, Shinran responded to his lifelong companion, Eshin-ni's practice of equanimity (Dōjigyō, 同事行, samāna-arthatā-saṃgraha). He thus offered her a lasting remembrance.

III. Attainment of Nirvāṇa and Its Function

A. Nucleus of *Kyōgyōshinshō* : Attainment (shō), which links Faith (*shin*) and the Realm of the True Buddhahood (*shinbutsudo*)

One obvious path by which we can comprehend the initial purpose of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* and the fundamental structure of the work, can be found in Shinran's autobiography (*jiden*) which we mentioned earlier. There it states that in the year 1201 at the age of 29, Shinran completely abandoned the noble practices and took refuge in the Original Vow. This strong statement is a clear expression of his motive for joining the movement. The *time*, *place*, and *subject* are clearly indicated within this precious historical document. We can note that he did not state he took refuge in the *nembutsu* (念佛), but rather that he took refuge in the Original Vow (*hongan*, 本願, pūrva-praṇidhāna), which transcends the realm of mere practice. This attitude of "refuge in the Original Vow" (歸本願) was the force that created a new evolution in Japanese Buddhism. The *Kyōgyōshinshō*, the principal work for the establishment of the Jōdoshinshū sect, was composed making Shinran's original motive for taking refuge in the Original Vow as its nucleus. Shinran dedicated his entire life to the creation of an academic basis for his faith in the Original Vow. The *Kyōgyōshinshō* was the result of his intellectual endeavor to support his faith. At the age of 29, Shinran established his faith in the Original Vow and it is generally believed that at the age of 63 (the year 1235), he composed

the initial draft of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*. After that, upon his return to the capital Kyoto, he constantly revised and edited the work. According to Dr. Toshihide Akamatsu¹²⁾, Professor Emeritus, Kyoto University, who studied the original manuscript, as late as 1257, at the age of 85, Shinran rewrote the volume *Kyo* (教) in its entirety and it is also believed that he rewrote the beginning of the *Gyo* (行) volume. The *Shin* volume is believed to have been rewritten and only the *Shō* (證) volume evidently remained complete in its initial form drafted in 1235. In this manner, counting the years from his initial homage at the age of 29, up until the time he reached 85, more than 60 years were spent for the completion of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*.

As we all know, a Japanese priest named Hōchibō-Shōshin (寶地房, 證眞) mid 12th-early 13th cent.: (?-1156-1189-1198-1207-?) dedicated his life to the composition of the commentary *Hokkesandaibu-shiki* (Private Notes upon the Three Major works of the Lotus School) while remaining unaware of the Genji-Heike battles. Even this priest only spent 50 some Years dedicated to his work. Shinran spent 60 years in his lifework and I believe there is no comparable example of this nature in world history¹³⁾.

In the year 1957, I read the *Shō* volume at the summer retreat at Higashi Honganji and at that time, I clarified the fact that each of the 6 volumes of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* are based upon the Original Vow¹⁴⁾. This was reaffirmed

12) In the 31th year of Shōwa in memory of the 700th anniversary of Shinran, the Higashi Honganji published actual size photographs of the *Bandōbon* text of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*. On that occasion the study of Shinran's handwriting and writing paper was initiated. As a result, it became evident that the *Kyōgyōshinshō* was continuously corrected and revised after he returned to the capital Kyoto up until his last years. This manuscript was made a national treasure and recognized as the authentic writing of Shinran. In the photostat publication, articles by the following professors were also included: T. Akamatsu, *Kyōgyōshinshō no seiritsu to kaitei* (教行信證の成立とその改訂), T. Fujishima, "Kyōgyōshinshō no shoshi (教行信證の書誌)" and O. Nabata, "Kyōgyōshinshō no kyōgi (教行信證の教義)". (cp. footnote 8)

13) S. Miyamoto, "Sōmoku kokudo shikkai jōbutsu no busshōronteki igi to sono sakusha (草木國土悉皆成佛の佛性論的意義とその作者)" in *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku ken'yū* Vol. IX no. 2 (1961) pp. 262-291.

in my 1969 summer retreat lectures. When we observe the structure of the 6 volumes, consisting of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, the *Shinbutsudo* (眞佛土) and *Keshindo* (化身土), we can note that the volume of attainment (*Shō*) plays the role of link between the volume of Faith (*Shin*) and the Realm of True Buddhahood (*Shinbutsudo*). This faith is explained as the true cause of Nirvāṇa. Another important aspect here is the fact that the Realm of True Buddhahood (*Shinbutsudo*) issues forth as the result of attainment (*shō*). It thus becomes quite clear in the *Kyōgyōshinshō* that the volume *Shō* represents the nucleus which intermediates between faith and the realm of true Buddhahood.

B. 'Docking' of Faith and Attainment (*shin* and *shō*)

At the beginning of the Attainment (*Shō*) volume, there is a symbolic statement of the vow of universal Enlightenment and in the volume on Faith (*Shin*), the 18th vow of the serene joyful faith (至心信樂の願) can be found. The 11th vow is the vow of universal Enlightenment, which means that all beings without exception will attain Nirvāṇa. According to this vow, it is stated that if one resides in the proper state (正定聚, *samyaktva-niyata-rāsi*) of faith (現生不退の信 *Genshō Futai no Shin*, The Irreversible of Faith in this life), he will attain Enlightenment. Thus two concepts are included within the 11th vow, the idea of universal Enlightenment and the establishment of proper faith. Shinran utilized this 11th vow in his discussion of faith, stating that those who attained faith would certainly attain Enlightenment. In other words, to attain faith means to obtain the ticket to birth in the Realm of Purification. In this manner faith is related to attainment (*shō*), as a true cause for the attainment of Nirvāṇa. In the morning of July 31, 1969 (Showa 44), the heroes of Apollo 11 successfully landed on the surface of the moon, collected moon rocks, docked their lunar module and returned to earth. The students of my summer retreat came to class in the morning red-eyed, obviously they had watched television through the night. I was about

14) S. Miyamoto, "Shinran no kihongan to Kyōgyōshinshō no kōzō (親鸞の歸本願と教行信證の構造) in *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku kenkyū* Vol. VI, no. 2 (1958) pp. 293-314.

to lecture that morning on the relationship between faith and attainment. Capturing this unique historical opportunity, I described the unity between faith (信, *shin*) and attainment (證, *shō*) as the *docking* of the two. Faith will lead to attainment and the attainment of proper faith represents the nature of attainment itself.

C. Benefitting Others, Non-duality and Manifestation of Kannon

Among the 6 volumes of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, we must recognize that the section of *gensō-ekō* (還相廻向, the return from attainment) in the volume of Attainment is extremely unique. That section is almost entirely explained by a direct quotation from *Ōjōronchū* of Donran (曇鸞, T'an-luan, 476-542). Shinran's own commentary only consisted of 4 sentences. Hōnen stated that he completely relied upon Zendo (善導, Shan-tao, 613-681), but in the case of Shinran, as the use of 'ran' (鸞) indicated, he was extremely dedicated to Donran. Particularly the *gensō-ekō* section represented a special section.

The so-called *gensō-ekō* (return from Attainment), denotes that those who have attained the goal will return to the world of birth and death, save beings from their sufferings and together with them, endeavor towards the attainment of Buddhahood. This can also be termed the '*spiritual work of salvation and welfare*.' It is exactly what was expressed in the historical Buddha's declaration of his mission (傳道宣言)to make efforts for the happiness and benefit of sentient beings. To make this fact easier to comprehend Shinran quoted the example of the manifestation of Kannon (Avalokiteśvara, 觀音示現) taken from the Lotus Sutra.

Shinran's quotation from Donran's *Ronchū* is long and in it he explains the practice of meditation to attain a flexible mind (柔軟心), that a flexible mind signifies a non-dualistic mind (不二心), that by means of wisdom, compassion and skillful means at individual will attain Buddhahood, thereby saving all sentient beings and attaining purity, serenity and enjoyment of mind. He further explains that the individual bearing all these qualities within himself will attain the enjoyment of the attainment of great Nirvāṇa. He also discusses true practice in a manner of the practice of non-practice and

non-practice of practice, and carefully explains the non-duality principle of emptiness, stating that Emptiness means to see things as they are, representing the realm of Enlightenment and Purification.

In his volume of Attainment (*Shō*), Shinran clearly concludes that attainment of the great Nirvāṇa and ability to engage in work to benefit others are both given to the individual as the result of the great compassionate vow of the Buddha. He further points out, the enjoyment of Nirvāṇa and the non-dualistic principle of Emptiness are to be understood by the individual properly. He quotes Donran's *Ōjōronchā*: "if we have not raised the mind to seek ultimate Enlightenment and simply listen to the descriptions of infinite enjoyment in that realm and for the purpose of that joy alone, seek to be born in that realm, it will not be accomplished no matter how hard one may try." By means of this quotation Shinran sets forth a warning. This 'mind to seek ultimate Enlightenment in the Realm of Purification' is equivalent to faith. *Donran's profound training and experience of Emptiness and Nirvāṇa must constantly be studied and eventually may become our own deepening faith.* This is the reason why Shinran, with his considerate thought included these quotations in the volume of *Shō*, or Attainment.

D. Faith and Satori and Shinran's honest Grief

Irreversibility (*futai*, 不退) was the objective to be accomplished in the first stage of Mahāyāna bodhisattva practice. 'Irreversible' signifies that one can accomplish a secure state whereby he will not slip down into a lower realm. In every area of professional skill or talent, it is a difficult task to perfect one's own ability. This includes all varieties of sports and learning. To reach an irreversible state does not mean it is a state for the bodhisattvas alone in the narrow sense of the term, but rather includes all who strive for perfection and can be thereby called 'bodhisattvas'. In Buddhism, whatever sect one may belong to, as long as the individual endeavors, he can be called a 'bodhisattva'. The irreversible state gives one the sense of belief and security just as if he were to purchase a ticket to reach the profound realm of Nirvāṇa. Traditionally, the same is said of the passing of the *Kōan* (公案), which also

represents a universally valid ticket; such transcends thought of one's own power or endeavour. Expressions such as *Jinen hōni* (自然法爾)¹⁵, the life of naturalness, 'as it is-ness' is considered to be a term expressing the religious state of mind of Shinran at approximately 85 or 86, but we can consider such an expression as being close to Enlightenment itself.

The Buddha made clear the true Dharma (*Shōbō*, 正法) as the Middle Path, is conducive to practical benefit, promotes order and is a practice both good and true. Ultimately, it turns into *Satori* and reaches Nirvāṇa. The Buddha achieved the Middle Path, which denied the two extremes. His eyes were opened and wisdom arose within him bringing forth serenity, divine wisdom, realization and Nirvāṇa.

Zen masters say that it is important that while one stands on *Satori* to transcend *Satori* and live on the path of the Buddha. The same holds true for practice; while exerting oneself in practice, one must forget the self, permit others to live and walk the great way. "To awaken the mind for enlightenment means to vow and actualize the deliverance of all sentient beings, before one's own deliverance is consummated" (*Hotsubodaishin*, or *Awakening the Mind for Enlightenment*). "In Buddhism practice and Enlightenment are one and the same. Now, practice already being the ground of Enlightenment, the moment the individual decides to walk the path of Enlightenment, that in itself is the manifestation of original Enlightenment. Therefore, the Master

15) S. Miyamoto, "The Relation of Philosophical Theory to practical Affairs in Japan", in *Philosophy and Culture East and West* (Hawaii University Press, 1962) pp. 97-116, and in *the Japanese Mind* (East-West Center Press, University of Hawaii Press 1967) pp. 3-23, also in the essay mentioned in Footnote 12. Shinran correlates the universality of Buddha nature with the Buddha nature of individual faith. This attempt was made in his *Yuishinshō moni* (唯信鈔文意, date 1257 when Shinran was 85) and the following year in his *Mattōshō* (末燈鈔) he discussed the subject of *jinen hōni* in the same context *Jinen Hōni no koto* (自然法爾事) with the universality of Buddha nature. This was the apex of Shinran's thought that he achieved during his last years however, the general direction was already indicated in the *Shō* and *Shinbutsudo* volumes of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*.

when giving advice to disciples on practice teaches them not to seek Enlightenment without practice, because practice itself points directly to original Enlightenment." (*Bendōwa*, or *Discussion on the Self Walking the Path*).

Even if we do discuss the attainment of Nirvāṇa in that realm, nothing is certain regarding when one will go to that realm. One may accumulate years, but it is still not certain of the hour of death. Despite the uncertainty, one should have hope and conviction. Therefore Enlightenment in that realm has a *profound religious meaning*. According to Jōdo Shinshū, this world is taken care of by the establishment of irreversible faith and Enlightenment is reserved for that realm. Both faith and attainment are given by the vow of Amida.

The state of irreversible faith and Enlightenment in the Realm of Purification are both open to sentient beings of the ten directions. The Realm of Purification is a place of joy for all beings, not reserved for the Enlightened alone. It is not the realm where one's own Enlightenment is to be clung to, but rather it is the place where the idea to benefit others and to work for the happiness of others is to be carried out. The most impressive statement of Shinran's grief appears in the volume on Faith where it states: "I sincerely realize that unfortunately this ignorant Shinran is unfortunately submerged in the vast ocean of human desire and confused by the immense mountains of honor and success, I do not take joy in becoming one of those who will be born in the Realm of Purification and I do not feel comfort in approaching true Attainment. It is shameful and regrettable." For Shinran, who composed the *Kyōgyōshinshō* which reveals the truth of the Realm of Purification and explores the completely new concept of faith given as a manifestation of the Original Vow, it is an astonishing yet meaningful fact that he could utter such words of grief. We must note this profound aspect of his work. In this attitude of Shinran lies the world of true religion and also the infinite realm of Enlightenment. This statement is extremely honest and within this honesty the true voice of Shinran lies. Shinran's work of *Shin* (Faith) and *Shō* (Attainment) are obviously both written for the purpose of opening the door to human truth.