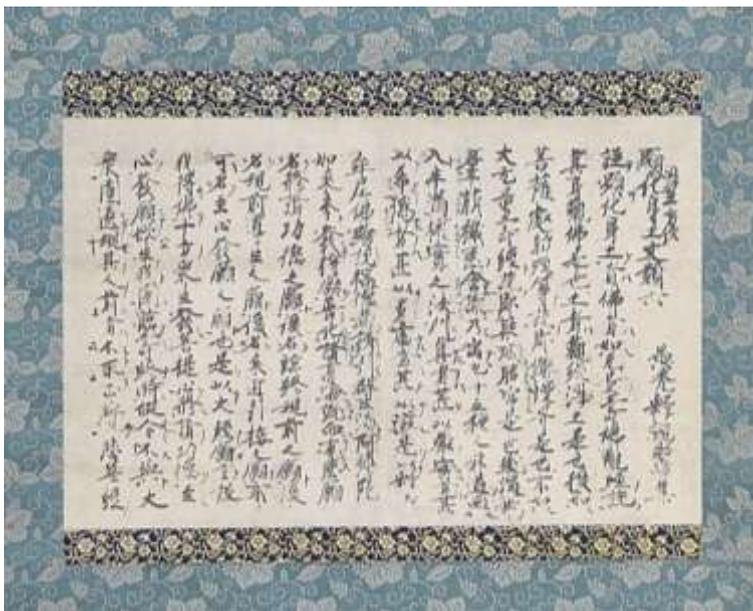


SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE KYŌGYŌSHINSHŌ

教行信証

= A READING GUIDE =



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**SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE
KYŌGYŌSHINSHŌ
= A READING GUIDE =**

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[Foreword] Although there are currently three English versions of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* (by K. Yamamoto, by the Hongwanji International Center and by myself), many of those who read it still seem unable to enjoy this cardinal scripture of Shin Buddhism. Indeed, the original text in classical Chinese, which was written in the 13th century, is indeed an impenetrable wall that defies access for people of the 21st century. Not only is the language of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* difficult even for the Japanese Shin Buddhists, but also the ideas and logic on which it is based constitute a labyrinth for most readers.

I hope this short article is useful in bringing the *Kyōgyōshinshō* closer to the minds of Shin Buddhists the world over and helps them to deepen their understanding of Amida's message of salvation. In presenting this article, I wish to thank Rev. G. Gatenby and J. Paraskevopoulos of Australia for their valuable suggestions.

The origin of Jōdo Shinshū 淨土真宗

Jōdo Shinshū is a unique way of leading us ordinary people, dark in mind and laden with evil karma, to the Nirvanic realm of supreme bliss and serenity - the Pure Land. It is in this realm that we realize enlightenment and embark on the eternal altruistic activity of saving others through the working of Amida's Vow.

Those born in the Pure Land assume the task of spreading the Dharma in the worlds of saṃsāra. The predecessors of Pure Land Buddhism in India, China, Japan and elsewhere, such as Nāgārjuna and Vasubandhu, were no exceptions. Shinran was born in Japan and brought Pure Land Buddhism to the highest level of development with the emphasis on Other-Power.

Being married and having children, Shinran professed, when he was exiled to northern Japan, that he was neither a priest nor a layman. He left the established Buddhist Sangha once and for all when he came down from Mount Hiei and became Honen's disciple in the city of Kyōto. Like his master, Shinran's departure from ecclesiastical circles increased his determination to spread Amida's message of salvation to ordinary men and women in the fields and in the streets.

Motives for composing the Kyōgyōshinshō

Honen's Nembutsu 念佛 teaching is simple and straightforward, easy to understand and practice. So is the basic standpoint of Shinran's Faith of the Other-Power. While living in the Kantō area, he was engaged in spreading the teaching of Nembutsu-Faith among local residents. They were only too happy to receive and live up to it. Seeing that his message was effectively reaching out even to people of little or no education, he strengthened his belief in the Other-Power teaching and strongly felt the need to establish the doctrinal system which would embrace the length and breadth of Amida's saving work. It is believed that he used to visit a local library to collect materials for this purpose.

There was another motive for Shinran's writing of this comprehensive work on the Nembutsu-Faith. Still fresh in his memory was the fact that when Honen's 法然 *Senjakushū* 選擇集 was made public after his death, scholarly monks of the older schools on Mount Hiei and Nara unleashed vehement attacks on Honen's teaching. His disciples tried hard to counter them and defend the master's Nembutsu teaching. Shinran followed suit but took a long time to prepare. He was scrupulous in bringing out a new Pure Land system

with an unprecedented scope and depth. His *Kyōgyōshinshō* not only defended the Nembutsu teaching against attacks from the traditional schools but also proclaimed the Other-Power Faith and Practice as the ultimate Mahāyāna teaching. Shinran began to compose the *Kyōgyōshinshō* while he was in the Kantō area. He kept revising it even after he returned to Kyōto when he was over sixty.

Outline of the *Kyogyoshinsho*

Shinran's salvation theory elaborated in the *Kyōgyōshinshō* represents the apex of not only Pure Land Buddhism but also Mahayana Buddhism as a whole. It is unique in its basic standpoint but, as he professed, he was simply a follower of his predecessors - the Seven Masters. While quoting abundantly from their works, Shinran developed his system of teaching, practice, faith, and enlightenment.

The title of this *magnum opus*, '*Kyō-gyō-shin-shō*' 教行信証, describes the system of salvation in Shin Buddhism. It is contrasted with self-power teachings which generally follow the system of '*Kyō-ri-gyō-ka*' 教理行果 (teaching, principle of truth and reality, practice, and enlightenment). According to the ordinary course of Buddhist practice, we first hear and study the teaching and understand the principle of truth. After that, we perform the prescribed method of practice to realize the principle of truth. When the practice is

successfully performed, we attain enlightenment. In the self-power teachings, one's practice is of primary importance; the final result depends on how effectively one performs the prescribed practice. The *Kyōgyōshinshō*, however, demonstrates that the process of salvation comes from above, that is from Amida. First, Amida reaches us through the words of the *Larger Sutra*. Next, we hear Amida's Name glorified by all the Buddhas, as promised in the Seventeenth Vow and, through it, realize his saving power. Thus the concept of practice has undergone a complete change from the conventional one. The Other-Power practice consists in the reversal of ordinary Buddhist practice. In Shin Buddhism, practice is Amida's work which is transferred to us through the Name. When the Name reaches us and is accepted in our minds, we become one with Amida in joyful faith – as shown in the Eighteenth Vow. Faith thus established in us is Amida's mind and the Bodhi-mind, and so it is the cause of enlightenment.

The *Kyōgyōshinshō* is a six-volume book, of which the first four chapters are as follows: 1) True Teaching, 2) True Practice, 3) True Faith, and 4) True Enlightenment. Besides those, there are two additional chapters: 5) chapter on the True Buddha and land and 6) chapter on the Transformed Buddhas and lands. Those who have attained the True Faith in accordance with the Eighteenth Vow, will be born in the True

Buddha-land, but those who have self-power faith and practice in accordance with explicit teachings of the *Contemplation Sutra* and the *Amida Sutra* are to be born in the Transformed lands.

1) The True Teaching: Of all the Buddhist teachings (traditionally enumerated to be eighty-four thousand), which is the true teaching? Every Buddhist master in all ages has struggled to find the true teaching. Shinran found the true teaching in the *Larger Sutra*. It was the very sutra for which Śākyamuni is believed to have appeared in the world. This sutra fully expounds Amida's Vows and practice and, above anything else, presents the Name and Faith as the practical way of our salvation.

The reason for Shinran's assertion that the *Larger Sutra* was the true teaching comes from the circumstantial evidence that, prior to the delivery of the sutra, Śākyamuni manifested a glorious appearance which revealed the 'five auspicious features'. The sutra states,

“At that time all the senses of the World-honored One radiated joy, his entire body appeared serene and glorious, and his august countenance looked most majestic. Having perceived the Buddha's holy intention, the Venerable Ānanda rose from his seat, ... and said to the Buddha, 'World-honored One, today all your senses are

radiant with joy, your body is serene and glorious, and your august countenance is as majestic as a clear mirror whose brightness radiates outward and inward. The magnificence of your dignified appearance is unsurpassed and beyond measure.... Today, the World-honored One dwells in the rare and marvelous Dharma; today, the World Hero dwells in the Buddha's abode; today, the World Eye concentrates on the performance of the leader's duty; today, the World Valiant One dwells in the supreme Bodhi; today, the One Most Honored in Heaven realizes the Tathāgata's virtue'." (BDK, 12-II, IV, pp. 7-8)

According to a different Chinese translation of the sutra produced in the early 8th century, Śākyamuni first entered the Great Tranquility Samādhi (equivalent to the Amida Samādhi), in which he manifested glorious features and then expounded the sutra. It is significant that Shinran mentions this *samādhi* in the *Hymns on the Pure Land*. He did not resort to a logical formula or theoretical speculation to prove that the *Larger Sutra* is the true teaching. We must remember that the verities of the *Larger Sutra* and of Jōdo Shinshū cannot be logically proved. They are to be accepted as facts that are revealed to us from the realm of the Buddha, just as Amida's saving power is to be accepted as a fact that can be experienced through the endowment of his Name and Faith. If, however, you wish to know through

direct perception the transcendent realities of the Buddha realm, there is a way. Concentrate on Amida day and night until you attain a *samādhi*. Since the *nembutsu samādhi* 念佛三昧 leads to the Amida *samādhi* 阿弥陀三昧, you will visualize all the spiritual facts surrounding Amida. Even though we are ordinarily denied *samādhi* practice, there is still a way open for us - through the attainment of Faith. Faith opens our eyes to the realities of the transcendent realm.

2) The True Practice: At the basis of the True Practice is the Seventeenth Vow the 'Vow that the Name shall be Praised by all the Buddhas' - which reads:

“If, when I attain Buddhahood, innumerable Buddhas in the lands of the ten directions should not all praise and glorify my Name, may I not attain perfect attainment.” (BDK, 12-II, IV, p. 16)

In Jōdo Shinshū, there is no prescribed practice for one to perform in the ordinary sense of the term. In the long history of Pure Land Buddhism from India through China and Japan, the Nembutsu has been the cardinal practice. Nāgārjuna presented recitation of Buddhas' names, especially Amida's, as the easy way of

attaining the stage of non-retrogression, in contrast to ordinary bodhisattva practices which are difficult to perform and require a long time to complete.

Shan-tao's 善導 system of five right practices which was very popular in China centered on the Nembutsu recitation. In Japan, Hōnen promulgated the exclusive recitation of the Nembutsu.

While following this tradition, Shinran went straight back to Amida's Name glorified by all Buddhas, which contains the merit and virtue of the ultimate truth and reality – True Suchness. Shinran brought our recitative nembutsu back to the original source from which it arises. In other words, the Nembutsu which we recite after awakening joyful Faith in accordance with the Eighteenth Vow comes back to the Name glorified in the Seventeenth Vow. So, irrespective of the number of times we recite the Nembutsu, the merit of recitation does not stay with us but returns to Amida to whom it belongs.

Shinran especially focuses our attention to the 'single thought of Nembutsu', which indicates one Nembutsu utterance. The moment Amida's merit and virtue is endowed to us through the Name, we receive it with a joyful mind. In other words, all the merit and virtue of Amida is transferred to us as if a gigantic *tsunami* were to engulf us. Here is to be found the difference between the self-power Nembutsu and the

Other-Power Nembutsu. In the former, which is ordinarily practiced in Pure Land schools, the number of Nembutsu recitations is important. Practitioners are encouraged to recite many Nembutsu. In Shinran's Nembutsu, the number of recitations is not important. Even one Nembutsu is enough if it accords with the Other-Power. Conversely, thousands of Nembutsu recitations add nothing to the merit and virtue required for the attainment of birth in the Pure Land. The Other-Power Nembutsu is 'no practice' on our side. We can say the Nembutsu whenever we feel like saying it, irrespective of the merit which may accrue.

It may also be noted that the Nembutsu Samādhi is mentioned in this chapter. Śākyamuni is said to have recommended it to his father because it is easy to practice and most effective. Of all the *samādhis*, it is the most distinguished because it is capable of removing all evil passions of the past, present and future. Side by side with the recitative Nembutsu, the Nembutsu Samādhi has been extensively practiced in India, China and Japan. This is a meditative Nembutsu with which Shinran was familiar on Mount Hiei when he was a Tendai monk. Later, Shinran reflected on this and included it in his system of Great Practice. The idea behind this seems to be that whatever merit accrues from the Nembutsu Samādhi belongs to Amida. Also, it can be seen that this *samādhi* practice is part of the Great Practice which centers round

Amida's Name.

The scope of the True or Great Practice embraces all aspects of Amida's working. It follows then that the Other-Power is fully elucidated here and the idea of 'the One-Vehicle teaching (*ekayāna*)—*一乘* based on the Primal Vow' is proclaimed as the ultimate One-Vehicle teaching, namely the ultimate Mahāyāna teaching, which brings all beings to enlightenment.

3) The True Faith: At the basis of the True Faith is the Eighteenth Vow - the 'Vow of Sincere Mind and Joyful Faith' - which reads:

"If, when I attain Buddhahood, sentient beings in the lands of the ten directions who sincerely and joyfully entrust themselves to me, desire to be born in my land, and think of me even ten times should not be born there, may I not attain perfect enlightenment. Excluded, however, are those who commit the five grave offenses and abuse the Right Dharma." (BDK, 12-II, IV, p. 16)

Faith is the most important element in every religion. In Buddhism, faith is the first step towards a long course of practice. Faith accepts the basic principle of Buddhism. Unless correct faith is firmly established, one cannot expect to embark on the prescribed practice appropriately. In the three Pure Land sutras,

different aspects of faith are mentioned. First, in the *Larger Sutra*, the Eighteenth Vow presents three minds as the cause of birth in the Pure Land: sincere mind (至心), joyful faith (信樂), and desire for birth (欲生). Of the three, joyful faith constitutes the very essence of the Other-Power Faith. Second, in the *Contemplation Sutra*, the following three minds are mentioned as the cause of birth in the Pure Land: sincere mind (至誠心), deep mind (深心), and mind to dedicate one's merit to Amida and the Pure land with the aspiration for birth there (回向發願心). In the explicit sense, those three minds are of the self-power faith but, in the implicit sense, they are the same as those of the three minds of the Eighteenth Vow. Third, one mind or single-mindedness is mentioned in the *Amida Sutra* in connection with the Nembutsu; in the implicit sense, it is the same as the Other-Power Faith.

In Shinran's doctrinal system, Vasubandhu's *Discourse on the Pure Land* occupies nearly as important a position as the Three Sutras. Hōnen had already noticed the importance of this *Discourse* and included it in the four canonical scriptures of Pure Land Buddhism. Shinran paid a special attention to the

phrase in the *Discourse* “with singleness of mind I take refuge...” Shinran esteemed this singleness of mind as highly as the Three Minds of the Eighteenth Vow.

In the general course of Buddhism, practitioners are expected to entertain faith and strengthen and purify it while performing practices. From the beginning, the Other-Power Faith is not included in the ordinary category of ‘faith’. It belongs to Amida but is freely endowed to us whenever we are ready to accept it. When it becomes ours, it has a revolutionary effect. It completely changes our ordinary state of mind, dislodging false beliefs and desires and eradicating all the karmic commotions that have been infesting our minds since the beginningless past. On the positive side, through Faith, we come to possess all the merit and wisdom of Amida, thereby effectively reaching the stage next to the Buddha’s.

Shinran explains that the True Faith is the Bodhi-mind. From the outset of the Mahāyāna, the Bodhi-mind has been the essential element for attaining Buddhahood. Ordinarily, the practitioners start their long course with a rather inadequate determination to proceed towards Bodhi. It is expected that they deepen and strengthen the Bodhi-mind while practicing the bodhisattva way. Shinran has distinguished two kinds of Bodhi-mind: vertical and horizontal. Each of them has two directions establishing, in all, a four-teaching classification of the

Buddhist Way.

- a. vertical transcending: Mahāyāna teachings for quick deliverance;
- b. vertical going out: Mahāyāna teachings for gradual deliverance;
- c. horizontal or crosswise transcending: the Other-Power teaching for quick deliverance based on the Eighteenth Vow.
- d. horizontal or crosswise going out: the Other-Power teachings for gradual deliverance based on the Nineteenth and Twentieth Vows.

The Bodhi-mind for horizontal transcending is the all-complete, supreme Bodhi-mind which can be established, even in the minds of ordinary people, and becomes the true cause for Buddhahood.

Shinran was convinced that the Other-Power Faith ‘cures the three incurable illnesses’, namely: (a) abusers of the Mahāyāna: (b) evil doers who commit the five grave offenses, and: (c) those who lack root of good (*icchantika*). These three kinds of beings would be either doomed to hell after death or have no possibility of attaining Buddhahood. Amida’s salvation reaches even such people.

4) The True Enlightenment: At the basis of the True Enlightenment is the Eleventh Vow, the Vow of Unfailing Attainment of Nirvana, which reads:

“If, when I attain Buddhahood, humans and

devas in my land should not dwell in the definitely assured stage and unfailingly reach nirvana, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.”
(BDK, 12-II, IV, p. 15)

In the ordinary bodhisattva way, when practices are accomplished, one realizes enlightenment. In Jōdo Shinshū, since the perfectly accomplished practice has already been endowed to us through the Name, we do not need to cultivate any practice whatsoever. As soon as the True Faith is established, we are assured of enlightenment in compliance with the Eleventh Vow. The True Enlightenment is the final goal of the Mahāyāna pursuit of the Way; it is the highest *Nirvāṇa*; it is the Dharmakāya; it is True Suchness.

It must be clarified, from the beginning that the Mahāyāna Nirvāṇa is different from the Hīnayāna Nirvāṇa in that this is not merely a state of extinction; it is a state of dynamic activity. Originally, Nirvāṇa is the state in which our evil passions, along with our tenacious self-attachment, are completely eradicated. The Mahayana Nirvana contains both a negative aspect and a positive aspect. The Mahāyāna speaks of ‘*Nirvāṇa* of no-abode’ (*apraṭiṣṭhita-nirvāṇa*); based on the principle of non-duality of *Samśāra* and Nirvāṇa, those who attain *Nirvāṇa* in the Pure Land do not dwell there indefinitely but are saving suffering beings in *Samśāra*. They, as bodhisattvas, are engaged in

endless altruistic activities in accordance with the Twenty-second Vow. In connection with this, we must note that they act in compliance with Amida's 'Endowment in the aspect of Returning'. This vow reads:

"If, when I attain Buddhahood, humans and devas in my lands of the other directions who visit my land should not ultimately and unfailingly reach the stage of becoming a Buddha after one more life, may I not attain perfect enlightenment. Excepted are those who wish to teach and guide sentient beings in accordance with their original vows. For they will wear the armor of great vows, accumulate merit, deliver all beings from birth and death, visit Buddha Tathāgatas throughout the ten directions, enlighten countless sentient beings as numerous as the sands of the Ganges River, and establish them in highest, perfect enlightenment. Such bodhisattvas transcend the course of practice of ordinary bodhisattvas, manifest the practices of all the bodhisattva stages, and cultivate the virtues of Samantabhadra." (BDK, 12-II, IV, p. 16)

This vow first assures that those who come to the Pure Land reach the stage of becoming a Buddha after one more life (*eka-jaṭī-pratibaddha*), which is the highest bodhisattva stage. Secondly, the exclusion clause

admits that those who so wish can remain as bodhisattvas of no rank indefinitely to save living beings. Shinran seems to emphasize the latter.

5) The True Buddha and Land: At the basis of the True Buddha and Land are the Twelfth and Thirteenth Vows, namely, the Vow of Infinite Light and the Vow of Infinite Life. The two vows read:

“If, when I attain Buddhahood, my light should be limited, illuminating even a hundred thousand *koṭis* of *nayutas* of Buddha lands, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.”

“If, when I attain Buddhahood, my lifespan should be limited, even to the extent of a hundred thousand *koṭis* of *nayutas* of *kalpas*, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.” (BDK, 12-II, IV, p. 15)

In accordance with different kinds of Buddha-bodies, different Buddha-lands are distinguished. A Dharmakāya Buddha dwells in a Dharmakāya-land, a Sambhogakāya Buddha dwells in a Saṃbhogakāya-land, a Nirmāṇakāya Buddha has his own sphere of activity. Although every Buddha has all the three kinds of bodies, his most prominent characteristic stands out and determines the nature of his Buddhahood. Śākyamuni was a Nirmāṇakāya Buddha like other Buddhas who had preceded him.

Amida is a Saṃbhogakāya Buddha rewarded for his vows. Like Amida, many other Buddhas living in other parts of the universe have been rewarded by their specific vows.

Amida is the Buddha of Infinite Light (Amitābha) and his land is the Land of Infinite Light. Also, as rewarded for his Thirteenth Vow, Amida is the Buddha of Infinite Life (Amitāyus) and his land is the Land of Infinite Life. Together, Amida is the Buddha of Infinite Light and Life, and the Pure Land is the Land of Infinite Light and Life. In this connection, we should note that it is established in the Mahāyāna that one's body and environment originate from the same karma, Amida's body and the Pure Land manifest themselves from the same karmic cause: namely, the Twelfth and Thirteenth Vows.

In the worlds of *Saṃsāra*, individuality reigns. Each being has its own karma which is different from that of others. Specific karmic energy created in a being continues after death while maintaining its individuality and undergoing transformations, until it is annulled by appropriate practices. When one is liberated from karmic fetters, one attains spiritual freedom – *Nirvāṇa* – and becomes an arhat. This is the objective of the Hīnayāna path. By realizing *Nirvāṇa*, one leaves *Saṃsāra* for ever.

Karma-created and karma-creating individuality is often falsely clung to as an eternally abiding *atman*.

Unlike some Indian religious philosophical systems, Buddhism does not admit the permanent existence of *atman*. According to the primordial teaching of Buddhism, one's individuality is a temporary conglomeration of the five constituent elements – the five *skandhas*. Under different causes and conditions, it assumes different outlooks. Ontologically, *atman* is a fallacy. Apart from the assertion that 'all are devoid of selfhood' (*anātman*), the Hīnayāna presents three more maxims: 'everything is ephemeral,' 'everything is suffering,' and 'everything is impure.'

In the Mahāyāna, one's individuality is retained indefinitely, not as something one is attached to, but as a provisional manifestation in order to display altruistic activities. For bodhisattvas and Buddhas, a 'universal entity' may be more appropriately used. The Hīnayāna concept of *anātman* which replaces ordinary people's attachment to *atman* is now replaced by the Mahāyāna concept of 'great self' (*mahātman*), which is equivalent to Dharmakāya. It should be remembered that 'great self' is one of the four virtues of the Mahāyāna Nirvāṇa, the other three being 'eternity,' 'bliss,' and 'purity.' When we are born in the Pure Land, we share the same Dharmakāya with Amida and bodhisattvas while retaining our provisional individualities for the purpose of manifesting various bodies of incarnations. When we return to our conventional individualities, our old karmas since the eternal past stored deep in our

consciousness revive but they cease to have any binding force. They have already been converted to Amida's pure karma. It is, however, possible for us to remember everything that has happened in former lives and be able to extend helping hands even to those suffering in hell. In this sense, we can talk as if our life continues to be in the Pure Land.

It may be necessary to explain a little more about the shift of the four delusions of an ordinary man to the four negative realities of an arhat, then to the four virtues of the Mahāyāna Nirvāṇa. First of all, we, ordinary people, have a habitual delusory view of taking ephemeral things to be permanent, painful things to be pleasant, no-self to be eternally abiding self and defiled things to be pure. Secondly, Hīnayāna sages have a correct view of impermanence, painfulness, no-self and impurity. Thirdly, a widely accepted Mahāyāna view, based on the *Nirvana Sutra*, etc., is that Nirvāṇa is eternally existent; it is the state of highest bliss; it is the state reigned over by true self that is free and unrestricted; it is the state of complete purity. The Mahāyāna Nirvāṇa thus contains the four intrinsic qualities: eternity (*nitya*, 常), bliss (*sukha*, 樂), great self (*mahātman*, 我), and purity (*śubha*, 淨). The 'true self' (真我) and 'free and unrestricted self' (自在

我) as the equivalents of 'great self' (大我)(*mahātman*) are descriptive of the highest state of self – the Buddha's self, and is of the nature of True Suchness.

The process of spiritual development from an ordinary man to an arhat and a bodhisattva/ Buddha in terms of *atman* may be shown by the following diagram:

Ordinary man attached to *atman*
Arhat realizes *anātman*
Bodhisattva/ Buddha realizes *mahātman*

6) Transformed Buddhas and lands: At the basis of birth in the Transformed lands there are two vows, the Nineteenth and Twentieth Vows, which read:

“If, when I attain Buddhahood, sentient beings in the lands of the ten directions who awaken aspiration for enlightenment, do various meritorious deeds, and sincerely desire to be born in my land, should not, at their death, see me appear before them surrounded by a multitude of sages, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.”

“If, when I attain Buddhahood, sentient beings in the lands of the ten directions who, having heard my Name, concentrate their thoughts on my land, plant roots of virtue, and sincerely transfer their merits toward my land with a desire to be born there should not eventually fulfill their aspiration, ,

may I not attain perfect enlightenment.” (BDK, 12-II, IV, p. 16)

These two vows are originally meant to ensure the aspirants’ birth in the Pure Land but Shinran makes a unique interpretation here. Aspirants who undertake various good acts, including chanting Amida’s Name, are welcomed to the Pure Land after death. Since they pursue meritorious deeds with self-power, they are born in the Transformed Lands.

As has been explained above, each Buddha has three kinds of bodies: Dharmakāya, Sambhogakāya, and Nirmāṇakāya. Amida as a Sambhogakāya Buddha manifests numerous Nirmāṇakāya Buddha-bodies and lands in accordance with the needs of numerous beings to be saved by them. It is already disclosed in the *Larger Sutra* that there are two kinds of beings born in the Pure Land: those who move about freely and those who are in the embryonic state. The former are those who accept the various wisdoms of the Buddha and are to be born in the True Pure Land. The latter are those who doubt them but believed in the law of karmic retributions. The embryonic state is called by various names: border land, seven-jeweled palace, land of sloth and pride. In addition to them, Shinran includes in this category the lands for the nine classes of aspirants presented in the *Contemplation Sutra*. As for the Transformed Buddha, he states that this is the

Buddha as the object of the ninth contemplation of the *Contemplation Sutra*, where it is stated:

“...you should realize that his body is as glorious as a thousand million koṭis of nuggets of gold from the Jambu River of the Yama Heaven and that his height is six hundred thousand *koṭis* of *nayutas* of *yojanas* multiplied by the number of the sands of the Ganges River. The white tuft of hair curling to the right between his eyebrows is five times as big as Mount Sumeru.... His aureole is as broad as a hundred *koṭis* of universe, each containing a thousand million worlds. In this aureole reside Transformed Buddhas numbering as many as a million *koṭis* of *nayutas* multiplied by the number of the sands of the Ganges River. Each Buddha is attended by innumerable and countless transformed bodhisattvas.” (BDK, 12-II, IV pp. 86-7)

Simply stated, for Shinran, the Buddha’s body and land that have limited dimensions are a transformed Buddha-body and land, whereas the immeasurable Buddha-body and land are the True Buddha and Land, that is, the Sambhogakāya Buddha Amida and the Pure Land.

Those who are born in the Transformed Lands may be able to enjoy all sorts of pleasure but have various

handicaps, such as being unable to see a true Buddha or hear the Dharma from him. Those born in the jeweled palace have to stay there for five hundred years, which, according to Genshin 源信, are equivalent to many *kalpas*, before their transgressions of doubting are pardoned and they proceed to the True Pure Land.

Furthermore, in Shinran's understanding, the Transformed Land is not separate from the True Land of Recompense but is included in it. The followers of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Vows are really born in the True Pure Land but, owing to their doubts, see delusory images of their own creation.

To sum up, the whole doctrinal system of the Kyōgyōshinshō in relation to the vows may be exemplified as follows:

- (1) Teachingthe *Larger Sutra*
- (2) Practicethe Seventeenth Vow
- (3) Faith the Eighteenth Vow
- (4) Enlightenmentthe Eleventh Vow
Aspect of returningthe Twenty-second Vow
- (5) True Buddha landthe Twelfth and Thirteen
Vows
- (6) Transformed Buddha land.....the Nineteenth and
Twentieth Vows

Let us join Shinran in placing our minds in the ground of the Buddha's Universal Vow and letting our thoughts flow into the sea of the inconceivable Dharma!

END