

was peculiarly prepared for such a persuasion by his rabbinical-  
gnostic training, his ethical pessimism, and a nature prone to  
ecstatic visions.

What strengthened Paul in his persuasion was this, that the  
heavenly Christ seemed to him to have *really* taken upon himself  
human form, not in a mythical personality said to have lived long  
ago, but in a historical personality living in Paul's own day and  
among his own people, the very soul of whose religion was the  
Messianic belief and to whom the Messiah's advent had long been  
promised. This historical personality, whom he had not seen him-  
self, he found had been able to gather about him a circle of fol-  
lowers persuaded that they had seen him again after his death  
and ready to take upon themselves persecution and death for his  
sake. Their conviction was so strong that not even their persecutor  
Paul could escape its contagious influence, but was driven to con-  
nect his rabbinical-*gnostic* ideas about the heavenly Christ and the  
idea of the suffering, dying, and risen god unconsciously influencing  
him, with that historical personality of his own people and his own  
time. The Christology of Paul, then, rooted partly in mythical  
and mystical, and partly in historical experiences—and we may say  
the Christology of Christianity generally—is a blending of Jewish  
and pagan elements, by which it became possible that a new religion,  
Christianity, arose in the broad daylight of history.

## SHINRAN, FOUNDER OF THE PURE LAND SECT.

BY YEJITSU OKUSA.

[The Pure Land sect is perhaps the most extensive Buddhist organization  
in Japan. It grew from small beginnings and brings Buddhism nearer to the  
common people. It has been compared to the Reformation in Christianity  
because it bears several obvious similarities to the creed as well as the religious  
practices of Protestantism. First of all there is no priesthood in the literal  
sense of the word. The priests live like laymen. They marry and do not  
observe any of the stricter rules of monkish life. But, above all, their main  
reliance in religious practices is upon faith. Shinran insisted as vigorously  
as Luther on the formula that by faith alone (or, as Luther expressed himself  
in Latin, *sola fide*) can man be saved. The Buddhist expression is: "To hope  
for faith by one's own power or by other power." The rule of the stricter or  
older Buddhists is to walk the Path with self-reliance. Every one must be-  
come his own savior. In order to be truly saved he must retire from the world,  
practise all the austere rules of monkhood, and renounce everything except  
his desire for entering Nirvana. Shinran insisted that the better and superior  
method was to save oneself by a leap relying on the saving power of Amida,

of the Buddha of eternal bliss, and that only by clinging to him one gained the right attitude to be saved, and to enter at the end of life into the paradise of the Pure Land, or as Christians would say, heaven.

These notes have been extracted from a booklet entitled *Principal Teachings of the True Sect of Pure Land*, Tokyo, 1910,\* which was sent to us by a younger brother of the Lord Abbot Count Otani, the head of the eastern branch of the Hongwanji. The author of the present article, Mr. Yejitsu Okusa, is the priest who serves as business manager of the sect. The passages in brackets are editorial insertions.—Ed.]

SHINRAN SHONIN was born on April 1 in the third year of Joan, 1173 A. D., in the village of Hino near Kyoto. His family was of the Fujiwara clan that occupied at the time the most important position in the empire, and his noble father, Arinori Hino, held an honorable office at the imperial court. [*Shonin* is a title denoting "priest," and Shinran is the name by which the reformer is best known to posterity; this name, however, was not assumed by him until late in life. In his childhood the boy was called by his father Matsu-waka-maru, which means literally "pine-youngson."] He was the eldest son, and from this fact we can easily see what auspicious prospects he had before him; for could not he, as heir to a noble family, occupy a high official rank, wield his influence as he willed, and indulge in the enjoyment of a worldly life? But the death of his parents, while he was yet a child, made him dependent on his uncle, Lord Noritsuna, and this unfortunate circumstance left a very deep impression on his young mind, which, naturally sensitive, now began to brood over the uncertainty of human life.

At the age of nine, the lad left home to lead a monkish life at a Buddhist monastery called Shoren-in at Awada-Guchi, where Jiyen Sojo, the high priest, took him as a disciple, shaved his head, and gave him the Buddhist name Han-yen [or Han-ne, which he bore until he was thirty. The first part of this name, *han*, was taken from his father's name Ari-nori of which *nori* in another pronunciation reads *han*.]

After this, the Shonin went to Mount Hiye, and staying at the Daijo-in which was in the Mudo-ji,<sup>1</sup> he pursued his studies under various masters in the deep philosophy of the Tendai sect, and disciplined himself according to its religious practices.<sup>2</sup> He also sought to enlarge his knowledge by delving into the doctrines of all the other Buddhist sects; but he was unable to reach the true way

<sup>1</sup> The word *ji* denotes a Buddhist temple.

<sup>2</sup> Compare on this and the following W. M. McGovern, "The Development of Japanese Buddhism," *The Open Court*, No. 753, pp. 97ff (February, 1919).

leading to a release from this world of pain. He went even so far as to invoke the aid of the gods as well as the Buddhas to make him realize an immovable state of tranquillity—but all to no purpose.

While thus vainly seeking his way of release, many years passed and he came to be looked up to, and to be paid high respect, by all his teachers and friends as one whose deep learning and unimpeachable morality were incomparable. His priestly rank advanced, and when he was twenty-five years old, he was made Monzeki (chief priest) of the Shoko-in. All these successes, however, were far from satisfying his noble spirit, which was ever longing for the truth. His spiritual vexations increased the more. When will the light come to this poor yet earnest truth-seeker?

His twenty-ninth year, which he attained in the first year of Kennin (1201 A. D.), still found him in a state of mental uncertainty. Determined to arrive at the settlement of all his doubts, he shut himself up in the Rokkaku-do, Kyoto, for one hundred days beginning with January 10 of that year, and offered his final prayers to Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva (Kwannon Bosatsu) to suffer him to see the light. At last he had a vision of the Bosatsu, and through his instruction he went to Yoshimidzu in order to be taught by Honen Shonin. Now according to this priest's doctrine, all sentient beings were sure to be saved and embraced in the light of Amida,<sup>3</sup> and to be reborn in the land of happiness, eternal and imperishable, if they, however sinful, only believed in the name of the Buddha, and, forsaking all their petty cares of the world present and to come, abandoned themselves to the Buddha's saving hands so mercifully extended toward all beings, and recited his name with singleness of heart. It was through listening to this doctrine that our Shonin came to remove from his mind every shadow of his spiritual doubt. Then for the first time he came to perceive that Amida was the name of his true Father, and could not help realizing that, during these twenty-nine years of his existence, his life had ever been actuated by this Father's will to save, and that this true Father, from the very beginning of all things, had been unceasingly at work to save his sinful children through his eternal mercy.

The Shonin was filled with joy and gratitude unspeakable. To commemorate this occasion of his spiritual regeneration, he was given by his master a new Buddhist name, Shakku. [This was chosen as a combination of the names of a Chinese and a Japanese priest, Doo-shaku and Gen-ku, and means "bountiful heaven."]

<sup>3</sup> "Amita" in Sanskrit, and "Omitho" in Chinese.

Abandoning his former adherence to the faith of the Tendai sect, he now embraced the Pure Land sect; that is to say, forsaking the uncertainty of self-salvation (*jiriki*, meaning "self-power"), he became a believer in the efficacy and surety of salvation through a power other than his own (*tariki*, meaning "other power").

After this, he resigned his priestly position as Monzeki, and became a Buddhist monk in black. He built a humble hut at Okazaki, where he continued to receive further instruction from Honen Shonin. His faith grew ever deeper until he thoroughly understood the signification of his master's doctrine.

In October, 1203 A. D., our Shonin decided to follow the advice of Honen Shonin and enter upon a conjugal life so as to give the world an example concretely illustrating their faith that the householder could be saved as much as the celibate monk. He was therefore married to Princess Tamahi, daughter of Prince Kanezane Kujo, formerly prime minister to the emperor. He was thirty-one years of age while the princess was eighteen. This marriage, in fact, was undertaken to settle the religious doubt then prevailing as regards the final redemption of those secular householders who, living with their family, have not completely destroyed the root of passion. Prince Kujo was one of those who were in doubt about this point, and our Shonin made the practical demonstration of his belief by marrying one of the prince's daughters and living the life of a man of the world. In the year following, a son was born to him, who was named Han-i.

In 1205 A. D. our Shonin was given by his revered master a copy of his work entitled *Sen-Jyaku Hon-Gwan Nen-Butsu Shu* (a collection of those passages from the sutras and other works with their explanations which relate to the thinking of the Buddha (*nembutsu*) or the reciting of his name—this reciting being Amida's original prayer (*hongwan*), most thoughtfully selected by himself). This event we have reason to consider a turning-point in the life of Shinran Shonin; for it was to a very select few only that the master was pleased to give his own writing—to those of his disciples who distinguished themselves in learning and virtue.<sup>1</sup>

Our Shonin assumed yet another name this year in accordance with his master's wish. The name was Jenshin, meaning "good faith." In this wise, the relation between the Shonin and his master grew closer and closer, and every one recognized in him a spirit that harbored a most powerful faith equal to that of his master himself. [The name Jenshin is a combination of the names of two religious teachers whose dogmas he embraced with great fervor.

The former was Jen-do, a Chinese priest; the latter Gen-shin, a Japanese. During his exile to Echigo Shinran was commonly called Yoshi-nobu, which is the Japanese pronunciation of the Chinese name Jenshin.]

Fortunately or unfortunately, all this led, in 1207, to a series of sad events in the life of the founder of the True Sect. The beginning of it was the conversion of two court ladies to the faith of Pure Land who finally entered a nunnery. This greatly offended the feeling of the court and set it against Honen Shonin and his followers. Taking advantage of the court's displeasure, the Buddhist monks belonging to the Kofuku-ji monastery at Nara, who had been observing the spread of the Pure Land sect for years with unmitigated jealousy, now maliciously denounced its chief propagators to the court and asked for an imperial order to forbid the preaching of the doctrine of the Pure Land sect. The court at last lent its ear to this vicious counsel and ordered Honen Shonin to leave the capital for Tosa province. Shinran Shonin, as the foremost disciple of the venerable Honen, could not escape the misfortune either and was banished to Kokubu in Echigo province.

Our Shonin had now to part from his revered master, as well as from his beloved family. We can well understand what sorrowful feelings were then astir in his heart which, however, was not so darkened as to be altogether insensible to the other aspect of this sad event. Perceiving the gracious design of the Buddha even in the midst of calamity, he thought in this wise: "Echigo, which is so remotely situated, would perhaps never have a chance to listen to the Good Law of the Buddha if there were not such an opportunity as this. My banishment serves an excellent purpose of proselytism. If I happen to find even one soul embracing the same faith as mine in that remote province, I shall regard it as owing to the wisdom of my venerable master." Thus thinking, he departed for his destination in cheerful spirits.

Therefore all the way along his long journey, our Shonin made use of every occasion to give utterance to his faith and interest the people in the Good Law. When finally he reached his place of banishment in Echigo, he was ever active in his missionary work, going about in the neighboring villages and exercising his personal influence over the rural population. In the meantime Princess Tamahi, who, being left behind in the capital, had spent days and nights in sorrow and without consolation, made up her mind to share with her husband the provincial loneliness in the far-away snowy region of Echigo, and to suffer the misery of banishment too.

Five years passed, and in November, 1211, the court issued an order to terminate the banishment of our Shonin. The message, carried by Lord Norimitsu Okazaki, did not arrive at its destination until December of the same year.

To his receipt of this message, our Shonin signed himself Gutoku (which means "simple-hearted bald man"). He inwardly wished, by thus designating himself, to determine his own status among the followers of the Buddha, which was neither that of a monk nor that of a layman. What other signification he wanted to give to this unique title was that he was one of those simple-hearted Buddhists who were not wise, nor intelligent, nor learned. He used to believe himself an ignorant and sinful soul, as is implied in the literal sense of the title Gutoku. This critical self-valuation was an aspect of his religious belief. Afterward he assumed the name Shinran, by which he is best known to posterity. [He took the first part, *shin*, from the name of the ancient Indian priest Tenshin and *ran* from Don-ran, a Chinese priest whose doctrines he developed and preached.]

When he received the message of release, he wished at once to proceed to the capital and see his venerable master; but being prevented by various circumstances, it was not until January of the following year that he could start from Kokubu. When he reached Kodzuke on his way to Kyoto toward the middle of February, unexpected news plunged him into the deepest sorrow and despair; for it was the news of the death, on January 25, of his revered master, Honen, Shonin, whom he had been so anxious to see once more before his final passing. His grief was so great that he threw himself down on the ground and cried most piteously.

Shinran Shonin now abandoned his plan to proceed to the capital, and making his way to Hidachi province, he visited several towns along his route and preached his faith to the people.

In January, 1217, he settled at Inada, of Hidachi province, and began writing his *Kyo-Gyo-Shin-Sho*<sup>4</sup> ("Teaching, Practice, Faith, and Attainment"), in which are laid down the fundamental principles of the True Sect of Pure Land. This was his first literary work, and his greatest, for on this is built the entire structure of the True Sect. After the passing of Honen, there were many of his disciples who failed to grasp the spirit of their master and grossly misrepresented its vital significance. To save the latter

<sup>4</sup> An exposition of the essential principles of the True Sect as to what it teaches (*kyo*), practises (*gyo*), believes (*shin*), and attains (*sho*), in six fasciculi.

therefore from a wreckage and to make known the true purport of the Pure Land sect free from all possible misinterpretations, Shinran wrote his most important book. It was completed in the year 1224, when our Shonin was fifty-two years of age.

In the following year (1225 A. D.) the Shonin built a temple at Takata, of Shimodzuke province. In 1226 the temple received the name Senju Amida Ji by an imperial order. After this, the True Sect of Pure Land began to draw its circles of propagation wider and wider around these two centers, Inada and Takata; and many men and women of good family gathered about him who led them to the truth of the Buddhist faith. For twenty years in these localities he had thus been indefatigably engaged for the cause of the True Sect of Pure Land, when he conceived an idea to visit the capital in 1232. He was then sixty years old.

He left his monastery at Takata to the care of his disciple, Shimbutzu, and accompanied only by two of his disciples (while his wife remained alone at Inada), he started for Kyoto from where he had been long absent. In Kyoto he had no fixed residence and moved from one place to another, among which we may mention Gojo-Nishinotoin, Okazaki, Nijo-To-minokoji, etc. He was never tired of preaching the Good Law of the compassionate Buddha, no matter who came to him for spiritual guidance and helpful instructions; and to those who could not pay him a personal visit he sent letters dwelling upon the joyful life of a devout Buddhist. Toward the end of his life the Shonin wrote various messages for the sake of uneducated followers of his faith, in which he expounded the essentials of the True Sect in the plainest possible terms.

In 1262 he reached the advanced age of ninety and began to show symptoms of an illness on November 23. He complained of nothing particularly, but spoke of the deep love of Amida and recited his name with profound devotion. On the twenty-seventh he bade farewell to his disciples, saying that he would be waiting for them in Pure Land when the time would come for them to join him there. After this he kept on reciting the name of Amida. On the following day, according to the example shown by the Great Muni of the Shakyas at the time of his Nirvana, he had his head turned toward the north, facing the west, and lying on his right side, in a room at the Jembo-in: at noon his reciting came quietly to an end, showing that he had finally returned to the Land of Light, and it is said that an odor of indescribably sweet fragrance filled the room and a flash of white light was seen across the western sky, as if unfolding a long piece of immaculate linen.

His remains were cremated on the twenty-ninth at the Yennin-ji, south of Toribeno, and his ashes were buried at two places, Otani at Higashiyama and Takata in Shimodzuke province, over which now stand tombstones.

The Shonin was apparently a manifestation of Amida Butsu; he was indeed a saving light who came among us some seven hundred years ago to dispel the darkness of this world. His life of ninety years on earth was an imprint eternally engraved on the hearts of sinners not yet freed from impurities. He lived among us to typify the life of a sinful soul that could yet be saved through his faith in the boundless love of Amida, and left a unique example for us who are intoxicated with the wine of passion. So our Shonin did not follow the steps of an ancient sage who, leaving his home and severing all family ties, would fly away from this world in order to cleanse the heart, to sanctify the conduct, and to be thoroughly imbued with the purest religious sentiment, and who by virtue of these unworldly merits was permitted to be born in the country of the Buddha. The Shonin, on the contrary, married Princess Tamahi and lived a family life, even after his confirmation in the Buddhist faith.

Four sons and three daughters were born to this union. The first, third, fourth, and fifth children were sons who were named respectively, Han-i, Zenran, Myoshin, and Dosho; while the second, sixth, and seventh were daughters, whose names were: Masahime, Sagahime, and Iyahime. The Shonin could not help but deeply love these children, so dear to the heart of the father that he once confessed with a truly human weakness: "I am the one who, not knowing how to be blessed by the saving love of Amida, is drowned in the tempest of passion and has lost his way in the mountains of worldliness." The founder of the True Sect, thus unlike most religious leaders, was a husband and father, who loved his family with all his heart and found his salvation in the eternal love of Amida.

It is due to this fact that in the True Sect of Pure Land there is no distinction made between the monk and the layman as regards their outward religious practice; while in all the other Buddhist sects the monk leads a life of celibacy and refrains from eating meat, the followers of the True Sect have no such special order among them, for their monks marry and do eat meat. Their religious life, therefore, consists in continuing to live an ordinary, every-day human life, not necessarily struggling to free themselves from the so-called "defilements" of the flesh, and in leaving the grave matter



of salvation entirely to the saving hands of Amida: for theirs it is only to be grateful for the Buddha's saving love and to express this gratitude by the observance of all the moral laws and the efficient execution of their respective duties. This faith and this way of living were exemplified by our venerable Shinran Shonin, the founder of the True Sect of Pure Land.

[The Pure Land of Amida is an ideal constructed out of the same religious needs of mankind that has created the idea of heaven in Christianity. In speaking of this ideal Mr. Okusa says:]

We can imagine the existence of three paths leading to the Pure Land of Amida, one of which is broad and safe, while the other two are rough and narrow. This broad and safe one is the true way that assures our rebirth in Pure Land. The Pure Land of Amida is a land of perfect beauty founded upon the truth of goodness, and not a particle of impurity could be brought in there. . .

This world of ours is a defiled world filled with sin and suffering; neither the wise nor the ignorant are free from sin, the noble as well as the poor are suffering from pain. He that declares himself to be sinless must be either an insane man or an idiot. . . . Where can we then find a region which harbors no pain? There stands Amida pointing to this Land of Purity and Happiness (*Sukhavati*), where our worldly sufferings and tribulations are no more. In this land there always smiles the spring of peace. No pain, no sin, but all beauty, goodness, and joy. Those born there enjoy a happiness that knows no ending; they are endowed not only with infinite wisdom and liberty, but with pure love and compassion which has the power to save all beings from the world of pain. All this happiness enjoyed by those who are in Pure Land is the outcome of Amida's love and will to save.

The will of the Buddha is manifest everywhere and in everything: it is present in the persons of our teachers, parents, brothers, wife, children, friends, and also in the State or community to which we may belong; the Buddha is protecting, nourishing, consoling, and instructing us in every possible way. What we owe to the Buddha is shown not only when we are carried into his Pure Land, but even when we are living our daily life on earth, for which we must also be deeply grateful. . . .

The Buddhist never loses an inward feeling of joy, as he most deeply believes in his rebirth in Pure Land through the grace of the Buddha; but as far as his outward appearances go, let him have nothing particularly to distinguish himself as such from other people. A Buddhist officer, or Buddhist soldier, or Buddhist man of busi-

ness has nothing remarkable about him so as to single him out as a Buddhist from among his fellow-workers; he obeys the moral laws, moves according to the regulations of the State, does nothing against habits or customs of his times and country, so long as they are not morally offensive; the only thing that distinguishes him most conspicuously from his non-Buddhist fellow-beings, is his inward life filled with joy and happiness, because of his faith in Amida's love to save all beings. For what constitutes the true Buddhist is his inner life, and not his outward features.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

### POLAND IN THE WORLD OF DEMOCRACY.

America, before the War, was hardly much interested in the Polish cause. The repeated efforts of the Poles to throw off the foreign yoke, directed especially against Russia, certainly have always found a generous echo in the hearts of individuals in this country, who also may take most of the credit for an occasional Kocziuszko statue and similar monuments which we find in our cities. The War at last reopened the question, for it was one of the avowed war aims of the Central Powers to push the Russian Empire farther east, to where it had come from, claiming that Poland belonged to the western half of Europe on the basis of its Roman Catholic civilization. This theory might have appealed to public opinion in the Allied countries if the necessity of keeping czaristic Russia in line had not prevented it from being fully appreciated. So it is after all the memorable statement of President Wilson, made in his "peace without victory" speech, which recognized Poland's cause as the cause of America and of democracy: "Statesmen everywhere are agreed that there should be a united, independent, and autonomous Poland." The collapse of the Russian autocracy following soon after facilitated the world-wide acceptance of this program.

The recognition of the Paderewski government by the Allied Powers and the United States is, of course, by no means the last step in the reestablishment of Poland. The new republic will need the assistance and cooperation of her older sister states if a truly democratic state is to be erected in that part of Europe. The claim she has to this aid, especially from the hands of America, is the basic subject-matter in a volume of over 250 pages before us, entitled *Poland in the World of Democracy*, by A. J. Zielinski (St. Louis, 1918). The book comes to us highly recommended by Archbishop Glennon of St. Louis, Senator Weeks from Massachusetts, and Mme. Turczynowicz, the author of the war-book *When the Prussians Came to Poland*. It discusses, in seventeen chapters, Poland's historical right, external and internal; her ancient and modern intellectual right; her political right; her ethical right; and a number of