‘The Event of the Arising of Shinjin’ in Shinran’s Thought: Focusing on His Interpretation of “The Mind of Aspiration and Merit Transference” (ekō hotsugan shin)

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In recent years, one of my primary concerns has been to clarify in as great detail as possible what sort of “event” (dekigoto 出来事) the arising of shinjin was for Shinran.

In Church Dogmatics: The Doctrine of Reconciliation, Karl Barth (1886–1968) writes that the life of Jesus itself, especially his resurrection, is the “event” which attests to the oneness of God and human beings. In this paper, I use the term “event” in order to express Shinran’s experience of the arising of shinjin as the attestation of the oneness (kannō dōkō 感応道交) of Shinran and Amida Buddha.

This paper explores how Shinran understands of the arising of shinjin from this sort of a perspective by focusing on the view of the “mind of aspiration and merit transference” (ekō hotsugan shin 廻向発願心) from the Guan wuliangshoujing 観無量寿経 as interpreted by Shandao 善導 (613–681), Hōnen 法然 (1133–1212), and Ryūkan 隆寛 (1148–1228). Through these considerations, I hope to show the ideas that form the background of Shinran’s original understanding of shinjin.