

## Prolegomenon to Shinran's Theory of the True and Transformed Buddha Land

GENJŌ USUI

The salient feature of the Pure Land faith is Birth in the Pure Land through Nembutsu. Since "Birth" here actually means "Birth in the Pure Land," the problem of the "Pure Land" naturally comes up. So far many related problems have been treated by a number of scholars from various angles, such as the basis for the establishment of Pure Land thought, the meaning of "Pure Land" and the existence of the Pure Land. However, it could ever say that the problem had been solved to any satisfactory extent. The reason for this is that the treatment so far administered had never been able to go beyond being mere objective studies.

Shinran Shōnin's views on the Buddha and the Buddha Land expounded in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, with its dynamic implications embracing a simultaneous unity of movements both from this world to the Pure Land and from the Pure Land to this world, should never be treated merely as a problem of the Pure Land, but as that of religious aspirations or desire for Birth in the Pure Land, the meaning of which is to be questioned in our actual life situation.

In reference to the True Buddha and the Buddha Land, Shinran clarified that the Buddha is the Tathāgata of Inconceivable Light and the Buddha Land the Land of Infinite Light, both of which should be

called the Buddha and the Buddha Land truly rewarded by Amida's Original Vow. Zonkaku Shōnin (1290-1373), the first son of the Third Abbot of Honganji, Kakunyo (1270-1351), says that they point to the realm of refuge for sentient beings. In other words, he says that the Buddha is the Tathāgata of Unobstructed Light as the object of sentient beings' refuge, and that the Land is the Land of Peace and Comfort as the object of sentient beings' desire for Birth. The relationship of subject and object here, however, is not static, but dynamic in the sense that it is to be actually experienced by sentient beings as they commit themselves to the practice and faith in Namu Amida Butsu. Therefore, the last chapter of *Kyōgyōshinshō* on the Buddha and the Buddha Land in Transformation was not appended simply to clarify the nature of the Buddha and the Buddha Land, but to reveal that the final attainment of sentient beings' Birth in the Pure Land is none other than their identification with Amida Buddha. Moreover, as it is stated therein, "Tathāgata Amida, having arisen from the realm of Suchness (*tathatā*) reveals a number of bodies such as Reward, Accomodation and Transformation," it might be said that this final chapter reveals that not only is the final state to be attained static and peaceful, but it is an endless Buddha Way which is dynamic, that is, a great faculty itself, exercised by the Bodhisattvas on their way back to this world, through which all suffering sentient beings are made to walk on the Buddha Way, so as to make its dynamism accepted by all beings aspiring with devotion for the Pure Land.

This Buddha Land of Reward, as rewarded by Amida's Original

Vow, however, corresponds to the Transformed Buddha Land as skilful means. That is to say, the last chapter of *Kyōgyōshinshō* describes the Buddha Land in transformation and shows that it is the world in which all practitioners doubting the Buddha's Wisdom are to be born. Again, this chapter does not simply reveal the Buddha and the Buddha Land in transformation. It reveals the Ocean of Amida's Vow in skilful means, in contrast to the true Ocean of Amida's Vow shown previously. All the teachings in reference to the temporary and false are none other than the great working of Amida's Great Compassion, embracing all sentient beings so as to cause them to devote themselves entirely to Amida's Vow of the Other Power. Therefore, Shinran Shōnin must have regarded all teachers who had expounded these teachings of expediency as Bodhisattvas on their way toward this world with respect to their compassionate works. Thus, while the true Buddha and the Buddha Land are the world of the yonder shore to be looked up to by those who practice with genuine faith, it is at the same time the working itself that truly refines sentient beings' practice and faith by endlessly revealing the Land of Transformation through the Buddha's Great Compassion in skilful means.

As stated in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, "The Land ought to be infinitely varied since its causes are infinitely varied," the world of sentient beings-- in which they, while having been born in the world of original quality, are attached to the "ego" and cannot help but create the world of particulars--is indeed the world of Suchness as the Way of Karma. Tathāgata, having a Great Compassionate heart, over the world of sen-

tient beings, has embraced it, giving rise to his Original Vow. Accordingly, Amida's Vow is not meant for delivering sentient beings from their karmic suffering by any means available, but it aims at having them return to the uncreated Suchness which is unitary and equal to all by means of its own dynamism, Suchness as the Power of Original Vow. It is there the Buddha and the Buddha Land rewarded by Amida's Original Vow appear. Here, sentient beings are summoned by the Original Vow and arrive at the deep faith in Suchness as the Way of Karma, in which they aspire in devotion for birth in the Pure Land as the yonder Buddha Land of Uncreated Suchness.

In the present paper, I have traced, with special reference to the last two chapters of *Kyōgyōshinshō*, the problem of how and on what sort of tradition Shinran's views on the Buddha and the Buddha Land, both true and expedient, had been formed, in regard to the meaning of "Pure Land" and the commentaries written by such Patriarchs as Nāgārjuna, Vasubandhu and T'an-luan; and how and in what specific topics these traditions had been inherited by Shinran's *Kyōgyōshinshō*; and how they had been answered by Shinran through his own religious experience.