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# The Work of Self-Attestation: The Problems and Possibilities of a Structural Understanding of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*

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THERE IS a famous portrait of Shinran 親鸞 (1173–1262) known as the *Kagami no goei* 鏡御影 (Mirror Portrait). Kakunyo 覚如 (1270–1351), Shinran's great grandson, undertook repairs and alterations to this picture, and in recent years a number of arguments have arisen regarding its authenticity.<sup>1</sup> I am of the opinion that the portrait prior to Kakunyo's alterations symbolized Shinran's self-attestation (*koshō* 己証), in that it represents his response to the tradition (*denshō* 伝承) he inherited from Genkū 源空 (1133–1212, more commonly known as Hōnen 法然).<sup>2</sup> Recent research suggests that the original *Kagami no goei* was a composite of (1) an upper text, (2) the portrait, and (3) (4) lower text (see figure 1 for a recreation).<sup>3</sup> I believe that the elements of the portrait can be interpreted in the following way:

<sup>1</sup> Debate on the *Kagami no goei* has focused on whether the portrait was made while Shinran was still alive or whether it was a copy produced after his death, which in turn has prompted the question of whether the text at the top of the document is actually in Shinran's own handwriting. Hiramatsu Reizō, after considering these problems, concluded that, "In the original picture, there is no mistaking that the quotation was written by Shinran himself" (Hiramatsu 1988, p. 217). I too believe that upon examining the form of the portrait and the content at the top of the document, it is difficult to conceive that anyone other than Shinran himself could have produced such writing. On this issue, see Akamatsu 1957, Hiramatsu 1988, and Katada 2009.

<sup>2</sup> A hint on the methods of perceiving the continuation of a legacy and responsibility for its explanation lies in the conventions of usage explained by Jacques Derrida. See Masuda 2007 and Kiyoshi et al. 2008, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> For a treatment of the text on this portrait, see Kyōgaku Kenkyūjo 2008, pp. 130–31.

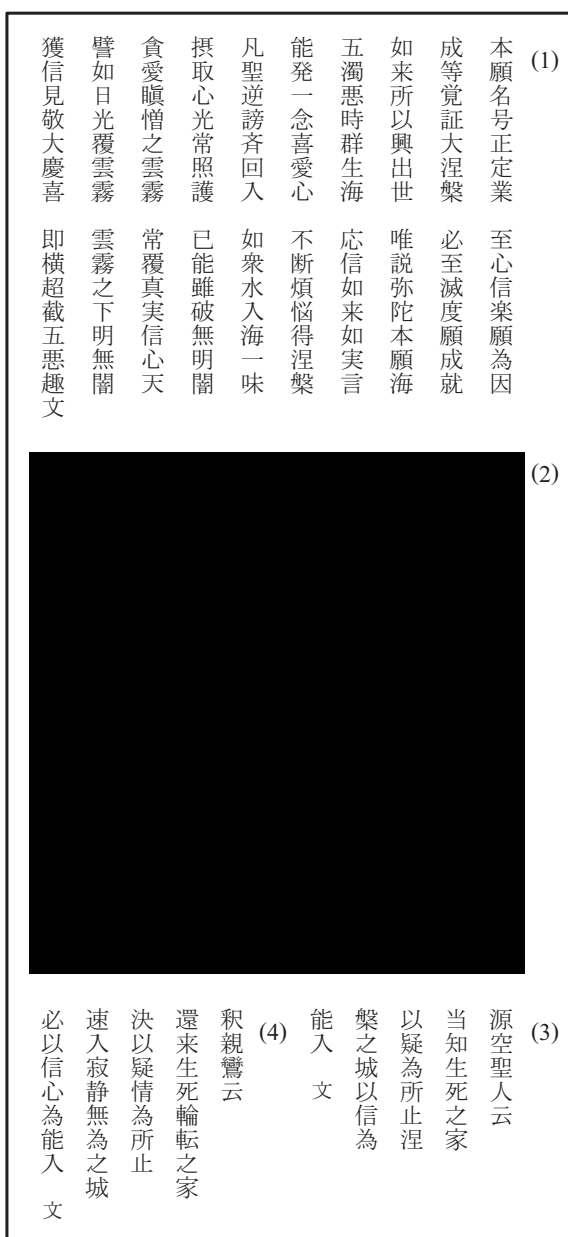


Figure 1. *Kagami no goei* (Mirror Portrait) restored to its original state. Traces of some characters in the upper text can be seen faintly on the current portrait. The numbering corresponds to the explanation on the next page.

(1) <i>Shōshinge</i> 正信偈 passage	Legacy from Genkū
(2) Portrait	Heir to the tradition
(3) Genkū Shōnin “stated” followed by <i>Sanjinshō</i> 三心章 passage	Name of bequeather Testament of Genkū
(4) Shaku Shinran “states” followed by Shinran’s verse	Name of heir Response by Shinran

I would particularly like to focus attention on the lower text, (3) and (4). A translation of the characters appearing there is as follows:

Genkū, the Sage, stated:

One should know that remaining in this house of birth and death  
is caused by doubt.

Entry to the castle of nirvana is made possible  
by faith.

Shinran, disciple of Śākyamuni, states:

Returning to the house of transmigration, of birth and death  
definitely takes feelings of doubt as the cause of remaining.

Swift entrance into the castle of unconditioned quietude  
is necessarily made possible by the mind of faith.<sup>4</sup>

In this portion of the portrait, a passage that was stated by “Genkū, the Sage”<sup>5</sup> (taken from the *Sanjinshō* [chapter on the three minds] in *Senjaku hongan nenbutsu shū* 選択本願念仏集) has been set next to a statement by “Shinran, disciple of Śākyamuni,”<sup>6</sup> such that the latter passage serves as a response to the former. At first glance, the differences between the two passages appear to be little more than insignificant changes in the words used. However, the slight variation in meaning between them indicates a doctrinal issue that had to be addressed through taking on the name “Shinran, disciple of Śākyamuni.”<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Kyōgaku Kenkyūjo 2008, pp. 130–31.

<sup>5</sup> The statement by “Genkū, the Sage,” is a quotation from the eighth chapter of *Senjaku hongan nenbutsu shū*, the section that begins with the statement “the passage that shows that the practitioner of the *nenbutsu* 念仏 must necessarily have the three minds,” and is generally referred to as the *Sanjinshō*, or chapter on the three minds. *Shinshū shōgyō zensho* 真宗聖教全書 (hereafter, SSZ), vol. 1, p. 967. Shinran also interprets the same passage in his *Songō shinzō meimon* 尊号真像銘文.

<sup>6</sup> The passage quoted becomes the basis for the verses on Genkū in both *Shōshinge* and *Monruige* 文類偈, *Shōshinge*’s counterpart in *Jōdo monrui jushō* 浄土文類聚鈔. For a commentary on the name of “Shinran, disciple of Śākyamuni,” see Furuta 2003, p. 998.

<sup>7</sup> In his commentary on this passage in *Songō shinzō meimon*, Shinran explains that the term “faith” in the phrase “entry is made possible by faith” means “the true mind of entrusting” and that “the mind of faith is the seed of enlightenment.” Although it is not quoted on the

Genkū's passage states that remaining within the house of birth and death, or making the decision to enter into the castle of nirvana, is a matter of faith and doubt. Shinran most likely believed that his responsibility—as one who inherited Genkū's doctrinal legacy and had a duty to respond to it—was to clarify the relationship between faith and doubt.<sup>8</sup> In light of Shinran's juxtaposition of these two passages, it is possible to see the continuation of the heritage of Genkū as being Shinran's work of inheritance of tradition (*denshō*) and his taking on the duty to respond as being the work of self-attestation (*koshō*).

### *Soga Ryōjin's Structural Understanding of the Kyōgyōshinshō*

Over the course of the past several hundred years, a great number of structural understandings of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* have been indicated through outlines (*kamon* 科文) created by commentators on the text. As one can tell from the fact that it is said that the traditional rites for the transmission of

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portrait, Genkū's original passage continues by stating that "Therefore, now the two forms of the mind of faith are established, and the nine forms of birth are settled." It is a call to establish the two forms of the mind of faith described by Shandao 善導 (613–681) and to decide one's birth in the Pure Land. Genkū, based in the tradition of the *Guan wuliangshou jing* 觀無量壽經 (hereafter, *Sutra on the Contemplation of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life*), understands the true mind of entrusting to be synonymous with the two forms of profound faith that Shandao discusses in his commentary on that sutra. However, in commenting on the relationship between the three minds of the *Sutra on the Contemplation of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life* and the three faiths of the *Wuliangshou jing* 無量壽經 (*Sutra on Immeasurable Life*, hereafter, *Larger Sutra on Immeasurable Life*), Genkū states, "Presently, the three minds of this sutra [the *Sutra on the Contemplation of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life*] open up the triple mind of the original vow. The reason for this is that the 'sincere mind,' *shishin* 至心, [of the *Larger Sutra on Immeasurable Life*] is the 'sincere mind,' *shijōshin* 至誠心, [of the *Sutra on the Contemplation of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life*]. The 'joyous entrusting,' *shingyō* 信樂, is the 'profound mind,' *jinshin* 深信. 'Aspiring to birth in my land,' *yokushō ga koku* 欲生我国, is the 'mind establishing a vow and transferring merit,' *ekō hotsugan shin* 回向發願心" (SSZ, vol. 4, p. 352). Shinran followed this line of thought, and in the chapter on faith in the *Kyōgyōshinshō* clarified that the true mind of entrusting is synonymous with the three faiths of the *Larger Sutra on Immeasurable Life*. In accord with that understanding, we can speculate that the continuation of the passages by Shinran on this portrait may have read something like "Therefore, now the three faiths are established, and the birth difficult to conceive is settled."

<sup>8</sup> Shinran responds to Genkū's passage by adding the words "returning," "definitely," "swiftly entering," and "necessarily." See Kaku 2011a and 2011b for a study on the significance of the response found via these differences. This study on the *Kagami no goei* was orally presented at the Kosei Chiku Seiten Gakushūkai 湖西地区聖典学習会 in February, 2009.

the *Kyōgyōshinshō* were made up of the recitation of the text and instruction about its outlines, they are both the starting point and the conclusion for understanding the *Kyōgyōshinshō* in traditional doctrinal studies.

Indicating a given structural understanding is thus a clear expression of the viewpoint from which one reads the *Kyōgyōshinshō*. Such structural understandings are an effective method for interpreting the vast *Kyōgyōshinshō*. However, one must be aware that if a certain form of structural understanding becomes received wisdom, there is a danger that it may bind the consciousness of the reader and deprive us of the possibility of new interpretations. In a similar manner to how a single mountain range can appear very differently depending on the place from which we look at it, we must acknowledge that a variety of viewpoints about the *Kyōgyōshinshō* are possible. A particular perspective does not necessarily eliminate other viewpoints. We must not forget that these are always relative standpoints and that our various structural understandings are developed within social and temporal limits. Having acknowledged those limits, I still believe that a structural understanding of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* provides an important method for confirming the attitude we take towards the work. In short, a structural understanding of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* does not mean the only correct way of looking at the text but instead is an expression of the viewpoint from which we study it.

Next, I wish to bring to your attention a structural understanding of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* proposed by Soga Ryōjin 曾我量深 (1875–1971) in his examination of “inheritance of tradition and self-attestation.” By introducing his position, I will try to shed some light on his radical interpretations. He sums up this structural understanding as follows:

Having read the sacred text of the six chapters, the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, many times over a long period of time, I have realized that it is made up of two parts. First, the two chapters on teaching and practice are part 1. Part 1 clarifies the tradition of the Buddhas and patriarchs within the original vow through the seventeenth vow, the Vow of the Myriad Buddhas Calling the Name. When we read the chapter on practice, we can see that Shinran, by quoting the various sutras, particularly the seventeenth vow in the *Larger Sutra on Immeasurable Life*, and then quoting the treatises and commentaries of the seven patriarchs of the three countries in correct [chronological] order, is clarifying *the inheritance of the tradition (denshō)* of Shin Buddhism. Then, placing his “Hymn of Correct Entrusting and *Nenbutsu*” [*Shōshin nenbutsu ge* 正信

念仏偈, commonly referred to by its shortened title, *Shōshinge*] at the end of the chapter on practice, the founder of our sect, Shinran Shōnin, clearly expresses his understanding of the *Larger Sutra* and the interpretations of the seven patriarchs, thereby closing the two chapters on teaching and practice—that is, part 1, the chapters on the inheritance of tradition—with these verses. Next, in contrast to the chapters on the tradition, the two chapters on teaching and practice, I believe that the four chapters from the chapter on entrusting are the *chapters on self-attestation* (*koshō*) by Shinran Shōnin. For a long time, it has been said that the first five chapters are the chapters on truth while the sixth chapter is the chapter on expedient means. That is, it was thought that the expression of the true and correct and the refutation of the false and wicked was clarified through the six chapters. I think that, in a sense, this is quite reasonable. However, I believe that there is nothing such as simply refuting wickedness in Shin Buddhism. There is no such thing as the mere refutation of wickedness in Shin Buddhism. The eighteenth vow, the chapters on truth, transcends the nineteenth and twentieth vows—the chapter of expedient means—but these are also enveloped within the eighteenth vow. The so-called transcendental and also immanent. The sixth chapter is enveloped within the chapters on truth from the chapter on entrusting onward. This was something I clarified thirty years ago.<sup>9</sup>

Elsewhere, Soga states:

First, based on the seventeenth vow, [Shinran] expounded the chapters on the inheritance of tradition. From there, Shinran Shōnin clearly expressed his own self-attestation regarding the triple mind of the eighteenth vow. The spirit from [the chapters on] entrusting and realization thus runs through to [those on] the true Buddha and land and the transformed Buddha bodies and lands. In my understanding, [that is why Shinran] specifically made the “Separate Preface” for the chapter on entrusting, and expounded his own self-attestation.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> From ‘*Shin no maki*’ *chōki* 「信の巻」 聴記 in *Soga Ryōjin senshū* 曾我量深選集 (hereafter, SRS), vol. 8, pp. 13–14. This is a record of the lectures given as the primary lectures for the intensive retreat (*ango* 安居) of the Shinshū Ōtani-ha 真宗大谷派 in 1960 (Shōwa 35), when Soga was eighty-five years old. Italics are added for emphasis.

<sup>10</sup> SRS, vol. 8, p. 18.

I would like to summarize the above passages as follows. Soga divides the six chapters of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* into two parts. First, the two chapters on teaching and practice constitute part 1, which is made up of the “chapters on inheritance of tradition” that clarify the legacy of the tradition in Jōdo Shinshū 浄土真宗. Part 1, based on the spirit of the seventeenth vow, is a collection of important passages from the *Larger Sutra on Immeasurable Life* and the seven patriarchs of the three countries, which is then closed with the verses of *Shōshinge*. Next, the four chapters from the chapter on entrusting constitute part 2. Part 2 consists of the chapters in which Shinran expresses his own self-attestation in reliance on the spirit of the eighteenth vow. This spirit that underlies the chapters on entrusting and realization continues through to those on the true Buddha and land and transformed Buddha bodies and lands. To mark the beginning of his self-attestation, Shinran placed a separate preface before the collection of passages on entrusting.

According to Soga’s reminiscences, he came to this understanding in 1925. However, when one examines examples of the use of “self-attestation” in Soga’s works after that year, there are few clear indications that his usage of this term differed significantly from previous general applications of it by other authors. As such, one cannot say that “self-attestation” as expressed by Soga can function well as a term that indicates a problem of doctrinal studies, as it is.<sup>11</sup>

### *In Light of the Bandō Version of the Kyōgyōshinshō*

As a result of Soga’s structural understanding of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* as being dividable into two parts, the “inheritance of tradition and self-attestation,” a point of view that sees the content of the text from the “Preface to the Collection of Passages of Faith” through to the “Collection of Passages on Transformed Buddha Bodies and Lands” as dealing with a single issue becomes possible. Yet is this a valid standpoint? By drawing attention to the structure of the Bandō 坂東 version of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, a work in Shinran’s hand that he is said to have continued to revise through to the twilight years of his life, I will attempt to scrutinize the validity of this structural understanding from the stance of the “inheritance of tradition and self-attestation.” Below, I will point out four aspects of the Bandō version which can be taken as evidence that Shinran shared Soga’s understanding.

<sup>11</sup> The maturation of “self-attestation” into a doctrinal concept had to wait until the interpretation given by Yasuda Rijin 安田理深 (1900–1982).



According to graphological studies of the Bandō version of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, the work consisted of two prefaces and six chapters (or “collections of passages,” as Shinran names them) at the time when he first completed a fair copy in or around his sixtieth year.<sup>12</sup> Since he wrote these two prefaces in order to introduce the various passages collected in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, then quite naturally they must include clues as to the primary impetus for the creation of the work itself. As evidence for the interpretation of the structure of the text as “inheritance of tradition and self-attestation,” Soga focused on the fact that the chapter on practice closes with *Shōshinge* and that the chapter on faith begins with the “Preface to the Collection of Passages on Faith.” This unique structure of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* certainly seems to support Soga’s position.

In the present Bandō version of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, the “Preface to the Collection of Passages on Teaching, Practice and Realization,” the “Collection of Passages on Teaching,” and the “Collection of Passages on Practice” constitute one volume, while the “Preface to the Collection of Passages on Faith” and the “Collection of Passages on Faith” make up another volume. The “Collection of Passages on Realization” and the “Collection of Passages on the True Buddha and Land” each make up one volume, while the “Collection of Passages on Transformed Buddha Bodies and Lands” has been divided into two volumes, thus making up a total of six volumes (refer to figure 2 for a comparison between the composition of the Bandō version with that of the Takada Senjuji 高田専修寺 and Nishi Honganji 西本願寺 versions). This composition of the six volumes of the Bandō version, where what Soga calls the “chapters on inheritance of tradition” stand together as a single volume, supports the understanding that each of the two prefaces serves as a preface to the subsequent chapters. That is, the first preface is to the first two chapters, the chapters on inheritance of tradition, while the second is the preface to the last four chapters, the chapters on self-attestation.

Within the present Bandō version of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, the statement regarding the name of the author, “Collected by Gutoku Shinran, disciple of Śākyamuni,”<sup>13</sup> occurs only after the “Preface to the Collection of Passages on Faith.” This implies that the four following chapters are connected by a single doctrinal theme.

However, a piece of the bottom right-hand corner of the first page of the chapter on teaching, the part under the title, has been cut away, and it is

<sup>12</sup> Shigemi 1981, p. 296.

<sup>13</sup> Throughout the *Kyōgyōshinshō* Shinran refers to himself with variations of the name Gutoku Shaku Shinran 愚禿釈親鸞. “Gutoku” literally means “foolish, stubble-headed.”

	Chapters in the Nishi Honganji and Takada Senjuji version	Chapters in the Bandō version
Volume 1	Preface to the Collection of Passages on Teaching, Practice, and Realization Collection of Passages on Teaching	Preface to the Collection of Passages on Teaching, Practice, and Realization Collection of Passages on Teaching Collection of Passages on Practice
Volume 2	Collection of Passages on Practice	Preface to the Collection of Passages on Faith Collection of Passages on Faith
Volume 3	Preface to the Collection of Passages on Faith Collection of Passages on Faith	Collection of Passages on Realization
Volume 4	Collection of Passages on Realization	Collection of Passages on the True Buddha and Land
Volume 5	Collection of Passages on the True Buddha and Land	Collection of Passages on Transformed Buddha Bodies and Lands (Part 1)
Volume 6	Collection of Passages on Transformed Buddha and Land	Collection of Passages on Transformed Buddha Bodies and Lands (Part 2)

Figure 2. The division of chapters into volumes in the Takada Senjuji and Nishi Honganji versions (left column), and the Bandō version (right column) of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*

entirely possible that this section contained the author's name.<sup>14</sup> By whom, when, and for what reasons this name was cut away we do not know, yet there is some leeway to explore the possibility that Shinran himself cut the name away. Incidentally, figure 3 compares the placement of the name of the author within the Bandō, Takada Senjuji, and Nishi Honganji versions. The two points of consistency between the three versions are, first,

<sup>14</sup> Shigemi states that "There originally was an author's name in the 'Collection of Passages on Teaching,' but this has been cut out of the present version" (Shigemi 1981, p. 300). If there was a name under the title of the "Collection of Passages on Teaching," who cut it out? Like other passages from this chapter, it may have been removed and framed as a treasure during the Edo period (a point indicated by Fujimoto Masafumi). However, I believe there is a possibility that Shinran himself cut the name out of this chapter. One could argue that he would have removed it after the Takada Senjuji version had been copied, when the *Kyōgyōshinshō* was being revised. A possible reason for its removal would be that he had decided that he did not want to leave his own name on the preface, the chapter on teaching, or the chapter on practice, and instead let them stand wholly as "inherited tradition." I discussed this possibility in an article in the November 2008 issue of *Tomoshihi* ともしび (Kaku 2008).

	Takada Senjuji Version	Bandō Version	Nishi Honganji Version
Preface to the Collection of Passages on Teaching, Practice, and Realization	None	None	None
Collection of Passages on Teaching	Collected by Gutoku Shinran	None (evidence of removal)	Collected by Gutoku Shinran
Collection of Passages on Practice	None	None	Collected by Gutoku Shinran
Preface to the Collection of Passages on Faith	None	Collected by Gutoku Shinran	Collected by Gutoku Shinran
Collection of Passages on Faith	Collected by Gutoku Shinran	Collected by Gutoku Shinran	Collected by Gutoku Shinran
Collection of Passages on Realization	Collected by Gutoku Shinran	Collected by Gutoku Shinran	Collected by Gutoku Shinran
Collection of Passages on the True Buddha and Land	Collected by Gutoku Shinran	Collected by Gutoku Shinran	Collected by Gutoku Shinran

Figure 3. Comparison of the presence of the author's name at the beginning of each chapter in the Takada Senjuji, Bandō, and Nishi Honganji versions of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*

that Shinran's name does not appear at the beginning of the "Preface to the Collection of Passages on Teaching, Practice, and Realization," yet it does appear at the beginning of all the chapters after the "Collection of Passages on Faith." It may be that Shinran was uncertain as to whether he should place his name as the author on the "Collection of Passages on Teaching," the "Collection of Passages on Practice," or the "Preface to the Collection of Passages on Faith."

According to the Bandō version of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, Shinran first placed the line "A Collection of Passages Clearly Expounding the True Teaching, Practice, and Realization of the Pure Land" at the end of the "Collection of Passages on Practice," but later blotted out the characters for "teaching" and "realization" with black ink so that the line became "A Collection of Passages Expounding the True Practice of the Pure Land" (see figure 4). This indicates that Shinran at one point considered the theme of "A Collection of Passages Clearly Expounding the True Teaching, Practice, and Realization of the Pure Land" to have been completed at the end of the

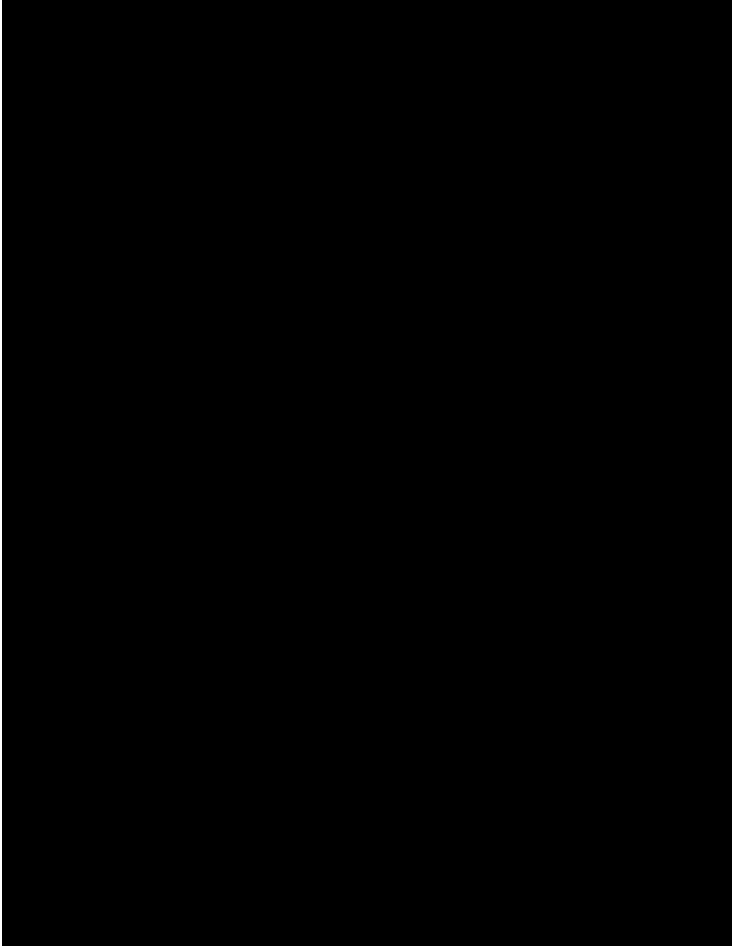


Figure 4. The closing title on the last page of the chapter on practice in the Bandō version of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*

“Collection of Passages on Practice.” This agrees with the position of Soga Ryōjin and Yasuda Rijin that the theme of “inheritance of tradition” in the first two chapters was completed with *Shōshinge*.

Soga did not arrive at his understanding of “inheritance of tradition and self-attestation” based on a consideration of these unique aspects of the Bandō version. However, one can say that the above points serve to support the validity of a structural understanding of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* through the concepts of “inheritance of tradition and self-attestation.”

*In Light of the "Preface to the Collection of Passages on Faith"*

Next, I would like to examine the point of view of "inheritance of tradition and self-attestation" by referencing the content of the "Preface to the Collection of Passages on Faith." According to this preface, the theme of "expounding true faith" is described as follows:

(1) As I reflect, I find that our attainment of joyous entrusting arises from the heart and mind with which Amida Tathāgata selected the vow, and that the clarification of the true mind has been taught for us through the skilful words of compassion of the Great Sage, Śākyamuni. (2) But the monks and laity of this latter age and the religious teachers of these times are floundering in concepts of "self-nature" and "mind only," and they disparage the true realization of the enlightenment of the Pure Land way. Lost in the self-power attitude of meditative and non-meditative practices, they are ignorant of the true *shinjin*, which is like a diamond.<sup>15</sup>

Of particular interest in this passage, in the case of the section that I have numbered as (1), is the indication that the theme of this chapter is the "attainment" of the heart and mind of true faith. In the portion numbered (2), Shinran describes simply the present situation which causes the loss of true faith.<sup>16</sup> In the chapter on transformed Buddha bodies and lands, he states that the cause which brought about the state of affairs that he criticizes in this passage is the mind of self-power (*jiriki* 自力), which he defines there as including elements such as the mind that practices meditative and non-meditative good, the mind that believes in the recompense of good and evil, doubting and misapprehending the wisdom of the Buddha, etc. There,

<sup>15</sup> From the "Preface to the Collection of Passages on Faith." The numbers have been inserted by the author. (Shinran Shōnin Zenshū Kankōkai 1989, p. 95). Also see *The Collected Works of Shinran* (hereafter, CWS), vol. 1, p. 77.

<sup>16</sup> In particular, one should note that the section marked (1) does not question the content of the mind of true faith but instead questions the causes and conditions of the attainment ("attainment" and "clarification") of the mind of true faith ("joyous entrusting" and "the true mind"). In these expressions, Shinran's original writing style, one which uses performative expressions, not descriptive ones, is very apparent. Yasuda Rijin states: "I think that the chapter on practice reveals the settled mind of faith and realization. Therefore, the chapter on faith was not created for the purpose of explaining the settled mind. Rather, it was written to make an issue of the settled mind. [This chapter] clarifies the distinction between true and provisional settled minds and critiques faith" (Yasuda 1985, p. 5).

he then provides a universal response, noting that the path to overcome such difficulties lies in the Tathāgata's compassionate vow of expedient means (vows nineteen and twenty).

Next, let us turn to a consideration of the possibility that the "Preface to the Collection of Passages on Faith" stands as the preface to the last four chapters. From the *Rokuyōshō* 六要鈔, it appears that Zonkaku 存覚 (1290–1373) understood the "Preface to the Collection of Passages on Faith" to be the preface to only the "Collection of Passages on Faith."<sup>17</sup> However, when the content of the "Preface to the Collection of Passages on Faith" is considered in the following way, one can see that this preface clearly anticipates the issues addressed in the "Collection of Passages on Realization," "Collection of Passages on the True Buddha and Land," and the "Collection of Passages on Transformed Buddha Bodies and Lands." Hence this preface can be characterized as serving as the preface to the four chapters which follow.

First, the phrase "disparage the true realization of the enlightenment of the Pure Land way" in the above passage relates to the content of both the "Collection of Passages on Realization" and the "Collection of Passages on the True Buddha and Land." It indicates that true realization of enlightenment is realized as the Pure Land.

Also, the words "floundering in concepts of 'self-nature' and 'mind only'" and "lost in the self-power attitude of meditative and non-meditative practices" relate to the "Collection of Passages on Transformed Buddha Bodies and Lands." Both phrases are descriptions of the mind of self-power that is dealt with in that chapter. Also, the *Sutra on the Contemplation of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life* and the *Amituojing* 阿彌陀經 (hereafter, *Amida Sutra*), which are taken up as central themes in the chapter on transformed Buddha bodies and lands, are two of the three sutras referred to in the line,

<sup>17</sup> Zonkaku states that "In contrast to the general preface at the very beginning of the first chapter, this is described as constituting a separate preface. This preface is here because this chapter on the settled mind (*anjin* 安心) is of the utmost importance" (*Rokuyōshō* in SSZ, vol. 2, p. 247). However, if we consider the fact that Zonkaku understood the placement of this special preface as mirroring the structure of the *Miaofa lianhua jing* 妙法蓮華經 (hereafter, *Lotus Sutra*), one may argue that he held the last four chapters to be the chapters on the settled mind. In his commentary on the separate preface Zonkaku states, "In the *Lotus Sutra*, there is a preface to each of the two gates, the primary (*hon* 本) and derivative (*shaku* 迹)" (SSZ, vol. 2, p. 247). Yasuda Rijin also states that the chapters on faith, realization, true Buddha body and land, and transformed Buddha bodies and lands should be understood as the "chapters on the settled mind" (Yasuda 1985, pp. 3–9).

“fully guided by the beneficent light of the three sutras.” Moreover, the line “I will pose questions concerning it and then present clear testimony in which explanation is found” anticipates the two questions and answers (*mondō* 問答) that are posed within the chapter on transformed Buddha bodies and lands.

*“Self-attestation” as a Concept Epitomizing Doctrinal Issues*

I would like to provide a clear definition of the term “self-attestation” proposed by Soga Ryōjin in order to make it a doctrinal concept that reflects its meaning as the practice of receiving the “inheritance of the tradition” existentially. Moreover, through these considerations, I would also like to establish that the four chapters that follow the “Preface to the Collection of Passages on Faith” represent Shinran’s work of “self-attestation.”

There are no examples of Shinran himself ever using the term “self-attestation.” However, this word was a general term of reference used in Tendai 天台 doctrine, which Shinran studied during his twenty years of training on Mt. Hiei 比叡. Moreover, early on, both Kakunyo and Zonkaku used it in their writings. Yet “self-attestation” as they use it means no more than Shinran’s *original* understanding and doctrine. In other words, they do not use the term to indicate an issue in doctrinal studies that serves to question the self within the “inheritance of tradition.”<sup>18</sup> As touched upon earlier, Soga Ryōjin himself often made use of the term in the more general sense of “original.”

As mentioned above, the term self-attestation cannot be found within Shinran’s own works. Does this therefore mean that the question of self-attestation is also absent from the *Kyōgyōshinshō*? Personally, I believe that one can perceive specific references to self-attestation in the following lines taken from the “Preface to the Collection of Passages on Faith”:

<sup>18</sup> In the note at the end of Kakunyo’s *Kudenshō* 口伝鈔, there is the statement, “The self-attestation of the sage and founder which reverently upholds tradition” (SSZ, vol. 2, p. 36). The phrase “self-attestation” also appears in the formal title of the *Mattōshō* 末灯鈔 compiled by Jūkaku 從覚 (1295–1360, second son of Kakunyo): “A Concise Record of the Self-Attestation of the Great Teacher Shinran, Sage of the Honganji, and a Collection of His Letters and Such from Various Places in the Hinterlands” (SSZ, vol. 2, p. 656). Although it is unclear whether the author of this text was Kakunyo or Zonkaku, the phrase also appears in *Kyōgyōshinshō tai’i* 教行信証大意: “The teachings laid out in the true teaching, practice, faith, realization, true Buddha and land, and transformed Buddha bodies and lands are the self-attestation of the sage and are vital to our school” (SSZ, vol. 2, p. 62). Thus from very early in the Shin tradition, the word “self-attestation” has been used to refer to the original teachings of Shinran.

- (1) Here I, Gutoku Shinran, disciple of Śākyamuni, [self]
- (2) reverently embrace the true teaching of the Buddhas and Tathāgatas and look to the essential meaning of the treatises and commentaries of the masters.
- (3) Fully guided by the beneficent light of the three sutras, I seek in particular to clarify the luminous passage on the “mind that is single.”
- (4) I will pose questions concerning it and then present clear proof in which explanation is found. [attestation]<sup>19</sup>

The line marked (1) confirms that the “self” in self-attestation specifically refers to “Gutoku Shinran, disciple of Śākyamuni.” The sentence marked (4) can be said to lay out a very concrete method for the “attestation” aspect of self-attestation in the expressions “pose questions” and “present clear testimony.” The sentences marked (2) and (3) are Shinran’s declaration of his intention to carry out the work of “self-attestation” taking Genkū’s teaching that “the three sutras and one treatise are the teaching that clearly espouses the correct way to birth in the Pure Land”<sup>20</sup> as his doctrinal foundation. It may be possible to say that this designation of Genkū’s provided a subtle hint for Shinran to attempt to unravel the problem of faith and doubt through the consideration of the relationships between the single mind found within the *Treatise on the Pure Land*<sup>21</sup> and the triple mind and single mind discussed within the three primary sutras. This issue can be seen as a core problem in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, for it is the focus of the questions and answers presented in the chapter on faith and the chapter on transformed Buddha bodies and lands. The three sutras are the Buddha’s own teachings, while the “one treatise” is the expression of the reception of that teaching by the Buddha’s disciple. The name, “Shinran, disciple of Śākyamuni,” which is taken from the names of Tianqin 天親 (c. 400–480; Jp. Tenjin; Skt. Vasubandhu), who composed the treatise that Shinran calls “the illustrious verses on the single mind,” and Tanluan 曇鸞 (476–542?; Jp. Donran), who wrote a commentary on that treatise, is truly a name of “self-attestation” in the strictest sense of the word, because Shinran addresses the problem

<sup>19</sup> From the “Preface to the Collection of Passages on Faith” (Shinran Shōnin Zenshū Kankōkai 1989, p. 95). Also see CWS, vol. 1, p. 77. The terms in brackets are explanatory notes that have been inserted by the author.

<sup>20</sup> From the “Kyōsōshō” 教相章 of *Senjaku hongan nenbutsu shū* (SSZ, vol. 1, p. 931).

<sup>21</sup> The full title of this work in Chinese is *Wuliangshoujing youpotishe yuanshengji* 無量壽經優婆提舍願生偈, but the text is often referred to as the *Jingtulun* 淨土論. The English translation of the title presented here is based on that shortened name.



posed by Genkū from the standpoint regarding the three sutras laid out by these two thinkers.

Where is the necessity of taking on the issue of “self-attestation” as a problem in doctrinal studies? The motive for taking on the work of “self-attestation” is clearly revealed in a passage from *Shōshinge* which reads, “It is extremely difficult to receive and uphold *shinjin* / Nothing surpasses this most difficult of difficulties.”<sup>22</sup> This shows that truly inheriting the legacy of Jōdo Shinshū as revealed by Genkū is indeed a difficult task. This task can ultimately be fulfilled only through responding doctrinally to the issue of faith and doubt he left behind in the passage introduced at the beginning of this article.

At the risk of repeating myself, the doctrinal concept of self-attestation refers to the work of thoroughly questioning the problems of faith and doubt with regard to the inheritance of tradition (the “Great Practice” of the Tathāgata). In a positive sense, it refers to the work based in “the mind of faith received from the Tathāgata” (*Tannishō* 歎異抄),<sup>23</sup> while in a passive sense, it refers to the work of delivering faith from the mind that believes in both sin and fortune, or that which is “lost in the self-power attitude of meditative and non-meditative practices.”

Incidentally, Yasuda Rijin held that in the chapter on faith Shinran does not reveal the content of true faith but instead questions what true faith is. He also pointed out that in contrast to praise as a method of study in “inheritance of tradition,” the special characteristic of the method of “self-attestation” is that it takes the form of “questions and answers.”<sup>24</sup>

As discussed earlier, the understanding of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* as “inheritance of tradition and self-attestation” was presented in an attempt to rescue the text from the conservative, apologetic interpretation that characterized it as “expressing the true and correct and refuting the false and wicked” (*kenshō haja* 顯正破邪). By considering the text from the “Preface to the Collection of Passages on Faith” through the chapters on faith, realization, true Buddha and land, on to transformed Buddha bodies and lands in terms of the unifying problem of self-attestation, one can understand the “Collection of Passages on Transformed Buddha Bodies and Lands” to be the work of self-attestation.<sup>25</sup> With regard to the relationship between the last three

<sup>22</sup> Shinran Shōnin Zenshū Kankōkai 1989, p. 87. See also CWS, vol. 1, p. 70.

<sup>23</sup> SSZ, vol. 2, p. 791.

<sup>24</sup> See lectures one, two, and three in Yasuda 1985.

<sup>25</sup> “I believe that the chapters on faith, realization, true Buddha and land, and transformed Buddha bodies and lands are linked together as a development in the subject capable of

chapters of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, it is possible to say that from realization, the Buddha land is revealed, and the Buddha land is further divided into true and provisional. The following passage from the chapter on realization highlights just such a structure:

Amida Tathāgata comes forth, is born of suchness, and manifests various bodies—fulfilled, accommodated, and transformed.<sup>26</sup>

Based on this passage, the “Jinge kamon” 深解科文 takes the “Collection of Passages on the True Buddha and Land” and the “Collection of Passages on Transformed Buddha Bodies and Lands” to be a development of themes presented in the “Collection of Passages on Realization.” It relates the phrases in this passage to the subjects taken up in the rest of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* as follows:

“Comes forth and is born”: Shinran’s comment on the returning aspect of merit-transference

- (1) “Fulfilled” body: Chapter on true Buddha and land
- (2) “Accommodated and transformed” bodies: Part 1 of the chapter on transformed Buddha bodies and lands
- (3) “Various bodies”: Part 2 of the chapter on transformed Buddha bodies and lands<sup>27</sup>

In short, the phrase “comes forth and is born” indicates the principle by which true realization develops as the returning aspect of merit-transference as described in the last half of the chapter on realization. Moreover, this understanding holds that the phrase “manifests various bodies—fulfilled, accommodated, and transformed” refers to the chapters that follow. That is, (1) “fulfilled” refers to the fulfilled body and land described in the “Collection of Passages on the True Buddha and Land,” while (2) “accommodated and transformed” refers to the accommodated and transformed body and land illustrated in the first half of the “Collection of Passages on Transformed Buddha Bodies and Lands.” On the other hand, this interpretation holds that (3) “various bodies” refers to the working that cautions against the wrong and false that is discussed in the second half of that chapter.

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faith. . . . The two chapters on teaching and practice reveal the Buddha-dharma, while those chapters after faith and realization deal with the problem of the subject” (Yasuda 1985, p. 3).

<sup>26</sup> From the “Collection of Passages on Realization.” Shinran Shōnin Zenshū Kankōkai 1989, p. 195. See also CWS, vol. 1, p. 153.

<sup>27</sup> “Jinge kamon” in volume 1 of *Sōdengisho* 相伝義書 (Sōshō gakuken and Shinshū Kyōgaku Kenkyūjo 1978, pp. 59–60). The numbers have been inserted by the author.

In this way, the Buddha bodies and lands symbolize the working of the compassionate vows as a place through which true realization limitlessly encompasses the sentient beings living in the defiled world. In other words, true realization is not only the true Buddha and land but is also developed as the transformed Buddha body and land. Through this working of the transformed Buddha body and land, sentient beings who are unable to leave behind provisional and false ways of being in spite of having encountered the Buddhist path are encompassed in the actualization of the Tathāgata's compassionate vows of expedient means. In this sense, the significance of realization developing as both the true and the provisional Buddha bodies and lands is based on the fact that realization is the self-awareness of "being within the Tathāgata." Here, we can see the reason why Soga Ryōjin, in the passage quoted above, stated that "I believe that there is nothing such as simply refuting wickedness in Shin Buddhism," and "The eighteenth vow, the chapters on truth, transcends the nineteenth and twentieth vows—the chapter of expedient means—but these are also enveloped within the eighteenth vow. The so-called transcendental and also immanent. The sixth chapter is enveloped within the chapters on truth from the chapter on faith onward."<sup>28</sup> In other words, by looking at the *Kyōgyōshinshō* from this perspective, we can see that the problems addressed in the chapter on transformed Buddha bodies and lands are not simply the subject of Shinran's criticism, wicked ways to be thrown off, but are instead the object of the compassion of the working of the Tathāgata to envelop all practitioners.

### Conclusion

"Inheritance of tradition" does not simply refer to former ways of thinking or to the transmission of old traditions. Rather it refers to the doctrinal issue of clarifying the Buddhist way that has come down to oneself. Therefore, the method for "inheriting of tradition" is praise, which is the reason that

<sup>28</sup> Another point of view that offered an alternative to the interpretation of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* in terms of "expressing the true and refuting the false" is the one proposed by Kaneko Daiei 金子大栄 (1881–1976). He argues that the first four chapters are the chapters on merit-transference, while the last two chapters were the chapters on the Buddha lands. (However, Kaneko does describe the two parts of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* in a variety of ways in different works.) In contrast to Kaneko's treatment of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* in terms of the working of the Tathāgata (merit-transference and adornments), Soga interpreted the text from the standpoint of a disciple of the Buddha who had encountered the teachings. In other words, the viewpoint of "inheritance of tradition and self-attestation" understands the *Kyōgyōshinshō* as a treatise about being a disciple of the Buddha.

the “chapters on inheritance of tradition” are closed with verses of praise, *Shōshin nenbutsu ge*.

“Self-attestation” does not simply refer to personal efforts such as putting forth an original understanding. Rather, it must be understood as working to take on the tradition that one has encountered in an existential way. The chapters on self-attestation pose the problem of listening to and understanding the tradition purely within this defiled world. Therefore, the method of self-attestation is through questions and answers, which is the reason that the “Preface to the Collection of Passages on Faith” was placed at the beginning of the chapters on self-attestation. We can say that the last four chapters of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, as the “chapters on self-attestation,” seek after and record the work of self-attestation under the name of “Gutoku Shinran, disciple of Śākyamuni” with unsurpassable exactness, universality, and fundamentality.

I understand self-attestation to mean the work of discovering oneself in the midst of the teachings inherited through tradition (the calling of the Tathāgata), correctly placing one’s self within that calling, and recovering one’s true relationship with the Tathāgata. Therefore, self-attestation must be the work that lays the foundations of the mind of true entrusting, and also must be the work that encompasses and transcends provisional and false ways of being which alienate this mind.

Without the structural viewpoint of self-attestation to understand the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, we will be stuck in an exclusivist understanding that only poses either the true or the expedient. As a result, we may become enveloped in the sectarian ideology that understands the *Kyōgyōshinshō* to be concerned primarily with “expressing the true and correct and refuting the false and wicked.”<sup>29</sup>

Incidentally, it goes without saying that this interpretation of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* as “expressing the true and refuting the false,” which was prominent until Soga’s time, is based on the terms “Truth of the Pure Land” and “Expedient Means of the Pure Land” that are used in the titles of the chapters in the work. However, more than that, this interpretation reflects

<sup>29</sup> Of course, typological methods of describing the Buddhist way as consisting of the two distinct aspects of the true and the expedient can be seen in a few of Shinran’s works, such as *Jōdo sangyō ōjō monrui* 浄土三經往生文類 and *Nyorai nishu ekō mon* 如来二種回向文. Although these dualistic treatments of the problems Shinran addresses in the *Kyōgyōshinshō* are undoubtedly effective for the purposes of teaching, they are problematic if one becomes attached to this fixed understanding and loses sight of the dynamic interrelationship between truth and expedient means.

the social structure of the Edo period which demanded that sectarian studies clarify both the originality and predominance of the Shin school in respect to other Pure Land sects (such as the Seizan 西山 and Chinzei 鎮西 schools). As such, a reconsideration of the various structural understandings of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* is significant in that it allows us to re-examine the standpoint from which we read the text.

Furthermore, if we do not have the structural viewpoint of “self-attestation” to understand this text, we will not be able to encounter the workings of the profound truth that acts in the form of expedient means, and we also will be unable to discover the dynamic aspect of the soteriology laid out in the *Kyōgyōshinshō* which enables us to “take reverent embracing of the teaching as a cause, and doubt and slander of it as a condition,”<sup>30</sup> as Shinran admonishes us to do.

From the considerations presented above, I believe that it is worthwhile to adopt the idea of “self-attestation” proposed by Soga Ryōjin as an essential doctrinal concept for understanding the *Kyōgyōshinshō*.

The response of Shinran to Genkū’s legacy was an effort to make faith and doubt perfectly clear in a personal and practical way. It is just such work as this that I would like to label “self-attestation.” These efforts, undertaken under the name “Shinran, disciple of Śākyamuni” and with the doctrinal method of collecting passages, are a thorough questioning which ultimately led to “clear proof,” just as Shinran said they would in the special preface. As relayed in the *Tannishō*, Shinran alone “amidst the many disciples”<sup>31</sup> of Genkū discovered and inherited the profound problem of “the mind of true entrusting received from the Tathāgata.”<sup>32</sup> The work of self-attestation is a method for inheriting the tradition. It is the process of continuing a legacy.

(Translated by Gregory D. Pampling)

#### ABBREVIATIONS

- CWS    *The Collected Works of Shinran*. Trans. Dennis Hirota, Hisao Inagaki, Michio Tokunaga, and Ryushin Uryuzu. Kyoto: Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-ha. 1997.
- SRS    *Soga Ryōjin senshū* 曾我量深選集. 12 vols. Ed. Soga Ryōjin Senshū Kankōkai 曾我量深選集刊行会. Tokyo: Yayoi Shobō. 1970–72.

<sup>30</sup> Shinran Shōnin Zenshū Kankōkai 1989, p. 383. See also CWS, vol. 1, p. 291.

<sup>31</sup> From the afterword to the *Tannishō* (SSZ, vol. 2, p. 790).

<sup>32</sup> SSZ, vol. 2, p. 791.

SSZ *Shinshū shōgyō zensho* 真宗聖教全書. 5 vols. Ed. Shinshū Shōgyō Zensho Hensanjo 真宗聖教全書編纂所. Kyoto: Ōyagi Kōbundō. 1941.

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