

## BOOK REVIEWS

language" to translate Dōgen's ideas, themselves highly original and difficult, seems to obscure rather than to clarify Dōgen's vision. One wonders as to the lucidity of such translations as "being-time" for *uji* and "the totalistic passage" for *kyōraku*. A word on the translation of a passage from Dōgen's "Zenki" (p. 110): "Therefore, life lives through me and I am me because of life." This strikes a false note. I would suggest instead: "Therefore, life gives me life; it makes my existence a living presence."

In spite of these reservations, however, it must be clearly stated that Heine succeeds in illuminating the core of Dōgen's philosophy of Zen, despite the difficulty of Dōgen's thought and the opaqueness of Heidegger's language. This work demands serious attention from Eastern and Western students of comparative philosophy and religion. The reader interested in Dogen studies will also find in it many helpful suggestions and a wealth of information, including an English translation of the "Uji" chapter of *Shōbōgenzō*.

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***LE SENS DE LA CONVERSION DANS L'ENSEIGNEMENT DE SHINRAN.*** By Dennis Gira. Paris: Éditions Maisonneuve et Larose, 1985, pp. 271. With a list of Japanese texts cited, bibliography, and index. ISBN 2-7068-0883-7

The publication of Dennis Gira's scholarly study on Shinran's thought, *Le Sens de la Conversion dans L'Enseignement de Shinran* (The Meaning of Conversion in Shinran's Teaching), comes as somewhat of a surprise. Recent works on Buddhism have been mostly concerned with Abhidharma, early Mahayana, or Tibetan Vajrayana. There has been a flood of books on Zen, but recently their numbers have been decreasing. On the other hand, there has been a slow but steady growth of interest in Pure Land Buddhism, especially in the Shin school founded by Shinran (1173-1262). The academic world is slowly discovering that the negative attitude toward Pure Land Buddhism fostered by such figures as Edward Conze and Christmas Humphreys has resulted in an unwarranted bias against this mainstream of Mahayana thought. D. T. Suzuki has even called Japanese Pure Land Buddhism "Japan's major religious contribution to the West."

Gira's work is the first French publication touching upon Shinran since Fujishima Ryoan's *Le Bouddhisme Japonais: Doctrine et Histoire des douze grandes Sectes bouddhiques du Japon* (1889) which was published almost a

century ago, and Emile Steinilber-Oberlin and Matsuo Kuninosuke's *Les Sectes bouddhiques Japonaise: Histoire, Doctrines philosophiques, Textes, Les Sanctuaries* (1930).<sup>1</sup> It is also the first work in the series published in the Collège de France's Bibliothèque de l'Institut des Hautes Études Japonaises to deal with a purely religious theme.

In the first half of his book, realizing that the majority of his audience would be unfamiliar with Pure Land Buddhism, Gira sets out to delineate Shinran's thought in the doctrinal context of Pure Land Buddhism before developing his central theme of *eshin* 廻心, or 'conversion'. He then goes on to distinguish the stages in its development. *Eshin*, a Sino-Japanese term, lacks a Sanskrit equivalent, but there are other Buddhist Sanskrit terms which Gira draws on for his definition of *eshin*. From a critical study of Pure Land texts, he ascertains the following fourfold progression:

1. *Eshin kōdai* 廻心向大, 'turning the mind towards the Mahayana teaching' (Skt. *mahāyāna-tīpratīvāhanārtha*). This refers to the conversion from the Hinayana ideal of the Arhat to the Mahayana ideal of the Bodhisattva.

2. *Eshin sange* 廻心懺悔, 'the repentance of evil and the clear apprehension of one's inability to transcend samsara'. This is emphasized by the Chinese Pure Land master Shan-tao (613-681) and the Japanese Pure Land figure Gen-shin (942-1017), and plays an important role in the development of Japanese Pure Land Buddhism.

3. *Eshin*, 'the conversion from the mind of *jiriki* 自力 (self-power) to *tariki* 他力 (Other power)'. This marks the great change wrought by Honen (1133-1212) in the Japanese Pure Land Buddhism, which was brought to full expression by Shinran.

4. *Eshin as ekō hotsugan shin* 廻向発願心, 'the mind turning over merit', one of the Three Minds mentioned in the Meditation Sutra.

According to Gira, Shinran's understanding of *eshin* cannot be reduced to a single definition, but reflects the four meanings cited above. At times Shinran uses it in its traditional sense, but elsewhere he gives his own unique interpretation of *eshin* as being solely "Amida's desire for beings to be born in his Pure Land" (*yokushō* 欲生).

In the second half of the book, the author explains how Shinran classified the true teaching of the Pure Land (*Jōdo-shinshū*), which he characterizes as *ōchō* 横超, or 'a crosswise leap'. This is the standpoint from which he reinterpreted conventional Pure Land texts in order to bring out the ultimate

<sup>1</sup> The notable exceptions are Henri de Lubac, *Amida* (Paris, 1955); Jean Eracle, *Un Bouddhisme pour tous, l'Amidisme* (Genève, 1973), and his *La Doctrine bouddhique de la Terre Pure: Introduction à trois Sūtras bouddhiques* (Paris, 1973); but none of these can be regarded as academic works in the strictest sense of the term.

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significance of the Larger Sutra of Eternal Life. In doing so, Shinran revolutionized the Pure Land teaching he received from his master Hōnen. This chapter is a penetrating study of Shinran as an original and innovative thinker in Pure Land Buddhist thought.

In this same context, Gira goes on to explain how *eshin* and *ōchō*, often considered as belonging doctrinally to different spheres, are brought together in the principle of *jinen-hōni* 自然法爾, 'the universal working of the power of the Vow', and how this forms the hidden core of Shinran's teaching.

My only criticism of this work would concern the translation of certain Shin terms. The translation of *eshin* as 'conversion' is justifiable for the most part, although its Christian undertones may prove to be a source of confusion. The conversion from self-power to Other power, however, is much stronger than a mere *conversion de l'esprit*, or 'spiritual conversion'. As Jérôme Ducor has pointed out, *eshin* constitutes a *retournement*, a topological revolution wherein the mind is turned inside out.<sup>2</sup>

Another important Shin term, *shinjin* 信心, Gira translates as *esprit croyant*, 'faithful mind'; this does not carry quite the same nuance of the original term used by Shinran. *Shin* 心, 'mind' or 'heart', embraces both the intellectual and the emotional, and it is difficult to find a suitable word to express this unity of heart and mind in the modern European languages.

In conclusion, I believe that Dennis Gira's work marks a milestone in the study of Japanese Buddhism in France, particularly in the field of Shinran's thought.

SHITOKU A. PEEL

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<sup>2</sup> J. Ducor (tr.), *Tannishō: Notes Déplorant les Divergences* (Kyoto: 1983).