

TRANSLATION

The Record of Ippen: Verse in Chinese

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INTRODUCTION

In Ippen's day, written Chinese was the vehicle of learned and clerical discourse, and the pieces translated here undoubtedly possessed a loftier, more formal, and more public tone than corresponding pieces in Japanese. The longer ones are clearly intended to provide general guidance in day to day living for Ippen's disciples and, although apparently written out late in life, probably have their origins earlier, when he first began attracting followers. The four-line verses also carry more "weight" than his *waka*, and those that reflect Ippen's efforts to formulate his religious understanding fully and precisely remain crucial to any discussion of his teaching. To cast light on the doctrinal context of Ippen's thought and characteristic features of its expression, I will consider here the earliest of the writings in Chinese, the "Verse on the Nonduality of Ten and One":

Perfect enlightenment ten aeons past—of the realm of sentient beings;
Birth in one thought-instant—in Amida's Land.
Where ten and one are nondual, we realize no-birth;
Where Land and realm are equal, we sit in Amida's great assembly.

The circumstances surrounding the composition of this verse are fully recorded in the *Ippen Hijiri-e*.¹ At the outset of his life of wandering, when he renounced secular life for good, Ippen (1239–89) journeyed to Kyushu to meet with his former teacher Shōtatsu,² a scholar of the Seizan branch of Hōnen's Pure Land school. From there he made a pilgrimage to Zenkōji in Nagano prefecture,

¹ Scroll I, section 4. See "The Record of Ippen: Letters," *Eastern Buddhist*, Vol. XI, No. 1 (May 1978), p. 52.

² Shōtatsu 聖達. Studied under Shōkū 証空 (1177–1247), founder of the Seizan 西山 branch. Also taught Ken'i 顯意 (1238–1304), who developed the Fukakusa line of the Seizan teaching.

perhaps seeking direct guidance in the Buddhist way from the sacred image of Amida enshrined there, said to have been transmitted from India. At Zenkōji, he copied a painting of Shan-tao's parable of the two rivers and white path. He then entered a three-year period of solitary nembutsu practice in the mountains of Shikoku, during which this painting, occupying the eastern wall of his hermitage, was his central altar image. It was in the course of this retreat that he wrote the "Verse on the Nonduality of Ten and One."

The parable of the two rivers and the white path

Shan-tao's parable is recorded in his *Commentary on the Meditation Sutra* as part of his exposition of the sutra passage,

When a sentient being who aspires to be born in the [Pure] Land awakens the three minds, then he will be born there. What are these three? They are sincere mind, deep mind, and the mind of directing one's merits toward attainment of enlightenment, aspiring to be born. [T12, 344c]

This passage is critical for the Pure Land tradition, because the attitude of the practitioner described here, termed the "three minds," has been considered an analysis of the faith necessary to nembutsu practice. Shan-tao expounds the three minds in detail and then sets forth his parable as an aid in "guarding one's faith against attacks" from the outside and from the viewpoints of differing beliefs. To summarize:

A solitary traveler is journeying westward through a plain when he finds himself pursued by brigands and wild beasts. He rushes toward the west, when suddenly he comes upon a river channel coursed by two currents. On his right, flowing to the north, is a torrent of raging water; on his left, flowing to the south, is a river of flame. Both extend endlessly at immeasurable depth, one hundred steps across. Dividing the two rivers and joining the eastern and western banks is a white path four or five inches wide, incessantly swept by the waves and scorched by the flames.

Behind the traveler are brigands and beasts, and to the north and south also there are wild animals and poisonous insects. Seeing death everywhere—whether he turns back, remains on the bank, or plunges ahead—he decides to venture on the path, in the hope that since it is there, there will be a way to cross. At that moment, he hears a voice calling to him from the opposite bank, and another from the eastern side exhorting him to advance fearlessly. He therefore resolutely sets out over the path, and though the brigands attempt to lure him back, he proceeds until he reaches the western shore, where he is greeted by the friend who encouraged him (T37, 272c–273b).

It may seem unusual to place in the altar an illustration of this parable, with its raging rivers (blind passions) and wild beasts (the senses, consciousness, etc.). The person calling from the western bank, however, represents Amida, while the exhortations from the eastern side are Śākyamuni's. Thus, in an illustration, the two honored-ones of Pure Land Buddhism would both be conspicuously depicted. Moreover, the parable seems appropriate to Ippen at this juncture in his life, when he sought to experience the truth of Buddhism rather than merely study its doctrine, for it powerfully and graphically portrays the crisis of the man in quest, together with the awakening of faith and the resolute attainment of the nembutsu practitioner. In fact, the image of the solitary traveler on the vast plain, facing death whatever he does and so abandoning all and entrusting himself to the white path, is strongly suggestive of Ippen's life of renunciative wandering. Along the tops of the boxes that held all the possessions allowed to each member of his following, three stripes—blue, white, and red—were applied as a symbolic representation of the path and two rivers, attesting to the continued importance of the parable as an expression of his way of life.³

The *Hijiri-e* states that Ippen placed the "Verse on the Nonduality of Ten and One" on the wall adjacent the illustration of Shan-tao's parable. Moreover, it refers to the verse as "the Dharma as he understood it in his own heart," indicating that the content of the verse is at once fundamental to Ippen's thought and a personal, original understanding. Although the images of the story do not appear directly in it, when viewed as a meditation on the parable, this verse reveals a characteristic vision and mode of expression found throughout Ippen's recorded words.

In contrast to the dramatic narrative of the original parable, Ippen's verse, with its counterbalancing elements, seems to contradict all direction and movement. Indeed, it might be seen to derive more from the illustration of the parable than from Shan-tao's text. The white path and two rivers had been a favorite theme of Pure Land pictorial art, and a number of examples survive from the Kamakura period.⁴ A typical depiction shows a single channel cutting horizontally across the middle of the painting, with the two rivers flowing out from the center to the left and right. In the upper portion of the painting, on the western bank, Amida is depicted against images of the Pure Land. In the foreground, representing the eastern bank, is the plain with its beasts and brigands, and at

³ "Boxes of Amida's twelve kinds of radiance" *jū-ni kō-bako* (see p. 114, n. 5). In practice halls, these boxes were placed together in a line to form low barriers, often to divide male and female members of the following. They are frequently depicted in the horizontal handscrolls treating Ippen, with the stripes on the covers extending the length of the barriers.

⁴ Examples may be seen in Jōji Okazaki, *Pure Land Buddhist Painting* (Tokyo, 1977), pp. 148–49.

the bottom are images of secular life. The solitary traveler is poised at the river's edge or a few paces along the white path, a narrow line that stretches vertically from bank to bank, dividing the two currents. The white path stands literally at the center of the painting, just as it is the center of the parable. But whereas Shan-tao explains the white path as representing the traveler's "awakening of the pure aspiration to be born" in the Pure Land, the illustration, showing a geometric design probably influenced by mandalas of the Pure Land, lends itself to Ippen's distinctive understanding. For Ippen, the white path that spans this world and the Pure Land is the site where the traditional dichotomies of the Pure Land teaching—sentient being and Buddha, this world and the Pure Land, self-power and Other Power—are overcome and drop away.

"Expounding in parables"

Ippen's view of the parable appears to be influenced by Seizan methods of interpreting Pure Land mandalas illustrating the *Meditation Sutra*. This sutra provides a wealth of materials for elaborate depictions of the palaces, ponds, trees, and other features of the Pure Land as well as scenes from the lives of Pure Land aspirants in this world. It sets forth a series of thirteen meditative practices (*jōzen* 定善)—contemplative exercises focusing on various features of the Pure Land, Amida, and his accompanying bodhisattvas—and nine grades of people who engage in non-meditative practices (*sanzen* 散善)—from the highest, who perform both religious and moral good deeds, down to the lowest, who spend a lifetime in evil, but utter the nembutsu at the very brink of death.

In contrast to the Chinzei branch of the Pure Land school, which recognizes the possibility of attaining birth in Amida's Pure Land through the various practices described in the sutra, the Seizan branch teaches that birth is possible through the nembutsu alone—and that this, in fact, is the true purport of the sutra. In the Seizan view, the range of contemplative exercises and the detailed treatment of nine levels of Pure Land aspirants were taught in order to show that all beings, whatever their capacity, are included in the Primal Vow. The two types of practices are considered to embrace all practices, and the words "meditative and non-meditative" are used together as a single term indicating all people—good and evil—classified by their capacity for good. Moreover, the fact that all levels of people—all doers of "good" of any degree—can attain birth means that birth cannot depend on any of the various individual practices. Since all people attain birth regardless of their particular kind of "practice," birth must be viewed as attained solely by virtue of Amida's Vow. Scriptural basis for this understanding is provided by the sutra itself. Before embarking on the exposition of the various practices, Śakyamuni states, in response to Vaidehi's request to be

shown how to perceive Amida's Pure Land, that he will teach her by "expounding fully in many parables" (*kōsetsu shūhi* 広説衆譬, T12, 341c). In Seizan thought, the practices of the *Meditation Sutra* all have metaphoric significance, ultimately revealing the nature of Other Power.

This view of the sutra as "a detailed exposition in parables," applied broadly, extends to the other sutras as well, and all of Śākyamuni's teachings are understood to teach implicitly the way of birth in the Pure Land through Other Power. Turned inward with fine attention to detail, this method of interpretation discovers symbolic meaning in each object mentioned in the sutra or depicted in the Pure Land mandalas. While the Chinzei branch views the mandalas as revealing the splendor of the Pure Land, Seizan doctrine sees them as depictions of the inner landscape of the practitioner's faith. Thus a two-story gate reveals the interdependent relationship between Amida's compassion (upper story) and sentient beings (lower story): without the sentient being, Amida's compassion has no occasion to manifest itself; without Amida's compassion, the sentient being leads a futile, meaningless existence. Concerning a person with hands in a gesture of homage, the right hand represents the sentient being; the left hand, Amida's working: together, with palms joined, they reveal the oneness of Buddha and sentient beings in the nembutsu. Shōkū, the founder of the Seizan branch, applied this type of interpretation extensively and minutely to the Taima mandala, which illustrates the *Meditation Sutra*.

Further, under the influence of the Shingon concept of the preaching of the dharmakāya (*hosshin seppō* 法身說法)—the idea that the formless dharmakāya expounds the Dharma through all phenomena—a leap was made from the triangular-shaped mountains of the mandala that revealed the trinity of Amida and his accompanying bodhisattvas to the mountains of this world, and to a recognition of the Dharma expressed by all things of the world (*jisō no hōmon* 事相の法門) in contrast to that of the verbal teaching (*kyōsō no hōmon* 教相の法門). An excellent example of such a vision in Ippen is his "Personal Interpretation of the Tools of the Way" (see p. 114).

This view of the teachings as basically metaphorical and symbolic pervades Ippen's thought. It is given extreme though characteristic expression in his burning of the books and writings in his possession at the end of his life with the statement that the ultimate purport of all the sutras is simply the Name. For Ippen, at the heart of the way is the abandonment of all attachment to self. For those whose attachments are especially strong, this means the abandonment of both body and mind. The abandonment of the body—renunciation not only of secular life but even of a settled dwelling and a regular source of food—is considered necessary to eliminate attachment to illusory existence and to live in the recognition that "this body is the form of drifting along in the flow of

impermanence; hence from instant to instant it arises and perishes" (26).⁵ But essentially the problem is the mind, and ultimately one must overcome all calculative thinking based on self-centered discrimination and clinging to one's own judgments. Thus, the final problem for the nembutsu practitioner is the relinquishment of attachment to his own, inevitably distorted and delusional, concepts of good and evil, practice, faith, and even aspiration for enlightenment.

The practitioner must give up all effort to achieve a particular understanding of the teaching, mental attitude, or religious realization. There is, therefore, a constant pressure in Ippen's thought to break through the traditional concepts of the teaching, to which we stubbornly cling in our efforts to achieve our own salvation. Thus Ippen's statements that the distinction of self-power and Other Power is but the first stage of the way (18), or that the three minds are abolished the moment they are established (3), or that the Pure Land teaching was established solely to awaken aspiration for birth (8). This attitude also allowed Ippen to speak with an eye to the listener, at times expounding the traditional teaching, and at others undermining the usual understandings. The "Verse on the Nonduality of Ten and One" also reveals this pressure to "abandon the mind" functioning at the core of Ippen's teaching. The first half of the verse presents elements of the Pure Land teaching—particularly Seizan doctrine—which, taken together, outline the awakening of aspiration and attainment of birth in the Pure Land. In the second half, these concepts undergo radical redefinition as Ippen breaks down the dichotomous thinking that may seize upon and distort them.

Awakening aspiration and attaining birth

In the Seizan school, Shan-tao's parable is seen as tracing the awakening of the three minds, which are summed up in the third, aspiration for birth.⁶ This mind is literally "the mind of directing one's merits toward attainment of enlightenment, aspiring for birth" (*ekō hotsugan shin* 廻向発願心). The "directing" or "turning over of merit" (*ekō*) is understood as a conversion or turning about at heart (*eshin* 廻心) in which one abandons self-power practices and takes refuge in Other Power. At the core of this conversion is the recognition (*ryōge* 領解)

⁵ All quotations of Ippen are from my translation of the *Ippen Shōnin Goroku: Letters* (*EB* Vol. XI, No. 1, May 1978, pp. 50–65), *Sayings 1–40* (*EB* Vol. XI, No. 2, October 1978, pp. 113–31), *Sayings 41–79* (*EB* Vol. XII, No. 1, May 1979, pp. 130–47), *Sayings 80–111* (*EB* Vol. XIII, No. 1, Spring 1980, pp. 104–15), "Hymn of the Special Vow" (*EB* Vol. XIV, No. 1, Spring 1981, pp. 94–96).

⁶ For a full discussion of the Seizan view of the parable, see Sugi Shiro, "Niga-hi no sange kan," first published in 1928; available in *Shimpen shinshū zensho, Kyōgi-hen* volume 20 (Kyoto, 1977), pp. 703–90. For Seizan doctrine generally, see Sugi's *Seichin kyōgi gairon*, first published in 1924; republished Kyoto, 1975.

that the practice to bring about our birth has in fact already been fulfilled with Amida's attainment of Buddhahood and that our own practice is futile and unnecessary; that is, as expressed in the first line of Ippen's verse, Amida's enlightenment is inextricably involved with this world. Since Amida's Vow was to attain Buddhahood only on the condition that all beings attain birth in his land through saying his Name, the birth of each being was fulfilled in the establishment of the Name when Amida realized enlightenment through arduous practice ten kalpas ago. Thus, Seizan doctrine teaches the nonduality of Amida's enlightenment aeons ago and the settlement of our birth in Amida's Pure Land with but a single utterance of the Name in the present. The apprehension or understanding of this forms the content of true aspiration for birth (the three minds).

When a person abandons self-power and takes refuge in Amida with this understanding, then the Buddha, who is the embodiment of perfect practice performed out of the desire to save all beings, enters and becomes one with the person's aspiration (three minds), and this oneness manifests itself as the *nembutsu*. At that moment the person, being possessed of both the aspiration (*gan shin* 願心) and the necessary practice—traditional elements of the bodhisattva path—attains his birth in the Pure Land. This is expressed in Ippen's second line: "Birth in one thought-instant—in Amida's Land." This teaching is based on the passage of the *Meditation Sutra* setting forth the three minds: "When a sentient being who aspires to be born in that land awakens the three minds, he is immediately born there." Traditionally, the words translated "immediately born" (*sokuben ōjō* 即便往生) had been interpreted to mean that when one realized the three minds, then attainment of birth at the end of life was decided. While Seizan doctrine accepts this interpretation also, at the same time it asserts that "immediate birth" is in itself an attainment of birth, for it is the point in which sentient being and Buddha become one.

A crucial aspect of birth in the Pure Land is Amida's coming (*raigō* 來迎) to receive the aspirant, which was traditionally understood to occur at the very end of life (*rinjū* 臨終). Seizan doctrine, however, interprets *raigō* more broadly as the embodiment of Amida's fulfilled practice for the attainment of birth of all beings. In the *Meditation Sutra*, Śākyamuni Buddha leads Queen Vaidehi through contemplative exercises focusing on various aspects of the Pure Land. Just as he is about to teach her how to free herself of all pain and affliction, Amida appears to her as a dazzling figure in the sky. Vaidehi thereupon requests Śākyamuni to teach how all beings may attain the vision of Amida. In Seizan doctrine, Amida's appearance in the sky represents his coming as the functioning of his fulfilled practice for our birth, and the ensuing three meditations—the seventh, eighth, and ninth on Amida's lotus throne, his figure, and his light—reveal the significance of his coming. The eighth meditation states:

“The Buddha-Tathāgata (Amida) is the body of the dharma-realm, entering into the minds of all sentient beings” (T12, 343a), and the ninth meditation states: “Each ray of [Amida’s] light shines everywhere upon the worlds of the ten quarters, grasping and never abandoning sentient beings of the nembutsu” (T12, 343b). To summarize this process, Seizan teachings borrow the Shingon term *nyūga ga’nyū* 入我我入, which in its Shingon significance may be translated “entering self into Self, and Self entering self.” In terms of the Seizan teaching, Amida enters the person who aspires for birth (entering into the minds of all sentient beings) and the person enters Amida (is grasped, never to be abandoned). The central meaning is the union of Buddha and sentient being.⁷

To clarify this oneness, Ippen borrows traditional terminology: “The three modes of action of each (sentient being and Buddha) are never apart from the other” (Hymn on the Special Vow). Shan-tao, in his commentary on the sutra passage “grasping, never to abandon,” explains the significance of Amida’s light in terms of three relationships between Amida and sentient beings, the first being “close” or “intimate” (*shin’en* 親縁): if a person always utters the Name, worships Amida, and thinks on him, the Buddha hears, sees, and recognizes the person; thus there is no separation between practitioner and Buddha in bodily, verbal, and mental acts (*Jōzengi*, T37, 268a). Seizan doctrine interprets this to mean that, although the nembutsu is the manifestation of the Buddha’s practice and not in any way a practice which we perform out of our own effort, once we have taken refuge in the Buddha, the nembutsu naturally expresses itself in all our acts, including our daily deeds as well as our worship; this is termed “the nembutsu pervading our three modes of action” (*tsūsangō no nembutsu* 通三業念佛). This intercorresponding oneness of the three modes of action of sentient being and Amida—strongly reminiscent of the three mysteries of Shingon—is emphasized in both Seizan thought and in Ippen.

In the third line of Ippen’s verse, “Where ten and one are nondual, we realize no-birth,” “ten and one” may be interpreted in terms of the concepts already presented. “Ten” refers to Amida Buddha and to his enlightenment ten kalpas ago; “one” refers to the person who says the Name once in the present moment. Their nonduality indicates the person’s attainment of birth through the nembutsu. To borrow a Seizan term, as indeed Ippen does, the nonduality of ten and one expresses the oneness of sentient being and Buddha (*ki-hō ittai* 機法一体). This term is rooted in Shan-tao’s analysis of the Name as *namu* (Skt. *namas*, to pay homage), indicating the person taking refuge in Amida, and *amida-butsu*, which embodies the Buddha’s perfect practice. Thus *Namu-amida-butsu*, by which we are made to know Amida’s fulfillment of our birth, itself manifests the oneness of being and Buddha.

⁷ Yasui Kōdo, *Hōnen shōnin monka no kyōgaku* (Kyoto, 1968), p. 237.

One thought-instant

After alluding to major concepts in the Seizan teaching that he had studied in his youth, Ippen proceeds in the second half of his verse to establish a new perspective on them. To begin, where the nonduality of ten and one signifies no-birth, then the one thought-instant (*ichinen* 一念) of line two, in which this nonduality emerges, is shown to be more than simply the utterance of the Name in the present moment in contrast to the infinite past. Ippen states elsewhere:

After the one thought-instant in which, realizing the transience of birth-and-death in our own flesh, we once truly and directly entrust ourselves through uttering *Namu-amida-butsu*, the self is no longer the self. Then, as our heart is Amida Buddha's heart, our bodily actions Amida Buddha's actions, and our words Amida Buddha's words, the life we are living is Amida Buddha's life. [Letter 1]

As is clear from this passage, the one thought-instant involves saying the Name ("uttering *Namu-amida-butsu*"); the pure, total religious awakening ("realizing . . . , we once truly and directly entrust ourselves"); and the instant of the emergence within time of that which is timeless ("then . . . the life we are living is Amida Buddha's life"). In the "nonduality of ten and one" that occurs in this thought-instant, Ippen asserts the nondifferentiation or simultaneity of the time of Amida's fulfillment of his Vow (past) and the thought-instant of the immediate present. This is expressed in the first line of the verse: "Perfect enlightenment ten aeons past—of the realm of sentient beings." In addition, in the second line, "Birth in one thought-instant—in Amida's Land," Ippen asserts the simultaneity of the one thought-instant (present) and birth in the Pure Land (future). As he states elsewhere, "The three times [of past, present, and future] are, as such, this one thought-instant" (52).⁸

In relation to the second line, ten and one suggest terms of a debate involving vital issues in nembutsu recitation—the number of times the Name should be said and the proper occasion for utterance. "One" refers to a single utterance (*ichinen*), while "ten" signifies repeated utterances, continuing throughout life, and in particular the utterance at the very point of death. Hōnen teaches that "the Primal Vow was made so that one utterance would result in one attainment of birth; hence ten utterances is virtue for ten attainments."⁹ In other words, since a person does not utter the Name as a kind of self-generated practice, the number of utterances is irrelevant; virtue is not accrued through repeated utterances, but is already embodied infinitely in the Name created by Amida through his

⁸ Cf. Nishitani Keiji, "The Problem of Time in Shinran," *EB* Vol. XI, No. 1 (May 1978), pp. 13–26.

⁹ Ishii Kyōdō, ed., *Hōnen shōnin zenshū* (Kyoto, 1955), p. 463.

own pure practice as Bodhisattva Dharmākara. Thus, when asked if all who utter the Name attain birth, Hōnen answered, "Nembutsu of Other Power brings about birth; with nembutsu of self-power birth is altogether impossible."¹⁰ The nembutsu as merely a self-power practice has no more significance than any other traditional practice; it is only when one entrusts completely to Amida that the Name can embody Other Power. Thus Hōnen states: "As faith, you should believe that birth is attained with but one utterance, and as practice, endeavor in the nembutsu throughout your life."¹¹

Hōnen, however, failed to convey to all his disciples a clear resolution of the cleavage here between faith and practice, or of the dualism of Other Power and self-power that it seems to imply. The idea that a single utterance is sufficient is expressed in several passages of the *Larger Sutra*, but the Eighteenth Vow itself mentions "saying my Name even ten times (*jū-nen*)." Further, in its treatment of the lowest of the nine grades of people, the *Meditation Sutra* describes a man whose whole life is spent in evil. At the point of death, however, he meets a teacher who instructs him to say the Name, and uttering it ten times at the very end, he brings about the eradication of all his evil through the power of the Name and so attains birth in the Pure Land. The ten utterances of the Name at death based on this passage came to occupy a major place in nembutsu practice, and it was widely believed that a calm mind and the final ten utterances were mandatory for being received by Amida at the moment of death. Moreover, utterance in ordinary times (*heizei* 平生) came to be viewed as preparation for the end. Hōnen's advocacy of lifelong nembutsu recitation, although not necessarily related directly to this notion of the ten utterances at death, does suggest the continuing influence of this concern.

Even during Hōnen's lifetime debate arose over the true nature of nembutsu recitation, with extreme positions labeled once-calling (*ichinen-gi*) and many-calling (*tanen-gi*). The position of once-calling emphasized faith in the Vow as central and was critical of conscious endeavor in constant nembutsu recitation as a sign of lingering doubt about the settlement of birth through one utterance. Many-calling emphasized practice and criticized adherents of once-calling of indolence, negligence, and an arrogant presumption on the power of the Vow. Although Hōnen rejected both positions as misrepresentations of the true teaching, the debate persisted.

Concerning these issues, Ippen states flatly: "Neither one utterance nor ten utterances has anything to do with the Primal Vow" (51). That is, the core of the nembutsu is Other Power, not any act of man. This is essentially Hōnen's stance. Ippen, however, goes beyond this to articulate a distinctive position:

¹⁰ *Hōnen shōnin zenshū*, p. 682.

¹¹ In "Ichigon hōdan," trans. by Dennis Hirota, *EB* Vol. IX, No. 2 (October 1976), p. 98. Also see *Saihō shinan shō*, *Hōnen shōnin zenshū*, p. 636.

Beyond the single thought-instant of nembutsu at the start
 There are no final ten utterances at death;
 Rather, start is made in adding thought-instant on thought-instant,
 And the thought-instant reaching its limit is the end.

[Hymn of the Special Vow]

This is not merely a synthesis of the positions of once-calling and many-calling based on the concept that each moment should be viewed as potentially the last, a position not uncommon among Hōnen's disciples. Rather, it is a thoroughgoing assertion of the nonduality of the first utterance of the Name and the last—that is, of the present (*heizei*) and the point of death (*rinjū*)—based on the disappearance of dichotomous thinking in the one thought-instant:

Once our delusional thinking has completely ceased,
 There is neither start nor finish, beginning nor end;
 In the oneness of Buddha and sentient being
 Lies the true saying of Namu-amida-butsu.

[Hymn of the Special Vow]

This thought-instant of taking refuge, of death ("saying the nembutsu in the disappearance of self is none other than to die" [68]), and of birth in the Pure Land repeats itself with each breath of life. This is the meaning of "no-birth."

No-birth

While "no-birth" indicates that which transcends birth-and-death, it is also a paradoxical contradiction of "birth in Amida's Land" in line two, for it is inseparable from the immediate present. As Ippen states elsewhere:

Birth is the first thought-instant [of taking refuge]. The term "first thought-instant," however, is still used with regard to the practitioner; from the very beginning, Namu-amida-butsu itself is birth. This birth is no-birth. The point of encountering this Dharma [of Namu-amida-butsu] is provisionally called one thought-instant. When a person has turned and entered into the Name, which cuts off all past, present, and future, birth is without beginning and without end. [52]

Ippen's thought here departs from Seizan doctrine, which not only emphasizes the pastness of Amida's attainment but also teaches two kinds of birth—"immediate birth" in the present and actual entry into the Pure Land at death. Thus, two aspects of Amida's coming are also taught, attendant upon each of these aspects of birth. Moreover, the practices performed in the interval between these two kinds of birth are considered to be of special significance. At the time of "immediate birth," the practitioner's eventual attainment of the Pure Land is

settled; this cannot be brought about by any self-power practice, but only through the power of Amida's Vow. Nevertheless, the nine levels of practitioners taught in the *Meditation Sutra* are taken to indicate nine levels or ranks in the Pure Land, and in Seizan doctrine, the nature of one's practice determines which level one is born into. This notion provides a stance for confronting the controversy over once-calling and many-calling: the first utterance is sufficient to bring about birth, but many-calling, as well as the performance of other practices and good deeds, may be seen as the posture of one truly destined for the Pure Land or its higher ranks. Ippen, however, rejects all anticipation of any kind, for it arises only from calculative, ego-attached thinking: "We must do away with the multiplicity of expectations in our hearts" (53).

Further, where birth is no-birth, "Land and realm are equal." There is no crossing over from this world to the other, but rather a disappearance of illusory discrimination between them. Here the question of the significance of aspiration for the Pure Land arises, or, in terms of Shan-tao's parable, the significance of the white path leading from this world to the other shore. For Shan-tao, "The white path four or five inches wide that spans the rivers is an image for the awakening of pure aspiration for birth in the midst of greed and anger, of all our blind passions." Thus the narrowness of the path expresses the precariousness of our aspiration: "Since evil passions are strong, they are likened to fire and flood; since the good heart is weak, it is like the white path." As the significance of aspiration and trust in Amida's Vow came to be clarified in the Japanese Pure Land tradition, however, the white path came to be seen not as vulnerable and beleaguered—that is, not as merely the attitude of the practitioner—but as symbolic of the power of the Vow itself, the Buddha's working in response to our aspiration. This is the Seizan view.

For Ippen, the question of aspiration and faith remained a latent problem at the time of the "Verse on the Nonduality of Ten and One," but it was brought to the surface shortly after he left his solitary practice in Shikoku. Ippen began spreading the nembutsu by distributing slips of paper carrying the characters of "Namu-amida-butsu," when he encountered a monk who refused to accept one:

Ippen said, "Please accept this card, raising faith that is one moment of mindedness (*ichinen*) and uttering namu-amida-butsu." The monk refused, saying, "At present faith that is one-mindedness (*ichinen*) does not arise in me."¹²

In offering the slip, Ippen uses the term *ichinen* with the sense of "even once"—even a single moment of faith and utterance. For the monk, however, *ichinen* implies "singlemindedness" or "wholeheartedness"—that is, a total entrusting.

¹² *Hijiri-e* III, 1. See "The Record of Ippen: Letters," *EB* Vol. XI, No. 1, pp. 54–55.

Ippen was awakened to the fact that he had overlooked the relationship between faith and utterance, and that if such faith was necessary, then his propagation was meaningless. Oppressed by this question, he entered a retreat at the Kumano shrine and received a revelation from the deity, a manifestation of Amida, which instructed him to distribute his slips without regard to whether a person had faith or not. Ippen explains the meaning of this revelation:

My teaching is the oral transmission given in dream by the Manifestation of the Kumano Shrine. I had before that studied the Pure Land teaching for as long as twelve years, but it was all an exercise of self-will, of which I was unable to free myself. Nevertheless, while I was in retreat at Kumano, I received a revelation that declared: "Make no judgments about the goodness or evil of your heart and mind. Since this mind is illusory, both when it is good and when it is evil, it cannot be essential for attaining emancipation. Namu-amida-butsu itself is born." At that time I abandoned my own intentions and aspirations of self-power once and for all. [85]

Ippen's teaching is traditionally seen as stemming from two sources: the Buddhism transmitted from India through China to Japan, and the direct revelation at Kumano. Through the latter, by which the traditional concern for the practitioner's attitude was completely subsumed in the utterance of the Name, Ippen was able to consummate his thoroughgoing rejection of self-power as discriminative thinking. On the basis of the ultimate denial of aspiration for the Pure Land and faith in Amida, as well as of all anticipation of birth—conspicuous elements of the Seizan teaching—he expounds a unique interpretation of Shan-tao's parable: "The white path between is Namu-amida-butsu, and the two rivers of fire and water are our hearts and minds" (22).

Amida's great assembly

Amida's great assembly traditionally signifies the beings in the Pure Land who gather to hear Amida preach the Dharma. Thus to enter this assembly means to be born in the Pure Land. For both Shinran and Ippen, however, joining Amida's great assembly expresses the status of the nembutsu practitioner who is one with Other Power where, as Shinran puts it, "Other Power is being free of any form of calculation."¹³

In Shinran and Ippen, the nembutsu is completely freed from being a means to birth on the part of the practitioner. In Shinran, this is expressed in his emphasis

¹³ See Letter 10, Yoshifumi Ueda, ed., *Letters of Shinran: Mattōshō* (Kyoto, 1978), p. 39.

on the decisive settlement of birth (i.e., enlightenment) with the realization of true entrusting to Amida's Vow; in Ippen, in his emphasis on birth as embodied in the Name itself, with the attitude of the practitioner being irrelevant. Together, their teachings reveal poles of a fundamental tension within Pure Land Buddhism, but their vision of the central problem of the practitioner is the same: to overcome attachments to one's own judgments and designs. In both cases, resolution occurs when sentient being and Buddha become one. For Shinran, this is the oneness in true entrusting (*shinjin* 信心), which is Amida's mind given to the practitioner; for Ippen, it is oneness in the Name.

Although Ippen ultimately rejects the concept of faith and insists that the practitioner "abandon the mind," for Shinran it is this very abandonment that is the crux of true entrusting. That is, for Shinran also true entrusting is not a matter of the practitioner achieving constancy or sincerity; as Ippen says, "If you think you can attain birth by establishing in yourself a faith that is resolute, you will only return again to the working of your own heart and mind" (25). The more basic problem for Shinran, however, is that it is also impossible for the practitioner to free himself of his own self-attachment, and all effort to do so in order to make himself worthy of salvation involves him in self-contradiction.

For Shinran, the practitioner's calculation (*hakarai*) falls away only as he awakens to the Buddha's compassion working to save him as he is. This awakening is itself brought about by Amida's activity, symbolized by his Name. Thus Shinran views the Name as Amida's working in a person to bring him to the realization of true entrusting; it is Amida's call to the traveler in Shan-tao's parable, not the call of man: "*Namu* means 'to take refuge,' which is to respond to the command and follow the call of the two honored-ones."¹⁴ In this way, the practitioner experiences the Buddha's wisdom-compassion working naturally and unfailingly to save him, and in the light of that wisdom-compassion he sees himself as he truly is, his every act defiled by self-centered passions, so that his attachments to his own efforts and goodness fall away. That is, the sincere mind of Amida becomes the practitioner's, and with it the person begins a lifelong process of plumbing into his own nature, both as a being in this world and as one possessed of the Buddha's mind.

This dual structure of entrusting is set forth in Shan-tao's explanation of "deep[ly entrusting] mind" (*jinshin* 深心), the second of the three minds in the *Meditation Sutra*. Deep mind is at once a profound sense of Amida's compassion and a deep realization of one's own evil. Shinran tends to view the white path and two rivers as a parable expressing this deeply entrusting mind awakened through the working of the Vow. Although he teaches a concept of two kinds of birth similar to that of Seizan doctrine, Shinran stresses that the practitioner abides

¹⁴ Yoshifumi Ueda, ed., *Notes on the Inscriptions on Sacred Scrolls: Songō shinzō meimon* (Kyoto, 1981), p. 51.

in Amida's great assembly, which means that, while he is filled with blind passions, the working of the Dharma manifests itself as his own living, carrying him naturally and necessarily toward fulfillment of enlightenment and return to this world to join in Amida's compassionate activity.¹⁵ Moreover, it expresses itself as the spontaneous utterance of the Name.

For Ippen, abandonment of calculative thinking is one with practice, the Name uttered with each breath. In abandonment, however, both the practitioner and the Buddha disappear, and there is only the Name. The Kumano revelation has two aspects, both centering on the eradication of dualistic thinking: the rejection of a concept of faith in which the dichotomy of the subject taking refuge and the object taken refuge in is maintained, and the Name as "One/all" (*ippen* 一圓). This latter term occurs in a verse (see p. 118) that was part of the deity's message:

The six-character Name is the Dharma that is One/all;
The ten realms—lands and beings—are the body of One/all.

"One" refers to the Name as "the original nature of mind" (72), the one mind or non-thinking that is prior to subject-object discrimination. Further, "the functioning of this non-thinking relates truly to ('sees' nondiscriminatively) the dharma-realm" (Letter 9); hence the Name is also "all," for here "the myriad things of the universe are all virtues that exist within the body of the Name" (Letter 4). Expressed in religious terms, "From the perspective of the Name . . . all beings, regardless of where they may be in the ten realms, including even those of this saḥā world, are among the true beings of the Land of Bliss" (94).

In accord with this revelation, Ippen refines the Seizan concept of the oneness of being and Dharma (*ki-hō ittai*), eliminating all lingering dualism:

Apart from the Name there is no sentient being taking refuge (*namu*), no Dharma taken refuge in (*amida*), and no person of enlightenment (*butsu*). It is the point where [the dichotomies of] "self-power" and "Other Power," "being" and "Dharma" are done away with that is Namu-amida-butsu. [49]

It is the Name, not the being, that hears the Name (70), the Name that utters the Name (16), the Name that is born (18). To express this, Ippen created the term, the "solitary and single Name" (*doku-itsu myōgō* 独一名号).

That the Name is solitary and single does not imply a negation of conscious-

¹⁵ Shinran's interpretation of "immediate birth" (*sokutoku ōjō*) is based, like his teaching generally, on the *Larger Sutra of Immeasurable Life* rather than the *Meditation Sutra*. For a thorough discussion of Shinran's concept of birth, see Ueda Yoshifumi, "Shinran no ōjō no shisō," *Shinran kyōgaku* No. 13 (November 1968), pp. 97–117 and No. 14 (June 1969), pp. 105–128.

ness; rather, it is a vehicle of self-knowledge and self-revelation, much as entrusting is for Shinran, though for Ippen it is knowledge of the true self. "In the mirror of the Name we can see our original face" (79), and we are able to "return to our original nature and original home" (14). Here, free of subject-object duality, the world of the immediate present emerges: "As water drinks water and fire burns fire, a pine tree is a pine tree, a bamboo is a bamboo: in being itself, each in its own way, there is no birth-and-death" (14). Ippen's rejection of the discrimination of time and temporal processes proscribes a vision like Shinran's of the natural working of the Dharma and of the spontaneous working out of our karma in this world, and it allows no room for reflection on the self filled with blind passions, which Ippen declares must be cast away. In each single thought-instant, however, "all dharmas are established as Namu-amida-butsum" (72), being recovered from an overlay of conceptual thought. Ippen deepens the Seizan vision of the things of this world as expressions of the Pure Land way, transcending its conceptualization, so that

Among all living things—mountains and rivers, grasses and trees, even the sounds of blowing winds and rising waves—there is nothing whatever that is not the nembutsu. It is not men alone who share in the all-transcending Vow. [Letter 5]

This, for Ippen, is Amida's great assembly. It is life on the white path, where this world and the Pure Land are equal.

The Record of Ippen: Verse in Chinese

VERSE OF ASPIRATION¹

We disciples [of the Buddha]
Vow that from this point of our existence
Until all the future is exhausted
We will not cling to body or life
But turn and take refuge in the Primal Vow,
And making only the cessation of life the finish,
We will wholeheartedly say the Name.
We will not teach good-and-evil;
We will not perform good-and-evil.
To such a practitioner,
Because he is in accord with the Primal Vow,
May Amida Buddha,
Avalokiteśvara, Mahāsthāmaprāpta,
The twenty-five bodhisattvas,
The unnumbered host of sages,
And all the Buddhas—witnesses to Amida's Vow—
Countless as the sands of the Ganges
throughout the six directions,
Bestow their compassion and protection
Constantly and uninterruptedly
Through the six hours of day and night—
No more parting from him, even for a moment,
Than shadows part from the forms they accompany.
Our hearts and minds shall be kept from confusion.
We shall not be afflicted with sudden illness;

¹ *Seigan gemon* 誓願偈文. Recorded in *Hijiri-e* VIII, where it is said to have been written at Taimadera in present Nara prefecture in Kōan 9 (1286). The first line may also be read "My disciples" or even "I and [my] disciples"; I have followed an interpretation suggested in *Ippen shōnin goroku genshaku*, based in part on Ippen's repeated statements that he is not a leader of a sect.

We shall not meet with precipitous death.
 Our bodies shall be free of pain,
 Our hearts unperturbed.
 At repose in body and mind
 As though in a state of meditation:
 When thus our lives come to an end,
 May the saintly host come immediately to welcome us.
 Allowing ourselves to be carried
 by the power of the Buddha's Vow,
 We shall attain birth into the realm of bliss.

PRECEPTS FOR THE NEMBUTSU PRACTICER²

With wholeness of heart revere the supernatural majesty of the gods;
 Do not slight the virtue of their original source.³
 With wholeness of heart think on the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha;
 Do not forget the power in the intercorrespondence of our aspiration
 and the Buddha's compassion.
 With wholeness of heart perform the practice of saying the Name;
 Do not endeavor in sundry practices.

² *Jishū seikai* 時衆制誡. Also appears in *Hōnō engi-ki* 奉納緣起記 by Ta'a Shinkyō 他阿真教, regarded as the second head of the Ji school.

Ippen is said to have written this piece while at Shitennōji in present Osaka in Kōan 9 (1286). Three years earlier, after this three-year retreat in Shikoku, "Ippen attained true faith; making fast his aspiration for birth, he submitted priestly vows to refrain from the ten grave transgressions, received the Tathāgata's precepts, and began to propagate the *ippen nembutsu*" (*Hijiri-e* II, 3). It has been pointed out that the eighteen items here generally correspond to the precepts against the ten transgressions (Hirata Teizen, *Jishū kyōgaku no kenkyū*, Tokyo, 1977, p. 132).

Jishū ("time companion") was used as a term for members of Ippen's following. It probably originally indicated a person who participated in the nembutsu liturgy at the six "times" (four-hour intervals) of the twenty-four hour day, particularly during sessions of continuous nembutsu practice; the school name *Jishū* 時宗 did not become current until the mid-Muromachi period.

³ *honji* 本地. Reference to the concept that the Shintō gods are manifestations of the Buddhas.

- With wholeness of heart entrust yourself to the teaching you cherish;
Do not denounce the teachings followed by others.
- With wholeness of heart awaken the mind of equality;
Do not engage in discriminatory thinking.
- With wholeness of heart awaken the mind of compassion;
Do not be forgetful of the sorrows of others.
- With wholeness of heart take on an expression of gentleness;
Do not manifest the marks of anger and intolerance.
- With wholeness of heart abide in the outlook of humility;
Do not arouse a spirit of arrogance.
- With wholeness of heart contemplate the bodily sources of impurity;
Do not give rise to a mind that cherishes attachments.
- With wholeness of heart contemplate the truth of impermanence;
Do not arouse thoughts of greed and desire.
- With wholeness of heart rectify your own faults;
Do not revile others for their transgressions.
- With wholeness of heart sport in the activity of converting others;
Do not be negligent in the practice for self-benefit.
- With wholeness of heart fear the three evil paths;
Do not indulge in evil acts.
- With wholeness of heart aspire for the land of peace;
Do not be forgetful of the suffering in the three lower courses.
- With wholeness of heart abide in the contemplation of birth;
Do not become lax in the practice of saying the Name.
- With wholeness of heart hold the West in mindfulness;
Do not divide your thoughts among the other nine regions.
- With wholeness of heart endeavor in the practice leading to enlightenment;
Do not keep company with those given to amusement and pleasure.
- With wholeness of heart follow the guidance of your true teacher;
Do not indulge in leaving matters to your own intents.

To the end of the last age,
Disciples who survive me
Should strictly uphold what is indicated here.
Exert all your powers, and never neglect

IPPEN SHŌNIN

[The Name that is] the embodiment of practice pervading
the three modes of action.⁴

NAMU-AMIDA-BUTSU

IPPEN

A PERSONAL INTERPRETATION OF THE TOOLS OF THE WAY⁵

NAMU-AMIDA-BUTSU

The disciples of Ippen are to accept wholeheartedly the significance of using the twelve tools of the way.

ITEM: Alms bowl (*hikiire*)

Namu-amida-butsu

Our alms bowl expresses the heart that entrusts to the Name as the dharma-vessel holding immeasurable life. It is none other than the virtue of the Buddha of Immeasurable Light.

ITEM: Chopstick holder (*hashi-zutsu*)

Namu-amida-butsu

Our chopstick holder expresses the heart that entrusts to the Buddha's boundless virtues entering the hearts and minds of all sentient beings. It is none other than the virtue of the Buddha of Boundless Light.

⁴ Hirata suggests that this postscript was added by Ta'a, arguing that "disciples who survive me" is inappropriate to Ippen, who was 48 at the time he wrote the piece, and who declared that his teaching was for his lifetime only. Ta'a was 70 when he wrote *Hōnō engi-ki*. Hirata, p. 132.

⁵ *Dōgu hishaku* 道具秘釋. Those who joined Ippen in his life of constant travel were prohibited from possessing anything beyond the twelve garments and utensils listed here. Ippen interprets them in terms of Amida's twelve kinds of radiance, enumerated in the *Larger Sutra of Immeasurable Life* as twelve names for Amida.

ITEM: Hempen overgarment (*amiginu*, lit. "net robe")

Namu-amida-butsu

Our hempen garment expresses the heart that entrusts to the Primal Vow of Amida, which takes in the good and the evil without discrimination. It is none other than the virtue of the Buddha of Unimpeded Light.

ITEM: *Kesa*⁶

Namu-amida-butsu

Our *kesa* expresses the mind that entrusts to the Name, incomparable as the dharma sweeping away suffering and affliction. It is none other than the virtue of the Buddha of Incomparable Light.

ITEM: Summer underrobe (*katabira*)

Namu-amida-butsu

Our summer garment expresses the heart that entrusts to the Buddha's manifestation body coming to welcome, transforming the flames of hell into a refreshing breeze.⁷ It is none other than the virtues of the Buddha of Brilliant and Majestic Light.

ITEM: Handkerchief (*shukin*)

Namu-amida-butsu

Our handkerchief expresses the heart that entrusts to the immediate eradication of an immensity of karmic evil in one moment of thought

⁶ Skt. *kāśya*, meaning "reddish brown" and referring to a kind of robe worn by Indian Buddhist monks. In the colder climates of China and Japan, this garment became a vestigial cloth worn over a robe. The *kesa* is said to possess the power to ward off affliction; hence the explanation.

⁷ Based on the *Meditation Sutra*, T12, 346a: Such a person of karmic evil is destined to fall into hell because of his evil acts, and when he is about to die, the flames of hell suddenly spring up around him. But he happens to encounter a true teacher who, out of great compassion, preaches the supernatural virtues of Amida Buddha's ten powers. . . . Having heard this, the person will be freed from his karmic evil, which would have involved him in birth-and-death for eighty billion kalpas. The violent flames of hell transform themselves into a cool, refreshing breeze filled with heavenly flowers. On each flower is a transformation Buddha or bodhisattva who welcomes the person.

on Amida Buddha. It is none other than the virtue of the Buddha of the Light of Purity.

ITEM: Sash (*obi*)

Namu-amida-butsu

Our sash expresses the heart that entrusts to the encircling light surrounding and illuminating the body of the practitioner. It is none other than the virtue of the Buddha of Joyous Light.

ITEM: Paper garment (*kamiko*)^a

Namu-amida-butsu

Our paper garment is the heart that entrusts to the facing of life's end in each thought-instant, walking, standing still, sitting, or lying down. It is none other than the virtue of the Buddha of the Light of Wisdom.

ITEM: Rosary (*nenju*)

Namu-amida-butsu

Our rosary expresses the heart that entrusts to the saying of the Name thought-instant upon thought-instant, taking only the cessation of life as the finish. It is none other than the virtue of the Buddha of Uninterrupted Light.

ITEM: Monk's robe (*koromo*)

Namu-amida-butsu

Our monk's robe expresses the heart that entrusts to the person [of the nembutsu] being a spotless lotus among men. It is none other than the virtue of the Buddha of Unfathomable Light.

ITEM: Wooden sandals (*ashida*)

Namu-amida-butsu

Our wooden sandals express the heart that entrusts to the very basest of foolish people being carried by the highest Vow. They are none other than the virtue of the Buddha of Light That Surpasses All Words.

^a A winter garment of heavy paper coated with persimmon tannin; easily torn.

ITEM: Hood-scarf (*zugin*)

Namu-amida-butsu

Our hood-scarf expresses the heart that entrusts to that which is the inmost intent of all the Buddhas, the pinnacle of all the teachings. It is none other than the virtue of the Buddha of Light That Transcends the Sun and Moon.

Within the Name that embodies the Primal Vow
 Are the virtues to which sentient beings should entrust;
 In the entrusting minds of sentient beings
 Appear the virtues of the twelve kinds of light.
 Other Power surpasses conception;
 Difficult is it to fathom for sentient beings.
 Saying the Name of Amida with reverent trust,
 Receive the benefits of the twelve kinds of light!

NAMU-AMIDA-BUTSU:

For the attainment of birth in the Land of Bliss for all sentient beings.

First day of the third month, Kōan 10 (1287)

IPPEN

GATHAS⁹

VERSE ON THE NONDUALITY OF TEN AND ONE

Perfect enlightenment ten aeons past—of the
 realm of sentient beings;
 Birth in one thought-instant—in Amida's Land.
 Where ten and one are nondual, we realize no-birth;
 Where Land and realm are equal, we sit in Amida's
 great assembly.

十一不二頌

十劫正覺衆生界
 一念往生彌陀國
 十一不二證無生
 國界平等坐大會

[1271]

⁹ *Geju* 偈頌. These verses are in chronological order, as nearly as determined, rather than their order in *Ippen Shōnin Goroku*.

THE SIX CHARACTERS, TEN REALMS, MYRIAD PEOPLE: 六十萬人類
SALVATION FOR ALL IN THE NAME¹⁰

The six-character Name is the Dharma that is One/
all;¹¹ 六字名號一遍法

The ten realms—lands and beings—are the body of
One/all; 十界依正一遍體

The myriad practices [held in the Name], when freed
of thinking, bring realization of [the enlightenment
that is] One/all: 萬行離念一遍證

[Thus the practicer of the Name is] the most exalted
of men, a wondrously excellent lotus. 人中上々妙好華

[1274]

REALIZATION OF NO-BIRTH IN THE SIX CHARACTERS 六字無生頌

In the six characters of the Name 六字之中

There is originally no birth-and-death; 本無生死

In the interval of one voicing: 一聲之間

Immediate realization of no-birth. 即證無生

[1274]

¹⁰ Ippen has a marked taste for number symbolism in his Chinese verses; the present title, made up of the first characters of each line, taken together reads "600,000 people," meaning the myriad people of each of the sixty provinces of Japan, that is, all people everywhere. Ippen printed these characters, in the phrase "decisive settlement of birth for 600,000 people," on the slips bearing the Name which he distributed throughout the country. The first line may also be interpreted to mean that the teaching of the Name is the culmination of all the Buddhist teachings. Line three has been interpreted in a variety of ways: e.g., All good acts and all practices of separating from thought are realized in the Name (*Shinge satsuyō shō* by Shōsan); Abandoning calculative thinking concerning other practices [and taking refuge in the nembutsu], one is assured of birth (*Shinge santan nembutsu yōgi shō* by Jikan). Both these Edo period commentaries are in *Nihon bukkyō zensho*, 1971 edition, vol. 46.

¹¹ *Ippen* 一遍 usually means "once" or "one utterance," but as Ippen's original term for the Name itself, it indicates the solitary, single Name whose virtuous working pervades all things and brings them to birth in the Pure Land.

RESPONSE TO A MESSAGE FROM KINTOMO¹²

答公朝書頌

Within the Name that is uttered once
The three honored-ones manifest their en-
lightening activity;
Before all sentient beings of the ten quarters,
Amida of the nine levels of Pure Land appears
in welcome.

一聲名號中
三尊垂化用
十方衆生前
九品願來迎

[1282]

HOMAGE TO SHOSHAZAN MOUNTAIN¹³

禮書寫山頌

Mount Shosha is a mountain of emancipation,
For the eight scroll-leaves [of the Sutra] of the
Good Dharma reveal the lotus of mind;
[The founder] Shōkū¹⁴ is a sage who attained nirvana,
For in the precious six-character Name lies
realization of no-birth.

書寫即是解脫山
八葉妙法心蓮故
性空即是涅槃聖
六字寶號無生故

[1287]

¹² Kintomo 公朝 of Kamakura was a scholar-priest of Onjōji (Miidera) and an accomplished poet. His message and Ippen's response are recorded in *Hijiri-e* VI. In his message Kintomo declares his faith in Amida, Avalokiteśvara, and Mahāsthāmaprāpta (the three honored-ones mentioned in line two) and expresses his gratitude for having been able to meet Ippen. It closes: "Please guide me to the wondrous, golden Pure Land. Though there may be [a difference of] before and after [in the times of our birth], do not forget this fervent pledge." Ippen answers this declaration of aspiration by explaining the immediacy of Amida's coming in the present.

¹³ The name *Shosha* 書寫 ("copy") is derived from the Lotus Sutra, chapter 21, which exhorts that the sutra be copied and a stupa be erected where it is done, because "that place is a Platform of the Path" (Leon Hurvitz, trans., *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma*, New York, 1976, p. 288). The Tendai temple on Shoshazan, Enkyōji, was a major center of pilgrimage. *Hijiri-e* IX records that Ippen visited it in 1287. When he discovered that the main hall was closed to all but long-residing monks, he composed this verse, after which he was admitted to the hall.

¹⁴ Shōkū 性空 (910–1007), a mid-Heian period Tendai monk whom Ippen took as a model of practice. Stories about him are recorded in *Senjūshō* and in the sections on miracles involving the Lotus Sutra in *Konjaku monogatari shū*. For Ippen, "The Lotus of the Dharma and the Name are one" (80).

ALL PRACTICES FULFILLED IN A SINGLE UTTERANCE

一稱萬行頌

A single utterance of [the Name that embodies] the
universal Vow is the ultimate among all practices;
The three characters (*a-mi-da*) of the fulfilled Name
are the wellspring of all virtues;
Without gaining a footing in the ground of mind,
one mounts the sacred lotus dais;
Without depending on effort in meditation, one
opens the storehouse of enlightenment.

弘願一稱萬行致
果號三字衆德原
不蹈心地登靈臺
不假工夫開覺藏

[1288]

FROM THE BEGINNING NOT A SINGLE THING

本無一物頌

The Tathāgata is [the embodiment of] all virtues;
Sentient beings are [possessed of] delusional thoughts.
From the beginning there is not a single thing;
Now what should I seek to attain?

如來萬德
衆生妄念
本無一物
今得何事

[Date and source unknown]