

# TRANSLATION

## *The Record of Ippen: Sayings Handed Down by Disciples (I)*

TRANSLATED BY DENNIS HIROTA

### *Note on the Text*

AT THE AGE of fifty, with death approaching, Ippen gathered those of his own writings he had at hand and, while chanting the *Amida Sutra*, set them aflame; to disciples he declared: "All the sacred teachings of Sakyamuni's lifetime were exhausted in having become *Namu-amida-butsu*." There is nothing in the scant records that survive which would lead us to expect anything different.

The most complete collection of his words, the *Record of Ippen (Ippen Shōnin Goroku)*,<sup>1</sup> comprises only two fascicles, the first consisting of Ippen's own writings—hymns, poems in Chinese and Japanese, letters, and other miscellaneous pieces—and the second, his spoken words as recorded and preserved by disciples. The *Record* seems to have been compiled from existing collections during the 1750's by Ikkai, who became the 52nd head of the Ji school in 1756. It is unknown what texts were available to him at the main temple, Shōjōkō-ji, or elsewhere, and some that he referred to have probably since been lost. Moreover, little is known of the original form and circumstances of the few early manuscripts that do survive.<sup>2</sup>

Ikkai was apparently dissatisfied with his own editing and resisted encouragement to publish. In 1762, however, a respected priest, Shunpō Myōzui 俊鳳妙瑞 (1714–87), lectured at Shōjōkō-ji on the *Banshū Mondo-shū* (1688), an earlier Edo period printed edition of Ippen's sayings. Shunpō, an acknowledged master of Seizan Pure Land doctrine, had also studied esoteric Buddhism and Mahayana precepts, and is said to have received certification in Zen practice under Hakuin. Ikkai, impressed by Shunpō's qualities both as a scholar

<sup>1</sup> I have relied chiefly on the edition of Ōhashi Shunnō in *Hōnen, Ippen*, Nihon Shisō Taikō 10. Other widely available editions include that of Miyasaka Yūshō in *Kana Hōgo-shū*, Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikō 83, and that of the Dai Nihon Bukkyō Zensho, 1971 edition, Vol. 46.

<sup>2</sup> For a discussion and table of correspondences of early manuscripts and printed texts, see Ōhashi, pp. 468–78.

## THE RECORD OF IPPEN

and a monk, seems to have requested him to re-edit the collection on this occasion.<sup>3</sup>

The first printing of the *Record* was made in 1763, but it was of Ikkai's original text and probably made without his permission. Both the wood blocks and books of this printing were destroyed in a fire the following year. Shunpō began editing in 1766 and carried the work to completion although Ikkai died that year at the age of 79. He also wrote what is still the principal commentary on the text, the *Ippen Shōnin Goroku Genshaku* (1767).<sup>4</sup> The re-edited text was published in 1770 and seems to have differed from Ikkai's original in content chiefly in Shunpō's use of the two narrative picture scrolls treating Ippen's life. These contain texts which, though not intended as collections of Ippen's words, include various writings as well as direct quotations. The first, the *Ippen Hijiri-e* (1299), also known as the *Rokujō-engi*, has a text by Shōkai, Ippen's brother and founder of Kangikō-ji, and depicts Ippen's entire life in detail. Several years after the *Hijiri-e*, the *Ippen Shōnin Eshiden* was made. While this scroll clearly borrows from the *Hijiri-e*, its purpose seems to have been to stress the transmission of Ippen's teaching to Ta'a 他阿, one of the earliest and most important disciples. It therefore gives only the highlights of Ippen's life and devotes its latter half to Ta'a. Because this was the initial transmission for the mainstream of the Ji school, however, the *Eshiden* had traditionally been valued above the *Hijiri-e*. Nevertheless, Shunpō saw the *Hijiri-e* as historically more reliable and rearranged certain sections of the *Record* to conform with it. He also added portions of its text to the *Record*, in particular at the end of the second fascicle.

In 1806 the second printing was also lost in a fire, but it was published once more from new blocks in 1811 (Bunka 8). The text was unaltered from the second printing, and most modern editions are of this third printing.

Although the *Record* as a whole is carefully organized, I have sought to present the material in an order determined by accessibility to modern readers, beginning with the letters in *Eastern Buddhist* xi, 1, and continuing with the second fascicle, "Sayings Handed Down by Disciples," of which the first third is translated here. These 'sayings' themselves show a deliberate arrangement by topic which differs from that of any other extant text. According to the *Banshū Hōgo-shū*,<sup>5</sup> another Edo period edition of Ippen's spoken words, the sayings were recorded at the Hiromine Hachiman-gu Shrine in Harima province (Banshū). This is in part corroborated by the *Banshū Mondō-shū*, which states

<sup>3</sup> Hirata Teizen, *Jishū Kyōgaku no Kenkyū* (Tokyo, 1965), pp. 58-62.

<sup>4</sup> 一遍上人語錄註釋. In *Dai Nihon Bukkyō Zenaho*, 1971 edition, Vol. 46; hereafter cited as *Genshaku*.

<sup>5</sup> 播州法語集 (1778). Included in *Hōnen, Ippen* pp. 352-77. This collection is quite close to the second fascicle of the *Record* in content, but with numerous differences of expression, probably indicating the use of variant texts.

## SAYINGS HANDED DOWN BY DISCIPLES

that they were recorded by a follower named Ji'a, of Shikamatsu in Harima, who made direct inquiries of Ippen. Thus this collection, based on a text in which the original Japanese has been rendered into Chinese, arranges the sayings into question and answer form. It is unclear, however, on what basis these traditions rest. If it is indeed true that the sayings were all recorded on a certain occasion in Harima province, they would probably date from some time towards the very end of Ippen's life.

---

1. Ippen Shōnin once said: You must distinguish carefully between the two gates—the Path of Sages and the Pure Land. The gate of the Path of Sages declares, "Blind passion as such is enlightenment," "Birth-and-death as such is nirvana."<sup>1</sup> I, too, might certainly have taught others this Dharma-gate, but it is beyond the capacities of people these days. For they would invariably return once more to their root attachment, which is blind passion, and it would only harm them. In the gate of the Pure Land one 'casts away body and mind,'<sup>2</sup> and with not a single place one longs for in all the three realms and six paths, aspires for birth in the Pure Land. There must not be a single thing in this world that you hold indispensable. To become free of birth-and-death while maintaining this existence here is out of the question.<sup>3</sup>

2. Further he said, The "Three Minds"<sup>4</sup> are the Name. For this reason, "With sincerity, joyfully entrusting themselves and desiring to be born

---

<sup>1</sup> "Path of Sages" is a Pure Land term traditionally used to indicate all other forms of Buddhism, but Ippen seems to have in mind here specifically the Esoteric and Real Mahayana teachings [i.e. Tendai, Shingon, Kegon, Zen]. (*Genshaku*)

<sup>2</sup> Expression common in Zen. Not holding to the good and evil of the body or the right and wrong of the mind: this is to cast away body and mind. (*Genshaku*)

<sup>3</sup> Standard Pure Land position, in contrast, e.g., with "becoming Buddha with the present body" in Shingon; but also cf. section 39 below.

<sup>4</sup> Enumerated in the *Meditation Sutra* as the attitudes necessary for the attainment of birth in the Pure Land: "If a sentient being who aspires to be born in that land raises in himself the Three Minds, then he is born there. What are these three? The first is True Mind, the second Deep Mind, and the third, the Mind aspiring to be born through turning over merit. If one possesses these Three Minds, one will be born without fail in that land" (T12, 344c). The Pure Land schools generally equate these Three Minds with those stated in the 18th Vow: "If, when I attain Buddhahood, the sentient beings of the ten quarters—[1] with sincerity [2] joyfully entrusting themselves and [3] desiring to be born in my land, and thinking on me [saying my Name] up to ten times—do not attain birth, may I not attain the supreme enlightenment" (*Larger Sutra*, T12, 268a).

## THE RECORD OF IPPEN

in my land" is interpreted to mean "saying my Name."<sup>5</sup> Outside of the reciting of the Name, then, there are no Three Minds whatever.<sup>6</sup>

3. Further he said, True Mind signifies that abandoning the self-attachment in self-power and taking refuge in Amida is the essence of a true and real mind. For when [Shan-tao's Commentary] explains, "All manner of greed, anger, perversity, deceit, wickedness, and cunning,"<sup>7</sup> it means for us to reject and abandon the consciousness of self of sentient beings. The three poisons, in terms of the three modes of action, are the blind passions the consciousness is possessed of.

Regarding Deep Mind, [Shan-tao's Commentary] explains, "Oneself is in reality nothing other than a foolish being of karmic evil caught in birth-and-death,"<sup>8</sup> so the essence of Deep Mind lies in abandoning the self possessed of blind passions and taking refuge in the Name of the Primal Vow. Hence these two —True Mind and Deep Mind— signify the stance of abandoning both the body and mind of sentient beings and taking refuge in the Name that is Other Power.

---

<sup>5</sup> Reference to Shan-tao's paraphrase of the 18th Vow in the afterword to his *Ōjōraisan* 往生圖論 (Hymns on Birth): "If, when I attain Buddhahood, the sentient beings in the ten quarters say my Name down to ten voicings and yet are not born, may I not attain the supreme enlightenment" (T47, 447c).

<sup>6</sup> In the background here is the Pure Land school's rejection of any understanding of the Three Minds as rooted in learning or spiritual discipline and not the Name; thus Hōnen interprets Shan-tao's paraphrase of the Vow to mean that when one believes that birth is attained through simply saying the Name, one naturally possesses the Three Minds. Also cf. Shōkū's statement: "[True] nembutsu is that of plain wood free of any coloration [by the practitioner]. Shan-tao's interpretation of 'sincerity, etc.' as 'voicing' means for us to return and become plain wood" (quoted in *Genshaku*).

<sup>7</sup> From the *Sanzenji* 散善義 (On Non-meditative Good) section of Shan-tao's Commentary on the Meditation Sutra 觀經疏 *Kangyōsho*: "There is all manner of greed . . . cunning, and it is difficult to put an end to one's evil nature. This is to be like a [poisonous] snake or a scorpion, and though a person in such a state practice in the three modes of action, it must be called good mixed with poison and practice in falsity; it cannot be called true and real practice. . . . One may seek to attain birth in the Buddha's Pure Land through turning over the merit of such practice mixed with poison, but it is altogether impossible" (T37, 271a).

<sup>8</sup> According to *Sanzenji*, Deep [ly believing] Mind is a profound faith of two aspects; the content of the first Ippen quotes here, and the second is "to believe deeply that Amida Buddha's 48 Vows embrace all sentient beings, so that without doubt and without apprehension riding in the power of the Vow, one is certain to attain birth" (T37, 271b).

## SAYINGS HANDED DOWN BY DISCIPLES

Regarding the Mind of Turning over Merit: at the moment the merits [of the good acts performed] while attached to the self in self-power and the merits that the Name possesses are harmoniously merged into a single taste, the oneness of that which takes refuge and that taken refuge in is realized, expressing itself as *Namu-amida-butsu*.<sup>9</sup> Once this takes place, the above Three Minds, being abolished the moment they are established, are the solitary and single *Namu-amida-butsu*.<sup>10</sup> Thus, besides abandoning body and mind and saying the *nembutsu*, there is no other consideration concerning the Three Minds. The stance of abandoning body and mind is itself *Namu-amida-butsu*.

4. Further, he constantly praised *Kenshō-bō* of Nagato,<sup>11</sup> saying, He did well in founding the Dharma-gate of the abolition of the Three Minds;<sup>12</sup> it was thus that he attained birth.

5. Further he said, On the statement that True Mind (*shijōshin*) is "true and real": Sugawara Fumitoki, of the third rank,<sup>13</sup> writes, "In

<sup>9</sup> In Pure Land Buddhism, the bodhisattva ideal of transferring merit towards the enlightenment of all beings was altered, in the light of the inadequacies of the practice of ordinary people, into directing one's merit towards birth in the Pure Land, where one could fulfill the practice for Buddhahood and then aid other beings. According to Seizan doctrine, one's past good acts done in self-power cannot bring about birth, but the moment one realizes them to be defiled and empty and abandons self-attachment, taking refuge in the Name, they are transformed into merit for one's birth, i.e. they merge with the practice for the birth of sentient beings that is Amida's attainment of enlightenment ten kalpas past. This is the basis for the oneness of practitioner (*ki*) and Buddha Dharma (*hō*) in Seizan doctrine.

<sup>10</sup> The person who has not yet abandoned self-power should seek to establish the Three Minds; the person who has already taken refuge in the Name of Other Power abolishes and casts them away [i.e. is free of all dualism and attachment]. (*Genhaku*)

<sup>11</sup> 藤性房 Studied Seizan doctrine under the founder Shōkū. Sayings recorded in *Ichigon Hōdan* 54-60 (trans. in *EB* x, 1).

<sup>12</sup> Seizan doctrine teaches that faith in the Vow (Three Minds) naturally and necessarily manifests itself as utterance of the Name. The abolition of the Three Minds is explained in the Edo period work, *Ichimonkishō Kotsumoku-shō*: "When this faith emerges from the lips, one utters *Namu-amida-butsu*. At this moment, the inner Three Minds wholly conform with the *nembutsu* emerging from the lips; this is called 'being held in' *Namu-amida-butsu*. The three Minds being for the time hidden is spoken of as 'being abolished'" (quoted in *Genhaku*).

<sup>13</sup> 菅原文時 Scholar and grandson of Michizane. Died 981. Many poems in Chinese included in *Wakan rōei-shū*.

## THE RECORD OF IPPEN

reading different works, sometimes [characters] are read as Japanese and sometimes not, depending on the nature of the matter." Since [Shan-tao] explains that "*shi* 至 means 'true' and *jō* 誠 means 'real,'" <sup>14</sup> *shijō* should not be read by converting it into Japanese. <sup>15</sup> It is simply the truth and reality of the Name. This means, in other words, that Amida is the true and real. It is not the 'true and real' mind generated from the heart on one's own part. The Dharma that is fathomed by our foolish minds has no truth or reality. Why? Because the mind that cognizes, being empty and illusory, is untrue and unreal. Only the Name that is cognized is true and real. Thus the Name is also taught to hold "virtues wondrous beyond all conception," <sup>16</sup> and further to be "true and real." <sup>17</sup> The full title of the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra in 150 Ślokas is *Great Bliss* (Dainichi Buddha) *Diamond-like* (Ashuku Buddha) *Never Futile* (Hōshō Buddha) *True and Real* (Amida Buddha) *Vow* (Fukūjōju Buddha) *Sutra*. <sup>18</sup> From the very beginning, "true and real" has been a name for Amida. Thus, True Mind is called "true and real," meaning that it is the mind which takes refuge in the truth and reality that is Other Power.

6. Further he said, Concerning the statement in the explanation of Deep Mind, "Oneself is in reality nothing other than a foolish being of karmic evil caught in birth-and-death, from distant past kalpas ever sinking and ever turning in transmigration with never a condition that would lead to emancipation": most people think that for a person to run about after different kinds of treasure and gird himself with wife and children out of self-concern is nothing other than the usual weakness of foolish beings, and simply because one cannot abandon such things, the explanation states that one's self answers no purpose whatever, "a foolish being of karmic evil caught in birth-and-death." Such is not the meaning

<sup>14</sup> From the explanation of True Mind in *Sanzeigi*, T37, 270b.

<sup>15</sup> Which would give it the meaning of "complete sincerity."

<sup>16</sup> From the *Praise of the Pure Land Sutra* 稱讚淨土經 *Shōsan jōdo-kyō*, translation of the Smaller Sukhāvati-vyuha sūtra by Hsüan Tsang (j. Genjō), T12, 350a.

<sup>17</sup> *Larger Sutra* T12, 266c: "[The Tathagata] desires to save sentient beings and bless them with true and real benefit."

<sup>18</sup> As explicated in Kōkai's *Rishukyōkaidai* 理趣經開題. The sutra was translated with the title 大樂金剛不空眞實三昧耶經 by Amoghavajra (T8, 784-86) and is chanted morning and evening in Shingon practice. The five Buddhas seen named in the title are those which make up the center of the Vajradhātu or Diamond Mandala.

## SAYINGS HANDED DOWN BY DISCIPLES

of this passage. It is precisely because that which is evil is of no avail in attaining emancipation that this self must be abandoned. Thus, further along the explanation states: "Abandon what the Buddha brings one to abandon, leave the place the Buddha causes one to leave."<sup>19</sup> If, while you know [your life] to be evil, you become more and more attached, and in order to maintain yourself free of cares, seek wealth and wife and offspring and provide for yourself with wine and meat and the five forbidden flavors, then knowing it to be a thing wholly delusive is of no use whatever. It is far better to abandon at once that which is evil.

7. Further he said, The moment you take refuge in Other Power, believing yourself to be "in reality nothing other than a foolish being of karmic evil caught in birth-and-death, from distant past kalpas ever sinking and ever turning in transmigration with never a condition that would lead to emancipation," the different kinds of birth-and-death all cease.<sup>20</sup> In every single one of the [Buddhist] teachings, a person becomes free of birth-and-death through entering this stage. The Name I am speaking of is the Dharma of the oneness of subject and object.<sup>21</sup>

8. Further he said, The Pure Land has been established in order to bring forth longing for it and foster the aspiration for birth. And the fostering of this longing is, in the end, so that we say the Name. Thus, the explanation of Deep Mind states: "to induce people to long." When we hear of the wondrousness of the Pure Land, the aspiration for birth cannot but arise within us. When this aspiration has arisen, necessarily the Name is uttered. Thus, the aspiration for birth is the incipient mind which leads to the taking of refuge in the Name. Since ours are illusory minds of the six forms of consciousness and discrimination, it is impossible that they

---

<sup>19</sup> *Sanzengi*, T37, 271b. Cf. section 9 below.

<sup>20</sup> Transmigrating in birth-and-death depends on a single thought-instant of self-attachment; hence, when in the present moment one casts off the self-attachment of self-power and takes refuge in the Name, then immediately the various types of birth-and-death cease. (*Genshaku*)

<sup>21</sup> *nō-shō ittai*, i.e. oneness of the person who takes refuge and Buddha taken refuge in. This has the same meaning as "the oneness of practitioner and Dharma" (*ki-hō ittai*) and "the nonduality of sentient being and Buddha" (*shō-butsu fu-ni*). These are all traditional topics of the Seizan school. (*Genshaku*)

## THE RECORD OF IPPEN

should become the accomplished cause for [birth in] that land. The state of [uttering] the Name is itself birth. Thus we speak of "birth through Other Power." Ordinarily, everyone thinks that he will attain birth because he earnestly desires it and his aspiration is so keen.

9. Further he said, When the explanation of Deep Mind states, "Abandon what the Buddha brings one to abandon," "Buddha" means Amida and "abandon" refers to attachment in self-power. When it states, "Practice what the Buddha brings one to practice," "practice" means the Name. When it states, "Leave the place that the Buddha causes one to leave," "place" refers to this defiled world. When it states, "To be in accordance with the Buddha's Vow," "Buddha's Vow" means the Vow of Amida Buddha.<sup>22</sup>

10. Further he said, "Not abandoning from instant to instant"<sup>23</sup> is the virtuous functioning of the oneness of practitioner and Buddha Dharma in Namu-amida-butsu. Some people interpret this in terms of the practitioner, some in terms of the Dharma.<sup>24</sup> Both are partial views. When we have realized that both practitioner and Dharma are the virtuous functioning of the Name, then though we take it in terms of the practitioner, or in terms of the Dharma, there is no error. For since it is the Name of the nonduality of practitioner and Dharma, apart from Namu-amida-butsu there is no one

---

<sup>22</sup> *Sanzangi* T37, 271b: "Abandon what the Buddha brings one to abandon; practice what the Buddha brings one to practice; leave the place the Buddha causes one to leave. This is to be in accordance with the Buddha's teaching and with the Buddha's intent. It is to be in accordance with the Buddha's Vow."

<sup>23</sup> *Sanzangi* T37, 272b: "Solely saying Amida's Name with singleness of mind, whether walking, standing, sitting or lying, without regard to whether the period of time is long or short and *without abandoning from instant to instant*: this is called the act of true settlement [of birth], for it is in accord with that Buddha's Vow."

<sup>24</sup> Generally speaking, this phrase had been interpreted in two ways. 1) With regard to the practitioner, it was viewed as an expression for religious aspiration and as encouragement to endeavor fully in utterance of the Name. 2) Since incessant recitation was obviously impracticable for ordinary people, the words "not abandoning" were understood to refer not to the practitioner's efforts, but to the virtue of the Dharma itself, as the nonduality of practitioner and Buddha in the Buddha's pure mind given to the practitioner and allowing him to take refuge in the Vow. The former view roughly corresponds to that of Hōnen (cf. *Ichigon Hōden* 114, *EB* x, 1) and the latter to that of Shin Buddhism.

## SAYINGS HANDED DOWN BY DISCIPLES

taking refuge and nothing being taken refuge in.<sup>25</sup>

11. Further he said, The good acts of the upper six grades of practitioners teach the essence of good that is fulfilled by Other Power and the bottom three grades set forth the image of the perniciousness of blind passion.<sup>26</sup> The reality, however, is that people of the good of religious practices should be explained to be of the top three grades, those of the good of precepts should be explained to be of the middle three grades, and those of the good of worldly morality should be explained to be of the bottom three grades. For it is stated, "First, the three types of good acts are explained to be the true cause for birth; second, the nine grades are explained to be the true practice,"<sup>27</sup> so the nine grades must all contain good acts of true practice. The good acts of the Mind of Turning over Merit indicate the time when the good acts possessed by the Name and the good acts done by a sentient being when practicing in self-power become one in taste.<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup> It is the Name's "not abandoning from instant to instant." When one casts away body and mind and takes refuge in the Name—and there is the oneness of practitioner and Dharma—then there is no speaking or silence, motion or stillness, that is not *Namu-amida-butô* from instant to instant. (*Goshaku*) Cf. Ippen's Letter 1, *EB* xi, 1, p. 57.

<sup>26</sup> In the *Meditation Sutra*, the three types of non-meditative good acts are described in terms of nine grades of aspirants for birth. The top three grades include those who have the mind of enlightenment and perform religious practices; the middle three include those who observe rules of conduct—the upper two precepts and the lowest worldly morality. The bottom three grades include evildoers without merit, the sole virtue of the worst of whom is the utterance of the Name at death.

<sup>27</sup> From the opening of *Seizengi*, T37, 270b.

<sup>28</sup> In *Seizan* doctrine, the terms "true cause" and "true practice" are understood with regard respectively to the equality of all beings from the perspective of the Buddha's Vow and their diversity in capacities and natures from the standpoint of sentient beings. That the three types of good acts are the true cause for birth is understood: practices in self-power are totally inadequate for attaining birth, but through the good acts recommended in the sutra the Three Minds are awakened in the practitioner. The essence of the Three Minds is the realization that self-power practices are useless and the taking of refuge in Amida. Through the Three Minds all one's past merits fuse with the perfect merits of Amida's practice and are thus fulfilled and transformed into the true cause for birth. Although all practices thus equally become the true cause, the nature of one's own particular practice eventually determines which of the nine ranks of birth in the Pure Land one attains.

## THE RECORD OF IPPEN

12. Further he said, It is written, "To attain birth through sundry good acts done according to one's own conditions is surely difficult."<sup>29</sup> "According to one's own conditions" means to establish a [supposedly] objective situation apart from the mind and there perform practices. One involves oneself in that outer situation in order to cultivate the mind; hence, when the situation passes away, there is no fulfillment. This is nothing other than good done in the attachment to self of self-power. It is called "sundry good acts done according to one's own conditions."

13. Further he said, What we call 'ego-self' is blind passion. If there is any attachment to self, since the Dharma that is practiced and the practitioner who is attached to himself are then separate from each other, in no way can practice be fulfilled. This is the teaching of Sakyamuni's entire lifetime. The statement, "Treating the illness according to the person's conditions is by applying the appropriate method,"<sup>30</sup> also refers to good acts of self-power.

14. Further he said, Now the Name, which is Other Power that surpasses all conception, is wisdom self-received-and-enjoyed.<sup>31</sup> Hence it is spoken of as the Buddha's self-exposition,<sup>32</sup> and also as the free expression of his own will.<sup>33</sup> "Self-received-and-enjoyed" means that, as water drinks water and fire burns fire, pine tree is pine, bamboo is bamboo: in being itself, each in its own way, there is no birth-and-death.<sup>34</sup> However, sentient beings, ever since having gone astray in self-illusion in a single thought-

<sup>29</sup> Shan-tao's *Hōjisan* 法本讚, T47, 433b.

<sup>30</sup> Shan-tao's *Hanjusan* 般舟讚 (Hymn of Meditation on the Presence of the Buddha), T47, 454c. I.e. teachings accommodated to the practitioner's level of comprehension and not the true and inconceivable Name. (*Genshaku*)

<sup>31</sup> "Self-received-and-enjoyed" 自受用 *jijiyū* expresses a Buddha's own enjoyment of the enlightenment he has attained. Generally contrasted with activity for the attainment of others, it also implies the realm shared only by Buddha and Buddha.

<sup>32</sup> According to the *Gengibun* 玄鑑分 (On the Profound Meaning) section of Shan-tao's Commentary: "The *Meditation Sutra* is the Buddha's self-exposition"; that is, it expresses the fundamental intention of his appearance in this world.

<sup>33</sup> 隨自意 *zujiji*: i.e. Buddha's thoughts directly preached as they are—the true teaching—in contrast with expedient means preached in accord with the listener's capacity to understand.

<sup>34</sup> Each dharma's being originally non-arising and non-perishing is itself none other than the wisdom self-received-and-enjoyed. (*Genshaku*)

## SAYINGS HANDED DOWN BY DISCIPLES

instant of self-attachment, have existed as foolish beings continually sinking [in the sea of birth-and-death]. If, while in this state, they take refuge in the Name that is the Other Power of Amida's Primal Vow, they return to their original nature, which is free of birth-and-death. This is called, "to endeavor in overturning one's illusion and return to one's original home."<sup>35</sup> Only by returning to and taking refuge in the Name can one return to one's original nature and original home.

15. Further he said, "That which takes refuge" is *namu*; it is the sentient beings of the ten quarters. It is, in other words, life defiled by premature death.<sup>36</sup> However, when one has taken refuge in Immeasurable Life that is ever abiding and unperishing, one strips away the illusive thinking of self-attachment; that which takes refuge and that taken refuge in become one, and the state of "the original nothingness of birth-and-death" is brought to realization as the six characters—*Namu-amida-butsu*. To apprehend thus is called the wisdom of the Three Minds. This wisdom signifies, in the end, casting away and ridding oneself of the calculative thinking which is self-power and self-attachment.

16. Further he said, To cast away one's self-being and become solitary and single with *Namu-amida-butsu* is called "singleness of mind unper-turbed."<sup>37</sup> The utterance of the Name that succeeds instant by instant, then, is the *nembutsu* saying the *nembutsu*. To expect, however, to attain birth by one's own good understanding even of this matter and one's own deep utterance of the *nembutsu* means that attachment to the self in self-power is still unable to die away. In all probability such a person will fail to attain birth. To be totally unconcerned on one's own part with all such matters as mindfulness or unmindfulness, intention or

<sup>35</sup> *Ōjōwaikan*, T47, 446a.

<sup>36</sup> One of the five corruptions of the present age.

<sup>37</sup> *Amida Sutra* T12, 347b: "If there is a good man or good woman who hears the preaching of the Name of Amida Buddha and holds and keeps that Name, whether for one day . . . or seven days, with singleness of mind unperturbed, then when that person faces the end of life, Amida Buddha, along with a host of the saintly, will manifest himself before him." It is said that, while the Jōdo teaching of Hōnen is based on the *Meditation Sutra* and that of Shinran on the *Larger Sutra*, Ippen's, with its emphasis on wholehearted recitation of the Name, is based on the *Amida Sutra*.

## THE RECORD OF IPPEN

lack of intention, and to become Buddha in simply one thought-instant—this is “wholehearted sole utterance.”<sup>38</sup>

17. Further he said, From the very first, the original nature of the self has not been turning in transmigration; it is only illusory attachment that transmigrates. “Original nature” is the Name, by which all the Buddhas have attained realization.<sup>39</sup> Attachment in illusion is without basis and without real essence. It is “originally unborn.”<sup>40</sup>

18. Further he said, Most people think that by distinguishing between self-power and Other Power and so maintaining their own self-being, they can lean upon Other Power and thus attain birth. This is a misapprehension. [The distinction of] self-power and Other Power is but the first stage. True Other Power means casting away the stances of self and other and in simply one thought-instant becoming Buddha. The manifested Deity of the Kumano Shrine announced to me in revelation: “Faith or no faith is not a consideration; karmic evil or no karmic evil is not at issue: *Namu-amida-butsu* itself is born.”<sup>41</sup> From that time, this Buddhist monk has realized and has cast away the self-attachment that is self-power.

These were the Master’s constant words.

19. Further he said, The good acts of self-power are not free of the seven or the nine kinds of arrogance. Thus it is expounded: “With

---

<sup>38</sup> Expression from the passage of the *Larger Sutra* (T12, 272b-c) describing the three types of aspirants for birth: those who renounce secular life; lay devotees who practice donation, etc.; and devotees of little merit. Interpretations of the entire passage vary, but those of all three levels “solely utter the Name wholeheartedly,” and Shan-tao states: “The Buddha preaches that the natures of sentient beings differ, with high, middle, and low levels. According to the particular natures, the Buddha encourages all solely to utter the Name of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life” (*Kannon Bōmon*).

<sup>39</sup> The Buddhas of past, present and future all have attained or will attain equal perfect enlightenment through *nembutsu-samadhi*. (*Genshaku*)

<sup>40</sup> All things, seen in their true suchness, are reality beyond birth-and-death. Ippen probably adopted this term from Shingon teachings, in which the unchanging, unproduced aspect of phenomena is represented by the Sanskrit vowel *a* (*aji-kompushū*).

<sup>41</sup> In summer of 1274 (1276 according to the *Eshiden*). For the account of the *Hijiri-s*, see “Record of Ippen: Letters,” *EB*, xi 1, pp. 54-5.

## SAYINGS HANDED DOWN BY DISCIPLES

arrogance, evil habits, and indolence, it is difficult to believe in this Dharma";<sup>42</sup> and further: "In performing practices of body, speech, and mind, there is much arrogance."<sup>43</sup> When one has taken refuge in Namu-amida-butsu, which is no-self and no-someone, there is no 'someone' who must be raised up, no 'self' which must be humiliated. This truth is expressed in the *Larger Sutra*: "[The heart] abides in the samadhis of emptiness, no aspect, and no desire."<sup>44</sup> And it is also taught: "Mastering the truth that the nature of all things is wholly empty and without self-substance, I shall seek only the Buddha Land of purity and without fail attain such a land."<sup>45</sup>

20. Further he said, Since the Land of Bliss is the Pure Land of emptiness and no-self, Master Shan-tao states, "Our ultimate stroll is far removed from being and nothingness."<sup>46</sup> It is taught of the people who attain birth, "All receive the body of natural emptiness, body which knows no bound."<sup>47</sup> Thus, the Name is not blue, or yellow, or red, or white; neither long nor short, neither square nor round. It is not being; it is not nothingness. Since it is also free of the five flavors, even though one utters it with the mouth one does not discover it to have any particular taste of the Dharma.<sup>48</sup> It is not a dharma that one can grasp or measure as anything whatsoever. It is spoken of as "without doubt, without apprehension,"<sup>49</sup> and all the Buddhas throughout the ten quarters praise it as wondrous beyond conception.<sup>50</sup> It is a dharma which cuts off all words and explanation, teaching that when a person simply recites [the nembutsu] at random as his voice will have it, he becomes free of endless birth-and-death.

21. Further he said, As long as one practices in self-power, it is the mind of self-attachment and arrogance that arises. For, thinking we can

<sup>42</sup> *Ōjōraisan*, T47, 441c.

<sup>43</sup> *Hanjinan*, T47, 454b.

<sup>44</sup> T12, 269c.

<sup>45</sup> *Larger Sutra*, T12, 279a.

<sup>46</sup> *Jōzengi* 定非論 (On Meditative Good) section of his Commentary, T97, 263a.

<sup>47</sup> *Larger Sutra* T12, 271c.

<sup>48</sup> Reference to the Tendai classification of the teachings based on five periods when taught, each represented by a flavor or state of milk.

<sup>49</sup> From the explanation of Deep Mind; cf. fn. 8.

<sup>50</sup> *Praise of the Pure Land Sutra*, T12, 951a.

## THE RECORD OF IPPEN

liberate ourselves from birth-and-death through our own full understanding and our own diligent practice, we cultivate wisdom and practice, and thus we come to believe that there can be none our equals as sages and practitioners, raising ourselves up and looking down on others. When we have taken refuge in the reciting of the Name, which is Other Power, there is no arrogance, there is no humility. For when we have cast away body and mind and taken refuge in the Dharma of no-self and no-someone, there is no individual-self [to stand in the opposition] of myself and another or this and that. It is the Dharma by which even country people and backwoods folks, nuns, and the foolish and ignorant equally attain birth, and so is called the practice of Other Power. In *Hymn of Meditation on the Presence of the Buddha* it is written, "In performing practices of body, speech and mind, there is much arrogance," referring to practices of self-power. It further states: "Earnestly awakening the supreme mind of enlightenment, turn about at heart and thought-instant after thought-instant aspire to be born in the Land of Peace";<sup>51</sup> this urges upon us the Three Minds. Since there is much arrogance in self-power practice, we are encouraged to awaken the Three Minds.

22. Further he said, "The White Path between is Namu-amida-butsu, and the two rivers of fire and water are our hearts and minds. That which is not overwhelmed by the two rivers is the Name."<sup>52</sup>

23. Further he said, The "singleness of mind unperturbed" taught in the *Amida Sutra* is the singleness of mind of the Name. To search after your heart and mind apart from the Name would be "dual-mindedness unperturbed"; it could not be called "singleness of mind." Thus, the *Praise of the Pure Land Sutra* states: "With compassion, [the Buddha] aids us and makes our hearts and minds unperturbed."<sup>53</sup> This is clearly not

<sup>51</sup> *Hanjusan*, T47, 454b.

<sup>52</sup> This parable is given in *Sanzangi* T37, 272c-273b. Ippen's interpretation differs somewhat from Shan-tao's own: "The two streams of fire and water are like all beings' love for greed, which floods their minds, and like their anger or hate, which burns like fire. The white path four or five inches wide joining the two shores is the awakening of the pure desire to be born in the Pure Land" (trans. D. T. Suzuki in *The Kyōgyōshinshō*, Kyoto: Eastern Buddhist Society, 1973, p. 100).

<sup>53</sup> T12, 350a. The two sutras quoted here are different translations of the Smaller *Sukhāvati-vyūha sūtra*.

## SAYINGS HANDED DOWN BY DISCIPLES

the single-mindedness of illusion and discrimination awakened by the practitioner.

24. Further he said, "Settled mind" is *namu*. "Practice" is the three characters, *a-mi-da*. "Mode of practice" is *butsu*.<sup>54</sup> When *Namu-amida-butsu* in which practitioner and Dharma are one has been realized, then the Three Minds, the Four Modes of Practice, and the Five Gates of Mindfulness are all the Name.<sup>55</sup>

25. Further he said, Everyone laments that he lacks the faith that birth is settled; this is completely without reason. There is no settlement in the hearts of foolish beings. Settlement is the Name. Thus, even though faith that birth is settled be lacking, if you leave all to your lips and recite the Name, you will be born. Birth, then, does not depend on the heart; it is through the Name that you will be born. 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. When you cast away your own heart and wholly realize that it is through the Name that you are born, then this heart of decisive settlement will arise of itself also.

26. Further he said, Settlement is the Name. Our bodies and our hearts and minds are unsettled. This body is the form of drifting along in the flow of impermanence; hence from instant to instant it arises and perishes. This mind is an illusive mind; hence it is false and illusory. Do not rely on them.

---

<sup>54</sup> Settled mind (安心 *anjia*), practice (起行 *kiyō*), and performance or fulfillment of practice (作業 *sagō*) are terms in the analysis of the practitioner's stance found in *Ōjōraisan*. Settled mind indicates the aspiration and assured faith described by the Three Minds. Practice—in terms of the three modes of action, worshiping with the body, reciting the Name, and thinking on Amida—has been formulated as the Five Gates of Mindfulness of Vasubandhu (worship of Amida, praise of the Name, aspiration to be born, contemplation on Amida and his land, and turning over merit) and Shan-tao's Five Right Practices (recitation of sutras, contemplation on Amida, worship, utterance of the Name, and praise). The Four Modes of Practice are: worship of Amida and the bodhisattva host; exclusive practice of reciting the Name; uninterrupted practice; and sustained practice throughout one's life.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Hōnen's statements in his *One-page Testimony or Ichigon Hodan* 28, in *EB* ix, 2, p. 98.

## THE RECORD OF IPPEN

27. Further he said (on the day of completion of a special session of nembutsu at Shikamatsu<sup>56</sup>), The Name is such that when we recite it, we attain birth through the wondrous and inconceivable working of Other Power, regardless of whether we believe in it or not. You must not, with your mind of self-attachment and self-power, seek to deal with it in this way or that. Since the Land of Bliss is the land of no-self, birth there cannot be attained through self-attachment; you must be born through the Name.

28. Further he said, All dharmas arise from nothingness; blind passions arise from self.

29. Further he said, Though you put heart and mind into the Name, do not take the Name into your own heart and mind.

30. Further he said, What we call "birth-and-death" is illusory thinking. In spite of the fact that illusory attachment, which is blind passion, has no reality, some people seek to free themselves from birth-and-death through their discriminative reflections on good and evil, taking this heart of illusory attachment and blind passion as their basis; this is utterly absurd. Thinking itself is the obstacle to emancipation. Hence it is stated: "Thinking as such is birth-and-death." Being free of birth-and-death means being free of thinking. As long as your mind remains unchanged from what it has been, liberation from birth-and-death is altogether impossible.

31. Further he said, In China, there is a mountain temple called Kinzan. It is a Zen temple.<sup>57</sup> At the foot of the mountain is a stupa inscribed:

---

<sup>56</sup> Special sessions for constant and dedicated nembutsu recitation at a temple or practice hall for a determined period—e.g., one day, a week, ninety days, etc.—were a common form of practice. Ippen seems to have regularly held sessions each month and for a week at the end of the year. Usually a group of practitioners was divided into six shifts which would take turns performing special hymns at the "six times"—at 4-hour intervals—of the 24-hour day. These shifts were called "time groups" (時衆 *jishū*); this is probably the origin of the use of this term for Ippen's followers generally. The term "Time school" (時宗 *jishū*) is a later designation not used by Ippen. Shikamatsu in Harima province is now part of Himeji city, Hyōgo prefecture.

<sup>57</sup> Kōshō Manju Zen-ji 興聖萬壽禪寺, one of the five main Zen temples, located at Ching-shan (j. Kinzan), Hangchow, in Chekiang.

## SAYINGS HANDED DOWN BY DISCIPLES

"The arising of thinking is sickness; its discontinuance is cure." With these lines of verse Shinchi-bō of Yura attained realization of the Dharma.<sup>58</sup>

32. Further he said, When the Name is called "nembutsu," "nen" in this word is not used to imply the thinking of our consciousness. Nembutsu is simply a term for the Name. It is just like saying "pine" or "bamboo" in naming things; it is a natural name.

33. Further he said, Concerning the statement, "Thinking on (*nen*) and voicing are one"<sup>59</sup>: the word "thinking" means voicing. The oneness here does not mean that conscious thought and vocal utterance are mingled and said to be one. From the very beginning thinking and voicing are one in essence. The oneness of thinking and voicing is nothing other than the Name itself.

34. Further he said, Concerning the matter of nembutsu-samadhi: "samadhi" means to see Buddha. The common definition [of nembutsu-samadhi] states that the term "samadhi" is applied because the person who practices meditative [nembutsu] sees Buddha while in his present body and the person of unconcentrated [nembutsu] sees Buddha at the moment of death, and so on.<sup>60</sup> However, this is a misapprehension. These two ways of seeing Buddha are both types of *kanbutsu* (contemplation on

---

<sup>58</sup> 心地持 (1207-98). Also known as Kakushin 覺心 and Hottō Enmyō Kokushi 法燈圓明國師. Important Kamakura period Zen master. Studied Shingon at Mt. Kōya and there became interested in Zen. Went to China and practiced at different temples, but especially under Wu-mên Hui-k'ai (j. Mumon Ekai), compiler of the *Mumonkan*. Returned to Japan and founded a temple at Yura in present Wakayama prefecture. Retained close associations with Mt. Kōya and nembutsu hijiri, and the *Record* relates Ippen's encounter with him.

<sup>59</sup> Hōnen's *Senjaku-shū*, T83, 6b, on Shan-tao's interpretation of the 18th Vow; cf. section 2 above.

<sup>60</sup> The views of nembutsu samadhi which Ippen describes here might be summed up: in meditative nembutsu one enters a state of concentration through repeated utterance of the Name and thus attains a vision of Amida and the Pure Land; that is, contact with the realm of enlightenment. For those incapable of meditative practices, the purifying effect of simple utterance at the time of death is enough to bring about Amida's appearance to take one to the Pure Land.

## THE RECORD OF IPPEN

Buddha) samadhi.<sup>61</sup> The nembutsu-samadhi we are concerned with is the Buddha-essence which has originally existed from the beginningless past, ever abiding and unperishing; hence, the Name itself is the true and real seeing of Buddha, the true and real samadhi. For this reason the nembutsu is called the king of samadhis.

35. Further he said, Do not seek the vision of Buddha apart from the utterance of the Name. The Name itself is the true and real seeing of Buddha. Buddha seen with the physical eye is not true Buddha. If we see Buddha with the eyes we now possess, we should realize that it is a demon. However, while dreaming there may possibly occur a true [vision of Buddha], for with dreams, the six forms of consciousness die away, and we have them while in a state of non-discrimination. Thus, in the Commentary [Shan-tao] uses the term, "dream self-concentration."<sup>62</sup>

36. Further he said, There are two types of demons, compliant demons and contrary demons. There are those which become demons while obedient to the practitioner's heart, and those which become demons while opposing and confusing him.<sup>63</sup> Of these two, the compliant demons are the more serious. Wife and children are such.

37. Further he said, The phrase, "Take in and receive, and not abandon,"<sup>64</sup> is interpreted in terms of the three types of relationship. "Take in" refers to the close relationship, "receive" to the immediate, and "not abandon" to the prevailing.<sup>65</sup>

---

<sup>61</sup> In general, practices of concentrating one's mind on features of the Buddha or the Pure Land.

<sup>62</sup> *Jōzengi*, T97, 267a.

<sup>63</sup> Compliant demons: family, treasure, etc. Contrary demons: sickness, misfortune. (*Genshaku*)

<sup>64</sup> 攝取不捨 *sei-shu fu-sha*. *Meditation Sutra* T12, 349b: "Each ray of [the Buddha's] light shines everywhere upon the worlds of the ten quarters, taking in and receiving and not abandoning the sentient beings of nembutsu."

<sup>65</sup> The three relations are set forth in *Jōzengi* T97, 268a, to explain the significance of the Buddha's light shining everywhere but taking in only people of nembutsu. Close: if a person always utters the Name, worships Amida and thinks on him, the Buddha hears, sees and recognizes him; thus there is no separation between practitioner and Buddha in bodily, verbal and mental acts. Immediate: if a person desires to see the Buddha, he

## SAYINGS HANDED DOWN BY DISCIPLES

38. Further he said, The ablutions of nuns who have broken the Tathagata's precepts and their torments to their bodies in no way constitute repentance. They know only the principle of causation expressed as "receiving the fruit of one's own acts," True and real repentance is the repentance of the Name that is Other Power. Hence Shan-tao states in explanation, "The saying of the Name from instant to instant is the constant repentance."<sup>66</sup> Do not cultivate a repentance with the mind of self-attachment in self-power.

39. Further he said, For the practitioner of the utterance of the Name in Other Power, the body may remain in this defiled world a while, but the heart has already attained birth and is in the Pure Land. Each of you should have deep faith in this truth.<sup>67</sup>

40. Further he said, There are three kinds of compassion: small compassion, medium compassion, and great compassion.<sup>68</sup> Great compassion is the compassion of the Dharma-body. Amida, who is the fulfillment of the special Vow, bears the great compassion of the Dharma-body and with it brings sentient beings across to enlightenment; hence, it is true and real and not vain.<sup>69</sup> Concerning this it is taught in the [*Meditation*] *Sutra*: "The Buddha-mind is no other than great compassion. With unconditional love it takes all sentient beings into itself."<sup>70</sup>

(*To be continued*)

---

appears before him. Prevailing: if a person utters the Name, all karmic evil is nullified, and the Buddha comes to receive him at the time of death.

<sup>66</sup> *Hanjuan*, T47, 452b.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. *Hanjuan*: "When one renounces, one parts forever from this world; when one longs, one abides constantly in the Pure Land." The Seizan school distinguishes two forms (or phases) of birth: the first occurs in the course of one's life with the attainment of settled mind and the realization that one's birth in the Pure Land has been in fact accomplished by Amida ten kalpas ago; the second is the actual parting from this world and going to the Pure Land at death.

<sup>68</sup> I.e. ordinary compassion felt by ignorant beings towards other beings in suffering; universal compassion for all sentient beings; compassion without object or intention, absolute and non-dichotomous. Taught in T'an-luan's *Commentary on the Pure Land Treatise of Vasubandhu*.

<sup>69</sup> Amida is the recompense-body Buddha in which the three Buddha-bodies are in conformity. (*Genshaku*)

<sup>70</sup> T12, 343c.