

THE EASTERN BUDDHIST

NEW SERIES

Vol. XI No. 1 May, 1978

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Published twice a year by The Eastern Buddhist Society.

	In Japan	Abroad
1 Year Subscription	2,000 yen	US\$ 8.00 or equivalent
2 Year Subscription	3,600 yen	US\$ 15.00 "
3 Year Subscription	5,000 yen	US\$ 20.00 "
5 Year Subscription	8,000 yen	US\$ 32.00 "
*Single copy	1,000 yen	US\$ 4.00 "

Subscribers in North America should send their subscriptions and orders for back numbers to Scholars Press, University of Montana, P.O. Box 5207, Missoula, Montana, 59806, U.S.A. Checks should be made payable to The Eastern Buddhist Society (Scholars Press).

Other payments from abroad should be remitted either by *Mail Transfer*, to Acct. No. 9200182, The Eastern Buddhist Society, and addressed to the Mitsubishi Bank Ltd., Shijo Karasuma, Kyoto, Japan, or by *Postal Transfer* (where available), to Acct. No. 4161, Kyoto Post Office, Kyoto, Japan.

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PRINTED IN JAPAN, KOMIYAMA PRINTING CO., TOKYO

THE EASTERN BUDDHIST

An unsectarian journal devoted to an open and critical study of
Mahayana Buddhism in all of its aspects, published by
The Eastern Buddhist Society
Otani University, Kyoto

Vol. XI No. 1

NEW SERIES

May 1978

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Frontispiece: The Mirror Portraiture of Shinran

This simple sketch of Shinran (1173–1262) is said to have been drawn in his lifetime by Sen-amidabutsu (*n.d.*), believed to be one of his disciples. The fact that it was done roughly, using only bold strokes of *sumi* and devoid of any color or ornamentation, suggests that it may have actually been a preparatory study drawn for a more elaborate work. The absence of such daily objects as cane, straw sandals or hide-mat seen in other examples of this genre, has the effect of revealing one aspect of Shinran's inner character—that of a solitary, stern seeker of the Way. As to when or why this portrait came to be venerated as the *Kagami no miei* 鏡御影 (lit., "mirror image portrait"), details are not known. In all probability the image of Shinran was so realistically rendered that, soon after completion, it was referred to in this way so as to distinguish it from other existing portraits.

This scroll is designated a National Treasure and preserved at Nishi Honganji in Kyoto. According to the colophon, it took its present form when it was repaired in November 1310 by Kakunyo (1270–1351), Shinran's great grandson and the third abbot of Honganji.

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BOOK REVIEWS

prose style, at least in translation, is academically dry and dully factual. Nor do the color and black-and-white illustrations give any adequate idea of the splendour of the originals. Even allowing for the difficulties of photographing incense-darkened and age-dimmed paintings on silk, many of the black-and-white illustrations are too small and their details indistinguishable. One might reasonably have expected better quality reproduction. But despite these disadvantages, this work, *faute de mieux*, is an essential addition to all libraries, personal or institutional, concerned with Buddhist art.

HAROLD STEWART

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Contributors include D. T. Suzuki, Nishitani Keiji, Hisamatsu Shin'ichi, J. W. de Jong and Abe Masao. Translated works include, among others, portions of the voluminous Avatamsaka-sutra, the Vimalakirtinirdesa-sutra, and selected fascicles from the Zen master Dogen's classic *Shobogenzo*.

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