

NOTES

THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF SHINRAN'S KYŌGYŌSHINSHŌ

IN commemoration of the 800th year since the birth of Shinran Shōnin (1173–1262), founder of the Jōdo Shin Sect of Buddhism, Higashi Honganji will soon publish Dr. D. T. Suzuki's English translation of Shinran's main work, the *Kyōgyōshinshō*. The *Kyōgyōshinshō* is made up of six volumes, of which the first four have been translated into modern English by the late Dr. Suzuki. Of all the works Shinran authored, the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, the "Collected Passages Expounding the True Teaching, Living, Faith and Realizing of the Pure Land," occupies the place of foremost importance in the history of Japanese Pure Land Buddhism. It is regarded in a sense as Shinran's commentary on his master Hōnen's *Senjaku Hongan Nembutsu Shū*. According to Shinran's own remarks appearing in the last volume, he wrote it out of a profound sense of gratitude for the spiritual guidance he had received from Hōnen.

Although attempts to translate the *Kyōgyōshinshō* into English have been made before in recent times by groups and individuals, they have not proved quite satisfactory in many respects. It is indeed a matter for congratulation that the major part of this important work has been translated by this world-famous authority on Mahayana Buddhist philosophy. It is highly significant to see that this translation is not only the last major work in Dr. Suzuki's long years of prolific writing activity, but also the culmination of his numerous writings on the theme of Shin Buddhism. It is only hoped that the remaining two volumes will some day be translated as well by somebody well qualified and competent for the work.

Back in April 1958, Higashi Honganji, in anticipation of the 750th anniversary of the death of its founder, to be commemorated in April 1960, officially entrusted Dr. Suzuki—then aged 90, the same age as Shinran upon his death in 1262—with the project of translating the *Kyōgyōshinshō* into English. The actual task was delayed until September 1960, and the rough draft finally completed (up to the fourth volume out of six) in March 1961. Dr. Suzuki made numerous additions and alterations on this draft until the very end of his life.

THE EASTERN BUDDHIST

Since then, up to the time of its publication, the staff of the Eastern Buddhist Society with the help of a number of Otani University scholars were engaged in coordinating the translation draft, providing it with indexes, glossary, chronology and charts, according to instructions given while the translator was still alive.

The English translation of the *Kyōgyōshūshō* is published together with a companion volume, *Collected Writings on Shin Buddhism*, and offered as a two-volume set. Volume I contains the translation of the *Kyōgyōshūshō*, with a glossary of terms, charts, and an index; it is approximately 400 pages.

Volume II contains Dr. Suzuki's essays on Pure Land Buddhism which have already appeared in some form or other; among them are "The Shin Sect of Buddhism," "The Myōkōnin," "Infinite Light," and "What is Shin Buddhism?" It includes as well translations by other people of other important Shin writings: *The Tannisō*, the *Shūji-shō*, the *Songs of Shinran Shōnin (Wasan)*, and the *Life of Shinran Shōnin (Godensō)*, most of which have been long out of print and difficult to obtain. It is 250 pages, with 12 pages of illustrations and an index.