

A STUDY IN THE PURE LAND DOCTRINE,
AS INTERPRETED BY SHŌKŪ, THE FOUNDER
OF THE SEIZAN BRANCH OF
THE PURE LAND SECT

I

During the latter half of the twelfth century, when in Europe the Pope's influence was at its height and all his followers were engaged fervently in the recovery of the Holy Land, here in Japan the old institutional Buddhism was in its course of downfall due to its own inner corruptions, and a newly-grown spirit was waging war against it. It was during this time of struggle that Hōnen (1133-1212), destined to be the father of all the Pure Land schools in Japan, founded an independent sect of Jodo, the Pure Land sect.

Among the many works and sayings of Hōnen, the "Ichimai Kishōmon" (One-Sheet Document), which was given as the last message to Genchi(源智), one of his disciples, well expresses the central idea of his doctrine. It runs thus: "By Nembutsu I do not mean such practice of meditation on the Buddha as is referred to by the wise men of China and Japan, nor is it the invocation of the Buddha's name, which is practised as the result of study and understanding as to the meaning of Nembutsu. It is just to invoke the name of Amida, without doubting that this will issue in the rebirth¹ of the believer in the Pure Land. Just this, and no other considerations are required. Men-

¹ Rebirth throughout this article stands for the Japanese *ōjō*. *ōjō* means "to leave this world and be reborn in the Pure Land, or the Tushita heaven, or the world of Kwannon, or some other worlds." There are many different views as to the nature of the Pure Land. They are, however, commonly divisible into two: the one holds that the Pure Land is reliable in the present life and exists as an idea or as a higher ideal world; the other thinks that the land is where we shall be reborn after death.

tion is often made of the threefold heart¹ and the four manners of exercise,² but these are all included in the belief that a rebirth in the Pure Land is most conclusively assured by the *Namu-Amida-Butsu*. If one imagines something more than this, one will be excluded from the blessings of the two Holy Ones, Amida and Sakyamuni, and left out of the Original Vow. Those who believe in the *Nembutsu*, however learned they may be in all the teachings of Sakyamuni, shall behave themselves like an ignoramus who knows nothing, or like a simple-hearted woman-devotee: avoid pedantry, and invoke the Buddha's name with singleness of heart."

This document gives Hōnen's idea in a nutshell, but there are many points which are very likely to be disputed. For example, Why is the *Nembutsu* the best of all works? Why must we cast away all other good works? Even if the *Nembutsu* is taken for granted as the best work, is it necessary to invoke the Buddha's name so continuously throughout one's life, or is it sufficient to invoke it just for once? Towards these questions, Hōnen assumed a rather liberal attitude, in which there was room enough for controversy. In fact, he explained these points sometimes in one way and sometimes in another. To him, as I interpret, the invocation of the name of Amida without doubting that it will issue in the rebirth of the believer in the Pure Land, is the alpha and omega of his faith, and nothing else is

¹ The threefold heart (*sanjin*, 三心), the spiritual preparations for the rebirth in the Pure Land, recommended in the Meditation Sutra. (1) The most sincere heart (*shijōshin*, 至誠心), (2) the deep heart (*jūshin*, 深心), and (3) the heart wishing for a rebirth in the Pure Land (*ekōhotsugwanshin*, 廻向發願心). As to the interpretation of this threefold heart, see page 90 et seq.

² The four manner of exercise (*shishū* 四修) or the four ways of practising the *Nembutsu* are prescribed in Zendo's "Hymn to the Rebirth" (*Ōjōraisan* 往生禮讚). (1) The practice with profound reverence (*kūgyōshū* 恭敬修), (2) the practice of the *Nembutsu*, and nothing else (*muyōshū* 無餘修), (3) the practice of the *Nembutsu* continuously without interruption (*mukenshū* 無間修), and (4) the continued practice throughout one's whole life (*jōjishū* 長時修).

needed. For it is in accordance with the Original Vow of Amida, who vowed that those who sincerely believed in him and earnestly desired to be reborn in his Pure Land and invoked his name for once up to ten times, should assuredly be reborn there; if they were not reborn, he would not attain Buddhahood. Hōnen believed in this in the most simple way and invoked the name of Amida, without being bothered with such questions as were mentioned before. His faith in Amida was a most practical one, and there was no need for him to inquire into the why of his faith which is above logic. This is where lies the mystical element of religion.

To his disciples, however, this was not enough. While the master still lived and his personality was the truth of his doctrine, it needed no interpretation. By his death, however, the doctrine became detached from its living background and was to be supported by argument. This was the task of his disciples; and they did it each in his own way according to his light and individual experience. In this manner, there arose many different schools of the Pure Land doctrine which with Hōnen had been one.

Of these many schools, we can distinguish six most prominently standing out, three of which, however, died away in course of time, but the remaining three are still in a flourishing state. One of them, the Shin, under the leadership of Shinran, became separated from all the rest, forming an independent sect, while the other two came to be known as different branches of the one Jōdo sect. One of them going under the name of Chinzei (鎮西) was established by Benchō (辨長), and the other called the Seizan (西山) branch has Shōkū (證空) for its founder.

The table on page 82 will help the reader to understand the development of the Pure Land doctrine after Hōnen.

I intend in the following pages to sketch the life and works of Shōkū, and to give an outline of his doctrine chiefly according to his "Book of Five Chapters," *Godanshō* (五段章).

		Principal tenets	
		Faith regarded as:	The significance of works:
Those who put more stress on faith:	Founder Kōsai, 幸西 (1163-1247),	Denomination Jōdo Sect, Ichinen Doctrina (now extinct);	The correspondence of our minds with the wisdom of Amida, by virtue of our relying upon his Vow. (No records left of his views.)
	Founder Shinran, 親鸞 (1173-1262),	Shin Sect;	Obeying the summons of Amida, who, in the form of his name, gives us faith and works for our rebirth;
	Founder Shōkū, 謠空 (1177-1247),	Jōdo Sect, Seizan Branch;	The understanding of the truth that Buddha-substance is our works for our rebirth;
	Founder Benchō, 辨長 (1162-1238),	Jōdo Sect, Chinzei Branch;	The mental attitude towards the Nembutsu;
Those who put more stress on works:	Founder Ryūkwan, 隆寬 (1148-1227),	Jōdo Sect, Chōrakuji Branch (now extinct);	(1) Life wholly devoted to the invocation of the name of Amida only; (2) Other works are disregarded.
	Founder Chōsai, 長西 (1184-1238),	Jōdo Sect, Kuhonji Branch (now extinct);	(1) Constant invocation of the name of Amida; (2) Other good works are as of the same efficacy.
			Our works become Amida's own; and, therefore, we must endeavour to do all good works, according to our capabilities. (1) Constant invocation of Amida's name is the right work; (2) Other good works are subsidiary.

II

Shōkū, whose other name was Zennebō (善慧房), was born in 1177 and entered the priesthood under Hōnen at the age of fourteen. He studied besides the Pure Land doctrine other schools of Buddhism, the Tendai (天台) under Gwanren (願蓮), and the Taimitsu¹ (台密) under Seishun (政春) and Jien (慈圓). He was ordained by Hōnen with the rite called Endontaikai² (圓頓大戒), and was given by Kōen (公圓) what is known as Baptism of Law-transmission, Denbo Kwancho (傳法灌頂).

In his twenty-second year, he was employed by his master as one of the revisers of the *Senjakushū*³ (選擇集), the most important text-book of the Jōdo sect, and lectured on it by the order of his master in the following year at the residence of Kujō Kanezane (九條兼實), who was then the prime minister. Some years later, he wrote the *Kwan-gyō Sho Shiki* (觀經疏私記), the "Private Notes on Zendo's Commentary on the Meditation Sutra," being entreated by Fujiwara Michiye (藤原道家), another high court dignitary. After his master's death, he resided at Ōjō-in (往生院) in the west of Kyōto; hence the name of Seizan, meaning "western hills."

It is said that he applied himself most diligently to the study of Zendo's Commentary on the Meditation Sutra, which he read day and night until he actually wore out three copies of it. It is also said that his lectures were not based on the literal meaning of the text, but singularly they

¹ The Taimitsu is an esoteric part of the Japanese Tendai.

² The Endontaikai, Great Spiritual Code of Morality in Mahayana Buddhism. The ordination taken place according to this rite is considered to qualify the ordained as belonging to the order of Bodhisattvas.

³ The *Senjakushū*, a work by Hōnen. The collection of the selected passages from various sutras, śāstras, and commentaries, with his notes, (hence the name *Senjakushū* 選擇集), arranged in order to show why we must believe in the doctrine of the Pure Land and how we must practise the Nembutsu.

coincided with the teaching of the *Hanjusan*¹ (般舟讚), which is one of the works of Zendō, but which was only afterwards discovered in the library of Ninnaji (仁和寺). Shōkū had a speculative turn of mind, gained many followers from among the upper classes, and a temple called Kwangishinin (歡喜心院) was founded for him by the order of the Emperor Gosaga (後嵯峨). He wrote an expository book on the Jodo doctrine, the *Chinkwan Yōjin* (鎮勸用心),² by the earnest request of Dōkaku, prince-abbot of the Tendai. The Empress Dowager was also interested in the Nembutsu, and for her Shōku wrote several papers on the subject; the book called *Nyoin Goshō* (女院御書)³ contains them, besides some of his letters addressed to a noble disciple of his. He passed away in 1247 at the age of seventy-one. The posthumous title, Kanchi Kokushi (鑑智國師), was given to him in the eighth year of Kwanei (寛政).

His chief works are:

1. *Kwammon Yōgi Shō* (觀門要義鈔), 43 vols., called "Jihitsushō" (自筆抄). This is a commentary on Zendō's works.⁴ Here he tries to interpret the whole system of Buddhism under three headings: (1) Gyōmon (行門), (2) Kwammon (觀門), and (3) Gugwan (弘願). According to him, (1) all the doctrines of Hinayana and Mahayana Buddhism except the teaching of the Meditation Sutra are called Gyōmon (i.e., "Exercise Gate"); for though they are diversified, they are all one in trying to attain Buddhahood by

¹ The *Hanjusan*, 1 vol., by Zendō. The full title is the *Hanjusanmai-gyōdō-ōjōsan* (般舟三昧行道往生讚), Hymn to the Rebirth by the Continuous Samadhi, *Pratyutpanna-samādhi*.

² The *Chinkwan Yōjin*, 1 vol., The Exhortation to and the Warnings in the Practice of the Nembutsu.

³ The *Nyoin Goshō*, 2 vols., the Letters to the Emperor Dowager.

⁴ Zendō's works are as follows: 1. The commentary on the Meditation Sutra (觀無量壽經疏), 4 vols.; 2. Hymns on the Adoration of the Rebirth (往生禮讚偈), 1 vol.; 3. Hymns on the Rebirth by the Continuous Samadhi (般舟讚), 1 vol.; 4. On the Ways of Meditating on Amida (觀念法門), 1 vol.; 5. Hymns on the Religious Rite (法事讚), 2 vols.

one's own efforts. (2) The teaching of the Meditation Sutra is called Kwammon (i.e., "Illumination Gate"); for it makes manifest Amida's merciful Vow by means of two forms of good work and a series of sixteen meditations. (3) By Gugwan is meant "Amida's Vow of Boundless Mercy", which is the essence of the Meditation Sutra. When the teaching of Buddha is thus systematised, Shōkū thinks that the ultimate aim of Buddhism is to make us realise that our own efforts are not strong enough for being reborn in the Pure Land and that only by believing in Amida's boundless love can we all attain Buddhahood.

2. "Tahitsushō" (他筆抄), 10 vols., is also a commentary on Zendo's works. The lectures delivered in his later years were taken down, so it is said, by one of his disciples and made into a book, hence "Tahitsusho" meaning a book "penned by another." Here he uses the new terms, Kengyo (顯行) and Jikwan (示觀), corresponding to Gyomon and Kwammon. There is another pair of terms, Shōin (正因) and Shōgyo (正行), which he uses in this text to express his understanding of the relation between faith (*anjin*) and works (*kigyō*). Shōin, the "right cause", is our faith in Amida's Original Vow, which is one in us all, while Shōgyo, the "right exercise", may vary with each of us according to his capability.

3. *Kwangyō Hiketsu Shū* (觀經秘決集), 2 vols., a commentary on the Meditation Sutra.

4. *Mandara Chūki* (曼陀羅註記), 10 vols., an explanation of Taema Mandala (當麻曼陀羅).

5. *Senjakushu Mitsuyōketsu* (選擇集密要決), 5 vols., a commentary on the *Senjakushu*.

6. *Shijuhachigwan Yōshakushō* (四十八願要釋抄), 2 vols., notes on the forty-eight vows of Amida.

7. *Shugyō Yōketsu* (修業要決), 1 vol., a brief commentary on Zendo's work.

Of these works, the first two are called *Kyōsō-bu-no-Sho* (教相部の書), books of "theoretical" explanation, con-

trusted to the other works known as "the Thirty-eight Volumes" of "symbolical" explanation, *Jisōbu-no-Sho* (事相部の書). There are, besides these, many other works also treating of the Nembutsu.

III

True to the spirit of Buddhism, Shōkū's doctrine starts from the actual state of things, which is far from being ideal and in which we are all suffering according to the law of karma. Shōkū first quotes a passage from the Meditation Sutra: "This world is a world defiled with five kinds of corruption¹ (*pañca-kashāyāḥ*), and filled with hell-dwellers, hungry-ghosts, and animals, and nothing good is found in it." According to Zendō, a commentator of the Meditation Sutra, we have: "This *sahaloka* (a world of patience) is a world of pain, inhabited in confusion by all kinds of wickedness, consumed like fire one after another by the eight kinds of pain, always inclined to create mutual enmity, smilingly practising a false friendship and always pursued by the robbers of the six senses;² it is like a burning pit where the three evils² are ready to devour all beings."

¹ The five corruptions (*gojoku* 五濁) are: (1) the corruption of the time (*kōjoku* 劫濁), the degenerate age, full of calamities, Sk. *kalpa-kashāyā*. (2) the corruption of thought (*kenjoku* 見濁), men have wrong ideas and superstitions, Sk. *dṛshṭi-kashāyā*. (3) the corruption of falling (*bonnōjoku* 煩惱濁), men are full of passions evil and defiled, Sk. *kleśu-k*. (4) the corruption of the person (*shujōjoku* 衆生濁), men's bodies become weak and their characters degenerate, Sk. *sattva-k*. (5) the corruption of life (*myōjoku* 命濁), man's life is shortened, Sk. *ayus-k*. Cf. Max Müller *Smaller Sukhāvīti-vyūha* § 18 (S.B.E. vol. XLIX).

² The six senses. According to the Buddhist psychology, there are six organs (*rokkukon* 六根), six objects (*rokkukyo* 六境), and six consciousnesses (*rokkushiki* 六識). Besides the ordinary five organs (eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body), the organ adapted for recognising the general aspect of object is added as the sixth. Corresponding to these six organs, there are six objects, viz. the worlds of sight, of hearing, of smell, of taste, or touch, and of idea. Also according to these six objects, there are six consciousnesses, i.e., the consciousnesses

Further, reflecting on the brevity of this life and filled with anxieties for the future, Shōkū adds: "This triple world is indeed a composite world. It is in its nature a transitory existence, not waiting for one's exhaling breath to return; at every instant the three evils accumulate their own rewards; and whatever form of the four existences¹ life may assume, there is no permanency in it. Whosoever is born is sure to die. Alas! life passes like lightning and it is like a drop of dew on the blade of grass, waiting to dry up in the morning sun. Alas! the body is like a leaf before the wind, and it is again like the morning-glory which withers before the evening comes. In this temporary abode of the five aggregates,² the occupant is like a traveller who migrates through the six paths of existence.³ While a spirit, wandering in the intermediate realm⁴ (the Buddhist Purgatory), is left alone to find its transitory fate, the

of sight, of hearing, of smell, of taste, of touch, and of idea. Above all the six objects are called the six robbers, for they rob us of the light of wisdom.

The three evils, (*sandoku* 三毒) (1) covetousness (2) anger (3) folly.

¹ The four existences (*shishū*, 四生) are as follows: (1) womb-birth, e.g. animals. (Sk. *jarayuja*). (2) egg-birth, e.g. birds. (Sk. *andaaja*). (3) moisture-birth, e.g. insects. (Sk. *samsvedaja*). (4) metamorphosis-birth, e.g. Bodhisattvas. (Sk. *upapaduka*). *Kusharon*, vol. VII.

² The five aggregates (*go-un* 五蘊). Man is conceived to be made up of the following five elements,—viz. matter, sensation, thought, action, and consciousness. So long as these elements continue to combine with one another, man's life lasts, but when they separate, man's life comes to an end.

³ The six paths of existence (*rokudō*, 六道). In Buddhist cosmology, the worlds where one's soul migrates are divided into three, viz., the world of desire, the world of form, and the world of no-form; from another point of view these three worlds are divided into the six paths of existence, namely, hell, the abode of hungry-ghosts, the animal world, the asura world, the human world, and heaven. For particulars see S. Beal, *Catena of Buddhist Scripture*, p. 18.

⁴ The intermediate realm (*chūyū* 中有), one of the four modes of existence. (1) Birth (2) Existence proper (3) Death (4) The intermediate realm, of which the last one is mentioned as the period

decaying substances and bones are exposed in the wilderness. Pleasure, human as well as celestial, passes away like a dream or a vision. Sorrows due to the eight pains¹ are soon upon us, and woes from the five fadings² lose no time to assail us. Hell and the animal world wait upon us as the reward of our evil deeds. There we suffer in the eight scorching and eight freezing hells.³ There a mutual enmity

when one is dead in the past world and is not yet born in the next. The body of one in this state of existence is as big as that of a child five or six years old, and consists of minute elements of purity, invisible to our physical eyes. There are various views concerning the duration of this state: some say it lasts for a week, others say it lasts for forty-nine days; some say it is only for a moment, others say that it is indefinite.

¹ The eight pains, pains in the human world. (1) Pain of birth (*shōku* 生苦), Sk. *jatir-duḥkham*; (2) Pain of age (*rōku* 老苦), Sk. *jara-d.*; (3) Pain of sickness (*byōku* 病苦), Sk. *vyadhi-d.*; (4) Pain of death (*shūku* 死苦), Sk. *manana-d.*; (5) Pain of parting with loved ones or objects of affection, (*aibetsuriku* 愛別離苦), Sk. *priyavisamprayoge-d.*; (6) Pain of meeting with what one dislikes (*onōdeku* 怨憎會苦), Sk. *apriyasamprayoge-d.*; (7) Pain of not obtaining what one seeks (*gufutoku* 求不得苦), Sk. *yaḍ apicchaya paryshamano na labhate tad api-d.*; (8) Pain of the five powerful elements, that is, the body itself produces pain (*goonjōku* 五蘊盛苦), Sk. *samkshepena pañcōpadanaskandha-d.*

² The five fadings in heavenly beings (天人五衰) who live in the lower heavens. These signs appear when they are doomed to die. (1) Defilement of clothes, (2) Withering of the flowers on their heads, (3) Bad smell in the body, (4) Perspiration under the arm-pits, (5) Dislike of the proper seat. There is another kind of the five fadings smaller one as it is called, (1) Cessation of musical voice, (2) Disappearance of the light from the body, (3) Sticking to the body of bathing water, (4) Attachment to objects, (5) Blinking of the eyes.

³ The eight scorching and eight freezing hells. The scorching ones are as follows: (1) *tōkwatsu* (等活), Sk. *samjīva*; (2) *kokujō* (黑繩), *kalasutra*; (3) *shūgō* (衆合), *samghata*; (4) *kyōkwan* (叫喚), *rawava*; (5) *daikyōkwan* (大叫喚), *maharawaba*; (6) *shōnetsu* (焦熱), *tapana*; (7) *daishōnetsu* (大焦熱), *pratapana*; (8) *muken* (無間), *avici*. The eight freezing ones are as follows: (1) *abuda* (犍闍陀), Sk. *arbuda*; (2) *nirabuda* (尼刺都陀), Sk. *nirarbuda*; (3) *atata* (阿唎訶), Sk. *atata*; (4) *gogoba* (臆々婆), Sk. *hahava*; (5) *kokoba* (虎々婆), Sk. *luhuba*; (6) *upara* (嚙鉢羅), Sk. *utpara*; (7) *guren* (紅蓮), Sk. *padma*; (8) *daiguren* (大紅蓮), Sk. *mahapadma*.

takes place and famine prevails. An iron rod crushes the bones and a forest of swords cuts deeply into the flesh. The hell-keepers and rakshas will keep their ever-watchful and angry eyes upon us, and the prisoners cry out in utmost agony. Ye, fools! that ye should suffer for ever the pains of the three evil states of existence for the sake of worldly gain and reputation. Ye, ignorant ones! unless ye get out of the painful sea of birth and death while enjoying life, how in the future do ye expect to reach the yonder shore of enlightenment? Therefore, ye should loathe the triple world and the six states of existence in order to enter the gate of eternal bliss.”

IV

Those who are weary of this world, would naturally seek a world where there is no pain and suffering whatever. an ideal world worth our living. The Pure Land is such a world of values. Shōkū expresses the idea in the following way: “To Vaidehī,¹ who wished to abandon this world in order to be reborn in a Pure Land, Sakyamuni showed her all the Pure Lands in the ten quarters. But as all the Pure Lands other than the western one do not permit those who are contaminated with evil passions, Vaidehī chose the latter as the place for her future rebirth. That Sakyamuni specially disclosed the one which is situated in the west beyond thousands of millions of lands, was due to his boundless mercy; for this enables all sentient beings to orient their place of rebirth, setting their bewildered thoughts at ease.”

Now, according to Shōkū, there are three ways of conceiving the western Pure Land. The first points to the one in our inner minds, which is, however, regarded as in the

¹ Vaidehī (Idai, 韋提), the queen of Bimbishāra (Bimbashara, 頻婆娑羅). The heroine in the tragedy in the palace of Magadha. Persecuted by her own son, she became weary of this world and desired to be reborn in the Pure Land. To this, The Meditation Sutra owes its origin.

west; the second is this world itself; and the third is an ideal world which, however, actually appeared to the visions of Vaidehī. The Pure Land which is in our mind is the conception of the Shingon sect, according to which this mind is immediate knowledge itself, Myōkwansattchi (妙觀察智 *pratyavekṣhaṇā-jñānam*), and is represented by Amida, while this body is the abode of the Buddha, not distinguishable from his Pure Land, as no other Pure Lands are conceivable than this body itself. The second Pure Land belongs to the Tendai, where it is conceived as a world not actually existing in its ultimate sense but existing as a relative or provisional one, that is, as the world of the *Nirmānakāya*.¹ The third Pure Land is a land of compensation which has two senses; according to the first it is one specially sought after as the most splendid and glorious of all the Pure Lands, whereas according to the other sense it is one produced by the special Vow of Amida for the sake of defiled women and sinful beings. This last is the land where all the Pure Land followers desire to be reborn.

V

By what means can we reach the land of Amida? Shōkū says: "According to the Meditation Sutra, a threefold heart is needed, the most sincere heart, the deep heart, and the heart wishing for a rebirth in the Pure Land; and those in whom the heart functions thus in threefold way are sure to be reborn in the Pure Land of Amida. Both Zendō and Hōnen are quite emphatic in their insistence on these spiritual preparations as recommended in the Sutra."

How is this threefold heart to be awakened? Shōkū goes on to say that the followers of the Pure Land doctrine differ² in their views as to the interpretation of what this

¹ *Nirmānakāya*, Jap. *ōjin* 應身, lit the adaptation-body, i.e. body transformed so as to be intelligible to human beings. One of the *Trīkayas* (*Dharma-k.*, *Sambhoga-k.*, and the *Nirmana-k.*).

² Generally speaking, this threefold heart shows that we must give up the confidence in "Self-Power" and enter into the faith of the

heart is, but the view presented below is in accordance with that of Hōnen himself, which is explained in one of his epistles as regards the awakening of the heart towards the Nembutsu.

By the first, the most sincere heart, we get away from the dominating idea of "Self-Power," which is cherished by those who do not understand the futility of works as the means of attaining to Buddhahood; for the Buddha is conceived by them as one who keeps himself away from them and to whom they do not stand in an intimate relationship; for this reason they want to win Buddha over to their side by their own efforts. Shōkū interprets: "The most sincere heart means truthfulness, straightforwardness, and simplicity. It is said in the Sutra that Bodhisattva Dharmākara, while he was yet in his disciplinary stage, practised six virtues of perfection in their multitudinous aspects, and our truthfulness consists in recognising that the Bodhisattva practised all these deeds in perfect sincerity. We read again in the Sutra that the Bodhisattva vowed that if those beings in the ten quarters should believe in him with serene thoughts, and should wish to be reborn in his country, and should have thought of him [or repeated his name]. say. ten times, and if they should then not be reborn there he might not obtain the perfect knowledge; our truthfulness consists in recognising that the Bodhisattva vowed this with "Other-Power." So much is the same in all the Pure Land doctrines. But the so-called "Other-Power" does not mean the same idea in all of them. According to the Chinzei Branch, it is the help of Amida which is given to the devotee to make him accomplish the good deeds of his own efforts, in order that he may get into the Land of Amida; for it is believed in that Branch that we are not so bad that we cannot be converted, so we must strive to be sincere and good. According to the other Pure Land doctrine, the Shin sect, it is the gift from Amida to us by which we are capable to be reborn in that Land, as our own works are of no purpose; for it is believed in that sect that we are so bad that we cannot be converted, so we cannot enter the Pure Land without Amida's gift. Therefore, in the Shin sect, this threefold heart is Buddha's heart which is to be given to us, while in Chinzei this means our determination to be good by the help of Amida.

serenity of thought. By a heart being straightforward is meant to perceive that all our works, however good they may seem to us, are no means of rebirth into the land of Amida. Truthfulness is to admit honestly what is impossible for us to accomplish as being really so. When we know how truthfully the Bodhisattva vowed for our salvation, we can get away from attachments and false judgments. By attachment is meant our own human efforts to get rid of what we consider a confused state of mind, to practise good works with a heart we consider pure, and by these means to wish to be reborn in the Pure Land. When we find out that we are too weak to break a piece of wood, we stop taking further steps to accomplish the impossible; in like manner, when we find out that we are too weak to break the stick of evil passions as the three poisonous desires are too strong, we do not trouble ourselves any further about them. To realise this fact on our part is truthfulness.

He goes on: "Untruthfulness on our part as mortal beings though outwardly affecting to be wise, good, and ever-striving, means the heart entirely false. We are false, avaricious, wrathful, and deceitful; we cannot stop wrong doing like vipers and reptiles. Even if we endeavour to do good works for all our lives and wish thereby to be taken up in the Land of Purity we cannot attain the end. For we cannot be truthful in its religious sense, as Zendo says, 'Even when we attempt to do good works throughout the course of our lives with the utmost energy and in good earnest, as if putting out fire on our own heads, we cannot call these truthful because they are tainted with the poison of evil desire and falsehood.' There is, however, a way to do away with false attachments. When the latter are converted into the knowledge of Buddha as embodying absolute truthfulness we participate in his truthfulness. The truthful heart means the acknowledgment of evil deeds as due to the karma of transmigration, and of the so-called good works as not really so, and not to be led astray by mere words, good or bad.

When this is truly understood we get into the truthfulness of Amida's heart. When we are thus made truthful and sincere, we begin to loathe this world and desire the Pure Land, ceasing from doing evil deeds and carrying out all good works like Bodhisattvas. So we obtain sincerity of heart."

The second, the deep heart, is to get a new standpoint, which is held by those who know their own impotence to attain Buddhahood by performing any good works and who realise how closely they stand towards Buddha and do not keep him away at a distance. The reason that makes us stand closely towards Amida is this: Our rebirth in the Pure Land is not possible apart from the fact that Buddha attained Buddhahood, and this fact proves in its turn that Buddhahood and rebirth are two aspects of one truth. Both Amida's enlightenment and our rebirth must thus be said to have been accomplished simultaneously. Why is this so? Because Amida, while he was in his Bodhisattvahood, vowed that we should be reborn in his Land, through the merit of good works carried out by himself, and finally through this merit he attained enlightenment, proving that our rebirth is thus made an accomplished fact. Therefore, when we are sincerely devoted to him he enters into our own hearts where he attains his enlightenment and where our rebirth is assured at the same time. To be confirmed in this belief is the deep heart.

Shōkū says: "The second, the deep heart, is a heart to believe firmly and devotedly in the Original Vow. When we gain this belief, we realise what Amida first intended in making his Vow. The belief is analysable into two components. The one is to know "self" and the other is to believe in Buddha. According to Zendo, we have: 'The first belief is to know decidedly and believe firmly that we are sinful mortals suffering the pain of birth and death from time immemorial, wandering through the six paths of existence, and knowing no clue whatever as to the way to

escape from transmigration.' Even when we perform all kinds of good works so called, we do not perform them with a truthful heart, that is, an idea of selfishness is always mixed in them, and thereby we are utterly unable to get out of the round of birth and death. To believe thus that we cannot get out of this transmigration by our own efforts is to know 'self.'

"Next, the belief in Buddha is to know decidedly and to believe firmly [as Zendo says], that Amida's forty-eight Vows do really save us, and that when we, undoubtingly and without hesitation, board the boat of the Original Vow we are most assuredly conveyed to the yonder shore of enlightenment. It is to know decidedly and believe firmly that the Original Vow of Amida is the Vow that saves us, that the doctrine of Sakyamuni teaches this, that all other Buddhas testify uniformly to this truth. It is to know decidedly and believe firmly that Amida's Vow will turn us into those who enjoy the five wisdoms¹ and five insights,² even though we may be committing the five deadly sins³

¹ The five wisdoms (五智) of Buddha: (1) Buddha-wisdom (*butchi* 佛智), (2) inconceivable wisdom (*fushigichi* 不思議智), (3) unspeakable wisdom (*fukashōchi* 不可稱智), (4) unlimited wisdom (*daijokochi* 大乘廣智), (5) culminating wisdom unequalled and unparalleled (*mutomurinsaijōshochi* 無等無倫最上勝智).

² The five insights (五眼) of Buddha. (1) physical eye (*nikugen* 肉眼), (2) celestial eye (*tengen* 天眼), (3) dharma eye (*hogen* 法眼), (4) wisdom eye (*egen* 慧眼), (5) Buddha eye (*butsugen* 佛眼).

³ The five deadly sins (*gogyaku* 五逆), Sk. *pañcanantaryāni*: (1) Killing one's father (*shifu* 殺父) *pitṛghata*, (2) Killing one's mother (*shimo* 殺母) *matṛghata*, (3) Killing an Arhat (*shirakwan* 殺羅漢) *arhadvadhā*, (4) Wounding the Buddha's body (*suibushinketsu* 出佛身血) Sk. *tathāgata-syantike dushitacitta rudhirot padana*, (5) Breaking the peace of Brotherhood (*hawagōsō* 破和合僧), Sk. *sangha-bheda*.

There is another set of five deadly sins which are prohibited in the Mahayana sutras: (1) Destroying temples, pagoda, scriptures, or images; stealing things belonging to the Three Sacred Treasures; making others do the same, and looking on with a glad heart; (2) Reviling the Buddha's laws, whether of the Lesser or Greater

and the ten evil deeds,¹ and though women may be labouring under the five obstructions.² The Vow will turn the evil passions into the marks of Buddhahood. The essence of the Vow is *Namu-Amida-Butsu*.

“*Namu* means ‘to trust,’ and ‘to trust’ is to believe in the power of the Vow, and that Amida will embrace such a believer because Amida is Love itself. When this belief on our part, which is *Namu*, is attained, the Buddha’s mercy is realised in it, which is distinguished as *Butsu* in the *Namu-Amida-Butsu*. The attainment of belief and the realisation of mercy are one, being two aspects of one experience. Further, Buddha means enlightenment, unfathomable wisdom. When this wisdom is realised in our hearts, we are enlightened. Sakyamuni and all other Buddhas are thus one in the attainment of *Namu-Amida-Butsu*. As they are all one, thus of one and identical body of enlightenment, we who get into this state, also participate in Amida’s own enlightenment. We are then said to be reborn in the Land of Amida by the power of Amida’s Original Vow, and on the part of Amida we can say that his Buddhahood is realised through our belief in him. It is, therefore, we may say, that there is no Amida’s enlightenment apart from Vehicles; (3) Persecuting the Buddhist priest; (4) Committing any of the five deadly sins (above-mentioned one); (5) Denying the laws of moral causation, not only being addicted oneself to the ten evil deeds, but also leading others to such sins.

¹ The ten evil deeds, (*jūaku* 十惡), Sk. *daśakūśhalāni*: (1) Killing (*sesshō* 殺生), (2) Stealing (*chyūtō* 偷盜), (3) Committing adultery (*jain* 邪淫), (4) Lying (*mōgo* 妄語), (5) Using the hypocritical speech (*kigo* 綺語), (6) Equivocation (*ryōzetsu* 兩舌), (7) Slandering (*akku* 惡口), (8) Covetousness (*tonyoku* 貪慾), (9) Anger (*shinni* 瞋恚), (10) Ignorance (*guchi* 愚痴).

² The five obstructions of women (*goshō* 五障): (1) She cannot become Cakravartti-rajā, Wheel King, who rules over the four provinces of Sumeru; (2) She cannot become Sikhim, King of Mahābrahman, who presides over the triple world; (3) She cannot become Sakradēvendra, Lord of the Trayastrmsah, who dominates over the thirty-three heavens, protects Buddhism and conquers the king of Asura; (4) She cannot become Mara, King of all the evil spirits; (5) She cannot become a Buddha.

our belief in him and that there is no rebirth on our part when severed from Amida's Buddhahood. To attain such a belief is called being reborn in the Land of Purity."

The third, the heart wishing for rebirth, means to dedicate one's works towards the attaining of rebirth in the Land of Amida. Good works so called were not good at all so long as the most sincere heart was not realised: but now that we have this heart, good works so called are valued from quite a new point of view and are thus good in the real sense of the work, and will surely be efficient to carry us into Amida's own land. To attain such a state of mind is known as the heart wishing for rebirth.

Shōkū says, "The third heart, Ekō-Hotsugwan-Shin (廻向發願心) in Japanese, is to dedicate all good works in previous lives as well as in the present to the attaining of the Land of Amida, rejoicing at the same time at every kind of good works that may be done by other fellow-beings in their past and present lives. Amida performed an innumerable number of good works for our sake, for our enlightenment, in order that we may avail ourselves of his work. To realise that Amida's work now directly proceeds from his merciful heart, we obtain this heart wishing for this rebirth."

This threefold activity of the heart issues from the belief that Amida's Vow does surely save us when, trusting its power, we practise the Nembutsu; for when we trust in his Vow, we have the most sincere heart, and when we practise the Nembutsu trusting in the Vow, we have the deep heart; and when we are assured of salvation, we have the heart wishing for rebirth.

VI

Such is the meaning of the threefold heart which functions as one as regards faith. The instant we attain this faith Buddha enters into our hearts and embraces us, and we are united with Amida inseparably. This state is

technically known as *Sesshu-Fusha*, *Sesshu* meaning "to take in" and *Fusha* "not to forsake." When this state is attained our works are Buddha's works whether they are done with the body, or the mouth, or the mind: conversely all the works done by Buddha whether with the body, the mouth, or the mind are all our own works. When this state is expressed in the formula of *Namu-Amida-Butsu*, when the dualism of *Namu* and *Amida* is unified, that is, when we are absorbed in *Amida*, for there are no more two things standing in opposition, one as "self" and the other as *Amida*; there is now a perfect unity, which is rebirth.

Shōkū explains this state of unity with the following analogy. "When a piece of dry wood takes fire, the latter speedily consumes the former: and when the wood turns into embers, one cannot say whether these are fire or wood: one may call them fire just as well as wood. In this, the dry wood represents mortal beings as they are unable to do any good work by themselves, being only capable of doing evils. But when they, relying on *Amida*, give themselves up to him, he enters into their hearts, and his enlightenment becomes their enlightenment. To give another analogy, the moon reflects itself in water wherever there is some: the moon and the water become inseparable here. Therefore, it is said that the rebirth is attained when *Amida* enters into our hearts and when thus our works are his and his are ours: in the unity of *Amida* and ourselves, *Amida* realises his Buddhahood and on our side rebirth is attained."

According to *Shōkū*, there is another kind of rebirth, which is called *Tōtoku Ōjō* (當得往生), rebirth to be attained in the future at the end of this life, to which is contrasted "rebirth already attained," of which mention has already been made. As to this future rebirth after death, it does not take place with us all in one way. It differs with each individual according to what kind of merit he accumulated while living. The realm assigned to those

who are to be taken in to the Pure Land according to this form of rebirth is divided into nine grades. (As to these different grades see the Meditation Sutra).

These two kinds of rebirth, the one attainable here and the other in the future, differ as to time, but essentially they are the same. The realm assigned to those who have already attained rebirth here is known as the Pure Land of Hossho Hosshin (法性法身), which means the unborn Dharmakaya: whereas those belonging to the second form of rebirth get into the Pure Land of Kuhon Kakubetsu (九品格別), meaning the Pure Land of Nine Divisions. The Pure Land may thus be conceivable as being twofold, but in reality it remains one and the same.

VII

In this Land of Purity into which we get by absolutely believing in the Original Vow of Amida, Buddha and we are so interpenetratingly merged that no distinctions now are obtainable between these two, all the doings of Amida are our doings and ours are done through him. However, this unity does not mean that in it no multiplicity is traceable. We, ignorant mortals, cannot avoid cherishing evil passions, and Amida cannot be said to be altogether unconnected with these evil passions on our part. Each moment an evil desire is awakened in us we think of Amida, and through this thinking, the evil itself is purified, resulting in the accomplishment of good works. Thus, we are called Bombu (凡夫, sk. *bāla*), i.e., ordinary mortals, in whom evil passions are inevitable however much we may try to overcome them. But this does not hinder our being reborn in the Pure Land: not that we may for this reason the more indulge in desires evil and defiled, but that we repent our sinful deeds and thoughts and grow all the more confirmed in the power of Amida's Original Vow.

Shōkū advises us to convert all the evil passions we may possibly cherish into opportunities of desiring the Pure Land.

For instance, "when we covet material treasure, let us turn this desire into that for the seven treasures of the Pure Land. When we crave for some particular food, let us imagine all kinds of dainties procurable in the Pure Land. When we desire fine clothes, let us turn our minds to the divine raiments in the Pure Land. When we are affected with heat and cold, let our hearts dwell on the climate of that Land. When we long for a recreation, let us fancy a stroll with Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. When we hear music on earth, let us apply our minds to the celestial music in that Land. When we see flowers, let us conceive those made of the seven treasures in the Land of Amida. When we see the sun, let us figure before our eyes the moonlike face of Buddha. In this way, whenever we enjoy anything pleasurable in this life, let us practise the Nembutsu, thinking of all the enjoyments in the Pure Land; and whenever we experience anything painful, let us also practise the Nembutsu, thinking of the eight pains sufferable in the three evil paths of existence. Let us thus practise the Nembutsu all the time each according to his own capabilities.

"As the result of this constant practice of the Nembutsu, our minds will be energised and Amida himself will appear even to these physical eyes of ours. *Namu-Amida-Butsu* is the point where Buddha appears to us and where we meet him. So everybody who will practise the Nembutsu through his life without interruption will assuredly come into the presence of Amida himself."

VIII

I hope in this brief exposition I have partially made clear the meaning of the Nembutsu according to the doctrine of Shōkū, the founder of the Seizan branch of the Pure Land sect. In short, according to him, the Nembutsu means, first, the invocation of the name of Amida; secondly, it is the name itself; thirdly, it is the substance of Amida;

fourthly, it is our knowledge of the substance; fifthly, it means all sort of works done with and in the knowledge of the substance of Amida; and lastly, the great universe itself is the Nembutsu.

To recapitulate: The Nembutsu is the name of Amida, the name represents the substance, and the name and substance are unified in the Nembutsu, and when this is practised there takes place the unity of Buddha and ourselves. The knowledge of the substance of Amida is the *sine qua non* of all works on the side of mortal beings. The Nembutsu is the one work by which all good works are really possible and without which whatever good works we may think we are doing, are not so in the true sense of the word. In one sense, therefore, the Nembutsu belongs to Amida and in another it is our own. When the Nembutsu is thus conceived it may assume another aspect and become what is called technically the "Nembutsu of the Great Universe." Here we have Shōkū's great philosophy of symbolism, which is his unique way of explaining the symbolical features of the universe. This, however, will require another opportunity to be clearly elucidated.

SHIZUTOSHI SUGIHIRA