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Medieval Buddhist Textuality: *Kyōgyōshinshō* as Literature

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Introduction

One central issue that any student of classical Japanese culture encounters sooner or later in his studies is the dilemma of fresh perspective. When handling a subject matter that has been around, and often even studied, for hundreds of years already, how can a modern scholar avoid simply rehashing old questions and old answers? Is our fate, then, simply to either search for previously unfound texts and materials or to view old questions in the light of whatever cultural or literary theory happens to be in vogue? True, the former approach can be a veritable goldmine if one happens to be in right place at the right time and can get his hands on important documents that were previously unknown—as in the case of Buddhist historian Washio Kyōdō when he found Eshinni's letters in 1921 as he was conducting an inventory in the archives of Nishi Honganji temple in Kyoto. The latter approach also has its advantages, in that it can give us new and valuable insights into materials that have been studied and researched repeatedly. The problem, however, lies in the universal applicability of modern theories onto cultures that may or may not have worked according to similar standards. The implications of this latter question are far too deep and far-reaching for me to discuss here in detail, but I will be touching on this subject while discussing different ways of reading and how they can—and perhaps should—be applied to the study of Japanese Buddhism and classical Japanese culture as a whole.

However, this is why I found the topic of the symposium so interesting. How can we approach the subject matter of our research from a fresh and original angle that enables us to shed more light on the questions that interest us and thus make the objects of our interest more approachable? The process of rethinking and renewing is central to every scholar—otherwise the ideas become stagnant. Rethinking, however, for its own sake is not always beneficial. How then can we find relevant new angles while still keeping in touch with the classical nature of the source materials? In this article, I offer one view into how to view medieval Buddhist texts in the light of the general literary atmosphere of the time of their birth. After all, a text is a text, and if we are acting as readers in a textual world where no lines were drawn between literary and religious worlds from literature's point of view, why and how should we draw those lines when approaching the subject matter from the field of religion?

Navigation and Textual Signposts

The central question is deceptively simple: how should we read a text? If we are dealing with a medieval Japanese Buddhist text, how should we approach it so that we can say something meaningful about the text itself? What if we want to read *Kyōgyōshinshō* in order to understand Shinran's views on the question of faith? If I give the text to someone without any background in either Buddhism or medieval Japanese culture, for example a member of my family, he might well be able to read the words that have been written, gain some valuable insights for his life, and even get some sort of an idea about the nature of the Faith[1] that Shinran is so interested in. However, the scholarly value of such an assessment and reading of this text would be close to nothing if we wanted to understand Shinran's ideas of Faith. Why is this? Because we can see that a modern reader with no background knowledge on a subject matter this far from our everyday life simply will not have the ability to understand the text the same way that Shinran would have understood his own words. As I don't have a background in literary theory, I am using these words in their most common-sense meaning: "reader" is someone who at any given time reads a text, and "modern" in the sense of someone who is living in the modern world, not at the time that the texts in question were written or compiled. It is of course clear that every reader in every time has had their own lenses through which they look at the texts that they are reading. In my opinion, the interesting question is, how can we enable ourselves to approach a text so that our understanding of it comes as close as possible to the understanding of the writer or the original audience of the text?

Textual presupposition is a natural but unfortunate thing. Without us even noticing, our built-in models of relating to texts will set us on a certain route of reading and interpretation, and it is all too easy for us to overlook the signposts inherent in the text itself. This is less a problem when we encounter familiar texts, which we can interpret "correctly" by picking up either intuitively or consciously the familiar directions that these signposts give us. When we are presented with something unfamiliar—signposts that are written in a language with which we are unacquainted—the probability of missing the trail of the text suddenly increases, and it is all too easy to end up lost and confused in the middle of foreign territory.[2] In the field of the study of literature, the necessity of navigating the text using its own inherent guidance is

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1 For the purposes of this paper, I will use the same term—Faith with a capital F—for both Shinran's terms *shin* 信 and *shinjin* 信心.

2 Although there are no theories about East Asian textuality that could be used as they stand, there are two scholars who have touched on the subject from a point of view that helps to clarify the logic in Shinran's writing. François Jullien has written about the argumentative patterns of Chinese culture in his book *Detour and Access* (Jullien 2000), and Sarah Allen has traced the roots of the Chinese conceptual schemes and philosophical language in her *The Way of Water and Sprouts of Virtue* (Allen 1997). Both of these books address Chinese texts and Chinese culture, and as such need to be applied with some care. The similarities between Chinese and Japanese culture are, however, obvious, and the general lines behind these theories can also be applied to the Japanese notions of textuality. The general notions presented in these two works are also intriguing from the point of view of Japanese literature, and I feel that my project is not so much a progeny, but more like a fellow traveler on the same quest.

often taken as a self-evident. In order to understand, for instance, the literature of the Heian-Kamakura periods, one needs to understand, at least to some extent, the main currents of the culture that gave birth to those texts; in order to get the most out of reading this literature, it should be read following as closely as possible to the way that the original author would have read it.

This problem is not restricted to literature, but can be found in every field that has to do with reading and interpreting texts. In the study of Japanese Buddhism, we are also often encountered with texts that we need to try to make sense of in order to understand our own field better. In Buddhist studies, this often entails knowing the Buddhist tradition with the theories and doctrines behind it, so that, when reading a text, one knows from which tradition, which lineage, and which doctrinal background the writer comes. The understanding of the various, often philosophically loaded, terms and concepts is deemed necessary for the student of doctrinal texts, while those who are more oriented towards an anthropological approach tend to focus on the cultural and sociological aspects of the religion. Both groups also make use of the various theoretical angles that the mostly western academia has come up with, often adapting them to the non-western circumstances, but nonetheless tapping them for terms and approaches that will enable the research to be included as a part of the wider field of the study of religion or philosophies—whichever the researcher feels more a part of.

What then makes this approach particularly problematic when the object of study is the Buddhist texts of the Kamakura Period? Quite simply the same divide I have just made—the separation between literary and religious texts. The separateness between these two fields is an almost always undisputed assumption, especially when talking about doctrinal Buddhist texts. For Japanese texts that are associated in any way with Buddhism, what can be described as doctrinal texts are only researched for their religious contents and meanings, while their poetic qualities are overlooked. This might be due to the protestant text-based ideals that held sway when Buddhism was first “discovered” in western academia, coupled with the Christianity-based notions of the importance of doctrinal fidelity. As the sutras and other Buddhist texts were researched mainly for their philosophical value, the focus naturally came to rest on the contents of any given texts and not so much on the form in which they were written. This also caused the scholars to overlook and undervalue texts with evident misquotations or made-up source texts. However, Jacqueline Stone has shown in her book, *Original Enlightenment and the Transformation of Japanese Buddhism*, that this creative reading and handling of Buddhist texts was more the norm than an anomaly in the medieval Buddhist textual world. In the Tendai School, the official Chinese texts were already being subjected to breakdown and a form of a very serious wordplay called *kanjindoku* or Mind-Contemplation reading, in which a new type of commentary tradition was being formed. These commentaries were based on a type of inner understanding or inspiration, where new meanings could be read into existing texts. However, just as one would have to be well-versed in poetic classics to be able to partake in the poetic correspondences of the court, so also the monks would have to know the basic sutras and their commentaries by heart in

order to appreciate and understand the *kanjin* readings of any given text.[3] This is because the act of reading in classical Japanese is inseparable from the act of writing.

A common example from literature would be the allusive practices of court poetry. In order to convey one's feelings about a given situation, say the full moon of autumn, one would have to compose a poem on the subject. Even though a certain amount of freshness of expression would be appreciated, there were strict rules within which this would have to be achieved. In order to enable the audience to relate to the composer's feelings, he would have to allude to a pre-existing poem from the classics, and then give it a new twist. Newness of expression was not valued for its own sake, but only if it was done well enough in relation to the classical corpus of poetry. When someone excelled in this kind of wordplay, it heightened his status in the eyes of his peers and could even advance his position at court—not to mention the effect that it would have on potential love interests. Similarly, Jacqueline Stone notes, "… in the light of the playful character of many *kanjin*-style readings, it appears to have had the character of a game, albeit a deeply serious one. Players of this game would have sought to excel in establishing those readings and associations that would support their particular doctrinal stance."[4] So whereas the literarary game of poetry would be used as a means of gaining both political status and desirability as a mate, a similar game in the Buddhist setting would be used to gain status in doctrinal debates and to promote certain personal insights on Buddhist doctrines. Instead of regarding these wordplays as misunderstandings of certain texts, it needs to be remembered that they would have made sense to their audience only in the context of the wider canon. As Stone remarks: "To be effective, the *kanjin* mode of interpretation would have had depended on more conventional doctrinal studies. One must know doctrines and texts before one can rearrange and reinterpret them; traditional doctrinal study was thus necessary to acquire the resources with which the game of *kanjin*-style interpretation, so to speak, was played."[5]

Kyōgyōshinshō has long been regarded as a difficult-to-read work, in which Shinran is seemingly presenting a variety of sources that are important to his own interpretation of the Pure Land faith. The quotations he presents, however, are heavily modified, even to the extent of going against the meanings of the original Chinese and Japanese sources. This in turn has been seen either to testify to Shinran's bad command of Chinese and incompetence at compilation, or even as a willful misrepresentation of and irreverence toward his sources. However, if we look at the text without any preconceived notions of textual fidelity, and instead take the approach of the *kanjin*-style readings, then the text transforms from being an arbitrary and badly compiled bunch of sources into a careful construction that reflects Shinran's own personal understanding of Pure Land Buddhism and Amida's role in it. Given the literary background of the monks and the general tendency of personal interpretation of Buddhist texts in Medieval Japanese Buddhism, I would like to argue that, instead of continuing the tradition

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3 Stone 1999, pp. 156–58.

4 Stone 1999, p. 167.

5 Stone 1999, p. 167.

of brushing over these "anomalies," it would be more constructive to shift our perception, read the texts without preconceived notions of what a Buddhist text should be like, and let the texts speak to us in a new, fresh manner. To rephrase William Bodiford in his Sōtō Zen in Medieval Japan slightly—rather than simply dismissing the practice as degenerate, one might more profitably investigate this hybrid formed by the Buddhist tradition and the Japanese tradition by asking: how do these two actually work together?[6]

It is clear, then, that we should approach *Kyōgyōshinshō* as a carefully constructed text written to an audience who would have been well versed enough in the Buddhist corpus that the changes and reinterpretations of the sources would have been both obvious and meaningful. The various changes made to the sources have been researched at length, so I would like to highlight another level of compilation that affects the reading of the text. This is the way that different passages are added into the argumentative stream of the text as a whole: understanding this might make it easier for us to grasp the general argumentative flow of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*. I will try to give some examples of how Shinran builds up an internal structure that directs the contents of his wide array of quotations, which can seem confusing at first glance. I would like to try and read Shinran's *Kyōgyōshinshō* as a literary text, and see how taking its textuality into account changes the way the text portrays itself.

Kyōgyōshinshō

Kyōgyōshinshō is undeniably Shinran's main doctrinal work, and lays out the theoretical basis for his religio-philosophical thought about his particular strand of Pure Land Buddhism. It consists mainly of quotations from both sutras and commentaries, with a few of Shinran's own comments interspersed in between. It is divided into six thematic chapters and two prefaces:

General Preface (総序)
1. Chapter on Teaching (教の巻)
2. Chapter on Practice (行の巻)
Additional Preface (別序)
3. Chapter on Faith (信の巻)
4. Chapter on Realization (証の巻)
5. Chapter on the True Buddha-lands (真仏土の巻)
6. Chapter on the Transformed Buddha-bodies and Lands (化身土の巻)

The chapters are of varying lengths: the first, which is also the shortest, is only a few pages long, and the last and longest chapter comprises almost a third of the whole work. This last chapter

6 Original quote Bodiford 1993, p. 3.

is, however, divided into two parts roughly from the middle,[7] which leaves the Chapter on Faith as the longest single chapter, taking up slightly more than a quarter of the whole text. The prefaces are two pages long each.

The manuscript is undated, but according to graphological evidence, the Bandō manuscript, which was the only manuscript written by Shinran himself, was copied out around the mid-1230s, thus coinciding with Shinran's return to Kyoto after years of banishment in the Kantō area. It is possible that there were earlier versions of the same text, but no trace of them has been found. The date traditionally assigned to its assumed completion is the year 1247, when, according to postscripts in two later editions of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, Shinran allowed his cousin and disciple Sonren (b. 1182) to make a copy of his work. It is clear that minor changes continued to be made to the text for some ten years after this date, but the act of granting permission for *Kyōgyōshinshō* to be copied has been seen as a sign that the text was more or less ready to be given out. While it is true that Shinran would probably not have given this permission had the text been "unfinished" in his eyes, I think that we might also question the whole notion whether or not *Kyōgyōshinshō* was something that was ever meant to be a complete, once-and-for-all finished, and systematic exposition of Buddhist philosophy. The Bandō manuscript is not a clean and ready copy of a thoroughly thought-out work, but more a personal working copy that was never finished, with words added, blotted over, and commented on.[8]

Aside from the chapter titles, there does not seem to be any visible structure to the text enforced by breaks in the text or subtitles, but each quotation and comment is separated as its own paragraph. As the manuscript itself does not break the text into smaller thematic units, most editions of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* have split the bulk of the text into smaller units, by dividing and numbering these paragraphs as passages. In the shorter chapters, this apparent lack of internal structure does not really matter, but in the longer and more argumentative chapters such as the Chapter on Faith, the result is that, without an understanding of the text's internal guideposts, its argument is easily drowned under the meandering of Shinran's style of writing.

However, even though the structural elements may not seem explicit to our unaccustomed eyes, they are in there. In addition, once the reader gets used to this meandering argumentative style, the work transforms from a disorderly jumble of quotations into a skillfully written text whose form is as much a part of the argument as its contents. The main target for my own research has been the Chapter on Faith, and that will be the source for all the examples in this paper. The same model does seem to be working throughout the whole text, though, so with some reservations I would claim that my findings in this particular chapter can be applied to

[7] This division is apparent in the Bandō manuscript, but is missing from both the Nishi Honganji manuscript and the Takada Senjūji manuscript. There are no separate titles for these two parts, so they are usually treated as one chapter, even though, on top of the visible break from the text itself, marked by an empty space between the two parts, there is a clear change of subject matter.

[8] See, for example, the difference between the Bandō manuscript and the other two main manuscripts, the Nishi Honganji manuscript and the Takada Senjūji manuscript on the picture pages in the beginning of Kakehashi 2004 and 2008.

the whole text. It is also interesting to note that this chapter seems to be structurally the most complex, with more subthemes and argumentative use of different combinations of passages than any of the other chapters of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*. As it is widely acknowledged that Shinran's relationship with the concept of Faith is the very thing that sets him apart from the other Pure Land proponents of the tradition, this is no surprise. To effectively back up the most personalized part of his doctrine, Shinran would of course need the most creative solutions for combining and re-writing extant texts. Further, as this aspect of his doctrine is what sets him apart, it is one of the very keys through which his other texts should be read.

Structural Elements in the Chapter on Faith

Just like the *Kyōgyōshinshō* in general, the Chapter on Faith is built out of modified quotations, with only some extra comments, such as introductions and further definitions, by Shinran. Even though the sources he uses are richly varied, and Shinran quotes from some twenty different texts, most of the text is made up from quotations from five different sources—three sūtras and two Chinese masters: *Muryōjukyō*[9] (Sk. *Sukhāvatīvyūha sūtra*, also known as *Daikyō*, or the Greater [Pure Land] Sūtra), *Muryōjunyorai-e*,[10] *Nehankyō*[11] (Sk. *Mahāparinirvāna sūtra*), Shan-Tao (Jp. Zendō), and Tan-Luan (Jp. Donran), respectively. The length of quotations also ranges from just a few lines up to several pages, the longest ones being more than ten pages long. These five quotations, in addition to Shinran's own comments on them, take up 84% of the total number of passages.[12]

Source	Number of passages/132	Percentage
Shinran	33/132	25%
Shan-Tao	28/132	21%
Daikyō	17/132	13%
Nyorai-e	13/132	10%
Nehankyō	12/132	9%
Tan-Luan	8/132	6%
Total	111/132	84%

In terms of the actual amount of text, this percentage would be even higher, since the length of the citations from the less-used sources tends to be only a few lines, with the exception

9 無量寿経 referred to from now on as *Daikyō*.

10 無量寿如来会 referred to from now on as *Nyorai-e*.

11 涅槃経.

12 Here, I have followed the division used in the *Shinran zenshū*, vol. 1, 1985, edited by Ishida Mizumaro (Shinran 1985).

of one citation from the *Kegonkyō*[13] (Sk. *Avatamsaka sūtra*), while there are several many-paged citations from both *Nehankyō* and Shan-Tao. As the other sources are mentioned often only once or twice, these five sources clearly stand out from the rest of them. These numbers do not show, however, that two of these sources have more than one role in the textual flow—instead of being purely informative, providing new information to back up Shinran's argument, they give structure to the text and steer the argumentative flow. Rather than adding to the contents, they create the relationships between separate parts of this long chapter, thus making it argumentatively efficient.

One of the most important structural strategies is the placement of passages from a pairing of *Daikyō* and its deviant translation, *Nyorai-e.*[14] When these sutras enter the text, it is always a sign that a new subtopic will start. This sutra passage also gives a slightly new direction to the preceding argument, taking it to a new level, but it rarely gives any "new" information as such—it seems to have more of an introductory function. If we take the appearance of the *Daikyō* as the equivalent of hitting "enter" on the keyboard—something that momentarily breaks the flow of the text and gives a sign that a new paragraph is starting, the previously mentioned Chapter on Faith ends up having nine parts, each beginning with a *Daikyō* quote, either by itself or, more often, paired with *Nyorai-e*.

After discovering these breaks, it is also instantly clear that every one of these "paragraphs" follows the same pattern in presenting the sources.

a. Introduction of the topic by Shinran
b. Quotes from *Daikyō* and *Nyorai-e*
c. Quotes from other sūtras
d. Quotes from the Indian Pure Land masters (Nagarjuna and Vasubandhu)
e. Quotes from the Chinese masters (Tan-Luan, Tao-Cho, and Shan-Tao)
f. Quotes from other Chinese teachers
g. Quotes from the Japanese Pure Land masters (Genshin and Hōnen)
h. Summary of the topic by Shinran

It is rare for all of these to be present in the same cycle, but the sources that are brought up are always presented in this order. As on occasion the summary of the previous topic acts also as the introductory part for the next topic, we get a very strongly cyclical structure that gives the long text momentum. The topics flow into one another, so that, even though the text goes through several topics, it forms one narrative flow from the start to the end of the Chapter on Faith. Thus, we can say that the Chapter on Faith is made up of nine cycles, and we already have a better grasp of the textual flow of this work.

13 華厳経.

14 The *Nyorai-e* translation of the *Sukhāvatīvyūha* is never used alone, but always to "echo" the passage from the *Daikyō*. Shinran seems to read from both translations, and in some instances he clearly uses this unorthodox translation as the basis for his arguments on the nature of enlightenment.

There are also several instances where there are small breaks from the rough form inside the topical cycles, and they become more numerous as the text goes on. There is, however, regularity within the irregular cycles, too. It is important to note that not all of these cycles are equal as subchapters. By taking a closer look at how Shinran comments between passages and introducing the *Daikyō* quotes to the textual stream, we can see an even more elaborate structure emerging from the text.

Steering the Narrative Stream

On the one hand, every one of these cycles forms an individual treatment of one particular topic and as such is complete. On the other hand, however, the cycles are linked to each other on several levels. I feel that a systematic analysis of the ways in which Shinran links passages and cycles throughout the *Kyōgyōshinshō* would present one answer to those researchers who claim that Shinran gives quotations "with no interpretation whatsoever or with overly terse and enigmatic comments." Even though I disagree with the whole notion of dividing *Kyōgyōshinshō* into Shinran's writing and quotations from outside sources—thus making an issue of what did he write himself and what he just copied—there are short but extremely meaningful passages that were definitely added by Shinran, which can help us to understand the *Kyōgyōshinshō* as a narrative whole and not just as a patchwork of quotations with some enigmatic comments thrown in at intervals. These introductory pieces also create an inner hierarchy between the cycles, making the relationships between them clear for the reader. There are two major ways that these links between the cycles are forged: by theoretical associations and by wordings.

One way of implying connections between cycles is the net of associations between theories that consist of several parts, such as the various Three Minds theories. Just by associating one cycle with one part of such a theory, that is, the third cycle with "the self[15] of joyous Faith," the unsaid assumption is that the two other parts of the system, "the attained self" and "the self-yearning for birth," will come up somewhere, and that there will be some kind of relationship between the third cycle and whatever these two parts relate to. After all,

[15] A note on the translation of 心 as "self": The problem here is of course obvious, as Buddhism is the schoolbook example of a philosophy on non-self or selflessness. The reason for this audacious behavior is still, I think, well-founded. I use this method of translation only when Shinran is the speaker, and so I have decided to leave Shan-Tao's theory of the threefold mind as "mind," even though the character used is the same. This is also the reason that Vasubandhu's theory remains as "single mind." However, I do not feel that "mind" or "heart" reflects clearly enough the holistic way in which Shinran thinks. "Mind" represents the division of the bodily and the mental, and using "heart" would place the emotional aside from everything else, while the experience of *shinjin* that Shinran is talking about very much denies any division between these three aspects. The joyous Faith and the yearning for birth are more than just emotions, and certainly not mental processes! The aspects that Shinran talks about are all parts of our selves, parts that every living creature has in them, and as such the word "self," without a capital letter, without any specific philosophical or Buddhist connotations, would seem the best way of translating something that is closer to the Japanese *kokoro* than the Chinese abstract 心.

the East Asian hermeneutic method it is not about tearing a system into its constituent parts, but about building nets of meanings by rewriting and transforming existing systems. These associations with the Three Minds theories bind together the second, third, and fourth cycles in this chapter. All of these cycles are distinct from one another, as is made clear by both structural and topical elements, but at the same time they present a continuous unfolding of arguments that essentially focus on one subject—the correct interpretation of Shan-Tao's theory. Thus, the Chapter on Faith could also be divided into three parts: the introductory cycle, the treatment of Shan-Tao's theory of Three Minds, which takes up cycles two, three, and four, and the final cycle, which takes the modified Three Minds theory up one notch and concludes the first thematic half of the chapter.

Another level of linking is obviously the use of short rhetorical devices, such as *kore o motte*, which tie new passages to the argumentative stream, and their parallelisms. These should definitely not be overlooked when deciphering the overall picture of the argumentative flow in both the Chapter on Faith and the *Kyōgyōshinshō* as a whole.

The passages inside a cycle are almost always introduced by a simple "*XX ni iwaku*" or "*XX ni notamawaku*" ("it is said in XX"). The two major exceptions to this rule are Shinran's own comments and the *Daikyō* quotations that open each of the cycles. To give one example of how this structure works, starting from the very beginning of the Chapter on Faith, the first comment by Shinran begins with the following phrase:

> Passage 1: "Humbly I declare that the Great Faith is in the grasping of the directing virtue of going forth to the Pure Land. The Great Faith is …" (KGSS: 96)[16]

This in itself ties the entire Chapter on Faith to the procession of themes in the *Kyōgyōshinshō* as a whole, and especially to the chapter that preceded it, the Chapter on Practice, which starts with a very similar phrase:

> "Humbly I declare that [both] the Great Practice and the Great Faith are in the grasping of the directing virtue of going forth to the Pure Land. The Great Practice is …" (KGSS: 17)[17]

Based on this parallelism, one could say that the Chapter on Practice and the Chapter on Faith are simply two sides of the same thing: grasping the directing virtue of going forth to the Pure Land. Thus, when read from this angle, the following discussion is already associated with the "Faith" part of the directing virtue of going forth to the Pure Land. Another factor that reinforces this link is the first sutra couplets—they are slightly modified versions of the first passages of the Chapter on Practice (KGSS: 17–18, 97). The Chapter on Faith can only start

[16] 謹テ往相ノ回向ヲ按スルニ大信有リ大信心者…

[17] 謹テ往相ノ回向ヲ按スルニ大行有リ大信有リ大行者…

to build themes when this link with the previous materials has been forged. Without going any deeper into the placement or relationship of Chapter on Faith vis-à-vis the other chapters of *Kyōgyōshinshō*, I would like to point out that the same macrostructure of semi-independent topical cycles that occurs in the Chapter on Faith is also repeated on the level of the whole work—the text is constructed in such a way that the same configuration of parts is repeated on different scales.

The sutras follow this. The first sutra quotation, the one that was also used in the Chapter on Practice, is given as the "description" of Amida's Vow. The second sutra quotation, on top of which Shinran starts to build his argument on Faith, is defined as applying the fulfillment of this Vow. Therefore, it will be clear from this point onwards that Faith is not simply one facet of the directing virtue of going forth to the Pure Land. Instead, Shinran's Faith is the very fulfillment of the Vow that Amida made. The rest of the passages are introduced by simple "it is said in XX" phrases, so the next passage that adds something to this procession is Shinran's conclusive comment on the first cycle, which begins with *shikareba*—"hence" (KGSS: 115). This draws the first cycle to an end, emphasized by ending the same passage with *shirubeshi*, "one needs to know this" (KGSS: 115).

A small detour follows in the form of a question and answer section, after which the second cycle starts by introducing the first part of Shan-Tao's Three Minds theory, "the attained self," to the thematic field:

> Passage 24: "… This attained self is the embodiment of nothing else than the attainment of the potency of the Name." (KGSS: 117)[18]

The sutra passages then start with a *kore o motte* ("therefore"). As the previous phrase is not separated as its own passage, but is instead just the last phrase of a longer section, the *kore o motte* ties what follows not only to the previous phrase, but to the whole question and answer section. It is also interesting that, unlike all of the other cycles in this first half of the text, the sutra passages of this second cycle bring new themes to the mix instead of simply transforming and playing with the old themes and passages. A comment from Shan-Tao follows, after which Shinran concludes the cycle with a comment that begins with *shikareba* or "hence," just as with the last cycle, and concludes with "this is called attained self" (KGSS: 119),[19] implying that the previous passages have now defined the first part of the Three Minds in a way that will operate throughout the Chapter on Faith.

The result of taking these internal argumentative guideposts into consideration is that we can produce the following table of contents for the Chapter on Faith:

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18 斯ノ至心ハ則是至徳ノ尊号ヲ其ノ体トセル也.

19 是ヲ至心ト名ク.

1. The description of Faith
    1.1 Introduction (First cycle)
    1.2 The Threefold Mind Theory
        1.2.1 Introductory Question and Answer
        1.2.2 Attained Self (Second cycle)
        1.2.3 Joyous Faith (Third cycle)
        1.2.4 Yearning for Birth (Fourth cycle)
    1.3 Faith as Enlightening Self (the part between the Fourth and Fifth cycles)
2. The true nature of Faith (Fifth cycle)
    Appendix A:
        Commentary on passage 56 and the dimension of transcending (Sixth cycle)
        Commentary on passage 56 and the dimension of cutting off (Seventh cycle)
        Commentary on being a true disciple of Buddha (Eighth cycle)
        Commentary on the point of no return (Ninth cycle)
    Appendix B: On the problem of difficult salvation

This is the purely structural side of the textuality in the Chapter on Faith. Another side of the coin is the shifting and flowing of the terms used, so that the result of the chapter is the conclusion that the moment of the fulfillment of Faith is the same as the moment of enlightenment. Without analyzing and considering these textual aspects, however, the argumentative stream seems difficult if not impossible to grasp, and the argument is drowned by the meanderings of the narrative.

The Call for Textuality Studies

In this paper, I wanted to give one new perspective on Buddhist research, namely that when we are studying the texts we need to reach to a deeper level than simply that of the message. This is not, however, a completely new idea. Kaneko Daiei evokes the need for literary studies of *Kyōgyōshinshō*[20] in his book *Kyōgyōshinshō sōsetsu* (1964): in his words, literary studies on this work did not exist at all. He laments the fact that *Kyōgyōshinshō* has become a work that seems hard to understand and uninviting to read, and points out that one reason for this is that we don't know how to read it, even though the keys for decoding it are present in the very text itself. He suggests that one should become "intimate" with the text by reading *Kyōgyōshinshō* out loud, since that way the reader does not have time to get stuck on all the difficult words and concepts in the text. He also argues that, instead of opening up the theoretical terms, more research should be centered on the words that describe the causal relationships between

[20] Literally, "research of *Kyōgyōshinshō* as 'writing' or even 'sentences'" (「文章としての『教行信証』の研究」).

terms and passages in the text, such as "because of this,"[21] the expression instead of the words. This would enable the reader of the text to begin by attaining a more general feeling of the text and the relationships between different parts of the text. The theoretical deepening of the text should only arrive in the reader's mind once he has become acquainted with the text.[22]

The object of Kaneko's quest was to find the feelings behind the words and, as such, his objective is slightly different from mine. However, I still agree with his arguments about the importance of not only exegetic, but also textual and literary studies of *Kyōgyōshinshō*. Even though Kaneko made his comments in the mid-sixties, I have not come across any studies addressing this particular subject, nor have the professors or academics of Shinran studies with whom I have been in touch mentioned any research related to it. Therefore, it seems that, even though those who read and re-read *Kyōgyōshinshō* in the course of their research probably have an intuitive knowledge of this subject, actual existing research in this area is either non-existent or a very minor and not recent phenomenon in the field—and is thus largely unknown. I feel that the field of Buddhist studies as a whole would be enriched by such an angle, and that it should definitely not be neglected if we are to properly understand Shinran and Medieval Pure Land Buddhism as a whole.

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[21] そのゆえは.

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