

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE IASBS

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国際真宗学会

GREETING FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Kenneth K. Tanaka, Musashino University

“Subjectivity”: A Provocative Theme

It has been exactly one year since the very successful Vancouver conference at the University of British Columbia under Jessica Main’s leadership. We are now looking forward to the 17th IASBS Biennial Conference to be held August 7-9, 2015 at the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) in Berkeley, California. (See details elsewhere in this newsletter) I hope that as many of you as possible will be able to attend.

The theme of next year’s conference will be “Subjectivity in Pure Land Buddhism,” a topic that appears at first glance to be antithetical to the primary Buddhist doctrine of “non-self.” Personally, I find it extremely intriguing as a theme, precisely because the issue of “subjectivity” demands further investigation and clarification for meeting the spiritual and ethical needs of contemporary audiences.

In fact, I have been heading a group of scholars associated with a research project sponsored by the Institute of Buddhist Culture at Musashino University, who have been working on this and related topics. In the coming years we hope to publish a volume entitled, *Tide of Wisdom: Shinran’s Wisdom, Subjectivity and Societal Dimension*.

I believe we can analyse the topic of subjectivity from three perspectives: 1) seeking Dharma as a deeply *personal* matter, 2) relying on one’s *own* judgment, and 3) realizing one’s *true* self. These three perspectives all point to the fact that Dharma cultivates seekers to become more committed, self-directed and actualized persons, and not be indifferent, other-directed and pessimistic as the critics of Buddhism past and present would want us to believe.

The deeply *personal* perspective of subjectivity can be seen, in my view, in the famous utterance attributed to Shinran in the *Tannisho*, “As I deeply consider Amida’s Vow made after five *kalpas* of deep contemplation, I realize that it was made for I, Shinran, alone.” He was certainly not monopolizing the Vow for himself, but making the admission that the Vow was meant exactly for persons such as himself and that there would be no liberation for him without it. Shinran’s search through the Dharma was initiated by a deeply *personal* issue and culminated in a profoundly *personal* realization.

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PURE LAND JOURNAL

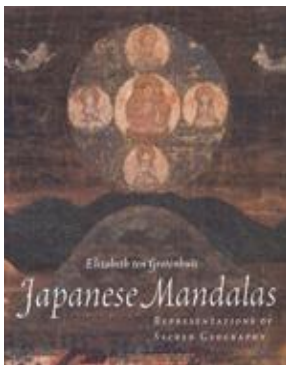
The IASBS annually publishes *The Pure Land: Journal of Pure Land Buddhism* (ISSN 0911-7660), an academic journal in English that contains research articles, essays, translations, and book reviews. Subscriptions to the Journal are available through [membership in the IASBS](#). All the past volumes of the Journal are currently hosted online by the American Theological Association Series. Members, please login to the [IASBS homepage](#) to view and download copies of the *Pure Land*.

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SUGGESTED READING



Japanese Mandalas: Representations of Sacred Geography



The first wide-ranging study of Japanese mandalas to appear in a Western language, this volume interprets mandalas as sacred realms where identification between the human and the sacred occurs. The author investigates eighth- to seventeenth-century paintings from three traditions: Esoteric Buddhism, Pure Land Buddhism, and the kami-worshipping (Shinto) tradition. This work chronicles the intermingling of visual, doctrinal, ritual and literary themes in Japanese religious traditions as a whole. Beautifully illustrated and a worthy addition to any bookshelf.

An example of the second perspective of *self-reliance* can be seen in another well-known statement, one by Shakyamuni, “Make yourself the light; make the Dharma the light.” The same spirit is found also in the Shakyamuni’s admonition to Kalama of not relying just on hearsay, tradition, or even scriptures without filtering them through *one’s own* observation, analysis and reason.

As for the last perspective of the *true self*, we can see its expression in such sutras as the *Nirvana Sutra* wherein it speaks of the True Self (眞我) or the Great Self (大我) when referring to the nature of self in enlightened beings. Another well-known statement, this one from the *Dhammapada*, points to a similar description of a person who has realized the way:

*Your own self is your own mainstay
For who else could your mainstay be?
With you yourself well-trained you obtain
the mainstay hard to obtain. (Dhammapada 160)*

In these examples of the three perspectives, I believe we find evidence of “subjectivity” in the Buddhist literature. “Subjectivity” should prove to be a provocative topic for the next conference as well as for all the IASBS members to contemplate on and to rally around for the upcoming year and beyond.

(ケネス田中氏による挨拶の要約：
第17回国際会議は、2015年8月7日～9日、カリフォルニア州バークレーのIBS行われる。大会テーマは、「浄土教における主体性」。「主体性」は現代社会においても重要課題であり、また、目下、武蔵野大学仏教文化研究所が主催する研究グループの課題の一つでもあり、数年後『智慧の潮 — 親鸞の智慧・主体性・社会性』という論文集の出版も企画されている。主体性とは、1) 個人的、2) 自己判断、そして3) 真我という三つの視座から考察することができよう。この非常に興味深いテーマを以て大会が盛り上がり、また、多くの国際真宗学会会員にとっても今後数年の刺激的材料となることを願う。)

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Update on the Forthcoming 2015 IASBS Conference

By Dr Scott A. Mitchell, Institute of Buddhist Studies, Berkeley, CA

2015 IASBS Biennial Conference: Subjectivity in Pure Land Buddhism (working title)

We are pleased to announce the 2015 Biennial IASBS Conference. Our theme this year will be Subjectivity in Pure Land Buddhism. The conference will be hosted by Institute of Buddhist Studies in Berkeley, CA, with generous support from the Jodo Shinshu Center and the Numata Foundation.

August 7 - 9, 2015

A formal call for papers will be released later this summer. **Proposals** and **abstracts** will be due by the end of the calendar year.

For questions or more information, please visit: <https://iasbs2015.wordpress.com/>

Or contact Scott Mitchell scott@shin-ibs.edu

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Pure Land Buddhism and Islam

by Reza Shah-Kazemi

The following reflections stem from a meeting between Rev. Kemyo Taira Sato, director the Three Wheels Shin Buddhist Temple, and Dr Reza Shah-Kazemi, author of several works on Islam and comparative religious studies. Further details of this meeting, including Rev Sato's paper, can be found at: <http://themathesontrust.org/library/islam-buddhism-common-ground-2014>

Editor

“One of the most important lessons we, as Muslims, can learn from the Amidist tradition relates to the meaning of the word islam.”

What can Muslims learn from Pure Land Buddhism? In my recent efforts to deepen my knowledge of the Pure Land tradition, and in my encounter of an authentic representative of the Japanese branch of this tradition, Rev. Kemmyo Taira Sato, I have been given various answers to this question. One of the most important lessons we, as Muslims, can learn from the Amidist tradition relates to the meaning of the word *islam*. This word, as is well known, means the act of making formal ‘submission’ to God, surrendering our will to what Amidists would call the will of Other-Power. While Muslims talk about the grace or mercy of God, Amidists would talk about the infinite salvific ‘power’ of the Other (*tariki*); in both traditions, one surrenders one’s will to something infinitely greater than oneself.

Rev. Sato stressed in our recent encounter that Amidists do not believe in ‘justification by works’ but in ‘justification by faith’, and asked whether the same was true for Muslims. I replied in the affirmative and cited by way of illustration of this principle the following dialogue between the Prophet and his companions. ‘Not one of you enters Paradise on account of his deeds’, the Prophet declared. One of his companions asked: ‘Not even you, O Messenger of God?’ ‘Not even I’, came the reply, ‘it is only through God whelming me with His mercy that I may enter Paradise,’ he continued.

But given the emphasis placed in Islam upon correct legal and moral action, and thus on the correct application of what Amidists would call ‘self-power’ (*jiriki*), the totality of reliance upon the grace of God, and the focus upon God as the source of one’s salvation can become, in practice, eclipsed by what Rev. Sato calls an ‘ethical’ perspective, rather than a properly ‘religious’ perspective. An ethical perspective reinforces one’s sense of moral agency, and thus entrenches one’s consciousness within the confines of one’s own ‘power’; whereas a religious perspective—a properly ‘Islamic’ one, in the sense of total submission to the Other— will, by contrast, liberate one from self-preoccupation, and allow one to see that one’s very capacity to act ethically derives from the grace of the Other. To fully surrender does not therefore mean that one should transgress ethical *rules*, only that one must transcend the ethical *perspective*, even while acting ethically. The consequence of this simultaneous affirmation of ethical propriety and transcendence of the ethical perspective allows one to see that true *islam* means acknowledging both one’s own impotence in the face of God, and, paradoxically, the inescapable ‘evil’ constituted by one’s own egotism or one’s sense of being independent of God.

The Qur’an expresses succinctly this point of view in the following two verses:

*Truly man is rebellious;
Insofar as he deems himself independent (96:6-7)*

Rebellion is here equated with self-sufficiency; on the contrary, submission (*islam*) is implicitly identified with total reliance upon God. The deeper existential implication of these two verses—and their concordance with the import of Rev. Sato’s distinction between the merely ethical and the fully religious perspective—is brought out by one of the great woman saints of Islam, Rabia al-Adawiyya. A man came to her and said he had not sinned for so many years. She retorted to him: ‘Your very existence is a sin to which no other can be compared.’ Forgiveness of this sin resides in seeing through one’s existence as one sees through a transparent veil to the one and only Light, that of God. Here we are struck by the similarity of the two traditions, wherein the Absolute reality is merciful Light removing the darkness of ego-bound consciousness. To see one’s own existence as darkness, and to see God as Light is only possible through total submission to God; and this submission is then seen, not so much as the seed of one’s enlightenment, but as the fruit of a pre-existing divine grace:

He it is who blesses you, as do the angels, in order to bring you out of darkness into the Light. And He is ever-merciful to the believers (33:43)

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Book Review

by

Jerome Ducor

Honganji Shiryō Kenkyūsho 本願寺史料研究所 (ed.): *Zōho-kaitei Honganji Shi* 増補改訂 本願寺史, vol. 1; Kyōto, Honganji Shuppansha, 2010; 642 pp. (ISBN 978-4-89416-090-3).

At the time of Shinran Shōnin's 700th Memorial in 1961, Hongwanji started the publication of the *Honganji Shi* 本願寺史 (*The History of Hongwanji*), in three volumes (1961, 1968-1969) covering the history of the head-temple of Hongwanji-ha from the time of the Founder Shinran down to the accession of the 23rd Patriarch Shōnyo Shōnin (Zenmonsama) in 1933. It was followed by a *Chronology (Honganji Nenpyō* 本願寺年表, 1981) and an *Index (Honganji Shi Sakuin* 本願寺史索引, 1984). All those volumes were published under the editorial supervision of the successive directors of the Historical Institute of Hongwanji, the late Miyazaki Enjun 宮崎圓遵 (1906-1983) and Chiba Jōryū 千葉乘隆 (1921-2008). This was a big work, the first comprehensive history of Hongwanji since the valuable *Ōtani-Honganji Tsūki* 大谷本願寺通紀 by Genchi 玄智 (1734-1794)¹.

Recently, for Shinran Shōnin's 750th Memorial, the Hongwanji has published the first volume of the "Enlarged and Revised edition" of the *Honganji Shi (Zōho-kaitei Honganji Shi)*, the beginning of a series of four volumes, which is planned to cover Hongwanji's history up to the contemporary period. From what can be seen from this first volume - covering the period from Shinran down to the demise of the 11th Patriarch Kenryo Shōnin (1592) - it is not only an enlarged and revised edition: it is a completely renewed book. As far as Shinran's life is concerned, for example, the legendary elements are discussed separately from the historical facts. Most of all, this new edition benefits from the studies of the many Japanese historians who published about Shinran's life and Hongwanji's history during the past 50 years, and all the references to these new studies are clearly provided. To put it briefly, this publication will be essential to all serious researchers. To write Shinran's long life is discouraging even for the best-intentioned biographer because it also includes many obscure parts besides clearly established historical facts. This new book does not claim to solve all of them. I would like here to give an example with the life of Shinran's father, Hino Arinori 日野有範.

1) The biography of 3rd Patriarch Kakunyo written by his disciple Jōsen in 1352 states that Shinran lost his father while still "in childhood" (*yōchi* 幼稚), and that this event was followed by his adoption by his uncle Hino Noritsuna 日野範綱². This is the earliest information concerning Arinori's death and is far from anecdotal, in that it could in itself explain the ordination Shinran received, with Noritsuna's support, when he was 8 years old (1181)³. In addition, Arinori was born after his other brother Hino Munenari 日野宗業 (born 1142)⁴, thus implying that Shinran's father would have passed away when he was around 40 years old. This theory about the premature death of Arinori (*sōseisetsu* 早逝説) was accepted during centuries by Jōdo-Shinshū chroniclers⁵.

¹ See my "Genchi et l'Ōtani-Honganji-tsūki", in *Bukkyō-bunka-kenkyūsho kiyō* 佛教文化研究所記要, no. 27 (Ryūkoku University, 1989), p. 73-87.

² Jōsen 乗専 (1295-1377), *Saishu-kyōjue no kotoba* 最須敬重繪詞 (Ssrs. 1, p. 950a).

³ Kakunyo 覺如 (1270-1351), *Illustrated Life of Shinran (Den'e* 傳繪, 1295) (Ssrs. 1, p. 520ab).

⁴ Date provided by the *Kugyō bunin* 公卿補任 (2, p. 23a). Munenari is the 2nd of the three brothers, and Noritsuna the eldest.

⁵ For instance Ekū 惠空 (1644-1721): *Sōrinshū* 叢林集 (1698) (Ssrs. 8, p. 287b).

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2) However, most modern historians reject this tradition as contradicting another source related to Arinori's death, which predates by one year Kakunyo's biography written by Jōsen. This source is constituted by the colophons (*okugaki* 奥書) of a copy of the *Infinite-Life Sūtra* (*Muryōjūkyō* 無量壽經) in two volumes made by Kakunyo's son, Zonkaku⁶. According to those colophons, Zonkaku used as a model a manuscript that has been in the hands of Shinran and one of his younger brothers, Ken'u 兼有⁷. More precisely, colophon of Volume 1 states that Ken'u added marks to the text (*katen* 加點) during Arinori's "intermediary state" (*chūin* 中隱), that is the seven weeks following his death. It adds that Shinran wrote the title on the sūtra's cover⁸. Here is the translation of the two colophons:

(Volume 1) The 15th day of the 12th moon of the hare-metal-junior year of Shōei, I completed the punctuation and the pronunciation: those are the red marks. I copied them from an original, which for years passed as having been marked by the discipline master Ken'u⁹ during the intermediary state of the Lord great officer and recluse of Mimuroto (Arinori¹⁰, His Eminence's father¹¹). The title on the outside is by His Eminence's brush. (...) Zonkaku
正平六歲辛卯十二月十五日，切句差聲畢，朱點是也。本者御室戸大進入道殿（有範，上人御親父）御中陰之時，兼有律師被加點之由，往年承置之間，所寫之也。外題者上人御筆也。(...) 存覺

(Volume 2) The 17th day of the 12th moon of the hare-metal-junior year of Shōei, [I completed] the punctuation and the pronunciation: those are the red marks. The manuscript's origins are recorded in the colophon of Volume 1. Zonkaku
正平六歲辛卯十二月十七日，切句差聲，朱點是也。寫本之由來等委記上卷奧畢。存覺

The colophons were published in 1922¹² and they immediately attracted the attention of Nakazawa Kenmyō 中澤見明, a self-taught historian of Hongwanji-ha, who was the first to use critical methodology in the study of history. At the end of the same year, he published a book in which he stated that Zonkaku's colophons contradict Jōsen's record¹³, making the point that if Ken'u was old enough to carry out this duty at the time of Arinori's death, then his older brother Shinran could no longer have been "in childhood". Nakazawa is therefore sceptical about the value of the colophons and considers that they recount little more than a "legend" (*densetsu* 傳説), since Zonkaku himself – writing decades after Arinori's death – states that the original "passed for years" as having been marked by Ken'u¹⁴.

⁶ See Ducor 1993, p. 360. Zonkaku 存覺 (1290-1373) also copied the two other sūtra of the *Pure Land Trilogy* (*Jōdo-Sanbukyō* 淨土三部經). Formerly preserved at Jōrakudai 常樂臺 (Zonkaku's temple), these autographs are now at Honpa-Hongwanji (Ssgm. 102). The *Muryōjūkyō* manuscript was on display at Ryūkoku Museum in 2011 (see the catalogue *Shakuson to Shinran, Shinran hen*, 3, p. 17, n° 57).

⁷ « Ken'u » is the Buddhist name received by Arinori's 3rd son at ordination (date unknown). According to the anonymous genealogy *Hino-shi keizu* 日野氏系圖 (early 14th c.), Arinori had four sons, in the following order: Shinran, Jin'u 尋有, Ken'u and Ui 有意 (Ssrs. 7, p. 503); only the year of Shinran's birth is known (1173), but all his three brothers could well have been born during the years preceding his ordination (1181). The family-tree *Hino-ichiryū keizu* 日野一流系圖, written by Jitsugo 實悟 (1492-1583) in 1541, adds a fifth name to the four brothers: Gyōken 行兼; still, he was but the god-child of Arinori, before being adopted by Noritsuna and eventually becoming Ken'u's disciple (Ssrs. 7, p. 521).

⁸ The original manuscript of the sūtra is lost, and its author remains unknown.

⁹ "Discipline master" (*risshi* 律師) is the lowest of the three prelaties (*sōgō* 僧綱) in Japanese Buddhism. The *Hino-shi keizu* mentions Shinran's brother as "the monk Ken'u (vice-discipline master)" (僧兼有, 權律師: Ssrs. 7, p. 503); he was a monk at Shōgōin 聖護院 (Jitsugo, *op.cit.*: Ssrs. 7, p. 521).

¹⁰ Arinori was great officer (*daishin* 大進) in the household of a dowager empress but retired at unknown date and became a recluse (*nyūdō* 入道) at Mimuroto (or Mimurodo) 御室戸, south-east of Kyōto. Ken'u also lived there at an unknown date (Jitsugo, *loc.cit.*); and Kakunyo retired there too, from 1308 to 1309 (Ducor 1993, p. 136).

¹¹ About the title "His Eminence" (*shōnin* 上人) first applied to Shinran, rather than "His Holiness" (*shōnin* 聖人), see Ducor 2007, p. 122-123.

¹² *Zonkaku Shōnin shigoshū*, p. 151b-153a. Cf. Ssgm. n° 102, p. 29a-30b; Sasaki 2011a, p. 35ab; Sasaki 2011b, p. 319ab. Colophon of Vol. 1 also in *Dai Nihon shiryō*, p. 161; a picture of it is provided in the *Zōho-kaitei Honganji Shi*, p. 7 (I don't know why it said there that it was discovered at Hongwanji after the War).

¹³ Nakazawa, *Shijō no Shinran* (1922), p. 26-29. Nakazawa says he has seen the duplicate of Zonkaku's manuscripts thanks to the historian Washio Kyōdō 鷺尾教導 (1875-1928), who had just discovered (1921) the letters by Eshinni (Shinran's wife) in Hongwanji's treasure-house.

¹⁴ Cf. *Zōho-kaitei Honganji Shi*, p. 6-7.

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However it may be conceded that these colophons hand down a reliable family tradition, though the mere fact of the anecdote's originality as well as the Zonkaku's authority, allowing himself to quote it. Thus Yamada Bunshō 山田文昭, the great historian of Ōtani-ha, adopted the theory of Arinori's long life (*chōmei setsu* 長命説), on the basis of Zonkaku's colophons, which he judged to be « important historical reference documents »¹⁵. From this time up to now, most the historians – if not all – have subscribed to his arguments¹⁶.

3) A few remarks should nevertheless be made at this point. First of all, it must be noted that the colophons do not state that Ken'ū copied the original text of the sūtra (*shakyō* 写經), a task which would definitely be impossible for a child as he would have to have written some 17.473 Chinese characters (*kanji* 漢字)¹⁷. Neither do they state that Ken'ū added the reading marks (*kunten* 訓点) needed to adapt the Chinese text to Japanese syntax (*yomikudashi* 読下)¹⁸. Last of all, they do not say that Ken'ū noted down the transcription of the Sino-Japanese reading of the sūtra (*kundoku* 訓読)¹⁹, which would mean adding Japanese letters (*furigana* 振り仮名) next to the Chinese characters.

What Zonkaku's colophons tell us is that Ken'ū provided “the punctuation and the pronunciation” (*kugiri sashigoe* 切句差声), as needed for a copy used for sūtra psalmody (*dokyō* 読經). When chanting in this way, the Chinese characters are simply read aloud, one by one, according to the manner of “straight reading” (*bōyomi* 棒読). Accordingly, all that Ken'ū had to do was to punctuate the plain text of the sūtra (*hakubun* 白文) by adding dots (●) between sequences of characters (*kuten* 句点), as the Chinese texts were composed of an uninterrupted series of Chinese signs. In addition, Ken'ū added various dots, circles and horizontal strokes (●, —, ●●, ○—) beside some of the Chinese characters to indicate their pronunciation in special cases (*shōten* 声点, *nisshōten* 入声点). Admittedly, *adding dots and strokes* – most likely under dictation²⁰ – is not a particularly difficult task, *even for a young child*. In comparison, Kakunyo was 4 years old when he started reading literature²¹. If Ken'ū were 5 years old when Arinori passed away, he would have been quite capable of accomplishing this pious task in his father's memory.

There was another brother in the family, between Shinran and Ken'ū: Jin'ū. If we admit a three-year difference between Shinran and Ken'ū, Shinran would have been only 8 years old upon his father's death, which would confirm Jōsen's statement in the *Saishu-kyōjue* that Shinran was then “in childhood” (it should also be remembered that Zonkaku and Jōsen knew each other²²). This would in addition correspond to the year 1181 during which he was ordained. To summarize, Zonkaku's colophons do not prove that Arinori lived on after Shinran's ordination. Conversely, Shinran's adoption by his uncle Noritsuna remains a fitting argument in favour of the tradition of Arinori's untimely death.

¹⁵ Yamada, *Shinshū shikō* (1934), p. 181; cf. p. 185.

¹⁶ See Fujiwara (1939), p. 58-60; Kusaka (1958), p. 130-132; Akamatsu (1961), p. 20-21; Srs. 1 (1974), p. 10; Hiramatsu (1998), p. 25-26; Sjj. (1999), p. 281b; Chiba (2000), p. 27-28 (CJC 1, p. 16); *Shinran yomitoki jiten* (2006), p. 143; etc. The editors of the collected works of Shinran, under the direction of Miyazaki Enjun 宮崎圓遵 (1906-1983), are not so categorical (Tssz. VIII-1, p. 217).

¹⁷ That is 8401 characters in Volume 1, and 9072 characters in Volume 2; figures provided by Genchi 玄智: *Jōdo-Sangyō jionkō* 浄土三經字音孝 (*Observations on the pronunciation of the characters of the Pure Land Three Sūtra*), p. 21ab.

¹⁸ Contrary to the explanations by Takahatake: *Young Man Shinran*, p. 15.

¹⁹ Contrary to the comments in the dictionary *Shinran yomitoki jiten*, p. 143.

²⁰ For example, under dictation from his uncles Noritsuna and Munenari.

²¹ From the autumn of 1274, Kakunyo learned reading using the *Collection of Japanese and Chinese Poems for Singing* (*Wakan Rōeishū* 和漢朗詠集) by Fujiwara Kintō 藤原公任 (966-1041). See Jōsen, *op.cit.* (Srs. 1, p. 958b); Ducor, 1993, p. 95-96.

²² See Ducor 1993, p. 207, 326.

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4) To substantiate the theory of Arinori's long life, attempts have been done to find traces of him in other historical records, but the results are scanty and uncertain. The name « Arinori 有範 » can be found three times in two aristocrats' diaries: once in the *Sankaiki* 山槐記 by Nakayama Tadachika 中山忠親 (1131-1195), in the year 1192; and twice in the *Meigetsuki* 明月記 by Fujiwara Sadaie 藤原定家 (or Teika, 1162-1241), in 1204 and 1207²³. Those dates are certainly later than Shinran's ordination, but the name « Arinori » is quoted without any patronymic, and could simply be a homonym. Conversely, those diaries do mention titles and functions in conjunction with this name which are not seen in sources explicitly related to Hino Arinori. All in all, most historians – including the *Zōho-kaitei Honganji Shi* - refrain from using those references to justify the supposedly long life of Shinran's father.

5) We still have to deal with a final argument related to Hino Arinori: the circumstances of his retirement to Mimuroto. One sufficient reason would seem to be the behaviour of his father Hino Tsunemasa 日野經尹. Although the details are unknown, his life was so scandalous that the *Sonpi bunmyaku* genealogy labels him a “debauchee” (*hōratsu no hito* 放埒人) and strikes him and his sons off the Hino family tree of the Northern House of the Fujiwara Clan - a line of brilliant Confucian literati - to unit them with a minor branch of the Southern House²⁴.

But another, more acceptable explanation has been put forward by historians: as a great officer in the household of a dowager empress (*kōtaigō* 皇太后), Arinori would have followed the custom of the time, which was to quit his position when the dowager passed away. However, no historical record gives the lady's name, and various hypotheses are imaginable. According to the *Zōho-kaitei Honganji Shi* (p. 6) it was Fujiwara Kinshi 藤原忻子, a spouse of emperor Go-Shirakawa²⁵: she became dowager in 1172, but the date of her death (1209) is too late for her to be seriously taken into consideration. Another name suggested already in the 18th century is Kōkamon'in 皇嘉門院, spouse of emperor Sutoku²⁶. This could fit as she received the title of dowager in 1141, but her death occurred on the 4th of the 12th moon of 1181, so that Arinori's retirement would therefore have been several months after Shinran's ordination, said to have been held in the spring of the same year.

Other hypotheses placing a dowager's demise *before* Shinran's ordination are possible; Kenshunmon'in 建春門院, for example, wife of emperor Go-Shirakawa, became dowager in 1168 and died on the 8th day of the 7th moon of 1176. One argument in favour of is that Shinran's elder uncle Noritsuna was a member of Go-Shirakawa's entourage, while his younger uncle Munenari was the study master of Go-Shirakawa's son, prince Mochihito-ō 以仁王, killed by the Taira in 1180²⁷. This could also mean that Shinran's family might have suffered from the conflict between the Court and the Taira, as well as from the war between the Taira and the Minamoto: for some historians, this might even be the principle reason for Arinori's retirement²⁸, particularly as his mother – a daughter of Minamoto Munekiyo 源宗清 - was the niece of Minamoto Tameyoshi 源為義, who in turn was the paternal grandfather of the first shōgun, Minamoto Yoritomo 源頼朝²⁹. A final option represents a more interesting candidate: Kujōin 九條院, wife of emperor Konoe, who became dowager in 1158 and died two months after Kenshunmon'in, on the 19th day of the 9th moon of 1176. What is particularly interesting in

²³ Hata, p. 59a-61a.

²⁴ *Sonpi bunmyaku* 2, p. 455.

²⁵ See also Fujiwara 1975, p. 81; Hata, p. 61. The information given here about the dowagers of that time follows the dictionary *Kamakura Muromachi jinmei jiten*.

²⁶ Genchi: *Ōtani-Honganji Tsūki*, vol. 1 (Ssrs. 8, p. 348a); *id.*, *Hi-Shōtōden* 非正統傳 (Ssrs. 7, p. 393a). According to Yamada (p. 186), this identification is unverifiable.

²⁷ See *Shinran yomitoki jiten*, p. 145-146; and Chiba, p. 30-31 (CJC 1, p. 17), who quotes also the name of Fujiwara Tashi 藤原多子: wife of emperor Konoe, she became dowager in 1156, but then arch-dowager (*taikōtaigō* 太皇太后) in 1158 and died in 1202.

²⁸ See for example Fujiwara 1939, p. 61; Akamatsu, p. 23, *sq.*; Hiramatsu, p. 27, *sq.*

²⁹ As according to *Sonpi bunmyaku* 3, p. 232-233; and 2, p. 219. See Fujiwara 1939, p. 73-75.

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this case is that Hino Munenari, brother of Arinori, became the secretary (*hōgandai* 判官代) of Kujōin in 1159³⁰: it is thus tempting to imagine that Munenari was in a position to help his younger brother enter the household of this dowager. Though no definite conclusion can be made from this, the year 1176 during which both Kenshunmon'in and Kujōin passed away could also mark the moment at which Arinori retired at Mimurodo for the years preceding Shinran's ordination in 1181. However, it should be noted that no historical source attests that Arinori did actually retire at the time of the demise of the dowager he was serving.

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³⁰ *Kugyō bunin* (2, p. 23a).

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