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Hōnen and Popular Pure Land Piety: Assimilation and Transformation

This study will explore one of the many complex issues in the development of Japanese Pure Land Buddhism. From a broad perspective Japanese Pure Land can be seen as a component of the East Asian Pure Land tradition. It was based on Chinese texts, ideas, and practices, some of which had been derived from India and central Asia. Yet the Japanese did not simply preserve what they had received from China; they made distinct contributions to East Asian Pure Land Buddhism. Japanese modifications of the received tradition began in the Nara period (646-794) soon after the introduction of Pure Land Buddhism to Japan (Shigematsu 1964, 13-60), continued during the early Heian period (794-ca. 1000; Inoue 1975, 83-156), and in the late Heian (ca. 900-1185) and early Kamakura periods (1185-ca. 1250) produced major transformations. The thought of Hōnen-bō Genkū (1133-1212) is especially remarkable for its departures from earlier Pure Land. His innovations and those of his disciples not only greatly altered the Pure Land tradition, they initiated a new phase of Japanese religious history called Kamakura New Buddhism. Whence did Hōnen derive his new ideas? Did he get them directly from Chinese texts as he claimed, or was he influenced by indigenous Japanese thought?

It was posited several decades ago by both Hori Ichirō and Ienaga Saburō that Hōnen was the inheritor of a rich fund of popular Japanese ideas and practices which he systematized into the thought of his Pure Land School (Jōdo shū) on the basis of continental, i. e., Chinese, Buddhist doctrines and texts.¹ Like these two scholars, Japanese histo-

An earlier version of this study was delivered to an Association for Asian Studies panel on Japanese Pure Land Buddhism in March 1993. I wish to thank respondent Jacqueline Stone, fellow panelists and my colleague Kevin Trainor for helpful suggestions.

1. Hori 1953, 324-25; Ienaga 1963, 26-28. Hori actually locates the sources of Hōnen's systemization in the *Ōjōyōshū* and criticizes Hōnen for an incom-

rians in general have tended to emphasize the importance of Hōnen's indigenous, popular legacy (Ienega, Akamatsu and Tamamuro 1967-68, 1.327-41, 2.31-32; Inoue 1975, 315-18), while Pure Land denominational scholars have tended to deemphasize the Japanese components of Hōnen's thought and accentuate his debt to continental ideas (Ishida 1952, 96-103; Fujiwara 1957, 215-21; Ishii 1969, 158-60). I would like to begin sorting out what Hōnen derived from late Heian popular Pure Land piety, what he acquired from continental thought, and how he related these diverse influences. Here I will explore the origins of just one of Hōnen's ideas, his view on effective practice for Pure Land rebirth.

Hōnen taught that the only practice necessary for rebirth into Amida Buddha's Pure Land was vocal *nembutsu*, that is, calling upon Amida (Sanskrit, Amitābha/Amitāyus) with the invocation, "*namu* Amida Butsu," "Homage to Amida Buddha," or, "I take refuge in the Buddha of Limitless Light and Life." My thesis is that Hōnen derived from popular² Pure Land piety this position on sole nembutsu cultivation, augmented and systemized it by means of continental thought, and related this systemized thought to a Pure Land scriptural canon, enhancing its credibility and emphasizing its autonomy.

For information on the popular piety which may have influenced Hōnen I will refer to Japanese scholarship on Heian period "accounts of rebirth" (*ōjōden*); I will consider Shan-tao (613-81) the major continental influence upon Hōnen; and I will utilize Hōnen's *Passages on the Selected Nembutsu of the Original Vow* (*Senchaku hongan nembutsu shū*)³ as the most important and only fully authenticated formulation of his thought.

Hōnen and Popular Pure Land Piety of the Late Heian Period

It is well known that Hōnen claimed sole cultivation of vocal nembutsu as the best practice for Pure Land rebirth. In Chapter 2 of his *Passages*

plete systemization. Ienega was primarily concerned with the derivations of Shinran's ideas, but the systemization which he credits to Shinran began, of course, with Hōnen. I might add that while Hōnen discovered continental Pure Land thought in the *Ōjōyōshū*, he then bypassed that text and drew directly upon continental thinkers like Shan-tao.

2. By "popular" I mean the religion of both clergy and lay persons of all classes and occupations except that of the nobility and upper echelon warriors; see Inoue 1975, 158, n. 1.

3. See References for fuller bibliographic information.

he maintains that exclusive Pure Land cultivation is much more effective than “adulterated practices” (*zōgyō*), and that among Pure Land practices, calling on Amida Buddha’s name is the “assured act” (*shōjō no gō*) certain to bring about rebirth (*T.* 83.2c14-4b20);⁴ in Chapter 3 he claims that vocal nembutsu is the sole practice selected by Amida and guaranteed by his eighteenth original vow for the rebirth of all sentient beings (*T.* 83.4b-6c); in Chapter 6 this nembutsu is presented as the best practice for an age of final Dharma (*mappō*; *T.* 83.8b-9a); and in Chapter 12 Hōnen explicitly rejects meditation, observance of precepts, recitation of scripture, filial behavior, the performance of good deeds and other “meditative and non-meditative meritorious acts” (*jōsan nizen*) because he claims they were not selected by the eighteenth vow (*T.* 83.14c-17a). In short, Hōnen maintained that calling the Buddha’s name was the best and only practice necessary for rebirth.

As we have indicated, our concern is to determine whence Hōnen derived these views. He claimed that he obtained them from the Mahāyāna scriptures as interpreted by the continental master Shan-tao (*T.* 83.19a5-12). In a moment we will examine to what extent this claim was justified, but first let us summarize the popular Pure Land piety of Hōnen’s time and especially its beliefs on how to be reborn in the Pure Land.

Some of the most revealing glimpses into popular Buddhism of the late Heian period, the eleventh and twelfth centuries, are provided by six collections called “accounts of Pure Land rebirth” (*ōjōden*). The earliest, *Nihon Gokuraku ōjōki*, was compiled in 985 by Yoshishige no Yasutane, and was followed over a century later by the *Zoku honchō ōjōden* of Oe no Masafusa in 1101-04, by the *Shūi ōjōden* and *Goshūi ōjōden* of Miyoshi no Tamayasu compiled between 1111 and 1139, the *Sange ōjōki* by Shami Renzen soon after 1139, and the *Honchō shinshū ōjōden* by Fuji no Munetomo between 1134 and 1139 (Inoue and Ōsone 1974, 711-760). All together they contain some 340 vignette describing the faith, practices and rebirth of mostly contemporaneous persons into Amida’s Pure Land. And while these stories cannot be taken as historical fact, they nonetheless give us considerable insight into the views of the compilers and of their contemporaries on the availability and means to Pure Land rebirth. Hori, Ienaga, Shigematsu and Inoue have conducted extensive studies of these compilations (Hori 1953, 304-17;

4. This reference is to volume number 83, page 2, tier “c,” line 14, to page 4, tier “b,” etc., of “*T.*,” the *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō*.

Ienaga 1963, 1-44 and 201-218; Shigematsu 1964, 122-309; Inoue and Ōsone 1974, 711-760; Inoue 1975, 158-265).⁵ They find that the subjects of the rebirth tales are persons of all classes and circumstances—nobility and commoners, warriors and free cultivators, lay persons and clergy, women as well as men—but that those from the lower ranks of society are more numerous, that women, both lay and clerical are well represented, and that *hijiri* and *shami*, the evangelists and leaders of popular Buddhism, are prominent. The *hijiri* were clergy who left the degenerating centers of monastic Buddhism to pursue an ascetic, fervid religious life either as recluses dwelling at monastic retreats (*bessho*), or as itinerants circulating among the populace in towns and villages. The *shami* were unordained “householder novices” (*zoku shami*) or “wayfarers” (*nyūdō*) who, while remaining married and in lay occupations, assumed an austere lifestyle, engaged in assiduous devotions and performed various religious functions for their fellow townspeople and villagers (Hori 1958; Itō 1969; Inoue 1975, 215-56).

As depicted in the accounts of rebirth, the Pure Land piety of this mixed populace had the following features: belief in the advent of the final age of the Dharma (*mappō*), conviction of heavy karmic burden, anxiety about reincarnation in hell, simultaneous participation in an eclectic *Lotus Sūtra*, Kannon, Miroku, Amida and Jizō devotionalism, as well as practice of various austerities and esoteric rituals, all in pursuit of this-worldly benefits as well as Pure Land rebirth. The practices depicted most frequently as eventuating in Pure Land rebirth are *Lotus Sūtra* veneration, especially chanting and copying the sūtra, and Pure Land nembutsu, especially contemplation of Amida.⁶ Frequently both kinds of devotion are pursued by the same person (Shigematsu 1964, 171-232).

These collections also reveal shifts in beliefs and practices from the earlier compilation of 985 to those compiled in the twelfth century. They show a heightened sense of personal evil and an increased anxiety, amounting to almost a certainty, of falling after death into a Buddhist hell. Amida and Jizō come to be emphasized as soters who have vowed

5. Moreover, Kotas 1987 summarizes much of the Japanese scholarship on the *ōjōden* and translates a number of tales.

6. The locus classicus of this exercise is the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou-fo ching / Kan Muryōjubutsu kyō*; see Ryukoku University 1984 or Muller, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. 49. For discussions of this exercise in Japan and China, see Andrews 1973 and 1993.

to save their devotees from this fate.⁷ Exclusive devotion, especially to Amida or the *Lotus Sūtra*, becomes more frequent. Vocal nembutsu becomes more common, and these later collections also show a tendency toward cultivation of huge quantities of vocal nembutsu—10,000 or 100,000 nembutsu per day or 1,000,000 during a fixed period. Sole cultivation of vocal nembutsu makes its appearance in a few tales as well.⁸ There is a noticeable increase in the incidence of rebirth of “evil persons” (*akunin*)—butchers, warriors, skeptics, and flagrant offenders—and especially of their conversion upon their deathbeds and rebirth by just a few utterances of the Buddha’s name.⁹ And finally, fanatical rebirth-suicide—devotees immolating or drowning themselves in expectation of immediate Pure Land rebirth—are more frequently depicted as well.

These eleventh century accounts also reveal a shift in the types and activities of the *hijiri* and *shami*. The *hijiri* more frequently emerge from their retreats and interact with laymen as itinerants who travel about from village to village (Itō 1984). Both *hijiri* and *shami* become more involved with Pure Land piety and in general they assume the roles of evangelizers and leaders of popular Buddhism, instructing and organizing the populace as preachers, healers and magicians in the style of the famous “*hijiri of the market place*,” Kūya (893-972). For example, they serve as priests of local temples and shrines, organize Pure Land and other devotional groups (*nembutsu shu*, etc.), lead pious ceremonies (*nembutsu kō*, *mukae kō*, etc.), collect meritorious donations for temple and village projects, conduct funerals, exorcise malevolent spirits, heal the sick, organize social service projects, and in general serve the many needs of the populace while recruiting them to Buddhist faith and especially to Pure Land piety (Inoue 1975, 226-56). However, despite these tendencies the rebirth accounts nonetheless reflect a Pure Land piety at the close of the Heian period that continued overwhelmingly to be incor-

7. Found by Inoue (1975, 230-254) also in the contemporaneous tale collection, *Konjaku monogatari shū*.

8. Inoue (1975, 250-51) identifies only four instances in the *ōjōden* and two in the *Konjaku monogatari shū*, but because all these cases describe the practices of commoners, including those leaders and evangelizers, the *hijiri* and *shami*, he maintains that such exclusive devotion to Amida and sole nembutsu cultivation must have been fairly common in this period.

9. Ienaga (1963, 14-18) identifies 19 such cases in the twelfth century *ōjōden*.

porated into an eclectic popular devotionism of many faiths and practices.¹⁰

When we compare this popular Pure Land piety with Hōnen's teachings on sole cultivation of vocal nembutsu it is clear that several of its tendencies coincide with Hōnen's positions: emphasis on the vows of Amida, on exclusive Pure Land devotion, on vocal nembutsu, on affirmation of the rebirth of commoners, women and even evil persons by vocal nembutsu, and their emphasis on sole nembutsu cultivation. It would seem reasonable to conclude, as some Japanese historians have, that Hōnen was strongly influenced by his contemporary, popular milieu.

We should also note that during his lifetime Hōnen had ample opportunity to absorb popular influences. Much of his clerical career was spent among the rural populace and close to those popular evangelists, the *hijiri* and *shami*. From the age of nine until his mid-teens he served in a provincial temple and was no doubt exposed to all sorts of popular piety. At age fifteen he received priestly ordination upon Mt. Hiei, but within a few years retired from Tendai's ecclesiastical center to a rural monastic retreat (*bessho*) on the western slopes of Mt. Hiei, called Kurodani, where he dwelt for twenty-five years (Tamura 1972, 61-103). Kurodani, like all such monastic retreats, served as a center where *hijiri* congregated and from whence they departed to preach and evangelize in the towns and villages (Takagi 1973, 357-375; Kikuchi 1982). While Hōnen himself does not appear during those twenty-five years to have left Kurodani to proselytize, he was nonetheless in close contact with these leaders of popular piety (Itō 1981, 42-72). Moreover, after his departure from Kurodani in 1175 Hōnen established a teaching center at Yoshimizu in the suburbs of the capital where he taught scores of disciples and followers.¹¹ Many of these adherents then went out into the city and countryside in *hijiri* fashion, spreading the sole-nembutsu faith among the populace (Ōhashi 1972, 143-47; Tamura 1959, 148-56; Itō 1969 and 1981, 73-136). Throughout his career, Hōnen was well

10. We must keep in mind that the rebirth accounts by their very nature emphasize Pure Land piety and tell us less about important trends in other varieties of popular religion. Thus our claim is not that they reveal an overall shift toward Pure Land piety, but just that they show some trends within popular piety as a whole and within Pure Land devotionism in particular.

11. In 1204 some 170 disciples and followers indicated their assent to Hōnen's teachings by signing his *Shichikajō seikai* (Seven Article Pledge); see Tamura 1959, 146-48 and Nakano 1985.

positioned both to be influenced by, and exert influences upon, popular piety.

Hōnen and Shan-tao on Practice

Yet, whatever popular influences we may detect in Hōnen's thought, as we have noted, Hōnen himself claimed that his teachings were based on the interpretations of Shan-tao. Thus we must examine Shan-tao's position on effective practice.

Shan-tao twice concisely formulated correct and effective Pure Land practice, once in his *Wang-sheng li-tsan chieh* (Hymns in Praise of Pure Land Rebirth) and again in his *Kuan Wu-liang-shou-fo-ching shu* (Commentary on the Amitābha Contemplation Sūtra). The former (*T.* 47.438c-439a) urges (1) veneration of Amitābha with offerings of incense and flowers, (2) singing the praises of Amitābha, his entourage and his Pure Land, (3) contemplating Amitābha, his entourage and his land, (4) vowing and praying to be reborn in the Pure Land, and (5) dedicating all one's own karma and the good karma of others to mutual rebirth in the Pure Land. This formulation completely omits the practice of calling on the name, except perhaps as an implicit accompaniment to veneration or contemplation. The *Commentary on the Contemplation Sūtra* formula (*T.* 37.272a-b)¹² gives priority to invoking the Buddha's name, but also recommends accompanying this with the practices of reciting the Pure Land sūtras and contemplating, venerating, and praising Amitābha. In another of Shan-tao works, his *Kuan-nien A-mi-t'o-fo hsiang-hai san-mei kung-te fa-men* (Methods and Merits of Samādhi of Contemplation and Reflection upon Amitābha), he prescribes contemplating the auspicious signs of the Buddha's physical body, but also urges as many as ten thousand to one hundred thousand daily invocations of the Buddha's name, interspersed with other devotional acts such as reciting scripture, making offerings and singing praises (*T.* 47. 23b8-14). In general, Shan-tao was an austere monastic and a fervent devotee who insisted on total dedication to Amitābha through constant, ardent engagement in an array of devotional activities.

Yet, fundamental to Shan-tao's thought were two tenets: First, that he and virtually all of his contemporaries were helpless, morally degenerate "ordinary persons" (*fanfu*) living in an age of final Dharma, and second, that for such persons the practice most certain to result in Pure Land rebirth was the act empowered by the eighteenth vow, calling on the

12. Cited by Hōnen in Chapter 2 of his *Passages*, *T.* 83.2c16-22.

Buddha's name.¹³ Shan-tao's position on practice was, therefore, ambivalent. While on the one hand he frequently urged constant performance of the most arduous contemplations and devotions, on the other hand he thought that most persons were capable of little more than calling on the Buddha's name.

Hōnen himself (*T.* 83.14c17-20) and modern Pure Land denominational scholars (Ishida 1952, 96; Fujiwara 1957, 215 and 218; Ishii 1969, 526-27) have heavily based their claim of Shan-tao's advocacy of sole invocational nembutsu on a passage in Shan-tao's *Commentary on the Contemplation Sūtra* interpreting Śākyamuni's final transmission of his *Contemplation Sūtra* discourse to Ānanda. This passage reads,

[The section of the *Contemplation Sūtra*] from, "The Buddha said to Ānanda, 'Keep these words well! [To keep these words is to keep the name of the Buddha of Limitless Life.],'” rightly reveals the bestowal of Amitābha's name for transmission to future generations. Even though [Śākyamuni] had hitherto taught the benefits of the meditative and non-meditative Dharma-gates, [he] saw that the meaning of [Amitābha] Buddha's original vow consisted in sentient beings calling solely and exclusively on the name of Amitābha Buddha.¹⁴

Here Shan-tao seems to be saying that Śākyamuni Buddha wanted Ānanda to convey to sentient beings in the future not the contemplations and ethical practices which he had just taught in the *Contemplation Sūtra*, but rather the sole practice of invocational nembutsu urged by Amitābha himself in his eighteenth vow. However, this is but one terse and ambiguous passage in all of Shan-tao's voluminous writings, and to use it to relegate categorically buddha-contemplation to the status of an inferior practice would be to oversimplify Shan-tao's rich thought.¹⁵

13. In the first section of his *Commentary on the Contemplation Sūtra*, *T.* 37.245-251, Shan-tao argues at length for the degeneracy of his age and the decadent condition of his contemporaries. He interprets the eighteenth vow as urging invocation at *T.* 47.27a16-19 and *T.* 47.447c23-26.

14. *T.* 37.278a23-26 by Shan-tao, interpreting *T.* 12.346b15-16 of the *Contemplation Sūtra*, cited by Hōnen in his *Passages* at *T.* 83.14c17-20.

15. Some Pure Land denominational scholars also claim that the *Commentary on the Contemplation Sūtra* was Shan-tao's final and most mature work (for example, Fujiwara 1957, 204-09), and therefore that its position on the priority of the eighteenth vow's vocal nembutsu should take precedence over passages in Shan-tao's other works urging contemplative and other practices. While the *Commentary on the Contemplation Sūtra* is probably Shan-tao's most mature work, there is no historical evidence that it is his last composition.

Although there are scattered about in Shan-tao's writings passages which urge invocation to the exclusion of contemplation (e. g., *T.* 47. 439a24-26), we should keep in mind as well first that Shan-tao frequently urged observance of the Buddhist precepts and performance of rites of repentance, and secondly that three of his five works are liturgical, designed for use in ritualistic worship services.

Was Hōnen therefore justified in ascribing his position on sole nembutsu to Shan-tao's interpretations? On the one hand, Shan-tao did interpret the practice of the eighteenth vow as calling on the Buddha's name and urge this practice as best for his contemporaries. On the other hand, his writings enthusiastically encourage the cultivation of buddha-contemplation and other Pure Land devotional practices. Thus, while Hōnen did not find "sole nembutsu" *per se* in the writings of Shan-tao, he was clearly influenced by Shan-tao's powerful arguments for the special status and efficacy of invocation.

However, aside from Shan-tao's position on buddha-recollection itself, there was another feature of his thought, a more basic feature, which was a prerequisite for Hōnen's formulation of a sole nembutsu doctrine. Before Hōnen could conceive of nembutsu as among all practices a superior practice which should be cultivated solely, it was necessary for him to perceive Amida as a special object of devotion to be worshiped to the exclusion of all other soters and sacralities. In Japan, the tendency had been to subsume Pure Land piety within either non-Pure Land doctrinal systems or, as we have seen, within an eclectic popular matrix. Moreover, even by the twelfth century exclusive devotion to Amida, according to the accounts of rebirth, had barely begun to emerge. In China, on the contrary, the line of Pure Land teachers from T'an-luan (ca. 488-554) to Shan-tao had for centuries been exclusively focused on Amitābha Buddha. Shan-tao rejected totally any spirituality except that committed to Amitābha and Pure Land rebirth. Thus the practices he recommends, as we have seen above, were all practices expressing devotion to Amitābha. Hōnen encountered in Shan-tao this exclusive commitment to Pure Land rebirth and exclusive reliance on practices in devotion to Amitābha. And this exclusive focus on Amitābha made it possible for Hōnen to formulate the even more thoroughgoing exclusiveness of his sole nembutsu position.¹⁶

16. Hōnen develops his exclusive Pure Land stance initially in Chapter 1 of his *Passages*, basing his position on citations from Tao-ch'o (562-645) and

Hōnen's Transformation of Popular Pure Land Piety

As I proposed above, it is my view that Hōnen drew from both his contemporary religious milieu and from continental thought and that he synthesized these influences so as to systemize a unique doctrinal position. Let me make three points: First, that Hōnen used continental thought to extract the sole nembutsu idea from its Japanese multi-faith, multi-praxis popular matrix; secondly, that he borrowed from Shan-tao certain of Shan-tao's notions on Pure Land praxis and used these to formulate a system of doctrines around the idea of sole nembutsu; and thirdly, that Hōnen related his teachings on sole nembutsu practice to a Pure Land scriptural canon, thus supplying them with some legitimacy and considerable autonomy.

Regarding the first point, based upon Shan-tao's exclusive commitment to Amitābha and his insistence upon the cultivation of Pure Land practices only, Hōnen was able first to extricate in theory Pure Land piety from its eclectic popular mix. Then based upon this exclusive Pure Land devotionism and Shan-tao's high regard for buddha-invocation he was able to develop his subsequent position of just one Pure Land practice, thereby extracting vocal nembutsu also from its eclectic amalgam. In some ways the highly focused Pure Land exclusivity Hōnen derived from Shan-tao was more important for Hōnen's historical role than his better known position on sole nembutsu, because it made possible, after centuries of co-option and subordination, the formulation by Hōnen of autonomous forms of doctrine and praxis essential for the development of the various Kamakura period Pure Land sectarian groups.

My second point is that Hōnen borrowed from Shan-tao certain of Shan-tao's notions on Pure Land praxis and used these to formulate a system of doctrines around the idea of sole nembutsu. As noted above, by the seventh century in T'ang China Shan-tao had already devised a rich system of Pure Land praxis. He saw the *nien-fo*, i. e., nembutsu, empowered by the eighteenth vow as the major act establishing a nexus of mutual devotedness between sentient being and buddha (*T.* 37.268a4-13), an act to be cultivated with sincere, deep and focused faith (*T.* 37.270c-273b), reverently, exclusively, constantly and to the end of one's life (*T.* 47.439a7-18). All this, as well as the identification of the *nien-fo* of the eighteenth vow with the utterance of the Buddha's name

other continental masters, and subsequently amplifies this doctrine drawing heavily on Shan-tao.

ten times as described in the *Contemplation Sūtra*, had already been worked out by Shan-tao. These systemic ideas and others were borrowed by Hōnen, enriching his notion of sole nembutsu and providing a rationale for its effectiveness.¹⁷

My third point is that Hōnen associated his teachings on sole nembutsu with a Pure Land canonical corpus, thereby enhancing their legitimacy and establishing their autonomy in relation to other doctrinal systems. There can be no question that a major concern of Hōnen in his *Passages* was to authenticate his teachings by showing how they were based upon Pure Land and other Mahāyāna scriptures. In the opening chapter he claims for his Pure Land School a canon called “the three part Pure Land scripture” (*jōdo sambukyō*), consisting of the *Wu-liang-shou ching / Muryōju kyō* (Sūtra of Limitless Life), *Kuan Wu-liang-shou-fo ching / Kan Muryōjubutsu kyō* (Sutra of Contemplation on the Buddha of Limitless Life, or Amitābha Contemplation Sutra), and the *O-mi-i’o ching / Amida kyō* (Amitābha Sūtra).¹⁸ Subsequent chapters of the *Passages*, with the exception of chapters 2, 9, 14, and 15, begin with a citation from one of these scripture intended to justify a particular claim regarding sole nembutsu or some related doctrine. (Chapters 2, 9, 14, and 15 begin with citations from the works of Shan-tao, which for Hōnen also had canonical authority.) This direct link to a defined set of scriptures associated with the Buddha Amitābha was also intended to liberate Pure Land doctrines from dependence on the canons of other schools, thereby giving these doctrines autonomy as well as legitimacy.

Conclusion

Let me conclude by reiterating that Hōnen did not simply adopt the raw features of popular faith into his teachings. He returned to the Chinese sources of much of Japanese popular Pure Land piety¹⁹ and used those texts and teachings to modify, systematize and defend popular Japanese

17. See Hōnen’s *Passages on the Selected Nembutsu*, T. 83.9a23-b7; 9c3-12b25; 12b27-c10; 4b26-c6.

18. The influence of Shan-tao is apparent here also. These three sūtras were the ones he recommended reading and reciting in one of his formulations of Pure Land practice (see section 3 above and T. 37.272b2). On Hōnen’s formulation of this canon and other features of his Pure Land School, see Andrews 1987.

19. Inoue and others (Shigematsu 1964; Satō 1956; Andrews 1989, 1990, 1991) have documented the impact of Chinese Pure Land upon early and mid-Heian Japanese Pure Land devotionism, especially upon the *Ōjōyōshū*, and the impact of this text in turn upon popular piety.

beliefs and practices. Moreover, this hybrid character of Hōnen's thought was important for the further development of Japanese Buddhism: Because it was based upon popular ideas and practices, Hōnen's thought had great popular appeal, and because it now constituted a system of doctrines invested with credibility and autonomy, it was able to serve, with later modifications of course, as the basis for several institutionalized Buddhist sects—the Jōdo Shū, the Jishū and the Jōdo Shinshū.

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CHARACTER LIST

akunin	惡人
bessho	別所
fanfu	凡夫
hijiri	聖
Hōnen-bō Genkū	法然房源空
Jōdo shū	淨土宗
jōsan nizen	定散二善
Kūya	空也
mappō	末法
mukae kō	迎講
nembutsu	念佛
nembutsu kō	念佛講
nembutsu shu	念佛衆
nien-fo	念佛
nyūdō	入道
ōjōden	往淨傳
shami	沙彌
Shan-tao	善導
shōjō no gō	正定業
T'an-luan	曇鸞
Tao-ch'o	道綽
zōgyō	雜行
zoku shami	俗沙彌