

鎮  
魂  
と  
再  
生

Chinkon  
to  
Saisei



An elder is praying for peace

Process Work and Japanese Buddhism.  
A pilgrimage of Completion.

Takeo Kiriyama

## Abstract

This thesis is about using process work to support Japanese buddhism and ancestors.

This is a record of the personal, spiritual, and historical pilgrimage of myself. I was born on the island named Japan , located in the Far East. Buddhism has a strong but invisible influence in my country. I went on a pilgrimage into Buddhism. Then I met four Japanese Buddhists who were dying inside of me and asking me for help . I attempted the possible salvation by using Process Work . I express this journey in the frame of Japanese traditional acting ,Noh theatre.

## Acknowledgement

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桐山岳大

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# Chapter-1

## Introduction

### 方法と様式 Hōhō to Yōshiki

#### 1-1 Method and style

The method that I have adopted in this project is a unique one, in that it does not belong purely to any particular approach to research. It blends together historical, narrative, biographical and autobiographical approaches to research. Its creative expression is influenced by my background experience of stage acting in Japan, and by Noh theatre in particular.

In my approach to research and my style of presentation, I use myself as a vehicle, employing a story-telling and dramatic style. By inserting myself this way into biographical narratives, I make a personal connection with history. I reject a conventional time-line view of history, and prefer to think of history as a matrix, or web that connects people across-1--1- time and culture. I believe that understanding history requires connecting with the people who lived it. So I have attempted to personalize history by bringing myself into dramatic dialogues with historical Japanese Buddhist figures: Prince Shotoku, Kukai, Dogen, and Shinran.

In my thesis project, through a process of historical study, inner work, and their creative expression in the form of Noh theatre, I reach deeply into myself, and experience Buddhist influence on me in the form of these

four Japanese Buddhists. I experience them within myself as living, dying, and asking for my help. As a result, I introduced each of the four Buddhists to Process Work, which I have been learning intentionally for the last ten years. In this process, the ways in which Japanese Buddhism and Process Work are different, similar and complementary are made more clear.

#### 1-1.1 How I approached my topic?

The process of working on this thesis was mostly a solitary one, but it involved sharing ideas and getting help from others as well. At first, I read widely on Buddhism. I read as many books on the four Buddhists as I could. As I read, I would scan my reactions and write them down. I spent time thinking about what I read, mulling it over, digesting it, and allowing thoughts and feelings to arise. I tried to understand the historical, social, and economic situations of the four Buddhists, as if I were alive in their time. Through an imaginative process, I tried to step into their reality, look at their actions, listen to their voices. I read their writings, and looked at how they interacted with society. As much as possible, I put myself into their reality. Then I waited for a story to come out. After that, I started writing the Noh theatre pieces, including the historical details of the lives of each of the four Buddhists. These theatre pieces form the main body of my thesis.

I wrote first in Japanese, and then, with the help of friends, writing into English. This translation process included cross-cultural exchange, and sharing of ideas, and gave me lots of understanding and new findings which I then brought into my thesis. In the translation process, I explored my Japanese ideas in English. This experience, while being greatly transformative for me, also helped my

American friends gain deeper understanding of Japanese Buddhism. When I explained the ideas in detail to my friends, I had to take a new look at what is considered general knowledge for Japanese, because they are not common ideas for Americans. I found areas that I had not previously thought about, and this inspired me to continue, and go even deeper with my explorations.

## 能

### Noh

#### 1.1.2 Noh Theater

In presenting the ideas contained in this thesis, I have chosen to borrow the style of Noh Theater. The lives of the four Buddhists, my own life experience, and some of the ideas and practices of Japanese Buddhism, and Process Work are presented in the form of four Noh theatre pieces.



*He is acting out the moment of his death.*

Noh Theater is stage art, formulated by Zeami (1363-1443). (Shirasu, 1996) It was developed through a kind of integration of various performances, dances, songs and mimics. This kind of performance was looked upon as cheap and worthless before Zeami, who elevated to art form. To this day, the performance style remained, unchanged, as when Zeami developed it.

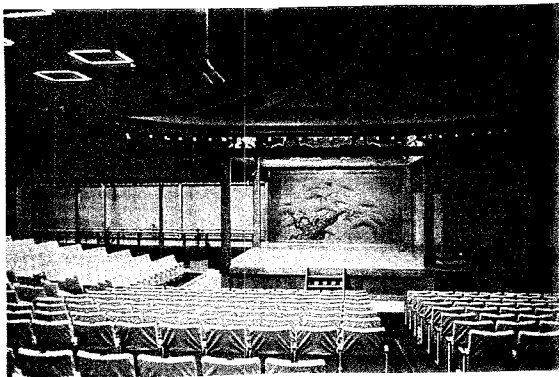


Historically, Japanese performers ranked very low on the social ladder. Zeami himself was seen as a beggar, and was homeless. Kabuki actors were also called beggars living beside the river. They belonged to the lower ranks of society. When Zeami was twenty years old, he had a chance to perform in front of Shogun Yoshimitu. The Shogun acknowledged Zeami, but not for his art; it was for his beauty. After that, Yoshimitu always took Zeami with him wherever he went. Did they have a sexual relationship? Yes, of course. Homosexuality was not hidden. It was accepted, especially in samurai traditions. This continued until the 1860s, when western culture began to enter Japan. Zeami grabbed this chance and Yoshimitu became his patron, supporting him until he completed the Noh Theater, the achievement of his lifetime. He developed every aspect of Noh theatre. He was an actor, director, and producer, and half of the scenarios, which are still performed today, were written by him.

## 舞台 Butai

### The Stage

Stages were outside and faced toward the Shinto shrine. The modern stage style is inside. But there are many outside performances these days.



A modern Noh stage



An ancient Noh stage.

## 仮面 Kamen

### The Mask

There are three types of masks which most of the Noh performers wear: old, woman, and Oni. It is Japanese belief that something which lives in seclusion, behind the mask, shape-shift into a more beautiful being. The mask then, was seen as a transformational tool.



A mask of woman



A mask of Oni



A mask of oldman

# 舞 Mai

## Dance

"Mai" means circling .(Watanabe,1991)By circling ,Gods and Goddesses can possess the actors.In Noh's way of dancing there is only simple steps make up the Noh style of dance,which are then combined and repeated.So actors would thoroughly engage their physical bodies in this simple style,therby allowing themselves to shapeshift into Noh consensus reality.The essence of Mai is molding the physical body ,so that the invisiblebody becomes free.

Noh Theater is a unique kind of performance. It has a specific style of music and dancing. On the stage there are six to ten musicians with flutes and drums. There is a five member chorus. Performers are generally two or three people. Performers move very slowly and subtly, but need quite a bit of concentration and physical strength. They start training at age three and practice every day. For them, being in their 60s means that they are still babies. After 70, they feel finally mature and free to perform.



Noh theatre originally started as a way to give a gift to the gods and to pray for everybody's happiness. Characters that are performed by actors are humans, ghosts, monks, devils, and so on. The basic premise of a Noh story is that there is a ghost who has something unfinished in its last life. The ghost appears on the stage, processes what is unfinished from his previous life, and gets enlightened. Here ,the strong influence of Pureland Buddhism and Zen Buddhism on Noh theatre can be seen.

#### Example of story



Here is an example of a Noh story. A monk meets an old beggar woman beside a river. This old woman treats the monk arrogantly, and the monk curses her. The beggar woman used to be a famous, beautiful, intellectual story teller named Komachi. She became an angry ghost because she had an unfinished love. When she was young, she talked to a samurai who fell in love with her. She said if he would visit her place on one hundred nights, she would sleep with him. He visited her on ninety nine nights, but then he got sick and could not accomplish the one hundred nights. He died disappointed and left a curse on her. Komachi begins to dance on the stage wearing the samurai's clothes. She appears to be a female wearing male clothes and dancing. But actually it is a male who is acting as a female in that moment. The heart is a woman, but the appearance is a man. When she dances, the old beggar woman becomes the younger, beautiful Komachi. But her mind is still arrogant. Through wearing his clothes and re-experiencing their relationship by dancing she begins

to understand the samurai's experience. She stands on her side and dances, and then stands on his side, and dances. The figure's appearance is that of a man, but its heart is that of a woman. Then through dancing, eventually they become one. Female and male become one. The unfinished love completes itself in front of the audience. Finally the unhappy, arrogant woman gets enlightened and can die.



A moment for a Noh actor becoming one with the mask

### 1-1.3 My background in theatre and film

My knowledge of Noh theatre comes from a long term interest in acting and theatre. I acted on stage from age 20 to 32. This came out of a major event in my early life. When I was 18 years old, I completely lost my way in mainstream society. I lost confidence, direction and suffered a lot from self hate. I shut my windows and doors I stopped communicating with anyone, and isolated myself for two months.

During that time, I came across a dialogue between the philosopher Takeji Hiyashi and the director Toshiharu Takeuchi. I happened to read Hayashi's books, in which

he described his learning experience at two schools which located in the discriminated town in Tokyo and Kobe, including Korean-Japanese people who this caste suffered from Japan's hidden caste system. This system stems from an ancient hierarchy, with the shogun at the top, followed by samurai, farmers, craftspeople, merchant and, at the very bottom, the non-humans. Today even though this hierarchy has been declared finished, such prejudices still exist. The so-called "non-humans" still live in certain sections of the town or city, and are discriminated against in marriage and employments.

Hayashi was visiting those school and gave a series of lectures to high school students some of whom were illiterate had been wounded by educational school. They were highly marginalized by mainstream society. I was so touched and feeling close to them, wanted to become a student with them. But I had edge to go there.

Then I read a dialogue between the director, Takeuchi, and the philosopher, S. Hiyashi, in which they talked about their collaboration and learning experience with them. They taught at those two high school, which held classes at night for students who worked during the day.

The philosopher taught about what is hulaan and the director brought his acting company to perform.

I found out in Takeuchi's biography that he had a institute of acting. I jumped into his school, not because I intended to become an actor, but because I believed that this was the only way to survive. Although I did not think of this at the time, I now realize I became involved in world work issues through acting. That also was not my intention. Acting was simply the only way to survive this life. If I had not involved, I am not sure that I would still be alive. I was playing roles on stage in those same two high school two years later.

#### 1-1.4 Akira Kurosawa and Toshiro Mihune



Akira Kurosawa



Toshiro Mihune

In the creative process of working on this thesis, my as acting has been a interest in film as well contributing influence. In particular, the work of and of film director , Akira Kurasawa ,and of actor , Toshiro Mifune, have been influential. Studying their work has helped me with my edges writing the Noh thetre piece. When I got stuck, I would consult with them, and their influence is woven into the four theatre pieces that emerged through this process . Akira Kurasawa is one of the most influential film directors in the last century.(Galbrath,2001). He influenced the work of George Lucas, S.Spielberg, and Frances Ford Coppola.

Toshiro Mifune starred in 16 films of Kurosawa ' s 30 films . Together , Kurasawa and Mifune created films such as Rashomon. Red Beard., High and Low, Ikiru , and Yojinioo and so on. In 1951 . Their movie Rashomon won

Grand prize at Venice which was first Japanese film entered the Venice. This gave great encouragement to the Japanese people, after having lost World War II. Kurasawa and Mifune created great dramas, but in their fifties their relationship between the actor and director, broke, ending their creative + collaborative effort.

In 1998, Mifune passed away. Then Akira Kurasawa made a public statement that Toshiro Mifune was a great actor. Six months later, Kurasawa died. I have lots of feeling about this issue. I feel respect and appreciation for them, but very sad they could not work on their relationship issue. It was personal as well as cultural issue.

Kurasawa's statement relieved the tension, but I wonder what would have happened if they had worked together on their relationship problems. I feel most Japanese people do not have relationship skills, tools, or ideas to deal with direct conflict. Japan had two great human beings, but didn't have skill to work on lost great human beings, who, because they lacked the skills didn't work on their relationship. This is sad history for me.



# 日本仏教 Nihon Bukyou

## 1-2 Japanese Buddhism

In my thesis, through the vehicle of Noh theatre which I have described, I explore Japanese Buddhism from various angles: from a very personal perspective, from a historical perspective on the lives of the four Japanese Buddhists, and from an interactive perspective, in which the ideas of Japanese Buddhism are explored in relation to Process Work ideas and interventions.

### 1-2.1 A personal view of Japanese Buddhism.

When I initially thought about what Japanese Buddhism is for me, I noticed a voice, a disturbing voice that prevented me from talking about this. When I invited this voice to speak, a cynical, sarcastic voice said:

What are you talking about? Buddhism? Religion? You know it's about sick people who cannot adjust to society. Religion is a place for escape from society. I don't have any time to listen to that.

In response, I said:

"What you are saying is partially right. Nowadays the Japanese religious situation is something like that. I thought the same way as you before. But I have another view point, based on my personal experience. Until my late 20s, I saw nothing valuable in the Japanese culture. Only the western way looked interesting to me.

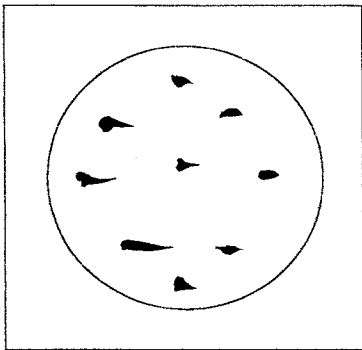
Then I happened to go on a pilgrimage at Shikoku. My viewpoint completely shifted. I saw that what I was looking for in a foreign culture was actually very near to me. I began to follow the history of Buddhism and learn about Buddhists, and found that their way of living, their actions, their worth deeply touched me. I want to share this experience with you. I think it will not be lost on

you, and may be of benefit to you. Then you can decide. If you don't have all the information, you can't decide what is worthwhile and what isn't. I don't want to push you.

The cynical voice then replied:

"Well, OK. Say something! Go ahead! What is Buddhism for you personally?"

So this is how I began...



Let's say, here is a paper and I draw a circle on it. This circle is me. Next let's experience how Buddhism relates to this circle. I begin to make a dot in the circle. One dot, two dots, three dots, four dots. I draw dots randomly in the circle. There is a lot of space in the circle.

Buddhism is like this for me. It is very invisible.

I have these dots in my body. I feel there are dots outside also.

I begin to make dots outside the circle. There are dots in the air, but not dense in my body, they are outside but not dense,

they are omnipresent.

Then I focus on one dot. I look at it with my inner eye. I keep looking at one dot. It's getting bigger. If I focus, give it attention, it grows. In this moment, it is the size of a quarter and the color of water, and now it is as big as a quarter. I put this ball on my palm. Something is inside. And I notice I see something cloudy.

What is it? I keep looking. It is a lake. I saw this lake before when I was 10 years old. In primary school we went on a trip in the deep mountains and we found a lake where the water was so transparent and so clear that I could see the bottom. There were lots of dead trees, big stones, and some fish in the lake and it looked so silent and precious. I was so scared feeling that I would be sucked into the lake.

Then part of me said you feel you will be sucked into the lake, so why don't you let yourself be sucked into it?

Then the next moment I am floating on the water in the lake. It is so silent, very silent, just silence. The water is cold, but not too cold. I feel the silence getting into my body and nobody is here, no human being. I am experiencing the quality of transparency and can notice every single movement, feeling, sound, and thought, and the clouds are moving, birds are flying, fish are swimming. This water was here from a long time before, but then this water is always changing and flowing. Who am I, floating on the water? Is this the personality named Take? Or am I this water who is holding a human being? Or who is this? Who am I? I feel I am a very old being and then I notice that I sense that I will also exist in the future. I am not only this, and this, but I am also an old spirit, and I will also be alive 200 years or more in the future. I notice that I am not attached to family, the roles of society, money, problems. I am completely free and separate from all that. I am free from everything, yet I'm also here. This experience is Buddhism for me. The four Buddhists are connected to this experience, because they made the lake.

## 1-2.2 A brief historical view of four Japanese Buddhists

In addition to my internal experience of Japanese Buddhism, I studied the lives of four key Buddhists in Japanese history. These will be described in more detail in later chapters, but I will give a brief introduction here.

### 聖徳太子

Shōtoku taishi

#### Prince Shōtoku (574-622)



Prince Shōtoku, founder of Japanese Buddhism, raised Japan from being unknown to having a place in world history. He was born into the Emperor's family, but never became an emperor, remaining a regent until the end of his life. He wrote the first national law, 17 articles in length. He broke all the governmental systems that depended on families and initiated a new system based on ability. While he was alive, he managed the balance of politics and there was no war. After his death, there was no one to continue this management and so the enemy became stronger. Twenty five years after his death, all of his family members killed themselves in order to avoid war.

## 空海 Kūkai

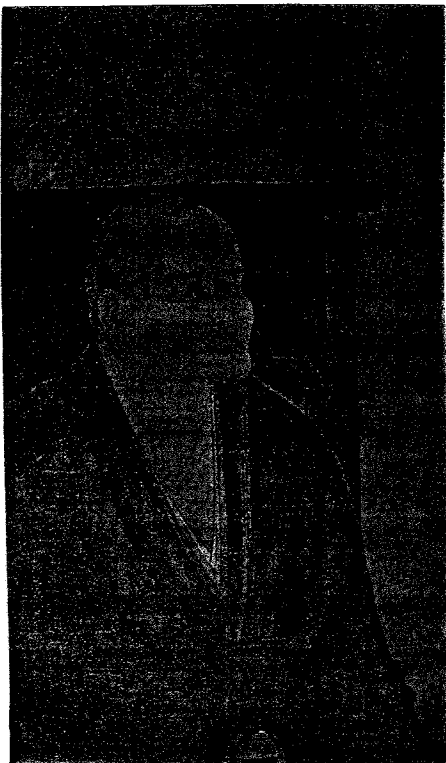
Kūkai (774-835)



Kūkai is notable for completing Esoteric Buddhism and for starting the Shingom sect. He lived at a time that still belonged to the ancient era, but modern ideas and things began to come into Japan from other countries for the first time. Kūkai's Esoteric Buddhism was quite diverse; of its kind in Japanese history.

## 道元 Dōgen

Dōgen (1200-1253)



The founder of the Soto Sect, Dōgen lost his parents when he was very young, and then noticed the impermanence of life and became a monk. He posed the question that if people have Buddha nature inside, why is there any need to practice? Nobody could answer his question and so he went to China where he met a master. He stayed there five years and then returned to Japan. He was the first one who wrote and thought in Japanese. He wrote a lot of writing from

Zen meditation and explored the dharma into every day stuff like how to wash your face, how to clean your teeth, how to urinate. He never related to politics and stayed in the mountains.

## 親鸞 Shinran

### Shinran (1173-1262)



Shinran was the founder of Shin Buddhism. He was born in the middle class, to a noble family, but his family did not have power and so he became a monk. He practiced rigorously but never had an experience of enlightenment and felt desperate. Then he tried one more thing. He stayed once more in the temple for 100 days, praying all day long. On the ninety sixth day, he met Prince

Shōtoku in a dream. Prince Shōtoku said, meet Pureland Buddhist Honen. He expanded this Pureland Buddhism and founded Shin Buddhism.

Both Dogan and Shinran Lived in the Japanese era known as the Middle Ages. This is a very interesting era because before that Japan tried to learn from China and Korea, using them as models. But then in the Middle Ages, something originally Japanese in thought and aesthetics started growing. Buddhism became a background theory of much Japanese art, and the Buddhism of Dogan and Shinran stood on the foundation of ancient Buddhism.

### 1-2.3 Who are these four Buddhists for me personally?

In the process of studying these four Buddhists, I asked myself "Who are they for me? Why are they so attractive to me, and what makes me so deeply concerned about them? These questions initiated a process of inner discovery, of what they mean to me as inner figures, qualities and tendencies.

#### 聖德太子 Shōtoku taishi

##### Prince Shōtoku

I see his tendency as climbing an unknown mountain without equipment. As a pioneer, he sees the direction and finds Buddhism. He involves himself deeply in Buddhism. Then he sees the outside world and wants to benefit everyone, using Buddhism in politics to govern the country and stop war. I feel he is the first ancestor of my soul.

#### 空海 Kūkai

##### Kūkai

For twelve years I have been walking the pilgrimage that Kukai founded. On the pilgrimage I found that what I want to do in this life is Process Work. I am deeply thankful to him. I feel his tendency is like staying in space but connecting to everything, reaching out in multiple dimensions. He was an artist, a poet, a calligrapher, an architect, and traveled all over the world. He could communicate with anyone. He lived in the city and also practiced in the mountains. He was quite a diverse human being. He showed the Buddhist way of freedom. I feel he models for me the Buddhism way of freedom, independence, and diversity.

## 道元 Dōgen

### Dōgen

I don't know the reason why, but my ancestors lived in front of the Dogen's temple. So physically I have a connection with him. Maybe my DNA knows him. Dogen was quite an intense character. He denied every Japanese Buddhist before him including Prince Shotoku and Kukai. He was extremely confident about what he was doing, which I have a big edge to but which is growing in me. I feel his tendency is like sitting in a deep well with no water.

Through sitting in the well, he can see other dimensions, consensus reality and the sentient dimension at the same time. He is a person swimming on the surface of the ocean but at the same time he can touch the bottom of the ocean.

He can verbalize his experience in his own original way. He is showing me how I can be creative, by staying deep inside myself until something original manifests.

## 親鸞 Shinran

### Shinran

Shinran embraced the powerlessness, impotence, and weakness of being a Japanese man. No one taught me to embrace these things in my personal history. I feel his tendency is like a subtle light in the darkness. This subtle light is like a lighthouse in the storm and cures desperation. This subtle light was shining before I was born and will continue after I pass away. He shows me the way of surrender, the ways I can throw away my cravings, my intention.



### 1-3 Buddhist monk or Process Worker?

If I was born in the ancient time or in the Middle Ages, I would have become a monk, following the four Buddhist movements. However, fortunately or unfortunately, I was born in 1962 and Buddhism had already become something of a fossil in Japan. Except for only one Zen priest, whom I met in my 20s, every monk that I knew of was following that path for the money, not for spiritual reasons. Monks become monks because they were born in the temple, and their main job was to conduct funerals and to maintain the graves. They had a lot of income and they did not need to pay taxes. There was no relationship between Buddhism and ordinary life, or everyday suffering. For that reason, I decided to become a process worker, not a monk.

#### 1-3.1 A brief overview of Process Work

Process Work was founded by Arnold Mindell in the 1960s. Arny found out that what a person dreams at night and what is happening in the body are similar. Then he started to see the patterns of the dreams and the body also reflected in people's relationships and in group dynamics. He worked with people's sensory grounded dynamics . experiences happening through the visual , auditory , kinesthetic , and proprioceptive channels of perception . He also brought in concepts from quantum physics , Taoism, shamanism, and Buddhism. The core of Process Work is following the Tao or nature, a concept from Taoism, and developing awareness from Zen Buddhism. From quantum physics comes the idea that below the surface level of matter exists a world of continually shifting waves and particles .

### 1-3.2 What Process Work is for me rsonally ?

It was almost ten years ago when I heard about Process Work. At that time, I had been a hermit in the mountain for three years . I received a letter from the Transpersonal pshchology Institute in Japana saying that Arnold Mindell would come to Japan. It was Arny' s first visit to my country, and I was interested in but didn' t go . The next year , I received another letter and, this time, decided to go. I strongly remember my feeling that Arnold Mindell was a very interesting man and that I laughed a lot. I also remember one exercise that asked me to become a creator of fate and then look at why I was bern in Japan now . My answer was that there are lots of options to choose from . Previous to this time , I had read many bocks by Carl Jung , study transpersonal pshchology and learned about the Eneagram, but I was not satisfied by those because it was too much thinking for me . When I saw ,Arny and Amy , I noticed something coherent , which was the experiential aspect and the finding of deep wisdom that was not only analytical and thinking oriented. Also, the work was like improvisation in acting , and I found something that was close to the way I experienced through acting. However, at that time, I felt dried up by acting as if my internal world had no water , and had jumped into nature, becoming a hermit.

I took Max and Jytte' s workshop many times . I have had a feeling Max and Jytte as a family . I asked them to become my study committee and then I became a diploma student. In 1997 I attended a relationship intensive in Australia. My intention was to find out if Process Work was the thing to which I would dedicate my life. I threw the I Ching, which said it will be very tough but you can go, and I went. I threw the same hexagram three times that year .

At that time, I hardly spoke English. There were a hundred

people at the workshop . Most were Australian and New Zealanders, several were aboriginals, one man had ancestors from Asia , and there was only one Japanese, myself. One afternoon the racial tension was activated and people of color decided to leave the room and they invited me . I was surprised because I had never seen myself as colored. Even though there is racism in Japanese society, I was unaware of it. I had never felt colored as a Japanese person. After that, I spent time with them every day . That was a huge experience for me. I couldn' t speak English, and as a Japanese male I had a tendency , couldn' t ask for help. Lee Jones and Julie Diamond have been helped me. First, they translated to me using simple words , but the problem was that I didn' t Then they even understand the simplified sentences . began to write down the ideas , and finally I could understand . They became my second ' study committee. And this relationship becomes life long treasure for me. So for me Process Work started with these matrix of experience . Process Work helped me experience an aspect, which I couldn' t know and was unaware of, in a warm hearted way without accusing me. Then it gave me the experience of going to the other side . I also learned that when somebody is struggling, Process Work helps this person with compassion and a willingness to adjust This is Process Work to his or her particular needs for me.

1-4. HOMAGE

Homage to  
Akira Kurosawa &  
Toshiro Mifune

黒澤明と三船敏郎に捧ぐオマージュ



Imagine you are sitting in a movie theater in a box seat, and that a trailer is starting! The movie is very brief, and has three scenes .

### **Scene One:**

Filmed in black and white there is rain like a waterfall. Two mens are sitting under the half ruined temple gate. The camera zooms in on this gate. There are a huge statue and a stone floor. They are sitting holding their knees and looking downward . They are middle aged . One is a monk who is wearing dirty, old, torn clothes and the other wears jeans and a T-shirt, also dirty and torn , but their faces are the same .

Monk: "It's strange. I don ' t understand, I just don ' t understand"

Other man:" Hmmm. Actually when the four Buddhists were alive Buddhism was flowering, people's minds were rich and at peace. But nowadays , there is only famine and there are lots of corpses at this gate . Lovers , families , babies , soldiers , bussinesspeople , parents , children , everybody died" .

Monk : " I don ' t understand why things are happening like this " .

## Scene two

Ghost:" I used to be called Prince Shotoku and I founded Japanese Buddhism. When I was alive , I saw the way of Buddha clearly , but I can ' t see it now . I was enlightened before, but now I feel unsettled and upset, as though I need to go back and complete something . But I don't know how to do that. So I am a ghost".

## Scene Three

The screen is dark and blank . Words are projected onto it. the projection is white on black so that it can be read .

Can Buddhism be resurrected ?

Can the four buddhists reach enlightenment?

二、聖徳太子



Kuze-Kannon

Shōtoku-taishi  
chapter-2  
Prince Shōtoku

## **Chapter-2**

### **Prince Shōtoku Gentleness of Spirit**

#### **2-1 Background notes**

This performance centers on Prince Shōtoku, who was born in the Asuka Era, 526 ce., the ancient time of Japanese history. It was a time before Japan came into world history. Buddhism was spreading from India through China and Korea to Japan.

#### **2-1.1 East Asian Situation**

At this time, China was one huge country called the Sui dynasty (581-618). Korea was made up of three countries: Koguryo, Paekche and Silla. Between Korea and China, there was strong tension, invasion, and issues around national borders. Because there is a sea between Japan, China and Korea, Japan possibly felt a kind of security, safer than Korea.

#### **Pre-nation identity of Japan as a powerful clan**

In the island of Japan, powerful clans created a small kingdom. There were five clans accepted by China. These clans were fighting and competing with each other, so there was no sense of one united nation or country. Historically, no one knows exactly where these five clans were located. This was the age in which Prince Shotoku lived.



### **2-1.2 Arising Emperor Family**

Japan has always had an emperor, has one now, and will probably continue to have one into the future. But where do these emperors come from? How did this begin? The emperors come from these five clans, who were accepted as the royal families, the kings and queens of the nation and their descendants(Saikawa,1999).

Mythologically, the Emperor arose more than one thousand years ago, but historically the Emperor families began during the 6th century. China was a model for Japan as a kingdom country. During the 6th century, public officials named the Emperor, which meant the center of the universe. I have never thought of the emperor as a king. The word "king" has always reminded me of foreign countries, such as China or England, where kings have authority and take leadership. But an emperor works differently. He was viewed as God. This changed after World War II when the Emperor became human, a symbol.

### **2-1.3 Buddhism and Shintoism**

Civilians who traveled or moved to Japan brought Buddhism at first. but officially it arrived from Korea in 538c. Before Buddhism . there was Shintoism. Shintoism, a kind of animism, say that everything in nature has its own life. It appreciates the four seasons . and sees gods in nature. Buddhism is a more widely known religion, and is at the forefront of spiritual ,philosophical,architectural artistic and technological evolution. Japan ' s acceptance of Buddhism signaled a paradigm and identity shift,drawing the nation more into relationship with the cultural and political issues of the world.

### War between Buddhism and Shintoism

The guardians of Shintoism were a strong family of soldiers named Mononobe. The Soga family was the guardian of Buddhism. When Prince Shôtoku was 14 years old, these two families went to war. The Soga family won that war, making them the strongest family in Japan.

## 聖德太子

Shôtoku-taishi

### 2-2 The life of Prince Shôtoku



Prince Shotoku's family, the Soga family, was one of the biggest clans. His mother's line was Soga, and his father's line was an emperor family. Prince Shotoku was born as a Buddhist, because his great grandfather and those that came after him were all Buddhist. While he was alive, he was called Prince Umayato, meaning 'stable' or 'barn', because his mother sensed birth

coming in front of a stable, where he was then born. Gossip about Jesus and the story of his birth was simultaneously beginning to spread and was projected onto Prince Shôtoku (Kazuyama, 2001). After his death, in the academic world at the universities, there was controversy about Prince Shôtoku, his life and writings, and this continues to be a hot topic even today. (Umehara, 2002). The dreaming around Prince Shôtoku is very interesting. He

became an archetypal figure in Japanese culture, viewed as a hero and savior.

In the following section, I will explore the historical context and mythological dreaming around Prince Shôtoku.

### 2-2.1 Prince Shôtoku Worries

In Japan in the ancient era, strong families were selfish, looked out for themselves, and were motivated by their own benefit. Official posts were determined by familial background. There were no ethics or compassion. If there was a war, strong families could use everyone in the region without regard for their situation, such as farming or family obligations. Families were separated and many people died during these times. Prince Shôtoku traveled around to find out what was happening in the country, and was disturbed and upset by what he found. Before he became the regent of the country, he went to war as a prince. He witnessed many deaths of ordinary people, and also saw the assassinations of two emperors by the Soga family. Once he gained political power as the regency, while he was regent all war was prevented.

### 2-2.2 Prince Shôtoku becomes the Regent

When he was twenty years old, Prince Shôtoku became the regent of Japan, at the request of the Empress Suiko. He continued to serve as a regent throughout the rest of his lifetime, until he died at 50 years old. As a political leader, he brought Japan up to a standard that gave it structure and an elevated role within world history, protecting it from colonization. As a politician, he accomplished three things: 1) He tried to help equalize Japan's relationship with China; 2) He broke the familial ranking system, creating a new 12 court rank system,

related to people's virtue and ability; 3) He created the first statute laws called the 'Constitution of Seventeen Articles', within Japan.

### 2-3.3 Politics and Religion

It is important to understand that religion belongs to politics in Japanese history. Therefore, Prince Shōtoku's political and spiritual rank together served to make him an influential presence. Without his political influence, Buddhism would not have spread, so this political aspect of Prince Shōtoku's life cannot be ignored. In this context, Prince Shōtoku laid the foundation of Japanese culture and also Buddhism. What does it mean to be the person who created a country and was also the founder of Buddhism as a national religion?

### 2-3 Prince Shōtoku and Buddhism

Prince Shōtoku was looking deeply for what was guiding his regency, how to unite the country and avoid war. He was also seeking his own spiritual fulfillment. He found it and began to use it. There is a story that comes to mind, which illustrates the feeling that Prince Shōtoku modeled towards people and the spirit behind Buddhism. In a market area, there were many people. Suddenly the crowd split apart because there was a deadly sick man. No one took care of him. They all ran away. But Prince Shōtoku went close to the man, gave his own clothes to him, brought him water and stayed with him. The man died in his arms. There was no leader who take risks and modeled compassion like him .

In 594 CE., Prince Shōtoku and Empress Suiko declared acceptance of the Three Treasures of Buddhism as the

national religion. Many strong clans began to build Buddhist temples. Prince Shôtoku became an apprentice of the priest Eji from Kogryô. Before that, he had studied by himself, learning to read Chinese characters, Taoism and Confucianism, so he was already highly educated. His apprenticeship continued for 20 years, deepening, broadening and making his learning his own, less theoretical and more real. However, he never became a monk. When priest Eji found out about Prince Shôtoku's death, he performed a ceremony and decided to follow him, dying one year later on the very same day. Also, in 607 c., Empress Suiko declared respect for the Shinto way of praying. She and Prince Shotoku made a balance between Buddhism and Shintoism. They built Buddhism on the foundation of Shintoism, Taoism and Confucianism, so Japanese culture is a mix of these four religions. For example, the 12 court ranking system contains many elements of Shintoism, Taoism and Confucianism. Even when they are invisible and addressed overtly, they are still felt.

### 2-3.1 Prince Shôtoku's Buddhism

## 在家主義

Zaike-syugi

### Buddhism for the lay person

Prince Shotoku's Buddhism recognized that a lay person, or a person living in his or her home, could be a Buddhist as much as a monk could. For example, he wrote a book about the Sutras, the oldest scholarly book in Japanese history, which told stories of ordinary people becoming enlightened. The early books on Buddhism said that it was

necessary to become a monk in order to follow the Buddhist way, but Prince Shōtoku preferred the ordinary path through everyday practice. In this way, he expressed the meaning of living in multiple worlds, not marginalizing consensus reality, but using it to go deeper into spiritual understanding.

## 如来藏思想

Nyoraizo-shisou

Tathagata-garbha: Everyone has the possibility to become Buddha

Tathagata-garbha is a Sanskrit term, meaning 'the embryo of the Buddha'.

One theory in Buddhism says that only some can become enlightened, and that this takes many lifetimes. Prince Shōtoku preferred to think that everyone has a baby Buddha inside.

## 世間虛假、唯仏是真

Seken-kokw, yuibutu-zesshin

Life is illusion, only Buddha is real or truth.

What Prince Shotoku actually did was to try to guide and structure the country, and fulfill the spiritual need of the people and himself. There is a constant struggle between theory and practice, consensus reality and living this in everyday life, and he tried to live both.

## 捨身飼虎

Shashinshiko

**Sacrificing the body to hungry tiger**

This was a historical story of Buddha's past life which was told to his family many times.

And illustrated as a beautiful picture on one of his memorial materials. Buddha is standing on a cliff with his clothes thrown off onto the trees, about to jump into the abyss and sacrifice himself to the hungry tiger family with seven cubs. He threw himself and saved the hungry tiger family.

2-4 First Noh Drama :Ikaruga

# 能、斑鳩

Noh, Ikaruga

Act one

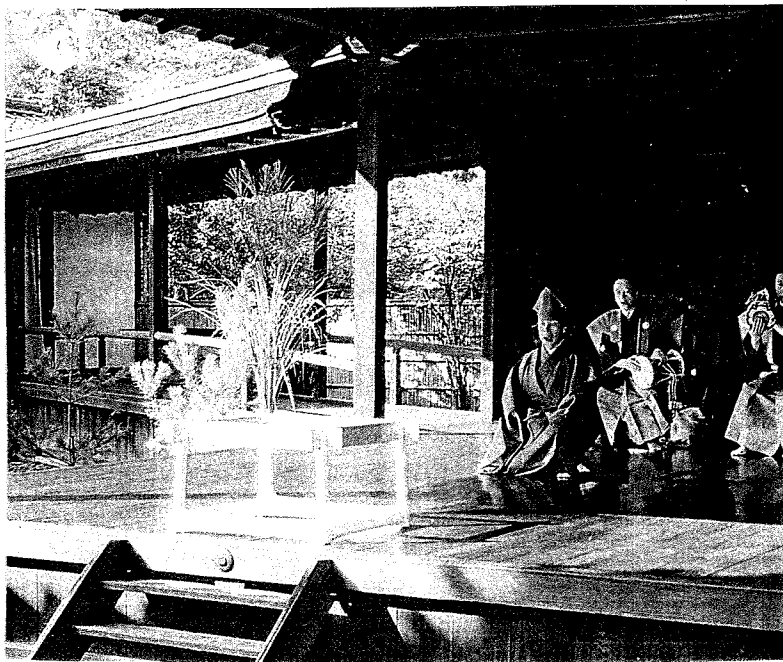
CAST

SHITE <sup>(1)</sup> : Prince Shōtoku as appear at first as his wife  
Tojiko-no-miko who is also a ghost.

TURE <sup>(2)</sup> : Oue who is Prince Shōtoku's son.

WAKI <sup>(3)</sup> : A process worker as a monk.

The scene is set in Ikaruga <sup>(4)</sup> . At the beginning there is  
no one on the stage. Then a monk comes to the center of  
the stage.



(1) Shite means a leading actor.

(2) Ture;menas a supporting actor.

(3) Waki means a supporting actor.

(4) Ikaruga is the ancient town whery Prince shottoku and his family lived



Monk

Here is Ikaruga. I am overwhelmed with emotion to visit Prince Shōtoku as a pilgrim for the first time. And then I'll come to Kūkai, Dōogen and Shinran. His tombstone must be around here somewhere, but I can't find it. I might have lost the way. The sun is setting. It is very beautiful.



A woman appears on the stage as if the sunset has become a human being. The sunset is shining on her face and her face is the color of the sunset. She is smiling, but also carries deep sorrow. Wearing a beautiful kimono, she is holding one flower in her hand, she passes through in front of the monk and then puts the flower on the rock.

Monk

"Excuse me. I am looking for the tombstone of Prince Shōtoku. Do you know about it?"

The woman doesn't respond. She doesn't say no but listens without looking.



Monk

"You look as though you are holding the flower for a reason. If it's possible, could you tell me about Prince Shōtoku?"

Woman

"Prince Shōtoku was called Umayato when he was alive. From childhood he had lots of curiosity about life, and he was born with compassion. Buddhism polished his nature. As a politician, he was always in a state of tension and conflict, especially in relationship to the Soga family of which he was a part. However, he always contemplated people's happiness and had a strong intention to never have war. This spirit flowed into nine national articles written after World War II. As a Buddhist, he never became a monk but he practiced thoroughly and lived the Buddha's teaching. At least a couple of days a month, he isolated himself and practiced meditation. As a father, he was warm and when his children did wrong, he taught them with compassion. He loved riding horses with his children. His final words were that consensus reality is illusion, only Buddha is the truth.

Monk

Who are you?

Woman

I don't want to say.

Monk

Please tell me who you are.

Woman

No



Monk

I need to know.

Woman

I am Tojiko.

Then the woman disappears. The sun is setting lower in the sky now.

Monk

It's strange that I should meet Tojiko-no-miko, whose husband is Prince Shōtoku. It is really getting dark. I will sleep here.

He puts his clothes on the ground and lies down.

The woman who disappeared was Tojiko no iratume. Prince Shōtoku was her husband. She appeared as a Ghost to pray for the family.



Act Two

Some kind of atmosphere wakes the monk up. He rubs his eyes. There is moonlight and in that light, someone is moving toward him. The moonlight shines from behind the person so that the monk can't see his face. It looks like a ghost of Tojiko but there is something masculine about the figure.

Monk

Are you Tojiko?

A male voice responds,

Prince Shōtoku

Who are you?


The monk stands up and begins to speak.

Monk

I am a monk. But actually, I am not a monk but a process worker. If I was born in the ancient time or the Middle Ages, I would have become a monk, but I was born in 1962 and so I became a process worker. I believe process work can do the same thing which Prince Shōtoku tried to do for people. I am deeply grateful to meet you. I am crying. Is there anything I can do for you?

Prince Shōtoku

You are listening to my story. I have one regret, because of which I became a ghost. Because of my belief, all of my blood relatives killed themselves. As long as I was alive, I maintained a balance between polarities, but



after my death, the group who had been against me attacked my family. Then my family vanished. The story of sacrificing the body to hungry tigers I told many times to my son and family, as this is the way of humans. Then my son and families lived it literally. Then everyone hung themselves. I feel guilty for killing them. Because of their hanging, a war was postponed, and the suffering was momentarily stopped. But for 1400 years IÅve felt regret.

Monk

What a tragedy!

Prince Shōtoku


I have regretted that my family was following my teaching and sacrificed themselves in order to save the people. That is real compassion, a manifestation of BuddhaÅfs teaching, but I am suffering from that. I know that that was the only choice at that time. I understand that, but I am in agony over it.

A man appears. It is Prince Shōtoku's son, Oue.

Oue

Father! It was a painful experience for us. I felt okay, because we were adults, but there were babies. It was so hard to make the babies join the sacrifice, but I could not find any other choice. Everybody understood your teaching from the bottom of their hearts and then hung themselves. But I was not aware that you have been agonizing over this for 1400 years.

Prince Shōtoku



Oue, thank you for saying that. I feel partially relieved by what you say but I wanted you to be a leader of this country, showing the way to the people, and building the country. So my vision is incomplete.

Monk

Shall we go back to the topic of sacrificing the body, to the hungry tigers? This is a very important thing. In Japanese history there is a lot of suicide, hara-kari, kamakaze attack. I think this was the first major sacrifice and suicide in Japan. And it became the model after that. Shall we contemplate on this? Let me ask a question. What is the polarity in the story of sacrificing the body and the hungry tigers?

Prince Shōtoku


The hungry tiger, the family, and the body which sacrificed. The tiger side is deadly hungry, she is close to dying of starvation.

Chorus

I'm starving, I'm starving. I need something to eat. It doesn't matter what they eat. The baby tigers are almost losing their consciousness. The mother tiger is crazy to save her cubs. Monk, it doesn't matter whose body they eat. The Buddha, in one of his past lives, decided to sacrifice his body. So kill yourself, sacrifice your life! That's the only thing. This is an amazingly beautiful religious experience! Sacrifice the body and then because of that, you will have no more lives.

Monk

Wow, the chorus is powerful it's easy to follow their voice. What if I say ending life is the easy choice? Is



there a more challenging thing to ending life?  
Sacrificing the body is actually escaping from something  
more difficult. What's happening is hopelessness and  
powerlessness. Is there hopelessness around?

Prince Shōtoku

That's it. I don't know any other solution besides  
sacrifice.

Monk

How about we go down from the higher place, from the cliff  
? Stop looking from the cliff at the hungry tiger family.  
What will happen if you see and come closer to the hungry  
tiger family?

Prince Shōtoku

Okay, let's do it. I was born into a noble family. So I  
really don't know. It's getting real and I notice I am  
getting scared to sacrifice my body. I begin to wonder if  
there is any other way than sacrificing my body? Is there  
anything they can eat?


Monk

Let's stay with this scary feeling. That's important  
especially for a leader.

Prince Shōtoku

Hello, tiger family! I thought I would sacrifice my body  
to you but I stopped. I changed my mind. I'm getting  
scared and I can't marginalize this feeling. I notice if  
I sacrifice my body, you will be hungry again. Let's  
think about a sustainable way for all of us.

Monk



Let's think about that. What is the essence of sacrificing the body?

Prince Shōtoku

The essence is surrendering myself to something bigger than me and giving up control and intention. Then my identity will die, and a new identity will be born.

Monk

Let's give birth to this new identity. What will you do about your problem?

Prince Shōtoku

I will teach and share my experience. I will work on the relationship problem in the Soga family.

Monk

Could you say more?

Prince Shōtoku

I will share everything which my family owned.

Then Prince Shōtoku begins to dance. He becomes Soga Umako (his enemy) and then says,

Soga Umako (Prince Shōtoku)

I was jealous of Prince Shōtoku. So jealous about his family's nobility and wise atmosphere. And I'm so scared to surrender to Buddhism because I will lose my money and my social status. That is so scary.

Prince Shōtoku dances between both sides. Eventually, both sides became one. He becomes enlightened.



三  
空  
海

Kūkai



Mahavairocana-tathgata

chapter-3

Kūkai

## Chapter-3

### Kūkai

## Searching for Buddhist freedom

### 3-1 Back round notes

Kūkai, a founder of Japanese Buddhism, brought structure to Esoteric Buddhism. He lived during the Late Nara to Early Heian of Japan. Like Prince Shotoku, Kūkai was loved by ordinary people in particular . After their death, there was much folklore about them both. There were a lot of rituals for them all over Japan by people who prayed and believed in them . I have been following Kūkai for the past 12 years as a pilgrim that he initiated 1200 years ago.

### 3-1.1 Kūkai' s world and Nation and Buddhism



Kūkai lived 200 years after Prince Shotoku . Through the effort of Prince Shotoku, Japan became a nation . Japan created criminal and civil statutes based on the model of China. But there is a difference between Japanese and Chinese, especially as a monarchy /emperor system. (Saikawa,1999).The difference is, in China ' s case, if the goverment or king changed, the whole

family changed . But Japan worked as a hereditary system, inheriting power and rank according to family. This approach is due to the mythological understanding that God gave authority to the imperial family . At a superficial level , the government structure has changed many times especially due to western influence. The authority of the imperial family and its impact on criminal and civil statutes , however , continues to this day. The country began to control Buddhism while Prince Shotoku was alive . For example, in India, Buddhist teachers and their disciples were not controlled by the government; there was a similar lack of government control in China .

Japanese Buddhism, however , developed under the control of the government. Monks became public officials. The purpose of Buddhism was oriented towards the country as a whole. Prayer was for the country and for the imperial family ' s benefit, for their protection. During Prince Shotoku' s time , Buddhism supported the people and their spiritual fulfillment . When Kūkai was born , however , the social situation was changing towards an emphasis on the nation and the imperial family. The country determined how many people could become monks and also supported them financially. The country did not allow a personal dojo and prohibited monks from speaking about Buddhism to ordinary people.

#### Official Buddhism and underground Buddhism

There were two kinds of Buddhism going on during this time : one was controlled by the government , the other was oriented towards personal exploration . (Tachikawa,2000). Many young people went to the mountains and became self-named monks , practicing a mixture of

Shintoism and a kind of Esoteric Buddhism, without any government control or structure . If a public official monk became interested in this more personal approach and wanted to relate more to ordinary people, he had to leave his post and get out of mainstream culture . So if a monk was inspired to follow the path of a "true" monk, seeking enlightenment through becoming his true nature and offering that to others, it was necessary to forego the official title. Mainstream Buddhism involved keeping distant from ordinary people, mainly for study and for the benefit of nobility and the country . This was a strong divergence from Prince Shotoku ' s original intent and his dream for Buddhism. Politics and Buddhism became entangled with each other. High priests became involved in politics, conflict and scandal . Buddhism lost its shape, ethics, standards and morals. . So the government decided to make a distance between Buddhism and politics. They moved the capital to Kyoto from Nara. During that situation, K Okai was born .

### 3-2 Esoteric Buddhism

Esoteric Buddhism was born at the very end of the theoretical development of Buddhism in India, during the 9th century . At the beginning of the 7th century, Buddhism lost power and almost died out in India. Some Buddhists survived in East Indian Bengal . Before the 7th century , Esoteric Buddhism traveled through China and came to Japan . After the 7th century , Esoteric Buddhism traveled to Tibet and developed into Tibetan Buddhism. This is a secret kind of Buddhism. Throughout Buddhism, attachment is understood to be the cause of suffering , but in the final stages , things such as anger, jealousy, sexual ecstasy and desire are embraced. Thus , the final stages of development or the fruits of Buddhism, as

discussed in the *Mahavairocana-sutra* and *Vajrasekhara-sutra*, grew into a practice and ideas. Esoteric Buddhist used magical words and mantras. The practitioner's body, words and mind become the same as Buddha's body, words and mind. This sameness is a way of practice, through which a person becomes Buddha in this very moment, not in the future. Becoming Buddha in this very body, in this moment, in this lifetime, now, is their unique standpoint. The uniqueness of Esoteric Buddhism is using the whole body and spirit into practice, trying to touch directly into the Buddha. Also, it always involves using the body, words and mind simultaneously. Theoretically, Esoteric Buddhism includes every single development of Buddhism, from Abidhanua to pure Buddhism, including Zen and every other form. Esoteric Buddhist also use mandalas, a teaching which cannot be expressed in words. Esoteric Buddhism developed from nothingness, MU but it reached out in the completely opposite direction.

MU, nothingness, emptiness, void, prefers the denial of everything. But Esoteric Buddhism embraces everything. The object of worship is Mahavairocana-tathagata, meaning Buddha as the mother of everything, where everything comes from. Buddhism started as a real historical person, but it grew into a figure, someone not human. In Buddhist history, Esoteric Buddhism is a challenge to positively embrace life.

### **3-3 The life of Kūkai**

In 774 CE., Kūkai was born at Sanuki in Shikoku. His father's family was Saiki, some scholar says descendants of the Ainu, the aboriginal peoples of Japan who were dominated by Yamato in ancient times. His mother's line was probably a family from China or Korea. He studied under his uncle, a famous scholar of classical Chinese

literature. His family looked to Kōkai and his knowledge to help change their primitive lifestyle and to become part of the mainstream, so he began to study at the university in the capital . However the university was a laboratory for building public officials. Education was oriented towards memorizing rather than creative thought . Public officials were dominated by mainstream families; only those with social status could fill these roles .

Kūkai was stuck. Because of his lower social rank, he could not enter the mainstream, nor could he return to his country without fulfilling his family' s expectations . He decided to drop out of the university , and wrote a play ( the first ever in Japan ) . It was a dialogue between a Buddhist, a Taoist and a Confucian, in which Buddhism was shown to be the most meaningful. Kūkai then disappeared from the world, retreated to the mountains and became a practitioner of underground Buddhism. He described himself in his play : his appearance was worse than a beggar, wearing only scraps for clothes , a rope for a belt, poor sandals, and his face covered with dirt .

Until Kūkai was 31 years old, there is no historical documentation as to where he was or what he was doing . He was probably traveling around the country . especially holy mountains and waterfalls, deeply rooted in nature . Through this practice, he dreamt of the Mahāvairocana-sutra, found it and read it. There were things he did not understand, so he decided to go to China to study further . At the age of 31, he came back into history by becoming a national monk and moved to China for the purpose of studying for twenty years . His official purpose was to become a national monk, but his secret purpose was a quest for understanding the *Mahāvairocana*

-sutra .

At that time China was ruled by the Tang Dynasty (618-907). It was a world-renowned international city Chang-an, like Rome. First Kūkai mastered Sanskrit for the purpose of studying Esoteric Buddhism. He visited many temples to find a master who understood Esoteric Buddhism. Finally he met Master Hu-Kuo, who poured all of his wisdom into Kūkai. Kūkai changed his plan from 20 to two years, and decided to return to Japan. His return was actually illegal, because he disobeyed a national order by changing the plan. So he waited six months for the Tao to give him a sign. When he returned, he had to wait for three years until his Esoteric Buddhism was welcomed. But this three years was meaningful for him to integrate and digest what he mastered in China. After that his Buddhism matched the needs of the people and country. Kūkai was invited to teach, he gave rituals to the emperors, and they became his students. From 30 to 43 years old, he accomplished many things. His talents were flourishing. Sometimes he was a politician, sometimes a calligrapher. He was also a doctor and an architect. He shape-shifted and took on many forms to help people. Kūkai asked the Emperor to give him a mountain called Mount Koya, which would become his dojo. After that, he moved back and forth between the city capital and this mountain, and he was extremely busy. He tried to stop doing national job, and wished to go back as an ascetic. But he never allowed it. He died on this mountain at 62 years of age.

### 3-4 Kūkai's Esoteric Buddhism

Kūkai structured Esoteric Buddhism unlike anyone who came before or after him. He showed a worldview that encompasses

sed both Buddhism in the city and in the mountains . Buddhism in the city was something linear and academic . Buddhism in the mountains was something that could not be contained, and that brought supernatural powers . For the Japanese during this time , mountains were the places where dead people lived . Mountains meant another world. Dead people are ancestors of the living, and they have a strong influence on ordinary life. In the mountains there live an invisible god and goddess who have a mystical energy . Kūkai stood for both Buddhism in the city and that of the mystical mountain.

#### 3-4.1 Kūkai and his Relationshi with Nature

Kūkai was deeply rooted in nature.(Tachikawa,2000). This might be because his father ' s lineage was aboriginal , though historically this is not absolutely confirmed. His blood . brought him deeply into shamanistic aspects of Buddhism. He used magical words and mantras . There are lots of stories of people who were suffering from lack of water because there was no rain or well, and Kūkai appeared, put his stick in the ground, and water came out. When he was practicing Mountain Buddhism he practiced in a cave in, next to the ocean , in which the view from inside was only sky and ocean. This became his name: ku means sky and kai means ocean . As the legend goes , Kūkai repeated mantras several million times and one night the north pole star moved down from the sky , came closer and closer and entered his mouth .

### 即身成仏

Sokushin Jobutsu

#### Becoming the Buddha in this very body

This is a core idea of Kūkai and a central notion of the



Japanese Shingon tradition. ( This idea is about the completion of one' s religious personality. Earth, water, fire , wind , space and consciousness are the six elements . The first five are material; the consciousness. These make two main things which are inseparable and also the symbol of mahabairochna <sup>1)</sup> . Through the three secrets of mudra , mantra , and , the practitioner ' s every action is meditation synchronized with mahabairochna. The belief is "I see myself within mahabairochna and inside of me I see mahabairochna. " The body, mind, and spirit of the practitioner are cooked and heightened to mahabairochna through mudra , mantra , and meditation .

#### Dhama Kaya Buddha Speaks

Buddhism has three viewpoints about the body . First is the nirmana body which means the historical Buddha ' s body, the impermanent being, also me and you. The second is sambhogakaya body, the living body, which practices to become Buddha and responds to others . The third is dharmakaya body. This body is eternal and unchanged. It does not have a personal character. (Tamaki, 1999).

Buddhism began about twenty-five hundred years ago. When Gautama Sidhartha, the founder of Buddhism was alive , there was no dharmakaya idea . Through the development of Mahayana Buddhism, absolute truth was called dharmakaya . And then people saw dharma kaya as a body but with no color, no shape truth itself was a body. In the sixth

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<sup>1)</sup> The Buddha who expounded esoteric Buddhism .An idealization of the truth of the universe .All the other bodhisattavas were born from him.All things in the universe constitute the body of this Buddha .He always expounds the law in this universe.

century Buddhism came to Japan . Prince Sh O toku made the shift in belief that that it was ,possible for the dhanna-kaya body to speak and communicate to people and teach people. No Chinese master taught like this; no Indian Buddhist said this either . After this, KOkai made the next development . He extended the concept of dhan!a kaya Buddha to all sentient beings . He began to say that dharma kaya Buddha has a self, and can concentrate and enjoy enlightenment . We ordinary people can join dbanna kaya Buddha' s samadi , through congruent concentration . Before KO kai , Dhal~la Kaya did not speak directly , it just sat in the background. Kūkai went beyond that and made space for Dhanna Kaya Buddha ' s speech . This was also a turning point in the history of Buddhism.

### **Mountain Buddhism**

Mountain has a special meaning in Japanese Buddhism. In Japan there is a particularly strong relationship with mountains . From ancient .times. many . spiritual seekers went into the mountains and practiced by themselves . Af ter the 7th century , Esoteric Buddhism and this tradition mixed together. Kū kai was involved in this Mountain Buddhism in his twenties. In my understanding. what a person does in his twenties greatly affects the rest of his or her lif e . Mount·ain Buddhism deeply affected Ku kai and gave him a fundamental identity before he moved into China. Mountain Buddhism is a Japanese Buddhism. Some people have been practicing it since ancient times , especially in the mountains where they burned fires on the mountain tops at night to shine out over the ocean for the gods to see. This was called Sugendo, which means to train onese I f in the mountains . Later pract itioners of Sugendo used Esoteric Buddhism to structure what they were doing .

The purpose of Sugendo is to unfold unlimited possibility inside and develop supernatural power through wild and risky practices. Kūkai was involved in this kind of practice in his twenties. One famous practice is to climb down over the edge of a cliff as far as you can and return. Another famous practice is standing upright under a waterfall. Many people have out of body experiences from these practices.

#### My experience of Mountain Buddhism

I took part in this kind of practice in 1998. I went to a temple on Dewa Mountain, which is located in the far northern part of Japan. The ceremony began when one man stood in front of the temple holding a long stick with a ball on top, which symbolized a penis and semen. He dropped the stick to the ground symbolizing joining the semen with the egg, the beginning of life. I stayed with one hundred other men for one week. In this one week, we didn't change our clothes or shower and wore the same special clothing for this practice. We woke up very early in the morning and ate very little, rice, pickles and miso soup, and went into the forest, running up the mountain. In the afternoon of day four, I noticed that something unknown was happening to me. It was raining a little at the time, close to sunset. I noticed that I was never tired. I could run up the mountain like the wind, as though I had no weight and didn't need to stop at all. It was quite mysterious. I've never experienced myself like this. I could run and run and run. One man said he had never seen anyone run up the mountain like I could. I noticed the mountain gave me the power. I didn't know who I was at that time. I was not me who lived in the city. One night they burned red chili peppers in the

charcoal burners in the temple with all the doors and windows closed so that the room filled with smoke . We had to stay as long as we could. It was an initiation setting for inducing same as birth experience . And then nobody can breath and I experienced close to death then door was opened. I was symbolically bern again. On the last day I was given a new name.

## お遍路

Ohenro

### 3-5 The piligrimage as personal experience

When I first encountered Kūkai I was twenty-eight. At this time I was lost in my life again, looking for which way to go, and what I wanted to do in this life. So I took a workshop on shamanism and transpersonal psychology . It was interesting , and in the workshop I met an American man who used to be a Zen monk. He became a monk in San Francisco Zen center and came to Japan to practice at a temple for several years . When I met him he was no longer a monk , he was a workshop organizer. He invited me to go to on a journey the day after next . I had nothing to do and so accepted his invitation to go with him. The direction was to Shikoku , but I didn't know what that meant , or what was waiting for me . On the train to Shikoku . he introduced me the purpose of the journey. It was a pilgrimage. I didn' t know exactly what that was . I had a vague sense of itg that pilgrims wore white clothes and had a stick and a wide-brimued hat . My image of this was quite miserable and sad, not a happy thing. At that time, my eyes only looked at the outside, and I was only interested in western culture. I didn ' t know much about Japanese culture. This was in 1990, already twelve years ago.

We stayed at a youth hostel in Kouchif which is the main city of Kouch prefecture . At noon we visited the shop in front of the temple and I bought white clothes , a stick, and wide-brimmed hat . I didn ' t understand the meaning of what I was to put on , but I bought them anyway . I put these things into a paper bag and carried them to lunch with him to the local restaurant . In the restaurant , because he was a white man and tall with a beard, people looked at him. He was not familiar around that place. In 1990, he was unusual; now he would be considered more familiar . It was a small restaurant , like the size of a large bedroom in an American house. A couple of people mostly men and an older woman , were there, looking relaxed and enjoying everyday life. The woman who ran the restaurant was around 60 years old and looked like nothing special , an ordinary woman . We were hungry and ate a lot . Eating , I found I had a strange feeling . Something was strange , something I . had never experienced was going on around me . I began to check what that might be . I found the woman who ran the restaurant looking for me . She looked at me as if I was something. I didn' t know what this something was, so I guessed she looked at me as a pilgrim. I also I guessed further that she looked at me as though I were Kūkai . I I identified began to understand what was going on . myself as Take from Tokyo, not knowing what I was going through , pretty uncomfortable with the situation . The American man was teaching me about Japan and I felt kind of awkward. I began to wonder why this man knew my country more than I did? I realized that I did not know about my country , that my interest was only in new things , like America had. But the woman looked at me without condition and saw my Buddha nature which I didn' t know at that moment . She

could also see the Kūkai in me. I noticed that I got goosebumps . This was the very beginning of my pilgrimage. After that I began to walk in the pilgrimage as often as possible .

Nowadays 20 million people go to Shikoku every year for a pilgrimage . It is quite open to anybody , any religion, any ethnic identity . Japanese called this pilgrimage Ohenro which means "walking around . " Kūkai set up this pilgrimage twelve hundred years ago and designed eighty-eight temples as a mandala. The pilgrims walk through these eighty-eight temples . On the way there are many kinds of roads : dirt , paved , pathways . There are quite old roads which have been protected from development and have a natural style. There are lots of tombs beside the old roads for those who died while on the pilgrimage . there were quite a/ In the past , marginalized people who could not live in the city or town. They had no place to live and: were seeking for the people a place to die. Actually the white clothes I was to wear during the pilgrimage - were clothes for a dead person. They symbolized that my social identity would be dead.

There is a belief that Kūkai is with each pilgrim. He is a bodhisattva; he didn ' t go to heaven but stays on earth until everyone is enlightened . Ninety-eight percent of the twenty million use cars and bus tours to make the pilgrimage. Only 2% of people walk. There is no difference in a deeper sense. People have different conditions. If you can walk, walk; if you need to use a car, use a car. These days more and more younger people, , retired people are beginning to walk to search the way .

One day I was walking by myself and visited a small temple

which was not one of the eighty-eight . I had a conversation with the priest who was in his mid-50s, with no hair and dressed in monk ' s clothes . He said to ,, me, out of the blue, If you are using money, you cannot get what you want . " Most walking pilgrims make a phone call to a hotel in the afternoon to arrange a place to stay for that night , and they pay money for one night ' s stay, dinner and breakfast. I decided to challenge what he said to me but it was unknowrl for me . I didn' t make a phone call that afternoon and I didn' t buy food. I just kept walking whole afternoon . Suddenly I noticed I was angry and upset about people in the village c'oming toward me and passing by me. I found that I said to them internally " Why don ' t you help me?" I noticed and laughed about myself. I began to understand what the monk was teaching me.

I started walking again. When it .got dark I was very tired and hungry, and it started raining. I picked up my rain jacket and started looking for a place to stay . I walked through the grassy area by the river to the bridge and found a place under the bridge. I sat dadn . The lights came on in the houses across the river. I was still upset about people not helping me. People were already at home, eating with their families and guests , nobody was with me . Sometimes I heard a car going across the bridge and the rain was falling. I felt so miserable! I could not do anything . But I began to notice what money could do for me. Money gave me safety, helped me to stay in consensus reality, and gave me warmth when I stayed in the hotel. Here I had nothing. I was listening to the sound of river flowing and watching the lights in the house' s windows , but there was nothing else to do. It was cold that night, but I didn ' t even have a blanket. Because

there was nothing to do, I tried to sleep but I could not sleep. Then I remembered that, in the middle age of Japan people of a certain cast lived under bridges and that actors come from these bridge people. They were called kawaramo which means "riverside people" . In my everyday life, at that time, I was an actor . I noticed that I was experiencing where I acting comes from.

In Japanese culture, the river shows the border, which means that beyond the river , on the other side of the river is a different world . I experienced this difference clearly and painfully, but with gratitude for the understanding . I realized that by not depending on money , I came to the other side of the river . This symbolized the original meaning of the word of shikoku. Shi has two meanings : one is the number four, the other is death . And Koku means country . I was wearing the clothes of death, but my mind was the same as when I was in Tokyo . As long as I was using money as I was doing same in Tokyo, I was staying on the same side of the river. Money plays a big role in life and keeps you safe from unknown. This was great teaching of that monk . I made deep bow to him .



3-6 Second Noh drama: Kūkai

# 能、御蔵胴

Noh, Mikurodou<sup>1)</sup>

## Act one

Cast

SHITE : KŪkai, appearing first as an ascetic who is a ghost .

WAKI : A monk as a pilgrim , myself.

Scene One

At the beginning there is nobody on the stage . A monk appears . He is wearing white clothes and an uribrella kind of hat, and he is holding a stick in his hand.

Monk

I am on the pilgrimage which KŪkai founded 1200 years ago .

Along the way are many graves of the pilgrims who died on the road . Some of them could not live in society. Some were chronically ill and praying for a cure . Some had lost their family and were walking with the dead. They died on the pilligrimage. I feel they were happy to die here.

It is almost sunset. Where can I sleep tonight? There ~s. a cave over there where the morning stars came into KOkai's mouth. I' Il take a rest in that cave.

---

<sup>1)</sup> Name of the cave where a rising star jumping into KŪkai's mouth.



The monk goes in and prepares to go to sleep .

A man appears on the stage. His clothes are dirty and torn and he has long unkempt hair and a tangled beard.

He uses a rope as a belt. He carries a bag on his back. His shoes are made of straw. His eyes are deeply shining but agonizing. He carries a big, wild, mountain lily .

He enters the cave, lights candles , puts the flower in front of the tombstone at the back of the cave , and starts reciting mantras .

Ascetic

Nobo akashakya va ya . Nobo akashakya vava . Nobo akashakya vava , , . . . ,

He repeats and repeats and repeats.

Then a monk stands up and talks to the man .

Monk

I feel you have some reason to do this. If it ' s possible, could you tell me why?

Ascetic

You know a morning star got into an ascetic' s mouth 1200 years ago. This experience changed his life completely. After that , he went to China and mastered Esoteric Buddhism . Then he came back to Japan and worked for people in the country , but I cannot see what he achieved for present day society because it only stays in the temples . He prayed for all people and proved that everyone can become a Buddha without leaving their body . Are people happy now? What am I doing here? I keep repeating this mantra millions of millions of times , but nothing changes



the world never changes .

The ascetic begins repeating the mantra again and then

he disappears . Monk What did I see that is mysterious? He goes back to sleep.



## Act 2

There is only sound of ocean waves . On the stage, the monk is still asleep. A person appears . It looks like the same man who had repeated the mantra , but this time he is wearing a kimono . The monk wakes up.

Monk


Who are you?

Kukai

I was born 150 years after Prince Sh-Otoku . At that time Japan was a new country . China was the most developed country in East Asia . I traveled into China and selfactualized . I studied what nobody had studied before and I listened to what nobody had listened to before in the eighth century . Then I brought what I had learned back to Japan and formed it in the Japanese way . I founded a school didn ' t happen that way . I worked a lot with the government and the country . Calling from government was escalating. Then I noticed I was spending almost no time by myself or in nature . I wanted to cut off the relationship with the country and government and with my students . I deeply wanted to go back to the mountain and be an ascetic again, but I couldn' t. Then my life was over. I was satisfied with my work but this question about, ut freedom was unfinished . I carry a strong regret .

Monk

What do you mean by freedom? In my generation, I can' t find freedom. I have no role models.



Kūkai

It is dhuda , which is freedom from the Buddhist viewpoint . It means release from everything : attachment , family bonds , and social values . Actually it is individualism, which has never been completed in this country of Japan .

Monk

That ' s exciting! That ' s right! May I ask a question?  
What is the essence of dhuda?

Kūkai

Emptiness. Mu.

Monk

Could you tell me more about that?

Kūkai

I experienced that here in the cave. When I was an ascetic , I practiced repeating the mantra . Then early one morning , I suddenly noticed the morning star in the sky moving toward ' me . It was shining and moving and coming closer to me and then it came into my mouth . It was quite an experience. I vanished and became a morning star. I didn' t have any boundary or identity. I didn' t have any attachment. I had no family ties . I became totally empty, but I was aware that I existed.

Monk

What an experience! Extraordinary ! Amazing ! This is the source of dbuda, Buddhist freedom. Let me ask another question . How do you live dhuda and work with the government, work with people, at the same time?

Kūkai



Kūkai

I bring this essence of dhuda to my work. I work without boundary . I work without attachment . I work without connecting with anything .

Monk

What do you mean by that?

Kūkai

Work only in the momentr moment by moment . There is no f-future, there is no past. There, is only now.

Kūkai begins to repeat the mantra . Then suddenly he becomes light. The cave becomes full of light. Then he dis appears .

四  
道  
元

Dōgen

**Chapete-4**

**Dōgen**

## Chapter-4

### Dōgen

### Kill the Buddhism

#### 4-1 Background note: The Kamakura era

The two remaining Buddhists whom I will present in this thesis, Dōgen and Shinran, lived in the middle age or Kamakura era(1185-1336). At the time, the form of government was changing from the nobility to the Samurais. One view of this era regards it at a time when Buddhism was stuck in a lack of theoretical development. However, from another viewpoint, Buddhism during this era actually went into the culture, shape-shifting into the background theory of art, architecture, haiku and waka. Shinto ideas were also interweaving with those of Buddhism at this time. While Kyoto had been the capital of Japan for 400 years, when the samurai power developed, a second capital was established in Kamakura, near Tokyo. Because society was changing, Buddhism also needed to change in order to survive. (Taira,2001)

In high school, I was taught that a new Buddhism started in the middle age, but this was not true because the old Buddhism had actually become invisible and was penetrating the culture and psyche of the Japanese people. Beside the major influence of the old Buddhism, the new was considered heretical and did not gain influence for another two hundred years.

In the era of Prince Shōtoku, Japan had modeled itself on



China, the most highly developed Asian country, adopting its criminal and civil statutes. During the tenth century, however, Japan found that it could not keep following China's ways and began deregulating, privatizing, and regionalizing.

People in the middle age believed there is a hell. From today's viewpoint, it is unbelievable for many that hell exists, but for those who lived in the middle age, hell was very real. The idea of hell is that suffering continues endlessly with no way out. Hell was precisely described in Abhidharma Buddhism and developed by Pure Land Buddhism and also Taoism mixed together. In the middle age, everything was related to religion: technology, production, cultivation. Therefore, the Buddhist belief of Buddhism that if you kill anything you will go to hell created a double bind for many people.

Buddhism was not helping people, but controlling them by fear. This is not what Prince Shotoku intended, and the historical Buddha would have been shocked! Mount Koya,

which Kūkai founded, became a feudal society and got money from people who lived in their territory and paid a tax which supported the temple. Kūkai liked to say that if people paid land tax they could go to heaven, and if you did not pay it, they would not go to heaven. This was a way of controlling ordinary people. And even when people wanted to pay but could not, the priest would curse them. This is a shadow aspect of Japanese Buddhism.

In the Buddhist viewpoint of history, the decay of the Law began which mean that the sutras survived, but there was not enlightenment. People began to believe because there

were many incidents such as wide-spread famine and epidemics of the plague. In Kyoto, for example, there were dead bodies all over the city; someone counted over a million. Also there was a slave market where people were bought and sold. The middle age was an agonizing, complex, and difficult time to survive. People found it easy to be hopeless; life was just suffering. Around this time, Buddhism in India was disappearing because it was coming under attack by Muslims. In China, however, Buddhism was flowering in the form of Zen Buddhism. This was the background situation of the middle age.

## 禪

Zen

### 4-2 Zen Buddhism

Zen is a unique sect of Buddhism which was developed through one tool, a way of calming the mind. According to the dictionary, the word Zen is originally dhyana, Sanskrit for meditation. This word translated into Chinese is chan and into Japanese is zen. Dhyana was one foundation of Buddhism that grew wider, was unfolded and developed in China and then moved to Japan where it flowered. After that it went to the west and has continued there until now, perhaps being even more popular in the United States than in Tokyo.

In the beginning of Buddhism, the historical Buddha practiced yoga meditation, which had been practiced since ancient times, but he developed it differently. (Tagami, 1998). One approach is samasa which means to concentrate the mind and to calm oneself. The other is vipasyana, meaning that finally with concentration and

from a calm mind, one can look at all phenomenon as being produced by causation. In the beginning of Buddhism, Zen meditation was not the purpose, it was just a part of Buddhism that was needed to attain wisdom.

As Buddhism reached China, just at the time of Christ, the Zen idea got into eastern Han, 25-220 c. Bodhidharma arrived in China around 470 c. He was the founder of Zen Buddhism and of Kung Fu martial arts. He taught four main things: first, special transmission outside the scriptures; second, no dependence on words; third, direct pointing at the soul; fourth, seeing clearly into one's own nature.

However, Zen did not become mainstream Buddhism until the eighth century. Hui/neng (632-713) was the ancestor of all who came afterwards in the sect. He taught sudden enlightenment without passing through gradations of practice and that everything is originally nothing. Social status, money, name, nobody can own these; even myself is not mine. From here Zen began to develop.

#### 4-3 Dōgen's Life



Dōgen was born in 1200CE, and passed away in his 50s. He went to the same temple as Shinran, Mount Hiei. Mount Hiei was the one basic and fundamental dojo of mainstream Buddhism, where they taught not only Buddhism but also medicine, agriculture, civil engineering, astrology, and the art of war. Also they had many monk warriors. As Buddhists they were not allowed to kill anybody, but their job

was to kill. Sometimes there was war between temples or between governments. Mount Hiei was not a good place to contemplate, study, and meditate, but it still was like a university.

Dōgen's father was a strong politician. His mother was from a quite noble family. When he was three, his father suddenly died. When he was eight, his mother passed away. Dōgen realized that he came from impermanence and uncertainty at a very young age, and he began to think about becoming a priest. He began to study Abhidharma Buddhism at age nine. At age thirteen, he officially became a priest at Mount Hiei.

Dōgen's fundamental question was that if Buddhism said that every person originally had Buddha nature, why did people need to practice? Originally people were Buddha, so why did people have a tendency to be enlightened? This was his basic motivation to study. This was a crucial question, a turning point question. Prince Shotoku believed that everybody had an embryo Buddha. Kukai said everybody could be a Buddha in this very body. Now Dōgen posed this very fundamental question.

Dōgen took his question to the high priests, but no one could answer it. Some priests recommended that he should go to China to study Zen Buddhism. (Tamaki, 1999) He went to the most Zen-like temple in Japan at that time. This was Kenjinji. There he met Yosai. He stayed at that temple and studied the Ouryo sect of Zen Buddhism. But he was never satisfied and traveled to China when he was twenty-four.

In about 1223, Dōgen reached China. It was the era of the Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279). One day, he was

staying on his boat. An old Chinese monk visited the boat to buy mushrooms from the boat owner. The monk was chief of the kitchen in the Zen monastery and was 61 years old. Dōgen asked him lots of questions about Zen and invited him to spend the evening to talk with him. But the monk declined because if he stayed, tomorrow's work would be disrupted. So Dōgen said, "Why don't you meditate and read Sutra rather than buy mushrooms and work in the kitchen?" The old monk laughed a lot! He said, "I appreciate that you come from a foreign country, but you don't understand what practice is." Dōgen was surprised. He found that this was something unknown for him. After that, cooking and kitchen tasks became very important for him.

Dōgen spent two years visiting Zen monasteries in China and kept searching for the right master for him. Just when he had almost given up, and had decided to go back to Japan, he met Rujing. When they met, they noticed each other deeply and Dōgen became an apprentice. Rujing 's teaching was " "Studying Zen is dropping off body and mind. Without depending on the burning of incense, bowing, chanting Buddha's names, repentance, or sutra reading, devote yourself to just sitting."

Dōgen spent two year with him, mastered the teaching, and went back to Japan in 1227.

#### 4-4 Dōgen's Buddhism

The old Buddhism which started from Prince Shotoku to the middle age was already 600 years. This old Buddhism was mostly for high class, noble and intelligent people, but they were stuck and in order for Buddhism to survive, it

had to find a way to reach ordinary people. But it was still dominating people by using rank and controlling their minds through fear. In that moment, the Buddhism of Dōgen and also Shinran started as a counter-cultural movement. Those involved in this kind of Buddhism were marginalized and were not saved by the old Buddhism. Their approach would ground Buddhism and become influential in the Japanese culture two hundred years later. At that time, their Buddhism would become more mainstream.

## 只管打座

Shikan-taza:

### Themeless meditation

Zen means meditation. Buddhism always required meditation but Zen was developed in China where this meditation was developed as a sect. In India, they meditated with some intent such as visualizing Buddha, remembering a past life, sitting with truth, and they preferred to meditate in a very silent place. In China, Zen monks sat at the edge of consensus reality with the purpose of not finding stillness but seeing the truth self and staying calm. They did not emphasize the sitting itself; Zen was everywhere in life. Dōgen emphasized strongly both the sitting itself, and going beyond duality. Enlightenment was not the purpose anymore; sitting itself was enlightenment. Buddha was already manifest in sitting and also Buddha was sitting. Without sitting nobody could become the Buddha.

### Dōgen's Individuality and Originality

Dōgen required throwing out mental attitudes, viewpoints,

discretion, knowledge, whatever had been studied, and conscious action. He required sitting wholeheartedly. He was the first to use the Japanese language in Buddhist teaching and writing. Before him Buddhists used the Chinese language and characters. Originally Japan did not have a written language. It only had a spoken language, so it used Chinese characters for its written language, putting Japanese sounds onto Chinese characters. However, people spoke differently, which meant that the spoken and written languages differed from each other. Dōgen wrote in Japanese, meaning that he also started a new way of thinking because thinking is affected by language. Thus, he is compared with the German philosopher, Heidegger. He sat and went beyond duality and from there he wrote many books, poems, and instructions about Zen Buddhism.

Dōgen was quite individual. In a sense, he was not involved in the common thinking of the time. People said this is the end of Buddhism. Only sutra can survive and no people will develop. But Dōgen never saw the world like that. He had no doubt about what he did and no doubt that Buddha was with him. (Tamaki,1999)

4-5 Third Noh drama:Dōgen

能、井戸

Noh, Ido<sup>1)</sup>

Cast

SHITE Dōgen, appearing at first as a homeless person

WAKI A man, myself

The scene is in Fukui prefecture, around Eihei Temple. A man appears on the stage.

Act one

Man

I am forty years old and come from Tokyo. Last summer I happened to notice that the ancestors of my father's line have lived in front of Dōgen's temple Eihei-ji for several hundred years. So I am visiting Eihei Temple.

A homeless man appears on the stage. He looks ugly, dirty.

People in town think that he is mad because one winter he visited Eihei Temple and said I am Dōgen. He walked into the temple but the monks kicked him out.

The homeless man says something unintelligible.

Homeless man

Why does no one notice me? What is wrong with me? Why

---

<sup>1)</sup> Ido means a well.





was I kicked out of the temple which I founded?

He begins to speak a sutra. It sounds like mumbo-jumbo.

The two men meet each other in front of the temple

Homeless man

I am Dōgen, am Dōgen, am Dōgen, am Dōgen.

The man's clothes smell bad and his hair is matted and dirty. He looks as if he never washes. But the other man listens to what he says, and stops walking and talks to him.

Man

Are you Dōgen?

Homeless man

Yes, I am.

Man

I am grateful to meet you.

Homeless man

Lucky you!

The other man makes a kind of joke and then surprises himself, thinking what if this man is the real Dōgen?

Man

My ancestors have lived in front of your temple from old times. Now I am visiting this temple for the first time.



Homeless man

Yes, who are your ancestors?

Man

Kiriyama family.

Homeless man

Oh, I remember. One day he came to Zen meditation. After that he began to live in front of the temple. Follow me.

The homeless man begins to walk towards the mountain. They go deep into the mountain. The homeless man introduces the other man to a well in the mountain. The man looks down into the well. There is no water. The homeless man pushes him down into the well and when he falls, begins to laugh wildly.



## Act Two

The man wakes up at the bottom of the well. He is sore and grumbling. Then he remembers what happened. He looks up. The well is quite deep. He can see only a circle of sky and clouds flowing in the blue sky. The bottom of the well is neither cold nor hot. He only feels time passing. He listens for sounds and hears only the wind blowing. He falls asleep.

The man dreams he is in the Eihei Temple. In front of him is the homeless man. Now he is wearing monk's clothes which are not dirty. His head is shaven. It is Dōgen himself.

Dōgen

I have one regret. When I was alive I had no doubt about what I was doing. However, I cut off all relationship with politics. I went forward in my way as far as I could go. But after becoming a ghost and walking around I began to see several things, which I was not aware of when I was alive. The main thing that I noticed was that there is a complete disconnection between what I created 800 years ago and modern society. The problems that people suffer from and social problems don't relate to Zen Buddhism. People in the Eihei Temple are doing their best, but some new viewpoint is needed. It is not enough to keep protecting what I taught in the temple.

Man

I completely agree.

Dōgen

What shall I do?



Man

Can you bring dharma to the city and your teaching into the modern society?

Dōgen

I think so. At the end of my life I said monks should stay only in the temple. But that was wrong. That became an escape from the society.

Man

Buddhism asks people to get away from desire, and to leave the temple and go into the city. How can people stay with dharma? This is a big question.

Dōgen

If I cannot find the answer, I will stay a dirty, homeless man.

Man

Let's get crazy. Then get into the society. You are already mad, so let's forget Zen Buddhism and forget about what you did before. Let's forget about everything and get completely crazy.

Dōgen

How interesting. Let's get crazy!

Man

Let's imagine you are going completely mad and crazy. Then what happens?

Dōgen

I'll burn the Eihei Temple and negate all of my teachings.



Man

You have negated everything you teach and the Eihei Temple is on fire. What do you experience now?

Dōgen

The whole world is burned and only dust and cinders remain. The world is returning to its beginning. It is utterly silent, but there is a strong energy. I see some new power is rising from under the ground up to the ashes.

Oh, I see a huge hand is trying to reach up and grab. One big hand. It looks muddy, the fingers curled, the nails long. The hand suddenly breaks through the ground and stays there.

Man

Wow! What is the essence of the hand?

Dōgen

The power creates from nothing and never gives up.

Man

How do you use the power for social problems?

Dōgen

I use this power so that I can jump into social problems without carrying anything. Then I'll grab the core problem and sit with it.

Then he begins to meditate and he becomes light. He is gone.

五  
親  
鸞

Shinran



Amitabha-buddha

Chapter-5

Shinran

## Chapter 5

### Shinran Open the gate

### 浄土真宗

Zyodo-shinsyu

#### 5-1 Pure Land Buddhism

Pure Land Buddhism, was originally not intended to provide benefit in this life. Its goal was to be reborn into the Pure Land, in next life, or in subsequent lives. In this context, the idea that everybody has an embryo of Buddha and everyone can become a Buddha in this very body was a very different one. However Shin Buddhism says that everyone is already saved by Amitabha Buddha.<sup>1)</sup>

Especially in this middle age people were suffering so much and life was so hard and harsh, that people's only hope was to die peacefully, and hope that the next life would be happy. So lots of ordinary people began to getting involved in Pure Land Buddhism, especially those who were not intelligent, noble people and those who were not educated. The Pure Land idea was dangerous for mainstream Buddhism because it only required Nembtu<sup>2)</sup> and denied the need for other practices. As a result, the

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<sup>1)</sup> The Buddha of Infinite Light, the Buddha of Infinite Life.

<sup>2)</sup> To invoke the name of Buddha.

founder of Pure Land Buddhism, Hounen, Shinran's master, as well as Shinran, were forced from the capital into the country by the government.

There are three main sutras about Pure Land Buddhism. Two were invented in India, one in China. In India, Pure Land Buddhism did not become a sect. It did not fit in China, either, because it did not fit the Chinese mentality of wanting to benefit in this life. It did not grow like Zen Buddhism did in China. In Japan in the middle age it was perfectly matched to the people's needs and grew very popular.

## 阿弥陀如来

Amida-nyorai

### Amitabha Buddha

Pure Land Buddhists only prayed to Amitabha. They did not even mention the historical Buddha himself. In Pure Land Buddhism, the focus moved to Amitabha Buddha. For example, Shinran mentioned that the historical Buddha was born due to telling a story of the mythology of Amitabha Buddha. Before becoming Amitabha Buddha, s/he was Dharma Kara Bodisatthva and had a high dream. Dharma Kara Bodisatthva would find the way to make people enlightened and saved through her/his practice and her/his prayer. And then her/his prayer would succeed and s/he become Amitabha Buddha.

### 5-2 Shinran's life

Shinran was born in 1173CE and died in 1262CE. His contemporary, Dōgen, passed away in his 50s. Shinran was



born 28 years before Dōgen, but lived longer than him. Shinran lived for close to 90 years, longer than was common for the time. Both Shinran and Dōgen went to the same temple, Mount Hiei. I don't think they met.

When Shinran was alive, he was not well known like other founders.(Satou,1998). He was forgotten for 200 years after his death, but now his sect is the most popular one in Japan, more popular than Zen Buddhism. His family was from the middle level of court nobility. He became a monk at age nine. Until twenty-nine he stayed at Mount Hiei and practiced mainstream Buddhism. He was an official monk. Mount Hiei was a fundamental temple, but the monks argued and fought and the temple was not a place of pureness. Because he was of middle class nobility, he was also a middle rank monk and could not rise any higher. Therefore<sup>1)</sup>, he withdrew himself, chose the practice of Nembutsu, and stayed with that for a long time. If Shinran had stayed ten years at Mount Hiei would have met Dōgen. What he practiced during this time was non-stop Nembutsu. He started chanting and walking on August 15 and continued, without sleeping, for seven days.

## 法然

Hounen

### Hounen;Shinran's master

If there were no Hounen, there would have been no Shinran. So I will tell you briefly about Hounen. In the

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<sup>1)</sup> To invoke the name of the Buddha ,referred to the invocation of the name of Amida by the formula"namu-amaida-butu",in order to reborn in his pure Land.

middle age, mainstream Buddhism said if you kill, you will go to hell, Ah and this idea applied to every productive job, meaning to agriculture, fishermen, wood cutters, and silk worm farmers, meaning all workers. So people were agonizing extremely and feeling very guilty without reason. So Hounen convinced the ordinary people that they were not guilty, that they were good people, which relieved them. Also the Pure Land idea said that no matter who you were, you would be saved. Every form of Buddhism in Japan took this idea also and began to say the same thing. That helped Buddhism get to ordinary people more. But Hounen amplified this idea, going farther with it and saying that Nembutsu is the only way, and other ways would not help. This negated the old Buddhism as a sect, and distorted it. People twisted this idea to mean that if a person committed a crime, he or she would be saved. This made Shinran hugely controversial.

### **5-3 Shinran's Buddhism**

Shinran founded Shin Buddhism through Pure Land Buddhism. Shin Buddhism is amplification of Pure Land Buddhism. He chose Nembutsu as the only way to save the people like Dōgen chose Zazen as the only way. Nembutsu is just invoking namu-amida-butsu, meaning I worship Amida, the Buddha of Infinite Light. Nembutsu is easy to practice because everybody can do it, but Dōgen's way requires the dedication. These two people lived at almost the same time but went in almost opposite directions.

#### **5-3.1 Shinran's Main Problem**

He practiced twenty years rigorously but never had a peak religious experience. (Satou, 1998). In these days, some monks met Buddha or a Bodhisattva, especially in dreams or visions or hearing voices. This was a signal to them

to trust in what they were doing. He never got that. Shinran wanted to meet Buddha, but he could not and then suffered deeply from doubt. He confronted this obstacle and began to feel deeply into his worthlessness and hopelessness, sitting with his powerlessness, going deeper into his fate. He contemplated himself from the bottom of his being and began to think differently. He thought of leaving mount Hiei which would mean losing everything; he would no longer be able to be a monk. He contemplated the way of practice and decided to leave Mount Henei.

Shinran went to the temple Rokkakudo, which was built by Prince Shotoku, and withdrew for one hundred days. He prayed and chanted with other ordinary people, including all the men and women who came to that temple. He was waiting for an omen telling him where he should go. On the ninety-fifth day, early in the morning, he met Kuanyin in the form of Prince Shotoku. Prince Shotoku said you should meet Hounen. This was the turning point for Shinran.

Next he visited Hounen every day for one hundred days. At that time Hounen was not an official monk. He had already dropped out of the official monk system and had begun to preach and teach everybody. During those one hundred days, Shinran became confident that Hounen was the only one who could guide him, and he became Hounen's apprentice.

Shinran was struggling with the issue of sexual relationships. At that time, many monks had sexual partners secretly. Some also had them openly even though it was not allowed officially. That meant there were no ethics. Shinran isolated himself again in Rokkakudo and

had a dream. In the dream Kuanyin said "If you make love with a woman, I will be her." This was a simple sentence; however, in the essence the meaning was that this was not only a sexual issue, but that if people have suffering and trouble, Kuanyin will become this person and save them. This experience became a core experience for Shinran. Kuan-yin is the mother of compassion and Amitabha Buddha sees wounds as dream doors, doorways to enlightenment. Amitaba Buddha helps us embrace our weakness, powerlessness, and confusion, the little me. We are all imperfect and always growing.

#### Throwing out Intention

When people do Nembutsu, it is apparently quite easy just to repeat "Namu Amida Butsu" which means I worship Amitabha Buddha. In fact, the practice is quite difficult because if people say it with intent, it will not work. As long as there is intention, such as to be reborn into Pure Land, it will not be effective. When a person has no intent, surrendering starts; give up everything and Amitabha Buddha comes to help.

#### Two Kinds of Compassion

If there is famine and people are hungry and close to death, a normal reaction is to want to help them. Shinran asked, "Is this the best response?" and replied, "I don't think so." You want to help this person because this happened to you, but if you had not met this person, then you could not have saved him. (Yoshimoto, 2001).

The first type of compassion one he called 'the compassion of the sage', meaning feeling of pity or empathy for others and helping them. However, this is seldom sustainable. It is just a momentary thing. The second

type of compassion is the compassion of Pure Land, which means 'do Nembutsu, go to Pure Land, and come back to society. After that you can practice compassion freely'. What this means, is go to the Pure Land first and then return to society. One must die this means and come back in the next life. It means that through practicing Nembutsu with no intention, a person will become Amitabha Buddha in this life.

## 自然法爾

Jinen-houni

### Jinem Honi

If a person does Nembutsu with intention, like wanting to go to Pure Land, that does not bring the person to Pure Land. If a person does good things, with intention that is not good either. If there is intention from the ego, Amitabha Buddha will never appear. Ji means by itself will happen naturally, nem means make it happen, and honi means because of Amitabha Buddha. Because of Amitabha Buddha's vow, without intention people will be saved.

## 自力と他力

Jiriki-to-Tariki

### Self power and Other power

There are two kinds of Buddhism. One is Jiriki meaning using self-power, going forward by oneself and having intent, purpose, and goals. It also includes trying to control life, the solutions to problems, and our own nature. Zen and most other kinds of Buddhism belong to Jiriki. The other kind is Tariki meaning the other power.

Pure Land Buddhism and Shin Buddhism are Tariki. In Tariki, especially at Shin Buddhism there is no intention

or control. Surrender and giving up are key ideas. Shinran said, if one person does nembutsu only one time, this person can die without agony. But this is not so simple. If this person does nembutsu with intent, that does not work. Nembutsu could not be completed just by the person's intention. The person needs to throw away every single intent. After that, something will come from Abhidharma Buddha. In this stage, nembutsu will start. Abhidharma Buddha has no discrimination. People who are poor or rich, have intelligence or no intelligence, with crime or without crime are all embraced. If a person has a deep belief in Abhidharma Buddha, she will save her, like changing a stone into gold.

#### **5-4 My personal experience of meeting with Tariki**

Here is an example from my own life of meeting with this other kind of power, Tariki. When I was being born, I was stuck face down just before my mother's cervix. I could not get out by myself and had to be suctioned. This is my very first experience in life, my first interaction with the world. I have been struggling with this experience of how I came into the world for my whole life. For example, in my life, when I come to the final stage of completing something, going out into the world in many senses, transitioning from the inner to the outer world, I often become utterly powerless for no apparent reason.

I decided to work on this by exploring my birth experience. I took it as a life myth experience. I began by identifying the strong sense of powerlessness and felt it as deeply as I could. Suddenly I noticed that I was in a timeless world, and that my feeling of powerlessness had shifted into something different, a kind of surrender about doing anything in my life. I noticed that I had no

intention to do anything.

I stayed with this wound and began to live with it. Then I start experiencing something like an unconditional attitude toward myself. The essence of this experience is that there is no me. I am like the air, the tree, the flower. I am everything. I do not need to do anything. I can just be anything. From here, if I look at the suction in my birth experience, I see Abhidharma Buddha. I was saved by Abhidharma Buddha in the very beginning of my life. From Abhidharma Buddha's viewpoint, she does not care what I do, what I wear, how much money I have, how much I accomplish, what social status I have. She welcomes my powerlessness and my weak part. This is my experience of meeting with Tariki.

5-5 Fourth Noh drama:Shinran

能、日立

Noh, Hitachi<sup>1)</sup>

Cast

SHITE Shinran, appearing at first as his wife Eshin-ni

WAKI A monk, myself

Act one

A monk appears on the stage.

Monk

I am traveling to Shinran's memorial place. I guess this is the place where Shinran and his wife, Eshin-ni, lived for a long time. The sun is setting.

A woman appears on the stage. She is carrying a flower and goes to a stone. She looks like she has a reason to do so. She is wearing a kimono and has hair down to her shoulders. She sings a song which melts into the sunset. The sunset carries sorrow.

Monk

I am visiting Shinran's grave also. Could you tell me a story about Shinran?


The woman starts speaking without looking at the monk.

Woman

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<sup>1)</sup> A name of local place where Shinran lived.





Shinran is the embodiment of Kuan-yin. I had a dream about that. In my dream people point to one man as though he is Kwanyin. Then I saw his face on her. It was Shinran's face. He lived until he was 90 years old. There were lots of things at the end of his life. He had no money so we had to live separately. When he died nothing special happened. His relationship with this life ended. His life ended and he moved to Nirvana. It was seamless.

Monk

This place is really a memorial place.

Woman

Yes.

Monk

Who are you?

Woman

I am the one carrying the same wounds with him.

Man

Could you tell your name?

Woman

I don't want to say my name.

Monk

I want to know.

The monk tries three times.

Woman



Woman


Shinran is my husband.

The woman disappears.

Monk

That is a mysterious thing. I'll stay here and sleep.

The monk sits down at the bottom of the tree and begins to sleep.



Act Two

The monk is still sleeping at the root of the tree. There is beautiful moonlight. Somebody is coming closer on the stage. Then he awakes but the monk cannot see the person's face because the moon is behind this person. It looks like Eshin-ni again, but it also could be a man. A man's voice is heard.

Shinran

Naman-dabu, naman-dabu, naman-dabu, naman-dabu,  
naman-dabu.

The words the person repeats mean I worship the Amitabha Buddha. He repeats them while walking in a circle.

Monk

Are you Shinran?

Shinran

Who are you?

Monk


I am a monk who has come to meet you.

Shinran

I have one regret. Without solving this question I cannot stop being a ghost.

Monk

Could I hear what your question is?



Shinran

When I was alive there were lots of people who misunderstood my teachings. They began to commit crimes, but then because of that they would be saved, I think I needed to stand up and organize my teachings as a religious sect officially. Then I would have stood as a leader of this sect, but I couldn't do that. This is still remaining as a big uestion. So I have become a ghost.

Monk

What do you mean by that?

Shinran

I am not the kind of person to become a master. I go wandering a lot. I'm walking around the fog of craving, but people who believed my teaching believed they would be born in Nirvana in the next life. They thought I had a magical power and that by using this power I could make people be born in Nirvana. They began to see me as a Buddha.

Monk

Have you ever felt that as a pleasure?

Shinran

Yes, I felt that. That is also my craving. I have that voice.

Monk

You are so human. That is not only you.

Shinran

That may be so.



Monk

However this is a huge problem. After your death no one gets this answer in this country. This is an authority problem and a power problem. I have never seen an ordinary human being who has power and authority at the same time. It's so easy to become inflated by power.

Shinran

That is right. That is why it's so heavy to me. But I want to make sense of this question. As you know, my teaching was understood deeply by the people who were agonizing and who had a hard life. Ten million people resonated with me. This number of people could have made a big religious sect, authorized by the government. But I couldn't bear to be the person at the head of such a sect.

Monk

I might help you with something. Let me ask a question. What do you mean by being in the head position?

Shinran

It is full of illusion and lies. People project onto me that I am the living Buddha. Then I get huge authority and an enormous amount of money. If I stand there in the top position, people see me as the Amitabha Buddha. Then whatever I say becomes the absolute truth. Everybody begins to surrender to me. People begin to follow whatever I say. This is scary. I cannot stand for that.

Monk

This is a really, really scary situation. But how about standing in this situation just a little bit. Then try to recognize how much of it is illusion and lie.



Shinran

Ok, I will try it.

Monk

Let's stand in that position as Amitabha Buddha. Let's not make people project this onto you, but have you experience that projection as yourself.

Shinran

No, I cannot do it.

Monk

Let's try for only three minutes.

Shinran

Ok, only three minutes.


Shinran begins to stand as Amitabha Buddha.

Monk

Dear Amitabha Buddha, do you stand with illusion and lies?

Shinran

No, I do not. There are no illusion and lies here. There is only light through all. Oh, I got it! This is unbelievable! This is a precious experience. I don't need to order anyone or anything from here. Who is scared is me, Shinran, not Amitabha Buddha. As Amitabha Buddha, just being is enough. What will happen, will happen by itself. If people see me in this position, they will still surrender to Amitabha Buddha, not to Shinran. Then nature unfolds itself. I am Shinran and at the same time Amitabha Buddha. I am no longer scared to come here any



Amitabha Buddha. I am no longer scared to come here any more.

Shinran begins to dance. He starts the dance as himself, then as Amitabha Buddha, and then as Eshin-ni. Then he dances as one. The full moon shines on.

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**Ketu-ron**

**Chapter-6**  
**Conclusion**



## Chapter 6

### Conclusion

In this thesis, I have explored my deep interest in the four Buddhists, Prince Shotoku, Kukai, Dogen and Shinran. I respect what they each stood for and their contribution to Japanese history and culture, and have tried to show this in the preceding chapters. I also see that they each had their limitations, and have also tried to show these through the Noh theatre pieces. Using Process Work to unfold these limitations, in this concluding chapter, I will point to the possible developments in personal and cultural life that can come through a Process Work approach. The use of Noh pieces has been helpful to enter altered states of awareness to access new awareness about traditional problems and characteristics of Japanese society and culture. In this concluding section, I will use short internal dialogues to bring the lessons of the Noh theatre pieces into everyday reality.

# 聖徳太子

## Prince Shōtoku

In Noh Ikaruga (the first Noh drama), suicide is revealed as a key issue in Japanese culture and personal life. In Japanese history, suicide has a different degree of acceptance than in the history of other countries. I believe this is because Christianity does not have the influence on Japanese culture that it has on western society and cultural experience. In Japan, "Hara-kiri" (Hara means belly, Kiri means cutting) is a form of suicide which was valuable in Samurai culture. This has influenced the acceptance of suicide in Japanese culture today. In Japan three million people kill themselves every year. This is three time more than the number of people who die in car accidents.

On this issue, a personal memory is relevant. My friend Akemi Outa killed herself seven years ago. We took a couple of the same transpersonal work shop together and once she visited my apartment with other friends. We had a good time together and there was a feeling of a brother and sister relationship between us. I have pictures of her visit. She was smiling and laughing in the photographs. I still remember the utterly shocking moment when a friend of mine told me by telephone about her suicide. Her parents were grieving and saying they did not understand why she killed herself. For a moment, I could feel nothing, I went blank and became numb as if the world around me did not exist anymore. I was denying her death internally, and sadness came later. I was holding a huge hole inside me.

In Process Work, there is the idea that identity is made up of different parts, and that an individual or group is not identical with any one of these parts. Therefore, it is possible for one or more parts to 'die' or be killed, without killing the physical body of the person. If Akemi had been familiar with this Process Work idea, she would have known that part of herself could die, while her physical body could remain alive. In this way she might not have killed herself.

This is an important way in which Process Work can contribute to the ongoing development of Japanese culture, and to the psychological health of individuals. I will illustrate this by the following dialogue. In Japanese culture, there is a ghost role that supports suicide. Let me pick up the voice of this ghost, and respond to it as myself.

Ghost: In Japanese culture suicide is accepted. If you have made a crucial mistake, you can kill yourself and compensate for it by your death. You can clean up every single mistake you have ever made in your life. Your family can be saved by your death and your family line can continue into the future.

Me: I am listening to every single word you say. And I notice that you said beautiful things and that you are carrying a kind of Japanese beauty. I appreciate that. And in the Samurai era what you said was absolute true.

Ghost: Yes, of course. Thank you for appreciating me. No one ever says that to me. I have been so tense and lonely. I am hungry for company.

Me: Oh, you were lonely and tense. How difficult for you! I want to help you complete your desire. What is the deepest desire you have?

Ghost: I want people to take responsibility and clean up their stuff by themselves. And then I want to make people aware of having no attachment to life.

Me: That's great! You are a teacher. And I want to help you. But I can't help you do that using suicide, because that affects other people. So let me help you another way.

Ghost: People cannot take responsibility in their own body. They are utterly powerless.

Me: That is partially true. Let's make this utterly powerless part die completely. Let's let it die. Then let me help you to complete your deep desire. Could you just stay with your deepest desire. What is the essence of it?

Ghost: ... individuality, aloneness ...

Me: Why don't you believe in the essence of this experience? Just believe in it and follow it.

Ghost: Believe in it and follow it. I notice I don't need to follow people. I can just be Me.

Me: You can take responsibility for yourself. I love you no matter what mistakes you make. I believe in you! Bye!

This dialogue shows that people do not need to kill their physical body in order to kill their identity, or deal with shame, failure and other forms of difficulty in life. Rather, Process Work suggests that they can interact with different parts of themselves, go deeply into the essence different experiences, and allow some parts of themselves to 'die' so as to live more fully.

# 空海

## Kūkai

In Noh Mikurodo (the second Noh drama), the key theme that came up is a surprisingly common problem to people nowadays as well. This is the theme of high dreaming and ordinary life.

After World War II, Japanese people made a remarkable economic recovery. I very much appreciate what my parents' and grandparent's generations did in this regard. They lived with two belief systems. One system of belief said that the Emperor was God, the other said that the Emperor was human, a symbol. This was a 'crazy-making' situation. School teachers made completely opposite statements before and after the war. I can imagine how people of my parents' generation got confused and hurt by that.

Their generation survived although many of the places in which they lived were reduced to ashes. They brought about an economic recovery. Although I appreciate their dedication, I also have mixed feelings about it. I remember in my childhood my father was always absent. He was always working. He got one day or two days off for a month, and then he was too tired to play with me. So I did not have much relationship with my father. I do not know what high dreams he desired to complete. I will ask him when I meet him next time.

My father is typical of most Japanese people, especially

men, who belonged to a company during this period of remarkable development. At that time, most people stayed with one company until retirement. This was a system which strongly supported Japan until recently. As a result, the company became a person's home. Relationship with family and individual dreams were disavowed. I feel very sad about this.

So in this aspect of Japanese history and culture there is a ghost who is inhibiting people from realizing their individual high dreams.

Ghost: You'd better stay and follow the other people. Be the same as everyone else.

Me: What makes you say that?

Ghost: You need to take care of history and dead people. Everybody died for following others.

Me: You are taking care of ancestors and dead people. I didn't know that. That is so sad everybody died for others. Could I know your deep yearning behind your intention?

Ghost: Connection. Connection between generation, people, family, community.

Me: Wow, I am grateful to hear that. In essence you are saying to people that we are all connected, together. Is that so?

Ghost: Yes.

Me: And I guess you are saying, you are not a soldier, you are a human being. You are not a company, you are an individual. You can make nice and sweet relationships with your family. Is that so?

Ghost: Yes, I did not know that.

Me: If you really believe your essence, what will you do?

Ghost: I will pray for people connect each other.

Me: Go for it!

The ghost leaves.

This illustrates how people's high dreams are important and can be lived in everyday life. Process Work values both the 'we' of the collective and the individual "I". In this dialogue, by unfolding the essence of the ghost, it can be seen how both culture and individual can come together.



## 道元

### Dōgen

The third Noh theatre piece, titled "The Ido", concerns Dōgen. It centers on the question of whether Japanese Buddhism can have 'Beginnner's Mind' again or not.

Fukushima Roshi of Tohuku-ji temple is very well known in the Process Work community. But most Japanese people do not know about him. Why is this so? I knew Fukushima Roshi's name before I became involved with Process Work, but it was not because he was known as a great Zen Buddhist. One day I saw on the television that a professor at Kyoto University had been sued for sexual harassment of a student. He hid himself in Tohuku-ji temple and was seeking to become a resident there. On the news, Fukushima Roshi said that he had asked the professor to leave the temple.

From this news item I noticed two things. One was that a Zen temple is good place to hide from society. Another thing was that the Zen Roshi could be seen only on television, not in person in daily life.

The majority of Japanese people call Buddhism 'Funeral Buddhism' because they meet Buddhist monks only at funerals. Buddhism is for funeral ceremonies, but it is no longer a spiritual belief for most people. Zen is much more popular in the United States than in Japan. I meet a lot of American people who are fascinated with Zen. Most Japanese are not interested in Zen.

In thinking about this, I found a hungry ghost. He was walking around like a homeless person. He did not have any home. Let me invite him here.

Hungry ghost: I lost my home. I don't know where I am heading.

Me: Who were you when you were alive?

Hungry ghost: I was a monk before. I was living in temple.

Me: Can you say more?

Hungry ghost: I lost the way and I lost my beginner's mind.

Me: That's so sad. You must be confused.

Hungry ghost: Yes, I am.

Me: What can I do for you?

Hungry ghost: I want to go back to having beginner's mind.

Me: Do you remember about it?

Hungry ghost: I don't ... I don't remember ... (he begins to sob)

Me: Take it easy and just sit, remember Dogen.

Hungry ghost:

(He begins to sit in Zazen position and meditate)

Me: I saw something change in you. I suggested you just sit, and I see you going back to your original self, simple open mind.

The hungry ghost disappears.

This dialogue shows how the practice of Buddhism as a religion has moved away from its origins, creating a hungry ghost, a need for the original simplicity and openness that was at the heart of Zen practice. Process Work helps a person to come back home, to their original nature, making a bridge between the labyrinth of the material world and its essence.

## 親鸞

### Shinran

In Noh Hitachi (the fourth Noh drama), Shinran struggles with rank and authority problems. This problem has been a big issue for me personally. I have been so afraid of becoming an authority. I felt it was so difficult to trust authority, both inside and outside. I hated authority.

In this problem, the emperor plays a big role in my inner world. This inner issue is a reflection of Japanese history and culture. From the Meiji era to the end of World War II, only an 80 year period, the Emperor was a supreme god. The government and Shinto used to govern people's minds using the Emperor's authority. Many people died for the emperor and were killed in his name. As far as I know, the Japanese government and the emperor's family have never taken responsibility for this, and the issue remains unfinished. As a result, my internalized emperor is an irresponsible murderer. Let me talk now with my internalized emperor.

Me: Could I talk with you?

Emperor: . . . . .

Me: Are you there?

Emperor: Yes . . . . .

Me: What are you doing in this silence?

Emperor: I am not familiar with this kind of conversation, I am shy because there is only you and me here.

Me: Yes, I understand. This is not a normal situation for you. I hope you are okay. May I speak?

Emperor: Yes, you may.

Me: I'm really glad to meet you. You are always behind a curtain. I have never see you directly.

Emperor: Glad to meet you, son.

Me: How come you call me son?

Emperor: Every person in Japan is my son.

Me: You surprise me! You look as though you have an eldership that I never thought you had. I need to check my feelings. Can I take time to feel them?

Emperor: Yes, you can.

Me: Thank you. I notice that I feel a kind of respect for you. That is a big change for me.

Emperor: Thank you my son.

Me: Let me ask a question. How do you take responsibility for World War II?

Emperor: I was so lonely, being raised as a prince. I had no friend to tell my truth and naked feeling to. I was so afraid to be a leader in the war, I made the mistake of being just superior. I forgot me as human. I was just a human being scared of death, the same as everybody. I have tremendous guilt feelings about World War II, and I am still suffering from that. If I can, I want to take responsibility.

Me: I hear you. Thank you saying your personal feelings. That changes me. I notice I begin to like you. Let me ask one more question. What is the essence of the emperor?

Emperor: My essence is a self-governing force. It is the same as sunshine, everybody can have me, so I am everybody, I am nobody. Everybody can be his or her own emperor.

Me: Wow, this is great. Why don't you take responsibility from that place?

Emperor: Yes, from that place, I will open the gate to everyone to become his or her own authority.

This last dialogue illustrates how people can have authority from within themselves. In Japanese culture, authority is located outside the person, in the collective and in institutions and people in authority. People are afraid to be different and to rebel. Using a Process Work approach to unfolding the essence of the emperor, this authority is transformed into the authority of the elder, which has regard and concern for all.

## 結び

### conclusion

Through a creative exploration of Japanese Buddhism and Process Work I have identified some of the ghosts of Japanese history and culture, aspects of Buddhism that have become stuck or frozen. Using Process Work skills and metaskills to unfold and go deeply into the essence of these various aspects of culture and personal experience, they begin to unfreeze and freedom emerges. It is my sincere hope that the work that is contained in these pages will be continued in Japan, in the United States, and everywhere where the ghosts of culture hold people back, in order to free people everywhere to become more fully themselves.

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