

# IASBS



## 国 際 真 宗 学

### INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SHIN BUDDHIST STUDIES

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### GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT

#### *Enhancing Conferences and Exchanges*

As was previously announced, I presented a paper at the Japan District Workshop on March 7<sup>th</sup> (see separate report below). I was very pleased to be able to have participated in such an event for two reasons. The first reason is that the workshop will serve as a ‘springboard’ for a district-level conference to be held in Japan sometime in 2010. Secondly, the responses and the discussions were extremely stimulating and gave me new insights into some of the major tensions in Shin doctrinal studies. I was aware of them before, but they became more apparent at this gathering. These tensions are not to be avoided but to be confronted and welcomed.

The tensions that I sensed were, for example:

- 1) The emotive versus the rational;
- 2) The ‘essentialist’ model versus the ‘developmental model’; and
- 3) The Dharmakara narrative as historical fact as opposed to a symbolic or sacred story.

In the presentation, I took the latter position (i.e. rational, developmental, symbolic/sacred story) for my approach was *propagational in nature and concerned with reaching out to beginners*. Most of

the four respondents disagreed with some of my views and conclusions, though they were sympathetic with my approach. It became clear to me that the disagreement stemmed from the difference in our approaches.

Their comments were valuable for helping to clarify my own understanding and made me more acutely aware of the existence of varying approaches, which are to be encouraged and welcomed in IASBS. I want to take this opportunity to thank Professors D. Ueyama, T. Naito, D. Hirota and T. Kaku for their valuable comments, and Prof. M. Dake and Mr. E. Shimazu for preparing the workshop.

It is my hope that we can continue our discussions when we start the ‘Discussion Forum’ through the IASBS website (homepage) by this summer. I hope you will all take part in them.

Finally, I hope to see as many members as possible at the upcoming conference in Kyoto from June 12<sup>th</sup> -15<sup>th</sup> (13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> for paper presentations), which serves as the ultimate forum for the exchange of views within the IASBS.

Best wishes to you all,

Kenneth K. Tanaka

（会長による挨拶の要約：

3月7日の京都における研究会は、実に有意義なものであった。（詳細は、このニュースレターに掲載されている）

それは、まず、この集まりが、日本地区における初の学術大会を、今後実現できる契機となったことであり、もう一つは、この研究会で貴重な議論を行う事ができた結果、真宗伝道論に就いて、「感情対理性」、「本質論対発達論」、「歴史・実体始点対象徴」等という、対立的な視点が存在することを再確認することができたことである。私は、後者の視点（理性、発達論、象徴）を取ったが、リスポンスの中には、私とは異なる視点からの意見を述べられた先生方もおられた。私は、このような異なる視点や立場からの意見が建設的に述べる事ができる、このような議論が可能となる国際真宗学会こそ、歓迎され育てていくべきであると考えている。現在、本学会のホームページでディスカッションの場を設けようとしているが、このような場の中においても、より多くの学会員の参加により熱く議論が行われることを期待している。また、本学会の最高の議論の場となれる、龍谷大学における学会（6月12日～15日に行われる）により多くの会員が参加されることを期待している。ケネス田中）



## **IASBS JAPAN DISTRICT WORKSHOP**

### **Contemporary Understanding of Amida in Propagation: Focus on the Conflict between the Historical and Symbolic Interpretations**

「伝道における阿弥陀仏の現代的理解  
- 歴史的解釈と象徴的解釈の対立を中心として」

*7 March 2009*

*Omiya Campus, Ryukoku University, Kyoto*

This was the first academic symposium sponsored by the IASBS Japan District. After Professor Mitsuya Dake of Ryukoku University explained the aim of the meeting, Professor Kenneth Tanaka, president of the IASBS and a professor at Musashino University, made a presentation entitled, ‘A

## Contemporary Understanding of Amida with a Focus on the Conflict between the Historical and Symbolic Interpretations’.

According to Professor Tanaka, Shinran doctrinally understood Amida Buddha as a Dharma-body of Expediency (*upaya-dharmakaya*, *Hoben Hosshin*), a manifestation of the formless Dharma-body of Dharma-nature (*dharmata-dharmakaya*, *Hossho Hosshin*), as he wrote in the famous *Shizen Honi sho* in his Letters:

... The supreme Buddha is formless and, because of being formless, is called *jinen*. Buddha, when appearing with form, is not called *supreme nirvana*. In order to make it known that the supreme Buddha is formless, the name *Amida Buddha* is expressly used; so I have been taught. Amida Buddha fulfills the purpose of making us know the significance of *jinen*.

Nevertheless, as Professor Tanaka pointed out, Shinran believed the sacred story of Bodhisattva Dharmakara (*Hozo Bosatsu*) historically rather than symbolically. “For Shinran, Amida was a means (*ryou*) but also a historical being that carried a sense of substantiality.” However, he notes that contemporary people, especially Westerners, have difficulty in accepting the story historically, which is one of the biggest obstacles today in communicating the Shin teachings beyond Japan as well as to young Japanese.

This issue is nothing new, he argued, and had been recognized decades ago by such eminent scholars as Professors Shojitsu Ohara and Naotaro Nonomura. Having said that, Professor Tanaka maintained, “Just because the narrative is not historically true, we should not abandon it. Instead, we ought to retain the narrative as a *sacred story*”. He pointed out that the findings of recent mythologists, such as Joseph Campbell, have paved the way for a new approach and appreciation of sacred stories.

After the presentation, four distinguished scholars responded to the issues raised by Professor Tanaka. Professor Daishun Ueyama (former President of Ryukoku University and Director of the Hongwanji’s *Kyogaku Dendo Center*) pointed out that Mahayana Buddhism has regarded expedient means (*upaya*) as being even ‘higher’ in importance in conveying the teachings than the truth it represents. Shinran was certainly conscious of the two dharma-body theory of *upaya-dharmakaya* and *dharmata-dharmakaya* but it did not mean, however, that Shinran thought the former was inferior to the latter. Nevertheless, Dr. Ueyama observed that many contemporary people express the view that the rational explanation of the Shin tradition, based on general Buddhist philosophy, is much easier for them in approaching Shin Buddhism than the narrative of Bodhisattva Dharmakara, if not understood as a ‘sacred story’.

Professor Dennis Hirota (Ryukoku University) made his comments with reference to Christian theologian Rudolf Bultmann, who tried to demythologize biblical stories following a scientific way of thinking and to reconstruct the meaning of the sacred stories through existential interpretation. To this, Professor Tanaka responded “I would use *re-mythologize* rather than *demythologize*” referring to his call to rationalize the sacred story of Dharmakara with practical examples from people’s daily lives with which they can more easily identify and understand.

Professor Tomoyasu Naito (Ryukoku University) introduced the findings of a contemporary study by a Japanese scholar on the meaning of the Japanese word *ryou* in Shinran’s Letters. According to this study, though commonly interpreted in this way, *ryou* does not necessarily mean ‘provisional means (*shudan*)’ as found with Shinran’s other uses of this word.

Professor Naito also pointed out that the rational interpretation could trivialize the sacred story and might distance people from Amida Buddha even further. According to him, Shin Buddhism is a tradition that, in the end, caters to our heart-strings rather than our intellectual curiosity; we are not to play with Buddhism intellectually. The presupposition of Shin Buddhism is to realize that we are beings of delusive calculation (*komo-funbetsu*). Such being the case, he felt that we are not really in a position to judge whether Amida Buddha is a historical being or not.

The last commentator was Professor Takeshi Kaku of Otani University. According to him, Shin Buddhism is sometimes called a ‘religion of language’. He felt that this expression was very important in religious discourse and that it could be applicable on various levels depending on the target audience (*taiki-seppo*). This point (i.e. the best suitable expression of the teaching for the target audience) steered the discussion to the various problems that participants have been facing in classrooms, temples, hospitals, etc. Professor Kaku also noted that *Namu Amida Butsu*, especially *Namu*, should become the main focus of our attention and queries, more so than Amida Buddha.

Among the approximately 30 people in attendance, there were other professors from Otani, Ryukoku and Kyoto Women’s Universities, the Director of the Hongwanji International Center, Buddhist researchers from overseas, psychotherapists, temple priests and graduate students. Many of them had an opportunity to share their opinions with Professor Tanaka and the four commentators. All in all, the workshop was extremely inspiring as well as informative.

Esho Shimazu

NB: (For those interested in a full outline of Kenneth Tanaka's presentation, it is available as a supplement at the end of the newsletter on our website: [http://www.iasbs.net/english/publications\\_e.html](http://www.iasbs.net/english/publications_e.html)).

## 2009 IASBS 日本地区 研究会（英文レポートの要約）

日時： 2009年3月7日 場所： 龍谷大学大宮学舎

当研究会は国際真宗学会日本地区初のシンポジウム形式による研究会で、先ずケネス田中学会長から「歴史的解釈と象徴的解釈の対立に焦点を置いた阿弥陀仏の現代的理解」と題する発表があり、引き続き4人のコメンテーターから意見が出された。

ケネス田中教授は、親鸞は御文章にある自然法爾章に「弥陀仏は、自然のようをしらせんりょうなり」と書かれた如く教理的には阿弥陀仏を方便法身として理解していたが、法蔵菩薩については象徴としてではなく歴史的存在として捉えており、このことが現代人に真宗を伝えようとする際の最大の壁になっていると指摘する。同教授によると、このことは既に何十年前に大原性實、野々村直太郎等の著名な学者が指摘していたことであるが、結論としては、ジョセフ・キャンベル等の新しい神話学の発展を踏まえて、歴史的事実というより「聖なる物語」として受け取るべきであると言う。

この発表に続き上山大峻龍谷大学元学長から、大乘仏教では方便の方を真理そのものよりむしろ高く評価していること、親鸞が方便法身と法性法身を意識していたのは確かだが、前者が後者よりも低いものと考えていたわけではないとのコメントがあった。しかし上山教授によると、多くの現代人は、仏教の基本哲理に根差した合理的説明の方が、法蔵菩薩の物語よりも真宗に入りやすいと言う。

続いてデニス広田龍谷大学教授から、聖書の非神話化と実存的解釈による神学の再構築を唱えたルドルフ・ブルトマンの業績が紹介された。これについてケネス田中教授から、非神話化というより再神話化という言葉を使いたいとの応答があった。

内藤知康龍谷大学教授からは、自然法爾章にある「りょう」の用例を親鸞の全著作で調査したところ、これまで「手段」と通常解釈してきたことに無理があるとする研究論文があるとの指摘があった。また、合理的解釈は「聖なる物語」を矮小化してしまい、かえって人々と阿弥陀仏との距離を遠ざけてしまう危険があること、さらに浄土真宗は知的好奇心よりも心の琴線に触れて行くのがその伝統であり、我々凡夫とは虚妄分別の存在であると自覚することが真宗の出発点なのだから、阿弥陀仏が歴史的存在か否かといった問題を判断すべき立場にはないし、仏教を知的玩具にしてはならないとの指摘があった。

最後に加来雄之大谷大学准教授から、浄土真宗は言葉の宗教と言われるごとく、対機説法

が重要であると指摘された。このことが反響を招き、多くの参加者から教室、寺院、病院等で直面している様々な問題について報告が出された。

役30名の参加者の中には、コメンテーター以外の大学教員を始め、本願寺国際センター職員、末寺住職、外国人研究者、心理療法研究者、大学院生等が含まれていた。ほぼ全ての参加者から質問や意見が出され、非常に有意義な研究会となった。

(発表のレジュメは、学会のホームページのニュースレターの後部に掲載されています。  
興味のある方は、ご覧ください。 [http://www.iasbs.net/japanese/publications\\_j.html](http://www.iasbs.net/japanese/publications_j.html))



### **Shin Buddhism and Christianity: Interpreting a New Testament Passage**

Alfred Bloom  
Emeritus Professor  
University of Hawaii

In the context of Buddhist-Christian dialogue, we can find a basis for discussion of the nature of the respective traditions in the well-known parable of Jesus concerning the Good Shepherd:

...And so he told them this parable: “Which one of you having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, and rejoices. ...” Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance. (Luke 15: 4-7; New Revised Standard Version)

This passage offers vividly the basic principle of Christian grace or the belief that God takes the initiative in the salvation process.

Shinran (1173-1262) gives a parallel expression when he declared: “If a good man can be saved, how much more an evil man!” As the lost sheep in the Christian story is the object of God’s seeking, so the “evil” person is the object of Amida Buddha’s Vow as Shinran interpreted it. He wrote:

...But Amida Tathagata has in fact established the Vow of the threefold mind (sincerity, joyful trust, aspiration for birth [in the Pure Land]) for the sake of foolish and evil sentient beings...  
(‘The True Teaching, Practice, and Realization, III’ in *The Collected Works of Shinran* (Kyoto: Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-Ha, 1997.) I, p. 95, #21.)

The principle of grace which permeates the New Testament became the singular focal point for Christian theology with the German reformer, Martin Luther (1483-1546), in the principle of “faith alone,” expressing trust in God’s grace. However, 200 years before Luther, Shinran established the paradigm of true entrusting endowed through the gift of Amida Buddha’s compassion and wisdom.

In both the Christian and Buddhist stories of the prodigal son, grace is operative in the actions of the fathers. Each father welcomes the son home when he unknowingly returns and is recognized by the father when he is still far off. Both versions demonstrate the principle of ‘grace’ or ‘unconditional compassion’ which we see also at work in the parable of the lost sheep or the salvation of the evil person. Both fathers respond to the need of their son. (*Lotus Sutra*, Chapter 4 and Luke 15: 11-32)

In contrast to some Christian interpretations of Jesus’ parable, the Buddha-Dharma does not stress punishment for sin. Rather, it illuminates our ignorance, as the father guides the son to the truth. The Buddha-Dharma offers insight into our passion-ridden, spiritually distorted, grasping selves. The consequences of bad choices are the natural outcome of the process of cause and effect (*karma*) and not the autocratic judgment of a wrathful deity.

The concept of the evil person must be carefully understood. In Biblical tradition, the evil person or sinner is understood as one who violates the laws of God. Jesus asserts that God’s purpose is the salvation of evil people, as the shepherd seeks his lost sheep. However, he does not change the definition of ‘evil people’.

Shinran, however, changed the definition of an evil person. For him, it includes all people, however defiled or righteous they might be. The evil person is one who believes that he attains enlightenment through his own efforts and prides him or herself on how pious they may be. The Apostle Paul comes close to Shinran when he indicates: “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God - not the result of works, so that no one may boast.” (Ephesians 2:8,9.)



Shinran sympathized with people who were defined as evil by the society of his time, such as hunters, fishermen, samurai and merchants. These people were driven by their karma to undertake tasks which were considered spiritually impure. He declared that the Buddha-Dharma did not discriminate people according to some socially-defined scale of goodness. (See *The Collected Works of Shinran*, 'The True Teaching, Practice and Realization', III. I, p. 107, #51.)

Rather than to an externally, self-subsistent God, in Buddhism, we return home spiritually when we recognize our interdependent relationship with all beings. Interdependence is symbolized as our Buddha-nature to which we awaken through true entrusting in Amida's Vow. In this process, Amida Buddha is not a God but the symbol of the process of interdependence which is reflected in the myth of his Vows. The form of the 48 Vows indicates that unless all beings realize the promised attainment of the respective Vow, the Bodhisattva will not accept enlightenment for himself. Amida Buddha, whose name means Infinite, Immeasurable and Inconceivable, is the totality of relationships within which we are living and which lives within us.

Viewing the imagery of the Good Shepherd in Jesus' parable from a Buddhist perspective offers an approach to discovering a common foundation for two rather dissimilar religious expressions. Both traditions provide varying insights into the nature of reality and human life which can assist modern people to share spiritual experience across religious boundaries, decreasing religious polarization. We are all embraced by the same reality, conceived in different terms, and hopefully our respective spiritual paradigms will bring more unity to our disparate lives and societies.

**(Japanese translation of Dr Bloom's essay)**

浄土真宗とキリスト教： 新約聖書の一節を解釈する

ハワイ大学名誉教授

アルフレッド・ブルーム

仏教徒とキリスト教徒が対話する際、有名なイエスの「良き羊飼いの喩」の中に、両宗教の性格を語りうる共通の話題を見出すことができる。

「あなたがたのうちに羊を百匹持っている人がいて、そのうちの一匹をなくしたら、その人は九十九匹を野原に残して、いなくなった一匹を見つけるまで捜し歩かないでしょうか。見つけたら、大喜びでその羊をかついで、帰って来て、友だちや近所の人たちを呼び集め、『いなくなった羊を見つけましたから、いっしょ

に喜んでください。』と言うでしょう。あなたがたに言いますが、それと同じように、ひとりの罪人が悔い改めるなら、悔い改める必要のない九十九人の正しい人にまさる喜びが天にあるのです。」（ルカの福音書 15：4～7）

この一節は、救済プロセスを主導するのは神であるというキリスト教の恩寵(grace)、もしくは信仰の根本原理を生き生きと表している。

#### 親鸞聖人(1173-1262)

も同様の表現をされており、「善人なほもつて往生をとぐ、いはんや悪人をや」と唱えられたのである。キリスト教の物語において迷える子羊こそが神の探し出そうとする対象であるように、親鸞聖人の解釈によれば、「悪人」こそが阿弥陀仏の誓願の対象なのである。聖人は、

「愚悪の衆生のために阿弥陀如来すでに三心（至心、信楽、欲生）の願を發したまへり」（『教行信証』信巻 21 浄土真宗聖典（注釈版 第2版 p.103）

と述べておられる。

新約聖書を一貫して流れる恩寵の原理は、ドイツの宗教改革者マルチン・ルター(1483-1546)

により、神の愛(grace)への信頼を表現する「信仰のみ」の原理としてキリスト教神学の最も重要な焦点となった。しかしながら、ルターより200年も前に、親鸞聖人は阿弥陀仏の慈悲と知恵を通じて賜る真実信心の世界を確立されていたのである。

キリスト教・仏教双方にある放蕩息子の物語では、慈愛が父親に行動させるものとなっている。どちらの父親も、自分の家とは気付かずに帰ってきた息子を温かく向い入れる。そして父親は気づくが、息子の心はまだ遥かかなたにあるままだ。二つの話とも、慈愛、もしくは迷える子羊や悪人正機の比喻の中に見られる「無条件の慈悲」を描いているのである。二人の父親ともに、息子の求めているものに応えようとしているのだ。（『法華経』第4章、ルカ伝15：11-32参照）

イエスの比喻に対するキリスト教徒のある種の解釈とは対照的に、仏法では罪に対する罰を強調しない。むしろそれは、父親が息子を真実へと導くように、我々の無知を明らかにしようとしているのである。仏法とは、煩惱にまみれ、心歪み、執着に満ちた我々の自我の中に、智慧を吹き込むものなのである。道を踏み誤った結末は、因果（業）の過程の自然な結果なのであり、激怒した神による独裁的な審判によるものではないのである。

悪人の概念はよくよく理解する必要がある。聖書の伝統の中では、悪人もしくは罪人は、神の掟に違反した者として理解される。神の目的とは、羊飼いが迷える子羊を探すように悪人を救うことだとイエスは主張する。しかし彼は悪人の定義を変えてはいない。

しかし親鸞聖人は悪人の意味を変えられたのである。聖人にとってこの言葉は、どれほど汚濁にまみれていようと高潔であろうと無関係に、全ての人々を含むもの

なのである。悪人とは自力で悟りに達するのだと思い込んでいる者や、自分がいかに信仰心の篤い人間であるかと自惚れている者のことである。「あなたがたは、恵みのゆえに、信仰によって救われたのです。それは、自分自身から出たことではなく、神からの賜物です。行ないによるものではありません。だれも誇ることのないためです。」と語る時、使徒パウロは親鸞聖人に近いと言えるだろう。（『新約聖書』「エペソ人（びと）への手紙」 2:8-9）

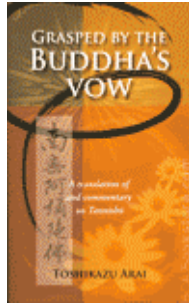
親鸞聖人は、獵師、漁民、武士、商人といった、その時代の社会では悪人とされていた人々に同情されていた。これらの人々は、業の結果として精神的に不純とされていた職業についているのだと見なされていたのである。聖人は、仏法とは社会的に定められた善悪の物差しによって人々を差別することではないとされたのである。（『教行信証』信巻51 浄土真宗聖典（注釈版 第2版 p.117）

仏教では、外に独存する神に帰るとは言わない。我々はあらゆる存在と縁起の関係にあるのだと認識する時、自分の生まれた家に精神的に帰るのだと言うのである。縁起は我々の内にある仏性という言葉によって象徴されており、阿弥陀仏への真実の信心を通じて我々は仏性に目覚めるのである。この過程において、阿弥陀仏は神ではなく、誓願の物語に反映されている縁起のプロセスの象徴なのである。四十八の誓願の形式は、各請願で約束したことの達成を衆生が実現できないのであれば、法蔵菩薩は彼自身の悟りを受け取らないというものである。その名が無限、無量、不可思議という意味である阿弥陀仏とは、こうした関係性全体のことなのだ。我々はその中で生き、また我々の中にそれが生きているのである。

仏教の視点からイエスの良き羊飼いの比喻の描写を見てみることは、幾分異なった二つの宗教的表現に共通の基盤を見つける手がかりとなる。二つの宗教ともに、真理や人生の性格について智慧を与え、現代人が宗教間の垣根を越えて精神的な経験を分かち合い、宗教的な距離を縮めてくれる手助けとなるものである。我々は全て同じ真理によって抱かれているのだが、異なった言葉でそれを認識しているのである。それぞれの精神的パラダイムが、我々の異質な生活と社会に、より一層の一体感をもたらしてくれればと思う。

### Book Review

*GRASPED BY THE BUDDHA'S VOW: A translation and commentary on Tannisho*  
by Toshikazu Arai (Berkeley: Center for Buddhist Education, 2008)



Although I ordered this book from the Buddhist Bookstore in San Francisco as soon as I saw it was available, it is reasonable for the prospective reader to ask the question which Arai Sensei himself raises in the preface – does the world need another translation of *Tannisho*? Well, the definitive translation does not necessarily exist, and may in fact never exist. Beyond a certain level of technical knowledge, which Arai Sensei of course possesses, translation becomes a matter of opinion and nuance and it can be illuminating to read different translations of a familiar text. Also, I naturally wanted to read Arai Sensei's commentary.

While conveying essentially the same meaning as the 'official' Shin Buddhist Translation Series version, Arai Sensei's translation has a different 'flavour'. For example:

Know that the Primal Vow of Amida makes no distinction between people young and old, good and evil; only shinjin is essential. For it is the Vow to save persons whose karmic evil is deep and grave and whose blind passions abound.

(From Chapter 1 of *Tannisho* – SBTS)

Amida's Primal Vow makes no distinction between old and young and between good and evil. All that is essential is entrusting ourselves to the Vow. The reason is that the Vow is to save sentient beings burdened with deep and heavy karmic evil, ablaze with blind passions.

(Same passage - Arai)

The differences between these translations are not great. I rather prefer Arai Sensei's version of this passage, but my preference is not uniformly in favour of his translation. This is not a competition though, and either translation is fine. What Arai Sensei's translation does is introduce the reader to the way he thinks and this leads the reader on to his commentary which is the main

part of the book. Arai Sensei breaks each chapter up and interpolates his thoughts. His commentary is, like his translation, direct and intimate, learned yet informal.

If there is a unifying theme to the commentary it is probably summed up in the last sentence of Arai Sensei's comments on the prologue of *Tannisho* - that its author Yuien is 'showing us what it is like to have true faith.' His comments, however, follow the flow of the text rather than some preconceived agenda. They are to the point. In Chapter 2, Shinran is quoted as saying:

... it is for each one of you to decide whether to take the nembutsu into your heart or to abandon it.

In response to this Arai Sensei writes:

There should be no ambiguity about true faith (*shinjin*). We either have it or do not have it – there is no in-between.

The explanation of how, in Chapter 9, Shinran uses compassionate means in answer to Yuien's deep concerns that he does not feel joy on saying the Nembutsu is masterful. Arai Sensei takes the reader through the steps of the logic of Shinran's reply, and clarifies Shinran's meaning and concludes that a person without *bonno* (delusion) would already be a Buddha who does not need the help of Amida. A person with any degree of *bonno* would not rejoice when he knows he is being born in the Pure Land, leaving his beloved ones, wealth and power behind.

I could quote again and again from the clear and useful explanations of the sometimes difficult text of *Tannisho*, but this work really warrants reading in its entirety. After the translation and commentary which make up the greater part of the book, there is a fairly lengthy and quite didactic section entitled 'Important Terms and Concepts' wherein Arai Sensei explains a number of general Buddhist and, specifically, Pure Land concepts which need to be understood to understand the commentary and, indeed, *Tannisho* itself. There is then the complete text of Arai Sensei's translation of *Tannisho* without the commentary. The book ends with a brief but useful list of references.

I strongly recommend this book. The translation is very easy to understand and complements previous efforts and the commentary is full of important teachings.

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**An Update on Digitization of *The Pure Land* journal:**

We are pleased that ATLAS has completed digitizing all of the issues and announced that IASBS members will be able to access them free of charge. The IASBS Steering Committee will decide at its upcoming June meeting on the best method for our members to access the journal. We will inform members soon after that meeting.

**Reminder**

14th Biennial Conference of the  
**INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SHIN BUDDHIST STUDIES**

**12-14 June 2009**

**RYUKOKU UNIVERSITY, KYOTO, JAPAN**

**Conference Theme:**  
**Shin Buddhism in the World of the Twenty-first Century**  
**—Challenges and Potential—**

「21世紀の世界と浄土真宗 — その課題と可能性」

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