

Belief and Slander:
Seikaku Hōin (1167-1235) in Shinran's Work and Life

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Among the major disciples of Hōnen 法然 (1133–1212), Seikaku 聖覚 (1167–1235) is remembered in both the Jōdo Shū and Jōdo Shinshū traditions as a devout follower of the master and an advocate of his *senju nembutsu* 専修念仏.² According to Shinzui 信瑞 (?–1279), another of Hōnen's disciples who wrote the *Myōgi shingyōshū* 明義進行集, Hōnen once said that Seikaku and Ryūkan 隆寛 (1184–1227) were to become successors of his nembutsu teaching after he passed away. Within the Jōdo Shinshū tradition, Seikaku is well known for his writing of the *Yuishinshō* 唯信鈔 (Essentials of Faith Alone), which strongly influenced Shinran's understanding of the concept of *shinjin*. However, Seikaku never became a member of the new *senju nembutsu* movement. Throughout his life, Seikaku remained a Tendai monk, even reaching the upper echelons of the Tendai administrative ranks. In 1227, Seikaku in fact clashed with Hōnen's disciples and sided with Enryakuji in a petition to limit the *senju nembutsu* practice.

Despite Seikaku's apparent turn against the *senju nembutsu* community from 1227, Shinran repeatedly made use of the former's *Yuishinshō* throughout his long teaching career. In 1230, about nine years after Seikaku wrote the *Yuishinshō*, Shinran made a copy of the text from

Seikaku's original manuscript. At that time Shinran was 58 and still living in Eastern Japan (Kantō 関東). After he returned to Kyoto and began living with his daughter Kakushinni 覚信尼 (1224-1283), Shinran made additional copies of the *Yuishinshō* for his followers in the east, and sent letters recommending that they study it. In 1250 at the age of 78, he then wrote a commentary on the text, *Yuishinshō mon'i* 唯信鈔文意 (Notes on 'Essentials of Faith Alone'), so that his followers could understand the difficult passages and phrases used in the text.³

It is not clear why Shinran became such an ardent promoter of Seikaku's *Yuishinshō*. It would seem that a rejection of Seikaku would be more appropriate, given Seikaku's public life that was not always supportive of Hōnen's teaching of the *senju nembutsu* practice. Some scholars, including Taira Masayuki, suspect that Shinran did not know of Seikaku's involvement with the Karoku persecution and was out of touch with the realities of the court.⁴ However, his relationship with Seikaku was close enough to be able to make a copy using the original manuscript while he was still in the Kantō. When Shinran returned to Kyoto in about 1232, it is not clear if the two met again before Seikaku passed away in 1235. However, Shinran's residence in Kyoto was not very far from that of Seikaku, and it seems highly unlikely that Shinran would not know of Seikaku's role in the Karoku persecution.

This paper seeks to reappraise the relationship between Seikaku and Shinran to suggest why Shinran continued to hold Seikaku in high esteem throughout his life. Discussions of Shinran's views of Seikaku are often limited to the text of the *Yuishinshō mon'i*, but Shinran drew from Seikaku

in several other important places in his writing. I focus on Shinran's "Postscript" to the *Kyōgyōshinshō* for clues about how Shinran perceived Seikaku. A close reading of the "Postscript" shows, first, that Shinran had a selective memory of key historical events of the time, namely the Ken'ei Persecution (Ken'ei no hōnan 建永の法難, 1207) and the Jōkyū Disturbance (Jōkyū no ran 承久の乱, 1221), while completely ignoring the Karoku Persecution (Karoku no hōnan 嘉禄の法難) of 1227 in which Seikaku had a part. Secondly, Shinran uses certain important ideas from Seikaku: the ideas of "belief and slander" (*shinbō* 信謗), and that those who go before act as guides for those who come later. I argue that Shinran's use of these phrases in the "Postscript," written late in his life, reveal both a deep appreciation of Seikaku and a nuanced understanding of what it meant to be a nembutsu practitioner, and that this understanding was colored by life experiences that both Shinran and Seikaku had faced. In fact, Shinran's appraisal of Seikaku can only be understood in light of the similar life experiences that shaped both men. Indeed, the realm of life experience was another area in which Seikaku's influence can perhaps be seen. Seikaku was also the successor of the Agui-ryū 安居院流, a private Buddhist preaching lineage established by his father Chōken 澄憲 (1126-1203),⁵ and as part of this lineage Seikaku was openly married and lived with his family while maintaining his official monastic status in the Tendai school. I suggest that the model of Seikaku as a home-living, married monk paved the way for Shinran to be able to make similar choices.

In this paper, I first examine Seikaku's family background as the son of Chōken, and the grandson of the famous courtier, Fujiwara Norimichi 藤原

通憲 (1106-1159), also known as the monk Shinzei 信西,⁶ to understand his life as a married monk. I then review Seikaku's support of Hōnen and the *senju nembutsu* movement during the Ken'ei Persecution, his private beliefs as seen in the *Yuishinshō*, and then his participation in the suppression of the *nembutsu* movement in the Karoku Persecution. Next, I analyze portions of Shinran's "Postscript" to the *Kyōgyōshinshō* to show how Shinran viewed Seikaku and how the notion of "belief and slander" in particular provides a lens for understanding their similar life experiences. In conclusion, I suggest why, despite Seikaku's later strained relationship with Honen's disciples, Shinran continued to value Seikaku as a nembutsu practitioner and great teacher.

1. The "Downtown" Life of Seikaku

Although in the Japanese Pure Land traditions, Seikaku is remembered as a humble and devoted disciple of Hōnen, Taira Masayuki has pointed out that this image is at odds with the reality of his career as a distinguished Tendai scholar.⁷ According to the historical records, Seikaku was appointed to the position of *tandai* 探題 (judge), the highest academic position and the second highest administrative position after the *zasu* 座主 (abbot) within the Japanese Tendai school.⁸ Additionally, as an official monk serving the imperial court, Seikaku was frequently invited to supervise numerous state-sponsored imperial Dharma lecture meetings as a *shōgi* 證義 (doctrinal inspector), a chief executive officer representing the Tendai school.⁹ Being affiliated with Shōrenin 青蓮院, Seikaku assisted Jien 慈円 (1155-1225) and managed a number of manors and branch temples.¹⁰ He

was also deeply engaged with national politics as the personal spiritual counselor for Emperor Gotoba (後鳥羽 1180-1239, r. 1183-1198), and his career as a Tendai monk rose together with the fortunes of the emperor when he abdicated and took the name Gotoba-in 後鳥羽院. However, after the Jōkyū Disturbance (Jōkyū no ran 承久の乱, 1221), in which Gotoba-in failed to unseat the Kamakura shōgunate and was exiled to Oki-no-shima 隠岐島, Seikaku's allegiances switched and he gained support from the bakufu.¹¹

But what made Seikaku one of the most popular Buddhist priests in his time was not his success as a Tendai scholar. Besides his official career as a Tendai monk, he ran his own private practice at his residence in downtown Kyoto as the headmaster of the Agui-ryū lineage of Buddhist preaching (*shōdō* 唱導).¹² The Agui-ryū had been established by Seikaku's father Chōken 澄憲 (1126-1203), who was also a Tendai monk.¹³

Chōken was the son of the famous court scholar Fujiwara Norimichi also known by his monastic name Shinzei. Shinzei rose to power as the most trusted political advisor to Emperor Goshirakawa 後白河 (1127-1192), but he was killed during the Heiji Disturbance (Heiji no ran 平治の乱) in 1159.¹⁴ Although Shinzei's lineage in politics was terminated with this incident, the careers of his descendants in the imperial court flourished especially in cultural and religious affairs.¹⁵ Shinzei's son Chōken became known as one of the most talented Buddhist preachers in his time. Chōken's son, Seikaku, was also an excellent preacher, and helped Chōken establish his center of popular preaching which later came to be known as Agui-ryū preaching.¹⁶

One of the issues often overlooked by historians is the significance of the fact that Chōken was “openly” married and had children.¹⁷ Seikaku was his eldest son and eventually succeeded his father in the Agui-ryū lineage. Though he was officially a Tendai monk, Seikaku, like his father, did not live in the monastery on Mount Hiei, and was also married and lived with his family in his residence in Kyoto. After Seikaku, the lineage of the Agui-ryū was handed over to his son Ryūshō 隆承. Thereafter, the lineage of the Agui-ryū was transmitted from father to son, a tradition that continued to about the late fifteenth century.¹⁸ Having affairs, maintaining unofficial marriages, and having children were not unheard of among medieval Japanese monastics, and the imperial court seems not to have been concerned with the openness of Seikaku's domestic life style.¹⁹ Nevertheless, members of the Agui-ryū were often the subject of criticism for not hiding their relationships with women to maintain their blood lineage.²⁰

Seikaku's close ties with powerful figures in the imperial court going back to his grandfather must have helped him to garner special treatment by the imperial court for his family. As a scholarly monk with a talent for popular preaching, Seikaku was very successful in establishing his career as a monk in the upper echelons of lofty Mount Hiei, but his life was also unabashedly entangled in the daily affairs of court, clan, and family in downtown Kyoto.

2. The Ken'ei Persecution and Seikaku's Relationship with Hōnen's Followers

As the author of the *Yuishinshō* clearly promoting nembutsu practice, and with his openly-married lifestyle, one might think that Seikaku would

be a staunch Pure Land advocate and preacher, similar to Hōnen, Shinran, and other Jōdo and Jōdo Shinshū priests who had left Mt. Hiei. Seikaku's *Yuishinshō* clearly demonstrates his profound understanding of Hōnen's teaching, and there is no doubt that, personally, Seikaku was deeply committed to Hōnen's *senju nembutsu* practice. But Hōnen's teaching is not clearly reflected in Seikaku's public life.

Certainly, Seikaku had a very close relationship with Hōnen while the master was alive. However, historians have cast doubts about his relationship with Hōnen's other disciples, which become strained after the Ken'ei government persecution of the *senju nembutsu* practice in 1207.²¹ Historical records suggest that Seikaku tried to intervene in the persecution, and that he provided assistance to many of Hōnen's followers. Prior to the persecution, in 1204, Seikaku had written the *Sōsanmon kishōmon* 送山門起請文 to the Tendai administrators on behalf of Hōnen to defend his promotion of nembutsu practice as not inconsistent with traditional Tendai practice.²² Seikaku may also have used his personal connections not only with the imperial court but also with the other Buddhist schools.²³ Jōkei 貞慶 (1155-1213), who wrote the *Kōfukuji Petition* (*Kōfukuji sōjō* 興福寺奏狀, 1205) requesting the government to ban Hōnen's *senju nembutsu* practice, was also a grandson of Shinzei, and Seikaku was his cousin.²⁴ However, Seikaku was not able to prevent the imperial court from sentencing Hōnen to be defrocked and banished from Kyoto. When Hōnen's major disciples regrouped and cautiously began promoting Hōnen's Pure Land teaching after the death of their master in 1212, there is no evidence that Seikaku actively participated in this revival

of the *senju nembutsu* practice.²⁵

3. Seikaku's Writing of the *Yuishinshō*

Although it seems Seikaku did not advocate Hōnen's teaching in public within his official duties, he made at least one very significant contribution to the promotion of Hōnen's *senju nembutsu* practice with his text titled *Yuishinshō* (Essentials of Faith Alone) composed in 1221. In this work, Seikaku summarizes the significant doctrinal issues of Hōnen's teaching and defends the *senju nembutsu* practice. He focuses on the notion of single practice, defining it and then citing the Chinese master Shan-tao on the merits of this practice:

In this gate of birth through the nembutsu, moreover, two practices are distinguished: single practice and sundry practice. Single practice is to perform simply the one practice of the nembutsu, awakening the aspiration for the land of bliss and the faith of entrusting to the Primal Vow, never mixing any other practices whatsoever with it. To say the Name of Amida only and think wholeheartedly on this one Buddha, never upholding other formulas or thinking on other Buddhas and bodhisattvas, is called single practice. ... Master Shan-tao declared: "Among those who abandon the single practice and incline toward the sundry, not one in a thousand can be born; among those of single practice, a hundred in a hundred, a thousand in a thousand, can be born." (*Collected Works of Shinran* [hereafter *CWS*], p. 688-689)²⁶

Further on in the text, Seikaku states that the mind entrusting Amida Buddha is the right cause of realization of enlightenment:

The Buddha's power is without limits; even the person deeply burdened with karmic evil is never too heavy. The Buddha's wisdom is without bounds; even those whose minds are distracted and self-indulgent are never rejected. The mind of trust alone is essential. There is no need to consider anything else. (CWS, p. 693)²⁷

He emphasizes that the virtue of the *nembutsu* practice supersedes the virtues of observing the precepts, because when practitioners say the *nembutsu* they are not induced by the defiled mind but are guided by Amida's Primal Vow.

The five precepts are acts of defiled beings; the *nembutsu* is a virtue of undefilement. In the five precepts no help from the Buddha's Vow is found, but we are guided to saying the *nembutsu* by Amida's Primal Vow. The virtue of the *nembutsu*, moreover, is superior to even the ten precepts and surpasses all the good of the three worlds. How much more does it surpass the scant good of the five precepts? Evil karma does not obstruct even the five precepts, it can never be an obstacle to birth (CWS, p.695-696).²⁸

Thus, Seikaku's ideas regarding the *nembutsu* closely aligned with the teachings promoted by Hōnen and Shinran.

There is a very interesting historical episode behind Seikaku's writing of this text. In Shinran's manuscript copy of the *Yuishinshō*, Shinran notes that Seikaku finished this text on the fourteenth day of the eighth month of 1221. This was only about one month after Gotoba-in and his forces lost their battle against the Kamakura army in the Jōkyū Disturbance. Gotoba-in was exiled to Oki no shima 隠岐島 in the seventh month and died there in 1239. This must have been a painful setback for Seikaku who was popular in the imperial court as Gotoba-in's spiritual consultant. Although he was not charged for treason as were others of his close associates in the imperial court, he was released from official duties as a Tendai monk for about one year. Taira Masayuki speculates that Seikaku wrote the *Yuishinshō* out of remorse for continuing to help Gotoba-in, who had exiled Hōnen during the Jōgen persecution. Gotoba-in himself became a devout nembutsu practitioner until he died in exile.²⁹ The text of the *Yuishinshō*, however, is a straight-forward discussion of the essentials of Hōnen's teaching, and there is nothing that explicitly suggests it was written as a response to a personal spiritual crisis or that of possible readers.

The ideas found in the *Yuishinshō* clearly show that Seikaku agreed with Hōnen's teaching and the nembutsu movement. However, merely six years later, Seikaku would sign a petition seeking to suppress the nembutsu practitioners. The question is, what changed for Seikaku so that he later he no longer supported the movement?

4. The Karoku Persecution and Seikaku's "Distant" Relationship with Hōnen's Followers

In 1227, a mob of Tendai monks destroyed Hōnen's mausoleum and desecrated his tomb. In the same year, in the Karoku Persecution, many of Hōnen's disciples, including Ryūkan 隆寛 (1148-1227), Kōsai 幸西 (1163-1247), and Kūamidabutsu 空阿弥陀仏 (?-1228), who had been propagating the *senju nembutsu* practice in Kyoto and its vicinities, were exiled.³⁰ The woodblocks for printing the *Senjakushū*, first published in 1211, were confiscated and destroyed.³¹ However, Seikaku does not seem to have intervened in this persecution of Hōnen's disciples as he had during the Ken'ei persecution. In fact, according to Taira's examination of the records of the Karoku persecution found in the *Kinkōshū* 金綱集, Seikaku was one of five major Tendai administrators who petitioned the imperial court to suppress the resurgence of the *senju nembutsu* practice.³²

It is not clear why Seikaku decided to participate in the petition to the imperial court. However, we should also note that despite the strong rhetoric against the *senju nembutsu* practice in historical documents, Shōkū 証空 (1177-1247), one of Hōnen's major disciples, was spared. Also, although Ryūkan, Kōsai, and Kūamidabutsu were exiled, none of these three major figures was actually arrested.³³ While they had to stay away from the Kyoto and Kamakura areas, there is no evidence that they disavowed their faith in the *senju nembutsu* practice. Rather, they continued promoting Hōnen's teaching wherever they went. It is also doubtful that the imperial court was even capable of enforcing the order or

even had the will to do so. It seems that the imperial court saw the problem of the *senju nembutsu* as part of on-going internal fights within the Tendai school. In fact, the records show that the imperial court also censured the Tendai attack on Hōnen's grave and specifically requested the Tendai administrators not to attack the *senju* practitioners.³⁴

Taira's readings of the historical documents are very accurate, and he shows that Seikaku was on the side of the Tendai's anti-*senju nembutsu* administrators. However, Taira seems to downplay the imperial court's strong sentiment against the rogue Tendai monks known for their disregard of the authority of the court.³⁵ It seems that the imperial court did not uncritically support only the Tendai side but sought to curb both sides as necessary. It is also noteworthy that the "sole" practice of *nembutsu* was allowed as long as people refrained from using the word *senju* (exclusive practice). Thus, some of Hōnen's followers in Kyoto adopted more acceptable words used by the traditional Buddhist schools, such as *fudan nembutsu* 不断念仏 (perpetual practice of *nembutsu*), even though what they were really doing was *senju nembutsu*.³⁶

After the Karoku persecution, Seikaku remained active as a Tendai scholar and as the head of the Agui lineage of preaching until he died in 1235 at the age of sixty-nine. There are no records showing that he ever publicly proclaimed his devotion to Hōnen's *senju* practice. When he passed away, the memorial services following his funeral were officiated in accordance with the protocol of Tendai esotericism (*taimitsu* 台密).³⁷ There is also no mention of the *senju nembutsu* practice in his preaching recorded in the *Gensenshū* 言泉集, a collection of Agui-ryū preaching

texts.³⁸ Although at this time Hōnen's *senju nembutsu* practice was still officially banned in Kyoto, it is also clear that Seikaku did not maintain close relationships with Hōnen's followers especially after the Karoku persecution in 1227.

5. Shinran's View of Seikaku: Hints from the "Postscript" to the *Kyōgyōshinshō*

Above we have reviewed Seikaku's changing relationship with the early nembutsu movement while also noting that Shinran throughout his life held a positive view of Seikaku. Here we turn to examine Shinran's view of Seikaku more closely. Why did Shinran continue to consider Seikaku to be a person of deep nembutsu faith even though Seikaku remained a Tendai monk and participated in the persecution of Hōnen's followers? In order to show how Shinran viewed Seikaku, I examine the "Postscript" to the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, which does not explicitly mention Seikaku but contains phrases and interpretations that demonstrate Shinran's appraisal of events and ideas directly associated with Seikaku.

To begin, I focus on Shinran's statements about a certain historical event, namely the Ken'ei (or, in Shinran's writings, Jōgen) Persecution. The basic facts of the Ken'ei Persecution were not in dispute at the time—nor are they in question today. To recap, in 1205 monks of the Kōfukuji sent a petition to the imperial court demanding that the *senju nembutsu* movement be suppressed. A scandal involving two of Hōnen's disciples and several court ladies was discovered in 1206. In 1207, Gotoba-in issued an order to exile Hōnen and many of his followers, including Shinran, and the

two involved in the scandal were executed (whether the Kōfukuji petition or the scandal was the actual cause of the order against Hōnen's group is debated).³⁹ However, Shinran's description of the events contains an idiosyncratic element. In this well-known passage, Shinran begins by naming those responsible for the persecution:

Monks of Śākyamuni's tradition in the various temples, however, lack clear insight into the teaching and are ignorant of the distinction between true and provisional; and scholars of the Chinese classics in the capital are confused about practices and wholly unable to differentiate right and wrong paths. Thus, scholar-monks of Kofuku-ji presented a petition to the retired emperor (Gotoba-in, personal name Takanari) in the first part of the second month, 1207 (the reigning emperor, Tsuchimikado-in, personal name Tamehito).

The emperor and his ministers, acting against the dharma and violating human rectitude, became enraged and embittered. As a result, Master Genkū—the eminent founder who had enabled the true essence of the Pure Land to spread vigorously [in Japan]—and a number of his followers, without receiving any deliberation of their [alleged] crimes, were summarily sentenced to death or were dispossessed of their monkhood, given [secular] names, and consigned to distant banishment. I was among the latter. Hence, I am now neither a monk nor one in worldly life. For this reason, I have taken the term Toku [“stubble haired”] as my name. Master Genkū and his disciples, being banished to the provinces in different directions, passed

a period of five years [in exile] (CWS, p. 289).⁴⁰

Shinran names the monks of the Kōfukuji, the retired emperor Gotoba-in, and the reigning emperor, Gotoba's son, Tsuchimikado 土御門 (1196-1231, r. 1198-1210). He then notes the anger of the imperial court and the execution and exile of the Pure Land monks, which seems to be a recognition of the 1206 scandal. Finally, he states that the persecution is the reason why he now calls himself "neither a monk nor one in worldly life." Here what is strange is the inclusion of Tsuchimikado. Recollections of the event typically focus on Gotoba-in as the person who gave the order. Although Tsuchimikado was enthroned already, he was only 11 years old at the time. Why did Shinran specifically make a special parenthetical note to include Tsuchimikado?

Shinran composed the "Postscript" to the *Kyōgyōshinshō* several decades after the Ken'ei Prosecution of 1207, with the vantage point of historical hindsight. The Jōkyū Disturbance of 1221 had already occurred, as well as the Karoku Persecution. In losing the Jōkyū Disturbance, Gotoba-in was exiled to Oki-no-shima and died there in 1239. Although Tsuchimikado-in (he had retired in 1210) was not a co-conspirator of the Jōkyū Disturbance, he too was exiled and sent to Awa 阿波 province in Shikoku, dying there in 1231. By purposefully including the name of Tsuchimikado, who was not a major figure in the Ken'ei persecution, together with Gotoba, Shinran evokes for the reader the image of the father and son exiled emperors. That is, Shinran seems to make a subtle equation of what happened to Hōnen and his disciples with the fate of

Gotoba and Tsuchimikado. While this subtle reference is not readily apparent to modern day readers, the effect would not have been lost on readers at the time—not unlike referencing “Charles and Diana” or “Bush-Gore” today. Even decades after these events, the simple evocation of names brings to mind the entirety of the past.

What is perhaps further curious about this passage is that, although Shinran is discussing the persecution of the nembutsu practitioners, he does not mention the second persecution—the Karoku Persecution. He does not mention it elsewhere in the “Postscript,” or in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, nor anywhere else in his entire corpus. There is never any blame assigned to Seikaku. Taira’s research has shown that Seikaku’s relationship with the nembutsu movement was complicated, and this would seem to suggest that Shinran should have distanced himself from Seikaku and perhaps somewhere in his writings at least noted the unfortunate events of 1227. Instead, Shinran seems to consciously refuse to bring up the Karoku Persecution. Taira has suggested that Shinran may not have known about it. But I find it difficult to believe that during the decades after the event Shinran would never have learned about it from other nembutsu practitioners in Kyoto. Rather, below in the conclusion, I offer an alternative view on why Shinran avoided mentioning the Karoku Persecution.

Before presenting this alternative view, however, it is necessary to consider Shinran’s view of Seikaku. We know from Shinran’s *Yuishinshō mon’i* that he highly valued Seikaku’s work and nembutsu thought. In the “Postscript” to the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, we can additionally see something of how Shinran valued Seikaku as a person. In the “Postscript,” Shinran quotes

two significant passages from Seikaku's *Yuishinshō*. First, the relevant portion from the "Conclusion" of the *Yuishinshō* is as follows:

Although there are many important doctrines concerning the nembutsu, they can be summarized in the preceding way. Some people who read this will surely ridicule it. Nevertheless, both belief and slander will become a cause for each one's birth in the Pure Land. With the pledges of friendship in this life—brief as a dream—to guide us, we tie the bonds for meeting before enlightenment in the coming life. If I am behind, I will be guided by others; If I go first, I will guide others. Becoming true friends through many lives, we bring each other to the practice of the Buddha-way, and as true teachers in each life, we will together sunder all delusion and attachment (CWS, p. 697).⁴¹

これをみんな、さだめてあざけりをなさんか。しかれども、信・謗とも
に因として、みなまさに浄土に生るべし。今生ゆめのうちのちぎりをし
るべとして、来世さとりのみへの縁をむすばんとなり。われおくれば人
にみちびかれ、われさきだたば人をみちびかん。生々に善友となりてた
がひに仏道を修せしめ、世々に知識としてともに迷執をたたん⁴²。

Shinran, in his "Postscript," directly copies this wording from Seikaku. Shinran's "Postscript" reads:

Therefore, I have selected [passages expressing] the core of the Pure Land way and gathered here its essentials. Mindful solely of the profundity of the Buddha's benevolence, I pay no heed to the derision

of others. May those who see and hear this work be brought—either through the cause of reverently embracing the teaching or through the condition of [others'] doubt and slander of it—to manifest shinjin within the power of the Vow and reveal the incomparable fruit of enlightenment in the land of peace.

これによりて、真宗の詮を鈔し、浄土の要を撫ふ。ただ仏恩の深きことを念うて、人倫の嘲りを恥ぢず。もしこの書を見聞せんもの、信順を因とし、疑謗を縁として、信樂を願力に彰し、妙果を安養に顯さんと⁴³。

The “Postscript” continues with a new section citing *Passages on the Land of Happiness*:

I have collected true words to aid others in their practice for attaining birth, in order that the process be made continuous, without end and without interruption, by which those who have been born first guide those who come later, and those who are born later join those who were born before. This is so that the boundless ocean of birth-and-death be exhausted (CWS, p. 291).⁴⁴

真言を採り集めて、往益を助修せしむ。いかんとなれば、前に生れんものは後を導き、後に生れんひとは前を訪へ、連続無窮にして、願はくは休止せざらしめんと欲す。無辺の生死海を尽さんがためのゆゑなりと⁴⁵。

Although the English translations are somewhat different, a comparison of the original Japanese makes it clear that Shinran has adopted these phrases from Seikaku.

Shinran's adoption of these phrases at the end of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* reveals that Shinran agreed deeply with Seikaku concerning the meaning of nembutsu practice and the relationship between nembutsu practitioners. Each person must deal with the problem of "belief and slander," both within oneself and from others. Yet both are a cause of birth in the Pure Land. Through our complex interactions with others, encountering both belief and slander, some guide and lead us, while we become guides for others. It is this deep appreciation for Seikaku's faith in the Pure Land path, and the genuineness of Seikaku's regard for Hōnen's teaching that is seen also in the *Yuishinshō*, that is the main factor for Shinran in his view of Seikaku.

One final note regarding Shinran's appreciation of Seikaku will further reinforce this assessment. In addition to the *Yuishinshō*, Shinran had also copied Seikaku's "Eulogy" (*Seikaku hōin hyōbyakumon* 聖覚法印表白文), in which Seikaku expresses his devotion to Hōnen during the thirteenth memorial service for Hōnen. Shinran probably copied this text in 1235, the year of Seikaku's death, and from this time Shinran's trust in Seikaku never faltered.⁴⁶ The "Eulogy" also had a significant impact on Shinran, who cited it not only in *Notes on the Inscriptions on Sacred Scrolls* (*Songō shinzō meimon* 尊号真像銘文) but also used its closing lines within the "Ondokusan" 恩徳讃, one of the most popular Japanese Hymns (*Wasan* 和讃). In fact the most powerful imagery of the "Ondokusan," of our repaying our debt of gratitude to our true teachers "even to the breaking of our bodies," "even to our bones becoming dust," is taken directly from Seikaku's "Eulogy."⁴⁷ For Shinran, with this knowledge of Seikaku's character as a firm follower

of Hōnen and a man of deep faith, Seikaku's later actions to suppress Hōnen's followers may not have been very concerning, especially in the light of certain mitigating factors in Shinran's own life.

Conclusion

Why did Shinran to the end of his life continue to admire Seikaku, who had acted against other of Hōnen's disciples in Kyoto? As we have seen above, Shinran considered Seikaku to be a person who deeply respected Hōnen and had a genuine faith in Amida's Vow. How, then, did Shinran view the Karoku Persecution? There are no documents that record Shinran's view of this persecution, but the fact that Shinran himself never said anything about it speaks volumes about his appraisal: it was not a significant event. In discussing the Karoku Persecution above, we also noted that it was not actually a very serious persecution. Nembutsu propagators were not arrested; their activities were simply curtailed.

Although Seikaku had signed the petition against the nembutsu movement, Shinran may not have considered this to be a significant mark against Seikaku. After all, Shinran too had had to quell certain activities and attitudes among his own followers, even to the point of disowning his own son Zenran. Shinran knew that among the people who counted themselves as followers of Hōnen, some taught versions of nembutsu practice mixed with other ideas and practices (as had Zenran). Shinran may have thought that Seikaku was perfectly justified in seeking to curb excesses among the followers in Kyoto. Thus, although Taira Masayuki has tried to portray Seikaku as something of a Tendai traitor to the nembutsu

movement, it seems highly unlikely that Shinran would have agreed with this portrayal. Indeed, Shinran may have been indebted to Seikaku not only for the profound ideas and beautiful literary phrases borrowed from the *Yuishinshō* and “Eulogy,” but also in more practical ways. The example of a high-ranking Tendai monk like Seikaku living at home with his family may have made it easier for a low-ranking monk like Shinran to return to Kyoto and do the same. In light of this precedent, Shinran’s decision to live with his own family may not have been particularly unusual. Finally, when Shinran had to suppress some of his own followers—even to the devastating step of disowning his own son—perhaps he was able to draw some solace from the example of Seikaku, who through his faith and belief in the nembutsu movement had nevertheless had to take the responsibility to also curb and slander some fellow disciples. In these life experiences, Shinran and Seikaku were remarkable similar.

Shinran closes the “Postscript” with the following passage from the *Garland Sutra* (*Kegon-kyō* 華嚴經):

A verse of the *Garland Sutra* states:

On seeing a bodhisattva
Perform various practices,
Some give rise to a good mind and others a mind of evil,
But the bodhisattva embraces them all (*CWS*, p. 292).⁴⁸

It is not clear why Shinran chose this particular citation to end the *Kyōgyōshinshō*. The same passage is also cited in the conclusion of

Genshin's *Ōjōyōshū*,⁴⁹ and it is often said that Shinran might have simply borrowed it from Genshin. But I would like to suggest—highly tentatively—that Shinran, after having quoted from Seikaku extensively in the “Postscript,” may have had Seikaku in mind. This “bodhisattva” could very well be an image of Seikaku, who as a Tendai monk had to performed various practices and undertake various actions. His actions may have led to a good mind for some and an evil mind for others—belief and slander—but until the end he remained at heart a true disciple of Honen and supporter of the message of Amida's Vow.

Notes

- 1 I am grateful to Lisa Grumbach for her meticulous editing and many helpful comments while updating the reference material and rewriting this essay.
- 2 See, Shinzui, *Myōgi shingyōshū*, in Etō Chōei, ed., *Bukkyō koten sōsho* (Kyoto: Chūgai Shuppan, 1924), p. 57. A similar story is also found in the *Hōnen Shōnin gyōjō ezu* (*Shijūhachikanden*), an official biography of Hōnen within Jōdo Shū tradition (Ikawa Jōkei, ed., *Hōnen Shōninden zenshū* [Osaka: Hōnen Shōninden Zenshū Kankōkai, 1961], p. 80). See also Taira Masayuki, *Shinran to sono jidai* [Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2001], p. 171-172). Shinran also make notes that Seikaku called Hōnen's Pure Land teaching is “my Pure Land school” (*waga Jōdo shū* わが浄土宗) and praises Hōnen as his “great teacher and master” (*waga daishi shōnin* わが大師聖人) in the *Songō shinzō meimon* (*Notes on the Inscription on Sacred Scrolls*). See *Jōdo Shinshū seiten zensho* [hereafter *Seiten Zensho*], vol. 2 [Kyoto: Hongwanji Shuppansha, 2011], p. 646, and the *Collected Works of Shinran* [hereafter *CWS*], [Kyoto: Hongwanji Shuppansha, 1997], p. 515-516).
- 3 *Mattōshō*, 19 (*Seiten Zensho*, vol. 2, p. 806; *CWS*, p. 551); *Shinran Shōnin goshōsokushū*, 6, 8, 11, 12 (*Seiten Zensho*, vol. 2, p. 828, 832-833, 840, and 843; *CWS*, p. 559, 561-562, 567, 569); and *Shinran Shōnin kechimiyaku monjū*, 2 (*Seiten Zensho*, vol. 2, p. 876; *CWS*, p. 551). Four copies of Shinran's

manuscripts of the *Yuishinshō* are currently extant. In the oldest copy, Shinran makes a note saying he was able to get hold of Seikaku's original manuscript in 1230, at which time Shinran was most likely still in the Eastern regions (Kantō). For the bibliographic information about these manuscripts, see Hiramatsu Reizō's notes on the *Yuishinshō* in *Zōho Shinran Shōnin sinseki shūsei*, vol. 10 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2007), 364-382.

- 4 See Taira, *Shinran to sono jidai*, p. 213.
- 5 For the development of Agui-ryū, see Sekiyama Kazuo, *Sekkyō no rekishiteki tenkai* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1973), p. 50-65; Komine Kazuaki, "Agui no hōe shōdō sekai: Chōken to Seikaku wo chūshinni," in *Chūsei hōe bungeiron* (Tokyo: Kasama Shoten, 2009), p. 115-278; Andō Dairyū, "Aguiryū shōdō no hani: Sono taiki no tayōsei nit suite," *Beppu daigaku kiyō*, 28 (1987), p. 11-15.
- 6 For the life of Shinzei and the legacy of his descendants, see Ichiko Teiji, "Shinzei to sono shison," *Nihon gakushiin kiyō*, 43-3 (1987), p. 171-190; Michael Jamentz, "The Role of Fujiwara no Michinori and His Descendants in the Compilation of Shingon Mikkyō Iconography during the Insei Period," *Japanese Studies around the World*, 2008 (2009): p. 155-177 (doi/10.15055/00003702); Michael Jamentz, "Shinzei ichimon no shinzoku nettowāku to inseiki kaiga seisaku," *Rokuzon zasshū* 10 (2008), p. 3-6.
- 7 Taira Masayuki, "Karoku no hōnan to Agui Seikaku," *Nihon chūsei no shakai to Bukkyō* (Tokyo: Hanawa Shobo, 1992), p. 329-387; and Taira Masayuki, *Shinran to sono jidai*, p. 170-172.
- 8 Taira, *Nihon chūsei no shakai to Bukkyō*, p. 344-352; and Taira, *Shinran to sono jidai*, p. 193-194.
- 9 Taira, *Nihon chūsei no shakai to Bukkyō*, p. 362-365; and Taira, *Shinran to sono jidai*, p. 204.
- 10 Taira, *Nihon chūsei no shakai to Bukkyō*, p. 344; and Taira, *Shinran to sono jidai*, p. 207.
- 11 For example, Seikaku was invited to Kamakura to officiate a memorial service for Hōjō Masako 北条政子 (1157-1225) in 1227. See Taira, "Karoku no hōnan to Agui Seikaku," p. 329-387; Komine, *Chūsei hōe bungeiron*, p. 218-224.
- 12 The downtown residence (*satobō* 里坊) of the Agui-ryū lineage was officially a detached villa of Enryakuji Chikurinjin on Mt. Hiei. Until late Kamakura period, the residence was most likely in Higashiyama Shirakawa

- area near the current Chionin temple. Although the exact location is not known, the Agui-ryū's residence was also known to exist until the Ōnin War in present Kamigyō ward in Kyoto. See Komine Kazuaki, *Chūsei hōe bungeiron*, p. 118, note 6.
- 13 For Chōken's life and works, see Komine Kazuaki, *Chūsei hōe bungeiron*, p. 115-194.
- 14 Ichiko, "Shinzei to sono shison," p. 175.
- 15 Ichiko, "Shinzei to sono shison," p. 178-189.
- 16 Komine Kazuaki, "Chōken wo meguru," in Komine, *Chūsei hōe bungeiron*, p. 115-142; Sekiyama Kazuo, *Sekkyō no rekishiteki tenkai*, p. 50-65.
- 17 This does not necessarily mean that Chōken was married with one particular woman. It simply means that he recognized his children as legitimate (Komine, *Chūsei hōe bungeiron*, p. 223). A son succeeding a father was referred to as *shitei* 真弟, or *shindeshi* 真弟子 (the real disciple). For more information about the marriage of medieval Japanese Buddhist monks, see Ishida Mizumaro, *Nyobon: Hijiri no sei* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1995).
- 18 See Komine Kazuaki, "Sonogo no Agui: *Ubō mondōshō* kara," in Komine, *Chūsei hōe bungeiron*, p. 267-278; and Sekiyama, *Sekkyō no rekishiteki tenkai*, p. 56.
- 19 Ishida, *Nyobon: Hijiri no sei*, p. 73-74; and Nasu Eisho, "Amenoshita ni morite kikoyuru kotomo ari: *Imamonogatari* ni katarareta Nihon chūsei no sōryō no kurashi," *Ryūkoku daigaku ronshū* 490 (2017): p. 13-15.
- 20 Komine, "Chōken wo meguru," p. 118-123.
- 21 Also known as Jōgen no hōnan 承元法難 within Jōdo Shinshū tradition since the name of the Era changed from Ken'ei to Jōgen later (10/25) in the same year and Shinran identified the year of the persecution as Jōgen 1 in the "Postscript" of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* (CWS, p. 289). For the historical evaluation of the Ken'ei persecution, see Taira Masayuki, "Ken'ei no hōnan ni tsuite," in *Nihon chūsei no shakai to Bukkyō*, p. 287-328; Taira Masayuki, "Ken'ei no hōnan no shiryōgaku," *Kamakura Bukkyō to senju nembutsu* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan), p. 263-295; Uwayokote Masataka, "Ken'ei no hōnan' ni tsuite," in Uwayokote Masataka, ed., *Kamakura jidai no kenryoku to seido* (Kyoto: Shibunkaku, 2008)
- 22 For the text of the *Sōsanmon kishōmon*, see Ishii Kyōdo and Ōhashi

- Toshio, eds., *Shōwa shinshū Hōnen shōnin zenshū* (Tokyo: Risōsha, 1955), p. 794-795; and Seiten Zensho, vol. 6, p. 265-267. Fukui Kōjun called this compromising doctrinal position in this text as “inwardly exclusive but outwardly Tendai practice” (*naisenju getendai* 内専修外天台) (Fukui Kōjun, “Hōnen den ni tsuite no nisan no mondi,” *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku kenkyū*, 5-2 [1957]: p. 239-243; Nakano Masaaki, “Hōnen to Hieizan: Sōsanmon kishōmon wo chūshin to shite,” *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku kenkyū*, 35-1 [1986]: p. 197-200).
- 23 Taira Masayuki, “Hōnen kyōdan to senju nembutsu no danatsu,” in Taira, *Kamakura Bukkyō to senju nembutsu*, p. 418, note 7.
- 24 Ichiko, “Shinzei to sono shison,” p. 179.
- 25 See Taira Masayuki, “Seikaku zō no saikentō,” in Taira, *Nihon chūsei no shakai to Bukkyō*, p. 362-374; and Taira, *Shinran to sono jidai*, p. 203-209. However, Seikaku was not completely detached from Hōnen’s followers, and he officiated Hōnen’s thirteenth memorial service at Nison’in 二尊院 temple in 1224 (Ryōchū, *Kangyōsho dentsūki*, in *Jōdoshū zensho*, vol. 2, p. 438-439). This memorial service was officiated at the request of Seikaku’s sister, Jōi 淨意, a nun residing at Nison’in at that time. For the Pure Land practice of Jōi, see Nasu Eisho, “Seikaku hōin no imōto Jōi-ni no jiseki ni tsuite,” *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 61-1 (2012): p. 63-69.
- 26 *Yuishinshō*, in *Seiten zensho*, vol. 2, p. 1088-1089.
- 27 *Yuishinshō*, in *Seiten zensho*, vol. 2, p. 1095.
- 28 *Yuishinshō*, in *Seiten zensho*, vol. 2, p. 1098-1099.
- 29 See Taira, “Senju nembutsu to chūsei kokka,” in Taira, *Nihon chūsei no shakai to Bukkyō*, p. 370-374; and Taira, *Shinran to sono jidai*, p. 210-211.
- 30 According to Taira, the historical value of the records on the Karoku persecution found in the *Kinkōshū*, compiled by the Nichiren scholar Nikō 日向 (1253-1314), has long been neglected because of the sectarian bias of researchers in the Japanese Pure Land tradition. See Taira Masayuki, “Karoku no hōnan to Agui Seikaku,” in Taira, *Nihon chūsei no shakai to Bukkyō*, p. 329-387; and Taira, *Shinran to sono jidai*, p. 168-202.
- 31 Because of the burning of the woodblocks during the Karoku persecution, there are no extant copies of the 1211 version of the *Senjakushū*. However, *Senjakushū* was published again in 1239. Most scholar agree that this edition was reproduced based on a printed copy of the 1211 book (*Seiten zensho*, vol 1.

- p. 1251: Mikuri Akio, “*Kyōgyōshinshō* no seiritsu to sono ruden nit suite,” *Ryūkokū daigaku Bukkyō bunka kenkyūsho kiyō*, 56 [2017], p. 18-19). This indirectly indicates that printed copies of the *Senjakushū* were circulating among Hōnen's disciples. More importantly, when the *Senjakushū* was reprinted again in 1239, there seems to have been no complaint from the Tendai administration even though the ban on *senju nembutsu* practice was still in effect in Kyoto.
- 32 See “Jōdoshū kenmon, ge,” in *Kinkōshū*, vol. 5. (*Nichirenshū shūgaku zensho*, vol. 13 [Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 1959], p. 215-220. See also Taira, “Karoku no hōnan to Agui Seikaku,” p. 355-356; and Taira, *Shinran to sono jidai*, p. 168-202.
- 33 Taira, “Karoku no hōnan to Agui Seikaku,” p. 340.
- 34 Taira himself notes that government persecutions against the *senju nembutsu* practice were often mere symbolic gestures by the imperial court or Kamakura shogunate to quell the grievances of the established Buddhist institutions, especially the Tendai school. See Taira Masayuki, “Kamakura Bukkyō no seiritsu to tenkai,” in Taira, *Kamakura Bukkyō to senju nembutsu*, 463-466; Taira, “Karoku no hōnan to Agui Seikaku,” p. 335; Taira Masayuki, ed., *Taikei Shinshū shiryō: Monjo kirokuhen I, Shinran to kissui kyōdan* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2015), p. 98.
- 35 See Taira, *Shinran to sono jidai*, p. 184-190.
- 36 See Nasu Eisho, “Seikaku hōin no imōto Jōi-ni no jiseki ni tsuite,” p. 67-68.
- 37 See Taira, “Karoku no hōnan to Agui Seikaku,” p. 369-370.
- 38 See Taira, *Shinran to sono jidai*, p. 208-209.
- 39 See, Rambelli, Fabio. 2004. “‘Just Behave As You Like: Prohibitions and Impurities Are Not a Problem’: Radical Amida Cults and Popular Religiosity in Premodern Japan.” In Richard K. Payne and Kenneth K. Tanaka, eds., *Approaching the Land of Bliss: Religious Praxis in the Cult of Amitābha* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press): 169-201.
- 40 *Seiten zensho*, vol. 2, p. 253-254. In this passage, notes in parentheses are Shinran's notations. Notes in square brackets are editorial additions in the CWS.
- 41 *Seiten zensho*, vol. 2, p. 1101. The last sentence of the passage is adapted by Seikaku from the *Anleji* 安樂集 by the Chinese master Daochuo 道綽

- (562-645). See also Eisho Nasu "Rely on the Meaning, Not the Words: Shinran's Methodology and Strategy for Reading Scriptures and Writing the *Kyōgyōshinshō*," in Richard K. Payne and Taigen Dan Leighton, eds, *Discourse and Ideology in Medieval Japanese Buddhism* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 241-244.
- 42 *Jōdo Shinshū seiten: Chūshakuban*, 2nd edition (Kyoto: Hongwanji Shuppansha, 2004), p. 1356.
- 43 *Jōdo Shinshū seiten: Chūshakuban*, p. 473.
- 44 *Seiten zensho*, vol. 2, p. 255.
- 45 *Jōdo Shinshū seiten: Chūshakuban*, p. 474.
- 46 Shinran was 63 when he copied the "Eulogy" and had already returned to Kyoto from Kantō by then (*Kenmonshū*, in *Seiten zensho*, vol. 2, p. 970-971. See also introduction to the text in *Seiten zensho*, vol. 2, p. 888-889).
- 47 For the *Notes on the Inscriptions on Sacred Scrolls*, see *CWS*, p. 514-517; and *Seiten zensho*, vol. 2, 643-649. The comparison of the passages from Seikaku's "Eulogy" and Shinran's "Ondokusan" are as follows:
Even to your bones becoming dust, then, should you repay it; even to the breaking point of your body should it be returned: Realizing the vastness of the benevolence of the great master's teaching, you should endeavor to repay it, even to your bones becoming dust; strive to return it, even to the breaking of your body. Carefully study this teaching of Master Seikaku (*CWS*, p. 516-517; *Seiten zensho*, p. 648).
「粉骨可報之摧身可謝之」といふは、大師聖人の御をしへの恩徳のおもきことをしりて、骨を粉にしても報ずべしとなり、身を摧きても恩徳を報ふべしとなり。よくよくこの和尚（聖覚）のこのをしへを御覧じしるべしと。（*Jōdo Shinshū seiten: Chūshakuban*, p. 670）

"Ondokusan" (*Shōzomatsu wasan* 59):

Such is the benevolence of Amida's great compassion,

That we must strive to return it, even to the breaking of our bodies;

Such is the benevolence of the masters and true teachers,

That we must endeavor to repay it, even to our bones becoming dust (*CWS*, p. 412; *Seiten zensho*, p. 498)

如来大悲の恩徳は 身を粉にしても報ずべし

Belief and Slander: Seikaku Hōin (1167-1235) in Shinran's Work and Life

師主知識の恩徳も ほねをくだきても謝すべし (*Jōdo Shinshū seiten: Chūshakuban*, p. 610)

48 *Seiten zensho*, vol. 2, p. 256.

49 *Ōjōyōshū*, in *Seiten zensho*, vol. 1, p. 1243-1244.