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Was shinjitsu shinjin of Shinran sudden experience

Whereas East Asian Buddhism embraced the rhetoric of having a „sudden path“, Tibetan Buddhism is more comfortable with the traditional gradual approach. Do you think that Awakening might be gradual or sudden? What is your view on this?

According to Shinran Shonin the true shinjin is the rarest thing of all rare things in this world. Shinjin is a very advanced level of the Satori world. As a direct inheritor of Sakyamuni's teachings, that is of Amida's teachings, Shinran from his childhood worked hard and practised diligently in a Tendai monastery. He was very dedicated to his study but after twenty years of demanding monastic life he understood that he wouldn't get anywhere on his path to enlightenment observing other monks who taught the Dharma rules by day and by night indulged in earthly pleasures at the foot of Hiei mountain. Despite his determination he was affraid that he might never experience enlightenment this way. He spent one hundred days in seclusion, and in meditation he saw Kanon who advised him to find Master Honen and to practise according to his directions. After he left monastic life, he found Honen and became his disciple. Only leading a life according to Honen's teaching of Nembutsu was he able to feel that he was on the right path. When I read about his development towards Satori, I see that his enlightenment couldn't be sudden; it was really based on diligent practice and study.

Shinran, moreover, by his contemporary was considered to be reincarnation of Ananda – a direct disciple of Sakyamuni Buddha, who lived about 1700 years before Shinran. Thus, assuming the above to be true, it took Shinran 1700 years to discover and understand the deepest meaning of Sakyamuni's teaching, and to enter the stream of the Primal Vow of Amida Buddha. Surely, therefore, this path can't be called easy. To meet Amida Dharma we have to practise for as long as eternity. According to Sakyamuni's OGONGE, „Oh bodhisattvas, you need to serve different Buddhas, practise in numerous Pure Lands, bow with respect to each Sambhogakaya, to – when you are experienced – return here to my realm(...)“. In the Japanese original, „BU JI OKU NYO RAI HI KE HEN SHO SETSU KU GYO KAN GI KO GEN TO AN NYO KOKU“ (part 20 of OGONGE).

Everything what is great and irreversible must have a high price.

The price is a never-ending chain of incarnations dedicated to Dharma and practice. As Master Shan Tao says in KISAMBOGE, this training lasts kalpas – „ Those who have completed the practice lasting kalpas, and those who have not completed it yet(...)“ or in the Japanese original, „JI KO MAN MI MAN CHI GYO EN MI EN SHO JI JIN MI JIN JUK-KE MO MI MO“ (part 5 of KISAMBOGE).

Possibly the interpretation of sudden enlightenment results from the fact that people tend to forget about the spiritual heritage of previous incarnations because they don't see or remember it at present.

The transformation of the limited human mind into the Mind of the Eternal Life and Infinite Light demands a change in the stream of human mundane conditions into the Pure Ocean of the highest qualities of Amida, on the basis of the transfer of Amida's Paramitas to the human mind, and on condition of complying totally – the condition of no conditions. In my opinion, such a transformation cannot happen suddenly because the human being would simply not survive it.

The English translation on the basis of „Sutras of the Pure Land of Jodo Shinshu“ by Myoshu sensei.