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# Contemporary Perspectives on Hōnen's and Shinran's Concepts of the "Salvation of Women" (*Nyonin Ōjō*)

Simone Heidegger

## 1. The "salvation of women" in the writings of Hōnen, Shinran, and others

Thanks to Prof. Kiyohiko Fujimoto, I was able to study as a research student at the Bukkyō University from April 1989 to September 1990, which was my first trip to Japan and an exciting and enjoyable experience. Under Prof. Fujimoto's professional and kind guidance, I studied Hōnen and Pure Land Buddhism. Not only did Prof. Fujimoto encourage my academic endeavours, he and his wife also invited me to their temple and took me to other Buddhist sights. Moreover, he made it possible for me to spend two weeks in the Jōdo-shū nisō dōjō in Kyōto, a training temple for nun-priests, which was very interesting for me as I was interested in the situation of women in Buddhism.

During my studies, I came across the concept of the "salvation of women" (or "birth of women in the Pure Land" (*nyonin ōjō*)), which comes up in Hōnen's, Shinran's and others' writings. In a nutshell, this concept says that Amida Buddha also saves women, or especially saves women, who are flawed or sinful<sup>1</sup> and who are expelled from salvation in other Buddhist schools. When born in Amida's Pure Land, women will be transformed into men. For the sake of brevity, this concept is referred to as the "*nyonin ōjō* concept" hereafter.<sup>2</sup>

Here, a passage from Hōnen's Commentary on the Larger Sutra (*Muryōjūkyō-shaku*) has often been quoted: Hōnen asks why Amida Buddha, in the 35th vow, focused on women and stated that they will be reborn as men, while the vows about birth in the Pure Land already refer to men *and* women—so that it seems it would not have been necessary to address women in a particular vow.

Hōnen (1133-1212) answers this question by stating that women, because of their obstacles and flaws, are excluded by all Buddhist teachings and from the pure lands of various Buddhas. According to Hōnen, many sutras and commentaries assert that women will be reborn in hell. Hōnen here also mentions and explains women's "five obstacles and three submissions".<sup>3</sup> Moreover, Hōnen states, women are excluded from temples and temple mountains like Mount Hiei and Mount Kōya, where women are not allowed to climb up to the temple centers on the top. Thus, being excluded from all holy places, women are inclined to doubt their birth in Amida's Pure Land, and that is why Amida Buddha established the 35th vow especially for women. Hōnen, in quoting Shandao, goes on to say that women will have changed their bodies into those of men at the end of their lives and will be reborn in the Pure Land.<sup>4</sup>

Shinran (1173-1262), in two of his *wasan* (hymns) in which he refers to the Larger Sutra (*Muryōjūkyō*) and to Shandao, also states that women, who otherwise would not have the chance to change their female bodies for many aeons, are saved by Amida Buddha. Shinran here mentions the "vow of transformation into man" and speaks of "women's attainment of Buddhahood" (*nyōnin jōbutsu*).<sup>5</sup>

Later Jōdo-shū as well as Jōdo-shinshū teachers took up these ideas, too. Of the Jōdo-shū teachers, Benchō (1162-1238) and Kōa (1261-1345) are worthy of mention; for the Jōdo-shinshū, Zonkaku (1270-1351)

and Rennyō (1415-1499) are well-known examples. It is striking that in some cases the depictions of women's sinfulness and their alleged exclusion from other Buddhist teachings become more and more lengthy and elaborate over the course of time. The reasons for this seem to be the gradual increase of patriarchal gender views in Japan, for one thing, and the fact that the commentary on a commentary on a commentary on an originally short passage naturally tends to be longer than the first commentary, for another.

Kōa's *Saiyōshō* and Zonkaku's *Nyonin ōjō kikigaki*, for example, not only include many contents from Hōnen's *Muryōjukyō-shaku*, but at the same time specify women's shortcomings and "sinful karma", e.g. vanity, lust, jealousy, self-attachment, and envy.<sup>6</sup> The same can be said for the *Nyonin-kyōka-shū* (composed at the end of the Sengoku period and printed in 1717),<sup>7</sup> which is based on the *Nyonin ōjō kikigaki*, but expands on the negative characteristics assigned to women in even greater length and detail.<sup>8</sup>

As to Rennyō, a large collection of pastoral letters to congregations is extant. In many of his letters, he speaks about "women with the five obstacles and the three subordinations";<sup>9</sup> often following the expression "evildoers who have committed the ten transgressions and the five offenses." In at least two letters he mentions that women have deep sins or that they are more sinful than men.<sup>10</sup>

The *nyonin ōjō* concept is not something restricted to the past, however, something that came to an end at the end of the Tokugawa period, as some accounts seem to suggest. On the contrary, the usage and sometimes active proclamation of this concept have continued far into the 20th, and maybe even the 21st century. Some telling examples are two brochures from the 1960s published by the Ōtani-ha of the Jōdo-shinshū and designed for women readers, which equate female-

ness/womanhood with self-attachment and show a further increase in the elaboration and prolonged depiction of woman's sinfulness.<sup>11</sup> In 1997, a poster referring to Rennyo with the text *nyōnin jōbutsu* ("women's attainment of Buddhahood") was distributed to the Ōtani-ha temples in the Kyōto district for display. It was accompanied by an article with the same title in the monthly magazine.<sup>12</sup> Here, the author did not set forth negative characteristics of women, but focused on the highly stereotypical and historically untenable concept of women being excluded from salvation in other Buddhist schools.

On the other hand, many critical voices have, for some decades, spoken out about the *nyōnin ōjō* teachings and accused them of discriminating against women.<sup>13</sup>

## 2. Contemporary interpretations of the teachings on the "salvation of women"

So let us have a look at the range of contemporary interpretations of the *nyōnin ōjō* teachings.<sup>14</sup>

When examining contemporary perspectives on the traditional Buddhist gender concepts presented above, I included the perspective that it is not always easy for adherents of a religion to directly criticize statements set forth in their authoritative texts and by their venerated teachers. After all, too much criticism runs the danger of undermining the very foundation of one's own faith, and besides, it might not be welcomed by fellow adherents. On the other hand, many people today do not find statements like "women are more sinful than men" very acceptable or convincing, raising the question of how such teachings are to be understood. It is possible to view the existing interpretations of the traditional gender concepts as strategies, which give an answer to this question and which, for example, allow the wording or

the content of a problematic doctrine to be criticized, while, at the same time, maintaining a positive view of the scripture or the teacher that expounded it. Some interpretations are thoroughly apologetic from the very beginning, though, and thus not subject to tension caused by a more critical attitude.

Nakano's *Josei* and the Kyōgaku Kenkyūjo's *Nyonin jōbutsu* (both 1981) mentioned above are examples of *literal* or *verbatim* interpretations of the *nyonin ōjō* concept. This kind of interpretation has become rare in recent decades, at least in printed form.

Another way of interpreting the traditional teachings is the *symbolizing* or *allegorizing* way of understanding. Roughly summarized, such interpretations state that in the context of the *nyonin ōjō* concept the expressions “woman” (*nyonin*) or womanhood/femaleness (*nyoninshō*) do not refer to actual women, but to human sinfulness in both sexes, in women as well as in men. As “woman” is understood to be representative of human beings in general, it is argued, the descriptions of woman’s sinfulness do not intend to denigrate women. Although some of these accounts seem to try to relativize overly drastic assignments of negative characteristics to women, it is obvious that the association of femaleness with sinfulness and of maleness with salvation is maintained and sometimes reinforced.<sup>15</sup> A special form of symbolizing interpretation is the *jikakugo* interpretation. According to this view, everyone regardless of their gender should consider themselves to be a “sinful woman” or a “woman burdened with the five obstacles and three subordinations” without any comparison or analysis, just as everybody should be aware (*jikaku*) of themselves as an evil person (*akunin*).<sup>16</sup>

Let’s now turn to *historicizing* perspectives: A very influential view of the *nyonin ōjō* concept, which embeds it into history, was pre-

sented by the historian Kasahara Kazuo in 1975.<sup>17</sup> Kasahara argues that in Hōnen's time as well as in the centuries before, the official Buddhist temples and the educated monks did not include women in religious practices and salvation. While within folk Buddhism, the idea that women can be reborn in the Pure Land did exist (as can be seen from the *ōjō-den*-literature), the educated monks lived in secluded temples apart from the people and did not have any contact with women. They did not see women as qualified for enlightenment or birth in the Pure Land and did not even raise the question of women's salvation. Women were not permitted access to the sacred precincts. It was the famous founders of "New Kamakura Buddhism"—first Hōnen, and then also Shinran, Nichiren, and Dōgen—who for the first time started to teach the salvation of women and to preach to women and include them in the religious activities they recommended. Their successors continued to do so, and sometimes set forth not only that women, too, can be born in Amida's Pure Land, but even that Amida Buddha saves women in the first place (*nyonin shōki*).

Kasahara's depiction of the founders' *nyonin ōjō* concepts includes the ideas of woman's sinfulness and the transformation of the female body into the male form, but Kasahara does not address the question of problematic aspects. However, by contrasting the *nyonin ōjō* concepts with a background in which women (allegedly) were not considered capable of attaining salvation at all, a very positive light is shed on these concepts.

Kasahara's approach was very influential in the Jōdo-shū as well in the Jōdo-shinshū in the following years and decades.

Historicizing approaches in general may imply or openly suggest a relativizing perspective—the *nyonin ōjō* teachings were meaningful in former times, but do not have a transhistorical meaning—as is

indeed the case with many authors (see below). In contrast, according to Kasahara's account, the *nyonin ôjô* approach can be understood in such a positive way that it is considered to be very valuable even for today. So, the above-mentioned article in the newsletter of the Kyôto district of the Ôtani-ha that accompanied the poster that was designed for display is very enthusiastic about the *nyonin ôjô* / *nyonin jôbutsu* concept. The author, Sakado Hiromu, closely follows Kasahara's arguments, but goes even further by asserting that in Rennyo's time and even up to the Meiji period (1868-1912), women were excluded by other Buddhist schools.<sup>18</sup>

From the end of the 1980s onwards, Kasahara's theory was strongly rejected by Taira Masayuki and other historians.<sup>19</sup> Taira argued that Kasahara's view was mainly based on Hônen's *Muryôjukyô-shaku*, which Kasahara had mistakenly taken at face value. Besides, not only did Kasahara take Hônen's account for an objective description of the situation of Buddhist women in Hônen's time, he also projected this description back onto the Nara and Heian periods. Taira pointed out that Hônen's depiction of the situation of women was correct only up to a point: It is true that, from 8th-9th century onwards, the status of Buddhist nuns (whose number had been high and who had been almost equal to the monks in the first centuries after the introduction of Buddhism in Japan) gradually declined; their number decreased, and from the 9th century onwards official ordination of nuns became less frequent and finally took place hardly ever. It is also true that a number of temples (among them Mount Kôya and Mount Hiei) did not allow the entrance of women. On the other hand, however, self-ordained nuns existed even in the Heian period. Besides, in Hônen's time and in the centuries before, educated monks did have contact with women, for example, via ceremonies conducted for aristocratic women. There



were also temples that accepted women pilgrims. And those temples that refused entrance to women sometimes held rituals for women at a place outside the temple precincts.<sup>20</sup>

According to Taira, Kasahara did not take into account the rhetorical-apologetic structure of the *Muryōjukyō-shaku* and the *nyonin ōjō* teachings.<sup>21</sup> Taira pointed out that the opinion that women were unable to attain salvation never existed in Japan. The salvation of women had not been particularly addressed for some centuries because nobody contested or questioned that women can attain Buddhahood or birth in the Pure Land. Statements that women cannot become a Buddha or were doomed to fall into hell etc. were always linked to statements like 'However, thanks to xyz (Amida Buddha, the Lotus-Sutra, the *kōmyō shingon* etc. respectively) even sinful woman, for whom all other paths to salvation are blocked, can be saved.' In this way, the reference to the alleged situation that every Buddhist school except one's own excludes women from salvation is a rhetorical means to highlight the superiority of one's own school.<sup>22</sup> This mode of argumentation—i.e. the *nyonin ōjō* / *nyonin jōbutsu* discourse—gradually arose in Japan from about the 9th and 10th centuries, with an increasing tendency and increasing influence in the course of time. The *nyonin ōjō* discourse was linked to notions of women's sinfulness and impurity and to the concept of the transformation of woman into man. Thus it did not improve the situation of women, but contributed to the dissemination of these disparaging views.<sup>23</sup> In that Taira identifies these elements as discriminatory towards women, his account is a criticism of the *nyonin ōjō* discourse.

Despite this criticism, Taira's account includes a positive view of Hōnen and Shinran: Taira considers the *nyonin ōjō* discourse as *not representative* in Hōnen's and Shinran's writings: In Hōnen's case, Taira

explains this view as follows: The passage from the *Muryōjūkyō-shaku* is the only place where Hōnen proclaims this discourse. While there are indeed passages in other writings commonly assigned to Hōnen, Taira does not consider them to be authentic. The *Muryōjūkyō-shaku* is one of Hōnen's early writings, in which his specific approach is not yet as developed as in his later works. At the same time, there are similar accounts of *nyonin ōjō* in earlier Pure Land writings by other authors. Moreover, the concept of the salvation of sinful woman does not appear in Hōnen's later writings, including his main work, the *Senchaku-shū*. There, we only find statements speaking of birth in the Pure Land in a gender-neutral way or asserting that salvation is independent of social status, gender etc. Moreover, in Hōnen's letters addressed to women followers as well, the *nyonin ōjō* discourse does not appear. So Taira concludes that the discriminatory *nyonin ōjō* discourse was not one of Hōnen's original or fundamental thoughts, but more a *remainder* of the influence of the Buddhism with which he became acquainted in his early years. As the *Muryōjūkyō-shaku* is based on sermons Hōnen held at the Tōdai-ji temple, it was addressed to a male audience, and so there is no evidence that Hōnen ever preached the *nyonin ōjō* teachings to women. Instead, Hōnen (as well as Shinran) assumed that women and men can be born equally in the Pure Land.<sup>24</sup>

As to Shinran, Taira argues that the references to the *nyonin ōjō* concept appear only rarely and briefly in his writings, only in the two *wasan*. Besides, they appear more as quotations than as Shinran's own creations. So in Shinran as well, the *nyonin-ōjō* discourse does not seem to be very fundamental.<sup>25</sup>

Taira's argument has also been taken up by Jōdo-shū and Jōdo-shinshū scholars and adherents.<sup>26</sup> The view that the *nyonin ōjō* discourse was not representative for Hōnen and Shinran makes it possible

to criticize the content of this concept, on the one hand, while maintaining a very positive view of the authoritative founders, on the other.

Arguments that the *nyōnin ōjō* discourse is not a representative or fundamental idea in Hōnen's, Shinran's, or Rennyo's thoughts usually indicate—as one might expect—other tenets that are to be considered fundamental instead.<sup>27</sup> This can be the teaching of the "exclusive *nenbutsu*" (*senju nenbutsu*) (by the power of which all living beings can equally be born in the Pure Land), or passages written by those founder figures stating that the practice of the *nenbutsu* or the power of Amida's Vow are not dependent on any "social" criteria like status, money, gender, age, education, intelligence etc. and that everybody can practice the *nenbutsu* (and be born in the Pure Land) as they are. This can further be the self-identification of Hōnen, Shinran, and Rennyo with lowly people at the bottom of the social strata.

Such contents are referred to as the essential contents of the founder figures' teachings including their gender concepts, and are often expanded on elaborately. The fundamental meaning of these contents is also acknowledged by those scholars or adherents who defend the more problematic *nyōnin-ōjō*-statements, too. In this a way, a sort of hierarchy of teachings develops.

What we often find in the context of historicization (and of seeing the "essential" tenets in gender-neutral and egalitarian statements) is the presentation of a kind of historical situativeness of the controversial teachings. Some proponents of this approach see the *nyōnin ōjō* concepts as a positive and valuable teaching in the time in which they developed, but at the same time recommend refraining from using these concepts today: In a time in which severe discrimination against women prevailed, the *nyōnin ōjō* concepts had a very positive meaning, but it would be counterproductive to continue to teach them today, when

women are considered to be equal and nobody doubts any longer that they can be reborn in the Pure Land. In this way, the presentation of the *nyonin ōjō* teachings “then” can be justified, and at the same time their presentation “today” can be refused or considered with caution.<sup>28</sup> Such rejection of today’s usage is not only theoretical or just related to individual decisions, it may concern liturgy: So, for example, in the *Shinshū Ōtaniha* as well as the *Jōdo-shinshū Honganji-ha*, the liturgy for women’s funerals includes or used to include Shinran’s *wasan* speaking of the transformation of woman into man upon birth in the Pure Land. Besides, Rennyo’s letters, some of them including formulations about women’s limitations and sinfulness, are liturgically read. In the *Honganji-ha*, liturgical reforms took place in the mid-1980s. They replaced the “transformation-into-a-man”-*wasan* by a gender-neutral one. This reform was carried out by the *Honganji-ha* administration in reaction to a previous report by a liturgical committee, which included the historicizing considerations mentioned above and reached the conclusion that *not* emphasizing the concept of transformation of woman into man today corresponds more to the spirit of the Pure Land Buddhist texts than the active usage of this concept.<sup>29</sup> Presumably at about the same time the “problematic” letters of Rennyo were also replaced by his gender-neutral letters or letters that address men and women on an equal basis in the main temple’s (*Nishi Honganji*’s) liturgy.<sup>30</sup>

It is interesting that in these cases the general historical considerations have often been combined with a reference to the classic Buddhist concept of “skilful means” (*hōben*), which says that the Buddhist teachings are designed to meet the diverse capabilities, needs, and situations of the respective audiences. So Buddhist teachings can be multifaceted and provisional.<sup>31</sup> According to those who apply this view to the *nyonin ōjō* teachings, these teachings had—as stated above—a

very positive function in ancient India or in medieval Japan. They were a skilful means, a pragmatic teaching (*zuigi no kyōsetsu*), adapted to the capabilities and needs of the people being addressed, but they should not be considered eternal truth or universal Buddha-Dharma.<sup>32</sup>

Other examples of historicizing approaches not only criticize their usage today but often also their usage by Hōnen, Shinran, and Rennyo. Hishiki Masaharu, for example, argues that it is not that patriarchy was the reason for Rennyo's preaching of the *nyōnin ōjō* concepts but that conversely it was Rennyo who introduced patriarchy into the Jōdo-shinshū community.<sup>33</sup> Hishiki concedes, however, that Rennyo's intention was to help women. Ukō Kikuko also makes a distinction between Shinran's and Rennyo's "true intention" (*shin'i*), on the one hand, and their *nyōnin ōjō* wordings, on the other. Just as it happens that parents with very good intentions for their children exert too much pressure on them at the same time (e.g. because they want them to achieve good results in school), a good intention does not always ensure that it is implemented in an appropriate way. In that Shinran, as far as the *nyōnin ōjō* concepts are concerned, did not go beyond the scope of what had been transmitted to him by his teachers, even Shinran is subject to limitations, according to Ukō.<sup>34</sup>

At the same time these authors elaborate on why it is not disrespectful, but possible and even necessary from a Jōdo-shinshū point of view, to have a critical attitude towards the authoritative teachers and founders.<sup>35</sup>

In the Jōdo-shinshū, the criticism of the *nyōnin ōjō* concepts stands in close relation to a broader discussion of gender discrimination which has developed since the 1980s in the Ōtani-ha and since the 1990s in the Honganji-ha. This discussion addressed mainly the situation of women priests (especially the exclusion of women from being tem-

ple chief priest in the Ōtani-ha until 1991/1996) and of male priests' wives. In this context, discriminatory attitudes in the teachings were made accountable for actual discriminatory situations in the community.<sup>36</sup>

### 3. Comparative perspectives within and beyond Buddhism

An interdenominational network of Japanese Buddhist women addressing gender discrimination has existed since the mid-1990s,<sup>37</sup> and Jodo-shinshū and Jōdo-shū women are part of it, too. So far I have not been able to study the contemporary situation of gender relations in the Jōdo-shū in detail, but it would be interesting to examine which discussions have been taking place and in what way the founder Hōnen is referred to in these discussions. It would also be interesting to find out about the Jōdo-shū attitude towards the liturgical usage of *nyonin ōjō* expressions. Unlike the Jōdo-shinshū situation, where *nyonin ōjō*-related expressions occur in Shinran's *wasan* and Rennyo's pastoral letters, which are both liturgically recited, Hōnen's *Muryōjukyō-shaku*, to my knowledge, does not play a role in liturgy. However, in some regions, the 35th vow of the Larger Sutra is part of (or used to be part of?) the liturgy of women's funerals in the Jōdo-shū. Another one of Hōnen's writings, including gender-related expressions and often occurring in liturgy is the *Ichimai-kishōmon*, which does not, however, contain any *nyonin ōjō*-related expressions.<sup>38</sup> In this short text, sometimes referred to as Hōnen's testament, Hōnen writes that practitioners of the *nenbutsu* should become like "ignorant nuns and path-enterers" (*ama nyūdo no muchi no tomogara*), which seems to state that nuns (unlike monks) are fundamentally ignorant. So the English version of the homepage of the Jōdo-shū Research Institute mentions in a footnote that "some people have interpreted this as a pejorative

statement towards women (...).<sup>39</sup> On the other hand, it can be argued that the term *nyūdō* ("path-enterers") referred to lay-monks and the term *ama* to lay-nuns (also from the background that women usually did not receive formal ordination at Hōnen's time), so that a gender-related imbalance does not exist here.

As stated above, the lack of Jōdo-shū examples for some of the interpretations mentioned here does not necessarily mean that such examples do not exist. On the other hand, the question of liturgical use in the Jōdo-shū might be different from the Jōdo-shinshū situation. Moreover, for Hōnen and Shinran, it can be argued that the *nyonin ōjō* concepts do not play a representative or fundamental role in their teachings, while for Rennyo such an argument would be more difficult to make. So the need for discussion of these concepts—be it from an apologetic or from a critical point of view—might be more significant in the Jōdo-shinshū than in the Jōdo-shū. However, this has to be examined.

I would like to conclude this article by briefly looking at comparative perspectives, including other religions: It is interesting that contemporary discourses in Islam and Christianity show many parallels to Pure Land Buddhism in regard to the hermeneutical strategies that are used when questioning, criticizing or expressing distance towards "problematic" teachings or formulations that occur in authoritative writings. To mention just one example, we can find the tendency to describe the historical "background" of one's own founder too generally as "negative" in Christianity as well. Jewish theologians, as well as Christian theologians dealing with anti-Judaistic tendencies in Christian theology, have pointed out that in many respects the historical (Jewish) background of Jesus, the environment in which he lived, was depicted in a more negative way than had actually been the case (for example,

the situation of women in Jesus' time or the figure of the pharisees) just in order to create a negative basis, a contrast, which functions to shed an all the more positive light on Jesus.<sup>40</sup> This reminds us very much of the "negative background" for Hōnen, Shinran etc. set forth by the KASAHARA line (see above). And many other parallels can be found.

### Notes

1. For the use of the term "sin" or "sinfulness" to translate or denote Pure Land Buddhist concepts, see HEIDEGGER 2010: 170-171.
2. Alternatively, the expression *nyonin jōbutsu* (women's attainment of Buddhahood) is also sometimes used in the Pure Land tradition (and even more in other traditions).
3. A standard expression that often appears in the *nyonin-ōjō*-teachings. "Five obstacles" says that women cannot become Brahma, Indra, Mara, a Chakravartin or a Buddha. When this trope is mentioned in (Mahāyāna) Buddhist texts, it is usually followed by explanations or depictions of how women can become Buddha after all, often in connection with gender transformation (see, for example, the Dragon King's daughter's attainment of Buddhahood in the Lotos Sūtra). "Three submissions" says that women have to obey their father when they are young, their husband when they are married and their son when they are old. For the origin of these expressions, see KAJIYAMA 1982.
4. ISHII Kyōdō (ed.) (1987 [1955]): 75-78.
5. *Jōdo wasan*, no. 60 (CWS I, p. 341), and *Kōsō wasan*, no. 64 (CWS I, p. 377).
6. For Zonkaku; SSZ 3, p. 109-118 (quoted also in KASAHARA 1975); for Benchō: Quoted in KASAHARA 1975: 232-235.
7. KASAHARA 1975: 344.
8. Passages of the *Nyonin kyōka-shū* are quoted in KASAHARA 1975: 344-352.
9. See letters I-7, I-10, II-1, II-8, II-10, II-15, III-1, III-5, III-7, IV-3, (V-2), V-6, V-7, V-8, V-14, V-15, V-19, V-20.
10. See letter V-7 and V-14; see HEIDEGGER 2006: 95.
11. NAKANO 1961; KYŌGAKU KENKYŪJO 1961 [1957]. See HEI-



DEGGER 2006: 103-116.

12. SAKADO 1997. See HEIDEGGER 2006: 156-158.
13. The books ŌGOSHI/MINAMOTO/YAMASHITA 1990 and TAGAMI 1992 seem to be the first critical publications that gained wide attention.
14. In my study about contemporary interpretations of the *nyōnin ōjō* teachings, I focused on Jōdo-shinshū publications (Shinshū Ōtani-ha and Jōdo-shinshū Honganji-ha, i.e. Higashi Honganji and Nishi Honganji) up to the 1990s (see HEIDEGGER 2006). For that reason, most of the authors and publications I present here (except for the historians) belong to the Jōdo-shinshū, and the lack of examples of Jōdo-shū authors for some of the interpretations discussed here does not necessarily mean that such examples do not exist. Also, recent publications could not be considered here.
15. See, for example, HIROSE 1973 (Shinshū Ōtani-ha), NISHIYAMA 1971 (Shinshū Ōtani-ha), IKEDA 1986 (Shinshū Ōtani-ha), HANAFUSA 1984 (Jōdo-shinshū Honganji-ha) (HEIDEGGER 2006: 101-129).
16. SAGAE 1997: 90-91; HATABE 1995 [1991] (both Shinshū Ōtani-ha) (HEIDEGGER 2006: 130-138.)
17. KASAHARA 1975.
18. SAKADO 1997. According to Kasahara's account, at least the Jōdo-shū, the Sōtō-shū, and the Nichiren-shū included women as well, and for the period from the 17th-19th century, Kasahara also presents a Shingon-shū version of the *nyōnin ōjō* concepts.
19. TAIRA 1990: TAIRA 1992: 394-397; 429-431 (the chapters on women and Buddhism in this book had previously been published in 1989).
20. See, for example, TAIRA 1992: 437. Evidence of the manifold ways in which women took part in Buddhist activities in the Asuka, Nara and Heian periods was provided by other historians as well, like Nishiguchi Junko, Katsura Noriko, Ushiyama Yoshiyuki, Takagi Yutaka and others.
21. TAIRA 1992: 432.
22. TAIRA 1992: 398-408; 437-442.
23. TAIRA 1992: 395-414; 437-440.
24. TAIRA 1992: 394-397.

25. TAIRA 1992: 397; 417.
26. KONDŌ 1991: 88-90 (Jōdo-shū); FUKUHARA 1991 (Jōdo-shū); TANOKURA 1991: 123 (Jōdo-shinshū Honganji-ha); in part KURIHARA 1991 (Jōdo-shinshū Honganji-ha)
27. The elements mentioned in the following can be found, for example, in TAIRA 1992; KONDŌ 1991: 90-92 (Jōdo-shū); FUKUHARA 1991: 35-40 (Jōdo-shū); MINOWA 1996: 43-48 (Shinshū Ōtani-ha); TANOKURA 1991: 123 (Jōdo-shinshū Honganji-ha); KURIHARA 1991: 73-74. (see HEIDEGGER 2006: 172-179).
28. See, for example, NAITŌ 1994, p. 40-42. (Jōdo-shinshū Honganji-ha); DENDŌ-IN TOKUTEI KADAI KENKYŪ-KAI (1993[1988]) (Jōdo-shinshū Honganji-ha); MINOWA 1995a: 39; MINOWA 1995b; MINOWA 1995c (Shinshū Ōtani-ha).
29. "Henjō nanshi ni tsuite". This paper was provided to me by Ogasawara Masahito, Jōdo-shinshū Honganji-ha shūmusho in 1996. It is analyzed in HEIDEGGER 2006: 167-171.
30. See HEIDEGGER 2006: 171 and HEIDEGGER 2010: 179 for the situation concerning liturgical reforms in the Shinshū Ōtani-ha and in the Jōdo-shinshū Honganji-ha.
31. The view that every Buddhist teaching is to be considered provisional, or a "skilful means", is also possible (see PYE 1978), but often this concept is referred to in order to distinguish between more provisional and transhistorically true teachings.
32. "Henjō nanshi ni tsuite"; DE 'DŌ-IN TOKUTEI KADAI KENKYŪ-KAI (1993[1988]): 25-26 (Jōdo-shinshū Honganji-ha); MINOWA 1995a: 40 (Shinshū Ōtani-ha).
33. HISHIKI 1998: 197-198; 207-209 (Shinshū Ōtani-ha); see also Minamoto in ŌGOSHI/MINAMOTO/YAMASHITA 1990: 141 and ŌGOSHI/MINAMOTO 1990 [1985]: 221-224.
34. UKŌ 1993: 38-39; UKŌ ca. 1998: 14-19. (Shinshū Ōtani-ha).
35. UKŌ ca. 1998: 19; HISHIKI 1998: 213-215. (Shinshū Ōtani-ha).
36. HEIDEGGER 2006.
37. See, for example, JOSEI TO BUKKYŌ TŌKAI KANTŌ NET-TOWĀKU (ed.) (1999) and other publications by the same editor.
38. ISHII 1987: 414-415; HEIDEGGER 1990.

39. <http://www.jsri.jp/English/Honen/WRITINGS/ichimai.html>
40. PLASKOW 1978 and 1991; SCHÜSSLER-FIORENZA 1983; SCHOTTROFF / WACKER (ed.) 1996.
41. HEIDEGGER 2014.

### Abbreviations

- CWS I: JŌDO SHI SHŪ HONGWANJI-HA (ed.) (1997).  
SSZ 3: SHINSHŪ SHŌGYŌ ZENSHO HENSAN-JO (ed.) (1982-1988 [1941]).

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