

**“Shinran Shonin was Humble, but was he Confident?
The Impact of Nembutsu Teachings on Our Humility and Confidence”**

親鸞聖人は謙虚だったが、自信はお持ちだった？

— 念仏の教えがもたらす謙虚さと自信 —

Hoonko Service for English Dharma Service (Online)

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1. Shinran Shonin (1173-1263) 757th Memorial service

- ① Hoonko Service = Gathering to express our gratitude for Shinran Shonin’s blessing of a teaching that resolves our spiritual liberation.
- ② Founder of the largest school in Japanese Buddhism.
- ③ Often compared to Martin Luther for having similarities:
 - 1. Once a monk/priest, and later married
 - 2. Emphasized faith and no self-centered works/practice
 - 3. Other Power or grace

2. I am attracted to the fact that he was humble. Some examples of his humility:

- ① “I do not have a single disciple.” (Tannisho, Chapter 6)
- ② I asked the Master, “Although I say the Nembutsu, I rarely experience joyful happiness nor do I have the desire to immediately go to the Pure Land. What should be done about this?”

He replied, “I, Shinran, have been having the same question also, and now you, Yuien, have the same thought, too!” (Tannisho, Chapter 9)
- ③ “Oh how sad it is that I, ignorant and stubbled-haired Shiran am wallowing in an immense ocean of desire and attachment and am lost in the vast mountain of fame and advantage.” (Kyogyoshinsho, Chapter on Shinjin)

3. The oldest Buddhist sutra called *Sutta-nipata* describes what a “sage” is in early Buddhism:
The wandering solitary sage,^[L]_[SEP]

Uncomplacent, unshaken by praise or blame.

Unstartled, like a lion at sounds.^[L]_[SEP]

Unsnared, like the wind in a net.

Unsmearing, like a lotus in water.^[L]_[SEP]

Leader of others, by others unled: The enlightened [beings] call him/her a sage.

(*Sutta-nipata*)

4. Examples of Shinran’s Confidence in his actions of going against societal norms.

① Getting married

② Disowning his son, Zenran

③ His criticism of the emperor:

He strongly criticized the Emperor, when it could have meant a severe punishment.
“The emperor and his ministers, acting against the Dharma and violating human rectitude,
became enraged and embittered.” (*Kyogyoshinsho*)

5. Yes, he was humble but also confident. The two do not conflict but are actually two sides of the same coin. His confidence stems from a deep sense of wellbeing from the assurance that he is embraced and protected.

① Think of a day in your life when you felt that sense of wellbeing, quiet joy and assurance.

② Metaphor of the “Wave and the Ocean”

③ Embraced in the assurance of Amida wisdom and compassion.

6. “Oh how happy I am. My mind and heart are planted firmly in the soil of universal Vow, and my thoughts flow in the inconceivable Dharma ocean.”