

HONEN'S ICHIMAI KISHOMON

The One-Sheet Document
DHARMA ARCHIVE ENTRY #17

The Nembutsu I have taught is not the contemplative practice that has been discussed and proclaimed by the accomplished sages of China and Japan. Neither is it to recite the Nembutsu having grasped its meaning through scholarly study. It is simply to utter "Namo Amida Butsu" realising that if you just say it, you are certain to attain birth in the Land of Bliss. Nothing else is involved.

The teachings speak of three essential attitudes, four rules of practice and so on, but these are all inherent and fulfilled in the thought that you will decidedly be born [in the Pure Land] though Namo-Amida-Butsu. If you imagine that there is some abstruse matter apart from this, you will isolate yourself from the compassion of the Two Honoured Ones, Sakyamuni and Amida, and slip through the net of the Primal Vow.

You may have carefully studied all the teachings that Sakyamuni taught during his lifetime, but if you entrust yourself to the Nembutsu, then you should – by turning yourself into a foolish person ignorant of even a single written character, and becoming the same as the unlettered women and men who take religious orders while remaining at home – simply say the Nembutsu with wholeness of heart, free from any pretensions to wisdom.

As a testimony, I seal this with the imprint of my hands.

The faith and practice taught in the Pure Land Path are exhaustively stated on this single sheet of paper. I know no special doctrine whatsoever apart from what is written here. To keep erroneous doctrines from arising after my death, I have thus recorded my thoughts.

Sealed: Genshin (Honen)