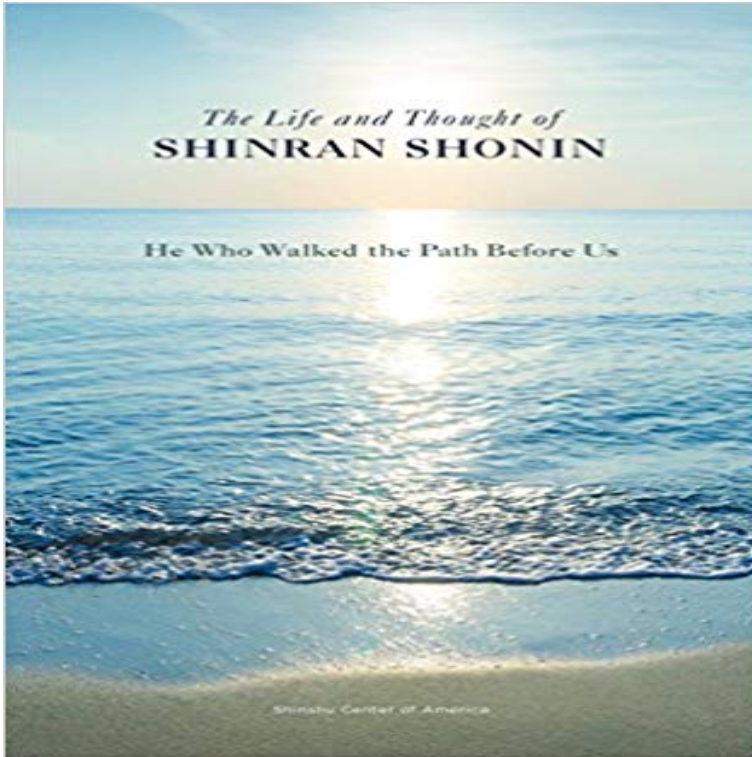


# The Life and Thought of Shinran Shonin: He Who Walked the Path Before Us



A path exists that perhaps weve never known. Only when it opens before us do we realize the Path has always existed. Unless someone takes that path and tells us about it we might not even notice it. In this book, we'll meet that person who has shown us the way. *The Life and Thought of Shinran Shonin: He Who Walked the Path Before Us* makes our own journey a reality. Shinran, a Buddhist priest of medieval Japan who is regarded as the founder of Shin Buddhism, was born in 1173 and died in 1263. Ninety years is a long time to live even in today's world. During the latter part of his life even in his eighties he wrote down many of his thoughts and experiences in the forms of long treatises as well as prose essays and verse. After his death a memorial hall was built in his honor that later was awarded temple status. His memory was exalted to the level of legend where it remained for hundreds of years. One hundred years ago scholars and writers began to explore the historical and human side of Shinran in the process of demythologizing religion. This more warm and human Shinran is the theme of many modern books. The present book does not intend to restore Shinran to his pedestal as a semi-legendary figure nor does it intend to present merely a humanized image of him. Indeed, the Shinran that we want to meet is the person who took the path before us. That is the real purpose of this book. The main text of this book is a translation of the *Shuso Shinran Shonin*, a textbook for temple study classes, published in 1978 by the Shinshu Otani-ha in Kyoto, Japan. The Shinshu Otani-ha, also known as Higashi Honganji, is one of the largest Shin Buddhist organizations in Japan. Since the book not only provides a good historical framework for Shinran's life, but also presents a careful selection of quotations from Buddhist literature, including those by Shinran himself, it is a good introduction of Shin Buddhism and Shin

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