

Some Thoughts On the Period Before Shoken and Jukai

We are born and do **The First Step**. We admit we are powerless, and at the same time we trust this strange, new, dangerous world. Help will hopefully arrive, and it does.

We are seven years old, and we do **The Second Step**. Again we enter a strange and new world. **Boys** leave the women's world, and enter the world of men. Some form of introspection is introduced. **Girls** realize they aren't married to Daddy, but belong in the women's world. They also receive a fitting introspection method.

Then at fourteen, our bodies have ripened, and it is time for **The Third Step**. New rules are given and accepted. New horizons open up.

At twenty-one we celebrate **The Third Step Completed**. We are grown-up now, and enter the community of the grown-ups. Yet, we are like a baby! So the second half of this fourth ceremony is called: **The First Step Revisited**. Again we admit our powerlessness, again we wait for help, from the outer and inner world.

At twenty eight (or so) our comfortable lives become a little bit uneasy, and like Siddhartha Gautama, we may start a spiritual quest. The fifth ceremony: **Shoken**.

Some years later we may admit we are Buddha, in other words: we receive **Jukai**.

Et cetera. Now, two questions arise.

Did we, grown-ups, really receive the first four initiations?

If not, how then can we give them to our children?