

Thoughts on Shin Buddhism

PART ONE

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I

THE TOPIC FOR TODAY is Shin Buddhism. I am supposed to cover its general outlines. I am afraid I have no intention of being systematic, for frankly I have not had an opportunity to consolidate my thoughts on the subject.

To begin with, I would like to consider the term "Supreme Enlightenment" as it appears in the *Sutra of Eternal Life*. As we know, this is the sutra which enumerates the various vows of Dharmakara Bodhisattva, each of which follows a similar formula: "If such and such a condition is not fulfilled, may I not attain Supreme Enlightenment." But just what is this "Supreme Enlightenment"? Nothing is mentioned at all which gives us any clue to its definition or characterization.

In addition to the term "Supreme Enlightenment," we also find in other Pure Land sutras a Chinese transliteration of the Sanskrit *amuttarasamyak-sambodhi*. *Anuttara* means "supreme," *samyak* means "complete," and since *bodhi* is customarily translated as "enlightenment," *sambodhi* would

* This is a translation of a group of lectures D. T. Suzuki delivered at Ōtani University in 1963, three years prior to his death. After retirement from his professorship at Ōtani, Dr. Suzuki returned from time to time when circumstances allowed to speak before the faculty and students on aspects of Buddhist thought and experience. These evolved into annual lectures, and became an important event on the university calendar. Many teachers and others who attended still remember his last appearance, when, speaking with all the experience and authority of his ninety-three years, he presented these ideas on Shin Buddhist teaching. This translation, the first of three installments, is from the transcript of those lectures. The Japanese text is given in the *Complete Works*, volume vi, pp. 381-400. We wish to thank the Matsugaoka Library, Kamakura, for permission to use it here.

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mean “perfect enlightenment.” A full rendering of *anuttarasamyaksambodhi* would be “supreme, complete, perfect enlightenment.”

We tend to take enlightenment for granted, and, when we refer to it, regard it as something fully understood. Yet when we are asked, “What is enlightenment?” it is very difficult to give an appropriate answer. There seems to be no suitable word for it among the Western languages. In the East it has been expressed in many ways. The implications it has in both Sanskrit and Chinese are abundant. Be that as it may, we ordinarily proceed under the assumption that we have grasped the full meaning of enlightenment, when, in fact, we are far from it.

The word “enlightenment,” I think, is often associated with the idea of light. For religions in general, light is an important concept. In Christianity, for example, it figures in the very first words uttered by God: “*Let there be light!*” So light is very important, for without it, all is darkness—the darkness of *avidyā* or ignorance. Enlightenment is bright; it is light as opposed to *avidyā*'s darkness. The distinctions of bright and dark, light and darkness derive from this.

What then is this light? It is said a human being is made up of atomic particles. But is that all there is to the matter? That the human body emits light has been a matter of belief since ancient times. Actual cases have been reported of a halo of light enveloping a person's head from behind. The haloes which emanate from Buddhas and saints usually appear from behind, broad and round like the moon, or like an umbrella covering them from behind, symbolizing light. But what is the source of these haloes or aureoles, which have been seen by people in the East as well as the West? Is it a sheer coincidence that such rings of light are experienced by all men regardless of their traditions or geographical settings?

Theosophy, a kind of modern religion, maintains that each human being has an “aura.” This aura, they say, is a kind of emanation or radiance which is emitted from the human body. Sceptics may call this absurd, but a light of some kind does on occasion seem to be seen or felt around the body of certain individuals, even though it may not actually assume the dimensions of an aura. Don't we all at times experience a sense of awe before a venerable or august personage, which makes it hard for us to approach him? A kind of fear or trembling is felt; we are struck by a sense of light.

There exists, it seems, a brightness above, beyond, and distinct from this

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world of ours. It is a plane different from our world of ignorance (*avidyā*), yet somehow supports and reflects it. Perhaps it is from such a realm that the "light" mentioned above originates.

The mere fact that we do not understand the nature of this "light" does not necessarily mean that it is nonexistent. For example, people nowadays haven't the slightest doubt of the earth's roundness. In ancient times, however, it was imagined to be flat, stretching out endlessly in all directions. I am sure that such an earth must have been very mysterious to the people of that time. Looking up into the skies, the eyes of ancient man saw the sun rise and set, the moon appear and disappear. And stars invariably appeared to him at certain times and in certain directions. Until the time came for the sun to show itself, it lay, hidden from view, in some unknown place. Our ancestors must have wondered deeply about the sun after it sank down into the earth: where it went, and how it stayed there.

We think of the earth as a round ball, suspended and spinning its way through endless space. We conceive of great galaxies doing the same thing. Ancient peoples, though lacking our knowledge, must have felt the movements of the celestial bodies to be mysterious, with the sun, moon, and stars constantly disappearing and reappearing.

Use of the image of light to describe the experience of enlightenment is probably due to the deep psychological relation the concepts of light and enlightenment have with each other. At the moment of Buddhist enlightenment, the surrounding world is found to be brightly illuminated. Christianity and other religions record similar experiences, so this is not something peculiar to Buddhism. In Japan, the name of the Shinto divinity Amaterasu Omikami contains the word "*terasu*," which means "to illumine," associating it with the world of light.

Light is not necessarily related to enlightenment, nor has enlightenment any need to be attended by light. And yet it so happens that the phenomenon of light is one which naturally comes to be associated with enlightenment. It is a fact that people tend to identify the world of enlightenment with the dimension of light. Buddhas, as enlightened beings, are usually described as clothed in a special radiance or lumination. The sutras tell of light emanating from Buddhas. They even mention the length of their beams: three inches, seven inches, one foot, ten feet, none of them particularly long. It is now believed by some present-day scientists that our whole body is surrounded or covered by a field of light emitting a faint

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fluorescent aura, like the luminescence of a firefly. Whether this is described with words such as illumination or enlightenment—either way it is all related to “light.” This light field is said to be rather weak, extending perhaps a foot or perhaps six feet from the body. There might even be Buddhas that do not give off very far-reaching light at all.

Although there seems to be a close relationship between Buddhahood and light, light can appear in a variety of ways. It may shine out with long rays or short rays. It may be thoroughly transparent, or hazy and dim. In some cases, it may have a glow not to be found in nature. But whatever its attributes, it does exist, and it has a kinship to Supreme Enlightenment. That does not mean, however, that without “light” Supreme Enlightenment cannot occur. The relationship is not absolute. Intellectually, people assume such a relation, but this doesn't imply that light always signifies enlightenment, merely that it often appears in connection with it. The most appropriate way of putting it is to say that the notion of light often accompanies an enlightenment experience, but it is not inevitable. After all, when the nature of things becomes clear to us, when we attain a comprehension of what was before incomprehensible, it testifies to the fact of our having been “illuminated.”

II

Let us turn to another subject, the world-view of the Indian Buddhists. It is an area which I have long had an interest in, even though I haven't given much study to it. Who but the Indian mind could have conceived on such a grand scale the cosmology they did? I often wonder what the average non-Buddhist Indians thought of their cosmology and astronomy.

I am not sure whether this view of the universe was confined to Buddhism or was shared with other Indian religions as well, but generally, the Indians conceived of the universe as consisting of various worlds: heavens and hells, the world of man, the different paradises, worlds of hungry spirits and beasts, all centered around Mount Sumeru. This developed into the Buddhist world-view which peopled the universe, throughout its length and breadth, with Buddhas. The sutras speak of billions, trillions, of numbers which are said to be immeasurable, innumerable, inconceivable, incalculable, the implication being that they are beyond the grasp of the human mind. Today computers make it possible for us to calculate quite

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easily what once would have taken many hours or even days. But even computers can only count so far in a day, even in ten years; they cannot go beyond the limits of what is calculable.

In the Buddhist universe, moreover, neither the number of worlds nor the number of Buddhas that fill them can be counted. The sutras also mention sravakas (hearers), pratyekabuddhas (solitary buddhas), and Bodhisattvas. (Interestingly enough, no mention is ordinarily made in this context of evil spirits—only sravakas, pratyekabuddhas, Bodhisattvas, heavenly beings, and human beings, who are said to exist in incalculable numbers.) And the Indians do not express this incalculability in vague terms: their methods are much more elaborate. You know, for example, of Sariputra, regarded as the wisest among the Buddha's disciples, whose mind seems to have had a scientific bent. The sutras declare that a certain thing could not be accomplished even if all the wisdom of hundreds of thousands of Sariputras were mustered together over a specific number of years. Analogies of this kind are common.

The Indian concept of "kalpa," connoting an incredibly long duration of time, is very characteristic of the Indian mind. Never would we find such a way of expressing time in ancient China or Japan. The Chinese calculated up to a hundred or thousand, or, at best, ten thousand, but no farther. Usually, when they desired to express a great number, the figure 10,000 was used. Thus the "ten thousand people," "ten thousand things," and so forth. But not so the Indians. They knew when it comes to figures in excess of ten thousand, there is a tendency for people to feel that any amount is more or less the same, but still they dared to extend their calculations considerably beyond that.

They give us concrete particulars of a certain immense number, and then they say that the sum in question is beyond that. They use parables; if you split a fine hair into ten (or one hundred) strands, and then use it to scoop up sea water, the tiny amount thus scooped up is contrasted with the enormous volume of water in the ocean. This way of reckoning is typically Indian. As far as I know it is not found among any other peoples. It is of course simple exaggeration. They do not count their Buddhas and Bodhisattvas one by one, down to the last man.

Confucians would call all this mere exaggeration and fantasy, dismiss it as absurd nonsense, and not give it a further thought. They never put much stock in what they regard as meaningless overstatement. But as I

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said, in the Buddhist scriptures, such conceptions are believed to have their own validity. They present us with astronomical figures, which it is doubtful that anyone could ever measure, and then say that such and such a phenomenon is even beyond that.

To return now to the questions of genuine Enlightenment, and its relation to light. Today, the time it takes light from the stars to reach the earth is calculated in "light years"—hundreds of thousands of light years. The distance light is said to travel in a minute escapes me now, but anyway starlight reaches the earth after travelling through space for millions of years. This is how modern science shows us of the stars' enormous distance from the earth. But the ancient Indians were able to conceive of such measureless time spans without any modern scientific knowledge. This was a marvellous achievement.

III

The place of the Buddha's Enlightenment is known in Sanskrit as the *bodhimanda*. It is said that there, at the moment of enlightenment, all things were transformed into gold, silver, and other precious things, and each began to shine with its own exquisite light. Of course this doesn't mean they actually turned into precious objects. I think it means that when Sakyamuni attained enlightenment, they began to shine with wonderful colors. Just try to imagine the *bodhimanda*! Suppose this hall, for example, filled with shining objects, radiant light emanating from all your heads.

We read, moreover, that the light emanating from the Buddha's face lit up "the infinite space in the eastern quarter." What exactly does this mean? How many worlds did he illuminate? For example, there are said to be a hundred trillion worlds between us and Amida's Pure Land in the West. Just how large is each of those worlds?

The kalpa, for instance, has as you know, been described in many ways. I have forgotten the exact details, but one of these descriptions supposes a huge fortress made of solid granite, something like our great concrete buildings of today, many leagues square, ten or perhaps a hundred, I don't think it makes much difference. This fortress or building is brushed by the sleeve of a heavenly being's feather robe once every several years. One kalpa is the length of time needed for the feather robe to wear it down to nothing.

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This feather robe is of course made quite differently from our clothes. We can hardly imagine the number of years that would be required for this thin, fine garment to wear away hard rock. Take this table in front of me. Nobody knows how many thousands or tens of thousands years it will take for it to wear away, but it will eventually disappear for it too is being "rubbed away" through use. But it will surely take more than a thousand years. If external contact were made only once every few years, though, how much more time-consuming it would become! With a rock said to be one hundred leagues or many hundreds of kilometers square, how many years would it take? That gives us some idea of the length of one kalpa.

Amida Buddha is said to have meditated for five kalpas during his disciplinary period, and after he attained Buddhahood, ten kalpas are said to have elapsed. In this case, ten kalpas or five, makes no difference. Ordinarily ten is twice five. But with kalpas, ten, five, or one, all come down to the same thing—eternity. In this perspective, the earth, several billion years old, is just a youngster. But according to the worldview of the Buddhists, our earth was gradually formed, will exist for a time, and then be destroyed, whereupon another world will be formed, subsist, disappear, and so on, in an eternal, unchanging process—this is a "world" in the Buddhist sense. Now what about the surface area of one of these Buddha-worlds or Buddha-lands? How much time would it take to measure it? No one knows. One hundred trillion such Buddha-lands are said to exist. We may as well say ten times that number. And Amida's Pure Land is even beyond all those Buddha-lands.

IV

Thus the light emanating from the middle of the Buddha's forehead or head illuminates all the infinite eastern quarter, and from Buddha-lands located beyond many billions of other Buddha-lands, Buddhas come, accompanied by countless Bodhisattvas, to the Buddha's place of Enlightenment (*bodhimanda*). One or two of their number acting for the rest praise the virtues of the Buddha in hymns or gathas. Not only from the East, but from all the other directions as well these superior beings come, attended by numberless Bodhisattvas, and their representatives describe or praise the Buddha's virtues and his enlightenment itself. Think, then,

how spacious the Buddha's place of enlightenment must be! Vimalakirti's ten-foot square room, filled with all his guests, is beyond our imagination—how much more so the *bodhimanda*! It is none other than the realm of the Buddha's Supreme Enlightenment.

Amida Buddha's Paradise is one hundred trillion Buddha-lands (*ksetras*) away from us. What these *ksetras* really signify is not altogether clear, but in any case, beyond them lies the Paradise where Buddhas of the ten directions congregate in untold numbers. How they can all assemble in this one place is beyond us, but they do. And there is no confusion or discord; they are arrayed in perfect order. Such is the world of Enlightenment as conceived by the Indian mind.

Since the world of Supreme Enlightenment is infinite, not like the finite world we live in, it is capable of absorbing or taking in any and all things. With our decimal system, which derives from primitive calculations using the fingers, we can multiply by units of ten as far as we want, but the infinite world of enlightenment is capable of containing even the most infinite calculation of that system. The world of Supreme Enlightenment easily encompasses whatever we can conceive of. Hence it far transcends the sensory world and its so-called logic. No wonder, then, that it should be called inconceivable and indescribable, since those who live confined in the world of the six senses are attempting to inform their fellow inhabitants of a world utterly beyond those confines.

Is it proper to describe it using negative terms? I should say it is not, because Supreme Enlightenment is not something negative. Rather, its negativity itself is positive; being is the same as non-being, and non-being is the same as being. We can say that in Supreme Enlightenment, a world appears where conflicting things can coexist in peace, without conflict.

When I first learned about Christianity, I remember being told of God's declaration, *Let there be light!* Christians assured me that it was the height of sublimity. But it is, after all, nothing more than that. I think the Indians' way of expressing infinite time, by dividing it into infinitesimally small units is more profound, and at the same time more precise. The previously mentioned parable about the hair and the ocean is a good example. What genius to conceive of such wonderful parables! They alone would be enough to speak for the genius of the Indian people. But there is an abundance of other evidence.

The *Lotus Sutra* tells of the Buddha of Great Divine Power and Supreme

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Wisdom who was already perfectly enlightened when the world began. It mentions the long duration of time which passed from this Buddha's attainment of enlightenment, up until the time when Sakyamuni Buddha preached the *Lotus Sutra* on Vulture Peak—or you might say, up until the time I came here to speak to you now.

As we have no way of ascertaining the size of a Buddha-land, let us suppose, tentatively, that it is this earth of ours. Let us smash the earth, grind it into fine powder and make some India ink out of it. We can hardly imagine an inkstone capable of containing all the ink thus made, but suppose that we had one, filled with the ink, and took a bit of it on the tip of a brush and made a dot of ink a thousand Buddha-lands away. Not every day, but once every several years. How long would it take for us to use all the ink made from the ground-up earth? The interval which passes from the time of the Buddha of Great Divine Power and Supreme Wisdom to Sakyamuni Buddha is said to exceed the time needed for this entire task.

Some may say that conceptualizations such as this are absurdities, purposeless nonsense, yet surely it is no easy matter to bring them into being. It is easy enough for us to belittle them now, but it took a richly creative mind actually to conceive of them.

The length of time in the parable is immaterial. It is, after all, eternal. What, then, about Sakyamuni Buddha's preaching of the *Lotus Sutra*? Historically, the question of whether or not it actually took place permits a wide range of opinions. None of that really matters, however, for such questions are not relevant. It is enough that *we are here, right at this moment*. When we are able to see the world of infinity in such a way, we can say that its duration is much less than a single day. This is very important.

As long as we try to picture the world of infinity from a finite world, a duality inevitably results. When it is seen from the Realm of the Dharma (*Dharmadhātu*) where *ri* (principle) and *ji* (particular things) are harmoniously and unobstructedly interfused, the infinite time expressed in the above analogy about grinding the earth into ink, is shorter than one day. It consumes less time than it takes me to raise a finger. According to our usual clock time, one day is made up of twenty-four hours. One hour is made up of sixty minutes, one minute of sixty seconds. But putting such mathematics aside for a moment, what if I raise my finger now and point to the sky? How much time does it take? In the reality of infinite time, the

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period from the Buddha of Great Divine Power and Supreme Wisdom mentioned in the *Lotus Sutra* to this moment right now is, I should say, less than a minute, scarcely a second.

V

Let me digress for a moment and tell you of a book I read recently on the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard. What he calls the "Instant" is similar to the Buddhist idea of *eka-ksana* or *ichi-nen* ("one thought-instant"). [For instance, he says, "the Instant is short indeed and temporal . . . every instant is fleeting, gone like all instants, the following instant, and yet it is decisive, and yet it is full of eternity."] Buddhists, to give an example, have long debated whether Buddhahood can be attained in one "thought-instant" or ten "thought-instants," although here too the difference between one and ten is not really important.¹ Anyway, as I recall, the author of the book wrote that the English word "moment," sometimes used as a translation for Kierkegaard's concept, had serious drawbacks, and he insisted that it had to be rendered as "instant." Instant, he said, was consonant with the idea of eternity, so that one instant could be said to equal eternity and eternity to equal one instant. If the word "moment" were used, time would come to be segmentalized, divided up into a series of moments coming one after another as a continuity, one, two, three, four, tied to the concept of time. It would thus be temporal and have to be discussed as a category of time. But by using "instant," the above equation can be formulated directly. I remember now that these were the reasons the author gave for using the word "instant" rather than "moment."

¹ "One Thought [-Instant]" is a momentous term in the philosophy of Shin and Jōdo. Its Sanskrit original is *eka-ksana* meaning "one instant" or "one moment." As we say in English "quick as thought" or "quick as a flash," "one thought [-instant]" represents in terms of time the shortest possible duration, which is to say, one instant. The one instant of faith-establishment is the moment when Amida's Eternal Life cuts crosswise the flow of birth-and-death, or when his Infinite Light flashes into the darkening succession of love and hate which is experienced by our relative consciousness. This event takes place in "one thought [-instant] . . ." (DTS, *Collected Writings on Shin Buddhism*, pp. 127–128n).

In the *Sutra of Eternal Life*, in addition to this "one thought-instant," salvation is said to be fulfilled in "up to ten thought-instants." Historically, Pure Land Buddhists have debated the significance in these numbers — *Trans.*

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But if you ask me, I don't think it really matters which of the words is used. Moment, by continuing in a temporal series like this, from hour to hour, reaches out into infinite time. The only difference between it and instant, then, is that while the former goes on increasing infinitely, the latter diminishes infinitely. If all, zero and infinity included, are contained in the One itself, then saying "moment" and "timelessness" will serve just as well as "instant" and "eternity."

In this way, the thought of a modern Westerner and the conception of an Indian who lived thousands of years ago arrive at the same place. The discussions about "one thought-instant" and "ten thought-instants" among Pure Land Buddhists today seem to be revolving around a similar point.

The important thing is that since Supreme Enlightenment has the power to embrace infinity completely within one thought-instant, infinity is eternity and eternity is infinity. In Shin Buddhist terms, this can be expressed as Supreme Enlightenment being endowed with the power of the Tathagata's Original Vow.

The explanation above was from the perspective of time. I am sure that many others exist which take both space and time into account. Not being a philosopher, I am unable to tell you what they are. But my own view is that time is none other than space and space is none other than time. We tend to think of time as one thing and space as another, but they are not so. Inasmuch as we cannot conceive of space apart from time or time apart from space, I think we are compelled to recognize their inseparable oneness.

We may as well put a plus sign or hyphen between time and space and treat them as one. Once divided, so that they appear as separate realities, time here and space there, the result is a "thing" called time, or space. But seen with the perfectly enlightened eye, time-space or space-time is zero, which is none other than Supreme Enlightenment itself. When Supreme Enlightenment realizes itself there, both infinite time and infinite space are embraced within it—infinite time and infinite space in a single thought-instant.

VI

So the Buddha takes into his hands all the countless Buddha-lands everywhere in the ten directions—the eight points of the compass, the

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nadir and zenith—not only all the Buddhas in these lands but all the sravakas, pratyekabuddhas, Bodhisattvas, heavenly beings, human beings, hungry spirits, and beasts as well. Underlying Dharmakara Bodhisattva's forty-eight vows is the aspiration to encompass all these realms, to take them and put them into his own hands. Unless he is able to do this, he vows that he will not pass into Supreme Enlightenment. This does not simply mean he will not attain Supreme Enlightenment until those conditions are realized, but that the Vow is itself Supreme Enlightenment. Instead of "take them into his hands," we might just as well say "put them on the tip of his little finger," or "on the point of a needle." I have read that during the Middle Ages, there was a great controversy among Christian theologians about the number of angels that could be seated on the tip of a needle. This seems ludicrous to us today: Let as many of them as want to sit there! And yet a response like that wouldn't have satisfied those Christian scholars. They wanted a specific number, so many hundreds or thousands. So when we talk of taking innumerable worlds in the palm of the hand, it can make little difference if instead of a hand we say a fingertip. The cosmos, embracing all space and time, perishes and comes into being an incalculable number of times while I raise my little finger and bend it like this.

The Supreme Enlightenment is none other than the experience which realizes all time and space within a single thought-instant. It is altogether different from the psychological experience of perceiving physical light. The world and experience of Supreme Enlightenment, then, is one in which time and space are contained in a single thought-instant.

We read in Shinran's *Kyōgyōshinshō* about *gokusoku enman*, "instantly perfected." *Gokusoku* means "instantly" and is related to time; *enman* means "perfectly" and is more related to space. There is another phrase, *sokushitsu enman*, which implies much the same idea. Shinran uses these expressions in connection with his ideas of "great living" and "great faith." Why is that? The passages in question appear in the True Living and True Faith chapters:

As I reverently reflect on the outgoing *ekō* (merit transference), I find therein the great living and great faith. The great living is to pronounce the Name of the Nyorai of Unimpeded Light. In this living are embraced all good things and all the roots of merit. They

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are instantly perfected [*gokusoku enman*] (as soon as the Name is pronounced).

As I reverentially consider the nature of the outgoing movement of *ekō* (merit-turning-over), I find that there is a great faith; and as to this great believing mind I make this declaration; . . . it is the white path of perfect passage (to the Pure Land) in the shortest possible time [*enman sokushitsu*].

The central issue here, is the relationship between “great living” and “great faith,” and the concept of “instantly perfected.”

From this perspective, we can say that “instantly perfected” is one thought-instant, one thought-instant being the “zero point” where time and space merge or disappear, and eternity emerges. This “eternity” is central to the whole matter. The words “instantly perfected” describe the oneness of zero and eternity, the experience of zero = eternity. “Instantly” refers to zero, and “perfected” to infinity, and thus the relationship between “instantly” and “perfected” is a reciprocal one. This is the zero point. “Zero” may sound negative, but in reality it is not so; that which emerges from it is positive. I think we can therefore conclude that “instantly perfected” expresses the idea that negativity is positivity, positivity is negativity. Some may hold other opinions, but it seems to me that, set in this context, what is called Supreme Enlightenment comes to appear in a somewhat clearer light.

If the word *kei-ken* (experience) is used in describing enlightenment, it makes it sound psychological. I think in many ways the word *tai-ken* (bodily experience) is more acceptable. But then it might make us suppose that it has a merely corporeal existence. Man creates verbal concepts like these and then finds himself bound up in them. Isn't this what the Shin Buddhist means when he speaks about man unavoidably being destined for hell? When the Chinese character *tai*² is used in such a combination, we are apt to imagine some physical entity actually lying there. Yet without this tangibility, we tend to feel something lacking. This makes us wish for a concept of *tai*, with much broader implications, which can bring all these things into unity.

² Briefly, the character *tai* (one of the characters making up the word *tai-ken*) is the fundamental, immutable substance of all things, their most concrete reality; hence it is sometimes rendered as “body” — *Trans.*

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When we try to think of it, our thinking hinders us; if we try to do away with it, we run into difficulty. We don't know how to proceed and end up hopelessly entangled in our own conceptions. The Shin Buddhist idea that we fall into hell as a result of our own deeds is a very perceptive one. What they say about man being "invariably destined for hell" is extremely interesting. It may sound odd my saying that, but what would we do without hell? Not a single day could pass without it. It is hell that makes us grateful for the Pure Land.

VII

Ultimately, then, Buddhas are light. Their substance or "body" (*tai*), Supreme Enlightenment, is none other than light. Amida is often called the Buddha of "Eternal Life," but it is better to say "Infinite Light," and make Eternal Life and everything else—including all time and space—enter completely into its lumination. Even this is not enough, however, so the sutra talks of "Unobstructed" Light. This epithet, different from either eternal or infinite, may be likened to an X-ray penetrating objects impervious to light. If ordinary light strikes an object, the object casts a shadow. This unobstructed light belongs to a shadowless world, a world of total, all-pervading radiance and total equality. When this world is clouded over by conceptual speculation, it is the cause of our suffering. Somehow, these impediments must be removed. That is why all those sravakas, pratyekabuddhas, Bodhisattvas, and the others are found "adorning" the Buddha-lands.

Yet, the word "adornments" (*vyūha*), which appears often in Buddhist literature, does not imply "decoration" in the sense of embellishing with the superfluous or nonessential. It means "distinction," "particularization," or "individualization," as against "sameness" or "equality." If everything is painted all in one color, the world becomes a monotonous place, bereft of any particular aspects of time or space, where it is impossible to distinguish anything at all. Hence, Buddha-lands are "particularized" by the addition of Bodhisattvas, sravakas, and so on. The "adornments" of the Pure Land signify this kind of particularization.

Particularization has another aspect, however, of individuals opposing and destroying one another, an occurrence bound to happen before full solution of their oppositions can be reached. The power leading us to

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final peace is in the meantime—no, it would be more proper to say *originally*—provided. This power is the essence of Buddha which has a twofold character, great wisdom (*prajñā*) and great compassion (*karunā*), and one can say that there is no Buddhism unless both of them are present. Yet we should not make the mistake of supposing that these two are independent elements. The oneness of the two aspects should not be taken in the sense of a chemical synthesis. There must be something that indicates that *karunā* and *prajñā* work in oneness. It is the oneness called *kāya* (body), the *kāya* of *Dharma-kāya*, or Dharma-body.

Oneness of great compassion and great wisdom—or, rather, the “body” of great compassion and great wisdom as one—is called *kāya*. In Zen, it is called *nin* or Person. *Kāya*, therefore, is a word of great significance. Great compassion and great wisdom work together as one entity. That entity is called *kāya* (body), but it is different from the physical “person” of the five senses. It would not be proper to call it a conceptualization either, for that would just be creating another concept. I don’t think “personification” will do either. “Personalization” is probably more appropriate than “personification.”

This “Person” is expressed by the Chinese character for “man” (*nin* in Japanese). It is the “independent Person of the Way listening to the Dharma at this very moment before my eyes,” that Rinzai talks about in the *Records of Rinzai (Lin-chi lu)*. I am convinced that this “Person” is of great importance, that it is none other than the *kāya* of *Dharma-kāya*. I think the Chinese made an excellent choice when they used this Chinese character to render the Sanskrit *Dharma-kāya*.

As I am terribly tired today, I will have to give the rest of this talk tomorrow, providing my blood pressure cooperates. At that time, I should like to speak about the nembustu, or calling of Amida’s Name. It is central to my thoughts on Shin Buddhism.

TRANSLATED BY BANDŌ SHŌJUN