

Discourse on Religious Morality and Common Morality

Kiyozawa Manshi

Translated with an Introduction by Mark L. Blum

Introduction

Written in 1903, the last year of his short life, this essay, is widely regarded as Kiyozawa Manshi's most mature statement on how he viewed the ethical imperative of religion. The reader should bear in mind the political climate in Japan at this time when the Buddhist community was struggling to regain its social legitimacy after decades of attenuation at the hands of the Meiji political oligarchy. The turn of the century saw the first incursions of Japanese militarism abroad and the political climate imposed a social mission on religious organizations, both Buddhist and Christian, in which spiritual goals were expected to demonstratively serve the modernization efforts of the nation-state. Kiyozawa was thus fighting to preserve the independence of Buddhism as a religious voice in Japanese society, and this struggle played itself out both on the greater political playing field as well as within Higashi Honganji itself, which ultimately took a pro-government stance. Titled literally, "The Relationship between Religious Morality and Common Morality," Kiyozawa here, as elsewhere, is not concerned with distinguishing morality from ethics; indeed both words appear to be used interchangeably in this text. In the original title, the term, "Religious Morality" is followed by the phrase *zokutai* 俗諦 in brackets. *Zokutai* is a technical Buddhist term representing the concept known in Sanskrit as *samvṛti-satya*: religious truth that can be known by ordinary beings; it is commonly translated as "worldly truth." Coupled with it, Mahāyana texts also discuss the "highest" or "absolute" truth, *shintai* 真真諦, which represents the Sanskrit *paramārtha-satya*. When read together with his final statement, "The Nature of My Faith" (*Waga shinnen*), it is clear that ethics was an crucial issue for

Kiyozawa.

Translation

Although it is often said that morality is the most important issue in the world of man, many people do not respect it. One can even discern a trend to dispense with it, and one inevitably wonders what sort of factors are at play that have induced some people to become determined to eradicate morality entirely. Some look at the Buddhist doctrine of the two truths, absolute and worldly, as found in Shinshū and say the worldly truth is none other than the teachings of ethics and morality. There are others, however, who would criticize this position, saying that not only does this reflect the error of partiality in advocating only the absolute truth, but it also leads to the loss of the benefits Shinshū affords to the nation and society. In the following pages I would like to present my feelings about the issue of morality and the Buddhist concept of worldly truth.

In general, the teaching of the two truths is extremely deep and subtle,¹ and yet also reflects a common, everyday attitude. One result of this is the existence of people who have somehow only heard about the popular side of the issue and thus understand little of its profound implications. Although it is difficult to treat exhaustively the details of this matter in this space, I will attempt to briefly outline it. Buddhism may be said to begin from humanist considerations and proceeds to develop various types of doctrines which are classified as Hīnayāna, Mahāyāna, Exoteric, or Esoteric. Beyond that, for those who are spiritually unable to enter into any of these systems, there is a way of salvation that, in the end, saves all sentient beings without exception by means of a single Dharma teaching: namely, the teaching of the two truths, worldly and absolute, which exhausts the full extent of the Buddha's great compassion. For this reason, the teaching of the two truths naturally transcends the so-called ethics and morality of this world. And [relevant to our present discussion] the sublime message inherent in the gate of worldly

¹In general the Mahāyāna notion of two levels of religious truth, one manifest and one utterly transcendent, is not viewed as directly relevant to problems of ethics or morality. This formulation of the problem of ethics in terms of the two-truth doctrine reflects Kiyozawa's personal understanding.

truth is itself truly astonishing.²

Any teaching which could be termed an ethical or religious doctrine is based on thoughts of good and bad that exist in our minds. All such teachings endeavor to encourage the good and control the bad; by doing so the goal is to bring us to the attainment of peace of mind. Spoken of from another point of view, we attempt to release ourselves from dissatisfaction and achieve contentment. But within this suffering and joy,³ it is the suffering and joy as it relates to the issue of good and bad that is indeed the predominant concern. The doctrines or teachings we see in the world are attempts therefore to enable the individual to reach a demarcated state where he can rest assured he has found a solution to this problem.

Now with regard to the issue of precisely what is good and what is bad, [we can say that] although all ordinary people feel this is perfectly obvious, looking at the research of scholars we find that things are in fact far from clear. What is considered good in country *A* may be considered bad in country *B*, and the reverse may also be true. Moreover, what was [considered] good during a former age may be seen as bad in later time [within the same country]. The converse also occurs. This being the situation, there are inevitable doubts about what is truly good and what is truly bad. When people speak of a relevant, practical morality or religion, however, they have little interest in debating such doubts. When practical morality or religion is the basis of one's concern, prevailing conceptions in other countries or in previous times are simply not considered. The crucial point is now, directly before us—deciding what action we should take. At such moments nothing else matters. [For most people,] their approach is simple: in their heart of hearts what they feel is good is good, what they feel is bad is bad. Were it possible to always do what one thinks is good and never do what one thinks is bad, all systems of morality and religion would affirm this position.

Nevertheless, if we address ourselves to the question of why

²Kiyozawa's position is that recognition of the existence of the ultimate truth does not require abandoning the worldly truth; instead the latter is embraced as provisional but indispensable. See the discussion of the five evils discussed in the second fascicle of the *Wuliangshou jing*.

³Suffering and joy are standard Buddhist terms for the two poles of how we process sensation: we are either repulsed by what we perceive as leading to suffering or anxiety (Skt. *duḥkha*) or attracted to what we think will bring us joy or happiness (Skt. *sukha*).

morality and religion are so difficult [to practice], we must first recognize the fact that when each individual tries to honestly base their actions upon what they feel is good and bad, things just do not happen as he or she thought they would. The harder one strives the more they will realize how problematic the situation is. And as understanding of the difficulty progresses, the more it becomes obsessive. From this corresponding growth in concern comes a variety of arguments on the subject of good and evil. The present situation in Japan is exactly at this stage. From the desire to advance the practice of morality, we have today a blossoming of academic discussions on the subject of ethics and indeed the various positions put forth are interesting. Some say that if one's motivation is good, then, as a result, one's behavior must accordingly be good. Another position states that regardless of one's motivation, if an individual's actions are bad or evil, then this is [unambiguously] evil. For purposes of research, these [opinions] are all attractive. But in the end, this is only debate or research. When we come to the actual practice of morality, debate or research makes little difference. Individually, everyone feels that they should simply do exactly what they think is right and not do what they think is wrong. But even if one were certain about what constitutes good and bad behavior in a particular situation, in fact it is difficult to carry out exactly what one thinks is good and completely refrain from what one thinks is bad. This kind of "difficulty" is completely different from the "difficulty" that arises in current debate or research [on what constitutes morality or ethics].

If the situation were such that we could not get to the level of practice until these troublesome investigations into the nature of ethics were resolved, then we would have to say that today we are not yet at a time when [ethical] praxis can take place. The actual practice of morality, however, is not at all dependent on this. It has been going on since ancient times [while the debate over what is good and evil continues to the present day]. And there is nothing to prevent one from beginning its [practice] today as well. If we do not begin [our ethical behavior] today, moreover, when could we hope to? [If we waited for the resolution of this academic debate] that time would never come. Hence the practice of morality is not something to be seen as linked to moral debate or research. They are totally separate.

On the other hand, for those who focus directly on praxis and encounter the problems inherent thereof, movement into the arena of debate and research on morality is natural. But one thereupon discovers all the problems that lie here as well and it becomes clear that this latter path will not provide any easy solutions [either]. One thereupon feels a tremendous stimulus toward [greater diligence in] practice and, with an even deeper zeal than before, one may return to the path of single-minded cultivation of practice. It is interesting that within this process many people either well-grounded in scholarship or with strong intellectual leanings will spend a long period of time, even decades, in intellectual debate. Among those with no academic achievement and weak intellectual inclinations, however, there are many who easily succeed in breaking away from this labyrinth of argument and investigation. There are also many who, from the outset, have never engaged in debate or research. In any case, everyone finds their concerns will ultimately be focused only on praxis, and no one can avoid experiencing problems in this area. Those people who have heard the teaching of the two truths according to the *tarikī* teaching in Shinshū and feel they are capable of easily putting into practice the worldly truth teaching have simply not reached this point yet. They are of a like mind to those researching and debating the question of morality.

There is something I want to say concerning the fact that it is not easy to do what is right (good) and abstain from what is wrong (evil). These [notions of doing good and avoiding evil] are basic ideas expressed in all teachings; but if we look into this one step further, we can say that, in fact, rather than calling these “teachings,” they should be seen as natural inclinations. Before we are ever taught such things, we are naturally endowed with desires motivating us to behave well rather than badly. Therefore, if it were truly possible to act on [these inclinations] without difficulty, then even if we were not formally concerned with this issue, we should be able to do what is morally correct. But things do not really work in this way and, in fact, even when [ethics] are taught with extreme care, still no one can fully behave [in a morally proper way]. To the practice of morality applies the saying: a three-year old child can speak of it but even an eighty-year old man cannot do it. Accordingly, if there are those who

think the practice of Shinshū worldly truth is easily accomplished, we must call this a misapprehension of the situation.

Some people will say the worldly truth according to Shinshū is different in its intent than ordinary ethics or morality. They will say that since the usual sense of ethics or morality is separated from religion, it cannot be practiced. But because Shinshū worldly truth is a morality which flows from absolute truth, so long as the attainment of *shinjin*⁴ is definite, moral practice will be natural and inevitable. Though it seems there is an element of truth in this, there is also one aspect which requires some care. We are referring to the distinction between things that occur naturally and inevitably and things which are carried out intentionally and deliberately. Something which occurs naturally and inevitably need not be taught. The necessity of “teachings” lies in the attempt to enlighten our intentions and deliberations by means of those teachings. Therefore, if the practice of worldly truth in Shinshū terms were accomplished naturally and inevitably, so long as the ultimate truth teaching exists, there should be no need for worldly truth teachings. From the fact that the worldly truth is taught nearly shoulder to shoulder with the absolute truth, it should be clear that the practice of worldly truth is in fact not something which manifests naturally and inevitably from the *shinjin* of absolute truth. [Rather] what is gained naturally and inevitably from the *shinjin* of absolute truth is the so-called “ten worldly benefits.”⁵ Because it is grasped in this way, there is no teaching stemming from it which says on any particular issue: “Do this and do not do that,” or “One must do this and must not do that.” There is no hint of any teaching [in this tradition] which advocates praying to the gods for protection or for blessings of the highest regard. This is because even

⁴*Shinjin* 信心 denotes attainment of religious liberation as defined in the Jōdo Shinshū tradition, and is left untranslated here. In this context, Kiyozawa appears to be referring to an assumption that those who have attained this awakening are *de facto* capable of proper moral discernment and successful praxis in moral terms, or as he puts it, “perfect praxis.”

⁵*Genshō jisshu no yaku* 現生十種の益. The ten kinds of benefits said to accrue to the nembutsu practitioner during this lifetime as mentioned by Shinran in the chapter on Faith in his *Kyōgyōshinshō*: protection by gods and spirits, supreme merit, turning evil into good, protection by buddhas, praise from the buddhas, protection by the light of the buddha-mind, joy of attaining faith, repayment of gratitude to the buddha, practice of compassion, entering the group destined for buddhahood. For a full discussion on this topic, see the *Bukkyō Daiji-i* 2.1099–1101.

without such prayer, one naturally and inevitably has already obtained the benefits of protection from the gods and blessings of the highest merit. Among the ten benefits [attained when *shinjin* is realized], one is transforming evil into good and another is realizing gratitude, thereby repaying merit [to the Buddha]. In these particular doctrines we have evidence of concern for good and evil as well as esteeming a sense of obligation. But these are benefits that accrue naturally and inevitably; there is no [accompanying] teaching which says, “For this reason, do this and do that.”

As stated above, since the Shinshū worldly truth is expounded as a teaching equally majestic with the absolute truth, it should be understood that it does not express something which naturally and inevitably manifests from the experience of *shinjin*; rather it exists in order to guide our intentionality. Seen in this way, there is no problem in affirming that the difficulties in implementing the worldly truth of Shinshū are not particularly different from the difficulties in implementing common morality or ethics. In the final analysis, the perfect practice of Shinshū worldly truth is [also] something not easily accomplished.

Although the perfect practice of either the worldly truth of Shinshū or common ethics and morality may be difficult, some degree of success is possible. If one gradually cultivates oneself, in fact, one can increasingly draw closer to perfection [in praxis]. The teachings [of any moral system], though they may be vexing, are therefore most important in this respect. It is a frequently presented argument, moreover, that [moral] practice is an urgent imperative. This position also has some truth to it. But strictly speaking, on this point we must draw a distinction between worldly truth in Shinshū and common, ordinary morality. The general attitude toward common morality is that one really has no other way to proceed: somehow each individual must maintain a practice that reflects moral [standards]. For, regardless of whether or not it is actually possible, we have no choice but to commit ourselves to carry out [these ideals] one at a time. Even if one’s resolve is firm, however, when it comes to the point of the actual implementation [of the morally ideal act], one gradually falls into a state of anxiety. In the end, the individual will turn to religion or become hopelessly despondent about his or her own future. Originally, the worldly truth as expounded in

Shinshū stands together with the absolute truth, [and we must bear in mind that] future events will all be accomplished by absolute truth. From the outset, therefore, the teachings imply no imperative to seek one's own progress in terms of worldly truth.⁶ Especially in its praxis, one will encounter troubles as we have mentioned above. No matter how hard we strive, there are no means by which we can [confidently] do something genuinely laudable. Moreover, [on the personal level], the ability or inability to [successfully] carry out these ideals depends upon the content of one's karmic fruition or inherent make-up; if one's karmic or natural design is inferior, no matter how much effort he may make, he is simply at a stage where he is unable to produce anything superior. In any case, [we can say] for Shinshū, worldly truth does not aim at the usual goal of competency in the implementation [of the teachings] such that we perform praiseworthy deeds; its efficacy lies elsewhere. Accordingly there is a great difference in the thrust of the Shinshū worldly truth and common morality which itself aims at performing commendable acts. Put in another way, it does not really matter whether one intends to do something splendid or something wretched: the goal of the worldly truth teaching in Shinshū is not concerned with such notions.

One may wonder, then, what the purpose of Shinshū worldly truth actually is. The answer is simply that it aims to lead the individual to the [above-stated] perception that one cannot, in fact, perform these moral tasks. Although there may be differences between those who have attained *shinjin* as it relates to absolute truth and those who have not, it should be noted that it awakens the individual to the perception that the impossibility of moral praxis is identical in both cases.

By way of explaining the profound implications [of this truth], let us first turn to those who have not yet attained *shinjin*. Having perceived the difficulties in [common] moral practice, such people may become religious and thereby proceed down the road to the attainment of *shinjin*. At first glance, this may not seem like much, but in fact it is not a simple matter. For the

⁶This section can be read as an expression of anger directed at the Honganji for its moral directives issued at this time which, in accomodation to the anti-Buddhist sentiment within the political establishment, included honoring parents and the state as a religious obligation.

single basic impediment blocking the entrance to *tarikī* faith is the conviction that one is capable of practicing *jiriki* discipline. Although there are many kinds of *jiriki* disciplined praxis, the most common and universal is behavior considered ethical or moral. As long as one thinks proper moral action is indeed possible, the entrance to *tarikī* religion is ultimately blocked. It is an indispensable condition for becoming religious that one experiences [the disappointment incurred when] honestly seeking to mold one's behavior to conform to ethics or morality, one realizes that ultimately things will not turn out as expected. In the case of those who have not attained *shinjin*, since the primary objective is ultimately the surrender of the deluded *jiriki* mind, this experience may occur in reference to an assortment of different moral schemes: the teachings of Shinshū worldly truth, the teachings of contemporary social ethics or [current norms of] morality, the five precepts,⁷ the ten wholesome aspects of behavior,⁸ an attempt to do good in all actions, etc. But the teachings of Shinshū worldly truth are the most favorable because they are constructed in a way that directly opens the door to absolute truth.

Next, we will consider someone after he has obtained *shinjin*. Although we attain “the great pacified mind”⁹ as a result of *tarikī shinjin*, the habitual deluded mind of *jiriki* continues to arise nonetheless. Thereafter, when we hear teachings on worldly truth, they seem directed precisely at this deluded mind. Our reaction is to immediately attempt to put these ideals into practice. When we then engage in such practice, however, we eventually perceive how truly difficult this is. It is then we turn around and rejoice [once again] in our *tarikī* faith, returning to the attitude embodied in the phrase: “The ocean of the Vow [wherein the Pure Land is reached via the triple-mind] is a place

⁷*Pañca-śīla*. These are prescribed for all Buddhist laymen: no killing, stealing, illicit sex, lying, or drinking of intoxicants.

⁸*Daśa-kuśala*. There are a number of lists of 10 admonitions in the Chinese canon, Nakamura Hajime giving five in *Bukkyōgo daijiten*, 591. Kiyozawa is probably referring to the list advocated by Onkō 欲光, better known as Jiun Sonja (1718–1804) for lay Buddhists: no killing, no stealing, no illicit sex, no lying, no disrespectful language, no slander or abusive language, no dissension-causing language, no covetousness, no anger, and no false views.

⁹*Dai-anjin* 大安心. In general, *anjin* is taken as a synonym of *shinjin* in Shinshū, with some leaders such as Rennyo preferring this term. With this term, “great *anjin*”, Kiyozawa seems to make it clear he means a determinant, if not ultimate, religious attainment.

where there is no practice that has not been completed.”¹⁰

In other words, in the situation [of one who has attained *shinjin*], because their praxis is so difficult, the worldly truth teaching exists to deepen further with each thought a sense of gratitude toward the infinite compassion [of the Buddha].

Of these two approaches to the worldly truth teachings, the first is an example of “Taking a teaching from one context and applying it to another.” When people hear that in Shinshū there is the idea of a worldly/absolute doctrine of two truths or a mutually dependent two-truth doctrine, they may think this reflects a religion which has not forgotten about society and the nation—revealing they are unable [at this point] to grasp the *shinjin* of absolute truth. When such people diligently attempt to practice the Shinshū worldly truth in the form of ethics or morals, in the end this [experience] becomes a guide which brings them to a grasp of the *shinjin* of absolute truth. Yet the true meaning of the traditional doctrine of mutually dependent two truths is expressed in the second example given above [i.e. after one has attained *shinjin*]. It is precisely because one has reached absolute truth *shinjin* that he is not surprised by his inability to actuate [the morality of] worldly truth. And because he fails at this, his sense of thankfulness toward his *shinjin* in the absolute truth deepens. It is here that the individual truly grasps the implications of this relationship of mutual dependence and mutual support.

The practical value of the essential message of the worldly truth lies, therefore, in its fundamental meaning for those who have attained *shinjin*, but there are further implications to this. Although it is true that the issue of praxis in regard to worldly truth first becomes relevant because it is problematic, with the passage of time the practical value of worldly truth becomes apparent even without sensing the difficulties involved in its application. Finally, one reaches the point where, upon hearing words such as “worldly truth” or “morality,” he can savor the true implications of the mutually dependent two truths. Thus, while it may be impossible for me to implement this truth, [I know] such an impossibility is a matter of course. At the same time [that I am perplexed about my practice], this self that is

¹⁰*Shinshū shōgyō zensho* 1.541.

stymied is encompassed by an infinite compassion that will never yield. Truly the only emotion here is gratitude—a surge of humility and joy. This state of mind may not arise readily in the beginning, but in the end it appears instantly whenever one hears about “worldly truth,” morality, etc.¹¹

There is also a contrary proof of this. Someone involved with the Shinshū teaching of worldly truth may see the anguish another person goes through regarding common moral issues like “Should I abide by this or not?” or “Can I do without this or not?” On the one hand while pitying the misleading prejudices of that person who is still committed to models of moral behavior, on the other he delights in the peaceful acceptance of his own situation. Indeed, questions of responsibility or obligation as in “Should I...,” or “Can I...” occupy a predominant share of the agony¹² in our lives; their influence is simply enormous. Though worldly truth as seen in Shinshū may contain elements of a command idiom expressed in terms of “Do this.... Do not do that,” generally speaking, in its core it does not approve of such exterior pressures as “You should do this” and “You must not do that.” Even in cases where anguish is created from the use of such [enjoining language], it is not comparable to the anguish experienced under the deluded thinking of common morality. In other words, when arbitrary notions of “You must do this” and “You must not do that” are added to the delusory abstractions of common morality wherein one is merely ordered to “Do this.... Do not do that,” the situation [may escalate to where] it seems a solemn command has come down from God or the Buddha saying, “You absolutely must do this,” or “It is strictly forbidden for you to do that.” People accordingly come to think that the

¹¹Note Kiyozawa’s use of the passive action of “hearing.” Since all praxis directed toward personal liberation, not only that of morality or worldly truth, is considered futile in Shinshū doctrine, Shinran’s emphasis on hearing the Dharma (J. *mon* 聞) has held special religious significance in Shinshū. Distinguished from merely listening, the technical term *mon* refers to discerning or encountering the Truth through hearing the preaching of the Dharma. Though Kiyozawa’s use of hearing is somewhat different here as it includes ordinary social morality, it similarly implies a religious affirmation.

¹²煩悶 *hanmon*. The word translated here as “agony” has a special political ring to it because of the situation in Japan at the turn of the century when the nation was directed into wars against both China and Russia, and young people were under enormous pressure to conform to the new imperialist model for Japan created by its leaders. The suicide of Fujimura Misao, a prominent philosophy student at Daiichi High School in Tokyo, at this time expressed the anxiety of this generation and led to many copycat suicides.

crucial matter of their salvation will depend on their ability or inability to implement so-called proper moral behavior, consequently feeling “If I do not do this, I will not be saved,” or “If I do that I will not be saved.” It is a matter of course that an extreme anxiety thus develops in regards to one’s capacity to behave appropriately. Whether or not one is able to actuate the worldly truth teaching in Shinshū, however, has not the slightest relation to the most important fact of one’s salvation. Though there may be some anxiety over one’s ability to implement [Buddhist ethics as called for in scripture], not only is this incomparable to the agony arising from the delusory abstractions of ordinary morality, but the nature of [Buddhist and non-Buddhist] concerns in this area is completely different. One contains the agony of being tormented by demons, the other consists of feeling shameful before the great compassion of the Buddha. In one there are tears cried in fear and an intense anger at never being forgiven, while in the other there are tears which come from being touched by the depth of compassion and mercy [in the Buddha] which encompasses us anywhere, anytime.

Because of this orientation, the Shinshū worldly truth teaching is not something which sets out to impose prescriptions on human behavior. If it were offering regulations for our actions, we would expect its principle to be definite and precise. In fact, whether it be simple “rules,” a general notion of duty to the laws of the state, or the five [Confucian] cardinal virtues of benevolence, justice, politeness, wisdom and fidelity, the forms [Shinshū statements take regarding such obligations] are decidedly vague. Even in the basic formula of the “five good acts and five bad acts”¹³ or the phrase, “only excluding those who have committed the five grave offenses and those who have slandered the Dharma...,”¹⁴ the intent is, again, somewhat different. Of course if one

¹³This phrasing comes from the standard translation of the so-called *Larger Sukhāvati-vyūha* by Saṃghavarman, the *Wuliangshou jing* 無量壽經, an early work where the Sanskrit term *pañca-śīla* (n. 5 above) is rendered as “five good acts” 五善 *gozen*, in contrast to its more common translation in Chinese as “five precepts” 五戒 *gokai*. Not observing these five precepts was then termed the five “bad acts” 五惡 *goaku*.

¹⁴This phrase is added as a disclaimer in the famous eighteenth vow of the *Wuliangshou jing* wherein these transgressors are excluded from this promise to all sentient beings by Amitābha Buddha to guarantee birth in his Pure Land. The *Guan wuliangshou jing* 觀無量壽經 seems to make up for this lapse in universality by including even transgressors in its definition of who can enter the Amida’s paradise, and Shinran took this phrase in an admonitory rather than a proscriptive sense.

were seeking to reconcile these formula with each other, he could say that they all may be implying the same thing. But it is better not to force such an accommodation. Why? Because just as we have stated above, the worldly truth teaching of Shinshū is not aimed at its actualization; if anything, it is aimed at arousing the perception that its actualization is in fact impossible. There is no need to enumerate every instance of this in detail, just as there is no need to fix its meaning. It applies to whatever approach one takes; it is therefore acceptable to see this as either imploring one to practice what is said to be good or urging one not to do what said to be bad. In either case the individual will reach the point where he awakens to the fact that the perfect practice of neither is possible. Grasping this is nothing less than the elation of *shinjin* in absolute truth. The worldly truth teaching is thus nothing less than the means to perceive absolute truth from its back side by means of *shinjin*. That is to say, as opposed to the positivity of absolute truth, worldly truth is appealing for its negativity. For that reason it is a great misperception to think the worldly truth teaching exists in order to compel people to uphold standards of human behavior, or by extension to benefit society and the nation. If the worldly truth teaching were expounded as a basic duty to the laws of the state or the precepts of benevolence and humanity, as a matter of course it would be conducive to the performance of [these duties] to some degree. In fact [such concerns] are an appendant phenomenon. Since there is a degree of efficacy in these secondary aspects, however, their esteem in society has resulted in the main point [of the teaching] being overlooked entirely. Despite the fact that the essential thrust of the doctrine is religious, it is this appended moral elements that seem to be valued most highly; a strange set of circumstances indeed!

In general, when one speaks in the same breath of Buddhist worldly truth and morality or the nation-state (*kokka* 国家), one should take care to explicate the qualities of each. Looking first at worldly truth and morality, the primary need is to know what is meant by worldly truth. Upon trying to explain this, one immediately notices that worldly truth stands alongside absolute truth in the doctrine of *tariki* Shinshū. In other words, [Buddhist worldly truth] is not a teaching of morality but a teaching of religion; it is not a humanist teaching but a Buddhist teaching.

Seeing it in this way, it goes without saying that worldly truth is something to be explained by a religious person and that its goal must be to produce religious results. Is not morality, on the other hand, morality? It is certainly not religion. Morality is a humanistic teaching, and has nothing to do with the way of buddhas. Hence it should be expounded by a moralist with the goal of producing moral accomplishments. Although politicians do not avoid speaking about business matters, politicians are not merchants. Although the world of business is not unrelated to [the growing of] grain, merchants are not farmers. In that religion and morality are separate, there is no need to confuse their domains. If one does not recognize the distinction between religion and morality, thereby taking the stance that religion is none other than morality and morality is none other than religion, then any discussion of the relationship between Buddhist worldly truth and morality is pointless. Furthermore, in such a context one would not be discussing morality in relation to worldly truth wherein worldly truth is contradistinguished from absolute truth, for this position implies both truths are teachings of morality.

Let us now consider the relationship between worldly truth and state and society. Since in general the notion of worldly truth is a religious teaching, it goes without saying that its contribution to society and the nation-state is, at the same time, a contribution of religious merit. It is one thing to recognize someone's religious contribution [to society] in his energies toward expounding the absolute truth teaching. It is quite another to then turn around and criticize the same person because he has not devoted equal effort to propagating the worldly truth teachings [conceived to have more direct social significance]. If absolute and worldly truth were distinct, then it would be acceptable to say there is an insufficiency if we teach one and not the other. But as they reflect only the front and back of the same thing, there should be nothing lacking if we teach only one. In any case, there should be no argument that the contribution to state and society of affirming even worldly truth lies in its religious impact, so when we expound the absolute truth teaching, this is already in effect.

There is also an argument which states that while it may be acceptable to draw a distinction between religion and morality

such that religious people preach religion and moralists preach morality, it would be improper if morality is destroyed by one's teaching of religion. This is no trifling matter, but there is really nothing that can be done about it. If morality is that weak, then its dissolution may not be such a bad thing. It is, after all, the duty of a religious person to teach religion. And he fulfills that duty for purposes of religious efficacy, certainly not because he intends to do away with morality. For this reason, if morality were destroyed, morality would be destroyed by itself. One wonders, however, if such vague arguments are really appropriate to this discussion. Just what is the religious person supposed to preach [about morality]? He cannot choose between someone who has killed another and someone who has not. Frankly, it is irrelevant to the religious point of view whether the person before him is a thief or not, or whether or not someone who wants to commit adultery should be allowed to do so. [The preacher of religion] has no choice but to stress that infinite compassion does not base its salvific intent on discriminations among individuals who have committed murders, thefts, etc.

How does the moralist respond to this? Is this something which he feels will destroy morality, something which will vitiate humanist values? Anyone who immediately affirms such statements does so rashly. [They would be assuming] that he who consciously distinguishes religion from morality would be obligated for religious reasons to withhold condemnation for murder, theft, licentiousness, or falsehood. From a humanistic, moral point of view, murder and theft are heinous crimes; licentiousness and falsehood must not be permitted. The people who commit these offenses are all transgressors against humanity and, in a moral sense, depraved individuals. [It is thus without denigrating morality that we advocate] the religious person expound the Dharma from a religious standpoint and moralists preach from their own moral concerns. Standing separately, there is no hint of a conflict of interest. [Consider the mind of] someone who has committed one of the offenses mentioned above. If he were concerned with morality before feeling disturbed about religion, he would repent and thereafter devote himself to a moral path. If he gives precedence to religion, he would rush at once to a portal of religion. If he needs religion and morality combined, then, repenting his sin, he will commit himself to the

paths of both. If he is someone who does not reflect upon either religion or morality, he will probably wander in the dark night of his crime just as he is. From this perspective one can also understand those who have refrained from such transgressions.

In conclusion, we must recognize that vague arguments about religion being harmful to morality, or the establishment of Buddhism as leading to the destruction of humanistic values, etc. only invite misunderstanding. Issues such as these demand precision. The distinction between religion and morality should now be clear: [we expect] religious advocates to uphold the religious dimension of life and moralists to maintain standards of morality. If each works to his full capacity, then each will contribute his own meritorious services to the state and society.

Above I have expressed my understanding just as it is by letting my brush run freely on how the worldly truth of Shinshū and the so-called ethics and morality of society stand toward one another. This being a work written after I have become ill, I would like to express my apologies for it being at a stage where a certain carelessness has been unavoidable.