

***Shinjin*: More Than “Faith”?**

John Ross Carter

Colgate University

Introduction¹

I have been given invitations to present lectures before, on occasion being assigned a topic or asked to consider a subject of my own choosing. I have not been invited to do the impossible, until February of this year when the invitation was extended to me to speak about *shinjin* (信心). I am not qualified to present a lecture on *shinjin*, and yet I was asked by a good man to do so. Perhaps it is characteristic of us that when asked by a good man to attempt the impossible we, somehow, find it in ourselves to try to rise to the occasion.

I do not have a command of the language in which Shinran wrote that would enable me to read his writings easily or to carry his words in my mind—may I also say in my heart (心). Nor am I a Jōdo-shinshū or Shin Buddhist who has been nurtured by this tradition into a point of hearing the “overtones” of *shinjin* in my readings of the honored texts, in my hearing of sermons, in my listening to and participating in the chanting, in my own experience of the *nembutsu*.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am not qualified to present this paper to you, to speak on this subject. And yet—and yet here I am. I wonder why I am doing this. I wonder why I agreed to accept the invitation to do this, why I have tried to put my mind to the subject.

Let me begin to respond to this—*shinjin is alluring*. It is attractive, or at

Shinjin : More Than “Faith”?

least some of us find this notion of the goal of human life to be eminently worth pursuing, or at least pondering. I am not sure that I fully understand why. Perhaps it is part of our human “make-up,” part of what it means to be human, that men and women are so comprised, so made, that when we “hit upon” a notion like *shinjin*, it gives us pause and makes us consider what we have come upon. It is possible that this observation reflects my anthropology, a systematic reflection on what it means to be man, i.e., *anthropos*. It is also possible that my perception is associated with what it means to be human, i.e., *homo sapiens*. It has direct bearing on my understanding of religious man, man becoming genuinely human, i.e., *homo religiosus*.

What is it about us, or within us, that makes us take *shinjin* seriously, that makes us want to understand it, as reasonable men and women, that leads us to pursue it, initially to try to find some perspective for it, to hope for its arising or occurrence? I raise this as a serious question, one that I hope you will consider.

Some of us who are Jōdo-shinshū or Shin Buddhists have thought that realizing *shinjin* would be the fulfillment of our lives. One wonders why.

For those of us who are Jōdo-shinshū or Shin Buddhist, *shinjin* represents salvation, our only and final hope. Others of us who are students of this tradition, and primarily of men and women who participate in it, seek to understand too. We seek this understanding because through it, if we have the patience and humane sensitivity to discern it, we might come to learn something more about ourselves, about ourselves as men and women, about ourselves as religious persons.

Shinran seems never to have told us exactly what *shinjin* is, nor did he give us a path with methodical stages whereby we might follow into *shinjin*,² nor did

he set himself up as an example of a person who *has shinjin*. Yet, one gets a sense that he spoke from within *shinjin*.³ And millions of men and women since have found this focal figure worthy of deepest admiration. Would you agree with me that this is fascinating?

Speak to us about *shinjin*, talk about the conditionless, about that which is fundamentally inconceivable—that is impossible, and yet I invite you to join me in my thinking on this subject.

I want to consider two general points with you today: (1) reasons for my thinking that *shinjin* seems to mean more than the customary English and/or Christian notion of “faith,”⁴ that it is an *expression* of faith, and (2) wherein a Christian might find a deep commonality of religious experience long understood by Jōdo-shinshū men and women. I would like to take this approach primarily because it might be of some interest to you who have studied the texts carefully for years, who have already all the textual notes that I have been able to assemble in only a few months.

I

Someone has said, with a sparkle in his eye, that you have to be a little mad to be religious. There is some truth in this, I think, if the point be that one needs to discern the limits of reason and rationality and at that limit to determine whether one is met by a great abyss of meaninglessness—or madness itself—or whether one is met by that which is the source of compassionate understanding, whether the limit of rationality is irrationality or whether at the limit of rationality one finds that which simultaneously totally negates rationality itself, subsumes it, and transforms it into a mode of human

understanding that enables one to become aligned within oneself and also with the cosmos, into a form of human action that is consistent spontaneity.

Shinran, it appears, has told one everything that one needs to know. He has not told one everything about *shinjin*, such would not be in keeping either with this notion or with this man, it seems. He has not explained *shinjin*, that is, he has not leveled it out to make it plain. He has merely told one where to look, where *shinjin* begins.⁵

Let us focus briefly on the “diamond-like” *shin* (*kongōshin*) before turning to consider two other weighty perspectives: *shinjitsu no shinjin* and *jinshin*.⁶

A

When the diamond-like genuine (?) serenity (*kongō no shingyō* 金剛信樂) arises one no longer is in the presence of doubt and perplexity, because one has realized the true operating and sustaining principle of what we call reality, that to which the word reality points (*shinri* 真理).⁷ And when this diamond-like *shingyō*—impregnable from without, invulnerable from assault from within—arises, one is brought to the attainment of enlightenment.⁸ A person in whom the diamond-like *shinjin* (金剛信心) arises is “the absolute and incomparable practitioner.”⁹

This diamond-like *shingyō* (金剛信樂) or *shinjin* (信心) is, of course, not one’s doing; one receives it by means of the power of the Primal Vow (*honganriki*).¹⁰ Further, the diamond-like *shin* (心), we are told, is the Bodhi Mind (*bodai-shin*: 菩提心) and this *shin* (心) is Other Power (*tariki*).¹¹

It appears that a realization of this diamond-like *shin* (心) or *shinjin* (信心), which is given to us, which is based on the working of Amida, is not the kind of

state that would entail doubt; doubt about the soteriological efficacy of the Vow of Amida, about attainment of consummating birth in the Pure Land, doubt about the textual heritage, about the reality of the source of reality (Amida). This *shin* (心) or *shinjin* (信心) suggests *certain* insight into the nature of things, as they really, presently—and lastingly—fundamentally are. It seems to be the act of personalizing truth, when *shin* (信) permeates the mind and heart (*shin* 心). This mind and heart (心) recognizes that it is the *shin* (心) that is the *shin* (心) of Amida, that this mind and heart (心) cannot become dissociated from the *shin* (心) of Amida, is assured of fully becoming one with Amida's *shin* (心: a linguistic expression that nudges the edge of discourse about ultimate reality that is formless yet yields itself into discernible form) because the person's *shin* (心), by being honest and sincere (信) *is* true, and naturally is thereby embraced in Truth which is also Reality, never to be dislodged.

B

We turn next to *shinjitsu no shinjin*. We have been told in the texts that many engaging notions are the equivalent of the notion of *shinjin*. I first found this surprising; now I am beginning to sense its subtlety. Whether or not one is inclined to translate the second element in this compound (心) as “mind” or “heart” is a delicate and complex matter, although I am beginning to find myself, if a single English term is required, preferring the translation “heart.” But still our term *shin* (信) is there, in *shinjin* (信心). Without attempting to translate *shinjin* let us consider these two magnificent adjectives in *shinjitsu* (真実).

What is the force of this *shin* (真) and this *jitsu* (実) in the compound

Shinjin : More Than “Faith”?

shinjitsu? Almost in every case, when they are combined, they have been translated by superlative translators as “true and real.” This in itself is an extraordinarily weighty string of adjectives in the English language. On occasion one finds *shinjitsu* translated with the one English term “true.”¹²

It appears that the mind or heart of a person becomes the mind or heart of Amida when the person’s mind or heart is permeated by *shin* (信), and, consequently, also becomes worthy to be called *shinjitsu*. This is entirely consonant, I think, with the worldview, let me call it, of the Jōdo-shinshū heritage. This is a point to remember, because our theoretical problem of whether the notion “faith” is adequate as a translation is not a problem in the notion of *shinjin*, of course, but primarily with the adequacy of an English concept.

But we should not stress too much this oneness of heart/mind of Amida and the person in whom *shinjin* has arisen. Were we to do so we would lose the dynamic that Shinran realized, and many have since: the dynamic that one senses in genuine encounter of oneself and the salvific source of reality. *Shinjin* appears to be the actualization within oneself both of that encounter *and* within that encounter. So also is *shinjitsu no shinjin*. And this has been given to one by Amida. Continuing to refrain from translating *shinjin*, let’s look for a moment at *shinjitsu*.

What is the sense of “true” in the term *shin* of *shinjitsu*? What is the sense of “real” in *jitsu* of *shinjitsu*?¹³ “True” is a great English word and, for that matter, represents a great human concept, without which one wonders whether our human life on this globe would have been worth living.

But true, in customary English discourse, has as its contrasting notion

“false.” If one were to take *shinjin* to mean “faith,” one might say in customary English that one could have “true faith.” But, without further elaboration, this usage could also give rise to the serious question whether it might be possible for someone to have “false faith.” It seems to me that persons either have faith or they do not, not that their faith might be more true, more genuine, more authentic one day than on another. It would be presumptuous of me as a person, inadequate for me as a historian of religion, to say that persons might have “false faith.”

Let me suggest what *shinjitsu no shinjin* might mean. It seems to me that *shinjitsu no shinjin* could mean “true and real *shinjin*,” but “true and real” in a way that personalizes our customary categories of epistemology and ontology in one’s becoming oneself “authentic and actual” or “genuine and non-ephemeral,” but perhaps it could mean, most engagingly, “honest or sincere heart and mind that is rooted in Truth and in Reality.” It seems that this kind of *shinjin* is not merely an individual’s opinion, not merely a psychological state of mind, neither is it impersonally true or false, existing “out there” as something about which we could argue propositionally or verify through rational inquiry. This *shinjin* suggests that when one’s heart and mind is sincerely honest, genuinely so, to the core, from the heart (which also carries with it the realization of one’s dishonesty, genuinely so, to the core, from the heart), such heart and mind is also real, authentic.

One ramification of this way of thinking might lead us to see that personal truth, that is, sincerity and honesty, is fundamentally aligned, both epistemologically and ontologically, with Truth in the highest sense, even salvific Truth, and that this Truth is Reality in the highest sense, else, of course, it

Shinjin : More Than “Faith”?

would be neither true nor real. Perhaps I can put it another way. In *shinjitsu no shinjin*, one’s mind-heart merges with and is permeated by Truth-Reality, never to be separated by either one’s actions or any other agent. The person of *shinjitsu no shinjin* becomes true and real; the heart that is honest, sincere, true, is the heart that is real, genuine.¹⁴

This has come about through the power of Amida’s Vow, especially the Eighteenth Vow, as an expression of Amida’s compassionate light. When this occurs, one is lifted up and embraced by Amida, never to be forsaken.

C

There is another interesting dimension in this human realization that I would like to consider briefly, and this is the notion of *jinshin* or “deep” *shin*. Shinran discerned, in a statement by Shan-tao, an insight of significant import: Shan-tao tells us that *jinshin* (深心) is *shinjitsu no shinjin*.¹⁵ He continues,

One truly knows¹⁶ oneself to be a foolish being full of blind passions, having scant roots of good and transmigrating in the three worlds unable to emerge from this burning house. At the same time, one truly knows without so much as a single thought of doubt, that Amida’s universal Primal Vow decisively enables all to attain birth....¹⁷

Now, this “truly” knowing (*makotoni shinnu*: 信知) is, as we would put it in colloquial American English, really and truly knowing, that is, it is both genuinely, authentically known and at the same time it is actually, factually, empirically the case.

This mind or heart (*shin*: 心), this deep and profoundly insightful mind or heart, knows that one is oneself fundamentally inadequate, bound by

disorienting passions, fragmented, awry, that one's life is out of joint (*ki no jinshin*: 機の深心) and, *at the same time*, this deep mind or heart knows Salvific Truth (*hō no jinshin*: 法の深心), genuinely knows it.

This is the creative catalytic awakening that enables one to know oneself as one truly is without committing suicide, to see the reality of oneself without attempting to destroy it or suppress or repress it. One is enabled to do this because of the certainty of the constructive context in which this awakening occurs, in the embrace of Amida through the efficacy of the Vow. One is enabled to see oneself as simultaneously childish (*bombu*) and childlike, as foolish and as grasped by Salvific Truth, because one's mind or heart has been permeated by *shin* (信).

In *jinshin* that is *shinjitsu no shinjin*, this realization is certainly not a theory, nor is it something held to be the case by trusting that it is the real state of affairs; it is not a situation the full disclosure of which will come in the future. It no longer seems to be primarily a matter of entrusting. It is the realization of the actual situation, the way things really are. It is both within and simultaneously throughout the sincere heart, that is true and real, that this realization has arisen, it seems.

II

You would have noticed that I have generally refrained from translating our key notion *shinjin* (信心). In a symposium held at Harvard Divinity School in the spring of 1984, persons, who were spokesmen for the heritage of Shinran, were divided in their judgment whether *shinjin* should be translated as "faith." Christian theologians frequently make the point that the word "faith" means

Shinjin : More Than “Faith”?

many things, and then they set about to tell us what “faith” really means. Since recently beginning my work in the writings of Shinran I have found that I seem to move closer to an understanding of his thought when *shinjin* is not translated by “faith.” I think I am coming to see more in *shinjin* than the English word “faith” communicates. So, let me offer this observation and briefly try to elaborate its basis.

Not translating *shinjin* as “faith” because the notion of “faith,” in the religious strands of Western culture and the English language heritage, is so variegated is an important point. There is the other side on this issue that would hold that *shinjin* does not mean “faith,” and that is an important point also.

There is still another perspective, one that I am gradually coming to see. It might be that *shinjin* is a unique *expression* of faith shared by men and women in the Jōdo-shinshū heritage that should be shared in its fullness and in its magnificence as a creative testimony in the religious history of humankind. I think this testimony is best seen by others, if you will allow me this observation, by keeping the term untranslated, by trying to elaborate it, by sharing it, by introducing the term into the English vocabulary, and, perhaps a century from now, if not today, by participating with those religious persons, who have been nurtured in the Christian tradition through the Western heritage and also through the English medium, in building a deeper, perhaps revitalized notion of the modes in which faith has been and can continue to be *expressed*.

But there is another side to this perspective, too, one that is also important. In making our translations into English we are not translating merely for Christians of the West, we are doing our work for English-reading Christians in

Japan, for English-reading Jōdo-shinshū/Shin Buddhists in Japan and elsewhere, for English-reading Hindus, Muslims, Theravāda Buddhists, Jews, and others (including Humanists, Western secularists, and atheists, too).¹⁸ Persons in the religious traditions have their notions of faith, and, obviously, have expressed their faith differently. Are we adequately moving to the depth of meaning in the notion *shinjin* when we translate it, now, at this time, in our generation, by “faith”?

In a previous lecture here at Otani University, I gave a little time to an exploratory probe into the notion of *shinjin*, suggesting, along the way, that it seems, perhaps, *shinjin* is an expression of faith, that persons have expressed their faith this way. I, at that time, turned to the notion of *kimyō*, and followed upon that with a brief consideration of the idea of *hearing*, not merely listening to (*chō* 聴) but really hearing (*mon* 聞). I was searching for a zone in human religious experience that might be prior to *shinjin*, not in a sense that one begins there and methodically moves through stages to *shinjin*—I have not found that idea in the texts. I was looking for an incipient dawning or initial response that would tend to signal to me the presence of what I have been enabled to discern to be a response of faith.¹⁹

It remains possible that in the *chō-mon-kimyō* complex, if you will forgive my putting it this way for brevity, one finds an initial dawning of faith. In quoting a line from the *Larger Sūtra*, “will serenely listen to [*chō*] and hear [*mon*] the teaching of the World Honored One,” Shinran, writing from within *shinjin*, indicates that we are enabled to listen (*chō*) to the teaching, we are allowed to listen (*yurusarete kiku*), and that when one really hears (*mon*), one hears by sincerely entrusting (*shinjite kiku*).²⁰ We also read, “Hear [*mon*] is a word

Shinjin : More Than “Faith”?

indicating *shinjin*.”²¹

Closely associated with this is the notion of refuge. We read, “*Take refuge* [*kimyō*] translates *namu*. It means to follow the command of the *Tathāgata*.”²² And further, we are told, “*Namu* means ‘to take refuge [*kimyō*].’ ‘To take refuge’ is to respond to the command and follow the call of the two honored ones, Śākyamuni and Amida.”²³

It seems to me that one can listen to teachings without seeing the point, without hearing. One can read the words, or listen to them, without hearing a command, or gentle summons. One can, you see, simply not understand. More boldly put, one could even say No! And continue to say No. But one does not, and history testifies that persons have not. One can say the *nembutsu* without taking refuge, of course—this is merely a physiological articulation of sound. One can, of course, simply mimic an action. One could say that it is merely a ritual—but one does not, and history testifies that persons have not.

It seems that one expresses one’s faith by saying YES to *shinjin*, by initially giving oneself to the ongoing salvific dialectic of *shinjin*. When one first hears (*mon*), when one first takes refuge (*kimyō/namu*), one has already said Yes! One would expect Shinran, writing from within *shinjin*, to remind one that even in the breakthrough of the salvific realization of *shinjin*, in hearing (*mon*), in truly, sincerely saying the name, *there* is the activity of Amida. But one’s faith is to be seen in one’s responding by receiving, in one’s affirmation in accepting.

I am not saying that there is no faith involved in *shinjin*—quite the contrary; one finds the fullest expression of one’s faith in and through *shinjin*. I am suggesting that *shinjin* includes faith and yet means more than faith, that it is an

expression of faith.

In discussions that I have had in the English medium since arriving in Kyoto, “faith,” as a translation of *shinjin*, was rather the standard. For a while I assumed such to be the case until I began to hear, in English, something like “faith in self-power.” I even noticed in an English translation, “a *shinjin* of self-power,”²⁴ and I thought it stood for *jiriki no shinjin*. In time, I came to find that *shin* (信) is often used synonymously with *shinjin*. If *shinjin* meant “faith,” then how could one be religious and at the same time have faith in one’s own ability to save oneself?

There is a problem here, it seems, particularly for those of us who are Jōdō-shinshū/Shin Buddhists who find ourselves working within this internally developed vocabulary yet in the context of a religiously plural world, undeniably, manifestly so. In my studies of the religious traditions of humankind, I have found that this quality of faith, wherever one might discern it, has not been attributable to “self-power”; if it be so, it is hardly faith.

One of the fundamental points of the religious life, globally considered, is that, in the final analysis, we do not save ourselves. The way of salvation remains, at its irreducible center, *given*. Even in one of the traditions that at first glance would appear most in keeping with “self-effort,” namely, the Theravāda tradition, there remains the fundamental triple assertion: (1) the pre-existent *Dhamma*, Salvific Truth, was not and is not of one’s making, that the Buddha realized it and shared it, without alteration; (2) that it is the kind of salvific process that enables one to participate in it through discipline, that it supports one in working through it, that it yields its fruit as the person follows it; (3) that at the moment of the first salvific insight (*prajñā/paññā* =

Shinjin : More Than “Faith”?

magga-dassana) there is no self-effort, no striving of the will or of the mind, that the salvific moment of insight arises of itself—such being the natural order of things—and that subsequent occurrences lead naturally to full penetration of Salvific Truth.

Recently, I have found that there is no recorded passage where Shinran used the expression *jiriki no shinjin*. There are several occasions on which he spoke of *jiriki no shin* (心) and only two where he mentioned *jiriki no shin* (信). This, I found startling because it substantiated my hunch, and, perhaps, might be worthy of a sustained study. It is possible that *shin* (信) when it stands alone, and especially in the *jiriki* complex, is not synonymous with *shinjin*. Hence, one could take *jiriki no shin* (心) to mean something like “mind or heart characterized by self-power” and *jiriki no shin* (信) to mean “self-willed conviction”²⁵ or “trust in the efficacy of one’s own [acts],” being alert that in this latter usage, the trust involved simultaneously recognizes the penultimate utility of one’s own acts and the fundamental supportiveness of the Dharma-way.

One might still choose to refer to the Theravāda case as *jiriki no shinjin*, but one would fail to understand the process or the persons involved were one to say this is “faith in self-power.” There is faith involved, but not in self-power, not even characterized by self-power. There is faith that *Dhamma* is such that one can exert oneself in living it, in finding it supportive.

Perhaps one might propose that *jiriki no shin* (心) means something like “a mind/heart committed to self-effort,” committed to a way of discipline. This being sincere in self-exertion, entrusting to the reliability of the way in supporting one’s self-effort, *jiriki no shin* (信), is, in my judgment, already an

expression of faith, faith that expresses itself in commitment, in discipline, in self-power *only* in so far as *Dharma* is such that it enables this process of religious living to lead on to enlightenment.

I would suggest that there is another expression of faith, and that would be a sincere mind/heart totally turned over to and turned around by other-power, *tariki no shinjin*. This is the form that the expression of faith has taken in Jōdo-shinshū, it seems. From within the Jōdo-shinshū heritage, the commitment in and through self-exertion has been understood as “self-power within Other Power.”²⁶

There is a corollary to this interpretation. It seems that there is a complete parallelism in the way Shinran was enabled to discover that birth in the Pure Land can be birth, now, in this life, and realized in consummation, in enlightenment, in the Pure Land at the falling away of this physical body in death. The direction of the soteriological process is from Amida’s side, so radically, so compassionately, pervasively so, that one no longer “takes refuge” (*kimyō*) at one’s own initiative, as formerly was the case in the Buddhist tradition and still is now also for some persons in Mahāyāna and almost all in Theravāda. Even in the moment of really hearing with depth of insight, there one finds the arising of *shinjin* which is the activity of Amida. Just as the full soteriological realization has been brought closer to the “now” that each of us is presently living, from the moment of one’s physical death to the moment of the demise of one’s self-centeredness, so also the activity of the salvific agency has been discovered *in* the act of our taking refuge, *in* the act of one’s really hearing. And, it appears, in this arising of *shinjin* there is not only the arising of salvific insight in and of Reality but also the concomitant arising of

Shinjin : More Than “Faith”?

compassion in and of Truth.

If I were to search through the concepts of the Indian phase of the Buddhist movement for a term that would tend to parallel *shinjin*, I would tend not to find it in *śraddhā* but, rather, in *prajñā* present in dynamic equipoise within a heart and mind that is *prasāda*. Thinking through the vocabulary of our contemporary Theravāda Buddhist colleagues, who have followed and have been supported by a tradition at least 1500, if not roughly 2500, years old, I would tend not to find the parallel of *shinjin* in *saddhā*, but in *lokuttarapaññā*, “world-transcending salvific insight” which explicitly is not the activity of one’s mind and at the same time is the awareness that yields genuine compassion as seen in the Buddha, the One of Great Compassion (*mahākaruṇā-vant*).

I have not found another term in the writings of Shinran that could be translated readily into “faith.” I wonder why? Obviously one might tell me that the reason I have not found one is that *shinjin* means “faith”—that is the term. But still I continue to ponder this. Could it be that Shinran, in writing from the perspective of *shinjin*, was assuming, taking something for granted, and so did not stress a point because it did not need stressing?

Could it be that Shinran was not primarily concerned with the matter of, or question of, faith, but with a mode for expressing faith that could be realized as authentic, sincere, and true, being given in its realization and consummation by Amida in the time in which he was living (*mappō*)? My hunch is that this might have been his concern.²⁷

Wherein might one find this religious sense that I am talking about, that I am calling “faith”—a religious sense for which, apparently, there was not a

Japanese word used by Shinran? I think one might say that it is initially in discerning *the alluring quality of shinjin*, at least in our first sensing this quality, and responding to it, saying, in effect “Yes,” affirming both our commitment to attaining it and also, inseparably, our openness to receiving it. *Shinjin* is seen, but not yet really seen, acknowledged as worthy of aspiration, but not yet received.

Perhaps two observations are timely before proceeding: (1) to comment on Shinran’s view of man and (2) to comment on how *shinjin* would be understood in this case. Firstly, we have heard that Shinran viewed us as being fundamentally bound by our incorrigible human inadequacy, by the disorienting duplicity of our detrimental thoughts, words, and deeds, at a time when the vitality of Dharma was no longer readily discerned in the hearts of men and women (*mappō*). We are passion-ridden folk, we are told. And yet, Shinran is speaking from within *shinjin*. It has been said that Shinran had a pessimistic view of man. In my judgment, this appraisal of Shinran’s view of man is incomplete.

There is another dimension in Shinran’s view of man that I find singularly engaging. He had a very penetrating sense of the way any person of any rank and of any length of training could be open to the salvific activity of Amida at any time and at any place. This, I think, is remarkable. It suggests not only the comprehensiveness of Amida’s compassion but also a soteriological sensitivity on the part of men and women that is so keen that there is no need for one to lay out stages or methods for pursuing the goal. Of course, in the thought of Shinran, one could not “do the doing” that would be necessary to pursue these stages or methods in the first place. But I am drawing our attention to the other

Shinjin : More Than "Faith"?

side of the dialectic—"just hear," we are told, "just say the name." You see, just as one is, it can happen! That, I think we can agree, is fairly good news about us and, of course, about Amida's relation to persons.

Let me now raise some question for those of us who are Shin Buddhists, who have lived with, even if not also within, the notion of *shinjin*. Is it possible to say that one discerns the trustworthiness of this *shin* (信) -oriented way of life, "this side of *shinjin*," and that one entrusts oneself (*shinzuru*) to it, and to that which this way of life holds out before one (as a person who knows oneself sufficiently well, and feels deeply that even on this initial level one is not initiating this "true-ing," this act of deep, sincere, honest alignment of mind and heart), because the context that enables one to give expression to one's entrusting of oneself has been sensed, although not fully understood, to be supportive—no matter which way it goes, so to speak; no matter how things might turn out?

Moreover, can one have a sense of *shinjin* that one's heritage has handed down to one, that the texts have placed before one, that one's mind has dwelled upon, that leads one to keep it in one's heart and mind—a *jiriki* action that is not in discord with *shinjin* further down the way, so to speak? Can one have a glimpse of *shinjin* "this side" of *shinjin* that, further along, should *shinjin* arise, one could then look back to find that glimpse, then given, now fully attained in a gift which establishes one in certainty of enlightenment? I think it is possible. I leave it with you, of course, to provide the answers. Whether the occasion of the arising of *shinjin* is interpreted to be a radical conversion of one's entire existence, a vivid spiritual revolution of startling effectiveness, or expressed in other metaphors, I, again, of course, leave it to you to provide elaboration.

Now, in raising these questions it appears that I might be creating a *gap* of sorts, one between something like a *jiriki-shinzuru*, or first glimpse, and the full awakening of *shinjin*. Here is where it seems a dialectic arises,²⁸ when one gains a glimpse of what *shinjin* might mean, aspires for it, but realizes the self-oriented calculation (*hakarai*) that lurks in the depths of all one's actions. This creative dialectic would itself undercut any attempt to create "stages along the way." Behind every so-called "stage" would lie *hakarai*, whether one can discern it or not, or so it seems.

Yet, *shinjin* is alluring. Why? And the dialectic is in full swing.

It seems to me that this dialectic is first discerned as a process, one never ending except, perhaps, upon realizing consummating enlightenment upon birth in the Pure Land. The dialectic of which I speak seems to express itself initially at the dawning of one's discernment of the alluring quality of *shinjin*. At this dawning, the dialectic takes place between the person—involving heart and mind; this is not merely a cognitive exercise—and the idea of *shinjin*, the notion of *shinjin*. Deep introspection appears to be a part of this dialectic, an honest self-appraisal, a developing self-consciousness of the pervasiveness of one's shrewd calculations, the inadequacy of all one's designing—even of all one's imagining (*hakarai*).

This first phase of the dialectic occurs in the *context of one's existential uncertainty*; there is *anxiety* in this. Precisely on the issue that concerns one most, one's ultimate and only hope, one begins to see that one is absolutely helpless. And yet, one does not put aside the idea of *shinjin*, one hopes for it, knowing that this hope is *one's own* hope and is itself ineffectual. Yet one will not step away from this dialectic; this dialectic is itself an expression of one's

Shinjin : More Than "Faith"?

faith, it seems, perhaps an incipient expression. One wonders whether Amida is already at work in such persons.

There is, it seems, a second level in this dialectic, not in the sense of a stage, but more in the sense of an unfolding of the former dialectic process. Whereas the former process was a dialectic *between* oneself and the idea of *shinjin*, the unfolding opens *within* oneself, as the dialectic of *bombu*/*bodhi* mind, of one both foolish and possessed of the mind of *bodhi*. Whereas the former process operates in the context of one's existential uncertainty, it becomes transformed into and occurs within the *context of Amida's salvific reality*; it is freed from anxiety.

If you find this way of talking about your religious experience to be at least intelligible, where might one tentatively place the notion of faith with which I, admittedly without articulation, perhaps even inchoately, am working? Perhaps faith is present when one first discerns that fundamental meaning in life is found within this dialectic, even in its incipient phase, when one is enabled to respond to the idea of *shinjin*, to find a dialectic with an idea yielding to a notion, to be enabled to respond to what the notion might mean, to be enabled to enter into the fullness of the dialectic into the reality of what one truly is—*bombu* and of one mind with Amida.

When, then, would *shinjin* arise? One does not know, it seems. Assuredly it has arisen within some—always some *others*. And others might have left a testimony, that can be read today, that for them the realization of *shinjin* was an "all-of-a-sudden" kind of thing. And so it seems that others have spoken using temporal metaphors to refer to the immediacy of an actualization that one cannot cultivate. But, for oneself, perhaps one does not know except, also

perhaps, *by the absence of anxiety*,²⁹ when the dialectic continues, but totally within Amida's embrace.

It seems that one expresses one's faith by living within this dialectic, even initially, even haltingly, ever refreshingly so, with a deepening awareness that this dialectic is divine, will yield salvific fruition in certainty of birth and enlightenment some way, somehow along the way, and that when it does so, it will then be seen fully as the natural and consistent action of Amida.

I wonder whether it is possible to say that coming to see oneself as inadequate and, at the same time, finding *shinjin* alluring is already the result of the working of Other Power, that, certainly, if there is salvific efficacy in the Primal Vow that it, too, is Other Power. It would follow that profoundly realizing the incisive edge of the *jiriki-tariki* dialectic might already be the action of Amida. If this dialectic has been deeply sensed, through the action of Amida, in the natural course of things, one has hope that *shinjitsu no shinjin* will arise—not beyond the dialectic, but at its most sincere and honest core, in the unfolding of *bombu/bodhi* mind. It is, after all, pebbles or tile chips that are turned into gold, we are told.

III

What might one who aspires to live Christianly say in response to all of this? If *shinjin* is not best translated as “faith” and if it remains a fundamental religious insight, and if Christian men and women are also religious, wherein might there be convergence in religious experience on the theme of our subject?

First of all let me acknowledge that from “the Christian side” it is rather

Shinjin : More Than “Faith”?

easy to take *shinjin* as the equivalent of *faith* because at first glance the superficial internal structures of the two traditions appear similar: through a response of faith, which ability is given to one, one is born again and is saved to attain heaven at death. You can readily determine the parallel in Jōdo-shinshū. But turning our attention from structures to persons living in the two traditions, to the meaning that they have found in their religious lives, this analogy breaks down.

In the Christian tradition, the *homologous* dialectic, it seems to me, is not faith, but the salvific dialectic that arises in one’s heart when one expresses one’s faith in the act of becoming honest about oneself and sincere in one’s aspiration to become Christ-like, a dialectic which unfolds, through God’s Grace, into a deeper dialectic, but one free from anxiety, of the knowledge of what one is in oneself and, at the same time, acknowledging the dwelling of Christ in one’s heart, a dialectic that goes a bit further than what one might call an “impossible possibility” to an “uncertain certainty,” that one yet aspires to become “Christ-like” (to become Christian as an adjective), falteringly, while Christ is in one’s heart. The point that I am proposing is that *shinjin* means to persons of *shinjin* what I suppose “in-Christ-but-not-Christ-like” would mean to those persons who are. And further, the faith of those of us who aspire for the arising of *shinjin* is not foreign to the faith of those of us who aspire to be Christ-like.

Wilfred Cantwell Smith, my mentor of some years ago at Harvard, has written a sterling piece entitled “Christian—Noun or Adjective?”³⁰ In that work, Smith reminds some of us of the casual way we tend to speak of ourselves as Christians, that is, in the sense of the noun, and how we are given pause,

frequently embarrassingly so, at the thought of whether or not we are Christian, that is, whether or not we are characterized by the adjective, “Christ-like.” This is a “matter of the closet,” so to speak, in the personal privacy of one’s life. The same would tend to hold true for those of us who are Jōdo-shinshū Buddhists, for those of us who prefer to call ourselves Shin Buddhists, when we pause for a moment to reflect on whether or not we are characterized by the true purport of the message of the Pure Land, fundamentally, *shinjin*. Do you see it working?

I am a Christian, I have mentioned before here at Otani University. I am a failure in being Christian, that is, I am a failure in being Christ-like; alas, I have also said here before. Yet, this is the dialectic in which I find my faith being given its fullest expression. I am sure that there are those who could live this way, who have lived this Christ-like way, always *others*—the great children of God of the past and somewhere, surely, today. There is not yet evidence that I can.

Related to this comment that I have just made about others, you will readily sense the creative dialectic that the *myōkōnin* set loose in one’s heart and mind today.

The word “Christian” occurs in the Greek New Testament. Outsiders used it to designate a group of people; insiders used it to designate only those who were prepared to live life like Christ, even to the extent of giving up one’s life by crucifixion as Christ did, and later in martyrdom, in a Christ-like way.

Perhaps it is possible that *I* can never *be* Christian. Let me put it this way: it is possible that the particular person that I am, this *bombu*, is so constituted that it is impossible for me ever to *be* in a state that is Christ-like. Perhaps the

Shinjin : More Than "Faith"?

very most that I can aspire for is that I might be present at a moment when an *act*—not me in myself—is done that is Christ-like. At such moment, the *I* that I *am* would not be self-consciously present—I am not there at all, nor, I suppose, would *hakarai* be active. The act that is Christ-like occurs, and in that act is Christ, is God enacted, and that act is in Christ by the Grace of God. An old Gregorian chant puts it this way: *ubi caritas et amore, deus ibi est*—"where there is charity and love, there God is."

If I were a Roman Catholic Christian I might say that the realization of *shinjin* is homologous to the realization of the Sacred Heart, the very Heart of God in Christ, the realization of it, the actualization in reality of it, not only entrusting to it or hoping for it in future. As a Protestant Christian, I turn to the life of Christ, the quality of that life, as the unfolding within time and space of the revelation of God that enables me, in aspiring and in failing to live like that life, to come to know what God is like.³¹

My faith rests in the heart of God's saving love as held before me in the event of Jesus Christ. I have been enabled, by God's gift of faith, to place my heart in God through Christ. Somehow, this person that I am trusts that in God's love there is something in me that is salvageable, that if I were left to my wits alone I would be no more than a clanking sound of dull brass, both in quality of tone and in endurance of sound. Yet God accepts this person that I am; he gives to me the ability to receive this acceptance, which acceptance I aspire again to offer to God through Christ.

In Christ one finds evidence of one's fundamental inadequacy, of one's failure, and simultaneously, inseparably, one's salvation. And the dialectic has begun, perhaps beginning years ago when one responded to an idea, discerning

through the dialectic that the idea becomes a notion, even thereafter becoming aware of a notion yielding, in a sophisticated sort of way, to a religious symbol, but finding, eventually, that the dialectic is, and has been, with and at the heart of reality.

Christians have held that one is saved by faith through God's Grace, and not, of course, through acts of one's own: ecclesiastical disciplines or self-imposed regimens. This faith, of course, is seen to be a gift. But Christians who have written such things, as Martin Luther did, say, have spoken from within the gift of God in Christ, it seems. This is *the gift*, the unconditioned gift, the inconceivability of which is brought within our range of understanding by our speaking of it as the love of God for us, for all of us. This gift of Christ is *the gift*, and one's appropriation of its givenness is also a gift of God, and an expression of one's faith.

What does *shinjin* mean? It assuredly means more to a Jōdo-shinshū Buddhist than it does to an outsider. What does *shinjin* mean? I suggest that it means more than "faith." I suggest that it means for you men and women something like what I mean by the salvific activity of God in Christ, by the engagement with the dialectic of being inadequate and accepted, of being a failure in becoming Christ-like and yet saved by God through Christ in the indwelling of Christ in one's life. Hence, I think *shinjin* is an expression of your faith as I think Christ is an expression of mine. And the dialectic that is an expression of your faith is a dialectic known also to Christians who would seek for the continual Gethsemane of the heart: "not my will but thine be done."

But at the depths of the dialectic of *shinjin*, there is a plus factor, touched upon above in the brief comments about *shinjitsu no shinjin*. The point seems to

Shinjin : More Than "Faith"?

be that when *shinjin* arises, truth/reality is known in Truth, the equal of enlightenment. I am not able to see this yet; perhaps I must await death, when I shall know in Truth. Then, in the presence of God—my heritage has spoken of this as heaven—what would be the meaning of faith? I celebrate the availability of *shinjin* for you as deepening dialectic and as realization of Truth in fullness. I also celebrate the outpouring of compassion (Skt. *karuṇā*) that flows freely through the heart and mind that realizes the salvific insight (*prajñā*) into reality, that is made available. The outpouring of compassion I have seen in God through Christ. The salvific dialectic I find friendly. I will have to wait, I suppose, before I will know in Truth. And, I suppose, in the presence of such weighty and marvelous matters, a couple of decades makes little difference.

I am not qualified to speak about what it means to be Christ-like. Do you understand, understand deeply, what I mean in saying this? Would I be intelligible to you, in the commonality of our faith, were I to ask you whether you also have been enabled to be grateful with me in this fact, in my awareness of not being so qualified? Perhaps we also can be grateful for these expressions of faith, of the faith that we share.

NOTES

¹ This is a revised version of a paper I read at the Shin Buddhist Comprehensive Research Institute on March 4, 1986. Following suggestions made by several colleagues in Kyoto it has been decided to keep, in general, the original lecture format of this presentation rather than to revise it to fit the customary guidelines for an article submitted for publication.

I want to thank Mr. Robert Rhodes for making available copies of the

original draft of this lecture for colleagues attending the session. I also want to thank Professors Hisao Inagaki, Michio Tokunaga, Mr. Dennis Hirota and Mr. Nobuo Nomura for their valuable comments.

² Perhaps I might be allowed to make an addendum to our procedures in Buddhist Studies, in studies about Buddhists as religious men and women, by saying that it is rather easy to talk about the “difficult path” (*nangyōdō*), but much more difficult to speak about the “easy path” (*igyōdō*).

³ How might one begin a consideration of *shinjin*? Of course one might turn to Shinran, but what does one find—a shaveling simpleton, a person who called himself “short-haired stupid person” (Gutoku), and one is immediately knocked off balance because one readily perceives that he became a profoundly insightful man, that he was enabled to unmask our human deceptions, and thereby to help us to find the source of our healing by letting us see ourselves exactly as we are in a context, indeed, in a cosmos, that is fundamentally, ineradicably, compassionate.

Shinran was powerful in his meekness, a forceful presence in his radical self-effacement, profoundly simple in his observations about the complexities of the human condition, dynamic in his quiet gentleness; while sent in exile he was reaching out to be supportive of others, a person exerting great influence without having self-motivation, a person who communicated to us the bondage that is our experience and who thereby led us to a position to discern wherein our freedom might begin. When one considers a figure like Shinran, evaluations by customary analysis tend somehow to miss the mark.

⁴ Shortly after agreeing to present this lecture on the notion of *shinjin*, I found a microfilm/xerographic copy of a Ph. D. dissertation by Morris

Augustine, entitled “The Buddhist Notion of Faith.” With some sense of excitement I began to read this work. In his comprehensive study of the general sweep of the Buddhist tradition, Augustine brings together a great deal of information. However, he starts his discussion of *shinjin* without raising the question that I am here attempting to raise. *Shinjin*, for Augustine, means “faith,” with no further discussion. I refer to Morris Jerome Augustine, “The Buddhist Notion of Faith,” a dissertation presented to The Faculty of the Graduate Theological Union in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Berkeley, California, May, 1978, Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms International, printed by microfilm/xerography in 1982. See especially his chapter IV, “The Notion of Faith in Shinran’s *Kyōgyōshinshō*,” pp. 175–225.

My own presentation, “*Shinjin*: More Than ‘Faith’?” might appear in need of a *definition*, of a definition of “faith.” In many cases, one might expect this: provide a definition of faith and argue wherein a notion might be different. Or, on the other hand, define the primary notion and show how it does not fit well one’s definition of faith. Matters are not always so easy. If I will have demonstrated that we need to continue our discussions of *shinjin* and faith, then, to a considerable extent, the point of the paper has been made. If *shinjin* is somehow “more than faith,” then how would we—all of us—set about to discuss what we mean by faith?

⁵ Professor Michio Tokunaga, in an unpublished lecture, “The ‘Non-Self’ Aspect in Shinran’s Concept of ‘Faith,’” given at the Second Biennial Conference of the International Association of Shin Buddhist Studies, Honolulu, Hawaii, on August 3, 1985, takes the position that “Shinran’s ‘faith’

is nothing but the negation of self-power mind” (p. 7). Perhaps this is where *shinjin* begins in one’s religious life, with the negation of “self-power mind.”

⁶ One of the first things that one meets in attempting a serious textual study of *shinjin* is the way many terms become gradually associated with this one key notion. There seems to be a funneling effect; many ideas seem initially to form a cluster, to become more fully understood as they tend to be interpreted from the perspective of *shinjin*, become merged in, if not collapsed into, the notion of *shinjin*. Once this process of understanding occurs, there is an “out-pouring” process of seeing how the many terms spread out with heightened nuances, a broadening spectrum of meaning. I have in mind terms like *daishinjin* (大信心), *shingyō* (信樂), *kongōshin* (金剛心), *shinjitsu no shinjin* (真実の信心), and *jinshin* (深心/信), to mention only a few.

All through the texts we see a centripetal movement by Shinran, pulling all of these notions together, giving to his readers some hint of how these notions, perceptions, ideas, tend to converge in *shinjin* (信心). Further, and also all through the texts, we see a centrifugal movement by Shinran, letting these notions extend the matrix of *shinjin*, spreading out into a widening spectrum. But it seems that more is going on. There is evidence that Shinran spreads it out before us, so to speak, presenting an elaborate display of initially apparently dissociated ideas. Just at the moment that this is discerned, it seems that Shinran makes another move, to hold the idea in focus, as it were, carefully turning it around, letting us discern flashing reflections of Amida’s light, as we would look at the slowly revolving diamond that is *shinjin*. And all the while, if one were to look for a statement by Shinran telling us that he *has shinjin*, one would look in vain, it seems.

We realize that this is the work of a person who referred to himself as a "simple shaveling," or the like; we realize, too, that he was a remarkable religious genius providing us with a paradigm of religious language at work, moving with purpose by refraining from attempts to be explicit about *shinjin*, knowing that explicitness on this point would yield to a more fundamental paradox, allowing us to reconsider the issue again and again at our present level of understanding by means of creative, catalytic contradiction.

Our colleagues at the Ryukoku Translation Center have thoughtfully put together textual references to a list of twenty related terms appearing in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, a list that probably is not exhaustive. See *Kyō Gyō Shin Shō (Ken Jōdo Shinjitsu Kyōgyōshō Monrui): The Teaching, Practice, Faith, and Enlightenment—A Collection of Passages Revealing the True Teaching, Practice, and Enlightenment of Pure Land Buddhism*, under the direction of Mitsuyuki Ishida, translated and annotated by Hisao Inagaki, Kosho Yukawa, Thomas R. Okano, "Ryukoku Translation Series," Kyoto: Ryukoku Translation Center, 1983 [of the work first published in 1966], pp. 122–124, and note 1, pp. 122 ff., providing elaboration.

In a brief consideration of *shinjin* one is met with a disappointing requirement, namely, to be selective. In attempting to meet this requirement, one realizes that there is a serious possibility that the whole might be misrepresented, that one runs the risk of failing to communicate the interlinkage of subtle notions. Consequently, my decision to select one cluster of terms and not another might reflect my own misunderstanding, might result, also, in failing to communicate the core dimensions of *shinjin*, might also give rise to a situation in which some are able to see the point of this paper while

others might not. Selectivity on an author's part also requires "filling in" on the part of the reader.

We are told that Shinran discovered the integrating singularity of what the texts presented to him as three *shin* (三心) seen as one (*isshin* 一心): we read that *shishin* (至心 "sublime mind/heart"), *shingyō* (信樂 "genuine serenity"?), and *yokushō* (欲生 "assurance of birth") all are not penetrated by doubt and are to be seen as the one *shin* (一心) that is the cause for Nirvāṇa: *shinjitsu no shinjin*. *Ibid.*, pp. 101, 103. See also the important passage at *ibid.*, pp. 176.

Shinran notes that the three *shin* (三心) are not mingled with doubt. He concludes that they are the *shinjitsu no isshin* (真実一心). This is called *kongō no shinshin* ("Adamantine True Mind"), which is itself *shinjitsu no shinjin*. See *ibid.*, p. 112. And we read also that "This *shin* (心) arises from the Wisdom of Infinite Light." *Ibid.*, p. 124.

Let me mention at this point the important notion of *yokushō*, "aspiration for birth" or "desire to be born" in the Pure Land. This notion might provide a helpful analogy to what I will attempt to communicate regarding *shinjin*. Let me try to explain. It is not difficult to understand how a person might desire to be born in the Pure Land; our human predicament impinges upon us with sufficient dislocation that further elaboration on this point is not necessary. However, in the thought of Shinran, it seems, even this aspiration or desire, when it is authentic, genuine, sincere and true, and, hence, also efficacious, is turned over to us by Amida.

One then can discern something like two dimensions of this notion: the first is our readily understandable human response to the potential for transcending the life-context by seeking to live through life in a broader

Shinjin : More Than “Faith”?

context, in light of the Pure Land. And yet, try as one might, in the final analysis it is not our desiring or our aspiring that gives rise to true and real *yokushō*.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 20. See also *The True Teaching, Practice and Realization of the Pure Land Way: A Translation of Shinran's Kyōgyōshinshō*, Volume I, Yoshifumi Ueda, General Editor, “Shin Buddhism Translation Series,” Kyoto: Hongwanji International Center, 1983, p. 57.

It seems to me that in this diamond-like *shinjin*, one is not getting a glimpse of something, not seeing “through a glass darkly,” not committing oneself to something—there is nothing more to which to commit oneself, if, indeed, one can even do this of one’s own will in the thought of Shinran. This diamond-like *shinjin* arises simultaneously with birth that is the birth of those definitely settled to become born in total consummation in the Pure Land at the demise of this body, then to realize enlightenment.

⁹ See *The True Teaching...*, p. 156. cf., *SSZ.*, II, 41.10.

¹⁰ *KGSS.*, *RTS.*, p. 111. There are noted at least ten benefits accruing to a person with diamond-like *shin* (*kongō no shinshin*), but I should think paramount is the realization, actual realization, that one “transcends crosswise the Five Evil Realms and the Eight Hindrances...” *Ibid.*, p. 120

¹¹ *The Kōsō Wasan*, “Ryukoku Translation Series,” Volume VI, Kyoto: Ryukoku University, 1974, wasan # 19, p. 39.

¹² As, for example, at *KGSS.*, *RTS.*, pp. 106, 108. Often this phrase, *shinjitsu no shinjin*, is found in a semantic cluster involving the activity of Other Power, either in the sense of *tariki*, more literally translated “other power,” or in the

sense of *rita*, carrying the connotation of “benefiting others” or “others’ benefit” in the sense that it is resultant from “other power.”

Our *shin* clusters appear in a significant passage found in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*: Since this *shin* (心) [the context seems to allow us to take it either as *shingyō* (信樂: “genuine serenity”?) or as *shishin* (至心: “sublime *shin*”?)] is the Tathāgata’s Great Compassionate *shin* [*daihisshin* 大悲心], it necessarily becomes the rightly determinant cause for the Recompensed Land. The Tathāgata, pitying the sea of suffering multitudes, endowed the unhindered, great Pure *shin* [*jōshin* 淨信 “unblemished sincerity”?] to the ocean of all beings. This is called the *shinjitsu no shinjin* of the Other-Power.

I have attempted to avoid translating *shin* (心/信) to some degree, but have otherwise followed the English translation provided at KGSS, RTS., p. 108.

It would seem that the *shin* (心) that is the person’s and the *shin* (心) that is Amida’s meet when, as a result of Amida’s great compassionate *shin* (大悲心), pure *shin* (*jōshin* 淨信) is given to persons, causing to arise in persons the *shinjin* (信心) that is *shinjitsu no shinjin*.

¹³The texts contrast *shin* (真) with *ke* (仮), translated as “temporary,” and *jitsu* (実) we find contrasted with *gon* (権), translated as “expedient.” *The Jōdo Wasan: The Hymns On The Pure Land*, translated and annotated by Ryukyo Fujimoto, Hisao Inagaki, and Leslie S. Kawamura, “Ryukoku Translation Series,” Kyoto: Ryukoku University, 1984 [second edition of the first edition, 1965], wasan # 71, p. 103.

Elsewhere, in speaking of *shin* as used in the expression “true disciples of Buddhas,” *shin* (真) is contrasted with both *gi* (偽), translated as “false” and *ke*, again translated as “temporary.” KGSS, RTS., p. 129.

Taking a glance at *ke*, "temporary" and *gi*, "false," we find the following: "Temporary' refers to the various beings in the Path of Sages and the beings who practice the meditative and non-meditative good deeds of the Pure Land Path." Further, "False' refers to the sixty-two and ninety-five wrong views." *Ibid.*, pp. 131, 132.

I was surprised to read in a footnote about *gi*, "False' refers to non-Buddhists." *Ibid.*, note 1, p. 132. I, for one, would certainly hope this is not the case.

¹⁴We are told that when *shinjin* arises, a person is definitely assured of attaining enlightenment, never to regress, becomes firmly rooted in salvific truth, soteriological reality. Great care is taken to stress that this birth, this attainment, occurs immediately. *Notes on 'Essentials of Faith Alone': A Translation of Shinran's Yuishinshō-mon' i*, Yoshifumi Ueda, General Editor, "Shin Buddhism Translation Series," Kyoto: Hongwanji International Center, 1979, pp. 34–35. See also *Jōdo Wasan*, wasan # 59, p. 91.

Some might want to see this immediacy primarily in terms of "clock-time," but it appears that it indicates, however, the immediacy of the salvific occurrence, that *there is no gap*. If there were a temporal gap, so to speak, there would have to be another stage, another agent, some other means to close it. From "our side," in human terms, we have tended to express the non-existence of that "gap" by turning our attention to the most infinitesimal instant of time, to look there for the moment when time itself is pressed to its limits and there to meet that context in which time itself occurs. The moment is so infinitesimal that our human reactions cannot get involved. This moment (*ichinen*) is in time but not of time.

The important work by Oscar Cullman, *Christ and Time*, provides an interpretation of a sense of “fullness of time” (Grk. *kairos*) in the more linear process of time (Grk. *chronos*) that might prove engaging in a comparative analysis of *ichinen* in the context of *shinjin*.

¹⁵*The True Teaching...*, p. 139, Cf., *SSZ*, II, 34. 9.

¹⁶I draw to your attention that this phrase (*makotoni shinnu*: 信知) was not translated “One knows in faith,” a provocative point suggesting the issue at hand. This translation was by the Shin Buddhism Translation Staff. The RTC staff has similarly translated *makotoni shinnu* at *KGSS*, pp. 106, 112, for example.

¹⁷*The True Teaching...*, pp. 139–140. Cf. *SSZ*, II, 34. 9–11.

¹⁸I understand that there is a rather recent movement called Shinran-kai which has generated some restlessness among colleagues in Kyoto about the possible ramifications of this movement’s emphasizing the assured and ready acquisition of *shinjin* or attainment of *shinjin*. I suppose Jōdo-shinshū ministers in the United States, and elsewhere, might find concern among their parishioners who live in areas where the evangelical Christian mode is strong. In these Christian circles, great stress is placed on the attaining of faith—now, or as soon as possible. A pastoral concern, let us call it, that I would have for these Jōdo-shinshū Americans would also, I suppose, lead me not to translate *shinjin* with “faith.”

¹⁹John Ross Carter, “On Understanding Religious Men and Women,” *Ken kyū sho hō* (Bulletin of the Otani University Shin Buddhist Comprehensive Research Institute), Kyoto: Otani University, January 31, 1986, pp. 20–26.

²⁰So Shinran glosses *chō* and *mon* at *KGSS*, *SSZ*, II, 8. 3. See *The True*

Shinjin : More Than “Faith”?

Teaching..., p. 77, where the phrase “will joyfully listen to” seems not to communicate the subtlety that Shinran discerned.

²¹*Notes on ‘Essentials of Faith Alone’...*, p. 37. Cf. *SSZ*, II, 626. 7.

²²*Notes on the Inscriptions on Sacred Scrolls : A Translation of Shinran’s Songō shinzo meimon*, Yoshifumi Ueda, General Editor, “Shin Buddhism Translation Series,” Kyoto: Hongwanji International Center, 1981, p. 45. Cf. *SSZ*, II, 484. 11.

²³*Ibid.*, p. 51. Cf. *SSZ*, II, 488. 6–7. The passage of Shan-tao’s that provides a basis for Shinran’s gloss occurs here and also in *KGSS*: in the RTS series on p. 46, and in the SBT series, noted as *The True Teaching...*, on p. 109. Cf. *SSZ*, II, 21.13.

²⁴*Letters of Shinran: A Translation of Mattōshō*, Yoshifumi Ueda, Editor, “Shin Buddhism Translation Series,” Volume I, Kyoto: Hongwanji International Center, 1978, p. 23.

²⁵*Notes on ‘Essentials of Faith Alone’...*, p. 39. Professor Tokunaga has recently shared with me that the Shin Buddhism Translation staff also found that *shinjin* when associated with *jiriki* and used in a negative sense seemed awkward, and hence their translation of *jiriki no shin* (自力の信) as “self-willed conviction.” But, I note, *shin + jin* does not so occur. Cf. *SSZ*, II, 627. 11.

²⁶See *Letters of Shinran: A Translation of Mattōshō*, p. 20.

²⁷From another angle, one might note that the general Western orientation to individualism is so dominant that one strand of interpretation of a dimension of faith is in highlighting its role in the formation of bases for community—loyalty, a sense of propriety, courtesy, reliability, which is often already the case in the supportiveness of Japanese village and community life.

²⁸By introducing the term “dialectic” I do not wish to make matters more complicated or complex than they are. I am using the term in a tentative way—for the time being—in an attempt to underscore an “interplay” between dimensions of one holistic discernment. By no means would I want, at this stage in my thinking, to introduce a Hegelian framework of thesis/antithesis/sublation into a new thesis yielding another thesis-antithesis process. It would be tempting to apply this schema, but to attempt it would, perhaps, superimpose a remarkable paradigm of calculation onto a subject that is not designed to bear it, so it seems. Nor would I want one to infer that my use of “dialectic” pertains primarily to proper reasoning, although this is a straightforward sense of the word.

I use “dialectic” here as a creative process of dynamic interrelationship of dimensions that work through each other while operating on each other.

“Dialogical” might be a helpful notion to introduce in this context. I would tend to interpret this notion to include both a sense of communication into deepening understanding in the interplay of the dimensions, a process involving intelligibility based on a mutually interpenetrating fundamental principle. Consequently, one would discern in *logos* not only “word” or “speech” but primarily the classic Greek notion of *logos* itself. Suggestive in this usage would be the homologous relationship of *logos* and *jinen hōni*.

²⁹Paul Tillich has written about faith having to do with “Ultimate Concern,” and this is an important contribution, one worth noting. But one senses behind Tillich’s notion the German sense of *Angst*, a deep, anxious, concern. I note this here because this notion of “concern” seems not quite to fit *shinjin* or the salvific insight attained by other Buddhists. Tillich’s sense of “dynamics of

faith" is somewhat akin to my use of "dialectic" in this paper, but Tillich's frame of reference suggests that he is finding that dynamic to be, fundamentally, between his Greek heritage and his Palestinian heritage, as these have contributed to the formation of his expressions of faith. This is seen in the "faith and reason" discussions. Tillich's notion of "the courage to be" seems to be an attempt at resolving the tension he sensed between faith and ontology, as it were, between God and Father or our Lord Jesus Christ and the Absolute.

As significant as this thinker's contributions have been, they seem unwieldy as reference points in Buddhist-Christian discussions.

³⁰Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Questions of Religious Truth*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1967, pp. 99–123. This insightful thinker, although not working with materials drawn from the Jōdo-shinshū tradition, has demonstrated points of convergence in other cases that have provided theoretical structure for some of my considerations in this paper. I note his important piece, "A Human View of Truth" in John Hick, editor, *Truth and Dialogue* (London: Sheldon Press, 1974). One of my former students mentioned that this one work by Smith was the most significant piece that she had read during her undergraduate years. His work in *The Meaning and End of Religion: A New Approach to the Religious Traditions of Mankind* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1963), *Faith and Belief* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1979), and *Towards A World Theology: Faith and the Comparative History of Religion* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1981) provides insight into the historical development of some of the key concepts involved in this paper.

³¹If I were a Jōdo-shinshū or Shin Buddhist thinker who set about to communicate with persons in the *nembutsu*-way the religious affirmations

shared by Christians, I think I could do-worse than to say that Christians, *as an expression of their faith*, have said the salvific activity that we have discerned to be the Universal Primal Vow has become “enfleshed” in Jesus, the Christ. Although when they stand before God in Christ they always measure themselves and find themselves to be fundamentally wanting, they simultaneously receive the reconciling activity of God in Christ. They, as an expression of their faith, have called “grace” what we tend to speak of as Amida’s *hakarai*. They seek the fulfillment of human life in simultaneous self-effacement and in giving praise to God in a way closely akin to the *nembutsu* when it is sincere, honest, true, and real. For them, God in Christ makes life worth living—and death worth dying. For us, Amida’s gift of *shinjin* has a similar depth of meaning.

C. S. Lewis has written in a little work of considerable insight, *Screwtape Letters*, something that suggests an alertness that Christians have about one’s own *hakarai*. He has an elder figure determined to distort, an elder satan, advising a junior satan, in the latter’s attempt to lead a new-found Christian: Catch him when he is being genuinely humble and whisper in his ears or lead him to say “By Golly, I’m being humble!” It is similar to the case of one seeking to negate one’s will coming to the point of saying, “I’ve just negated my will on that matter; right on, good job!”

I note also that the discussion of dimensions of interreligious understanding of men and women who are Buddhists and Christians is seriously developing in the United States. And this discussion is not taking place in a closed context, between two groups as it were, but is developing in the broader perspective of a religiously plural world, one of the empirical facts of our

Shinjin : More Than "Faith"?
existence.