

## The Future as the Essential Moment of Faith in Shin Buddhism

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As is well known, Shinran succeeded in positively overcoming the future-oriented propositions of faith in the Pure Land teaching. This is the reason for his subsequent insistence on the idea of the “Rightly Assured” that salvation takes place at the moment one surrenders himself to the Other Power. When Shinran commented upon Shan-tao’s statement: “In the forethought, one’s life comes to end, and in the afterthought, one instantaneously attains rebirth (in the Pure Land),” and interpreted it as: “One’s acceptance in faith of the Original Vow is the end of one’s life in the forethought,” the overcoming of the futuristic tendency of the teaching appears to have been realized.

However, so long as the expression: “Aspiring for birth in the Pure Land” is used and the Pure Land is regarded as the home all sentient beings should aspire for, it is impossible for us to wipe out all futuristic elements. Honen’s decision to adopt the Pure Land teaching, discarding the Holy teaching inevitably involved looking to the future for attaining eternal bliss, forsaking Enlightenment in this life. For Honen Amida’s Pure Land—expressed as the realm of the fulfillment of the Original Vow—was one yet to be realized in the future, in which all sentient beings are called upon to attain rebirth.

What was then the significance of Shinran’s attempt to overcome the futuristic tendencies? In order to pursue this question, I have tried in this thesis to focus my attention to such questions as “What does the Future mean to us in the strict sense of the word?” “How can the Future be distinguished from its adulterated counterpart?” and, “What is the moment, whereby the genuine Future could be

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brought about?"

In short, it aims at clarifying that for Faith Future is not something merely to be overcome, but it is a positive moment which reveals, through the anxiety and hope we hold for the future, what the true, genuine faith is at this moment.