SYMPOSIUM:
PURE LAND FAITH—CHRISTIAN FAITH

Refocusing the Dialogue

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T HIS ESSAY is based on the lecture I gave at the annual symposium of
the Eastern Buddhist Society and on the discussion with colleagues and
the audience. This event was a further step in my engagement in Buddhist-
Christian dialogue, which dates back to 1999, when a delegation of priests
and professors of the Ōtani tradition came to Philipps-Universität Marburg
for discussions on the topic of "Jōdo Shinshū und Evangelische Theologie"
and which has continued in personal exchanges and conferences at both
places, culminating in my visiting professorship at Otani University from
2006 to 2008. Since then I have kept in touch with Jōdo Shinshū issues.

Seishinshugi

Let me first share some of my impressions while working through the
anthology of Shin Buddhist writings edited by Mark L. Blum and Robert F.
Rhodes under the title, *Cultivating Spirituality* (originally published as *An
Anthology of Modern Shin Buddhist Writings* by the Shin Buddhist Com-
prehensive Research Institute at Otani University in 2001). This collection
of essays by Kiyozawa Manshi 清沢満之 (1863–1903), Soga Ryōjin 曽我量
深 (1875–1971), Kaneko Daiei 金子大栄 (1881–1976), and Yasuda Rijin 安
田理深 (1900–1982), together with the commentaries of the editors and Paul
Watt, documents the attempt "to reinterpret Shin Buddhist teaching for the
modern age" as it is "confronted with the rapid westernization of Japan that

began with the Meiji Restoration in 1868."[1] I am struck by the frontier situation and the antagonism of the powers in those days, and also by the fate of religion, Buddhist, Shinto, and Christian and its existential, academic, and institutional situation.

These priests and scholars underwent turmoil throughout their lives. They were first welcomed and later expelled from their academic positions and from the priesthood, then finally restored. Kaneko Daiei has the roughest biography: "forced to resign from his professorship" in 1928 and reinstated not earlier than 1940, "purged from the . . . faculty" after World War II in 1949, and in 1952 he "once again resumed teaching at Ōtani University as emeritus professor . . . until 1974."[2]

I would like to focus here on the concept behind the keyword *seishinshugi* 精神主義, the term that was "given to a set of principles that prioritized personal, subjective experience as the basis for religious understanding, as well as the praxis that ideally brought about realization."[3] Mark L. Blum does not hesitate to claim that *seishinshugi* may be understood as the "most important new conception of Shin thought since Rennyo reformed Honganji in the fifteenth century."[4]

The philosophical approach of this movement is close to the program which, decades later, the German (Marburg) theologian Rudolf Bultmann (and others) called "existential interpretation." I note a common basis for both concepts: the hermeneutics of subjectivity, by which is meant the hermeneutics of a personal, existential approach towards traditions. Robert F. Rhodes maintains: "This 'subjectivist turn,' which locates both Amida Buddha and his Pure Land in the self-awareness of the believer, is a major theme that underlies modern Shin Buddhist thought."[5] Kiyozawa insisted "that Shinran's message on other-power was something *existential* rather than doctrinal."[6]

Kiyozawa Manshi and Soga Ryōjin

To illustrate this emphasis I offer the following testimonies from Kiyozawa and Soga, which were my own starting point in the Buddhist-Christian dialogue.

[1] Rhodes 2001, p. 1.
[2] Ibid., pp. 164–65.
[3] Blum 2011, p. 3.
[4] Ibid., p. 32.
[5] Rhodes 2011, p. 163.
[6] Blum 2011, p. 34; italics added by the author.

One week before his death Kiyozawa Manshi dealt with "The Nature of My Faith" (*Waga shinnen* 我信念). In this essay he claimed that there is an essential interrelation between "the individual who believes (*ki* 機)" and "the Dharma that is believed (*hō* 法)." He laid stress upon the "personal experience" and the "salvific effect" of faith.[7] This is the context in which the following must be read: "Faced with the truth of the powerlessness of my own efforts, I [know I] lack the ability to stand on my own, but this Tathāgata, in whom I am able to believe as the fundamental embodiment of the sacred, has the power to make me what I am." For him, the Tathāgata is "infinite compassion," "infinite wisdom," and "infinite power." "The Tathāgata in whom I believe did not wait for the next world, but brought me enormous happiness here and now." And he adds: "As I have not experienced happiness in the next life yet, I cannot comment on that."[8]

Soga Ryōjin: "Soga breaks with earlier Shin dogma and interprets the figure of Dharmākara Bodhisattva (Hōzō Bosatsu 法蔵菩薩) as a symbol of the awakening of faith in human beings."[9] In critical dispute with Christian traditions concerning the mediation and the mediator of salvation he maintains: "As a human Buddha, Dharmākara Bodhisattva is, as such, the eternally existent Amida Buddha; at the same time, in another aspect, he is the true subject of the self that seeks salvation. I have expressed this idea with the words 'the Tathāgata is none other than myself,' and again have sensed it as 'the Tathāgata becomes me.' "[10]

The fates of these persons and institutions in their fundamental crisis and turmoil might be somehow comparable to the disaster in Germany at the end of World War I and to the radical changes and breakdowns in the early period of the Hitler dictatorship and—within a globally completely different situation—to the worldwide civil disturbances and even riots of 1968. However, the student movement happened more than four decades ago, and sometimes I wonder where the agencies of discontent, resistance, protest, and creative departures can be found today. Surely, there are active energies in political, aesthetical, and religious countercultural movements, but there is no really effective transfer into the ruling national and international power structures and into the dense grids of global governance. I aim at a new appreciation and reinforcement of the "subjective turn" and I wonder

[7] Kiyozawa 2011, pp. 93–94.
[8] Ibid., pp. 95–96.
[9] Rhodes 2001, p. 3.
[10] Soga 2011, p. 112.

where and how this endeavor can be re-discovered and re-enacted in the interreligious dialogue.

Dialogue

To unfold my interest in the existential interpretation and in the "subjectivist turn" more broadly, I would like to offer some more general remarks concerning the interreligious dialogue and its dynamics. I would argue that subjectivity is the foundation on which dialogue has the chance to be effective and to reach deeper levels of encounter.

Any interreligious dialogue is a rather abstract and artificial endeavor if the participants behave as if they were expected to exchange controversial doctrinal positions as "officially" and objectively as possible. For in this case it would mean that the representatives of the religions in dialogue are supposed to try to present their institutions and traditions and also themselves in an extremely neutral way. This means that in this process their life story, their personal existential attitudes towards this tradition and its various-real and possible-present manifestations, will be suppressed in an artificial way. For ordinarily, at least in modern times, men and women develop an open and critical, somehow nevertheless balanced attitude of identification and of mental and ritual distance over against the system of religion in which they are involved. Moreover, in strict relation to this observation: in the given religious institution itself one can find very different profiles in all areas of teaching and religious practice: doctrines, prayer, liturgy, meditation, social engagement. Women and men necessarily generate their own positive selection, construct new interrelations and exclude certain aspects. In their special way of thinking, feeling, and acting they develop their own *gestalt* and a "credo specific to their personality" (*persönlichkeitsspezifisches Credo*), a term coined by the well known representative of "pastoral theology" Klaus Winkler.

Winkler is interested in the "embedding (integration) of the individual modalities of faith in psychogenetically conditioned and psychologically distinct ways of life. Character imprints and basic attitudes towards life shape themselves when, in consecutive phases of childhood, the individual gains the chance of continuously increasing his or her autonomous coping with life challenges."[11] According to my understanding, this conceptualization of development has to be extended to further stations of one's life cycle, reaching far beyond childhood with its social, political, cultural, and religious

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[11] Winkler 1982, p. 161 (Author's translation).

parameters; and these have been highly visible in the biographies of the Shin Buddhist teachers mentioned above. We need to integrate these personality-specific factors also into the process and into the whole atmosphere of an "official" interreligious dialogue.

Purely dogmatic debates or clarifications of doctrinal positions are neither an adequate starting point nor an appropriate focus or target within interreligious dialogues. Doctrines are the result of historical and sometimes also contemporary controversial theoretical religious debates in the context of social and ideological power conflicts within a religious organization and/or in confrontation with a political system. In certain periods of critical social development they might designate an authoritative position which is—so to say—"temporarily final." However, exactly because of this, character doctrines are not suitable as a starting point for encounter and exchange for historically completely different situations. A setting of an entirely different nature must be invented so that a fruitful encounter can take place— an encounter that does not aim at setting up borders to define limits. So, I would like to raise the question: are there concepts for an effective and fruitful encounter which does not end up drawing lines of partition but rather opens up horizons for potential exchange?

Participant Observation

Perhaps the approach of the anthropologist Bronislaw Kasper Malinowski can be supportive. He is often referred to as the first ethnographer who did his research mainly by experiencing and sharing the everyday life of his subjects. Malinowski developed the concept of "participant observation." "To participate means to live together with another person, to adjust oneself to his or her culture, to stay in his or her social environment, and to speak his or her language—summarily: to realize a switch in perspective and to perceive the world with the eyes of another—at least for a certain span of time."[12] Michael Pye has augmented Malinowski's program by speaking also of "observant participation." In this way an even more adequate though risky proximity to the subject of research can be realized. In Buddhist-Christian dialogue for example, Pye claims that scholars of religious studies almost become theologians, though not completely (*nicht ganz*), and at the same time almost, though not completely, become representatives of Buddhism.[13]

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[12] Sundermeier 1996, p. 26 (Author's translation).
[13] Pye 2004, p. 12.

Realizations of such a concept might include: reciprocal invitations to participate in festivities and religious ceremonies; discussions on an intellectual as well as on a personal level of issues other than doctrine; and analyses of everyday reality, the orders of rituals, the structures of religious organizations participating in the dialogue, noting the extent of financial and institutional dependencies.

Our Otani-Marburg exchange has been carried through not only by means of lectures and seminars but also by mutual participation in liturgical activities, not to mention all sorts of social events or more or less official academic banquets as well as "social hours" and informal "parties" (within the faculty as well as open to students). I would also like to mention the special unit of a four-hour project on "sutra-drama" which I was invited to lead, in which participants delved into a text of the Pure Land tradition by means of body-work, play on the stage, and active imagination. Personal interactions with colleagues in a more private setting, such as on long-distance journeys, sometimes extended even further by traffic jams, added to the diversity of impressions and information I encountered, as did talking and travelling together with academic colleagues, Buddhist priests, or laypersons, as well as with other representatives of the Japanese people.

Mirror Communication

In favor of a clearer understanding of how an interreligious dialogue might function and become valuable, I would like to introduce yet another model concerned with subjective and symbolic interaction, derived from the fields of depth psychology and psychology of religion. Peter Schellenbaum coined the term "mirror communication" (*Spiegelkommunikation*). Mirror communication "generally aims at the perception or awareness (*Wahrnehmung*) of something which belongs to oneself, but which up to that moment had still been a part of one's unconsciousness, yet was visible in a still foreign, external image, in order that it might finally become a mirror image."[14] Such "images" might be icons and all sorts of symbols, rites, myths, narratives, and dreams, but they also might be well-known personalities: the therapist as well as other people—those one admires as well as those by whom one is disgusted. In the process of this communication, a mutually vivid to-and-fro between "image" and spectator occurs. And, whilst it is a process of growing identity, it takes place within the tension of remaining differences—for mirror images never become identical with their counterparts. Rather, they are

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[14] Schellenbaum 1981, pp. 9–10.

meant to facilitate a discovery of roles and aspects of one's own life and ego, which had theretofore been known only to one's unconscious mind and had thus remained inaccessible as potentials for one's path in life. Under these aspects, encountering different religious traditions will not only stimulate and promote a new, more differentiated perception of the respective counterpart but also contribute to a critical and positive self-perception.

The spectator never becomes identical with the "image" of the counterpart. He does not fall into the mirror (so to say). Sundermeier offers necessarily paradoxical phrases for the final results of a dialogue process: ". . . to be with yourself [*bei sich selbst*] and to be with the foreign other person [*der Fremde*] at one and the same time, to accept strangeness [*Fremdheit*] which does not eliminate familiarity and intimacy [*Vertrautheit*], to keep a distance which is proximal and includes being-together with the other."[15] As Sundermeier writes, invoking Habermas: "Insofar as Habermas cannot allow the foreign to stand as foreign, does not take its context seriously, and drags it into his own rational, complex world of life and symbols, he universalizes his own context and precisely in doing that he loses any claim to universality."[16] From an existentialist point of view, I would like to add that certain manifestations of distance and strangeness will remain not only towards the foreign person, the stranger, but also towards my own self.

An interreligious dialogue should neither end up in reassurances and self-affirmations nor consist of attempts of outdoing each other based on the conviction that one's own tradition is more complex, truer, or more healthy. Rather, dialogue could lead both to mutual enrichment as well as to irritating alienations or provocations. In such a dialogue I would hope to encounter strange or even embarrassing elements, aspects which have not yet been detected thoroughly enough in my own tradition and could potentially vitalize or deepen it. As far as Western traditions are concerned, I imagine, some of the crucial issues under de- and re-construction are: ego concepts, all sorts of ontological "traps" in terms of reification (*Verdinglichung*) and objectivations, areas of bodily and mental experiences, and expressions (not only "mystical" in a narrow understanding of this term).

So as a partner in encounter I will be stimulated and enriched. However, I cannot expect my partner in this dialogue to go through a similar process with the tradition he or she brings to the dialogue, nor should this be my aim. How he or she reacts is beyond my manipulation and control. And, in any case, I do not have to instruct my interlocutor on what should be learnt

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[15] Sundermeier 1996, p. 132.

[16] Ibid., p. 92.

from the encounter with my tradition, and which of his or her conceptions and practices he or she should alter in consequence.

I would like to present an open list of activities in areas of research and potential exchange-areas which do not place the emphasis on verbal and mental/intellectual communication, but rather on experiences and performances. Such areas are: playing, praying, meditation, and silence.

Playing

Playing is a special attitude towards the entire environment of life (Lebenswelt). Role playing, theater exercises, and all sorts of rituals and liturgies are essentially connected with bodily experiences and bodily expressions. In order to dive deeply and holistically into a religious tradition, it is meaningful to proceed not only mentally, but also bodily. And, that means that all sorts of mental and bodily associations and remembrances, feelings and emotions, or affections come up that might have been repressed or which are not accessible just by studying books and by intellectual exchange.

This is the reason why, to me, liturgical training programs and the hermeneutical approach of Biblio-drama/sutra-drama seems to be quite valuable and effective—also in interreligious dialogue. Here is a chance to enlarge and to deepen the levels of exchange. This drama work is a special mode of entry into the understanding of religious texts and rituals. It is an experimental, text-oriented, playful interaction within a group. It is based on physical body exercises and meditations, on methods derived from linguistic text-analysis and from humanistic psychology (psycho-drama), from play, and theatre pedagogy.

As far as my own experience in this field is concerned, and also to illustrate the approach, let me mention the following.

At the "5th International Lotus Sutra Conference in Marburg" (May 2002) I offered a theatre workshop dealing with sculpturing situations and encounters related in chapter 4 of the Lotus Sutra.

During my visiting professorship at Otani University (2008) I was invited to lead a process of "sutra-drama" dealing with the story of Ajātaśatru in the "Sutra on Visualization of the Buddha of Infinite Life."[17] Colleagues and graduate students did body work, analyzed text units, did role playing, and meditated at certain locations mentioned in the story (e.g., the vulture peak in Rājagriha, the royal palace, the Land of Utmost Bliss of Amitāyus[18]) and

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[17] Inagaki 1994, pp. 317–50.
[18] Ibid., pp. 320–21.

stepped forth and back from one place to the other. All this was meant to participants to find one's own stance within and even beyond the plot of the story (see Martin 2010).

In "Tenri University and Marburg University Joint Research Project: Prayer as Interaction" (Marburg, September 2006) we had an open liturgy workshop sharing cultural and religious body expressions and experiences in different genres or types of prayer—for example: invocation, adoration, petition, penitence, and lament (following Wittgenstein, these are quite distinct "language games"; see Martin 2007). For me this was an important contribution to our exchange—especially since members of Tenrikyō perform "Teodori" in their services, a dance with hand movements (see Morishita 2001).

Praying and Meditation

Praying could be understood as a subdivision of play in so far as—from an anthropological point of view—it is a religious body exercise since it is related to certain bodily expressions, movements, and techniques (especially concerning heartbeat, breathing, and voicing/singing). Praying can be just private, but essentially it is also part of liturgies celebrated by religious communities. Liturgy is another wide area of body sensations and bodily manifestations of feelings and expressions. This focus could be a base for further studies on the *nembutsu* as well as on the mantra-like "prayer of the heart" in the Christian Orthodox Church.

Not only prayer but also meditation could be included under the aspect of bodily play. Even if the aim of certain stages of meditation is to leave the body entirely, the body remains the medium for reaching that aim. In such a process, the physical and energetic state of the body and its awareness may change radically.

To Be Silent and To Remain Silent

Though there is a close connection between playing, praying, and meditation, praying and meditation are and remain activities in their own right and have their own dynamics. It also makes sense to associate both with the religious practice of being silent and remaining silent.

Moreover, silence is a special religious—so to say—medial or even passive activity without, below, and beyond language. That means it is a-verbal and trans-verbal, and as such silence is another body technique. Silence is a religious exercise in the everyday life and cloister liturgies of monks and nuns with the intention of increasing distance to the world and re-focusing

communication completely. Within the protestant Christian tradition, Quakers celebrate long periods of a so-called "silent worship"—waiting for the Holy Spirit to take over, that is, to appear and to speak. Going beyond this realization and the usual short periods of silence during Catholic services, Rudolf Otto conceptualizes a "unifying silence" aiming at the "interior union and communication with the Presently Invisible,"[19] also in the sense of a "mystical" human community. According to many traditions everything, even *words* of the deity arise from "silence."

At this pivotal point, at the very latest, we are back in academic and hermeneutic discourse, and here we are confronted with a paradox from the very beginning. Essentially mystics have to conceal something and are unable to go beyond that to express their truth. According to Kaneko Daiei: "Words . . . are concepts and cannot express the reality that we experience directly . . . truth is inexpressible."[20] Mystics have to keep something secret, being quiet. However, time and again they cannot help but reveal their insights, which they try to communicate verbally. When dealing with the spiritual truth of *seishinshugi* there is also a certain need for arguing and reflection. Here lies the chance and the commitment of "existential theology." Communicating verbally also means to turn back to personal and academic exchange and encounter by means of terms, definitions, logical—sometimes paradoxical—thinking, as well as by means of narratives and poetry. Poetry of all sorts, parables, hymns and other songs, *kōan* 公案 and *haiku* 俳句, not to mention *Gutoku's Notes* (*Gutokushō* 愚禿鈔), may be an even more adequate medium to communicate religious life.

Formation Programs

In 2008, I already brought up the question of "practical" training in the academic education of Shin Buddhist priests. Are there training programs to study the art of playing and praying, the art of performing rituals and the art of being and remaining silent? Or do teachers still trust in the concepts of "learning by doing" or "learning by imitation"—that would mean just taking over patterns of behavior from parents, teachers, and significant others? Admittedly, this way of learning has been and still is, in cultural history, the most common and effective way in all developmental stages and ways of life.

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[19] Otto 1923, p. 173.
[20] Rhodes 2011, p. 168.

In Conclusion

I am aware of the fact that my contribution is a rather personal statement, based on my special interests, experiences, and impressions in recent years and on my ongoing academic studies. Nevertheless, I hope that this short essay is not *merely* private, since my observations and positions arose in a field of ongoing academic and personal exchange. The title: "Refocusing the Dialogue" is meant to be a re-view as well as a pre-view: looking forward, developing ideas, and opening up horizons.

RESPONSES

The Possibility of the Subjective
Turn in Interreligious Dialogue

KADOWAKI KEN

The Subjective Turn and Interreligious Dialogue

Professor Martin has stressed the nature of the subject established by Kiyozawa Manshi and Soga Ryōjin as being "a subjective turn," or "the existential hermeneutics of subjectivity." The subjectivity that these two established was indeed free from traditional political and religious authority. This subjectivity was, however, also different from the ego of the self-centered, imperialistic politicians of the Meiji period (1868–1912). This ego was a parallel of the ego that supported the independence of the Meiji state. It saw its mirror image in the other countries of Asia and, without engaging in dialogue with these countries, attempted to assimilate them through violence. It was unable to recognize an other, or admit any difference in the mirror image it saw.

The subjectivity established by Kiyozawa and his counterparts was not based on that sort of political, secular plane, but instead on a transcendental one. They opened up this purely religious, transcendental plane by peeling away religious authority from the secular, political authority with which it had become fused. That is what is referred to as *seishinshugi*, "spiritualism," or "cultivating spirituality."

On this plane of *seishinshugi*, subjectivity is absolutely reliant on the Tathāgata. Or, one could say that the ego, the center of the self, is handed over to the bodhisattva. That is, in this subjective turn, the subject is brought up from the plane of the secular to the plane of the spirit, while also becoming absolutely dependent on the Absolute.

It appears that Kiyozawa's dialogue with Western philosophy, Soga's dialogue with Nichiren, and Kaneko's dialogue with the *Garland Sutra* (*Kegonkyō* 華厳経) all played major roles in their respective subjective turns. They were able to discover both similarity and difference within the mirror image provided by their dialogue partners, and were therefore able to critically consider their own *shinjin* 信心, or "faith."

Playing a Part and the Message Directed to Me, Alone

What we seek after in interreligious dialogue is affirmation that religions are religions in spite of their many differences by recognizing their common forms. Through interreligious dialogue, we confirm the common form of "believing in something," despite differences in the content of that belief. One such form is reliance on the Absolute. That reliance can be seen within a variety of concrete physical expressions, such as play, prayer, and silence. During our visits to Germany, we did not just engage in verbal dialogue, we also experienced many concrete expressions of this reliance on the Absolute, such as standing in the solemn silence of magnificent German churches or participating in the ritual of receiving communion at a church in Marburg.

Also, under the guidance of Professor Martin, we experienced acting out the tragedy of Ajātaśatru here at Otani University. The experience of playing one character in that sutra play left a very strong impression on me.

Following Director Martin's instructions, we relaxed our bodies and climbed on stage. Then, we played one of the characters. I cannot say whether Professor Martin, who served as the director, was God or the Devil, but we each took on one character based on his instructions. What does it mean exactly, to play a specific character?

For example, when Hamlet was ordered by his father's spirit to play the character of avenger, he wondered whether that spirit was the Devil. In asking "To be or not to be; that is the question," he is questioning whether or not he should play that character. However, when he ultimately does take on the character of his father's avenger, the problem of whether this spirit is the Devil or not is not resolved. He chose to follow the direction of his father's spirit, even if playing that character would lead to his complete

destruction, just as Shinran followed Hōnen's encouragement to say the *nembutsu*, even if it might lead to hell, or Socrates followed the god's order to practice philosophy, even though it led to a death sentence. Their obedience to these orders was possible because each saw the order as directed solely to themselves. We each took Professor Martin's instructions as none other than a "message directed to me" and played our characters in obedience to his orders.

Similarity and Difference

By playing a certain character in this sutra play, I was able to establish a subjectivity of "absolute obedience" based on a "message directed to me, alone." That is, through this sutra play, I experienced a subjective turn. That was a concrete experience of a religious form that can serve as a basis for interreligious dialogue. Further, when each person physically acted out a character, the individual expressions were all original. When another person plays the same character, the physical expressions are necessarily different. However, through those differences, we were able to recognize the similarity in that they were playing the same character, while also seeing the differences as valuable expressions of originality.

Interreligious dialogue—especially one that takes each other's physical expressions and daily customs as a medium—should be able to form relationships where similarity is confirmed while differences are respected even more.

A Few Questions about Dialogue and Faith

KIGOSHI YASUSHI

It is a great honor to have this opportunity to meet again with Professor Martin, and I sincerely hope that it will enable us to further deepen our dialogue with Christian thought.

I have known Professor Martin since 1999, when we here at Otani began a joint research project with Marburg University. My time today is too limited to convey my many memories from our various collaborations or the positive results I have gained from those interactions, but bearing these in mind

as well, I would like to contribute my part to this symposium by discussing two things. The first is related to how I personally approach the issue of dialogue between Shin Buddhism and Christianity. I will describe an experience that occurred in the course of our exchange with Marburg University that affected my approach, and would like to hear your thoughts about it. The second is related to faith. Concerning this issue, you have pointed to thinkers such as Kiyozawa Manshi and Soga Ryōjin, and I would like to go in the other direction and ask a few questions about faith in Christianity.

Let us start with the aforementioned personal experience, which I had at the conference in 1999 and which has continued to influence me strongly to this very day. Since this conference was the first serious attempt at exchange between scholars of Shin Buddhism and Christianity, we chose to focus on aspects that seemed to be relatively similar in each of these respective faiths. The agenda was broad-ranging, including such topics as Shinran's *shinjin* 信心, or devotion, and Luther's faith, Amida Buddha and God, Jesus Christ and Dharmākara Bodhisattva, and so forth. I had previously attended several courses at a Christian university and therefore had some relevant background, but for me too, this was the first opportunity to do research in dialogue form, and I remember being rather tense during our exchange.

I was in charge of the subject of *shinjin*. My counterpart in the dialogue was Professor Hans Martin Barth, who discussed Luther's *sola fide*, salvation through faith alone. How is faith gained? Who is its subject? These and many other issues were on our agenda, but before we knew it, our time had run out and the event was over. Seeing that I was somewhat satisfied by our discussion but still unsure of myself in the format of dialogue, Professor Barth was kind enough to invite me to dinner.

The two of us went out for a meal with Professor Ōkōchi Ryōgi, who represented Otani University's research in German literature and served as our interpreter. We went into a Mediterranean restaurant, and once we finished ordering, Professor Barth said to me, "So, before we eat, let's continue the discussion." He immediately asked, "You said that the core of Buddhist faith was entrusting (*kie* 帰依), but to what do you entrust yourself?"

> I replied, "In Buddhism, it's entrusting oneself to the teaching."
> Professor Barth instantly asked, "What is meant by the term 'the teaching'?"
> I replied, "It's the truth shown by the Buddha."

Professor Ōkōchi provided us with an accurate and swift interpretation, but as we were nevertheless careful not to burden him too much, the

conversation was moving forward in very simple language. After I had said "truth," Professor Barth asked another question: "What is truth?"

I was thinking about all sorts of things, but in order to be able to explain myself as simply as possible, I finally gave the following answer: "It's the law of dependent arising."

Then Professor Barth suddenly said something astonishing: "Kigoshi-san, God is the one who created that law of dependent arising."

Both Professor Ōkōchi and I were a bit startled, and I was at a loss for words. And yet—maybe because I was young—I sensed that if I remained silent this attempt at interreligious dialogue would end in failure, so the next moment I replied: "It was under the law of dependent arising that God, too, was created."

Professor Ōkōchi, who had appeared to be equally amazed at Professor Barth's declaration, nodded in approval and cheerfully translated my words. For a second Professor Barth looked perplexed, and I remember how I was somewhat nervous that the friendly conversation before the meal might turn into an argument. And yet, the next moment Professor Barth extended his hand with a smile and said, "This discussion seems to have come to its conclusion. Come on, let's eat."

My tension was at once relieved, and my shoulders loosened up. I will probably never forget this event for the rest of my life. In terms of winning or losing a debate, or of human tolerance, it was a complete loss on my part. Nevertheless, these kinds of considerations did not bother me at all. The only thing I felt, on seeing Professor Barth's smile and friendly hand as he said that the discussion could not go any further, was that it is not so important whether "God created the law of dependent arising" or whether "God was created under the law of dependent arising." For Buddhism, the wall standing in the way of dialogue with Christianity is "the existence of God," and for Christianity the wall is "the non-existence of God" in Buddhism. It is a totally unbridgeable chasm between the two. However, through this exchange with Professor Barth, I have started to think that while this decisive difference indeed amounts to a deep gap, actually it is of little consequence. Was it the "law" that preceded God or the other way around—this important issue does exist, but ultimately it is nothing more than a question of "what came first." It is quite possible, while leaving the chasm as it is, to promote spiritual dialogue with regard to the question: How should deeply sinful humans live their lives?

I would like to hear what Professor Martin thinks about my experience or these thoughts about dialogue.

From this perspective, I would like to ask a few questions about today's lecture, particularly with regard to the theme of faith. You have referred to the way faith was understood by Kiyozawa Manshi and Soga Ryōjin. I think you have observed issues that, when aiming to understand Shinran's *shinjin*, touch right to the heart of the matter. My question, following your observations, is quite a simple one.

Shinran's *shinjin* is said to be an awareness, or mind, granted through the Original Vow, which is based on Amida Buddha's compassion. *Shinjin* contains two elements: recognizing one's deep-rooted evil, and entrusting oneself to Amida Buddha, who ceaselessly wishes for that individual to seek a pure world. Kiyozawa discovered in this awareness the birth of a new subject, and Soga went as far as describing that subject by saying, "The Tathāgata becomes me."

Now, my question is, can a similar structure be seen in Christian faith? The sinless Jesus Christ took upon himself the sins of all humanity, and redeemed those sins by being crucified. This redemption was recognized, and Jesus was welcomed back into Heaven. I wonder what sort of relationship exists between this chain of events and the faith of individual Christians.

More specifically, I would like to ask about the following four points:

1. How is the redemption by Jesus Christ related to the personal faith of a Christian?
2. What sort of new worldview does God's forgiveness bring about for the Christian?
3. For the Christian, is personal faith related to the discovery of a "new subjectivity"? If so, what is that "subject" and how is it described?
4. Would it be unsuitable to attribute the concept of *jihi* 慈悲, compassion, to God?

Rejoinder to the Responses

GERHARD MARCEL MARTIN

Response to Kadowaki Ken

Even though you do not pose any question as such, I would like to react briefly to your contribution. I appreciate that you support my general concept of different media in religion (playing/praying/meditation/silence/theoretical reflections) and my specific idea that these different media are also valuable tools in interreligious dialogue. I would also like to thank you for amplifying and concretizing my short remarks on "sutra-drama." Just here I would like to add a remark. You mention twice my "instructions" during the workshop and that the participants "played (their) characters in obedience to [my] orders." However, in my concept of sutra-drama I would never take the role of "a God or the Devil" in such a workshop. The leaders of such workshops just make suggestions and invite participants to take over roles. They are not supposed to compel anybody to follow any advice. In longer, more advanced experiential approaches, the participants even change roles and try out variations. All of these are contributions to the movement of the sutra-drama group within the open space of the given text, and it is this that remains the foundation and in some sense the hidden leader of this experimental work.

One final remark. I would like to confirm your summary that "Interreligious dialogue . . . should be able to form relationships where similarity is confirmed, even while differences are respected even more." This is a visionary statement for an ongoing and continually refocused dialogue!

Response to Kigoshi Yasushi

For me, the report on your talk with Hans-Martin Barth is a very moving testimony to an interreligious dialogue. The topic is nothing less than the "truth" and so therefore the fundamental conceptual question soon arises: Is God the creator also the creator of the "law of dependent arising" or is he a creature of this law? Being asked about this, I would answer as follows. In terms of doctrinal systems, completely different concepts (or even non-concepts) of "God" do remain in indissoluble confrontation. In this

respect, there is no chance for a convergence or reconciliation between East and West (and I dealt with that problem in my lectures at Otani University in 2007). But, I appreciate and confirm your insight: "It is quite possible, while leaving the doctrinal chasm as it is, to promote spiritual dialogue with regard to the question: How should deeply sinful humans live their lives?" Here you make a shift from purely academic controversies towards existential questions of salvation and liberation. In our ongoing dialogue however, I would like to change one word in your aforementioned question. Instead of "*sinful* humans" I would prefer to speak of "*completely lost* humans." In the Buddhist-Christian dialogue I became more and more aware of a certain fixation of Christian traditions on the moral questions of sin, whereas in Buddhist teaching much stress is laid on human suffering and ignorance as essential features of existential disasters.

At the end of your contribution you ask the question whether there might be comparable processes of transformation in Jōdo Shinshū and Christian thought in terms of "the birth of a new subject." By quoting and briefly commenting on some basic terms and sentences from the New Testament, I hope to answer the fundamental question which you have unfolded under different aspects, starting with the Christian concept of redemption through the crucifixion as a ritualistic sacrifice. For me, it is important to emphasize that this understanding of Christian salvation is but one among many other approaches. In the Christian understanding, salvation aims at a complex and complete transformation of existence, which is interrelated with all steps of the incarnation of Jesus: his birth, life, death and resurrection, his teaching, and his deeds. In any case, the interpretation of the meaning of the cross also has mystical and ethical connotations. One of the most comprehensive statements regarding the meaning of the death of Christ and the birth of a new subject is to be found in the letter of Paul to the Galatians, where he says: "I have been crucified with Christ and it is no longer I who lives but it is Christ who lives in me" (2: 19–20). This is at least one way to express "how redemption by Jesus Christ is related to the personal faith of a Christian" (your first question). The "new worldview" that "God's forgiveness brings about for Christians" (your second question) is one of liberation and openness and is not focused any longer on any personal, self-oriented need for salvation. This goes together with a new ability to accept others and oneself and to realize compassion. Thus, the "new subject" (your third question) exists in the atmosphere of an all-encompassing compassion (a central catchword in my Otani lectures of 2008), which is situated beyond narrow "ego" structures.

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