Shinran's View of Language

A Buddhist Hermeneutics of Faith

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Part Two

The medicine of the Tathāgata's Vow destroys the poisons
of our wisdom and foolishness.

—Shinran, "Chapter on Shinjin," 51

One word of truth transforms evil karma into good.

—Tsung-hsiao, quoted in "Chapter on Practice," 97

We have seen in Part One that Shinran's Pure Land path is distinguished from "self-power" meditative traditions by a fundamental linguisticality. Authentic engagement with it is not, however, simply an intellectual grasp or acceptance of the verbal teaching, but involves a shift in awareness of language itself. We are moved from an appropriation of the teaching into our conventionally perceived universe to a realization of language as false and true in Shinran's senses. On the one hand, conceptions of self and world are seen to be shaped by the attachments and judgments of the egocentric self and become fabrications ("empty talk and gibberish"). On the other hand, "the Name alone is true and real." It is accessible to our understanding, yet makes present that which transcends conception, being characterized by the nondualities of word and reality and of act and word. To hear the Buddha's Vow as true language is to "realize shinjin" or attain the Buddha's mind. Thus, the teaching has a therapeutic function, illuminating the falsity of the thought and speech ordinarily generated by human

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beings, and at the same time, as true word, it enters and transforms their thought and speech.

In Shinran's recorded words in *Tannishō,* which arose in dialogue and therefore differ from the interpretation of scriptural texts that informs most of his writings, we have found materials for sketching the entrance into genuine engagement with the teaching as the collapse of the doubled self (calculative thinking that stands apart from and judges self and world) concomitant with the emergence of the real (Buddha, wisdom) in complete opposition or polarity with the self (samsaric existence). We are now in a position to consider the implications of this shift for linguistic activity, including the saying of the nembutsu and verbal expressions of the teaching. Part Two will focus on: (1) the nature and functioning of language in the realization and the life of shinjin; (2) Shinran's interpretive methods as reflecting his view of language; and (3) his treatment of the "threefold shinjin" or "three minds" ("sincerity, trust, aspiration for birth" in the Eighteenth Vow) as at once an exposition of religious awareness and an example of interpretation undertaken from the stance of fulfilled engagement.

LANGUAGE IN THE REALIZATION OF SHINJIN

The nature of the language of the path may be approached by distinguishing two phases in authentic engagement with it: the point of entrance into such engagement and its subsequent unfolding in the practicer's life. These two phases or dimensions correspond, in Shinran's terms, to realization of shinjin ("hearing the Name") and performance of practice ("saying the Name of the Tathāgata of Unhindered Light"). Shinran's assertion of the essential unity of these phases holds a critical place in his thought, for it was by delineating his conception of shinjin that he sought to clarify the fundamental nature of practice in Hōnen's teaching. Thus he states: "Saying the Name is the right act, supreme, true, and excellent. The right act is the nembutsu. The nembutsu is Namu-amida-butsu. Namu-amida-butsu is right-mindedness."[1] Here, the equivalency of utterance, reality, word, and thought (shinjin) is asserted.

[1] "Chapter on Practice," 12 (SSZ 2: 8). Also see "Chapter on Practice," 77 (SSZ 2: 35).

At the same time, however, he also indicates a relationship between shinjin and practice, stating that they are distinct but conjoined. For example, he interprets the term *ichinen* in the *Larger Sutra* as applying, in different contexts and with distinct meanings, to both realization of shinjin and saying the nembutsu: as the "one thought-moment" of shinjin (*shin no ichinen*), implying both temporal brevity and elemental unity or purity, and as "one utterance" that is fulfillment of practice (*gyō no ichinen*).[2] Further: "Although the one thought-moment of shinjin and the one utterance of practice are two, there is no practice separate from shinjin, nor is the one thought-moment of shinjin separate from the one utterance of practice."[3] Here, shinjin and practice are two and yet inseparable. Thus, in developing Hōnen's nembutsu teaching by declaring shinjin to be the true cause of birth in the Pure Land, Shinran in fact magnified the problem of explaining the role, and even the necessity, of saying the Name. He is therefore sometimes understood as having taught "birth through shinjin" in contrast to Hōnen's "birth through the nembutsu." Such an understanding, however—which tends to view shinjin as an intellectual acceptance of the doctrine of birth through the nembutsu and to relegate actual saying of the Name to ancillary status—ignores the linguistic dimension of Shinran's path, which is the locus of its accessibility and its transformative power.

In traditional Shin dogmatics stemming from the fourteenth century, this issue of the relationship between shinjin and nembutsu (known as *gyō-shin ron*) has been treated through the imposition of the subject-object dichotomy. This schema was first formulated by Zonkaku at the beginning of his commentary on *Teaching, Practice and Realization* in order to account for the apparent discrepancy between the struc-

[2] Specifically, as one thought-moment of shinjin in the passage on the fulfillment of the Eighteenth Vow (Shinran interprets *ichinen* as a temporal moment in "Chapter on Shinjin," 60, and as freedom from double-mindedness in "Chapter on Shinjin," 65); as one utterance of the nembutsu in the passage entrusting the sutra to Maitreya ("Chapter on Practice," 77).

[3] *Mattōshō*, 11 (SSZ 2: 672). See *Letters of Shinran*, 39. Also: "True and real shinjin is unfailingly accompanied by [saying] the Name. [Saying] the Name, however, is not necessarily accompanied by shinjin that is the power of the Vow" ("Chapter on Shinjin," 50, SSZ 2: 68). Here, both the inseparability of shinjin and nembutsu and the asymmetry of their relationship is expressed.

ture of Shinran's work, which devotes a major chapter to shinjin, and its title, in which shinjin is not mentioned. According to Zonkaku, shinjin and practice stand in a subject-object relationship, with shinjin indicating the subject that trusts (*nōshin*) and nembutsu as its object (*shogyō*, meaning "that which has been fulfilled through the Buddha's practice"). Further, the path is such that subject and object (being and Buddha) are one in Namu-amida-butsu; thus, in Shinran's title, shinjin is already implied in the term "practice."[4]

Although Shinran does not use the contrasting terms *nō* and *sho* to indicate the agent-object dichotomy,[5] they became standard fixtures in the discussion of the interrelationships between shinjin and nembutsu down through the Shin scholastic tradition.[6] In developed treatments, the categories of agent and object are superimposed on both practice and shinjin. With regard to shinjin, first practice (Name, embodiment of Amida's Vow or virtues), as "that taken refuge in," is identified as its object; then—in an assertion of nonduality—shinjin also is objectified as the manifestation of this Name (Other Power) in beings. Realization of shinjin thus becomes an abstraction divorced from the practicer's concrete existence and removed from the practicer's subjec-

[4] *Rokuyōshō* 六要抄, SSZ 2: 212. Zonkaku bases his discussion on Shan-tao's exposition of Namu-amida-butsu as comprising both aspiration (Namu-) and practice (Amida-butsu).

[5] Shinran does employ them in "Chapter on Practice," 72, but with the sense of "direct" and "indirect" causes of birth, referring to Amida's Name and light.

[6] Traditional discussions note two sequences in the relationship between the two elements: practice–shinjin and shinjin–practice. Concerning the former, it was noted that in *Teaching, Practice and Realization*, "Chapter on Practice" precedes "Chapter on Shinjin," contradicting the usual order of awakening faith in the teaching followed by performance of practice in that attitude. Further, "Chapter on Practice" sets forth the power of the Name of Amida, summed up in the epigraph for the chapter, a title for the Seventeenth Vow that states that the Name shall be praised and uttered by all the Buddhas. Here, the Name as the embodiment of Amida's virtues is identified with the Buddha, and its priority is taken to indicate Amida's activity in directing virtue to beings (giving shinjin through the Name). Concerning the latter, it was noted that in the Eighteenth Vow, the threefold shinjin precedes mention of nembutsu ("even ten utterances"). Here, shinjin is identified as Amida's mind given to beings, so that the order of shinjin–practice expresses the nature of genuine utterance as arising from the Buddha's mind in the practicer. See Fugen Daien, *Shinshū gyō-shin ron no soshikiteki kenkyū* (Kyoto: Hyakkaen, 1935), 1–4.

tivity. Further, vocal nembutsu is viewed as the result of a subsequent, reverse movement from such shinjin (Buddha's mind) to utterance. Although it must be the practicer's linguistic act, as such it is doctrinally restricted in meaning to the expression of gratitude. In other words, one's saying the Name is reduced to conceptual content without salvific significance, while "genuine" utterance that is the manifestation of Buddha's mind becomes isolated from actual experience.

Here, the unity of shinjin and nembutsu is grasped on the basis of opposition between being and Buddha that is resolved through interaction empowered from the side of Buddha (agent-object dichotomy in which agent and object are further asserted to be one). This method of treating the issue, however, inevitably results in abstracting the elements of the path from the realm of human action and awareness. Rather, the transformative character of shinjin and nembutsu and their continuity can be better understood by taking into account the linguistic dimension of the path, in which authentic engagement (hearing and saying the Name) functions as the locus of the simultaneous and inseparable presence of samsaric existence and true reality. Below, we will consider first the moment of hearing the Name as entrance into such engagement, then the development of this hearing as linguistic activity unfolding in the practicer's ongoing existence.

I. Entrance into Authentic Engagement: Hearing the Name as the Reformulation of the Limits of Self

Shinran interprets the phrase "hear the Name" from the *Larger Sutra* passage teaching the fulfillment of the Eighteenth Vow as signifying realization of shinjin; it expresses entrance into authentic engagement in linguistic terms, or entrance into a new realm of language, which implies a new mode of awareness. This awareness is not attainment of nondiscriminative wisdom in which the subject-object dichotomy that characterizes delusional thought and perception has been eradicated; nevertheless, a new, transformative paradigm of apprehension of self, world, and true reality emerges in which the subject-object dichotomy has lost its domination.

The new paradigm is characterized not by the centrality of an independent self as subject discerning and relating itself to the elements

of the teaching (Amida, Name, Pure Land) as objects, but rather by the dual presence, emerging inseparably and in opposition, of self as false, samsaric existence and Vow or Name as true reality.[7] Self and Vow together become present in this way at the very point that a boundary between them arises, as two faces of that boundary. Here, the motion of the self acting to incorporate the elements of the path into itself is arrested; nevertheless, the person who realizes shinjin gains a new apprehension that occurs as the appearing of the boundary itself. This happens in two ways. On the one hand, the boundary arises as the horizon of the self, delimiting and defining one's entire existence and the dimensions of its possibilities. On the other hand, with the breakdown of the effort directed toward rectifying the self by assimilating what is true and good and expelling what is evil, this horizon takes form as, and thus manifests, an opposite movement—the approach to the self of inconceivable true reality emerging as the Name.

To delineate this new mode of awareness and the relationships that underlie it, it is necessary to cut across the subject-object cleavage of practicer and Vow that dominates initial engagement. This may be done by considering the process of entrance in terms of negative and positive aspects that occur simultaneously.

Dissolution of the Conceptual Frameworks of Provisional Engagement

Provisional engagement is informed by the activity ("doubt") of an inner self that objectifies and judges the self, its world, and the teaching, seeking to enhance its own existence by achieving good and avoiding evil. It is expressed in Shinran's writings as "belief in the recompense of good and evil and reliance on [one's own practice of] the root of good (nembutsu)."[8] Here, two elements are implied: (1) the frameworks of ordinary thought—including causality and the discrimination of good and evil—within which the practicer as subject grasps the elements of the path and his or her involvement with them; and (2) the motive force or effort to incorporate what is good into the self and eliminate from the self and its world what is evil—expressed, in Shinran's words, as relying on the nembutsu as "one's own good act."

When the inner self that manifests itself as the imposition of these frameworks emerges not as the arbiter of true good and evil but rather

as the reified activity of the fundamental blind passions of desire (appropriation of good) and aversion (eradication of evil) rooted in self-attachment, the means of judging the existence of the self and deter-

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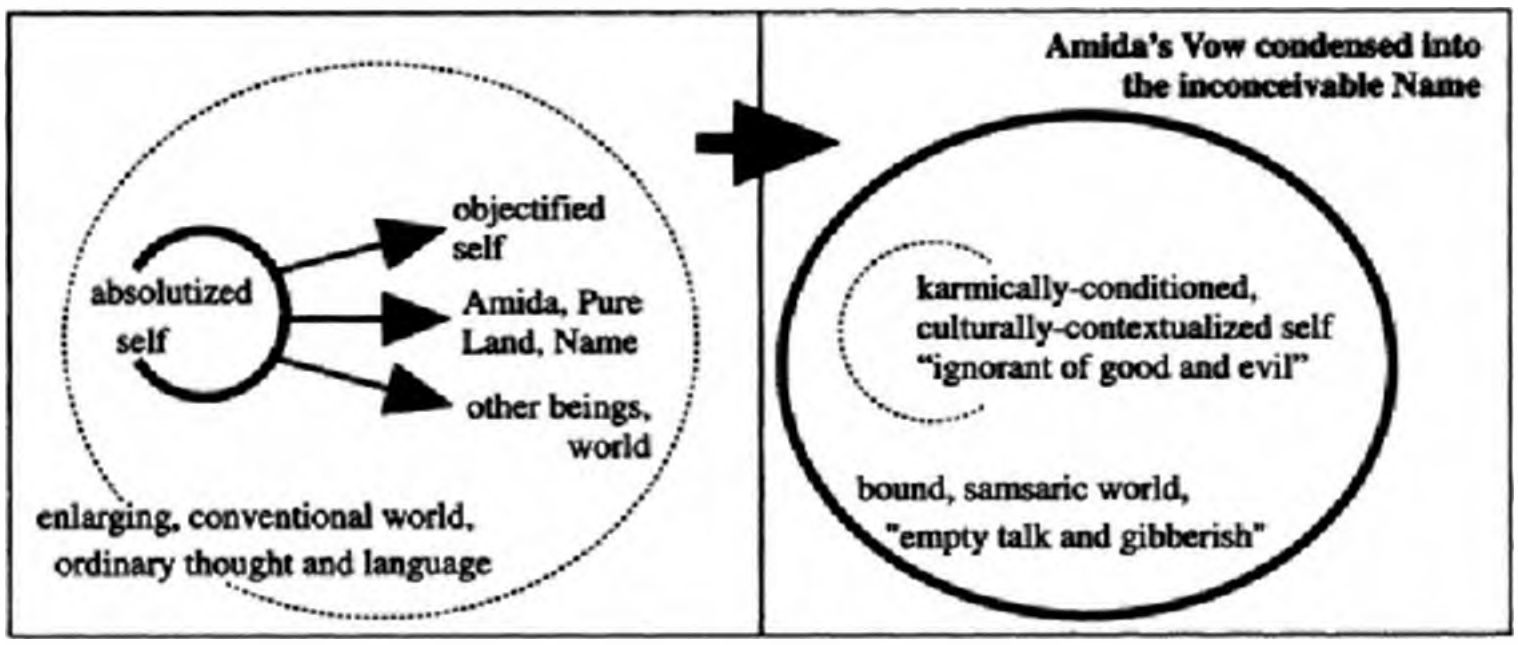
[7] The classic formulation of such a paradigm is Shan-tao's two aspects of deep mind (see Part One, 62–63). Traditional Shin discussions of it, however, tend to remain doctrinal and intellectualized because the shift into the religious awareness of authentic engagement has not been explored. The following discussion, focusing on the domain of language (as Shinran does in *Tannishō*), may be diagrammed:



(a) Provisional engagement: doubled self of calculative thinking that assesses its own acts and its condition in the world: "Endeavoring to make oneself worthy," "reflecting knowingly on one's evil"; "making the nembutsu one's own good act"; "judging people as good and bad."

(b) Moment of entrance into authentic engagement: collapse of calculation simultaneous with the arising of the double-sided horizon of the world of the self and the Vow. The boundness of one's existence emerges interfused with the hearing of the Name as the presence of transcendent reality.

Realization of shinjin as the movement from (a) to (b) includes: 1. the dissolution of any stance for an inner, reified subject that can buttress itself by assimilating what it judges good and distancing itself from "evil" that threatens it; 2. the freeing of the path (Buddha, Pure Land, nembutsu) from objectification within the coordinates of conventional thought and self-serving efforts to appropriate and utilize it; 3. the arising of a holistic apprehension of the limits or horizon of one's existence as a web of acts characterized by the passions of self-attachment and the inescapable falsity of thoughts and perceptions shaped by ordinary language; 4. the presence to oneself of that which is real (as life, light), apprehended in the hearing of the Name.

[8] See *Hymns of the Dharma-Ages* (*Shōzōmatsu wasan*), 60: "As a mark of not realizing the Buddha-wisdom,/ People doubt the Tathāgata's various kinds of wisdom,/ Believe in the recompense of good and evil, rely on their practice/ Of the root of good, and hence remain in the borderland."

mining the path disintegrate. The stance of the absolutized self has been engulfed in evil it sought to differentiate and distance itself from; thus, the drive to establish one's existence through moral rectification is uprooted. With regard to the practicer, this aspect is the "overturning of the mind of self-power."

With the dissolution of the stance of the subject of provisional engagement that seeks to disengage itself from its own past and from the flux of existence in the world together with other beings, one's conception of oneself—as the objectified self acting to amend itself—loses its clear outlines. To employ the images of the teaching, one's existence becomes coextensive with time stretching back into the "beginningless past," and one's present bears the influence of the acts in other lifetimes, as other selves, in other circumstances of existence. The self becomes fluid, a tissue of acts permeating the temporal boundaries of this life, and is fused to the past through unknowable deeds that remain as traces in the present. Moreover, not only temporally, but "spatially" as well, the fixed boundaries of the objectified self and its separateness from the "outside" world melt, and there emerges an awareness of the self as floundering in an ocean of existence with other beings.

With regard to the elements of the path, there is likewise a dissolution as the frameworks in which they had been grasped instrumentally cease to define them. When the thinking that had guided one's acts in establishing a relationship between oneself and Amida as person and Pure Land as goal loses its capacity even to determine what is good and effective for achieving its ends, the conceptions of Amida and Pure Land themselves are invalidated (in fact they correspond to no more than "transformed buddha-bodies and lands"), and the Name, above all, ceases to function as a means for invoking the Buddha or gaining merit for progress to the Pure Land. With the dismantling of the parameters of interpersonal or teleological relationships with the self, Amida's Vow can no longer be located in a linear, temporal past of this world—as a principle set in motion that one can bring one's life into accord with; further, the Pure Land cannot be located as an extension of the spatial coordinates of this existence. Buddha and Pure Land fulfilled through the Vow cease to be meaningfully conceived through calculative thinking.

Dual Presence of Samsaric Existence and True Reality

The realization of shinjin may also be discussed in affirmative terms, as a mode of apprehension in which the existence of the self and true reality arise together to awareness, even while they lie beyond the thought and conception of the self possessed of blind passions and ignorance. This apprehension may be grasped as a double-sided re-delineation of the limits or boundary of one's own existence.

BOUNDARY AS HORIZON: APPREHENSION OF SELF AND WORLD AS SAMSARIC EXISTENCE. While on the one hand practicers are bereft of the power of self-definition and self-direction, having been forced to relinquish the absoluteness of their frames of reference, on the other hand, they have, from another perspective, overcome the fragmentation of the self—the incessant bifurcation into absolute subject and amenable object, together with the division of self from other beings and the world—and been enabled to apprehend their existence whole. For the self—whose center, as the judge of the worth and destiny of the self, has dissolved—to be apprehended whole is for the delimiting horizon of its own existence to arise. That is, the self at once loses its own definition as absolute and enduring and comes to apprehend itself as samsaric existence in entirety. These two aspects—dissolution and holistic apprehension—are inseparable and can arise only together.

Here, the existence of the self, conditioned by its history and its acts and circumstances, moves in inevitable circularity. It rises to self-awareness as samsaric only where it is thoroughly bounded and circumscribed temporally at every possible point. Though one had sought or assumed within that circle a stable, undistorted point of reference for determining one's existence, apprehension of the whole must include the relinquishment of the very possibility of any such stance.[9] When the self is apprehended thus, all possibility of establishing a basis for one's own liberation must be abandoned. This is the meaning of overcoming the fragmentation of the self in its temporal aspect through the collapse of the doubled self.

There is also a "spatial" aspect of fragmentation, for it is precisely

[9] Cf. Wittgenstein in *Tractatus:* "The sense of the world must lie outside the world. . . . God does not reveal himself *in* the world" (6.432).

the arising of the horizon of the self and the collapse of the doubled, inner self that leads to the falling away of the distinction the self had sought to construct and enforce between its own existence and the world of existence together with other beings. This aspect is vividly expressed in Shinran's words in *Tannishō*, 5: "All sentient beings, without exception, have been my parents and brothers and sisters in the course of countless lives in many states of existence." He makes this statement in explaining his refusal to say the nembutsu for the repose of his parents. The basic reason is his incapacity to fulfill any good act whose merit he might turn over to others. This is an expression of his awareness of the horizon of his existence as wholly samsaric. He goes on, however, to stress the absurdity of blandly assuming that one can direct merit to one's ancestors—a powerful element of Japanese religiosity—by pointing out the interrelationships between oneself and all other beings, so that to save one's parents would be to save countless multitudes of living things. We see here the intimate link between the self-awareness of one's own existence as bounded and samsaric and the awareness of that existence—precisely in being samsaric—as intertwined with the existence of all beings. All living things come to manifest the possibilities and limits of one's own existence.

This is the perception underlying the expression, "this self possessed of blind passions, this world that is a burning house." It calls to mind the vision of Bodhisattva Dharmākara, who is enabled through the power of Lokeśvararāja Buddha to survey all worlds and beings before establishing the Primal Vow. In fact, it points to the opposite side of the newly-formed boundary of the self: the active face of reality.

BOUNDARY AS APPROACH: APPREHENSION OF REALITY AS HEARING THE NAME. Entrance into authentic engagement is the perforation and transformative relocation of the boundary of the self. This new boundary not only circumscribes the self, but also manifests the presence of that which stands beyond, transcending the self and its conceptual universe. The presence of this far side of the boundary is apprehended as the Name; that is, the arising of the horizon of the practicer's existence is itself also the hearing of the Name. This hearing is not one's perceiving and arrogating the path that stands apart from oneself; precisely such a subject-object relationship marks provisional engagement. Rather, it is the arising of the horizon that simultaneously

divides and conjoins the polar opposites of false existence and true reality, so that both sides concomitantly become loci of new apprehension.

We will consider this aspect of hearing the Name in terms of Shinran's conception of true language, which is characterized, as we have seen in Part One, by a dialectical integration of two movements: (1) "horizontal," from the establishment of Dharmākara's Vow to attainment of Buddhahood as Amida, and (2) "vertical," emergence of formless reality as form. We will take up two phases of hearing, corresponding to the domination of first the horizontal dynamic, then the vertical.

A. *Arising of the Horizon of Existence as the Condensation of the Path into the Name.* The dissolution of the elements of the path as objectified by calculative thinking signifies their extrication from usual frames of reference, but not lapse into mere meaninglessness. This is because it is the teaching itself that moves the practicer toward the collapse of the doubled self, and because at the same time it provides—in the Name—the means for a new mode of apprehension. This is the meaning of Shinran's statements that shinjin arises from, and is given as, Amida's Vow. Thus, there is a circularity from the teaching to the realization of shinjin, and from realization of shinjin to a new understanding of the teaching, or to an apprehension of the language of the path as words made new.

Concerning the first phase of this reciprocal movement, the narrative of Dharmākara-Amida sets forth the bodhisattva's practice so that it stands in contrast with the efforts of beings. It furnishes a model against which practicers must measure their own performance. By radicalizing (taking literally) the standards that beings assume but do not rigorously apply, Shinran shapes the narrative so that it provides, in mythic expression, a paradigm of the bipolar opposition that emerges together with the collapse of the doubled self. The acts of sentient beings and the acts of Buddha are represented as antithetical dimensions of blind passions and wisdom, falsity and true reality. Shinran further underscores this opposition by emphasizing, in the narrative, the purity of Dharmākara's practice in each of its moments.[10] Thus,

[10] Shinran elaborates on the practicer's floundering in the ocean of samsara and the purity of Dharmākara's practice in his exposition of the three minds, discussed below. Shinran employs ocean imagery to suggest inconceivability, universality and transformative power, core characteristics of the double-sided horizon.

the fulfillment of the Vow does not stand simply at the conclusion of aeons of practice, but is brought into every moment of it, so that the Vow-narrative contracts into a mode of temporality removed from our usual conceptual frameworks. Here, the opposition between being and Buddha becomes one of temporal existence and that which transcends it at every point, or the life of the self within the world and that which encompasses the life of the world as one.

This compression of the Vow's establishment and fulfillment into each moment of Dharmākara's practice has its parallel in the field of language. The Vow-narrative moves toward its own condensation into the Name of Amida, in the same way removing itself from our usual frameworks of understanding. It is not simply that the Name lies at the end of a long process leading to its establishment; rather, it is of the nature of the Vow that the Name embody all the elements of the entire narrative—aspiration for Buddhahood, aeons of practice, attainment of wisdom-compassion, liberation of all beings—which are together rooted in reality (formless dharma-body). It is for this reason that Shinran explains "hearing the Name" as hearing "how the Buddha's Vow arose—its origin and fulfillment,"[11] and also as occurring as "one thought-moment."

These movements toward condensation, temporal and linguistic, fuse in the thought-moment of realization of shinjin. This hearing the Name and its instantaneity signify the total compression of the Vow, which is also the complete extrication of the path from a discursive grasp and any calculated process of attainment. The nembutsu ceases to be one's own good, being disentangled from causal frameworks that center on the acts of the self, and comes to be apprehended rather as a movement toward one. In Shinran's emphasis on the Name as Amida's call to beings and on the Seventeenth Vow that Buddhas throughout all time and the entire cosmos say and praise the Name, we find an image for this approach. It is precisely at the point where the horizontal, linear frames of reference condense that this Name emerges as the presence of reality beyond conceptual grasp.

B. *Hearing as the Crystallization of Reality in the Name.* Where the path approaches to touch one's own existence (condenses into the Name), the horizon of the self arises and the hearing of the Name

[11] "Chapter on Shinjin," 65 (SSZ 2: 72).

occurs. To hear the Name, then, means that it is apprehended as the crystallization of the Vow-narrative, a gestalt in which wisdom-compassion is compressed. It is this apprehension that underlies Shinran's creation of altar scrolls in which sculpted or painted images of Amida Buddha are replaced by the written characters of the Name, in one of several versions, in a vertical line with a lotus pedestal beneath. Here, the Name has the character of form that is at the same time formless reality, of language that is pervaded by the silence of astonishment or inconceivability. On the one hand, it is true reality (wisdom-compassion, unhindered light) that has coalesced at the boundary of the self; on the other hand, it is itself the boundary of the self in karmic existence that has arisen through the falling away of calculative thought. Shinran states in a hymn: "The light shines everywhere ceaselessly;/ Thus Amida is called Buddha of Uninterrupted Light./ Because beings hear this power of light,/ Their mindfulness is enduring and they attain birth." To hear the Name is to hear or apprehend the power of light, and this light or hearing becomes enduring mindfulness in the hearer.

The Name can embody these movements—contraction and emergence—because of its dual character as true language or as word that is also silence. The movement of condensation occurs along the horizontal vector, when the entire span of the Vow-narrative, extricated from temporal, conceptual frameworks, fuses into and becomes present as one thought-moment. The movement of emergence occurs along the vertical vector at that very point of condensation, when the Name becomes the opposite face of the horizon of the self as samsaric existence.

Shinran's altar scrolls include another innovation in addition to the representation of Amida Buddha as Name: the inscription of scriptural texts above and below the central image. It may be said that text and Name stand not only in the circular relationship between teaching and realization mentioned above, but also in the dialectical one between horizontal and vertical that we have been delineating. The texts free themselves from conceptual grasp and condense into the Name, which is encountered as another face of the horizon of the self. At the same time, however, Shinran speaks of the "ultimate brevity *and expansion* of the length of time in which one attains the mind and practice that result in birth in the Pure Land."[12] Thus, the one thought-moment of hearing the Name unfolds in acts of language, which now newly articu-

late the nature of self and world in fulfilled engagement with the path. We will consider this "expansion" next.

II. Authentic Engagement: Saying the Name as Transformation

Shinran speaks of hearing the Vow or Name as transformative. He states, for example, that when one "encounters" the Vow—entrusts oneself to its power—"all roots of good and all virtues" become "perfectly full in one's heart."[13] Further: "Because one entrusts oneself to the power of Amida's Vow—this is the absence of calculation on the part of the practicer—one cuts off and abandons the five evil courses and becomes free of the four modes of birth naturally (*jinen*)."[14] When one hears the Name, one is "filled" with the Buddha's virtues (wisdom-compassion), so that bondage to samsaric existence is broken. From the perspective of the Name, the aspect of nonduality in the arising of the double-sided horizon dominates, for the "Name embodying the perfectly fulfilled supreme virtues is true wisdom that transforms our evil into virtue," or into itself. Shinran expresses this nonduality with regard to the practicer's condition also:

> The directing of virtue for our going forth is such
> That when Amida's active means toward us reaches fulfillment,
> We realize the shinjin and practice of the compassionate Vow;
> Then birth-and-death is itself nirvana.[15]

Here we see the fundamental elements of the model of realizing shinjin that we have sketched above: that which is real touches human existence where the origin and fulfillment of the Vow coalesce as the Name and the path condenses into a single instant; here, word and reality are nondual. This occurs when hearing the Name is the collapse of the inner self that objectifies the self and the path. The bifurcation of the self

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[12] *Passages on the Pure Land Way*, 34 (SSZ 2: 445).
[13] *Notes on Once-Calling and Many-Calling*, 46–47 (SSZ 2: 616).
[14] *Notes on the Inscriptions on Sacred Scrolls*, 37 (SSZ 2: 580).
[15] *Hymns of the Pure Land Masters*, 35 (on T'an-luan).

through assuming the stance of an absolutized self of calculative thinking is overcome, and the distinction of self and path as subject and object falls away. Engagement with the teaching is liberated from ordinary discursiveness and self-objectification, and the Name becomes a transparency (light, wisdom), pervaded by a silence in which instrumentality is replaced by the presence of that which transcends conceivability. Thus, act and word are also nondual. The result is the emergence of the dual presence of practicer (samsaric existence) and true reality together with the transformation in which birth-and-death is itself nirvana. Shinran uses the metaphors of the practicer being filled by the ocean of Amida's virtues or their blind passions flowing into and become one with the ocean of the Vow (mind of compassion) to express this.

There are several points to be noted concerning this transformation. First, it occurs without the conscious effort or even the awareness of the practicer: "In entrusting ourselves to Amida's Primal Vow and saying the Name once, necessarily, without seeking it, we are made to receive the supreme virtues, and without knowing it, we acquire the great and vast benefit."[16] This attainment of supreme virtues is not brought about through the practicer's will or endeavor; rather, it occurs precisely where calculative thinking falls away and the elements of the path are removed from our usual frames of reference. Thus, it takes place instantaneously, apart from causal processes we might initiate; with utter decisiveness; and at a level deeper than ordinary awareness. For this reason, Shinran adopts the term *jinen* to characterize the dynamic of this transformation, explaining simply that, free of designs, "one is made to become so."

At the same time, however, the transformation does not remain confined to the one thought-moment of realization of shinjin or to an instant that transcends temporal existence:

> "To be made to become so" means that without the prac-

[16] *Notes on Once-Calling and Many-Calling*, 40 (SSZ 2: 611). Also: "Though people of the diamond-like mind neither know nor seek it, the vast treasure of virtues completely fills them" (*Notes on Once-Calling and Many-Calling*, 47, SSZ 2: 617); "Since, without his seeking it, the person who entrusts himself to the Buddha's Vow is made to attain all virtues and all good, it is said 'made to become so'" (*Notes on 'Essentials of Faith Alone'*, 32, SSZ 2: 641).

> ticer's calculating in any way whatsoever, all his past, present, and future evil karma is transformed into good. "To be transformed" means that evil karma, without being nullified or eradicated, is made into good, just as all waters, upon entering the great ocean, immediately become ocean water.[17]

We see here that while transformation occurs with realization of shinjin, it encompasses, without negating, the practicer's entire temporal existence, including all the acts that make up ongoing life. Thus, two moments may be distinguished with regard to this transformation: the moment of realizing shinjin, when it fundamentally and irreversibly takes place ("virtues quickly and rapidly become perfectly full in the heart"[18]), and the moment of ongoing life when evil acts continue to be transformed into good while remaining evil. While the first moment of transformation permeates one's existence in its unconscious depths, the second suggests that, though not brought about by conscious endeavor, transformation is not wholly beyond the awareness of beings.

Transformation comprises these two moments because it is inseparable from the opposition that, together with the nonduality or simultaneity that does not nullify it, characterizes the arising of the double-sided horizon of the self.[19] Shinran speaks of transformation precisely because it is the arising of the horizon—with the attendant collapse of

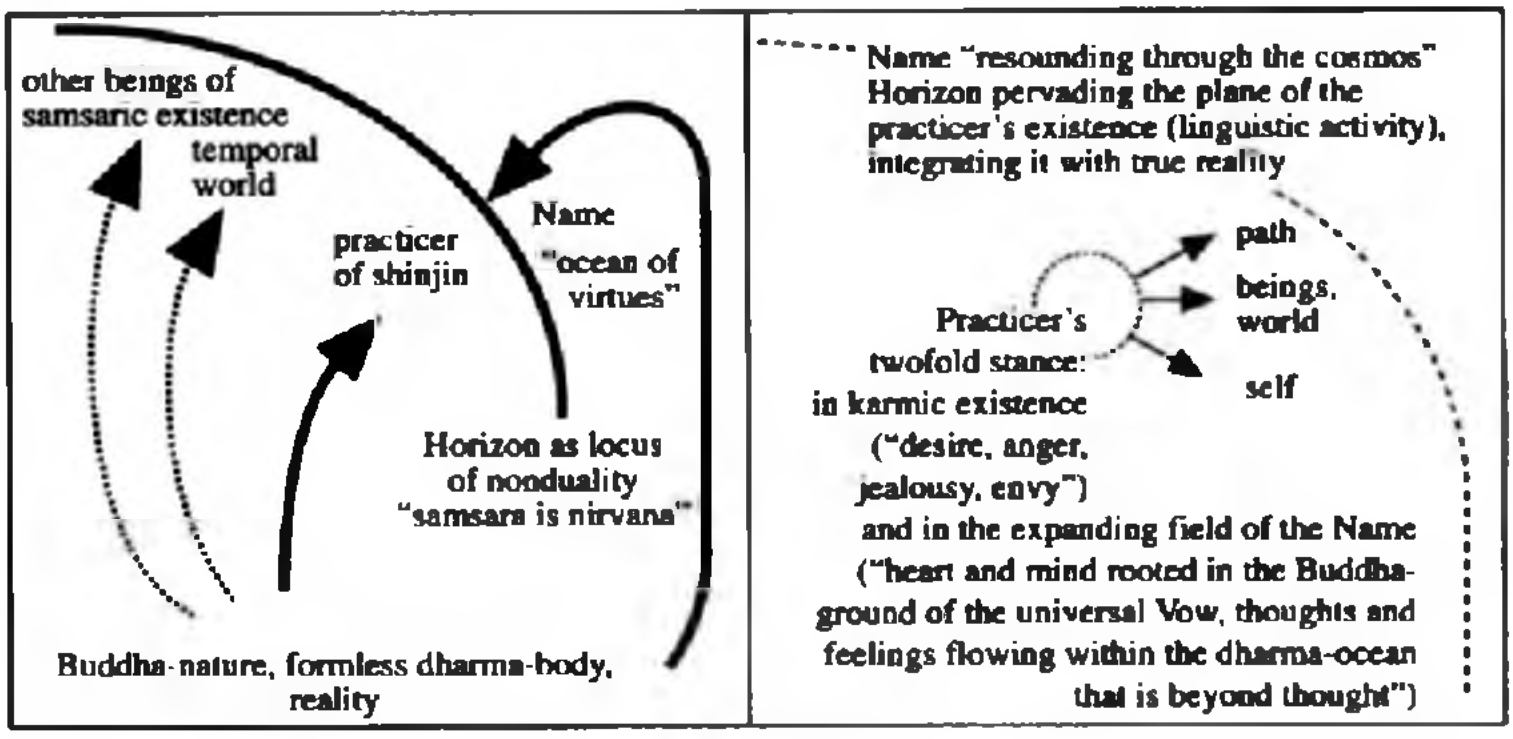
[17] *Notes on 'Essentials of Faith Alone'*, 32 (SSZ 2: 623).

[18] *Notes on Once-Calling and Many-Calling*, 47 (SSZ 2: 617).

[19] The horizon (or dual presence of Name as real and self and world as samsaric) depicted as holistic and instantaneously emerging in fn. 7 (b) represents not an objective, doctrinally dictated barrier between being and Buddha but rather a fundamentally altered mode of existence and awareness. To depict this, it must be recast to manifest the dynamics that evolve with regard to the practicer's life. Where calculative thinking collapses and the path condenses into the Name, all linear relations between one's acts and the Vow are severed by the radical disjunction between them. Here, there is no basis for genuine awareness of the path embedded in a subject-object dichotomy. The horizon itself, however, in its linguistic character as the Name, enters the practicer's awareness and holds together two transformative moments in which its dimension of polar opposition arises and simultaneously is overcome—allowing first interfusion and then interaction—without being dissolved. This is the basic model of shinjin ("faith") as both salvific (attainment of transcendent reality) and interrelational (providing for a coherent apprehension of self, path, and world) in Shinran's writings.

SHINRAN'S VIEW OF LANGUAGE (II)

(c) Two inseparable moments of transformation in authentic engagement:



(i) Primary moment of transformation: arising of the double-sided horizon as the emergence of the nonduality of delusional existence and true reality. Word and reality are one ("From this oneness form was manifested") and act of hearing and reality are one ("shinjin is none other than Buddha-nature"). Here, the horizon as nondualistic reality further signifies that "Tathāgata pervades the countless worlds . . . Thus, plants, trees, and land all attain Buddhahood."

(ii) Continuous transformation in the present: the horizon (self as blind passions/reality as Vow) arises anew as the saying of the Name—voiceless and voiced, unconscious and conscious—within the linguistically-shaped and karmically-bound acts that make up one's ongoing temporal existence. Thus, "the minds, good and evil, of foolish beings are immediately transformed into the mind of great compassion," and further, "the more ice of passions, the more water of enlightenment."

In Shinran's thought, the Name as true language (conception permeated by inconceivability, or "horizontal" and "vertical" planes interfused) harbors the nonduality of samsaric existence and true reality. Reality cannot be attained through a subject-object relationship (penetration of the elements of the path), but neither can it be encountered by human understanding without engagement with the path (cannot be reached simply through reflection into the self). The horizon arising as the Name, however, without allowing any objectification of reality, is itself also the presence of dharma-body that fills oneself and all beings (c. i). The teaching as the unfolding of the Name, based on this simultaneous nonduality and polarity of practicer and Buddha, comprises a bridgework of dialectically interactive conceptual structures that discloses to apprehension the ineffable reality in its depths. Thus, Amida "gives" his mind to beings or "grasps" them with the light of wisdom; the "boundlessness . . . and all-inclusiveness of the Tathāgata's virtues is likened to the unobstructed fullness of the . . . ocean," and those virtues flood into practicers' hearts; conversely, their "rivers of blind passions, on entering the ocean of the Vow . . . become one in taste with that sea of

calculative thinking—that allows for the presence of reality to emerge. At the same time, it is not that reality is present prior to the arising of the horizon of the self (hearing the Name), nor can beings carrying on their ordinary lives directly realize the nonduality that marks the stance of the Name as wisdom or suchness: "We are full of ignorance and blind passions. Our desires are countless . . . to the very last moment of life they do not cease."[20] Here, the opposition of true reality and samsaric existence is also one of wisdom and ignorance. Nevertheless, the Name "breaks through all the ignorance of sentient beings and fulfills all their aspirations,"[21] and "the compassionate light of the Buddha of unhindered light always illumines and protects the person who has realized shinjin; hence the darkness of ignorance has already cleared."[22] Shinran asserts that ignorance both remains and is dispersed.

This condition reflects the complex nature of the Name, which is reality that transcends conception and as such transforms practicers' existence without their knowing or seeking it, and which is also character-

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wisdom"; "blind passions and enlightenment become one body and are not two."

This nonduality does not signify eradication of delusional thought or attainment of nondiscriminative wisdom; therefore Shinran states, with regard to Buddha, that Amida's light is "unhindered" by beings' passions, and with regard to beings, that they attain the Buddha's virtues without knowing or seeking it and that their evil is transformed into good without being nullified. In other words, nonduality underlies the double-sided horizon, but thought and perception remain linguistic and conceptual. Nevertheless, because of this dimension of nonduality, Shinran speaks of the "wisdom of shinjin" ("since Amida's Vow is wisdom, the emergence of the mind of entrusting oneself to it is the arising of wisdom") and "nembutsu that is wisdom" (*Hymns of the Dharma-Ages,* 34–35). In fact, it is through the Name in its character as linguistic act that integration of one's ongoing existence with true reality occurs. Passions still arise, but with the dissolution of calculative thinking that absolutizes the "inner" self, they are divested of the directedness and the driving force of the intellect, which functions instead to disarm them. That is, the Name as the arising of the double-sided horizon comes to form the core of the practicer's words, which are transformed by it into false language (delusional thought and blind passions that harbor the inconceivability of the Name as their own falsity and distorted perceptions of the world) and into true language (words with the power to presence and disclose the horizon's dimensions of polarity and nonduality to oneself and others) (c. ii).

[20] *Notes on Once-Calling and Many-Calling,* 48 (SSZ 2: 618).

[21] "Chapter on Practice," 12 (SSZ 2: 8).

[22] *Notes on the Inscriptions on Sacred Scrolls,* 39 (SSZ 2: 72).

ized by form and thus is accessible to conscious apprehension. The second moment of transformation signifies the functioning of the Name, with its two dimensions, to integrate the nonduality of reality with the practicers' ongoing existence so that it rises to conscious awareness. Thus, Shinran states that practicers "should truly receive the Name of the Primal Vow/ And never forget it, whether waking or sleeping."[23] To "truly receive (信受, *shinju*) the Name" is to realize shinjin; it is the crystallization of wisdom-compassion as the Name at the horizon of one's existence. Another face of this reception of the Name, however, is that one "never forgets it, whether waking or sleeping." The unfolding of the transformative moment into the whole of one's life is accomplished through the linguistic dimension of human existence. It is as and through word (Name) that reality continuously transforms the person's life, which is carried on with thought and perception informed by language. The Name possesses this power because it functions not simply as another word of conceptual thought, but more basically as a new, double-faceted model of language underlying all linguistic activity and awareness.[24]

The Name as a New Paradigm of Language

In terms of linguistic activity, the collapse of the doubled self means that hearing the Name ceases to be a conceptual grasp of the Vow, and saying the Name ceases to be viewed as the outward expression of thoughts and aspirations harbored within the mind. Calculative thinking is, in fact, rooted in clinging to the existence and salvific significance of what we take to be pure and isolate "inner" thoughts. Instead of the Name functioning as an instrument within the subject-object dichotomy, engagement with it is the arising of the boundary of the self together with the transformative presence of reality. As we have seen, it encompasses two interfused moments. First, hearing the Name is characterized by the nonduality of practicer and reality. It is not,

[23] *Hymns of the Pure Land Masters*, 96.

[24] The thought of Ippen (1239–1289) affords an example of focus on the point of the arising of the Name (one "discards one's self-being and becomes solitary and single with Namu-amida-butsu," so that "the nembutsu says the nembutsu"), without the counterbalancing movement of the second moment of transformation. See Dennis Hirota, *No Abode: The Record of Ippen* (Kyoto: Ryukoku University, 1986), 46–49.

however, that the Name functions as a sign or concept through which persons penetrate to suchness or dharma-body; rather, through the collapse of calculative thinking, within them an awareness emerges that the reality that is the Name and the reality that encompasses their existence are one.

At the same time, the Name that approaches to constitute the far side of the boundary of the self as reality at the edge of conception does not dissolve, but retains its aspect of form. From the perspective of practicers, no meditative exercises are fulfilled, and the collapse of the doubled self in the realization of shinjin occurs without breaking through discriminative thinking. Thus, the path condenses into the Name in one thought-moment not by casting off its linguistic character, but by becoming language penetrated by inconceivability or nonduality. This leads to the second moment. Because the Name's linguistic character—as a dialectic of horizontal and vertical dynamics—remains intact, the movement toward hearing (compression of the horizontal into a single point), on reaching the point of consummation, undergoes a reversal. Without parting from its nature as formless reality taking form (vertical dimension), the Name evinces its linguistic character as the reassertion of the horizontal dimension of causality, time, and space (fulfillment of immeasurable life and light).

It is not, however, that practicers simply give direct expression to awareness of the reality in their existence. Rather, the nembutsu, as word encompassing nonduality and dual presence, pervades waking and sleeping as the re-occurrence of the arising of the horizon of the self, informing each new moment of the practicer's life. The Name functions to fuse the fundamental nonduality of practicer and reality that has been attained at the realization of shinjin with ongoing life, or to integrate the practicer's ordinary awareness and the unconscious depths of human existence.

The field of the Name, then, surfaces from the passivity of the instant of realizing shinjin, in which one attains virtues while neither seeking nor knowing it, to merge with the flow of karmic existence made up of one's actions—physical, verbal, and mental—issuing from the blind passions and attachments of the delusional self. This shift into the dimension of human action underlies the continuity between hearing and utterance that Shinran expresses as the inseparability of shinjin and practice. Saying the Name—whether voiced or voiceless—becomes

practice that transforms one's ongoing existence. Moreover, the affirmation of the Name as the reenactment of the arising of the horizon is an act in which the agent is not at issue, for it is not independently accomplished by either being or Buddha. Thus, in "Chapter on Practice," Shinran adopts as an expression of practice the saying and praise of the Name by all the Buddhas, and further states that great practice is the person's saying the Name. Practice is the Name uttered by Buddhas throughout the cosmos and all past, present, and future, and it is one's own utterance; at the point where nembutsu as the re-arising of the double-sided horizon that encompasses the self and all existence becomes an ever-present ground bass, such a distinction holds no significance.

In addition, the Name enters into conscious thought, which implies conceptual understanding and the subject-object dichotomy. Thus, Shinran also states: "Knowing truly (信知, *shinchi*) that the Primal Vow . . . grasps those who commit grave offenses and transgressions, we are quickly brought to realize that blind passions and enlightenment are not two in substance."[25] Here, Shinran asserts the being's new self-awareness, which develops conceptually in terms of the teaching in dialectically interconnected structures of thought informed by both polarity and nonduality.

Name in the Practicer's Acts of Speech

There are two modes in which the Name enters conscious speech: it becomes deeply harbored in the words of daily life, so that they come to be apprehended as rooted in falsity; and it becomes words made new—the true words expressing the life of the path. Here, we see how entrance into authentic engagement with the path results in the arising of false (ordinary) language and true language (nembutsu, teaching), as developed in Part One.

A. NAME IN THE DEPTHS OF ORDINARY LANGUAGE. We have seen that the hearing of the Name, as the arising of the horizon of the self, involves the emergence of a dual presence: samsaric existence insepara-

[25] *Hymns of the Pure Land Masters*, 32 (on T'an-luan). Also see "Hymn of True Shinjin and the Nembutsu": "When foolish beings of delusion and defilement awaken shinjin,/ They realize that birth-and-death is itself nirvana" ("Chapter on Practice," 102, SSZ 2: 45).

bly fused with true reality. This structure of dual presence characterizes not only the limits of existence—the entirety of samsaric temporality and the totality of beings—but also comes to inhabit, through thought and speech, the locales and objects of the person's daily life. Shinran speaks of this when he says, "With the foolish being possessed of blind passions, with this fleeting world—this burning house—all things are lies and gibberish . . . the nembutsu alone is true." Practicers of shinjin do not, of course, cease from "empty speech"; to seek liberation through such rectification would only involve them in the self-contradictions of self-power. Neither, however, do they give themselves to false speech and acts with a sense of impunity. Instead, the words of ordinary speech come to be invested in their depths with the double-sided horizon of the self that arises as hearing the Name. This inner face of ordinary words is recovered to conscious awareness together with the perception of their falsity. The process by which this occurs is described in *Tannishō,* 16, which argues against the belief that genuine engagement requires repentance (*eshin,* "change of heart") for evil acts. In the Shin path, "change of heart" properly refers to the transformative entrance into authentic engagement that occurs once and for all. Rather than repeated conversions as acts of temporal existence, then,

> even when our thoughts and deeds are evil, if we thereby turn all the more deeply to the power of the Vow, gentleheartedness and forbearance will surely arise in us naturally. Whatever may occur, as far as birth is concerned, one should just recall constantly and unselfconsciously the depths of Amida's benevolence and one's gratitude for it, without any contriving.

When one finds oneself committing evil ("becoming angry, doing misdeeds, disputing with fellow practicers"), one should not seek to repent, for that is precisely to take the stance of the doubled self that judges and amends the self. Rather, the evil act becomes an occasion for reflecting on the Vow, for in the depths of all one's acts lies the arising of the double-sided horizon of the self and true reality. Out of those depths, where it has reverberated as a ground bass, the Name rises to the lips spontaneously as the reenactment of that arising.

Evil acts come to be seen in the broad context of the horizon of samsaric existence, that is, as evil transcending our ordinary standards of

good and bad. Further, not only those acts considered wrong by normal standards serve as occasions for reflection; our every act, in its depths, opens out to the horizon of the self. The words that define our world and shape our interactions with others all harbor in their depths the distortions of self-attachment. To plumb each word, then, is to recover in its depths the Name as the arising of the horizon of the self. This does not lead to the abandonment of ourselves to evil or to despair, for it is this horizon running in the depths of all things that works to overcome the distinctions and divisions of good and bad, desire and hatred, that the doubled self had sought to impose on the world. All living beings come to be seen as interrelated within the bounds of samsaric existence. Shinran's statement that the person of shinjin constantly practices great compassion—constantly says the Name—may be understood as the presence of this holistic apprehension in the depths of all linguistic acts.

Further, the opposite face of the horizon is the presence of the real. It is for this reason that Shinran states: "Tathāgata pervades the countless worlds; it fills the hearts and minds of the ocean of all beings. Thus, plants, trees, and land all attain Buddhahood." These two faces of interrelationship within samsara and presence of nirvana or Buddha-nature should be understood to reflect the dual aspects of the horizon that arises as the hearing of the Name and that lies open to reflection in all the words of ordinary speech, or all the things that make up the world of "empty talk and gibberish."

B. NAME AS WORDS MADE NEW. It is also possible for words to manifest and shape conscious awareness of the dual presence of the self and reality. The fundamental expression is, of course, the utterance of the Name, which may spring from astonishment at the self and the world in the grasp of Amida's light, joy and gratitude for the Buddha's compassion, or aspiration for birth in the Pure Land. It may arise almost unconsciously, as a reaffirmation of the dual presence that has emerged as the hearing of the Name and that draws reality into apprehension without objectification. On the one hand, the Name is reality, being the emergence into form of the formless, and on the other hand, it holds conceptual meanings rooted in polarity and nonduality, being the condensation of the Vow. While with regard to the first of these characteristics, it is instantaneous in arising and glyphic or emblematic,

so that it is nondual with its apprehension, with regard to the second, it is open to discursive understanding and becomes the object of thought.

Because the Name holds both of these characteristics, it unfolds as the teaching of Amida's Vow in the *Larger Sutra,* and as the words of the Pure Land masters down through history. There are two aspects here. First, with regard to the words of the teaching, Shinran states that "to teach the Tathāgata's Primal Vow is the true intent of the sutra; the Name of the Buddha is its essence."[26] That is, the Name—with its dual characteristics as reality and as conception—lies at the core of the words of the teaching and makes them true language, with powers to transform and to make the path comprehensible. Second, with regard to the speaker or writer, the words of the teaching issue from reality (Buddha's mind, wisdom, shinjin). The central model for such arising is Śākyamuni's entrance into the samadhi of great tranquility as the foundation for the *Larger Sutra,* which is delivered while he "abides in the place of all Buddhas." When Shinran states that Hōnen was a manifestation of Mahāsthāmaprāpta Bodhisattva, he is not merely drawing on popular belief, but also applying the model of the Name as transmitted and spread by words arising from the Buddha's mind; this is clear also in his statements that the teachings of Seikaku and Ryūkan are to be embraced because these practicers have already attained birth in the Pure Land.

A fundamental implication of this view of the teaching as the Name unfolding in history is that the basic mode of apprehension of the Name must be applied for genuine understanding of the teaching. It is from the stance of hearing the Name or entrance into fulfilled engagement with the path that the teaching is authentically interpreted.[27]

[26] "Chapter on Teaching," 2 (SSZ 2: 3).

[27] The hermeneutic circle implicit in Shinran's view of scriptural texts is expressed in the following passage: "Although in their general import the three sutras have explicit (*ken*) meanings and an implicit, hidden, inner (*shō on mitsu*) meaning, they each reveal shinjin to be the basis for entry [into dharma]. Hence, each sutra opens with the words, 'Thus [have I heard]. . . .' 'Thus' signifies the aspect of genuine entrusting" ("Chapter on Transformed Buddha-Bodies and Lands," 37). In other words, the sutras "all teach the true, diamond-like mind to be what is most essential," and at the same time, shinjin is the "basis for entry" that allows for genuine understanding of the texts. Shinran develops his highly focused position drawing on earlier hints: "Each sutra opens with the words, 'Thus [have I heard]. . . .' This reveals entrusting to be the basis for

Through such a hermeneutic, the words of the teaching are recovered from ordinary, relativizing conceptualization and come to express the double-sided horizon of self as samsaric and reality as compassion.

SHINRAN'S INTERPRETIVE METHODS

The Place of Interpretation in Shinran's Works

The activity of interpretation plays a dominant role in Shinran's writings. With the exception of some letters and hymns, almost all of his works may be viewed as efforts to assemble and arrange, annotate, or translate passages from the Chinese Buddhist canon. All these activities seek to transmit the path by rendering and communicating readings of scriptural texts. This focus on texts in Chinese has led some readers to perceive in Shinran an elitist attachment to scholastic achievement, acquired in two decades of study on Mount Hiei and persisting despite his doctrinal stance against the necessity of learning in the Pure Land path and his years of propagation in the countryside. Others, seeking to reclaim the egalitarian Shinran, direct attention to his efforts to produce writings in Japanese intended in part for the ears of the illiterate despite his awareness that such writings would be ridiculed as clumsy and repetitious by the educated.[28] Neither view of Shinran's works, however, clearly identifies or accounts for one of their chief motive forces: the extraordinary energy devoted to enabling readers—even the illiterate—to encounter scriptural texts.[29] Why the importance of Chinese texts? Why was straightforward exposition of the teaching in Japanese inadequate? Simple authority is not a satisfactory answer, particularly with those passages most indicative of what is original in

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entry." T'an-luan, *Commentary on the Treatise on the Pure Land*, quoted in "Chapter on Shinjin," 38 (SSZ 2: 65). For a general discussion of the problem of Shinran's interpretive methods, see *Teaching, Practice and Realization*, Volume I (1983), 38–44.

[28] See the postscript to *Notes on 'Essentials of Faith Alone'* and *Notes on Once-Calling and Many-Calling*.

[29] Even in his *wasan*, many of which may be viewed as renderings of Chinese writings into Japanese, there are, in addition to the numerous Buddhist terms, phrases adopted from Chinese works with little concession to the Japanese context, so that they would have been incomprehensible without seeing the written text or receiving explanation.

Shinran's thought, for through various modes of annotation he presents interpretations that scholar-monks even of Hōnen's lineage would have found eccentric. More importantly, the authority of proof-texts would not have been a crucial factor in the religious lives of the people in the countryside.[30]

Shinran's involvement with Chinese texts derives in part from his understanding of the nature and role of writings, including his own, in the Pure Land path. He speaks repeatedly of the difficulty of accepting the teaching: "More difficult even than trust in the teachings of Śākyamuni's lifetime/ Is the true entrusting of the universal Vow;/ The sutra teaches that it is 'the most difficult of all difficulties.' "[31] The difficulty, highlighted here by a distinction even between an acceptance of Śākyamuni's teachings and the true entrusting of the Vow, is an indication of the gap between our ordinary thinking and authentic engagement with the path. If the texts were to be merely accepted by the reader as authoritative, the understanding of them would not differ from our ordinary understanding and exposition of their content in Japanese would be sufficient. Shinran, however, draws a firm distinction between the false language of our ordinary thought and perception and the true language of the tradition. No amount of reasoning, authority, or logical argument within the world of our usual thought can lead one into the realm of true language. Hence, Shinran's project in his writings is not to formulate an argument on the level of ordinary logic. Rather, since the Pure Land way as a path for foolish beings turns on our encounter with true language, Shinran seeks (1) to gather central examples of true language, and (2) to present them in a way that illuminates their nature as true language. These general aims are expressed at the conclusion of *Teaching, Practice and Realization,* where, after his own postscript, he borrows the words of Tao-ch'o:

> I have collected true words to aid others in their practice for attaining birth, in order that the process be made continuous, without end and without interruption, by which those who

[30] That Shinran understood the effectiveness of a tract like Seikaku's *Yuishinshō* is evident from the numerous copies he made of it, and others, in his late years, although he never wrote a similar expository piece in Japanese.

[31] *Hymns of the Pure Land,* 70.

> have been born first guide those who come later, and those who are born later join those who were born before.[32]

Shinran's focus on the texts of the tradition derives ultimately from his view of the religious path, and of the flow of its transmission in the world, as intimately involved with language and engagement with it. But another reason for his adherence to Chinese texts lies in qualities he perceived in written Chinese that rendered it open to interpretation that could reveal its functioning as true language. Both Chinese and Westerners seeking to introduce Western thought in China often found the native language unwieldy.[33] Shinran, however, took the opposite attitude toward written Chinese: he adhered to it as the medium for the teaching, finding in it qualities that could act as aid and corrective in engaging the Pure Land path. Western scholars have commented on the main features that concern us.

First, there is the isolating or "nonagglutinative"[34] quality of the language, in which each individual character is a unit of meaning, and person, number, tense and mood are not indicated by processes in which these elements are combined into derivative words. This leads in Shinran's commentaries to a tendency to break the text down into single characters. He even splits compound words—common in the Chinese rendering of Buddhist terminology—and attributes distinct meanings to essentially synonymous characters, at times suggesting the fusion of disparate aspects or temporal moments of a concept.[35] This "nonagglutinative" characteristic aids him in detaching passages and terms from normal contextual understandings. It is also related to the

[32] Quoted in "Chapter on Transformed Buddha-Bodies and Lands," 119 (SSZ 2: 203). Shinran's view of true language extends to a recognition of the origins even of his own words: "If what Hōnen said is true, then surely my words cannot be empty" (*Tannishō*, 2).

[33] See Arthur F. Wright, "The Chinese Language and Foreign Ideas," in Arthur F. Wright, ed., *Studies in Chinese Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), 286–287.

[34] Julia Kristeva, *Language the Unknown: An Initiation into Linguistics*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), p. 72.

[35] For example: "Concerning "Name" (名号, *myō-gō*): 名 *Myō* indicates the Name in the causal stage, and 号 *gō* indicates the Name in the resultant stage" ("Note on *Jinen hōni*" in *Hymns of the Dharma-Ages*, SSZ 2: 530). The same treatment of *myō-gō* is found in *Notes on 'Essentials of Faith Alone'*, 30, SSZ 2, 621.

reverse, syntactic operation of creating new contexts through the juxtaposition of terms or passages. The paratactic disposition of words and phrases in coordinate patterns without logical connectives is frequently encountered in written Chinese, and Shinran employs it as a stylistic feature in his writings. In addition, he adopts it as a larger structural principle, most notably in the serial organization of *Teaching, Practice and Realization*, but also in the Japanese "notes" (*mon'i*).

Second, the general polysemous nature of written characters has often been noted. Chinese dictionaries from early times show that individual characters are as a rule used with numerous and diverse meanings. This semantic diversity extends to an absence of the categories of parts of speech as conceived in Indo-European languages, so that a single character may function in different settings as noun, verb, adjective, and so on.[36] Thus, dictionaries are often of limited use in deciphering difficult passages, and a reader, to determine which meanings are appropriate, must be attentive to the various levels of context.[37] In his readings of the texts of the tradition, however, Shinran employs Chinese dictionaries and traditional commentaries not simply to identify the applicable meaning of the character in its specific context, but precisely to draw out its various connotations.[38] The polysemous nature of the characters allows him to radicalize or expand their significance by again breaking down their immediate, literal contexts and discursive frameworks. Where free of such frameworks, they disclose meanings expressive of the emerging horizon of the realization of shinjin.

Third, related to polysemy, there is the conceptualization and defini-

[36] See Paul Demiéville's emphatic statement quoted in Julia Kristeva, *Language the Unknown*, p. 73.

[37] "After all is said and done, the meaning is determined from the context; ergo, a translator must get a firm grasp of his context in the largest sense of the word, and there no dictionary will avail him." Achilles Fang, "Some Reflections on the Difficulty of Translation," in Arthur F. Wright, ed., *Studies in Chinese Thought*, 282–283.

[38] For example, in a commentary on the phrase, "Solely through the greatness of Amida's universal Vow" from Shan-tao, Shinran defines the character 為, which is of negligible significance in the original, as "to accomplish, to use, to be settled, that, this, to encounter. To encounter implies form." Thus he recasts the phrase: "Amida's *using* and *settling on* the *Name that embodies* the Vow" (*Notes on Once-Calling and Many-Calling*, 44–45; SSZ 2, 614).

tion by means of opposition and association. French Sinologist François Jullien has argued in his work on the language of Chinese thought that "terms function conceptually less by themselves as semantic units than by correlation with other terms and by virtue of a network of associations, being engendered as elements of a duality."[39] Jullien asserts that in philosophical discourse, terms are not defined by themselves; rather, the meaning of any term can be deduced only in relation to the other terms with which it is linked. He points out the importance of binary opposition or dualisms to define terms: the Chinese character "is a virtuality of indefinite meaning . . . not taking on a conceptual usage except with respect to another term which serves as its counterpart." This feature of binary opposition in the definition of Chinese words plays a central role in Shinran's interpretations of texts, and corresponds in his thought to the aspect of opposition in the double-sided horizon that arises as hearing the Name, or to the initial shift in awareness that we have seen in *Tannishō*, in which our ordinary thinking is drawn from relative judgments into absolute polarity.

A fourth general feature of written Chinese that Shinran draws heavily on in his reading of Pure Land texts is the frequent lack of explicit indications of tense and relationships. As Arthur Wright states: "Structurally Chinese was a most unsuitable medium for the expression of their [proponents of foreign ideologies] ideas, for it was deficient in the notations of number, tense, gender, and relationships."[40] Even in passages that appear unambiguous in context, Shinran finds a latitude unavailable in Japanese for interpretations that deviate from the preceding commentarial traditions. One major use of such features concerns designations of the agent of action. With the arising of the doublesided horizon of the self, practicers experience a reversal in the direction of the activity that moves them toward awakening. To articulate this, Shinran adopted the Mahāyāna concept of "directing" (*ekō*) merit gained through practice toward attainment. On the one hand, the foundation for calculative thinking and effort has collapsed

[39] *Procés ou Création: Une introduction à la pensée des lettrés chinois* (Paris: Seuil, 1989). From Chapter 11, "The Linguistic Expression of Process," trans. by Victor H. Mair in "The Language of Chinese Thought," *Philosophy East & West*, 41:3 (July 1991), 377.

[40] "The Chinese Language and Foreign Ideas," *Studies in Chinese Thought*, 286–287.

and self-power has been overturned; hence, there is "no directing merit" (*fuekō*) by the practicer. On the other hand, this collapse is also true reality approaching and moving into one's existence from beyond its bounds. To express this reversal, Shinran develops unique interpretations of passages from Vasubandhu and T'an-luan that explain *ekō* in the Pure Land path. In his readings, Shinran identifies the agent of the directing of merit not as the aspirant, as was traditionally understood, but Dharmākara-Amida, who gives the virtue of his practice to beings.[41] Moreover, after deviating from the accepted readings, Shinran goes on to interpret the passages in the usual way also, with the Pure Land aspirant as the subject who performs *ekō*. In this case, however, *ekō* refers to the activity of those who have been born in the Pure Land.[42] We see here that, once removed from usual frameworks of understanding, a single text is open to divergent readings that articulate different aspects of the complex condition of authentic engagement. Another crucial area of interpretation involves temporal expressions. The double-sided horizon is a fusion of distinct temporalities: that of karmic existence and that of the Vow. By utilizing the polysemy of characters to elicit temporal implications (*nen* 念 as an instant of thought, *soku* 即 as "immediate" attainment of birth) and the absence of explicit indications of tense, Shinran is able to interpret the *Larger Sutra* passage on the fulfillment of the Eighteenth Vow as expressing the realization of shinjin as the attainment of that which transcends time.[43]

Because of these characteristics of written Chinese, Shinran finds in the texts of the Chinese canon a language that resists unilinear or monolithic grasp, and at the same time allows for understandings in which the disparate dimensions of the Name or Vow—nondualistic and polar, transtemporal and temporal—are held together without fissure.

[41] Shinran indicates his interpretation by adding honorific auxiliary verbs in his reading of the Chinese. See "Chapter on Practice," 17, 19 (SSZ 2: 13, 16).

[42] See "Chapter on Realization," 15–16 (SSZ 2: 107).

[43] "One thought-moment" (*ichinen*) is time at its ultimate limit, where the realization of shinjin takes place. . . . "Then" (*soku*) means immediately, without any time elapsing." *Notes on Once-Calling and Many-Calling*, 32–33 (SSZ 2: 605); also see Yoshifumi Ueda and Dennis Hirota, *Shinran: An Introduction to His Thought*, (Kyoto: Hongwanji International Center, 1989) 195–202, for annotation and commentary.

Interpretive Procedure: Analysis and Reconstruction

We are now in a position to consider Shinran's reading of true language. In the passages from *Tannishō* taken up in Part One, Shinran speaks directly across the gap between our ordinary thinking, which is the stance of his interlocutors, and the awareness of false and true language; hence, in those passages, his central focus is the shift from provisional into authentic engagement, and particularly the negative, therapeutic aspect, in which attachment to ordinary frames of reference is broken. The hermeneutic strategy in Shinran's works that corresponds most directly with these shifts is his distinction of "explicit" (*ken*) and "implicit" (*on*) meanings of certain texts, the former corresponding to readings from the perspective of ordinary thought (what we have termed provisional engagement) and the latter to readings from the stance of the realization of shinjin (authentic engagement). The texts of the tradition in general, however, are language that raises religious existence to awareness and renders it intelligible. The broader interpretive problem, then, is to grasp them from the stance of realization of shinjin. In attempting this, Shinran's treatment of Pure Land writings displays a dual operation that corresponds to the shifts in perspective that we have seen in *Tannishō*. We may identify them as: (1) analysis, which works to remove the texts from the ordinary frames of reference and from a merely conceptual grasp of the teaching; and (2) reconstruction, in which the concepts of the teaching are understood to articulate the significance of authentic engagement with the path and the apprehension of self and true reality within it.

In terms of the nature of true language, analytic methods work to disclose the vertical vector that it embodies, which has been obscured by an objectifying understanding of the path within ordinary frames of reference. Through lexical analysis, words are extricated from the relative judgments of calculative thinking and come to be apprehended instead with reference to the total opposition between samsaric existence (empty talk and gibberish) and true reality inherent in the arising of the double-sided horizon. Having passed through this purifying fire, where they are marked by and made to bear both the polarity and nonduality with formless, timeless reality that characterize the boundary of the self, they are recovered through a reconstructive reading, so that they illuminate religious existence by setting forth the horizontal,

narrative vector in the texts. No longer anchored in the discursive, literal surface, they become expressive of an inverted directionality, in which the logic of progression along the path is integrated with a new logic of transformation, or by the presence of the double-sided horizon of self and reality in opposition concomitant with nonduality.

SHINRAN'S INTERPRETATION OF THE THREE MINDS

Shinran's interpretive procedure as a whole reflects in structure the shift from provisional to authentic engagement with the path. The analytic phase corresponds to the negation of self-power modalities of thought and the emerging presence of that which is real, while the reconstructive phase corresponds to the unfolding awareness of opposition and nonduality in the complex interaction between practicer and Buddha. We will now turn briefly to an example of his methods, his treatment of the "threefold shinjin" of the Eighteenth Vow.[44] This passage may be taken as an instance of language that functions to shape apprehension of the nature of shinjin and that is genuinely understood only within its attainment, for Shinran clearly distinguishes it from the passage enumerating three minds in the *Contemplation Sutra,* which not only corresponds to the understanding of the path in provisional engagement but fulfills a therapeutic role of leading beings to the realization asserted in the Vow.[45] Shinran's fullest discussion of the threefold shinjin, in "Chapter on Shinjin," falls clearly into two parts, for it comprises two *mondō* or questions-and-answers. The first corresponds to the analytic phase of interpretation, the second to the reconstructive.

[44] *Sanshin* 三信 or 三心: "If, when I attain Buddhahood, the sentient beings of the ten quarters, [1] with sincere mind 至心 [2] entrusting themselves 信楽, [3] aspiring to be born in my land 欲生我国, and saying my Name perhaps even ten times, should not be born there, may I not attain the supreme enlightenment."

[45] "The three minds of the *Contemplation Sutra* (sincere mind, deep mind, aspiration for birth through turning over merit) are parts of the mind of self-power of a person who pursues meditative and non-meditative practice. Know that the deep mind and sincere mind [in the *Contemplation Sutra*], which are means, are intended to bring the two goods—meditative and non-meditative—into the aspiration for the threefold shinjin of the *Larger Sutra.*" *Notes on 'Essentials of Faith Alone',* 48 (SSZ 2: 634). Shinran's hermeneutical stance differs radically from that of Hōnen, who identifies the two versions of three minds.

1. Analytic Phase

Shinran raises the topic of the three minds as an issue of interpretation, presenting them as the crux of an apparent conflict in meaning between scriptural texts: "The Vow of 'sincere mind, entrusting, and aspiration for birth' has been established. Why does Vasubandhu . . . speak of 'one mind'?"[46] Shinran first quotes the Eighteenth Vow, then refers to the opening lines of the gatha from Vasubandhu's *Treatise on the Pure Land,* which is regarded as a commentary on the *Larger Sutra:* "O World-honored one,/ With the mind that is single (*isshin*)/ I take refuge in the Tathāgata of unhindered light." Shinran brings this passage to bear on the Eighteenth Vow by viewing the term *isshin* (一心, literally "one mind," meaning "single-heartedly") as synonymous with the three minds of the Vow. Shinran's question, then, appears straightforward: if the *Larger Sutra* sets forth three minds, why does Vasubandhu speak of "one mind"?

This is not, however, simply a question of arithmetic. The dialogic format in which Shinran casts his discussion is a common device in Buddhist texts, but it also suggests the situation of the passages from *Tannishō* considered in Part One, in which he effects a shift from the assumptions underlying the questions presented by followers into the perspective of fulfilled engagement. In the exposition of the three minds, this shift turns on two meanings of "one" in "one mind." In formulating the question, Shinran emphasizes the numerical meaning to underscore the apparent inconsistency in the two passages. He goes on, however, to develop the meaning of "three" versus "one" into a contrast between our ordinary frames of reference and true reality that transcends conceptualization, or, to use the metaphors developed above, the horizontal and the vertical. In other words, Shinran employs "three" and "one" to establish a polarity with movements in opposite directions between them.

The movement from "three" to "one"—the analytic phase of interpretation—aims at the disclosure of the Vow through freeing it from the presuppositions with which we ordinarily grasp it. It corresponds to the collapse of calculative thinking and the emergence of reality, or the condensation of the Vow into the inconceivable Name. Here, there

[46] "Chapter on Shinjin," 19 (SSZ 2, 59).

are two basic interpretive operations. Shinran begins by "looking into the literal meanings (字訓, *jikun*) of the three minds."[47] This method of exegesis by close investigation of the lexicographical meanings of individual characters was practiced on Mount Hiei by Tendai scholars and was especially valued in the Eshin branch, which focused on the Pure Land path. Shinran was probably trained in such study during his twenty-year stay on the mountain, and there is evidence of its methods from his earliest surviving writings to his last works. Scholars have classified various categories of definition—dictionary entries, definitions of those entries, characters related by pronunciation, and so on—but our concern here is less Shinran's sources than his general aims. By extricating the characters from their contexts and exploring the literal definitions of each, he dissolves, in the denseness and polysemy of the terms, the frames of reference we would commonly bring to bear on the text and the conceptions of the three minds as necessary attitudes of our ordinary consciousness.

Following this, Shinran fuses each list of definitions through the use of the binary opposition that is a typical feature of Chinese lexicography, and thereby absolutizes the meanings of the terms.[48] This is the second step in the analytic phase. While various meanings are given for the characters making up the terms for the three minds, their essen-

[47] "Chapter on Shinjin," 20 (SSZ 2, 59): In sincere mind (*shinshin*), *shi* means "truth," "reality," "sincerity"; *shin* means "seed," "kernel." In entrusting (*shingyō*), *shin* means "truth," "reality," "sincerity," "fullness," "ultimacy," "accomplishment," "reliance," "reverence," "discernment," "distinctness," "clarity," "faithfulness"; *gyō* means "aspiration," "wish," "desire," "exultation," "delight," "joy," "gladness," "happiness." In aspiration for birth (*yokushō*), *yoku* means "wish," "desire," "awakening," "awareness"; *shō* means "accomplishment," "fulfillment," "performance," "establishment."

[48] "Chapter on Shinjin," 20 (SSZ 2: 59): We see clearly that *sincere mind* is "the mind that is the seed of truth, reality, and sincerity"; hence, it is completely untainted by the hindrance of doubt. *Entrusting* is "the mind full of truth, reality, and sincerity"; "the mind of ultimacy, accomplishment, reliance, and reverence"; "the mind of discernment, distinctness, clarity, and faithfulness"; "the mind of aspiration, wish, desire, and exultation"; "the mind of delight, joy, gladness, and happiness"; hence, it is completely untainted by the hindrance of doubt. *Aspiration for birth* is "the mind of wish, desire, awakening, and awareness"; "the mind of accomplishment, fulfillment, performance, and establishment." It is the mind of great compassion directing itself to beings; hence, it is completely untainted by the hindrance of doubt.

tial synonymy in signifying truth, reality, and sincerity is indicated by their common antonym: they are "completely untainted by the hindrance of doubt." Here, the three minds are seen to be "one" (true and real) in contrast to double-mindedness and established on its collapse. Based on this antithesis, the threefold shinjin may be said to lie precisely in the absence of calculative thinking, where the practicer comes to "know nothing at all of the two, good and evil," or where the Vow-narrative condenses into the inconceivable Name, which Shinran later states is the essence of sincere mind. At this point in the interpretive process, no dualistic relationship between subject and object or practicer and Buddha is set forth. There is only the opposition that corresponds to the double-sided horizon of samsaric self and true reality that arises with entrance into authentic engagement.

2. Reconstructive Phase

The Pure Land path does not turn on the eradication of discriminative thinking, but lies accessible and transformative through and in the medium of language. Thus, the teaching, as true language, must on the one hand be the emergence in linguistic form of true reality, which for delusional minds can only be said to be formless or inconceivable, and on the other, it must be intelligible to our unenlightened understanding, providing a coherent and accurate grasp of the self and the world. It remains, therefore, for Shinran to delineate the significance that the teaching of the three minds holds for practicers' lives. His strategy in the second question-and-answer is to move from the abstract, radical (or non-contextualized) meaning of the terms for the three minds presented in the first question-and-answer and to disclose their concrete significance for temporal existence. He accomplishes this by reversing the initial question concerning "three" and "one": if the minds are in fact essentially one, why does the Vow enumerate the three?[49] Here, Shinran moves from oneness to manyness, which expresses the sphere of duality or conscious awareness. He proceeds in

[48] "Chapter on Shinjin," 21 (SSZ 2: 59): Question: We can accept Vasubandhu's intentions—the significance of taking the three as one—as indicated by the literal meanings of the terms. But Amida Tathāgata has in fact established the Vow of the threefold mind for the sake of foolish and evil sentient beings. How are we to understand this?

his answer by delineating—through the use of narrative, temporal, and causal frames of reference—a complex superposition or simultaneity of two patterns of relationships among the three minds, one by which their dimension of nonduality is maintained and a second that allows for intellectual comprehension.

A. Narrative description of the dual presence of samsaric existence and true reality together with their nonduality. Shinran elaborates, in mythic terms, the awareness that emerges in the collapse of calculative thinking. Since this awareness forms the foundation of each of the three minds, Shinran casts his exposition of each one in the same pattern of (1) contrast between beings' lives in the world and Dharmākara Bodhisattva's pure practice, together with (2) the Buddha's giving his true mind to ignorant beings. To describe the perception of human existence as samsaric—the total lack of all possibility of goodness or purity of mind—Shinran uses universalistic imagery, particularly the metaphor of the ocean. Beings are an "ocean of multitudes"; their lives are an aimless "floundering in the sea of blind passions," a "drifting and sinking in the ocean of birth-and-death." Within this ocean, beings have not a single moment of freedom from blind passions; this is the temporal aspect of the all-inclusiveness and all-pervasiveness of ignorance and pain in unenlightened existence. This "constant" and "incessant" domination of desire and hatred extends from "the beginningless past down to this day, this very moment." In opposition to the existence of unenlightened human beings Shinran sets forth, as that which lies at the far side of the horizon of the self, the character of Dharmākara's practice, in which "there was not a moment—not an instant—when [it] was not pure."[50] The narrative elaboration of opposition between beings and Buddha lays the foundation for the expression of the nonduality arising through an approach from beyond that is also implied in the horizon. Shinran invokes the narrative of the Vow further by using the term "give" or, more literally, "turn over and bestow" (回施, *ese*) to express the nexus between Buddha and human existence. Amida turns over his true mind—as sincere mind, entrusting, and aspiration for birth—to beings. Thus, a groundwork of polarity and nonduality runs in the depths of each of the three minds.

B. Formulation of a sequential pattern among the three minds. To

[50] "Chapter on Shinjin," 21 (SSZ 2: 60).

articulate fully the character of life carried on in the attainment of shinjin, it is necessary to indicate how the Buddha's pure mind that has been given one is integrated with one's daily existence. Shinran accomplishes this by going on to assert, together with the pattern above, a sequential relationship among the three minds: the Name is the essence of sincere mind, sincere mind is the essence of entrusting, and entrusting is the essence of aspiration for birth. There is no support in the literal surface of the text for this interpretation of a sequence among the three minds outside of the order in which the eight characters appear in the Vow, but by setting out an order and developing each mind into a different facet of awareness, Shinran is able to delineate relationships between subject and object and between Buddha and being that occur as functions of shinjin while maintaining that it is the "mind that is single."

(1) *Sincere mind.* In the first *mondō,* Shinran states that "sincere" mind means the mind that is "true and real." In this, he follows traditional commentaries. In his lexical analysis, however, Shinran polarizes or absolutizes the meanings of terms on the basis of the opposition inherent in the arising of the horizon of the self. Thus, in his treatment in the second question-and-answer, he develops the definitions with extreme literalism removed from ordinary relative use: sincere mind indicates true reality, that is, the Buddha's "pure, true mind," or "Buddha-nature." Here, Shinran emphasizes the continuity of sincere mind with that which is beyond conceivability.[51] Being identical in nature with the "inconceivable, indescribable, and inexplicable" Vow, it completely transcends conceptual understanding, and thus allows no possibility for being grasped through the subject-object dichotomy of discriminative thinking. Further, it is the Buddha's mind given to beings; thus, it is free of the duality of Buddha and sentient being. In a commentary, Shinran explains: "*Sincere mind* means true and real. 'True and real' refers to Amida's Vow being true and real. . . . From the very beginning sentient beings, who are filled with blind passions, lack a mind true and real."[52] In Shinran's inter-

[51] "Chapter on Shinjin," 25 (SSZ 2: 61): This mind . . . originates from the inconceivable, indescribable, and inexplicable ocean of the Vow of great wisdom, the One Vehicle. This is "sincere mind."

[52] *Notes on the Inscriptions on Sacred Scrolls,* 33 (SSZ 2, 577).

pretation, "sincere mind" can only be self-reflexive. It is an expression in the Vow that refers only to the Vow itself. With regard to sincere mind, there is as yet no evolvement of a subject-object dichotomy, and consequently, while true reality and samsaric existence stand in contrast, there is no interaction between being and Buddha. It is the "core" or "seed" of true reality, the essential character of the Buddha's mind in beings at its very point of emergence in hearing the Name. At the same time, however, it is the foundation of the other two minds.

(2) *Entrusting*. Although trust ordinarily implies an interpersonal relationship, Shinran elaborates the foundation in nonduality (sincere mind) of this mode of apprehending religious engagement by developing it in a teleological framework, or one of fulfilled teleology: "Because this mind is the Tathagata's mind of great compassion, it necessarily becomes the truly decisive cause of attaining the fulfilled land."[53] Since entrusting as the Buddha's mind functions as the cause of birth, its dominant characteristic is not dependence but joy, which Shinran emphasizes in his selection of prooftexts. In this way, he develops a subject-object dichotomy within the threefold shinjin without departing from its nature as the mind that is single: entrusting is the cause of birth, and it is experienced as joy in that cause. Shinran's evolvement of self-awareness may be seen in the careful distinction of two kinds of joy that he sets forth in other writings, based on the terms *kangi* 歓喜 and *kyō*[*ki*] 慶喜. Speaking of the realization of shinjin in a *wasan*, Shinran states: "in even a single thought-moment of sincere mind,/ You have attained shinjin and joy (*kangi*), gladdened (*kyō*) by what you have heard."[54] Both forms of joy arise as elements of the realization of shinjin in the thought-moment of hearing the Name, but in annotations to this hymn as well in other writings, Shinran indicates that they are experienced as distinct: "*kangi:* to rejoice in shinjin beforehand [at being assured of future birth]; *kyō:* to rejoice after having

[53] "Chapter on Shinjin," 28 (SSZ 2: 62). I have discussed the nature and role of the dialectical relationship between interpersonal and teleological modes of apprehending the path in "Breaking the Darkness: Images of Reality in the Shin Buddhist Path" (*Japanese Religions*, 16:3, 17–45). I borrow the paired terms "interpersonal" and "teleological" from Gordon D. Kaufman, "Two Models of Transcendence," in *God the Problem* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), 72–81.

[54] *Hymns of the Pure Land*, 49.

attained shinjin." *Kangi* is joy in the knowledge that one will unfailingly be born in the Pure Land, having attained the Buddha's mind as the cause, arising at the moment one realizes shinjin. *Kyō*, by contrast, holds a reflective dimension, unfolding after realization of shinjin in the evolving awareness of the presence of reality pervading one's ongoing existence. Thus Shinran states concerning *kyōki:* "*To be glad* means to always have joy uninterruptedly in one's heart and constantly keep it in mind."[55] In "Chapter on Shinjin," Shinran uses the term *kyōki* for the joy in becoming a "true disciple of Śākyamuni" and entering the company of the Buddhas through receiving Amida's virtues; here, we see the development of a religious awareness characterized by the subject-object dichotomy that at the same time preserves the apprehension of nonduality with Buddha. Awareness is developed further in terms of the dichotomy of being and Buddha in the third mind of aspiration for birth.[56]

(3) *Aspiration for birth.* Shinran maintains the sense of movement implied in aspiration, but by emphasizing the interpersonal rather than teleological apprehension of the path, effects a reversal of direction: " 'Aspire for birth' is the command of the Tathāgata calling to and summoning the multitudes of all beings."[57] Out of wisdom-compassion, Amida calls to beings, and beings respond with the "diamond-like true mind" that is the Buddha's. Thus, the interpersonal relationship between Buddha and being evolves, but as with the subject-object dichotomy in joy, is penetrated by the dimension of nonduality. The central interpretive move in Shinran's exposition involves the shift in the agent of *ekō* (directing virtue for attainment of birth) from practicer to Amida, which we have discussed above. We should note here that, while the words of the Vow, "aspire for birth," are removed from their immediate, prescriptive context and given a new context

[55] *Notes on 'Essentials of Faith Alone'*, 46 (SSZ 2: 633).

[56] A fundamental tenet of the Pure Land tradition stemming from Hōnen is his assertion that all requirements for birth—including the three minds—are fulfilled in the nembutsu. Because of this, traditional Shin commentators have tended to focus on configurations of unity among the three minds rather than the pattern of evolvement, with aspects of nonduality and dichotomy (subject-object, being-Buddha), that Shinran also sets forth.

[57] "Chapter on Shinjin," 39 (SSZ 2: 65).

within the apprehension emerging from realization of shinjin, the central object of this hermeneutic strategy in Shinran's works is the Name, Namu-amida-butsu, itself: " 'Namu' [*kimyō*, 'to take refuge'] . . . is the command of the Primal Vow calling to and summoning us."[58] Thus, through the evolvement of the threefold shinjin, we return to the linguisticality of the path, and come full circle to the hearing of the Name. It is the point of entry, and it is the flowering of attainment, now harboring the double-sided horizon of self and reality.

Through a discussion of Shinran's view of language, I have sought to sketch an understanding of the interrelationships between shinjin and nembutsu that might serve as an alternative to traditional accounts, and to delineate the unity in his path of religious realization and practice, and of apprehension of word and of self and world.[59] Further, although larger methodological and comparative considerations must be left for another occasion, I have also sought to formulate Shinran's thought in a way that allows for comparison with treatments of faith, interpretation, and engagement with religious symbols in other thinkers without ignoring either his adherence to general Mahāyāna views of reality and language or the centrality of linguistic action that distinguishes the path he sets forth.

[58] "Chapter on Practice," 34 (SSZ 2: 22).

[59] One of the few contemporary treatments of Shinran's thought that touches on its linguistic implications is Ōmine Akira's discussion of the Name (see "*Gengo to chōetsu*," *Risō* no. 630, November, 1985, 50–60; in English, "Language and Transcendence," *Pure Land* no. 3, 1986, 141–156). Ōmine frames his view of the Name in terms of "pure" or "poetic" language, invoking in particular Heidegger's assertion that "language speaks." He does not, however, delineate the nature of engagement with the language of the path or delve into the hermeneutical issues of what it means concretely to hear the teaching and how such apprehension is possible.