

# The Shin Faith of Rennyo

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Speak out, speak out what is on your mind.  
Those who do not speak out are forbidding.  
Whether one has *shin* (信) (faith) or not,  
just speak out.  
By speaking out, others are able to know  
what is on your mind and correct you.  
Just say what is on your mind.

RENNYO SHŌNIN<sup>1</sup>

RENNYO (1415–1499), the eighth abbot of the Honganji branch of the Jōdo Shinshū founded by Shinran (1173–1262), was born at Ōtani, Kyoto, in 1415 (Ōei 22.2.25). At the time of his birth, Rennyo's grandfather Gyōnyo (1376–1440), the sixth abbot, was custodian of the ancestral hall established at Shinran's burial site at Ōtani Honganji by Kakunyo (1270–1351),<sup>2</sup> Shinran's great-grandson. In 1431, Rennyo was ordained

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<sup>1</sup> "Rennyo Shōnin goichidaiki-kikigaki," in *Shinshū shōgyō zensho* (Kyoto: Ōyagi Kōbundō, 1969–1970), Vol. III, p. 553; *Shinshū shōgyō zensho* is cited hereafter as *SSZ*. For an English translation of this memoir, see Yamamoto Kōshō, tr., *The Words of St. Rennyo* (Ube: Karinbunko, 1968).

<sup>2</sup> For English translations of some of Kakunyo's writings, see "Tract on Steadily Holding to the Faith (*Shōji-shō*)" and "The Life of Shinran Shōnin" in D. T. Suzuki, *Collected Writings on Shin Buddhism* (Kyoto: Shinshū Ōtaniha, 1973).

priest at Shōren'in, receiving the name Kenju. Under the tutelage of his grandfather and of his father, Zonnyo (1396–1457), Rennyō was instructed in Shinshū tradition and Pure Land texts. A memoir notes that again and again he read Shinran's *Kyōgyōshinshō*; *Rokuyōshō*, a commentary on *Kyōgyōshinshō* by Kakunyo's son, Zonkaku (1290–1373); and *Anjinketsujōshō*, a work of uncertain authorship, three copies of which were worn threadbare by his constant use.<sup>3</sup>

In 1457, Rennyō succeeded his father as abbot of Honganji. Consistent with a childhood pledge to revive and restore the founder's teachings during his lifetime, Rennyō set about expanding Honganji's influence and economic base. His vigorous efforts, however, gave offense to Mt. Hiei's warrior-monks, who in 1465 attacked and burned down Ōtani Honganji. In 1471, Rennyō, at age fifty-seven, embarked on the most consequential period of his life in shifting the center of his activities to Yoshizaki in the Hokuriku region. Amidst the unsettled social and political conditions brought about by the Ōnin War (1467–1477), he developed his "pastoral letters" (*Ofumi*, or *Gobunshō*), written in colloquial Japanese, as an instrument for exhorting and instructing Shinshū adherents (*monto*) in Shinran's teachings. In the course of the next quarter-century until his death at eighty-five in 1499 (Meiō 8.2.25), it appears that he achieved his lifetime ambition to revive the religious movement which began with Shinran. Indeed, he laid the foundation for Honganji's rise as the most powerful religious organization in medieval Japan.

In sum, students of Japanese civilization are agreed that Rennyō and Shinran are the major figures in the history of the Shinshū. In general, however, two contrasting lines of interpretation of Rennyō's place in relation to Shinran's may be observed. Shin Buddhists nurtured on Rennyō's *Ofumi* and his disciples' memoirs, such as that from which the passage above is cited, revere Rennyō as a "second founder."<sup>4</sup> This traditional sectarian view maintains that a key concept for Rennyō—*anjin* 安心 (serene-mind)—is identical in meaning with Shinran's central notion—*shinjin* 信心 (faith-mind);<sup>5</sup> both concepts have been translated

<sup>3</sup> Inaba Masamaru, ed., *Rennyō Shōnin gyōjitsu* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1948), p. 64.

<sup>4</sup> *Chūkō shōnin* 中興上人 is one of several epithets which refer specifically to Rennyō within Shinshū tradition.

<sup>5</sup> SSZ III, p. 576; *The Words of St. Rennyō*, p. 66.

by the word "faith" in English.<sup>6</sup> This view stresses continuity within the tradition; it gives minimal consideration to issues in social and intellectual history.

Historians, on the other hand, have emphasized Rennyo's role as a brilliant political strategist whose leadership was crucial for Honganji's expansion and rise to power. This view, taking for granted the discontinuities in any historical process, fails to give adequate importance to the structure of Rennyo's religious thought and practice in relation to Shinran's. For example, the historian Ienaga Saburō has claimed that the thought and activities of Honganji as a religious order are entirely different in quality from those of Shinran. Further, he claims that studies of Shinran are virtually useless for understanding Honganji.<sup>7</sup>

The challenge, therefore, is to present a third view which (1) takes into account the fact that Shin Buddhists primarily see within their tradition the continuity between Shinran and Rennyo; and (2) is not incompatible with the historical analyses of scholars who observe discontinuity and change. This view—a comparative history of religion perspective—draws on Shinshū texts and sectarian studies<sup>8</sup> as well as on more general historical studies.<sup>9</sup> In developing such a position, this article projects a double focus. The first, exploring some of the problems faced by the student who seeks to understand the core religious concepts of a tradition not his own, is a consideration of Rennyo's definition of Shin faith in terms of *anjin*. The second, seeking to set these concepts in a historical and comparativist

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<sup>6</sup> The question of whether it is appropriate to translate *shinjin* (and *anjin*) as "faith" is a matter of concern to Shin Buddhists. Noteworthy is that a deliberate decision is made on the part of a group of Shinshū scholars to leave the term *shinjin* in Japanese in a recent translation of Shinran's *Mattōshō*: "Shinjin has commonly been translated as 'faith,' but we have felt that that term, so strongly and variously colored by its usage in the Judeo-Christian tradition, would only blur the precision of the meaning of the original" (see *Letters of Shinran: A Translation of Mattōshō*, ed. Yoshifumi Ueda [Kyoto: Hongwanji International Center, 1978], p. 83; hereafter cited as *LS*).

<sup>7</sup> Ienaga Saburō, *Chūsei bukkyō shisōshi kenkyū* (Kyoto: Hōzokan, 1966), p. 202.

<sup>8</sup> Among Shinshū scriptures (*Shinshū seiten*) is a collection of eighty *Ofumi* known as *Gojō ofumi*, edited by Rennyo's grandson; four *Ofumi* known as *Ge no ofumi*, and *Gozokushō*; *Ryōgemon* or *Gaikemon* attributed to Rennyo; and several hundred of Rennyo's sayings which make up *Rennyo Shōnin goichidaiki-kikigaki*. In all, some 200 pages of "scripture" are contributed by Rennyo, as compared to about 450 pages of Shinran's writings.

<sup>9</sup> For example, see the postwar publications of Hattori Shisō, Kasahara Kazuo, Akamatsu Toshihide, and Inoue Toshio.

context, is an introduction to the writings of Wilfred Cantwell Smith, a scholar engaged in the study of a universal human phenomenon which he identifies as "faith."<sup>10</sup> The conclusion, striving for a single focus, is a re-consideration of Shin "faith"—the concepts of *shinjin* and *anjin*—in relation to such a universal notion of "faith."

### The Definition of Shin Faith

#### *Shinran's Concept of Faith: Shinjin*

We begin with a brief inquiry into some of the characteristics of Shinran's concept of *shinjin*.<sup>11</sup> Shinran's thought rests firmly on the triple sutras of Pure Land tradition and on his interpretation of the writings of the seven Pure Land patriarchs, concluding with those of his master, Hōnen (1133–1212). These texts provided the literary source for Shinran's conviction that his own existence was passion-ridden and evil in nature, and that only through the other-power of Amida Buddha's vow is salvation possible. For example, in volume three of *Kyōgyōshinshō*, Shinran quotes the fifth patriarch Shan-tao (Zendō, 613–681) as follows:

The deep mind is the mind of deep faith. It has two aspects. The first is that which believes deeply and determinedly that we are really sinful, ordinary beings, fettered to birth-and-death, continuously drowning and transmigrating since innumerable kalpas ago, and have no means for emancipation. The second is that which believes deeply and determinedly that the forty-eight vows of Amida Buddha embrace sentient beings, enabling those who trust in the power of his vow without doubt and apprehension to attain birth

<sup>10</sup> This article retains the original structure of the lectures prepared primarily for Japanese audiences—orientalists and Shin Buddhists—in which I draw on Smith's approach to "religion" in an attempt to elucidate Shin Buddhist materials. See *EB* XIII, 2 (Autumn 1980), pp. 115–26 for Frederick Franck's review article, "The Basic Constituent," on Wilfred Cantwell Smith's *Faith and Belief* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979); Franck focuses on Smith's humanistic vision rather than on his comparativist historical approach to religion.

<sup>11</sup> For a statement on the distinctive features of Shinran's thought in the context of the intellectual history of East Asia by an eminent Shinshū scholar, see Ishida Mitsuyuki, "Shinran's Position in the History of Eastern Thought," in *Shinran kyōgaku no kisoteki kenkyū*, Vol. II (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1977), pp. 1–10.

in the Pure Land without fail.<sup>12</sup>

Here, Shinran follows directly in the line of the Pure Land patriarchs; he goes a step further, however, to proclaim that the Jōdo Shinshū is the conclusive form of Mahayana Buddhist tradition.<sup>13</sup>

Several points appear to be unique to Shinran's concept of faith. First, he maintains that *shinjin* is true mind: it is Amida's mind transferred to sentient beings at the moment in which all religious practices are recognized as mere calculations (*hakarai* はからい)<sup>14</sup> for attaining one's own salvation. The logic of this insight, based on a profound personal experience, is worked out systematically in *Kyōgyōshinshō*. Shinran shows that the three minds referred to in Amida's eighteenth vow—*shishin* 至心, *shingyō* 信樂, and *yokushō* 欲生—are in reality one mind or *shinjin*:

When I humbly inquire into the literal meaning of the triple mind, there is a reason for making the three unified into one. The reason is:

The Chinese characters 至心, which are rendered "sincerity," are the compound of *shi* (至) and *shin* (心). *Shi* means true, real, and integral; *shin* means seed and kernel.

*Shingyō* for "faith," is a compound of *shin* (信) and *gyō* (樂). *Shin* means truth, reality, integrity, fulfillment, consummation, completion, action, gravity, [detailed] inspection, examination, expression, and loyalty. *Gyō* means desire, wish, delight, joy, pleasure, gladness, congratulation, and felicity.

*Yokushō* for "aspiration for birth," consists of *yoku* (欲) and *shō* (生). *Yoku* means to desire, to enjoy, to become conscious, and to know; *shō* means completion, work (that is, making, rising, doing, starting, serving, growing), doing, and rising.<sup>15</sup>

When we thus examine the meaning of the three terms, we find that the mind is the one which is true and real, within which there is no admixture of things unsubstantial. The mind is the one which is

<sup>12</sup> SSZ II, p. 52. Translation cited is from *The Kyō Gyō Shin Shō*, Ryukoku Translation Series V (Kyoto: Ryukoku University, 1966), p. 91; altered slightly.

<sup>13</sup> SSZ II, p. 658; LS, p. 21.

<sup>14</sup> For examples of usage of this crucial term in Shinran's thought, see SSZ II, pp. 658–63, 666–71; and LS, pp. 68–69.

<sup>15</sup> SSZ II, p. 59. For translation quoted, see D. T. Suzuki, tr., *The Kyōgyōshinshō* (Kyoto: Shinshū Ōtaniha, 1973), p. 104.

right and straight, within which there is no admixture of anything wrong and false. [Thus we truly know that for this reason, there is here no admixture of doubt.] It is called *shingyō*, faith. Faith is the one mind, and the one mind is the mind that is true, real, and believing.<sup>16</sup>

In his later writings in Japanese,<sup>17</sup> Shinran seeks to apply the conviction that *shinjin* is true mind to the daily lives of his companions, people of "faith."

Second, the unique quality of Shinran's thought in relation to Japanese thought in general lies in his critical attitude towards all types of popular religious practice. This attitude is reflected in his *Shōzōmatsu wasan*:

Lamentable it is that people, whether of the Way  
or of the world  
Choose auspicious times and lucky dates,  
Worship heavenly gods and earthly deities,  
And are absorbed in divinations and rituals.

Lamentable it is that these days  
All in Japan, whether of the Way or of the world,  
While performing the rites and rituals of Buddhism,  
Worship the supernatural beings of heaven and earth.<sup>18</sup>

This attitude is further reflected in the experience of Shiba Ryōtarō, who, in a recent issue of *Shūkan Asahi*, describes his visit to Yoshida township in Hiroshima prefecture to gather folklore materials. According to his column, he was told by the curator of the local museum that, because the region had been so heavily influenced by Shinshū tradition, no such materials were to be found.<sup>19</sup>

Shinran's criticism of folk religious practices as calculative stems from an awareness of his own incapacity for good and his conviction that salvation is entirely the work of Amida Buddha. Convinced that he could do no good of his own accord, it followed that he claimed no disciples.

<sup>16</sup> For translation quoted, see *The Kyōgyōshinshō*, pp. 104–105.

<sup>17</sup> Shinran's letters, in particular the *Mattōshō* collection which dates from the last decade of his life, are essential for a balanced view of his religious thought.

<sup>18</sup> *SSZ* II, p. 528. For translations quoted, see *Shōzōmatsu Wasan*, Ryukoku Translation Series VII (Kyoto: Ryukoku University, 1980), pp. 101, 104.

<sup>19</sup> "Kaidō o yuku", *Shūkan Asahi* No. 411, pp. 54–57.

Thus, the message permeating his teachings is that whatever good exists to be shared with others is simply that which he himself receives continuously through the other-power of Amida's vow.

Finally, for Shinran, the only true way to live is to live naturally (*jinen ni* 自然に), that is, free of all calculation.<sup>20</sup> To the extent that one lives naturally, the Nembutsu arises spontaneously as an expression of gratitude. Shinran's position here appears extremely subtle. For example, a young Shinshū priest spoke recently about his late father, a devout priest who died in great pain. The son had urged his father to say the Nembutsu, but the father adamantly refused to do so and died in an apparent state of turmoil and unrest. Subsequently, the son recalled Shinran's understanding of *shinjin* and of the Nembutsu as "surpassing conceptual understanding" (*fukashigi* ふかしぎ).<sup>21</sup> Within that context, he believed that his father had died secure in Amida's embrace, having lived free of all calculation to the last moment, exemplifying Shinran's understanding of *shinjin*. The son went on to say that Shinran does not tell us how to live and die; he simply says to live naturally.

The above inquiry reveals two aspects of Shinran's notion of *shinjin*.<sup>22</sup> First, on the side of Amida, there is non-duality: the mind of Amida and the mind of man are identical. In this aspect of *shinjin*, there is continuity with the fundamental non-dualist position of Mahayana Buddhist tradition, mediated directly to Shinran through Tendai's teaching of primordial enlightenment (*hongaku shisō* 本覚思想).<sup>23</sup> Second, on the side of man,

<sup>20</sup> For Shinran's definitive passage on this notion, see *SSZ II*, pp. 663–64; *LS*, pp. 29–30.

<sup>21</sup> See use of this term in *Mattōshō*, *SSZ II*, pp. 659–60, 667, 669; *LS*, p. 84.

<sup>22</sup> In quotation from *Kyōgyōshinshō* cited above (n. 12), Shinran quotes Shan-*tao* to the effect that there are two aspects of the mind of deep faith. More specifically, the approach to Shinran's thought taken here is suggested by the glossary entry *shinjin* in *LS*: "This heart-mind [*shinjin*] has basically two aspects: a non-dichotomous identity wherein the heart and mind of Amida and the heart and mind of man are one, and a dichotomous relationship wherein the two are mutually exclusive and in dynamic interaction. . . . While *shinjin* is an experience on the part of man, its source, its contents, and its consummation are to be found not in man but in Buddha" (p. 83).

<sup>23</sup> For a systematic analysis of Shinran's thought in the context of Tendai's *hongaku shisō*, see Tamura Yoshirō, *Kamakura shinbukkyō shisō no kenkyū* (Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1965), pp. 525–48; see also Tamura's *Nihon bukkyōshi nyūmon* (Tokyo: Kado-kawa Sensho, 1969) in which he presents a theory of Japanese culture from a Buddhist perspective. He suggests that Shinran's unique achievement in Pure Land thought is

there is duality: the mind of Amida and the mind of man are mutually exclusive and in dynamic interaction. In this aspect, there is continuity in Shinran's thought with Hōnen's dualistic emphasis on the separation between man and Amida that is only to be bridged at the moment of death.<sup>24</sup> The uniqueness of Shinran's position is seen in the simultaneous holding together of these two aspects of *shinjin*. Shinran's thought, grounded in an awareness that the Nembutsu alone is true,<sup>25</sup> is ultimately critical not only of self but of every historical, social, and cultural form. Yet, at the same time, there is a possibility for vigorous affirmation of life in this world through trust in the other-power of Amida's vow.

*Interpreters of Shinran's Faith: Kakunyo and Zonkaku*

Kakunyo and Zonkaku play decisive roles in shaping Shinshū tradition;<sup>26</sup> they serve as "institutionalizer" and "first theologian," respectively. Kakunyo establishes Honganji at the site of Shinran's tomb as the center or *axis mundi* for the Shinshū order. Further, as custodian of the ancestral tomb, Kakunyo claims to be the sole legitimate interpreter of how Shinran discerned the concept *shinjin*. Kakunyo's efforts to define "true *shinjin*" provide the basis for a Shinshū orthodoxy according to Honganji, which contrasts with the heterodoxy of those other groups stemming from Shinran's Nembutsu movement which did not recognize Kakunyo's authority. As noted by a scholar of Christian origins in a similar context, ideas contrary to the development of the religious institution frequently came to be labeled "heresy"; ideas implicitly support-

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a synthesis of Hōnen's dualistic position and the absolute monism of Tendai's *hongaku* thought to create an existential non-dualism. A Shinshū scholar, Fugen Dai'en, interprets *hongaku* in Shinran's thought from an entirely different perspective; see his *Shinshū kyōgaku no shomondai* (Kyoto: Hyakkaen, 1964), pp. 16-62. Nor do Shinshū scholars find an analysis using categories such as monism, dualism, or non-dualism helpful. Historians of Buddhist thought, however, are pressed to use such categories in order to cut across sectarian lines.

<sup>24</sup> Shinran rejects the position of those who emphasize that Amida comes to meet those who call his name during their last moments. See *SSZ II*, p. 786; and "Tannishō: Passages Deploring Deviations in Faith," tr. Bandō Shōjun and Harold Stewart, *EB XIII*, 1 (Spring 1980), p. 71.

<sup>25</sup> *SSZ II*, p. 793; "Tannishō," p. 77.

<sup>26</sup> For an introduction to Kakunyo and Zonkaku, see Shigematsu Akihisa, *Kakunyo* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1964).



ing institutional development became the "orthodoxy."<sup>27</sup>

Zonkaku's *Rokuyōshō* is the first commentary to be written on Shinran's *Kyōgyōshinshō*. The task of every commentator is to bring to life the spirit of the original text; in the case of Shinran's searching analysis and explication of his personal experience of *shinjin* in *Kyōgyōshinshō*, Zonkaku treats Shinran's metaphorical expressions of religious consciousness as literal statements.<sup>28</sup> Again, it must be noted that such a shift in consciousness is not unusual for a religious tradition when a founder's vision undergoes institutionalization.

Kakunyo's most consequential move is to adopt prevailing Confucian ethical norms to give content to Shinran's fundamental principle that one is to live naturally.<sup>29</sup> Zonkaku, influenced by *honji suijaku* 本地垂迹 (original entity and its manifestation) thought, sees "secular authority" (*ōbō* 王法) and Buddha-Dharma (*buppō* 仏法) as distinct, yet complementary; like the two wings of a bird, or the two wheels of a cart, both are necessary.<sup>30</sup> Shinran's vision of a seamless world—Amida's world—thus becomes a vision of two realms—an inner realm of Amida's mind, or *shinjin*, and a secular realm indistinguishable from existing social norms.

In sum, Kakunyo and Zonkaku's interpretations of *shinjin* involve major shifts in thought. Shinran's position, simultaneously holding Hōnen's dualistic thought and Tendai's non-dualist emphasis, breaks down with a resultant loss of its metaphorical-poetic quality. The renewed dualistic emphasis is not that of Hōnen—man and Amida, or this world and Pure Land—but of an inner spiritual realm and an external secular realm with minimal relationship or tension between them. The self-critical spirit which led Shinran both to criticize and in some sense finally to affirm every expression of culture is heavily blanketed. This shift in the structure of *shinjin* is made largely under the influence of syncretistic *honji suijaku* thought which Shinran had rejected.

#### *Rennyō's Concept of Faith: Anjin*

Rennyō, as noted above, is the catalyst in the transformation of the weak,

<sup>27</sup> See Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels* (New York: Random House, 1979), p. xxxvi.

<sup>28</sup> See discussion of Shinran's fire and wood metaphor as interpreted in Zonkaku's *Rokuyōshō* in Yamabe Shūgaku and Akanuma Chizen, *Kyōgyōshinshō kōgi* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1951), pp. 803–804.

<sup>29</sup> SSZ III, p. 67.

<sup>30</sup> SSZ III, p. 173.

struggling Honganji branch of the Shinshū into the most powerful religious institution in medieval Japan. With Rennyō, the term Shinshū becomes virtually synonymous with Honganji.

My thesis is that Rennyō's four years (1471–1475) at Yoshizaki in the Hokuriku are the most consequential period in Shinshū history following Shinran's death.<sup>31</sup> Rennyō, implementing Kakunyo and Zonkaku's contributions, gives sharp definition to a Shinshū ethos both doctrinally and institutionally. Although Rennyō was nurtured on Pure Land writings as well as on those of Shinran, Kakunyo, and Zonkaku, his view of Shinran was significantly shaped by Kakunyo's writings, including *Godenshō*, an idealized biography of the founder, and Zonkaku's *Rokuyōshō*.

Following Rennyō's move to Yoshizaki in 1471, his teachings proved highly attractive to *monto* who flocked to his mountain retreat.<sup>32</sup> In turn, the community was increasingly drawn into a political power struggle which was to culminate in *monto*-related uprisings. The distinctive marks of Rennyō's thought emerge in an *ofumi* written during this period of acute danger to the community at Yoshizaki.

First, there is a deepening awareness of this world as transient, fleeting as a dream.<sup>33</sup> Rennyō instructs the *monto* that more important than matters in this life is birth in the Pure Land in the next life.<sup>34</sup> Shinran's thought had kept in balance a dual emphasis: on the one hand, attainment of birth in the Pure Land and realization of enlightenment (*ōsō* 往相), and on the other, a subsequent return to this defiled world to save others (*gensō* 還相). Rennyō's thought appears to stress the former and to leave aside for the most part the latter.<sup>35</sup>

Second, there is a promulgation of regulations (*okite* 掟) which carefully

<sup>31</sup> Presented at greater length in my "Rennyō and Jōdo Shinshū Piety: The Yoshizaki Years," *Monumenta Nipponica* XXXVI, 1 (Spring 1981), pp. 21–35.

<sup>32</sup> Inaba Masamaru, ed., *Rennyō Shōnin ibun* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1948), pp. 103–105; hereafter cited as *Ibun*. This collection contains 221 *ofumi* held to be authentic by the editor.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibun*, pp. 113, 121, 217, 245. Citations are from *ofumi* included in *Gojō ofumi*, written during Rennyō's Yoshizaki years.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibun*, pp. 111, 113, 122, 183, 190, 218. Citations are from those *ofumi* included in *Gojō ofumi*, written during Rennyō's Yoshizaki years.

<sup>35</sup> See Futaba Kenkō, "Shinshū ni okeru ōjō shinkō to rekishi to no kankei ni tsuite no kasetsu," in *Shinshūshi no kenkyū* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1966), pp. 516–23.

define proper behaviour for people of *shinjin* both within and outside the community.<sup>36</sup> Those who disobey are threatened with expulsion from the community.

Third, there is a movement towards positive accommodation with secular authority on the basis of *honji suijaku* theory.<sup>37</sup> Rennyo moves beyond Zonkaku's position to give priority to secular regulations in the interest of preserving his community.

Fourth, Rennyo appropriates the concept *ki-hō ittai* 機法一体—the oneness of *ki* (sentient beings) and *hō* (Dharma)—from *Anjinketsujōshō*.<sup>38</sup> This text of obscure origin was unknown to Shinran, who never used the term *ki-hō ittai*. Shinshū scholars acknowledge *Anjinketsujōshō*'s affinity to the thought of the Seizan branch of Hōnen's Pure Land sect.<sup>39</sup>

Finally, these innovations are introduced in the context of Rennyo's increasing use of the term *anjin* as defining the meaning of *shinjin*.<sup>40</sup> In Shinran's writings, however, the term *anjin* appears only three times, always in direct quotations from Pure Land texts and unrelated to a discussion of *shinjin*. In identifying *shinjin* with *anjin*, Rennyo specifies that the two characters *an* 安 and *shin* 心 making up the compound *an-jin* are to be rendered *yasuki kokoro* やすきこころ (serene-mind).<sup>41</sup>

Central to my thesis is that Rennyo's understanding of *shinjin* as *anjin* of other-power is shaped decisively by *Anjinketsujōshō*. In an *ofumi*, Rennyo instructs the *monto*: "For the gist of *shinjin* in our tradition, peruse very carefully *Anjinketsujōshō*."<sup>42</sup> A memoir attributes to Rennyo the saying, "I have read *Anjinketsujōshō* for more than forty years without

<sup>36</sup> *Ibun*, pp. 131–33; also see pp. 109, 137, 143, 199, 238–40. Citations are from *ofumi* written during Rennyo's Yoshizaki years.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibun*, pp. 123–24, 150–53, 166–69.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibun*, p. 230. For a clear exposition of *ki-hō ittai* as Shin Buddhist doctrine, see Yoshifumi Ueda, "Response to Thomas P. Kasulis' review of *Letters of Shinran*," *Philosophy East and West* XXXI, 4 (October 1981), pp. 507–10.

<sup>39</sup> See Fugen Kōshu, "Anjinketsujōshō to shinshū resso no kyōgaku: Anjinketsujōshō to Kakunyo-Zonkaku no kyōgaku," *Ryūkokū daigaku ronshū* 415 (October 1979), pp. 81–107.

<sup>40</sup> For instances of the term *anjin*, including the phrase *tōryū no anjin* 当流の安心 in Rennyo's *ofumi* written during the Yoshizaki years, see *Ibun*, pp. 70, 111, 131, 182, 206, 231, 242.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibun*, p. 182.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibun*, p. 363.

ever getting tired of it. It is a scripture from which one can dig out gold."<sup>43</sup>

It is my view that the fundamental religious vision underlying *Anjinketsujōshō* and the interpretation of the Nembutsu in terms of *ki-hō ittai* is not necessarily wholly continuous with that of Shinran; it represents a reassertion of a type of non-dualist thought found in its purest form in esotericized medieval Tendai tradition.<sup>44</sup> Even as the influence of *honji suijaku* thought on Kakunyo and Zonkaku tempers Shinran's uniquely critical position, so the strong non-dualist flavor characteristic of a *ki-hō ittai* interpretation of the Nembutsu appears to lead to a further reformulation of Shinran's position. Of course, there are grounds for arguing that Rennyo's own existential situation dictated his remarkable devotion to *Anjinketsujōshō* and his efforts to make *anjin* available in theory and practice to his own community. However, what might be interpreted as skill-in-means (*hōben* 方便) is crystallized as the definitive orthodoxy following his death.

Rennyo's *Ofumi*, selected, edited, and revered as Shinshū "scripture" by his successors, have come to be accepted as equal in authority with Shinran's own writings.<sup>45</sup> The tacit assumption that Rennyo's concept *anjin* is identical in meaning with Shinran's *shinjin* has set the agenda for and presented a severe challenge to Shinshū scholarship from the Edo period until the present.<sup>46</sup> Although, as noted above, both concepts have been translated into English by the word "faith," to the critical historian's eye, these two expressions at times appear to have had different meanings and played quite different roles in Shinshū history. For example, while there is a term *i-anjin* 異安心 "heterodox *anjin*," coined in the Edo period, there is no equivalent term *i-shinjin*. Despite the fact that Shinran's concept *shinjin* and Rennyo's *anjin* may be identical in meaning in the heart and mind of the Shin Buddhist, to the historian they appear to represent different qualities of piety. Indeed, Rennyo's definition of *shinjin* in terms of *anjin* may be seen as contributing to a transformation in Shinshū tradition. One Shinshū scholar puts the matter in the extreme in saying that, with Rennyo, Shinshū emerged from being a "dangerous" religion

<sup>43</sup> *Rennyo Shōnin gyōjitsu*, p. 119; *The Words of St. Rennyo*, p. 88.

<sup>44</sup> See my "Rennyo and Jōdo Shinshū Piety: The Yoshizaki Years."

<sup>45</sup> Of the eighty *ofumi* selected by Rennyo's grandson in compiling *Gojō ofumi*, at least thirty-five were written during the period of institutional crisis at Yoshizaki.

<sup>46</sup> For a recent statement of orthodox Shinshū doctrine by scholars of Ryukoku University, see *Shinshū yōron* (Kyoto: Hyakkaen, 1953; 1978).

to being a "secure" and "useful" religion. In the process, Shinshū, tainted with a Shinto-istic quality, is reduced to being merely a Japanese religion.<sup>47</sup>

Such self-criticism is extremely severe, although comparative historians may note similar processes at work in other religious movements. The historian also knows that Honganji provided a secure refuge for the *monto* in periods of danger, serving both their spiritual and physical needs. In this respect, Rennyo's definition of *shinjin* in terms of *anjin* is the work of a religious genius. However it may be evaluated, Rennyo's pattern of response to both internal and external crises at Yoshizaki became embedded in the consciousness of the Honganji order; subsequently, in moments of internal disharmony or external threat, *anjin* was sought at all costs.<sup>48</sup>

In an effort to set our inquiry into the meaning of *shinjin* and *anjin* in a comparativist context, we turn now to the work of Wilfred Cantwell Smith.

### "Faith" and Comparative History of Religion

#### *Religion and Faith*

Smith is perhaps best known in Japan for his work as an historian and an Islamicist. His *Islam in Modern History* (1957), a major work representing the early phase of his scholarship, has even been translated into Japanese.<sup>49</sup> The publication of *The Meaning and End of Religion: A New*

<sup>47</sup> Fukushima Hirota, ed., *Jinja mondai to shinshū* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1977), p. 41.

<sup>48</sup> Some examples are seen in the concern with *i-anjin* following the Sango wakuran 三業惑乱, a doctrinal dispute which seriously threatened to split Nishi Honganji in the Edo period; the emergence and formalization in the context of the Buddhist persecutions in early Meiji of the *shinzoku nital* 真俗二諦 doctrine, supporting a radical separation between an inner spiritual realm and an external realm of social and political responsibility; and the formalization of *Anjin rondai* 安心論題, articles of right belief, following the Nonomura incident in the Taishō period. Nonomura Naotarō, a professor at Ryukoku University, was dismissed from his post for publishing a serialized critique of Pure Land thought, called *Jōdokyō hihan* in 1923; this work was recently republished under the same title (Kyoto: Chūgai Nippō-sha, 1980).

<sup>49</sup> *Islam in Modern History* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1957) has been translated as *Gendai ni okeru isuramu*, Nakamura Kōjirō, tr. (Tokyo: Kinokuniya, 1974).

*Approach to the Great Religious Traditions* (1963)<sup>50</sup> signals a move into comparative religious studies with an approach which appears relevant to a study of "faith" in Jōdo Shinshū history.<sup>51</sup> Smith's essay is a rigorous historical and philological analysis of the Western concept "religion." He identifies a steady process of reification of the meaning of this concept in Western intellectual history—from "religion" as an inner personal quality of living to "religion" as an external impersonal system of beliefs. He argues that the meaning of the Western concept "religion" is so ambiguous today that we should end our use of it and substitute two categories: "cumulative religious tradition" and "personal faith."

A religious tradition is easy to identify. It consists of externally observable data which are the historical deposit of the past life of a particular religious community. It is a system of religious symbols,<sup>52</sup> including "temples, scriptures, theological systems, dance patterns, legal and other social institutions, conventions, moral codes, myths . . . anything that can be and is transmitted from one person, one generation, to another, and that an historian can observe."<sup>53</sup> The major examples, of course, are the great religious traditions—Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Islamic, and Jewish. Each is a historical reality continuous over the centuries.

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<sup>50</sup> This work, with a new subtitle, was republished in 1978 as *The Meaning and End of Religion: A Revolutionary Approach to the Great Religious Traditions* (San Francisco: Harper and Row). What appeared to be a "new" approach in 1963 was seen as "revolutionary" fifteen years later.

<sup>51</sup> To my knowledge, Smith's approach to comparative religious studies has not attracted the attention of a significant number of Japanese scholars. A possible reason is that at first glance he appears to be asking questions that are peculiarly tied to problems in the intellectual and religious history of the West. It might be claimed that he is seeking to extricate Western intellectuals from a pit into which Japanese intellectuals may not have fallen. Smith's point, however, is that although the terrain is different, particularly in regard to the religious soil in which the respective cultures are rooted, "a true understanding of humankind involves a recognition of our [humankind's] potentiality for faith" (*Faith and Belief*, p. 129).

<sup>52</sup> Smith explicates the meaning of symbol in a brief essay, "Religion as Symbolism," Introduction to *Propaedia*, part 8, "Religion," *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1974), Vol. I, pp. 498–500. As a historian, he identifies as virtually a universal phenomenon man's ability "to designate some item from within the visible world and to sacralize it in such a way that it becomes then for them the symbol or locus of the invisible, the transcendent." Different groups, he notes, choose a great variety of different things, including concepts, to serve as religious symbols, not equally successfully.

<sup>53</sup> *The Meaning and End of Religion*, pp. 156–57.

The term "faith" is more problematic. Faith is never a completed static entity that can be readily packaged. Rather, a person's faith is a quality of daily life in relationship to truth; faith is an engagement by truth. Faith is nurtured by a religious tradition; in turn, the system of symbols which may be said to constitute the religious traditions are the deposit of faith. Smith's two categories recognize the dynamic quality of religious life. He sums up his thesis with an aphorism: "The religious traditions evolve. Man's faith varies. God [Truth] endures."<sup>54</sup>

### *Faith and Belief*

A third phase of Smith's work is represented in his essay, *Faith and Belief*. It, too, is a comparativist historical study; yet Smith goes further to claim that in a preliminary way it is theological and in various senses philosophical.

His thesis is that in modern times Western Christians have confused the distinction between "faith" and "belief." In order to clarify the relationship of these terms, he undertakes a comparative study of the Buddhist, Islamic, Hindu, and Christian traditions.

The Latin term *credo*, a cognate of the Sanskrit *śraddhā*, is crucial to Smith's understanding of the meaning of "faith."<sup>55</sup> *Credo* has been translated "I believe" in the Christian creeds. In recent centuries, it was interpreted frequently as meaning "intellectual assent to a propositional truth." However, the root meaning of the compound *credo* is *cor*, meaning "heart," and *do*, meaning "put," "place," "set," or "give." Smith demonstrates how as used in Christian liturgy, it is an act of personal engagement: "to set one's heart on," "to give one's heart to," or "to take refuge in." That meaning has been lost, to a large extent, in modern Western religious consciousness; in recent centuries the English word "belief" has changed its meaning drastically, so that "belief" is no longer the same as "faith." On occasion, "belief" has led people to "faith." Yet, in modern times, inherited beliefs may even have been an obstacle to faith.

Smith again offers an aphorism to sum up his position: "One's faith is

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 192.

<sup>55</sup> *Faith and Belief*, ch. 5, especially p. 76. For a discussion of *credo* in relation to *śraddhā*, see p. 254, n. 25; for the etymology of *śraddhā* as "a compound of two words, *śrad* (or *śrat*), heart, and *dhā*, to put" (p. 61), see pp. 223–25, n. 35.

given by God. One's belief is given by one's century or one's group."<sup>56</sup> For Smith, faith is a universal human phenomenon; it is what makes man uniquely human. Belief is a single expression or symbolization of faith. It has been the distinctive symbolization for Western Christians in a tradition marked for its emphasis on the intellectualization of faith as theology. Especially suggestive for a study of Shin faith is Smith's observation that in numerous instances the concept "faith" in Christian scripture, the New Testament, has no object.<sup>57</sup>

### Shin Faith Reconsidered

We now turn once again to the Shinshū concepts *shinjin* and *anjin* in relation to Wilfred Cantwell Smith's understanding of faith. Does his approach enable us to say something fresh about the role and meaning of *shinjin* and *anjin* as religious symbols in Shinshū history? Is some third view tenable?

We must note here that Smith's aphorisms do not apply directly. He would be the first to admit their generality, and that a facile substitution for the terms "faith," "belief," or "God" by the key concepts of a non-Western tradition is highly problematic. He might suggest, however, that there has been in Shinshū history following Rennyo a relationship between *shinjin* and *anjin* analogous to that between "faith" and "belief" in Western Christian history. This is not necessarily to wholly identify *shinjin* with "faith" or *anjin* with "belief." However, we may note that *Ryōgemon*<sup>58</sup> or *Gaikemon* attributed to Rennyo is a formal statement, even a confession, of Shinshū orthodoxy, *shinjin* as *anjin*, in contrast to heterodoxy, *i-anjin*. Before developing the analogy further, a careful analysis—not possible here—of the usage of the terms *shinjin* and *anjin* in Shinshū texts, sermons, and documents, particularly in the Edo period, would be necessary.

The argument of this paper is that both Shinran's concept *shinjin* and Rennyo's *anjin* appear to be expressions of personal faith. The use of such concepts as religious symbols is necessary to give form to that which is formless. The positive side is that these two expressions have served and

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 166.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 101–102.

<sup>58</sup> For *Ryōgemon*, see *SSZ* III, p. 529.



continue to serve to introduce countless men and women in Japanese history to truth. The negative side is that at times these same expressions may have been identified too literally with, and thereby impoverished, the apprehension of that truth.

Further, in the sense that *shinjin* and *anjin* are both expressions of Amida's mind, they never vary in meaning. Consequently, the faith of members of the Shinshū community through the centuries is wholly consistent in meaning with both Shinran's *shinjin* and Rennyo's *anjin*. To the historian, however, it is not a matter for dismay that *shinjin* and *anjin* as religious symbols appear to have served Shinshū tradition in different ways—indeed, to have meant different things to different people at different times in different places. *Shinjin* as a religious symbol has the capacity to include the entirety of the salvific process: the shock and pain of recognition of one's incapacity to do himself or others any good at all; an eagerness to be embraced by Amida's compassion; a joy welling up within as a result of the experience of being embraced; and, finally, the serenity that is grounded firmly in the absolute assurance of one's birth in the Pure Land. This process surpassing conceptual understanding occurs in a moment of what might be termed "differentiated simultaneity."

Rennyo, in a quite different historical setting, is pressed to formulate an expression of Shin faith as simply as possible for the protection and preservation of his community. Drawing on a *ki-hō ittai* formulation of the Nembutsu found in *Anjinketsujōshō*, he gives clear and specific form to Shinran's concept *shinjin* in terms of *anjin*. Rennyo's *anjin*, of course, is not entirely discontinuous with Shinran's expression of faith as *shinjin*. It is, however, a much more compact definition and one which is tied to a specific interpretation of the Nembutsu. In this sense, the risk of losing a vital relationship with that which it expresses appears to be great. Indeed, it is my view that, following Rennyo's death, the dynamic, existential, and universal quality of man's being embraced by Amida, expressed in Shinran's *shinjin*, yields to a more static and exclusivist quality of Honganji *monto* resting serenely in Amida's embrace, expressed by Rennyo's *anjin*. The entirety of the salvific process evoked by the term *shinjin* is reduced to the final stage or goal of salvation as *anjin* available to members of a particular community.

Every student engaged in comparative studies has experienced the frustrations and the joys of the translation process. Our work is never completed until we have taken the risk of putting what we have discerned

into another language. Therefore, a translation-interpretation is offered as follows: (1) *shinjin* is "mind-engaged-by-truth"; and (2) *anjin* is "mind-serene-in-truth."<sup>59</sup>

In respect to Shinran's concept *shinjin*, we can say that a person's mind is "engaged" directly through Amida's embrace; in respect to Rennyo's concept *anjin*, the person's mind is interpreted as "serene" and "at rest" not apart from the embrace of Honganji as a religious order. In this way, *shinjin* and *anjin* may express respectively individual and communal aspects of a person's faith. It would appear that the vitality and richness of Shinshū as a religious tradition rest precisely on the availability of these two distinct yet complementary religious symbols. Further, Shinshū history may be viewed as a history of interpretations or responses to truth through the vehicle of these two religious symbols. It is to be anticipated that, of necessity, at moments *shinjin* and *anjin* will stand in considerable tension. In Shinshū history, however, the dominant pattern has been to seek to minimize, even to eliminate, that tension by stressing the communal aspect of personal faith at the expense of the individual aspect. In this sense, the comparative historian may report that Shinshū as a religious movement becomes vulnerable to being reduced to general patterns of Japanese religiosity both in shaping and in becoming accommodated to Japanese civilization.

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<sup>59</sup> The translation-interpretations of *shinjin* and *anjin* are, I believe, faithful to Shinran and Rennyo's writings, respectively. We noted above that, for Shinran, *shinjin* is true mind itself, and further, that it is through Amida Buddha's embrace that sentient beings attain birth in the Pure Land. Further, we noted that for Rennyo, the two characters making up the compound *an-jin* are to be rendered *yasuki kokoro*. These translation-interpretations are not inconsistent with Smith's descriptions of faith: "Faith is a saying 'Yes!' to truth" (*Faith and Belief*, p. 163), and "Faith, then, is an engagement" (p. 5).

We raise a final point: *shingyō*, the second of the three minds in Amida's eighteenth vow, is translated "serene faith" in *The Kyō Gyō Shin Shō* (n. 12 above), pp. 7, 103. It appears that sectarian scholars may have been drawn for cultural reasons—historical, sociological, psychological, and other—to emphasize a serene quality of "faith." In other words, the rich meaning of Shinran's *shinjin*—three minds as one (n. 15 above)—takes on a distinct coloration of "serenity" in being identified so strictly with Rennyo's *anjin*.