

Small Glossary of Shin Buddhist Terms

after a chapter of "The Letters of Shinran" (*Hongwanji translation*).

Accommodated teachings (gon-kyo) Teachings "accommodated" or adapted to individual needs and levels of understanding, in contrast to the "real" teaching, which is the direct expression of truth. The original term gon also refers to the manifestation of the Buddhas in temporary form, a slightly different usage found in Letter 1.

Amida Buddha. Amida ([a-mita](#)), literally "immeasurable [life and light]," is the Buddha whose essence is dharma-body as compassionate means, characterized by form. The formless dharma-body, in order to awaken beings of blind foolishness to itself, "manifested form and announced a Name," appearing as Dharmakara Bodhisattva. This bodhisattva established and fulfilled the special vow to save foolish and evil beings and became Amida Buddha. While the other Buddhas help people who accumulate meritorious deeds, practice meditative activities, and perfect wisdom, Amida Buddha saves the being of blind foolishness and karmic evil through "form" (Primal Vow) and "Name" (nembutsu). That is, the person who realizes himself as being truly human (ignorant and evil) and becomes his foolish self attains Buddhahood by virtue of Amida. Letter 5 states that "Amida is the medium through which we are made to realize jinen", which means that through the form and Name of the dharma-body as compassionate means, Amida Buddha, we are made to realize the formless dharma-body as suchness.

Being grasped and never abandoned (sesshu-fusha). While the English translation lacks the precision and aptness of the original term, the primary meaning is that when a man attains shinjin, he is said to have been grasped by true compassion, and there is no possibility of his being abandoned or forsaken for he has gone beyond the realm of birth-and-death. Never being abandoned is also expressed as residing in the stage of non-retrogression. Sesshu (being grasped) is a dynamic term having several connotations: the active and unremitting pursuit of all beings, especially those who turn away from the Vow; the grasping of all beings without discrimination; and the inevitable act of taking each and every being completely into the heart of true compassion. Man cannot grasp the immensity of true compassion (because of selfworking); he can only be grasped by true compassion (which is true working).

Birth (ojo). The literal meaning of ôjo is "to go to be born." Traditionally it simply referred to being born in the Buddha Land after death, but for Shinran this meant specifically attaining nirvana and becoming the supreme Buddha. Because of this, in Shinran's writings birth is used to imply not only the perfect attainment of enlightenment in the land of Buddha at death, but also the realization here and now of shinjin, whose natural (jinen) outcome is supreme Buddha-hood.

Birth-and-death (shoji). The Sino-Japanese translation of sam-sara, which means "the stream of time from birth to death and death to birth." Unenlightened beings repeat the empty, meaningless cycle in countless lives, driven only by the agitations of greed, anger, and folly. The purpose of Buddhism is to attain liberation from such a hollow existence, becoming a being of wisdom and compassion, filled with that which is true, real, and sincere.

Blind passion (bonno). A comprehensive term descriptive of all the forces, conscious and unconscious, which propel the unenlightened person to think, feel, act, and speak in such a way as to cause uneasiness, frustration, torment, pain, and sorrow mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and even physically for himself and others. While Buddhism makes a detailed and subtle analysis of blind passion, as evident in such terms as craving, anger, delusion, arrogance, doubt, wrong views, etc., fundamentally it is rooted in the fierce and stubborn clinging to the foolish and evil self that constitutes the basis of our existence. When we realize the full implications of this truth about our selves, we see that the human condition is itself nothing but blind passion. Thus, just to live life as an unenlightened being is to manifest blind passion at all times, regardless of what we may appear to be on the surface. But the one who realizes this, having exerted his highest efforts and having failed to lead a life that is true, real, and sincere, is the person who is the major concern of Amida's Primal Vow.

Borderland (henji). This is synonymous with land of indolence, womb of Buddha Land, and castle of doubt, all describing the realms into which Jodo Buddhists are born, but which lie outside the Buddha Land. They are for those who still cling to self-power and who have yet to realize fully the shinjin of Other Power. Thus, they are born in the borderland, next to the Buddha Land, or in the land of indolence where they continue to indulge themselves in self-gratifications, or in the womb of the Buddha Land where they are enclosed within a limited vision as if contained within a womb, or in the castle of doubt where they are imprisoned in their own self-centered uncertainties.

Buddha Land (jodo). Jodo is rendered as Buddha Land (Buddha-ksetra), rather than the traditional "Pure Land" or "Pure Realm," in order to emphasize its basic characteristic as the realm of enlightened beings. Shinran expressed this reality of the land of enlightenment as one with the being of perfect enlightenment. This land of Amida Buddha is also called "the fulfilled land" or "the true land of fulfillment" because it is established as the result of the fulfillment of the 48 Vows. It is contrasted to "the land of the miraculous body," which is a temporary realm leading to the fulfilled land.

Buddha's benevolence (button). This term is composed of two words, butsu (Buddha) and on. The Chinese word on corresponds to the Sanskrit kṛta, meaning "benevolence" or "act of kindness." As a Buddhist term, however, on was used to translate kṛtajña, which denotes the gratitude that comes upon the realization of what has been done for one, and in button refers specifically to the deep feeling of thankfulness for Amida's Primal Vow, which has been established through countless aeons of time for one's own sake. However enormous man's blindness, ignorance and self-centeredness, even greater is the power of the Primal Vow, which will transform them into their very opposites. When we realize this, we experience it as the benevolence of the Tathagata; this feeling is called Buddha's on.

Calculation (hakarai). Hakarai literally means to design or arrange and is used by Shinran in two senses. One is the hakarai of sentient beings. Before a person realizes shinjin, he remains unaware that its attainment is possible only through the working of the Primal Vow and thus tends to cling, consciously or unconsciously, to what he thinks that he might or should do in his endeavors to attain enlightenment. Shinran called this inevitable blocking of the human mind hakarai and strongly admonished against it, for shinjin is complete entrusting to the Primal Vow, in which no hakarai can be found. Thus, where there is human calculation in any form there is no awakening to Amida's compassion, and where there is true appreciation for the working of Amida, there is no human calculation whatsoever. They are mutually exclusive. Shinjin is the complete negation of self-willed calculation in which the basic idea of Buddhism, no-self, is fully realized. It should be noted carefully that the negation of human calculation does not mean the negation of his efforts to-

ward realization; what is negated is the attachment to one's own self: the thoughts, achievements, and claims of the self-centered heart and mind. In several instances, we have translated hakarai as designing or reasoning.

The second sense is the working or design of Amida for man, which is fully appreciated when human calculation ceases to function; that is, when shinjin is settled.

Compassionate means (hoben). The Sanskrit original, upāya, means "coming near," "approaching," and in extension means: "expedience." Generally speaking, it has two usages in Buddhism: the method or practice by which a man can attain Buddhahood, and the skillful means which Buddhas use to teach and to guide sentient beings to enlightenment. In Shin Buddhism, compassionate means refers to the manifestation of ultimate reality, which is beyond time and forms. In the world of relativities that is so it comes into the range of human comprehension and description. Thus, Amida, with his Primal Vow, his Name and his Land, is described as dharma-body as compassionate means, which makes possible the liberation and enlightenment of all beings. In this case, however, dharma-body as compassionate means is considered to be one with dharma-body as suchness, so that compassionate means are considered not secondary but essential in our entrance into the ocean of Amida's Vow and ultimate enlightenment. This term is also used to refer to the compassionate means, such as the practices described in the 19th and 20th Vows, used by Amida to lead practicers of self-power to the shinjin of Other Power, which is beyond self-power.

Dharma-body (hosshin, dharmakaya). D. T. Suzuki explains this term: Kaya meaning "the body" is an important conception in the Buddhist doctrine of reality. Dharmakaya is usually rendered "Law-body" where Dharma is understood in the sense of "Law", "organisation", "systematisation", or "regulative principle". But really in Buddhism, Dharma has a very much more comprehensive meaning. Especially when Dharma is coupled with Kaya—Dharmakaya—it implies the notion of personality. The highest reality is not a mere abstraction, it is very much alive with sense and intelligence, and, above all, with love purged of human infirmities and defilements.

The Dharmakaya is not the owner of wisdom and compassion, he is the Wisdom or the Compassion, as either phase of his being is emphasized for some special reason. We shall miss the point entirely if we take him as somewhat resembling or reflecting the human conception of man. He has no body in the sense we have a human body. He is Spirit, he is the field of action, if we can use this form of expression, where Wisdom and Compassion are fused together, are transformed into each other, and become the principle of vitality in the world of sense-intellect. (The Essence of Buddhism, p. 47) According to Shin Buddhism, dharma-body has two aspects: "dharma-body as suchness" and "dharma-body as compassionate means." Dharma-body as suchness is formless and nameless, transcending the capacity of the ordinary mind to apprehend or speak about it; therefore, it manifests itself in the form of dharma-body as compassionate means which, fulfilling the 48 Vows, becomes Amida Buddha. Amida is described variously as the fulfilled body, reward body, recompensed body, etc., all pointing to the fulfillment of the countless requirements necessary for the salvation of all beings. In Kyogyoshinsho Shinran quotes the following passage from T'an-luan's Commentary on Vasubandhu's Treatise on the Buddha Land in order to illuminate the relation between these two aspects of dharma-body: "Among Buddhas and bodhisattvas there are two aspects of dharma-body: dharma-body as suchness and dharma-body as compassionate means. Dharma-body as compassionate means arises out of dharma-body as suchness, and dharma-body as suchness emerges [into the realm of human comprehension] through dharma-body as compassionate means. These two aspects of dharma-body differ but are not separable; they are one but not identical."

Dharmakara Bodhisattva (Hozo Bosatsu). The bodhisattva who established the vow to save all sentient beings in the universe through the utterance of his name and who became Amida Buddha through its fulfillment. The Vow of Amida is, strictly speaking, Bodhisattva Dharmakara's. In the story of Dharmakara we see that Amida is not a static symbol of absolute truth, but the expression of the ever-active working of compassion that lies at the core of Mahayana Buddhism. This working of compassionate means of the ultimate reality, the dharma-body as suchness, is one of the phases of jinen. Shinran states: "Manifesting a form from this (formless) treasure ocean of suchness, calling himself Dharmakara Bodhisattva, and making the unhindered Vows as the causes, he became Amida Buddha; that is the reason he is called the Tathagata of the fulfilled body... This Tathagata is the dharma-body as compassionate means; the dharma-body of compassionate means is that which manifested form and announced a name and makes sentient beings realize it. This is Amida Buddha" (Ichinen-tanen mon'i).

Diamond-like heart and mind (kongo-shin). The diamond (vajra) is a favorite metaphor in Mahayana Buddhism for the bodhi-sattva's indomitable and indestructible wisdom, which nothing can destroy and which sunders all forms of evil, both within and without. In the Path of Sages this metaphor is used to express the great power of prajna, which acts at the last stage of the bodhisattva's practice to cut the deepest root of attachment to birth-and-death. In Shinran's teaching, it is used to indicate that the mind and heart of the person of shinjin is indomitable and indestructible, not because of our strong conviction, firm belief, or hardness, but because its essence is Other Power.

Equal to Tathagatas (nyorai ni hitoshi). Even though one is a being of karmic evil, when he entrusts himself completely to the Primal Vow, devoid of any form of self-willed calculation, his heart and mind are equal to those of Tathagatas. This is possible because this entrusting (shinjin) is none other than the heart and mind of Amida Buddha working in man. To express this, Shinran speaks of the heart and mind of a person of shinjin always being in the Buddha Land, even though his body remains in this relative world of defilement. This should not be understood as implying any duality of body and mind, or that the mind, separating itself from the body, goes to a remote Buddha Land.

Fellow-practicer (dogyo; dobo). A term for the people who share the aspiration for enlightenment and who together walk the path of the dharma. It has come to be especially associated with Shin Buddhists, among whom it suggests a strong sense of community bound by Amida's compassion which excludes no one. In particular it reflects the overturning of all those barriers erected by traditional Buddhism which set certain people apart from others. Shin Buddhism recognizes no distinctions in clergy and lay, sexes, social standing, learning, intelligence, or moral goodness in matters regarding salvation or enlightenment realized by virtue of the Primal Vow. Shinran himself said he had no disciples; instead he called everyone his fellow-practicers.

Five grave offenses (go-gyaku). The early tradition lists them as: 1) killing one's mother, 2) killing one's father, 3) killing an arhat, 4) causing blood to flow from the body of a Buddha, 5) disrupting the harmony of the assembly of monks. Another tradition gives them as: 1) destroying stupas and temples, burning sutras and Buddhist images, or plundering the three treasures; causing others to do these acts; or being pleased at seeing them, 2) slandering the disciples and solitary-Buddhas or the Mahayana teaching, 3) harassing the practice of a monk or murdering him; 4) committing any of the five grave offenses of the early tradition, 5) committing the ten transgressions with the conviction that there will be no karmic recompense and without fear for the next life, or teaching others such an attitude.

Foolish being (bambu). One of the Sanskrit equivalents of foolish being is bala, which has various connotations: immature, silly, stupid, foolish, ignorant. This term, however, is not to be understood in the conventional sense suggested by these words, for it is the result of a profound religious awakening in which even the so-called intelligent person, when illumined by Unhindered Light and brought to awareness by the wisdom of shinjin, comes to realize himself as a foolish being who is forever motivated by blindly self-centered desires, attached to the fascinations of this evanescent world, and unable to resolve the contradictions of human existence thoroughly. In fact, Shinran says that true wisdom is brought forth only from the heart and mind of the person who is awakened to himself as a foolish being. This awakening consists of two mutually opposing aspects: one is the realization of the foolishness and evilness of one's own being, and the other is the realization of the great compassion of Other Power. An arrogant and prideful person obstructs the working of the Primal Vow and never sees himself as a foolish being. A synonym for this term is 'ignorant being' (gusha).

Fulfilled land; True and real land (shinjitsu-hodo). A synonym for Jodo or Buddha Land. It is a realm established by Amida Buddha, having fulfilled every necessary requirement for the enlightenment of all beings. Thus, it is a land which becomes manifest as the fulfillment of Amida's Vow, but at the same time it is the realm of man's ultimate fulfillment. Thus, in Shinran's thought Jodo or Buddha Land is none other than truth, reality and sincerity, which alone can fulfill man's deepest needs; rarely does he refer to it in terms of the traditional mythical references, such as the land of bliss or the Western land.

Giving and being given (eko). The term eko is impossible to translate fully into English but literally means "turning over," "redirecting," or "giving to another," traditionally rendered as "merit-transference." The concept of eko was born in the bodhisattva tradition in which religious practices are undertaken for the benefit not only of oneself but of others also. The deep wish or vow of the bodhisattva is for the spiritual and moral elevation of all beings, traditionally expressed as "going out from birth-and-death." Therefore, it is only natural that he shares his accomplishments with others. This sharing or turning over, however, does not involve any form of sacrifice, as might be presumed, for it is an act of compassion performed in non-dichotomous thinking and feeling.

In other schools of Buddhism, then, eko signifies a practitioner's directing of merit towards his own and others' attainment of enlightenment, and in traditional Jodo Buddhism, which confronted practically the tremendous difficulties of the bodhisattva path, eko came to mean the directing of one's inadequate merits not towards others but towards the attainment of birth in the Buddha Land, where one could realize enlightenment and then return to this world to work for the salvation of all beings. Shinran, however, viewed eko from the opposite perspective and used the term to signify the Enlightened One's (Amida Buddha's) directing and giving his merits to practitioners. Thus, the nembutsu—and shinjin as its realization by us—are said to be given by Other Power.

Shinran speaks of two kinds of turning over: outgoing eko (i.e. outward from birth-and-death) which effects man's birth in the Buddha Land, and returning eko (into birth-and-death) which enables him to come back into this defiled world for the salvation of all beings. Both activities are manifestations of the working of Amida, that is, of what is given by Amida.

Jinen-honi. As Shinran states in Letter 5, jinen is the supreme Buddha. It is a term for the ultimate reality of Buddhism, expressing suchness, or things-as-they-are, free from the bondage of birth-and-death. Jinen thus signifies that which is beyond form and time, and beyond the domain of human intellect and works. It is, in other words, dharma-body as

suchness, which "fills the hearts and minds of the ocean of all beings" (Yuishinsho-mon'i). To awaken to this dharma-body as suchness is to become Buddha.

It is impossible for man to realize dharma-body as suchness through human calculation; however, it works in man as the dharma-body as compassionate means to make itself known. This working is also called jinen by Shinran, and with this sense he explains the meaning of jinen as, "It is not through the practitioner's calculation; one is made to become so". Its synonym, honi, means, "One is made to become so by virtue of the dharma (i.e. Vow) ." Both refer to a person's being born in the Buddha Land—becoming the supreme Buddha—through the working of jinen as the Primal Vow.

Although other forms of Buddhism speak of "attaining the Buddha-hood of dharma-body as suchness with the present body," Shin Buddhism, recognizing the nature of man's condition as a living being, places complete attainment with birth in the Buddha Land of the dharma-body of compassionate means at death. However, jinen works in man constantly, and to experience and awaken to this working. To realize shinjin: is a kind of enlightenment. Shinran calls it "the dawning of the long night of ignorance." Thus, when Shinran says that "from the very beginning one is made to become so," "becoming so" can be viewed in terms of several aspects of a process.

Jinen, as Amida's Vow, works "to have each person entrust himself [to the Vow] in namu-amida-butsu and be received in the Buddha Land; none of this is through the practitioner's calculation." That is, it brings us to the realization of shinjin, and this means that we attain the stage of non-retrogression. Concerning this realization of shinjin, Shinran states, " 'To be made to become so, means that without a practitioner's calculating in any way whatever, all his past, present, and future karmic evil is transformed into good (Buddha's virtues)' " (Yuishinsho-mon'i).

Further, the person of shinjin is necessarily born in the Buddha Land. This also is the working of jinen. To attain birth in the case of Shinran means to realize supreme nirvana, and he speaks of it as "•returning to the capital of dharma-nature." Indeed, it is to become the supreme Buddha. Thus, "when a man attains this enlightenment, great love and great compassion immediately reach their fullness in him and he returns to the sea of birth-and-death to save sentient beings' " (Yuishinsho-mon'i).

From the standpoint of the practitioner, jinen—the working of the Primal Vow—means the negation of all calculation. The negation of calculation means that he is saved through jinen without freeing himself from blind passion.

Jodo Buddhism. Jodo, or Pure Land, Buddhism has its beginnings in three Mahayana sutras, the Larger Sutra of Immeasurable Life, the Smaller Sutra of Immeasurable Life, and the Meditation Sutra, and Jodo practices such as invoking the Name of Amida or contemplating the features of the Buddha Land have been commonly employed in various schools of East Asian Buddhism. More specifically, however, Jodo Buddhism refers to the independent Jodo school established by Honen in 1175 on the principle that the nembutsu is the practice prepared for man by Amida, excluding all other practices as invalid.

Karmic evil. At the root of human existence is karmic evil, "evil" because beneath the veil of ordinary life is found insatiable greed and blind self-centeredness, and "karmic" because such evil is the product of one's countless past lives. Karmic evil, then, is not to be understood on the same level as the conventional notions of good and bad, or the ethical concepts of good and evil. It is something more basic and fundamental, ruling the actions and thoughts of man and known only through the illumination of unhindered light. Religiously speaking, karmic evil may correspond to the Christian notion of sin, but the basic difference seems to be that while sin is the fallen state of man in relation to a supreme being,

karmic evil is the consequence of one's own intellectual, volitional and affective history formed in countless lives lived in blind passion. The transformation of this karmic evil into the very substance of enlightenment is the essence of the Primal Vow.

Jinen means "to be made to become so." "To be made to become so" means that without a practitioner's calculating in any way whatever, all his past, present, and future karmic evil is transformed into good (Buddha's virtues). To be transformed means that karmic evil, without being nullified or eradicated, is made into good. (Yuishin-sho-mon'i)

Name (myogo, nembutsu). The Sanskrit original, namadheya, simply means the "name" of a Buddha or bodhisattva, but it has a special significance in Shin Buddhism; hence the capital letter. It might be said that "Amida Buddha" is a name, but namu-amida-butsu is the Name. The difference between the two is that the Name includes "namu" as a necessary and essential component. "Namu" is being called and invited to the Buddha Land by Amida. It means that one is made to entrust oneself completely to the Primal Vow of Amida fulfilled for one's own sake. "Namu," therefore, is a crucial part of the enlightenment realized by Amida Buddha, and its inclusion in the Name reveals the absolute nature of Amida's compassion. Thus, when the Name is said, it is neither a petitionary prayer nor a magical formula, but the call of Amida and man's realization of that call. In other words, when the Name which is filled with Amida's profound wish for man works on him and becomes a reality in shinjin, it flows forth as namu-amida-butsu. Here there is no room for any form of doubt, hesitation, or self-willed calculation.

Nembutsu. This term has several meanings in the history of Buddhism, based on the various connotations of nen (meditating, thinking, pronouncing, etc.): meditating on the special features of the Buddha image, holding to the thought of the Buddha, and pronouncing the name of a Buddha. In Shin Buddhism nembutsu has two meanings: it is the Name (myogo) as the ultimate manifestation of true compassion, and it is the saying of this Name, namu-amida-butsu.

Non-retrogression (futaiten). The realization of shinjin means that one has entered the ocean of Amida's Primal Vow, so that "the long night of birth-and-death has already dawned." This is also expressed as "being grasped by Amida never to be abandoned" and as entering the community of the truly settled. Shinran calls this the stage of non-retrogression (avaivartika), a term originally used to describe the bodhisattva on the path of enlightenment who will never backslide because he has realized suchness nondichotomously. He has already reached the "other shore" (nirvana), even though he lives in a dichotomous world.

Other Power (tariki). This is the power of the Vow of Amida, which transforms ignorance into wisdom, darkness into light, and evil into virtue. The "Other" here is not a term relative to "self" but an Absolute Other which is beyond all sentient beings, working within and without each self to effect his enlightenment. In the words of Shinran, "Other Power means to be free of any form of calculation" (Letter 10). This means that Other Power is to be realized where all selfworking has ceased and one has been grasped by true compassion.

Path of Sages (shodo-mon). This term indicates the schools of Buddhism which are basically monastic, such as Zen, stressing the observance of precepts, including celibacy, dietary restrictions, rules of conduct, etc., and the pursuit of formalized methods of religious practice, meditative and non-meditative, in order to attain supreme Buddha-hood. In contrast to this path is the Jodo or Pure Land path, which finds its way to becoming the supreme Buddha through being born in the Buddha Land.

Practicer (gyoja). This slightly unusual English word has been employed to translate an expression frequently used by Shinran, shinjin no gyoja (practicer of shinjin) or nembutsu no gyoja (practicer of nembutsu), to emphasize the fact that the arena of religious practice for a Shin Buddhist is everyday life, involving duties and personal and social responsibilities, emotional and physical involvements, and all of the problems that arise from trying to lead the highest life of good. Stated conversely, shinjin and nembutsu in fact constitute the only practice by which those who are involved in everyday life and unable to undertake monastic practice can free themselves from birth-and-death and attain Buddhahood.

Primal Vow (hongan). A vibrant life-force which makes sentient beings attain supreme enlightenment works in each being. It appeared in the person of Sakyamuni, who was moved to expound the Larger Sutra, revealing for the first time in history this life-force as the Primal Vow of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life and Light. But the Sanskrit original, puna-pranidhana, implies that the Primal Vow existed prior to (purva) the earliest being, and that it is the basis and foundation of each being, leading it to its self-awareness from the bottomless depth. In other words, the Primal Vow is the working of Amida Buddha (dharma-body as compassionate means) issuing forth as the profound desire, a wish from the deepest source of life itself to free all beings from the weight of karmic evil in the ocean of birth-and-death. It is the manifestation in time, from ten kalpas ago that are the beginningless past, of that which is timeless. This is taught in the Larger Sutra, the Chinese translation of which is ascribed to Samghavarman (Kosogai) of the Wu Dynasty (A.D. 252), as the forty-eight Vows of Amida, the most important being the 18th Vow. Hongan has been translated as Original Vow, Original Prayer, etc., but Primal Vow is preferred because the dual implications of purva seem to be suggested by the word 'primal', which is defined in Webster's Third International Dictionary: "1. of or relating to the first period or state, original, primitive. 2. :first in importance, fundamental, principal."

Religious practice (gyo). Unlike religious traditions which stress "faith," Buddhism has considered "religious practice" as necessary for enlightenment. A common formula in Mahayana Buddhism has four stages: pure faith in the validity of a teaching, intellectual understanding of the contents of the teaching, religious practice which incorporates the teaching into one's being, and the ultimate attainment of enlightenment. There are two major types of religious practice: meditative and non-meditative. Meditative practices include all forms of single-minded concentration, whether sitting in the lotus position, walking meditation, chanting of mantras, visualization of mandalas and Buddha images, etc., and non-meditative practices include the observance of precepts, selfless giving, daily worship, and other forms of religious rituals. Shinran rejects all of these as "sundry practices" which cannot lead to real enlightenment. For him the only authentic religious practice is the countless aeons of effort, thought, discipline, and merit accumulated by Dharmakara Bodhi-sattva, viz. Amida Buddha. Thus, the only true religious practice leading to enlightenment is that of the Buddha, and man partakes of its benefits by saying the nembutsu, which is the practice especially selected by Amida as eminently suitable and efficacious for all people in all ages. Thus saying the nembutsu is called "great practice," meaning that it is not the practice of man but that of the Buddha. When the essence of this great practice is realized in the heart and mind, it is called shinjin.

Right-mindedness (shinin). For Shinran, right-mindedness is nothing other than shinjin, or entrusting of oneself to the Vow, in which the mind of Amida becomes one with the mind of man. Thus, right-mindedness is also the saying of the nembutsu as the manifestation of shinjin.

This term originally derives from contemplative practice, in which it refers to the attainment of undistracted concentration. In traditional Jodo Buddhism, right-mindedness is that

state of practice in which one establishes a relationship to Amida by pronouncing the Name and thus occasions his coming at the moment of death. There are two major interpretations of right-mindedness in traditional nembutsu practice. One is nembutsu samadhi: the entrance into deep concentration on Amida through repeated utterance of the Name. The other interpretation views most men as incapable of meditative practices of any kind; nevertheless, the purifying merit of the Name itself repeated at the moment of death will neutralize all one's bad karma, so that Amida will receive one. Through this encounter with Amida, a man attains a state of right-mindedness and remains in it as he ends his life (Honen).

Saying the nembutsu (shomyo) various expressions, such as reciting, pronouncing, or uttering the Name, are in common use. "Saying the Name," however, sounds most naturally and ordinary, suited to the religious life of a Shin Buddhist. While there is nothing extraordinary about the nembutsu, the realization attached to it, involving one's whole being, evokes an entirely new universe of meaning. The most profound realization of man possible, plumbing the depths of human existence, is actualized in the nembutsu.

Selected Primal Vow (senjaku hongan). According to the Larger Sutra, in establishing his vow Bodhisattva Dharmakara surveyed all the Buddha Lands and chose from among them those qualities he considered best. In essence, his Primal Vow is to create a certain kind of Buddha Land, and each of the 48 Vows represents the selection of a particular feature of the land, so that taken together they map out the topography of the Buddha Land.

It was Honen who established *senjaku* as a term for the principle underlying the particular formulation of the Primal Vow. In the third chapter of *Senjaku-shu*, Honen states, "The word 'selected' (*senjaku*), which occurs in The Larger Pure Land Sutra, goes on to demonstrate its applicability to the individual Vows. The importance of *senjaku* for sentient beings lies in Shinran's interpretation of the 18th Vow.

Self-power (jiriki). The erroneous belief that one can attain enlightenment through calculative effort.

Selfworking (gi). The original term *gi* has several connotations: reason, meaning, justification, principle, etc. Shinran uses *gi* to denote two opposing realities: first, the mental, emotional and volitional working of unenlightened man (self-power) to fathom Amida's Primal Vow which surpasses conceptual understanding, translated as "self-working"; and second, the boundless activity of Amida's Primal Vow (Other Power) which fills the person of blind passion with true wisdom and compassion, translated as "true working." Thus, the paradoxical phrase, *mu-gi o matte gi to su*, is rendered "no selfworking is true working" (literally "no working is working"), implying that where the activities of the ego are no more the true working of Amida's compassion manifests itself.

Shin Buddhism (jodo-shinshu). The term *Jodo-shinshu* was used by Shinran to describe the true essence (*shinshu*) of the Jodo teaching of his master, Honen. Shinran's successors, however, came to use it for the name of their school, with Shinran as the founder, thus distinguishing it from other Jodo schools which also claimed to succeed in Honen's teaching. Today Shin Buddhism claims the largest number of followers of any school of Japanese Buddhism.

Shinjin. The realization of Other Power in which human calculation is negated through the working of Amida Buddha. It denotes the central religious experience of Shin Buddhism, and literally means man's "true, real and sincere heart and mind" (*makoto no kokoro*), which is given by Amida Buddha ("Buddha's mind given to human"). This heart-mind 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.

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. Paul Tillich has stated:

There is hardly a word in the religious language, both theological and popular, which is subject to more misunderstandings, distortions and questionable definitions than the word "faith." It belongs to those terms which need healing before they can be used for the healing of men. Today the term "faith" is more productive of disease than of health. It confuses, misleads, creates alternately skepticism and fanaticism, intellectual resistance and emotional surrender, rejection of genuine religion and subjection to substitutes. Indeed, one is tempted to suggest that the word "faith" should be dropped completely; but desirable as that may be it is hardly possible. A powerful tradition [Christianity] protects it. "Introductory Remarks," Dynamics of Faith (New York: Harper & Row, 1957), ix.

Supreme nirvana (mujo-nehān). Nirvana is the goal of the Buddhist life, where the false self is annihilated, never to emerge again, and a new being of true compassion and true wisdom, concerned with the welfare of all beings, is born. Supreme nirvana is contrasted to nirvana limited to personal emancipation.

Surpassing conceptual understanding (fukashigi). "Inconceivable" has been the common translation for fukashigi, and is accurate if properly understood. Fukashigi means that something cannot be understood by conventional means; nevertheless, it is within the awareness of man. The awareness, however, cannot exhaust its depth, which is fathomless. Thus, fukashigi means that while something can be known, it is not subject to intellectual analysis. This is the reason for the admonition against trying to reason out the meaning of "no selfworking is true working." "Mystery" might be an apt translation for this term, but it is confused with mysteriousness and mystification in popular understanding, so it should be used with care.

Tathagata of unhindered light filling the ten quarters (jinjippo- mugeko-nyorai) A synonym for Amida Buddha, sometimes shortened to Unhindered Light. According to Shinran, light is the "form" or manifestation of transcendental wisdom, and since nothing can obstruct or hinder its penetrating illumination, it is called unhindered. This unhindered light fills the entire universe, the ten quarters referring to the eight points of the compass, the nadir and the zenith. The function of unhindered light working on man has various stages: it illuminates and penetrates the hardest substance in the world: the blind, stubborn clinging to the false ego, forged through countless aeons of time; it melts this hardest substance in the world, transforming it into a supple and resilient being both in mind and body; and it nurtures a new being, a person of shinjin whose necessary and inevitable attainment is Buddhahood.

Ten transgressions (ju-aku). The Buddhist precepts against 1) destroying life, 2) theft, 3) adultery, 4) lying, 5) harsh words, 6) speaking ill of others, 7) idle talk, 8) greed, 9) anger, 10) wrong views.

True compassion (daihi). True compassion is the closest English equivalent for daihi and its Sanskrit original, maha-karuna, which constitutes the essence of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life and Light. According to Webster's International Dictionary, compassion means to bear with or suffer with another being: it is a "deep feeling for and understanding of misery or suffering and the concomitant desire to promote its alleviation; spiritual consciousness of the personal tragedy of another or others and selfless tenderness directed toward it." While this definition seems to convey the idea of Buddhist compassion,

it is inadequate because of the distinction between self and other, for in Buddhism compassion goes beyond any division or dichotomy between self and other into the world of complete identity. The basic meaning of "sorrow" in daihi or "lament" in maha-karuna attempts to show this selfsame identity wherein the misery, suffering, or personal tragedy of another is none other than one's very own. Such a non-dichotomous compassion is guided by prajna, a wisdom which surpasses conventional thinking and feeling and moves in non-dichotomous perception (nirvikalpajana).

True teacher ([zenjishiki](#)) The original Sanskrit kalyanamitra is literally "good friend" and the Sino-Japanese rendition means "One of virtue and knowledge." Shin Buddhists use it to refer to any person who, through the manifestation of shinjin in daily life, opens up the possibility of coming in touch with true compassion. Although it is not a title or an indication of rank, it expresses a strong sense of gratitude to him through whom one was able to encounter and awaken to the teaching.

Truly settled ones (shojoju) A term descriptive of those who will attain enlightenment without fail. Alternate translations used in the past include such terms as the truly assured ones, truly determined ones, etc., but truly settled ones is preferred because "assured" lacks the definitiveness of the original expression and "determined" sounds willful, forced and unnatural, whereas "settled" connotes the wholeness, naturalness and peacefulness of one whose perfect enlightenment has been decided and is only a matter of time. This word was originally used to describe the bodhisattva who had reached a stage where enlightenment would be attained without question. In the Jodo tradition prior to Shinran it referred to those beings born in the Buddha Land who without fail will attain enlightenment because of the ideal environment conducive to religious life. For Shinran, however, the truly settled ones are the people of shinjin in this life who have been awakened by the Primal Vow here and now. They are also described as being in the stage of non-retrogression.

selected by Myoshu