

## Other Power and Social Ethics:

### The Bifurcation of Shinran's Teaching

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A religious tradition undergoes change and development as time passes. There is an interplay between the tradition itself and persons who respond to that tradition through faith, who respond, nevertheless, not in isolation but in particular historical periods and specific cultural contexts. Professor Tokunaga moves our consideration to a consideration of a horizontal relationship with others in society and seeks to help us see that ideally engagement with social issues is naturally expressive of *Shinjin*.

I have introduced the subtitle of this chapter in order to draw attention to the way Shinran's teaching began to be altered because the Hongwanji organization, in its continuing development and phenomenal growth, had to make the teachings fit the mores of the society and the motives of the organization. It is important, as we have noted before, to get some initial idea of the meaning of *Shinjin*. Let me refer you to the definition of *Shinjin* previously provided on page 141.

According to this definition we can see that *Shinjin* has two aspects, that is, "the true, real and sincere mind of Amida Buddha" and "the entrusting mind of a person of *Shinjin* to the working of such a mind of Amida." What is more important here is that the latter, the entrusting mind, is made possible by the working of the former, of Amida's power, Amida's power of the Primal Vow. This means that everything concerning our salvation is attributed to the working of Amida. This is *Other Power*.

Here, then, considering the relationship of self-power and Other Power would be instructive. There are schools within the Pure Land tradition of Japan which allocate, for example, thirty percent of self-power and seventy percent of Other Power, or fifty percent self-power and fifty percent Other Power. In a sense, Japanese Pure Land schools can be classified according to the percentage of the dependence on the working of Other Power, in terms of salvation. In Shinran's case, it can definitely be said that our salvation is one hundred percent dependent on Amida. Here occurs a very serious problem concerning the religious life of the followers of Shin Buddhism; partially because of the sense that the term Other Power conveys and partially because of the soteriological structure of Shinran's thought. *Shinjin* is regarded as the source

of the very popular image or perception of Jodo-Shinshu, the perception which most Japanese have for Jodo-Shinshu; that is, "the do-nothing school." This is, so to speak, a nickname for Jodo-Shinshu. Even Shin devotees who could not listen to the teaching carefully and could not think about the teaching very seriously have this tendency of viewing their own school as representing the position that one is being saved by doing nothing. This has been a consistent tendency among Japanese Shin people, not only today but also some centuries ago.

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A Jesuit missionary named Alejandro Valignano came to Japan in the sixteenth century to make an inspection of the state of Christianity here at that time. He reported,

Buddhist priests emphasize how great a compassion Amida and Sakyamuni have on beings, and therefore they are easily saved by these Buddhas. Whatever sins one may commit, he or she will be purified only through calling the Buddha's name and having a firm belief in their virtues. Accordingly, one does not need to atone for one's sins. If one did so, it means to insult the amends Amida and Sakyamuni have made for human beings. This is very similar to Martin Luther's heresy.

Although this report reflects some misunderstanding, it is an interesting one. For instance, he does not have any distinction between Amida and Sakyamuni. Amida is not like a historical being, while Sakyamuni is a historical figure. Valignano did not know this. Although his observations were misinformed, there is some truth in them. For example, Valignano was aware that Shin Buddhism was most popular among Japanese people of those days. Further, he regarded Shin Buddhism as the "do-nothing school," which is the very reflection of the perception Japanese people of those days had on Shin Buddhism. He caught the sense of "do-nothing" in Shin Buddhism.

In contrast to the Path of Sages, which requires extremely difficult ascetic practices, Shin Buddhism gives the impression of a very easy going way for final attainment. Therefore the followers of Shin Buddhism can be lazy when seeking for the way of salvation. Such is a serious misunderstanding of Shinran's teaching. For Shinran, *Shinjin* could not have been such a static state of mind. On the contrary, it was a dynamic confrontation of self-power and Other Power; namely, an incessant battle against the arising of self-centered

wishes and pride for doing something good or efficacious for one's liberation through one's own power. If even one percent of self-power remains in one's mind, it cannot be called *Shinjin*. Moreover, this one percent is so strong and persistent that it is hardly possible to eradicate it. It is like lifting one's body with one's own hands.

In Buddhism, in general, doing good for other people is required for the fulfillment of the way; it is an essential condition for attaining the final goal. The main activity of a Bodhisattva, for reaching Buddhahood, is to help others first, leaving his or her own benefit behind. This is the Mahayana Bodhisattva way. But, if the Bodhisattva takes pride in doing good for others, he or she will fall back to the starting point. This is repeatedly taught in every school of Mahayana Buddhism. In a sense, this is regarded as the activation of Sakyamuni's teaching of "non-self."

In the same way, in Shin Buddhism, if one takes pride in doing something efficacious for one's salvation, that state of mind can never be called *Shinjin*. This characteristic of *Shinjin* should be emphasized in order to make the Shin Buddhist way Mahayanistic and to clarify Shinran's thought as distinctive from other schools of Pure Land tradition, which admit some self-power activity to some degree. Anyway, the source of doing good

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for others or the source of ethical implications lies in *Shinjin* itself, because self-power activity means to do good for oneself and others in order to attain salvation, the problem of which is that this self-power is to be negated by the working of Amida. If there is no self-power, there would be no negation of it; that is, there is no room for the realization of Other Power. There are some people who say that self-power mind itself is *Shinjin*, but in our organization, Hongwanji, such is regarded as a heretical view. But I think there is some truth in their claim of self-power mind itself being *Shinjin*, because there is no *Shinjin* at all without self-power which is to be negated by Other Power.

Shin Buddhist ethics lie right at the confrontation of self-power and Other Power. Unlike Christianity, however, it is quite difficult to find room in Buddhism for ethics, especially with regard to Shin. In addition, it is also very difficult to judge Buddhist teaching, applying the Western notion of ethics. Within the social history of the East, there has not been such a notion as ethics as with the Westerners. In exploring this problem in the Buddhist tradition, such a difference in the way of thinking necessarily has to be taken into

consideration. Compared with Christianity, in which social, historical and consequently ethical aspects are highly valued, Buddhism is generally considered to be a religious tradition which is mainly concerned about a very individual liberation of the self.

This tendency of Buddhism was already found when it was first introduced to China and was exposed to severe criticism by the Chinese. The Chinese people are very ethical, in a sense, according to the teaching of Confucianism. Therefore, Confucian ethics were adopted by Buddhism for the purpose of soothing such criticism. Discrepancy between the essence of the Buddhist doctrine and Confucian ethics still remains today and causes numerous problems. This is one of the biggest problems of Japanese Buddhism, even today. We also have had to apply Confucian ethics to Buddhist teaching in order to make it suitable for Japanese society, just as early Chinese Buddhism did. A typical example of the problems is ancestor worshipping applied in Chinese Buddhism and later in Japanese Buddhism. Ancestor worshipping has nothing to do, originally, with Buddhist teaching, but these days, as you may have seen, Japanese Buddhism is closely related to ancestor worshipping.

Returning to the problem of individual liberation through religion and its effect in the society, these look contradictory at a glance and stand against each other. Consider the following passage,

The rule of the person who renounces worldly life is not to pay homage to the king, not to pay homage to one's parents, not to serve the six kinds of blood relative, and not to worship spirits."

A superficial understanding of this passage is that the world renouncers, that is Buddhists, do not have to respect kings, parents, relatives, or gods, because they are now apart from the secular world.

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Such an interpretation should be considered biased. It is not right. This statement is very similar to a well-known saying seen in the *Rinzairoku* (Chinese, *Lin-chi lu*),

Encountering a Buddha, killing the Buddha;  
Encountering a Patriarch, killing the Patriarch;  
Encountering an Arhat, killing the Arhat;  
Encountering mother or father, killing mother or father;  
Encountering a relative, killing the relative,

Only thus does one attain liberation and disentanglement from all things, thereby becoming completely unfettered and free.

These two passages, drawn from the *Bodhisattva Precept Sutra* and the *Rinzairoku*, both point to the importance of detachment from secular affairs in order to attain the final goal of emancipation. (But Shinran's intention of quoting the former passage is to criticize the pressure of the secular authority upon Buddhists.)

If one is concerned only about secular or earthly desires, one's attainment of the ultimate goal will be beyond reach. Similar passages are found in the *Bible*, too, where Jesus Christ is recorded to have said,

If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, even his own life, he cannot be a disciple of mine. (*Luke*, 14:26).

In another passage, it is said,

Truly I say to you, there is no one who has given up home, or wife, brothers, parents, or children, for the sake of the Kingdom of God, who will not be repaid many times over in this age, and in the age to come have eternal life. (*Luke*, 18:29-30)

Needless to say, these passages do not simply mean that one is to reject this world for the sake of the attainment of personal liberation, whether it be Christian or Buddhist. Shinran's *Shinjin* is often misunderstood from the same perspective. It is, according to D. T. Suzuki, "the culmination of Mahayana Buddhism in the Far East," but because of its too existential or transcendental character, there are some critics who claim that Shin Buddhism lacks social and ethical implications. In other words, it is concerned only with a vertical relationship of "I" and Amida and not with a horizontal conjunction with other people in the society. The vertical relationship of an individual with Amida, this existential and personal aspect of Shinran's *Shinjin*, is typically seen in his words recorded in the *Tannisho*:

When I consider deeply the Vow of Amida, which arose from five kalpas [an extremely long time] of profound thought, I realize that it was entirely for the sake of myself alone! Then how I am filled with gratitude for the Primal Vow, in which Amida settled on saving me, though I am burdened thus greatly with karma.

This is an exceedingly personal aspect of *Shinjin*, and accordingly puts a great stress on the salvific power of Amida's Primal Vow, and naturally leads to the transcendence of good and evil; namely, the transcendence of the ethical level of seeking salvation.

In this context, one would do well to consider other significant passages from the *Tannisho*.

Know that the Primal Vow of Amida makes no distinction between people young and old, good and evil; only the entrusting of yourself to it is essential. For it was made to save the person in whom karmic evil is deep-rooted and whose blind passions abound.

Thus, entrusting yourself to the Primal Vow requires no performance of good, for no act can hold greater virtue than saying the Name. Nor is there need to despair of the evil you commit, for no act is so evil that it obstructs the working of Amida's Primal Vow.<sup>104</sup>

And further,

Even a good person can attain birth in the Pure Land, so it goes without saying that an evil person will.

Moreover,

I know nothing of what is good or evil. For if I could know thoroughly, as is known in the mind of Amida, that an act was good, then I would know the meaning of "good." If I could know thoroughly, as Amida knows, that an act was evil, then I would know "evil." But for a foolish being full of blind passions, in this fleeting world—this burning house—all matters without exception are lies and gibberish, totally without truth and sincerity. The nembutsu alone is true and real.

These passages reveal the very individual, subjective, and personal character of Shinran's thinking. Here, an important question arises: whether Shinran's *Shinjin* is so radically individual and subjective that it is merely a self-satisfaction which lacks the horizontal relation with others. Does it mean that with *Shinjin*, described by Shinran in these passages, one should confine oneself to one's internal spiritual world, paying no attention to the external life,

or external law; or is *Shinjin* a topic taken up only within the circle, so to speak, a circle of faith?

After Shinran was exiled to Echigo province by the Imperial Government at the age of thirty-five, he called himself "neither a priest nor a layman," a well-known phrase. This is usually interpreted to be an expression of his resistance against or escape from the secular authority. It might not be possible, but the depth of his appreciation of the universal compassion is ignored from this point of view.

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Nearly twenty years after his exile, Shinran indicated what he meant in the phrase "neither a priest nor a layman."

In reflecting on the ocean of great *Shinjin*, I realize that there is no discrimination between noble and humble, or black-robed monks and white clothed laity, no differentiation between man and woman, old and young. The amount of evil one has committed is not considered, the duration of any performance or religious practice is of no concern.<sup>107</sup>

Notwithstanding the apparently too individualistic appreciation of Amida's Vow, a horizontal conjunction of himself and other people, under universal compassion, is clearly seen in this passage.

So far, I have noted a very complicated character of Shinran's *Shinjin*. One dimension is a very subjective character of *Shinjin*, the other is the relationship between "I" and other people through *Shinjin*, which is usually ignored by Shin followers or by outside critics.

Now, in turning to the notion of a bifurcation of Shinran's *Shinjin*, the phrase "Buddha's Law and King's Law" throws into sharp relief the very pure soteriological truth given by the teaching of Pure Land Buddhism, which is the "Buddha's Law," and the "King's Law," which is the law of the secular authorities. Shinran's *Shinjin* began to be bifurcated in the process of the expansion of the Hongwanji denominational organization.

Shinran died in 1273, almost unknown to people of his day except for a small *nembutsu* community, which had been organized under his leadership near the Tokyo area, where he lived for approximately twenty years from his early

forties to his early sixties. After his death in Kyoto, his grave was entrusted by his disciples to his youngest daughter, Kakushin. The graveyard developed later into the Hongwanji temple.

The bifurcation of Shinran's teaching into the two aspects, "Buddha's Law" and "King's Law," began to appear after the organization of this Shin denomination, centered at Hongwanji. It was Kakunyo (1270-1351), a great grandson of Shinran, who developed the graveyard into Hongwanji temple and tried to acquire authority over the followers of Shinran's teaching. For that purpose, he had to locate or situate the Hongwanji organization within the Japanese society of his time, a process in which, however, he did not succeed. His son, Zonkaku (1290-1373), first cooperated with him toward this objective, but, perhaps because of Zonkaku's too radical compromise with other Buddhist schools and the secular authorities, Kakunyo had to disown him.

Zonkaku's view of "Buddha's Law" and "King's Law," as it is reflected in his behavior, presents a typical picture of the relation of the two aspects which exerted a great influence upon Rennyo (1415-1499), a restorer of the Hongwanji denomination, and also upon the traditional doctrine of Shin Buddhism after Rennyo. In one of Zonkaku's writings, it is stated:

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Buddha's Law and King's Law are to make a pair, just like the two wings of a bird; like the two wheels of a carriage. Neither of the two should be missing. Therefore, Buddha's Law is to protect King's Law and King's Law is to respect Buddha's Law.

This view of Zonkaku's is not his own invention but is based on quite a popular idea which had been prevalent in Japan since the Heian period, when the role of Japanese Buddhism was to protect the nation. For example, the Tendai school on Mt. Hiei was established in order to protect the nation, not to save the people. Put more precisely, it was to protect the Imperial Government, not the ordinary people. The "two wings of a bird" and the "two wheels of a carriage" are phrases commonly used when this topic was discussed. The mutual dependence of "Buddha's Law" and "King's Law" is mentioned by Zonkaku in other writings as well, and it can be assumed that by applying this idea he must have aimed at locating the Hongwanji organization within the structure of the nation. It is to be noted that Zonkaku's notion of the mutual dependence of "Buddha's Law" and "King's Law" is quite different from Shinran's.



Shinran quotes from the *Mappotomyoki*, or "A Record of the Lamp in the Last Dharma-age," the author of which is unknown, but usually attributed to the founder of the Tendai School, Saicho:

Spiritual truth and secular law act in mutual dependence to spread the teachings. Because of this, the profound scriptures pervade the world and virtue permeates the land.

Spiritual truth and secular law act in mutual dependence to spread the teachings; because of this the mutual dependence of "Buddha's Law" and "King's Law" is solely to spread the true teaching within the world. This was the original intent of this passage from the *Mappotomyoki*, but later it no longer was precisely understood.

The intention of Shinran's quoting this passage was to protest against the government's way of strictly controlling monks and nuns on the ground of breaking Buddhist precepts. There were many monks and nuns who broke Buddhist precepts in those days. It goes without saying that Shinran's criticism of the government for their despotic control of Buddhists originated for him at the age of thirty-five when the *nembutsu* community, led by Honen, his master, was persecuted by the government. Far from depending on the secular authority in spreading the teaching, Shinran aimed at the independence of the *nembutsu* community from any power of the secular authorities including the power of the other existing Buddhist schools.

Zonkaku, however, states that the *Mappotomyoki* was written for revealing the harmony of spiritual law and secular law, which is quite contrary to the original purpose of this book. The purpose of the *Mappotomyoki* is to reveal that the Buddha's teachings should spread in the society without having any restrictions or violations by secular authorities.

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There is, of course, a great difference between the social and historical settings of Shinran and Zonkaku, but it is true that the Hongwanji denomination and the other schools of Shin Buddhism continued to keep the policy which Zonkaku prepared in compromising with the secular authorities in order for their organizations to survive.

Undoubtedly, it was Rennyō, the eighth Abbot of Hongwanji, who restored the Hongwanji organization which was about to disappear, at that time, from

Japan. Hongwanji was a very small school at Rennyo's time. He restored it and made it the biggest school of Japanese Buddhism. He took over the position of the head of Hongwanji in 1457, at the age of forty-three, and during the following forty years he made it an unprecedentedly huge Buddhist organization in Japan. Because of this sudden expansion of the Hongwanji community, Rennyo was forced to meet with various problems of which Shinran would never have dreamed.

Most of these problems were caused by friction between the Hongwanji community and the society at large, which can be roughly classified into two parts: (1) other schools of Buddhism including other sects of Shin Buddhism, and (2) the government in power, both central and local. These two kinds of power were what Rennyo had to call into question. Notwithstanding the frequent persecution and conflicts caused by these powers, Hongwanji continued to grow into a monumental religious community in Japan.

It was solely because of such an abrupt growth of the community that Rennyo had to use skills as imaginative as possible in order to solve these problems. For this he is criticized by some modern scholars as being political, not religious in personality. In order to avoid conflict with outside society, Rennyo had to issue regulations or restrictions (*okite*) for the followers of Hongwanji within the Shin community. Five times he issued *okite*, from 1473 to 1478. The first *okite* issued in 1473 consisted of eleven regulations or restrictions.

- (1) Do not make light of other gods, Buddhas, and Bodhisattvas other than Amida.
- (2) Do not abuse other teachings and schools.
- (3) Do not reproach other schools on the basis of the Shin teaching.
- (4) Do not reproach the evasion of impurities [as stressed, for example, in Shinto], though it is meaningless from the standpoint of the Buddhist view.
- (5) Do not propagate your own faith without the authentic transmission of the teaching.
- (6) Do not make light of the local guardians and landowners.
- (7) Do not compete with other schools praising the Shin teaching only.
- (8) Do not praise the Shin teaching on the basis of secondhand information about the teaching.
- (9) Do not eat fowls and fish in a *nembutsu* gathering.
- (10) Do not drink so much as to lose your temper in a *nembutsu* gathering.
- (11) Do not gamble among the *nembutsu* followers.

In addition to these restrictions, the *okite* said that those who violated them were to be banished from the Hongwanji community. A total of thirty-five regulations included in the five *okites* can be summarized as follows: (1) Observance of the governmental law is taken to be essential and one should keep the Buddhadharma to oneself. (2) Make the point of obeying the social morals and never make light of other schools. Many expressions of this kind in Rennyō's letters may be summarized in such a sentence as "Externally, the observance of King's Law is essential, and internally, keeping Buddha's Law is fundamental."<sup>111</sup>

So, in Rennyō, "Buddha's Law" and "King's Law" are completely bifurcated, separated. This kind of expression very frequently appears in Rennyō's letters to the followers. With this teaching, Rennyō seems to have divided the life of *nembutsu* followers: life in the secular society outside the Shin community, and life in a religious circle within the community. The clear contrast of the two, a dualistic opposition of "Buddha's Law" and "King's Law," is usually said to be contradictory to Shinran's way of living. This is the main reason for the criticism of Rennyō. But without Rennyō, there would not have been any Hongwanji organization.

Shinran, too, had to face a problem similar to Rennyō's, concerning the relationship between the *nembutsu* community and society. He returned to Kyoto when he was sixty-two or sixty-three. When he was about eighty, a very serious dispute concerning the interpretation of the teaching occurred among his disciples and followers in the Kanto area. As a result of this dispute, the *nembutsu* community in the Kanto area split into two: one was a group called "Licensed Evil," which roughly stressed the inconceivably deep compassion of Amida's Primal Vow, and consequently an idea began to prevail in the Kanto area that Amida's compassion is so deep that it is never hindered by any evil. This perspective can naturally develop into an idea that the more one does evil, the greater the possibility that one can be saved by Amida. This is undoubtedly a misunderstanding of Shinran's thought as recorded later in the *Tannishō*, as we have seen; "Even a good person can attain birth in the Pure Land, so it goes without saying that an evil person will."<sup>112</sup> and further, "the evil person who entrusts himself to Other Power is precisely the one who possesses the true cause for birth."<sup>113</sup> This description of Shinran's was misunderstood. Some intentionally did evil in society. People of licensed evil intentionally dealt in wrongdoing in the society. This caused an intervention into the Shin community by the Kamakura Shogunate government.

Shinran sent letters often to the disciples in Kanto warning them not to disturb

the society outside their community. We have to admit that there is a decisive difference between Shinran and Rennyo. In Shinran's case, his warnings to the followers were closely connected with the teaching, while in Rennyo's case, a bifurcation of "Buddha's Law" and "King's Law" can be clearly observed. This, of course, is only a rough sketch of Rennyo's view of "Buddha's Law and King's Law." Many other aspects must be taken into consideration in order to grasp his thought.

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The Hongwanji community restored by Rennyo went through the kaleidoscopic changes of the Japanese nation, sometimes standing against the ruler, sometimes compromising with the government. It is during the Edo period that not only Hongwanji but all the other schools of Buddhism had their backbone taken out by the government and were tamed, just like a dog. This lasted for about 260 years.

This political skill was first demonstrated by TOKUGAWA Ieyasu (1542-1616), the founder of the Tokugawa Shogunate government. For instance, very early in the Edo period, the huge denomination or organization of the Hongwanji community was forced to split into two, forming West Hongwanji and East Hongwanji. This move was caused by TOKUGAWA Ieyasu in response to the enormous power of the riots initiated by farmers (*ikkoikki*) led by Hongwanji members. TOKUGAWA Ieyasu had experienced the terror of the *ikkoikki*, as a local ruler when he was young. The Hongwanji community was forced to split into two, and hence they could not cooperate anymore to lead in further *ikkoikki* riots.

After Ieyasu, the Tokugawa Shogunate protected all schools of Buddhism in Japan and placed Buddhist priests at a highly ranked status within the social classes. This meant that there was no need for Buddhists to protect themselves. It was, so to speak, like a wise bird being caught in a cage and being kept under a careful watch. Shin Buddhism was no exception.

Under governmental protection and supervision, Hongwanji lost its power to expand its horizontal influence in society. In addition, it began to strengthen the relation with the secular authorities. In this setting, the study of Shinran's teaching was greatly encouraged within the Hongwanji organization. However, the study progressed only with the focus on the subjective and individual aspect of salvation-that is, the vertical relation between the aspirant and

Amida. The relation with other people within society, which is indispensable for the Mahayana Bodhisattva path for its fulfillment, was not emphasized in the study of Shinran's thought. This grew into a scholastic tradition of Shin Buddhism. Even today, we can observe that the study of Shin "theology" is focused mainly on the vertical relation between the "I" and Amida.

It can also be said that only the passive acceptance of Shinran's teaching was applied and urged, and the active aspect was intentionally ignored. A good example of what has been ignored is the matter of "being equal to Buddhas." Shinran, especially in his late years, repeatedly emphasized that the person *of Shinjin* is the same as a Bodhisattva and equal to Buddhas.

Now, the *Larger Sutra* speaks of the "stage next to enlightenment, like that of Maitreya." Since Maitreya is already close to Buddhahood, it is the custom of various schools to speak of him as Maitreya *Buddha*. Since the person counted among the truly settled is of the same stage as Maitreya, he is also said to be equal to Tathagatas. You should know that the person of true Shinjin can be called equal to Tathagatas because, even though he himself is always impure and creating karmic evil, his heart and mind are already equal to Tathagatas."

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This roughly says that a person of *Shinjin* is equal to Maitreya Bodhisattva or Buddha, which means that he or she is right on the path of the Mahayana Bodhisattva way. In the Mahayana Bodhisattva way, doing good for others is the necessary, first condition, to attain the final goal. This assertion by Shinran, however, was completely ignored in Shin scholarship during the Edo period, though it was treated with great importance in his writings, especially in his letters. What is more surprising is that even today, it is missing in the doctrine which is supposed to be authentic at Hongwanji. Shinran's emphasis on the Mahayana Bodhisattva way, that means the very active way of living for Shin followers, is not accepted by the Hongwanji, especially by the elders.

So long as a person *of Shinjin* is equated with a Bodhisattva or a Buddha, and if it is stressed as it was by Shinran as an active phase of *Shinjin* focused on the horizontal relationship with people in society as an essential condition for the Mahayana Bodhisattva path, Shin ethics will naturally come out of the teaching. In this sense, during the Edo period, Shinran's *Shinjin* fell down to

the ground of self-satisfaction, which is even today observed as the major attitude of Shin followers of "the do-nothing school." *Shinjin* is a topic concerned only with the topic of faith. Shin followers confine themselves to a small community which appreciates the boundless compassion of Amida only on the occasion of gathering or listening to the teaching in temples. All that is seen is the passive acceptance of the teaching. There must be, of course, some passiveness in any religious tradition to receive the teaching, but what is important is the natural outflow of the truth or reality presented in the form of teaching, through the entire personality of the listener, or of the follower. The confinement of Shin Buddhists themselves in a special circle is chiefly because the teaching has been and continues to be presented in a way that is accepted only passively.

In Rennyō's day, in the Edo period, and in the period after the Meiji Restoration to the end of World War II, social ethics in Shin Buddhism were more focused on the harmony of the community with the outside society than on a follower's individual participation in social issues. It was mainly due to the visible and invisible pressure on the community from the side of the secular authority or governmental power. Today, there is hardly any pressure on the communities of Shin from the governmental side. Therefore, the members of the community can act freely in social issues as they wish.

There are several social movements in which Hongwanji has been taking leadership, such as the anti-Yasukuni Shrine movement-involving the Japanese government's attempts to make Yasukuni a national shrine. Other religious schools too are strongly against this policy. Also, Hongwanji is involved with anti-nuclear weapons movements, and *anti-buraku* discrimination movements. Regarding the last one, Hongwanji has the longest history of involvement. They have been trying to solve the problem for many years. It is, however, very ironic that Hongwanji is criticized these days for doing *anti-buraku* discrimination movement activities.

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What is more important is a voluntary participation of the members in these movements, not the organization as a whole but individually, personally. Each person must participate in what he or she thinks is important for solving social problems. Also, if their commitment to these social issues has nothing to do with the realization of *Shinjin*, there will appear another bifurcation of Shinran's teaching as observed in the bifurcation of "Buddha's Law" and "King's Law." The most important thing is that the commitment of Shin followers to resolving

social problems should be connected with *Shinjin*.