

Engaged Shin Buddhism

**Alfred Bloom
Emeritus Professor
University of Hawaii**

Introduction

In the 21st century many social and political issues are coming to a head culminating in violent conflicts between and within nations. We need not enumerate all the problems here. For Buddhists, the problem is to find a voice to respond with some degree of unity to those issues. Unlike many other religious institutions in the West, Buddhism does not have a central authority to speak for all Buddhists. Perhaps that is not even desirable. Individual organizations such as Shin Buddhism does have a central organization in Japan and in the areas beyond Japan it is the largest and well-organized Buddhist community. Nevertheless, it has not been able to speak with a strong voice, despite the verse in the Juseige (Verses on Weighty Vows), chanted frequently in temples, that the community would open the Dharma treasury universally within the world and always being among the masses, speak with a lion's voice. Other Buddhist groups are composed of small local fellowship focused on the practice of their tradition. The Tibetans achieve a degree of unity through the activities of the Dalai Lama. However, the Buddhist voice does not have a real focus with American society, particularly.

The reason, in part, for this lack of a social voice, is that during the long history of Buddhism, over 2600 years, it has endured many forms of despotism and political or government control. Only now in the West Buddhism has the freedom to speak out but it has not been prepared to do so. Only one organization exists, the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, to carry the banner of Buddhism into the arena of social change and advocacy. It is a national organization but in comparison to other religious traditions, small.

It is important for Buddhists to apprise themselves of the foundations in Buddhism itself which can give direction for their participation in society. In a sense Enlightenment begins here, in attaining understanding of the world to which we offer Buddhism and to engage the various cultures in viewing life from the standpoint of Buddhism and its implications. Hopefully this series of studies will help in that direction and point students to the resources that are available to inform their understanding.

Unit One Dharmakara's Vow: Engaged Shin Buddhism

There have always been social issues and problems in the world's cultures throughout history. They have become more intense and visible in modern times due to improved travel, communications and many forms of technological developments. There are also increased population pressures that exacerbate problems such as crime and violence and drugs.

Many problems such as ecological degradation, nuclear and weapons delivery systems, economic and population growth, political terrorism, and epidemics such as drugs and AIDS have transcended national boundaries. Further many of the major social issues confronting modern people, particularly in the United States, involve religious and spiritual implications. Right off we can think of racism, poverty issues, alcoholism, gambling, medical issues such as transplants, Alzheimer's disease etc. abortion, euthanasia, same gender issues, capital punishment, prayer in school, creationism, book censorship and sex education, cloning and bio-genetics. In addition, there is spouse, child and elderly abuse and gun control. Certainly the list can go on.

On the international scene, numerous conflicts involve religious rivalries between Catholic and Protestants in Northern Ireland, Hindus and Muslims in India, Christians and Muslims in the Philippines, Israel and Arab peoples which involve Judaism and Islam at the

heart of their conflict. In the U.S. we have our own fundamentalist political activity. In these instances, we can see that religion does not necessarily offer positive solutions to issues, but may actually be the cause of problems.

If we look at the many problems broadly, a major factor is the ongoing secularization and modernization, even westernization, which create stresses within societies. We can see this most evidently in Iran and Afghanistan with their solution in promoting Islamic fundamentalism. The extreme fundamentalism of the Taliban in Afghanistan prohibits television or any access to modern culture beyond Islam.

It is clear that no one religious tradition has the answers to all these issues and problems. Since religion is the cause or basis for many of them, it is evident that we must be critical in our religious understanding. We must study carefully in order to discover, as best we can, spiritual insights that will contribute to the welfare of society and conduce to our society's spiritual and social well-being.

Today people are seeking in many areas for guidance and meaning for their lives in order to confront these confusing and difficult problems. None of us are immune. In a recent obituary column there was a notice of the funeral of a beautiful, young woman who died at age 18 of a drug overdose. The family commented in the notice that we must be more aware of our youth and the life they are living. What story of family suffering lay behind that notice and other incidents that we read everyday in our newspapers?

We generally assume the importance of religion and a spiritual perspective in working toward the solution or amelioration of our many problems. However, we must also understand that the major religious traditions originated largely in pre-modern times which never contemplated the problems that we now face either in their multiplicity or their complexity. It is,

therefore, difficult to find specific texts and passages from the ancient scriptures that speak directly to current issues. Often religious teachers are very selective in what passages they employ. Sometimes they interpret texts in literal fashion without regard to changed religious and cultural circumstances. This problem is most clearly indicated in the ways that certain Christian leaders take Biblical passages to denounce and condemn gay people and restrict their rights. Buddhism has not been as prone to this type of interpretation because of the highly symbolic and metaphorical character of Buddhist Sutras. Buddhism has followed the principle of interpreting more by the spirit than the letter.

What religion can provide for us is a spiritual context or system of values and principles, as well as a community, that is, Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, to grapple with issues. The study of Engaged Buddhism by Professors Christopher S. Queen and Sallie B. King, using the Three Treasures have provided an interpretive system for understanding Buddhist movements and developing our own approach to social issues. With the category Buddha, they consider the personal dimension of religion and its leadership; Engagement or Liberation refer to the Dharma, doctrine or teachings; while Sangha refers to institutions, and actions. Their study shows that, as a major world religion with a 2500 year old tradition, Buddhism possesses ample resources to formulate a Buddhist perspective, without requiring total unanimity or uniformity on any issue. Buddhism respects individual conscience while also inculcating respect and compassion for another's point of view.

Shin Buddhism, as a significant development in Buddhist history, has at its disposal the general tradition, as well as features which are distinctive to Shin Buddhism itself. It is the purpose of these sessions simply to open up the issues for discussion. As we have earlier indicated there is no single correct view. What is presented will be this speaker's understanding

as the basis for further discussion. From our study together we may discover a core consensus which can be called Shin.

It will be clear from my lectures that I begin from a distinctly historical perspective. Our modern culture has become aware of its historicity in that we are all culturally and socially conditioned persons living within a culture that itself has changed through centuries. In actuality, the post-modern view is Buddhist so far as it deconstructs all forms of social or thought structures and concepts by seeing them in their process of formation. For instance, We often read about the idea of non-soul in Buddhism and the illustration of the chariot to explain it. The chariot is nothing more than the combination of various parts which are called "chariot," though the chariot does not exist in itself as an independent object. Chariot is a label we give to this configuration of parts.

Buddhism, as we hear over and over, teaches impermanence; it teaches the delusory character of our thought which misinterprets experience, striving for permanence or substantiality. We easily form attachments and addictions, or graspings, defining ourselves by what we have rather than what we are. We see ourselves as fixed selves rather than a process which grows and develops. From this misunderstanding of our true nature grow our prejudices, our stereotypes, our dogmas, our ego-centrism and conflicts.

What Buddhism calls no-self or non-self or emptiness signifies that reality is open; there are no ultimates or absolutes which are beyond challenge or question as to how they conduce to spiritual growth, deepening understanding of life and reality or the formation of fruitful relations among people and with nature. We may call Buddhism a relational relativity. Modern people react negatively to relativism, but relational relativity simply means that everything must be seen in context and relation. Nothing, whether a thing or idea, is isolated from other aspects of our

world and its history. In view of its philosophical and spiritual character, Buddhism should be the most creative and dynamic tradition, because its thought is not rigid, as a body in rigor mortis, but flexible, open, evolving, and adaptive.

Unfortunately, Buddhism is made up of people who over history have had their own experiences and agendas. It has crystallized institutions which strive to maintain their own self-existence. Religious bureaucracies, like the political, seek to perpetuate themselves. Thereby, they sometimes become part of the problem that societies have to solve rather than the solution. While we seek change in society, we must also seek change in religious institutions and their mode of operation, if the spiritual ideals that we seek to realize are to become effective in our modern setting. We must interpret tradition to today's needs.

The title of this series has been given as Dharmakara's Vows: Engaged Shin Buddhism. We should comment briefly on that story in the Larger Pure Land Sutra. It will be taken up again later, but here I simply wish to call attention to its relation to the meaning of Engaged Shin Buddhism. It is the foundation story for the Pure Land tradition as we know it and also for Shin Buddhism. The account follows somewhat the life of Sakyamuni, particularly in his renunciation of society and secular leadership. However, the Pure Land story has marked differences from that of Sakyamuni.

Sakyamuni became aware of his own impermanence as he observed the suffering of the ill, the aged and those who died. He then desired to find a solution to his individual problem which he later shared with others. In the Pure Land story Bodhisattva Dharmakara, as a king, looked out from his palace and surveyed the conditions of the multitudes of people in the world. Moved by compassion, he renounced his throne and went to the Buddha of his time and vowed to devote himself to the spiritual liberation of all beings. Thereupon he made his 48 Vows.

The content of those Vows was to create an ideal world where people could fulfill their highest spiritual potential and attain Buddhahood themselves. In contrast to the story of Sakyamuni in earlier tradition, the Mahayana Bodhisattva Dharmakara wanted to create an ideal environment that would inspire the growth of people. Mahayana Buddhism, though carrying forward the spirit of Sakyamuni, emphasizes spiritual nurture and a broad inclusiveness based on interdependence. Spiritual nurture which enables the attainment of enlightenment means broadly education as a basis for growth. The principle of inclusive interdependence expressed in the Bodhisattva's Vows is the recognition that my well-being is not separate from yours or that of others, whether we view it simply on the spiritual plane or on the socio-economic plane. We may say that Bodhisattva Dharmakara was engaged, involved, committed in seeking the highest welfare for all people. He thus provides the ideal that underlies Pure Land Buddhism and the spirit of Mahayana Buddhism wherever it has gone.

In its history, this story of Dharmakara and the ideal it presents has been interpreted in purely spiritual or religious directions. We will see that this was perhaps due in a great measure to the nature of the societies into which Buddhism flowed. However, as an ideal or paradigm for our attitudes, we need not restrict its meaning and application simply to the issue of salvation in another world of the Pure Land.

We may see in the effort of Dharmakara an expression of Engaged Buddhism which has become the term of choice for socially aware and involved Buddhism. Queen and King in their text define Engaged Buddhism or Liberation Buddhism as "a voluntary association of people guided by exemplary leaders and a common vision of a society based on peace, justice and freedom." (Christopher S. Queen and Sallie B. King, eds. Engaged Buddhism: Buddhist Liberation Movements in Asia. [Albany, N.Y. State University Of New York Press, 1996.] p. 19)

The term Engaged Buddhism was first used by Ven. Thich Nhat Hanh in 1963 when he wrote a book with that title. As a Vietnamese with a French language background, the term *engage* had the meaning of politically outspoken or involved. It was used by activist intellectuals in French Indochina. The term was later used in 1988 by Sulak Sivaraksa in a book with the title: Socially Engaged Buddhism and a text edited by Fred Eppsteiner. (The Path of Compassion: Writings on Socially Engaged Buddhism.) In 1989 an organization was established named International Network of Engaged Buddhists. (*Ibid.*, p.34, note 6).

However, historically, it began with the efforts of Col. Henry Steel Olcott (1832-1907) in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) in 1880. He undertook to revitalize Buddhism there to oppose the colonial and missionary efforts to Europeanize the Ceylonese. It was taken up by Anagarika Dharmapala (1864-1933) who was influenced by Col Olcott and Madam Helena Blavatsky, the Theosophical leader. Dharmapala worked to restore ancient Buddhist sites in India and began the Maha Bodhi Society and its journal: Maha Bodhi. There are historical connections with Hawaii. Dharmapala came to Hawaii. He gave precepts to numbers of people, including Shinkaku Hunt and Mrs. Mary Foster.

Later in Hawaii, we can observe Engaged Buddhism in the efforts of Bishop Yemyo Imamura and his activities during the sugar strikes and with Rev. Shinkaku Hunt, the establishment of the International Buddhist Institute. Bishop Yemyo Imamura wrote an essay in the 1932 Hawaii Buddhist Annual: “The Democratic Ideal of the Shinshu Sect of Buddhism”.

Also in the same volume Kenji (Baron) Goto wrote:

Nowadays, persons who advocate that religion should serve society as a whole rather than individuals have increased in number. Religion should not be selfishly directed but should tend to the universal emancipation of men as members of society. True happiness cannot be attained by self-emancipation alone. That freedom from ignorance, or wrong thinking, must spread to all so that others may be served, for true religion aims at universal emancipation. (Kenji

(Baron) Goto, "Buddhism and Its Recent Tendency," Hawaii Buddhist Annual,(1932). P. 128.)

We can look at the broader implications of the Dharmakara story for our own time where we cannot separate spiritual well-being from social well-being. It is common knowledge that it is impossible to interest a person in life in another world when he is starving in this one. Walpola Rahula in his work: *What the Buddha Taught*, states: "Those who think that Buddhism is interested only in lofty ideals, high moral and philosophical thought, and that it ignores the social and economic welfare of people, are wrong. The Buddha was interested in the happiness of men. To him happiness was not possible without leading a pure life based on moral and spiritual principles. But he knew that leading such a life was hard in unfavorable material and social conditions." (Walpola Rahula. *What the Buddha Taught*. (New York: Grove Press Inc., 1959.) p. 81.) He goes on to point out that modern people know of Buddha's ethical and spiritual teaching, but little concerning his outlook on social and political matters.

While the principle of Engaged Buddhism can be observed in Buddhist tradition, there are distinctions which we may make in its application. That is, Engaged Buddhism may take the form of social welfare. In this case it may develop hospitals, hospices, old age homes, orphanages or assist the poor and suffering in many ways. Engaged Buddhism may also operate to bring about social change through some form of direct or political action. This latter aspect, sometimes emphasized in Asia, has been largely embraced by western followers and is of fairly recent development. In Hawaii it took form with the activity of Buddhist Peace Fellowship against the war in Vietnam. This feature has also been influenced by modes of Gandhian and Christian non-violence. However, we can see instances in Asian context with the

non-violent protest and activity of Aung san Suu kyii in Myanmar (Burma) and the efforts of Sulak Sivaraksha in Thailand.

It is appropriate in the light of the spirit of Buddhism to promote the happiness of all beings also to extend the spiritual meaning of the story of Dharmakara to include social concerns. Hence in the text of the Juseige which we often recite, the Bodhisattva declares his intention to fulfill his Vow :

If I should not become a great benefactor
In lives to come for immeasurable kalpas
To save the poor and afflicted,
May I not attain perfect Enlightenment.
(Hisao Inagaki. The Three Pure Land Sutras. (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshodo, 1994.) p. 249)

The situation of religion in ancient societies, however, so far as it has inhibited the implementation of Buddhist social principles, cannot be allowed to control the understanding and application of religious principles in our contemporary society. If religion is unable to engage with contemporary problems to help people in their present living, people will not be interested in its claims about the afterlife.

For some people the idea of Engaged Shin Buddhism may seem like an oxymoron. However, if Shin Buddhism cannot engage contemporary issues at some level, its present vitality and future will be in doubt. It is, therefore, the intention of these discussions to explore how Shin Buddhism can fulfill its potential as a Mahayana Buddhist tradition and a world religion which provides guidance for people in their daily life in society.

Unit Two Faith and Community: Religion and Society

I have entitled this unit Faith and Community, as an orientation to the general problem of religion and society and the background of what "engaged" Shin Buddhism might mean.

Religion is one of the most enduring and pervasive aspects of human existence. There has been no known human society or culture which lacks the elements of religion. We do not need to demonstrate in detail the importance of religion to human society as we see its good and bad effects all around us.

This religious concern has been evidenced from earliest times when people cast aside the bones of animals, but treated the bodies of their loved ones and companions in a special manner. Archaeology is replete with graves and grave implements. The concern for future destiny in this life or the next is present even today in the-persistence of practices such as divination, astrology, and other forms of religion in our highly technological age. It is particularly evident in the emotional appeals of evangelists for people to get right with God before they die.

It was once thought that religion would disappear with the supremacy of science. Whatever value science may have it does not afford us an understanding of our life, an assurance of the worth or meaning of our existence, or the success of our hopes and plans. The revival of religion in formerly Communist countries shows the persistence of religious faith in spite of great oppression. Communist governments have held great religious-like ceremonies when their leaders died. A Marxist lecturer in formerly communist Yugoslavia made three points of importance in understanding religion:

1. Religion flourishes under every type economic system.
2. Religion will endure as long, as people die.

3. The origin of religion is a mystery

I ran across a joke some time ago which illustrates the persistence of religion, despite rejection. An atheist was asked why he punished his child so severely. He replied that he wanted to put the fear of God in him. Also the story is told about the famous French playwright Ferenc Molnar who was reputedly very superstitious. He used all forms of protective methods and even filled his pen with violet ink, because black ink was the color of death. Once he heard of a well in a village in the Alps where one could get rid of all superstitions. He went there and performed the rites. Later, when his friends related some gossip they heard when he was away, he knocked on wood and covering his eyes, mumbling, "God willing." When they asked him why he did such things, since he had supposedly given up superstitions, he replied that he had given them up, but had only saved the most important ones. (Saturday Review of Literature. Oct 26, 1966).

It is well-known that when people get to know each other more intimately and transcend the usual superficialities, they often drift into the discussion of religion. The reason for this is that religion speaks of our destiny, our hopes, our views of reality and life. Even though modern secular life appears to give many people the confidence that they can dispense with religion as a significant resource for living, it is often the case when non-religious people reach an extremity in life, they appeal to God. In war it is often called Foxhole theology. It is evident that even people who stoutly deny the existence of God and the validity of any form of religion will still discuss those issues very eagerly. They still seek an understanding of their life, even if it is not in traditional terms. It is also the reason for the advice we often hear not to discuss religion or politics. Further, some of the bloodiest wars in history have been fought over religion. This is because the discussion goes to the very core of our being and its meaning.

Consequently, religion requires careful consideration, even by religious people. People may gain meaning from religious faith, but the meaning of religion itself in society is not unambiguous. We often hear today the argument that all religions are the same, as a way of evading serious discussion of religion. However, there are clear differences among religions and their implications for social life. There is a conflict between two concepts of religion in our own society, the tribalistic or communal and the personal, individual view of religion. There is also prudential ethic and prophetic or positive/proactive ethic.

The tribal or communal religion emphasizes the group over the individual, considering the community or society sacred or the highest frame of reference, represented in the king as divine or ruling by divine right. The personal form of religion in the world religions emphasizes the individual as the fundamental unit of value, offering direct apprehension of the divine or truth. In the realm of ethic. Prudential ethic, found in every tradition, can be tribal or personal. It stresses harmony and assumes the given order of things.

This perspective is still with us in our language when we say someone does not know their place, or they overstepped their bounds. In ancient society, reinforced by religion, the right or good thing was to fulfill one's obligation or position in society. The important thing is to integrate oneself within the society and to be aware of one's place in it. So doing, one may live fruitfully and peacefully, while prospering. Criticism of Honen's teaching included the fact that he broke the communality, the order of things, in beginning a movement without official permission and appealing to individuals.

The prophetic or positive/proactive approach sees the injustice within the given order of things and challenges it in the name of a higher truth. It seeks the liberation of the person from

the domination of exploitive government and religion. The prophetic contrasts to the prudential in focusing on justice, rather than simply law and order.

In our situation it is a struggle between those religious people who wish to impose their views of right and wrong on society and those religious people who oppose such imposition. Certain groups want to use political authority to enforce what is essentially a religious view of morality. It has been reflected in nationalism where people proclaim “love it or leave it;” “my country right or wrong, my country.” Religion has often been invoked or used to inculcate such notions. Japan used religion to anchor nationalism, though they denied it was religion because there was no Bible or view of after life and salvation. Likewise, Americans have believed that God chose this nation to lead the world. It is our manifest destiny. However, the early leaders of our nation tried to limit such pretensions by clearly separating church and state. A popular slogan has been *pro deo pro patria*, for God and Country.

Some knowledge of the history of religion is useful for understanding the nature of religion and its involvement with society. In the earliest periods of human history religion was essentially tribal or group oriented. The scholar Emile Durkheim held that society becomes a reality in people's lives through the network of human relations and attendant rules that provide the basis for human existence. Society is an invisible force in our lives which becomes sanctioned by religion often in myth. The Greek philosopher Proclus claimed that the gods were like policemen who observed people's actions when other humans were not there to see. There is a Biblical example in an oft-repeated blessing, the Mizpah benediction. It says "May God watch between you and me while we are absent one from another." The text taken out of context seems to be positive. However, it was given when Jacob parted from his brother Esau,

neither of whom trusted each other. The statement meant that God would watch and see what the other did, when they were out of sight of each other.

Generally, however, religion facilitates the integration of the person into society. Each human grouping has its own religion and rituals generally based in reverence for the tribal ancestors or nature deities on whom the people are dependent for their life, either in hunting and gathering or later in settled agricultural life. It is religion that forms the connection or bond between the people and defines them from outsiders. As long as tribes were isolated, their religion was the only truth for them.

When there were tribal wars and larger social complexes developed, the victor gods became the heads of the pantheon, ruling over the lesser gods, as the superior tribes subjugated the weaker. Eventually great national religions emerged such as we find in ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Greek and Roman world, India, China and also Japan.

The Greeks early discovered religion as a social control mechanism. Greek philosophers, as well as ancient Chinese scholars, recognized that it was the fear of the unseen gods and spirits that maintained morality.

In all these ancient societies the fundamental unit was the group, tribe, clan, or family, arranged in hierarchical fashion with royal and aristocratic clans at the top. The rulers claimed to have divine origin, as virtual incarnations of the gods to govern the people. In Japanese mythology the Sun Goddess Amaterasu-o-mikami delegated her great grand son Ninigi-no-mikoto with his attendants to descend from Takama-ga-hara in order to subdue the unruly people then on earth and to make way for the Japanese people. The Emperor was believed to be her lineal descendent through her great great grandson Jimmu Tenno, the first Emperor, who took the throne in 660 B.C.E. Even Shinran, as a member of the Fujiwara clan,

is said in the Godensho to be a descendant of Ame-no-koyane-no-mikoto, the ancestor of the Fujiwara and a deity in charge of ritual who accompanied Ninigi-no-mikoto when he came to earth.

Such myths ground the authority of ruling groups and provide a religious basis for kingship. In Japan the Emperor was the high priest of the people and his actions in planting rice in the spring ensured good crops. The harmony of the group with nature required the obedience of individuals to the rules and taboos. Angering the gods would break the harmony of nature and bring about natural disasters.

About the 7th or 6th century B.C.E., however, a new concept of religion emerged from the tribal. Here we see the appearance of what we know now as the great world religions. From China, through India, to Europe there was the axial age. During this time there was a search for salvation, emancipation, or universal values. Sages observed that the universe was governed by principles, usually moral, rather than the whim of deities. The great teachers appealed to individuals to seek their spiritual welfare independent of the group. There was an effort to discover the principles governing the universe and life.

We can observe this trend in the teaching of Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu in Chinese Taoist philosophy in the way of nature, the Tao, the moral teachings of Confucius on the nature of leadership and government in the way of Heaven, T'ien. In ancient Indian religion there was the teaching of karma where the punishment fit the crime and the mystic union of atman-brahman (the self and ultimate reality) as the way to spiritual freedom. In Buddhism there was the emphasis on morality rather than birth as the index of the value of a person, as well as the Dharma expressed in the principles of the four noble truths and eightfold path. These were presented as a universal truth by which individuals could achieve improve their status in

transmigration or ultimately liberation from the wheel of births and deaths. The principles of karma, rebirth and goal of nirvana were applicable to all beings. Zoroastrianism in Persia focused on the battle between truth and the lie, while the Hebrew prophets sought justice. The Greek philosophers sought the laws of the physical universe and truth, while the ancient Mediterranean and Greek mystery cults gave people release and hope beyond this world. It was a remarkable stage of history, marked by the discovery of the individual as the center of spiritual value.

Since that time, there has been constant tension between religion which serves group, national or cultural interests and religion which cultivates personal understanding and liberation. Socrates was persecuted when he tried to educate the youth. He was charged with corrupting their morals and undermining traditional religion by the *polis*, the community. The Biblical prophets and the Persian prophet Zoroaster were persecuted when they declared the truth of God with new moral and doctrinal revelations, demanding justice and righteousness for all. Gautama gave a particularly individualistic path to enlightenment, beyond traditional family duties and obligations. Confucius could not get a job and Taoism was said to be the philosophy of people out of office.

Because of pressures from the social-tribal religion, the goal of individual emancipation offered by the emerging world religions was often shifted to the afterlife. The institutionalization of religious traditions gave rise to orders of clergy, ritual organization, texts, and beliefs. The various religious systems often allied with the ruling class in the pursuit of social power and to curry favor with the aristocratic class. Religion and government often collaborated together to subjugate the peasants and masses of people.

The initially creative religious movements became accepted in the ancient societies at the expense of their critical insight into social relations. They came to support the status quo. Religious and political institutions, East and West, amassed great wealth. We can see this in the great art treasures throughout the world, bought and paid for by the labor of the masses who never were able to see them, because they adorned the residences of the rulers.. These conditions gave rise to Karl Marx's dictum that religion is the opiate of the people who were intimidated by religious fears and political power.

Occasionally prophets and teachers rose up to strive for reforms, but they were persecuted, exiled or killed. Consequently, the history of religion offers a record of the struggles of people throughout human history to attain the truth of existence in freedom. This struggle goes on today in many parts of the world and within our own society.

In our society, those who claim that the United States is a Christian nation represent the tribal concept of religion in which religion defines the obligations and character of the group. Religion and nationalism are intertwined and threaten the freedom of religion for all people. As example, religious people, quoting their scriptures, argue that acceptance of same-gender marriage relationships or abortion will threaten the integrity of society. They identify religious beliefs and social order which may be more dangerous than the proposed marriage relationship itself. While the arguments and the means of their dissemination are more sophisticated, they still represent the struggle of the tribal orientation with the personal.

Within our context of freedom there is the right to be non-religious and the Constitution protects the rights of the minority. These important aspects of religious freedom which have been won through long struggle in history are often overlooked in the clamor that democracy means majority rule. Because of the traditional strength of Christianity in our

society, the call for majority rule often means establishing Christian views as the norm of society.

This conflict within religion raises a question for many people whether religion itself can truly illuminate our problems. Sectarian religion and its attendant dogmatism divide religious groups within themselves and between traditions. If religious people fight among themselves, can they offer any real guidance to society?

Despite the many problems that we can observe within the field of religion, the various religions have an accumulated body of wisdom and insight from which we may all benefit. The wisdom which people need in order to live fruitfully and satisfyingly with their neighbors has generally been set forth in their native religions through beliefs, myths, rituals, and an ordered way of life. The question for our time is how we can become more aware and sensitive to the nuances of religious teaching in order to distill out its deeper dimensions, leaving aside its superficial and coercive aspects?

While it has become very difficult for thoughtful people everywhere to accept authorities and mere beliefs, one must still consider what values make life truly worthwhile for oneself and others. This question requires us to canvass the best thought of every culture in order to arrive at the most compelling and deepest conviction. There are some who may object that values are not at all that significant as the starting point. Yet we can observe that values remain important even when one has rejected traditional religion as illustrated in the conflict surrounding the Vietnam war. To attain conscientious objector status at that time it was only necessary to demonstrate a philosophic basis for conviction, rather than a specifically religious view.

In this situation in our country a trans-national universal morality was pitted against a nationalistic and pragmatic morality. There is no crisis encountered for our existence in

deciding to eat hamburgers or hot dogs as a matter of preference. However, there may be more significance in the choosing between political science or religion as a subject of study. Finally, however, it may be very critical if one decides to fight in a war or not to fight where one may lose one's life or receive society's disapproval for not serving.. Here one needs a conviction and a system of values to which one is committed if one is to give his life or suffer punishment for any cause.

These observations are aimed at encouraging all of us to be more sensitive and critical of religious claims. Just because an idea is religious does not necessarily make it a good idea. We must look further into the implications of the ideas promoted. Gautama himself urged people not merely to accept what he said, but to test it in their experience and in their thought. Thus he stated in the Kalama Sutta:

Come, Kalamas. Do not go upon what has been acquired by repeated hearing; nor upon tradition; nor upon rumour; nor upon what is in a scripture; nor upon surmise; nor upon an axiom; nor upon specious reasoning; nor upon a bias towards a notion that has been pondered over; nor upon one's seeming ability; nor upon the consideration, 'The monk is our teacher'. Kalamas, when you yourselves know: 'These things are good; these things are not blamable; these things are praised by the wise; undertaken and observed, these things lead to benefit and happiness', enter on and abide in them. Soma Thera, trans. "Kalama Sutta: The Buddha's Charter of Free Inquiry," in Selected Buddhist Texts From the Pali Canon Vol I. The Wheel Selections #8. (Kandy: Ceylon Buddhist Publication Society, 1963.) p.8).

Buddhism supports free and critical thinking which is required in our contemporary religious situation.

Shin Buddhism, as Buddhism, stands within the stream of Buddhist tradition which promotes personal values and perspectives in religion and life. Like Gautama, Shinran made serious decisions in his quest for spiritual liberation. However, Shin

Buddhism, as a religious institution, gradually rose in social status so that its leaders, the Abbot, became aristocrats in the old order of Japan. It really lost its touch with the people. As example, Zonnyo, Renny's father, had to dismiss Renny's mother because she was not from a proper family. Jodo Shinshu (Shin Buddhism) became one of the strong supporters of the traditional family system. While we stress family today for good reason, many who do in Japan and here also have a nostalgia for the old order of things.

The hereditary Abbacy in Shin Buddhism parallels the Imperial lineage as a miniature unbroken line. During the Tokugawa period (1600-1868) the distinction of tribal-communal and personal-universal can be seen in the difference of spirit and activity of the ecclesiastical doctrinal system and the myokonin who appeared among the common people. It is important to understand the different aspects of Shin Buddhist history in order to find the appropriate expression of Shin Buddhism in modern society. It is important to transcend the distinction, indicated by Professor Kakue Miyaji, between monto (tribal-communal) and shinja (personal, believer) in our sangha.

Within our Shin tradition, there is a basis for critical thinking and understanding in the teaching of Shinran and Renny. Shinran questioned the religious and political authorities of his day, finding them unjust and corrupt. Renny urged his followers to discuss, question and understand the teachings. If we do this, Shin Buddhism can make a contribution to our contemporary society in dealing with its many problems.

Unit Three Historical Reflection on Buddhism and Society

In our previous lectures we have tried to establish a context for considering the social involvement of Buddhism. In this lecture I wish to review historical and contemporary instances of Buddhist engagement with society. This aspect is important because the question is often asked: What is the relevance of Buddhism today?

This question is asked from a variety of angles, the personal and the social. Many people simply consider Buddhism in terms of its personal import for their daily lives. There is nothing wrong with this, but it does not tell the whole story of the significance and potentiality of Buddhism. On the personal level we may discover a means to gain peace of mind or relaxation through some sort of meditative practice. Others may go deeper, seeking personal transformation and an understanding of life more consonant with their intellectual and religious development. While the personal dimension is, perhaps, the most important, it has the danger of being simply a self-centered means of enhancing one's life, like gazing on one's own navel or perhaps like Narcissus, looking at himself in the mirror of water. It can become isolated from the sufferings and problems of contemporary people. It reflects the tendency to regard religion as simply a private or subjective matter, yielding mere self-satisfaction or some personal happiness.

However, Buddhism also possesses a social orientation or concern for others which becomes evident in its history. Theravada from early times has taught the principle of interdependence and metta (lovingkindness) which seeks happiness for all beings. Similarly with Theravada, Mahayana Buddhism also clearly teaches the principle of interdependence where our happiness also depends on the welfare of others. It focused this central ideal in the bodhisattva who refuses enlightenment until all other beings share it with him.

It has been a common criticism of Christians to Buddhism that it is weak in social awareness and concern. However, without going into a detailed review of the historical background of this problem, we can point out that Buddhism has generally existed under despotic regimes for centuries throughout Asia. In those countries religious freedom to develop the social implications of the teaching did not exist. Nevertheless, throughout its history wherever possible, Buddhism has been concerned for the welfare of people. In addition we should note that social concern in Christianity has historically been a fairly recent development, which we cannot go into here.

In scriptural texts, the record of the last days of the Buddha (Mahaparinibbana-sutta, below p. 128) describes the conditions necessary for the maintenance of a society. There are also legends of the Buddha's intervening and giving advice, appealing to their sense of values. Historically, the earliest and most notable instance was King Asoka (3rd century B.C.E.) who converted to Buddhism and attempted to implant Buddhist ideals in his country through putting edicts on stone pillars throughout the land. (See quotations below pp. 131-135.) Buddhism transformed the warlike people of Tibet into a peaceful people with more monasteries than military garrisons. In China Buddhism functioned within the society in a variety of ways. Monks established welfare facilities such as the Inexhaustible Treasury, supported by donations from followers. The money was used for repairing temples, aiding the poor and sick. While carrying on various economic activities such as grain mills and oil presses, the monasteries also provided hostels for the safety of travelers. Hsin-hsing (7th C.) taught that all beings had Buddha-nature and were, therefore, all essentially equal. Temple lands were cultivated through people who became Temple slaves or serfs because of unfortunate life conditions. Some were criminals who

were freed if they went to work for the temple. Others were unemployed people or orphans.

Though the term slave is used, the person had certain rights and privileges.

In Japan similar activities were carried on. Generally, Buddhism had a benign effect on society, providing services for people which the government did not offer. Outstanding monks devoted themselves to the good of the people. As example, the monk Gyogi Bosatsu (7th C.) traveled about the country, building bridges, wells, hostels, dams, irrigation systems to help the people. In the Heian period, the monk Kukai (774-835), the founder of the Shingon-sect, is well-known for building a lake for water control and for founding a public school for poor children. Saicho (767-822), the founder of the Tendai sect in Japan maintained that people who had the mind of the Way, i.e. those who practiced Buddhism were a nation's treasure. Buddhism was to serve the welfare of the nation.

However, Buddhist egalitarianism in China and Japan could pose a problem to hierarchical, authoritarian governments. It had to be restrained and controlled. Contact with the masses was limited. Laws governing monasteries were enacted, though the Order was supported for magical purposes. An example is the Three Stage Doctrine of Hsin-hsing, mentioned above. In his teaching he revered all beings and criticized government as inadequate to purify society or religion which had become corrupted in the last age (mappo). It was proscribed as subversive. There was also the teaching of the White Lotus Society and the descending Maitreya cult. These movements were involved with uprisings against the Mongols in the 14th century. The very popular Laughing Buddha is said to be Maitreya in one of his various guises as a source of good fortune. However, the descending Maitreya is thought to come back to rectify the wrongs in the world.

In the history of Shin Buddhism, during the time of Rennyō, his followers, inspired by their faith, rose up in peasant uprisings to throw off the bondage of the warlords and the religious institutions that supported them. Shin Buddhism freed them from the fear of superstitions.

In modern times Buddhism has often been criticized for being in collusion with the ruling power structures and the aristocratic class which was a source of considerable wealth for the temples. However, there have been Buddhist movements which have attempted to serve the people such as in modern India where Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar in 1956 worked to uplift the Dalits or untouchable class. The effort was based on the Buddhist teaching of equality which stresses moral character rather than birth as the basis of human value. At the time of the struggle for Indian independence, as a lawyer Dr. Ambedkar became the leader of the Untouchables who he named Dalits which means “oppressed.” He was himself an Untouchable but through talent and hard work rose to the top of the Indian legal profession. He was an architect of the Indian constitution. After Independence in 1949, he authored the laws on the illegality of Untouchability. Nevertheless, as we know from African-American experience, it is easier to make laws than to get rid of prejudice and its effects on the oppressed people. In 1956 Ambedkar decided that the only way for the ex-Untouchables to be truly free was to leave Hinduism and the caste system altogether and to follow principles which asserted the humanity of all and offered ways in which the community could truly transform itself. He led a mass-conversion ceremony in which several hundred thousands of his followers turned to Buddhism. Ambedkar died soon after. The work has continued through the efforts of the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order. Its activities include centers, retreat centers and social work projects in five Indian states, and involves thousands of people.

In early modern Japan there were Buddhist social movements, though these were later suppressed. During the Meiji era (1852-1912) of 45 years, the government sent students over the world to learn modern knowledge in all fields. All forms of social, economic, and political institutions were established such as post-offices, railroads, shipping, income tax, parliament and constitution. Untouchability was abolished in law, as well as wearing swords, the top knot and practices of revenge. Women were encouraged to get education. Christianity was introduced. Compulsory education was established to raise the level of literacy. However, despite modernization, the Meiji authorities maintained "immanent theocracy" developed during Tokugawa which combined a modern secular state and a quasi-divine paternal and authoritarian nation.

Education was to promote the imperial way based on the family concept of nation. A new elite of intellectuals appeared. Among them were Fukuzawa Yukichi, founder of Keio University, Mori Arinori, a Shin Buddhist. They reacted against traditional values and the ideology of the regime. Their motto was *risshishusse* which means to establish the self and gain success. The Meiji government had a similar ideal for the society in its motto of *fukokukyohei* which means a prosperous country and a strong army.

While the Meiji government was somewhat liberal in the beginning, it became more conservative and bureaucratic. Nationalism arose based on the myth of the divinity of the Emperor, which transformed into a mission to extend the imperial way beyond Japan. It is within this background of great stress and change in the transition to a modern nation that modern religion developed in Japan.

With the emergence of state-supported Shinto and the effort to separate it from Buddhism, there were severe reactions to Buddhism called *haibutsukishaku* which means to destroy Buddha

and throw down Sakyamuni. In Toyama in 1870, 1730 temples were reduced to seven. Many were destroyed. Priests were returned to laity and lost their privileges. The *yamabushi* (mountain ascetics) were prohibited. These reactions were due to the strong support of Buddhism by Tokugawa and its corruption.

There were several changes in approach to religious policy as time went on, because of conflicts among the leaders. In 1889 the Meiji constitution was promulgated. In it religious freedom was guaranteed so long as it was in harmony with public duty. There was to be no religious instruction in schools, but moral education could be given.

With respect to Buddhism, it had been virtually the state religion before Meiji and had been supported by the ruling classes. With the reaction against Buddhism in early Meiji, there was also some resistance among Buddhists. In Echizen which was a strong Shin area, people bearing banners with the name *Namu-Amida-butsu* came to the prefectural offices, demanding that the officials not permit Christianity or western learning in the schools. Rather, Buddhism was to be promoted. The revolt was strong enough to require troops to put it down.

Some priests also sought the reform of Buddhism. Many priests also supported the separation of church and state. Scholarship began to develop. Shimaji Mokurai (d.1911) went to the west and to India. He was a member of Nishi Hongwanji, while Nanjo Bunyu (d. 1927), a member of Higashi Hongwanji, studied Sanskrit with Max Mueller in London. The Taisho canon was published in 100 volumes and printed in 1932. This effort in scholarship was led by Takakusu Junjiro (d. 1945). Kiyozawa Manshi (d. 1903) combined Hegelian philosophy and Amida devotion, trying to revive Buddhism philosophically.

However, Buddhist institutions played into the hands of the nationalists in attacking Christianity. Inouye Enryo (d.1919), a Shin Buddhist, criticized the irrationality of Christianity and

stressed the rationality of Buddhism. Otani Kozui, an abbot of Nishi Honganji, was commended by the Emperor for his work in lifting the morale of troops in the Russo-Japanese war (1904-1905).

Against the background of the more official developments, there emerged a variety of lay movements. Some opposed Christianity and westernization. Others tried to deal with modernization. In 1899 the *Shin Bukkyo Doshikai* (Fellowship of Neo-Buddhists) rejected superstition and was anti-clerical. It opposed government interference in religion and promoted learning and morality.

Some Buddhist movements in modern Japan had their origin in Shin Buddhism, as well as Nichiren Buddhism. Those of the Shin background are *Muga no Ai* or selfless love. Others were *Ittoen* (garden of one light), *Shinbukkyo Undo* (neo-Buddhist movement) and *Seishinshugi* (spiritualism [not occult] of Kiyozawa Manshi and the *Hanseikai* in Nishi Hongwanji).

Muga no Ai derives from Higashi Hongwanji and was initiated by Ito Shoshin (1876-1963), while he was studying in the research department of Shinshu University (Otani University). He rejected a future for himself, secluding himself in a Dainichido (hall dedicated to *Dainichi Nyorai*) as a beggar. He experienced selfless love and began to publish a magazine Selfless Love in 1905. He taught that the conviction of selfless love is not something we believe in because we are Buddhist, Christian or Confucian. Rather, it is because it is the absolute truth. Though truth is hard to define, we call it selfless love. It is the true nature of the universe which acts with selfless love. Each thing entrusts its destiny completely to the love of the other. It devotes all its power to the love of the other. Ito had not realized the true nature of the universe and self and therefore was passionate with self attachment and hatred. With this awakening, he reached the sphere of absolute peace.

He renounced his priestly position and announced that *Muga no Ai* was beyond sectarianism. He criticized the sect teaching that Buddha nature must be selfless, but the sect was

completely self-powered and self-attached. It is heathenish, according to him, that we do not see the light of the Buddha. Others contributed to his paper, supporting his view.

There are several special points in Ito's view:

(1) We can become freed from self attachment and recognize the consciousness of love as the center of the universe.

(2) We must remove the barriers between ourselves and those about us. We love and are loved.

(3) The individual is central and when freed from self-attachment does not hold to any "ism" apart from the self.

(4) Human liberation is beyond imperialism, capitalism, militarism, political authority and wealth.

Ito created a center called the Garden of Selfless Love, as well as establishing branches. He had about 100 followers over the country. They were poor and wealthy, educated and uneducated, living in a communal fashion, but economically independent. At its peak his magazine had 4000 subscribers. Living selflessly was more important than propagating the teaching.

Two prominent themes appear in the journal. They were socialism and peace. Ito was not himself a socialist, and he took an anti-war stance in the Russo-Japanese war.

The Garden of One Light was begun by Nishida Tenko who has been compared to Tolstoy, Gandhi and even St. Francis. While his group is not strictly considered a Buddhist group he studied Zen and drew on Buddhist themes such as Light (*komyo*), non-dualism, a formless garden of bliss, gratitude (*hoon*), and palms together greeting (*gassho*).

His teachings stressed communal living, critique of capitalism, the life of repentance, emphasis on gratitude and service. Nishida was an example of his own teaching giving up everything to work for others. He and his followers engaged in the dirtiest work, cleaning street, public latrines. He never asked for money but trusted in the Light to take care of him.

The Neo-Buddhist movement was born from seeds sown by Furukawa Take in 1899. The name of the group underwent several changes. It met in a unitarian church, but its radical theories led to the suppression of its publication and symbolized the death of freedom of thought. It continued as a club but it diminished with the loss of its publication.

There were five major points:

- (1) The basic principle was to have sound Buddhist faith.
- (2) They must work to propagate sound belief and work for the reform of society.
- (3) They advocated free investigation of Buddhism and other religions.
- (4) They did not regard the preservation of the old religious system and its rituals as necessary.
- (5) They completely rejected political protection and interference in religion.

With respect to the Buddhist establishment it opposed conservative Buddhism and Kiyozawa's spiritualism. They regarded it a sentimental, subjective and world-denying. They were especially opposed to Kiyozawa. In addition, they tried to liberate Buddhism from political authority, and though not completely opposing war, they did take a stand in that direction. They had a close relation to socialism, though it was not a socialist movement. They collected money to help people injured in mines and had a pro-labor outlook. They criticized police persecution and violation of human rights in disputes over the constitution. They took stands on public issues and advocated the abolition of prostitution, as well as opposing drinking and smoking. [This summary is based on materials from Nihon Bukkyoshi, Akamatsu and Kasahara, Shinshushi Gaisetsu and Kitagawa, Religion in Japanese History.]

We might also call attention to the work of Baroness Takeko Kujo of the Nishi Honganji. (1887-1928) She was the daughter of Koson Otani, Abbot Myonyo of the Nishi Hongwanji. She

married Baron Yoshimasa Kujo, a son of a very noted Kyoto family. She had been raised in traditional fashion, studying with private tutors within the temple confines.

However, despite her rather isolated existence, the Russo-Japanese war in 1905 thrust her into patriotic activity and led to the formation of Buddhist Women's organizations. Though the women of Japan at the time were constrained by traditional conceptions and obligations, Takeko and her sister-in-law Kazuko, the wife of the succeeding Abbot Kyonyo (Kozui), determined to overcome the apathy of women and engage in social activities where she demonstrated considerable organizational and leadership skills. She encouraged the soldiers as they went to the front, providing many kinds of supplies, medical and personal. During the last years of her life she devoted herself to social welfare work in the slums of Tokyo. She established the Rokkaen orphanage. (Hanayama Shoyu, ed. Understanding Japanese Buddhism. (Tokyo: 12th WFB Confab Japan Committee, Japan Buddhist Federation, 1978.) p. 27) She has also been especially remembered for her work in the 1923 earthquake in building the Asoka hospital. (noted in Kenneth Tanaka. Ocean: An Introduction to Jodo-Shinshu Buddhism. (Berkeley: Wisdom Ocean Press, 1997.) p. 208. See also Kengi Hamada. The Life of Baroness Takeko Kujo. (Honolulu: Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, 1962.) pp.26.)

Shin Buddhism in modern history presents us with a variety of developments in the area of organization, doctrine, social relations and responses to changing social conditions. It is a complex evolution, but constantly responding to its environment.

In postwar Japan there have been numerous groups that stress world peace such as the Soka Gakkai, Risshokoseikai and Nipponzan Myohoji. An issue engaged by some Buddhists has been the discrimination against the outcast group usually referred to as *burakumin* or village people. Particularly the Shin Buddhist sect has been active in this area. A study group *Kaiho*

Shinshu Kenkyukai critiques Shin and Buddhist tradition in order to purify it of discriminatory implications. Since the war Shin Buddhists have strenuously opposed the re-establishment of the Yasukuni Shrine as a national patriotic memorial, because it was a symbol of the military ethos of modern Japan. They have also strongly opposed the changing of the war clause of the constitution, imposed by the American occupation forces. It prevents the re-arming of Japan. Japanese generally have naturally been opposed to nuclear arms, being the only country to have suffered from them. There are now concerns for ecology and a slowly developing women's movement. In addition, there are also scholarly efforts to critique the social perspective of traditional Buddhism such as the Critical Buddhism with the Soto Zen sect and the studies of wartime theology within the Shinshu sect.

In South Asia Buddhism readily became a vehicle for nationalism among the newly independent nations after the war. However social movements have emerged to help village people improve their lives and realize a more democratic way of life inspired by Buddhism. Among these movements is Sarvodaya in Sri Lanka, *Sarva* means embracing everything and *udaya* means the awakening of all. It aims at-the "Awakening of All." "This movement began as an educational experience in the mid-1950's, when a group of high school teachers in Columbo decided to translate their convictions into action. They organized "shramadana" camps in which groups of students from relatively affluent urban homes gave up their vacations to share their resources, especially their time, thoughts and efforts, and work in the country's most backward and outcaste villages, whether Sinhala, Tamil, or Muslim. They went wherever they were invited." By 1967 there were 100 villages involved By 1974 there were 1,000 villages involved. By 1983 there were 6,000 villages involved with two million persons involved. By 1994 there were 10,000 out of total of 23,000 villages involved with nearly four million persons.

Dr. Ariyaratne, the founder, formulated a Five stage development model:

1. Introduce and encourage functional leadership and community spirit through Shramadana camps.
2. Form functional groups and training programs according to the needs of individuals--- Mothers, Youth, Elders, Children.
3. Groups prioritize needs, discuss and launch projects. Economic and employment opportunities increase.
4. Income generating activities help to bring a more self-financing community as the social programs continue.
5. Self-financing continues and surplus is shared with other communities.

Mr. Sulak Sivaraksha in Thailand has attempted to bring reforms and an establishment of democracy based on Buddhism at great personal cost and suffering. "He holds that the error of western technocratic notions of development is that they measure development by quantity or aggregate growth...." He also believes that "Asian people need to 'develop an awareness of their conditions and the strength to strive towards meaningful participation...in their own process of change.'" Aung San Suu Kyi who has frequently been in the news in Myanmar (Burma) has worked tirelessly to restore democracy there and to liberate her people nonviolently from a repressive military regime. She won representation in the parliament but has been prevented from taking her place.

The Dalai Lama of Tibet has been struggling for the freedom of his people employing the teachings of Buddhism. His teaching stresses that political transformation must be based on the spiritual transformation of the person, through meditative practice and spiritual growth. He does not restrict his view to Buddhism, but appeals to all faiths. Ven. Thich Nhat Hanh, a Vietnamese monk, has been very influential in advocating a Buddhist path to conflict resolution also based on personal transformation through the path of Mindfulness. Transformation embraces the other, not as an enemy, but as a way of seeing into the depth of one's own ego and passions. Compassion must always be extended to the opponent in recognition of our common humanity.

There have also been organizations started locally and in the West such as the Buddhist Peace fellowship. This movement began in the late '60s in Hawai'ian response to the Vietnam war and was headed by Robert Aitken Roshi. It was organized in 1978. In 1968, Buddhist poet Gary Snyder wrote a challenging piece called "Buddhism and the Coming Revolution." An excerpt states:

Institutional Buddhism has been conspicuously ready to accept or ignore the inequalities and tyrannies of whatever political system it found itself under. This can be death to Buddhism, because it is death to any meaningful function of compassion. Wisdom without compassion feels no pain.

He also stated:

The mercy of the West has been social revolution; the mercy of the East has been individual insight into the basic self/void. We need both. They are both contained in the traditional three aspects of the Dharma path: wisdom (prajna), meditation (dhyana), and morality (sila). Wisdom is intuitive knowledge of the mind of love and clarity that lies beneath one's ego-driven anxieties and aggressions. Meditation is going into the mind to see this for yourself --over and over again, until it becomes the mind you live in. Morality is bringing it back out in the way you live, through personal example and responsible action, ultimately toward the true community (sangha) of "all beings."

The movement continues today and is centered in Berkeley, California with a branch in Hawaii and throughout the United States. It has been particularly inspired by the Dalai Lama and Thich Nhat Hanh, continuing its efforts for peace but now embracing ecological and women's issues.

Sakyadhita: International Association of Buddhist Women organization was established in Bodhgaya in 1987. There is a local branch in Hawai'i. The movement is committed to the ideal of positive human development and to promote the spiritual and social welfare of the world's women. Its ideals include the creation of a communication network among Buddhist women; to

promote understanding among different Buddhist traditions; to encourage and educate women as teachers of the Dharma and to assist those desiring ordination; to conduct research in Buddhist texts related to monastic discipline and women's issues; and finally to promote world peace through practice of the Buddha's teachings.

The Hawaii Association of International Buddhists originated in 1992 as a means of bringing unity out of the diversity of Buddhist traditions in Hawai'i. It emphasizes harmony, cooperative and educational programs to promote spiritual and humanitarian goals, grounded on Buddhist values such as lovingkindness (*metta*), compassion (*karuna*), sympathetic joy (*mudita*) and equanimity (*upekha*). It has held numerous seminars on current issues affecting the local Hawai'i and American society generally.

Recently Project Dana was begun at the Moiliili Hongwanji Temple. The term *Dana* means selfless giving, based on the first of the six spiritual perfections of Mahayana Buddhism. It began in 1989 as a caregivers' program to assist the home-bound, and various forms of disabled or aged people. It is now flourishing with numerous sites in Hawai'i and on the mainland, enlisting volunteer members. The Project is ecumenical and serves people without regard to race, religion or other social categories. It also cooperates with other service organizations.

We may also call attention to the establishment of the Pacific Buddhist Academy by the Honpa (Nishi) Hongwanji temples. It is unusual in making Peace its major focus for activity.

Behind these movements and efforts lie the basic teaching of Four Noble Truths, and the Eightfold Path, as well as the six spiritual perfections of the Mahayana tradition. The principles are given a more up to date and contemporary application. In addition, the Mahayana Buddhist ideal of interdependence and the bodhisattva, as well as other images and symbols such as the

famous, ancient, though legendary, lay person, Vimalakirti, inspire people with the ideal of service.

However, pre-modern religion, whatever the tradition, cannot give direct answers to specific issues that confront us. What is needed is an understanding of the spirit of the faith and the attitudes it engenders towards others and their problems. The principles of love, compassion, lovingkindness and mercy found in the great traditions provide a basis for working together to solve problems. However, in our contemporary situation, national, cultural, institutional traditions and other factors have prevented religion from having a clearly benign effect. We can see this in the area of organ transplant where one obstacle may be religious belief.

It is the Buddhist perspective that a spiritual transformation of the person is necessary for social transformation. The principle of one by one transformation may appear statistically impossible. However, modern history has indicated that ideologies, social engineering, top-down directives, authoritarian or dictatorial or even secular democratic efforts do not lead to final solutions, but perhaps at most provide band-aids for problems. The problem is that as long as the self-other dichotomy remains at the base of our thinking, we can only seek to control, and manipulate others. Buddhism urges a more non-dichotomous approach of working **with** rather than **on** someone.

Realism requires us to acknowledge that there is no one final solution on the human level to our complex problems. Through the reduction of our own egoistic goals and designs brought about through spiritual cultivation, we may make a more positive, mutual, interactive approach to issues over time.

In any case Buddhism is not lacking in the basis for a meaningful social perspective and effort. In the Western context, Buddhist leaders are becoming more alert, thoughtful and

participant in searching for solutions. Buddhist participation in society at many levels can provide a broader perspective for modern people.

Unit Four The Doctrinal Basis for a Buddhist Approach to Society

In this unit we will take up the textual and doctrinal basis of Engaged Buddhism. It is important to survey the scriptural and textual resources, as well the doctrinal, in order to maintain a consistency between our spiritual principles, ideals and the activity we carry out in society. Buddhism has often been criticized for a lack of social awareness. Its inward, spiritual focus seems to many to ignore the affairs of the outer world. I have read a recent book Einstein and His God, which discusses the religious views of the scientist Albert Einstein. In his references to Buddhism, he describes it as world denying and pessimistic. A similar view was promoted by the famous sociologist Max Weber. This view of Buddhism has been long standing, being held also by Dr. Albert Schweitzer. The view became widespread through Dr. Schweitzer's popularity. It reflects the materials that were current in the scholarly world of that time in the early part of this century before World War II. During that period in Academia the Pali texts and Theravadin monastic perspective were dominant.

There is much in Buddhist history that would confirm this view since Buddhist monks have left home, that is, they have renounced ordinary society to begin a quest for their enlightenment. In Japanese they are called *Shukke*, the homeless ones. When ancient writers proclaimed that monks do not bow before kings etc. it is because they have given up those areas of obligation and responsibility. The monkhood and monastic life is an alternative society, engaged, as it were, in pursuing enlightenment. These prominent western writers did not know

the whole of Buddhist tradition nor did they have first-hand observation. They also neglected the Mahayana tradition of the bodhisattva and East Asian Buddhism.

However, when we canvass the texts and understand Buddhist principles, there is a basis for social concern which advocates of Engaged Buddhism today employ in working out their approaches to problems. For our study, I have assembled a variety of texts which illustrate Buddhist social concern. I have drawn from Theravada and Mahayana sources, ancient and modern. I will be referring to this body of material during my lectures.

First of all there are instances where the Buddha himself expresses social concern. Strikingly, in the Mahaparinibbana-sutta (See quotation below, pp. 128-130) of the Pali tradition, Gautama gives advice concerning a healthy society and its prospects of survival. This advice was offered on the eve of his passing away into nirvana. There is another famous instance where Buddha intervened in a dispute over water and prevented a king from attacking his enemy. (See below quotation pp. 130-131). The key statement is the Buddha's observation that "If I refrain from going to them, these men will destroy each other. It is clearly my duty to go to them...." Though Buddhists may seek their own enlightenment apart from society, they have a duty to assist where possible to avoid or alleviate suffering. The Buddha compared the worth of human life to the worth of the material possessions that the kings sought. While the poem following contrasts the spiritual freedom of the monk, the story indicates that there is still a responsibility to seek the welfare of others. If the Buddha had not been there to oppose their violent action, blood would have been shed. Jataka or stories of Buddha's previous lives offer many instances of the bodhisattva's sacrifice on behalf of others.

The Appanaka Sutta (See below quotation p. 120) indicates that there was recognition that rulers may torment and threaten their people, even while practising austere spiritual practice.

The contrast to this is one who practices the middle path, neither tormenting himself or his people. There are numerous passages where the duties of a king are set forth. A summary of the ideal king is presented in the Maha-Sudassana Sutta (See below quotation, p. 120) which describes how the king provides for the needs of his people. He "gave food for the hungry, drink for the thirsty, raiment for the naked, means of conveyance for those who needed it, couches for the tired, wives for those who wanted wives, gold for the poor and money for those who were in want." That is, the king provides for the needs of those who suffer in society. In Quotation, pp. 122-123 there is a comprehensive list of the Ten Duties of the King. Number 3, perhaps, summarizes the basic duty of a king "sacrificing everything for the good of the people (*pariccaga*), he must be prepared to give up all personal comfort, name and fame, and even his life in the interest of the people...." The eighth is also very important in the view of Buddhism that the king should follow the principle of non-violence "which means that he should harm nobody (*sic*), but also that he should try to promote peace by avoiding and preventing war, and everything which involves violence and destruction of life." Despite its being a monarchy which is usually associated with despotism, there is a democratic nuance in Buddhism which indicates that the king "should not oppose the will of the people, should not obstruct any measures that are conducive to the welfare of the people..."

However, some of the complexity in seeking the welfare of the people is indicated in the Cakkavatti-Sihanada Suttanta. (See quotation, p. 127) Here the king sets out to do good for his people and create an ideal society. Due to his leniency, crime actually increased. Consequently, he became more brutal in his punishment, but violence continued and human life declined. Confronted with the downward spiral of violence, the people got together and decided to do good. Then the society improved and life lengthened. The passage suggests that simply doing

good does not change people, Rather, the overall society requires a certain morality in order to exist and people must agree to fulfill those principles. There seems to be the idea of a social contract underlying this story.

Many texts promote non-violence or ahimsa for which Buddhism is noted. Most outstanding are the admonitions of the famous text Dhammapada (The Path of Righeousness or Words of Truth). "Hatred is never appeased by hatred in this world; it is appeased by love. This is an eternal Law." (#5) "All tremble at weapons; all fear death. Comparing others with oneself, one should not slay, nor cause to slay." (#129) (Walpole Rahula. What the Buddha Taught.)

Buddha also gave advice to lay people in several *Sutta*. The most well-known are the advice to Sigala and the Mangala Sutta. The Sigala Sutta takes up the relation of ministers and masters toward their servants and employees. Like the ruler, they are to treat them fairly and tend to their needs. There is a humanism and humaneness involved here that regards others with dignity. People are "assigned work according to their capacity and strength." They are not only given food and medicine and wages, but also time off and gifts. (See quotation, p. 126) The Kutadanta Sutta (See quotation, pp.127-128) explains the basis of good order in a country. It indicates that excessive punishments (law and order) are not the solution, but rather proper encouragement for the development of life will bring social peace.

Later the famous Buddhist King Asoka erected a series of pillars around his country to promote Buddhist morality. Also Prince Shotoku in Japan in the 7th century in his Seventeen Point Constitution commends reverence for the three treasures as a means of securing the moral well-being of the nation. (See quotation, pp. 141-144)

Asoka comments on ceremony and ritual. He observes that formal rituals are of little significance, but the kind that result in good consequences include "right treatment towards slaves and servants, reverence towards teachers, restraint from injury to living creatures and charity towards (Buddhist) ascetics and Brahmanas..." (See quotation, p. 134) These ceremonies have a lasting effectiveness and quality that ordinary rituals do not.

Rock Edict XIII (See quotation, pp. 135-136) gives an account of Asoka's renunciation of conquest and violence. He was remorseful of the harm he had brought on others. The king urged amnesty to enemies: "For, (the king), the Beloved of the Gods, wishes to all beings freedom from injury (i.e. security), self control, proper behaviour (or mental tranquillity) and gentleness (or joyousness, *rabhasa*). In the opinion of (the king), the Beloved of the Gods, the chiefest conquest is the *Dharma-vidhya* (i.e. the victory of the Law of piety). In Pillar Edict IV (See quotation, p. 136), we see Asoka's counsel to his representatives throughout the kingdom. They are to act for the welfare and happiness of the people in fulfilling their duties. He urged uniformity in law and opportunity for review of criminal cases involving the death sentence in an effort to save their lives.

Prince Shotoku was inspired by both Buddhism and Confucianism. In Article II he recognizes the spiritual influence of Buddhism as the basis of social morality. (Quotations, p. 22). His advice on governing appeals to the highest ideals and leaders should be model for the behavior of the citizens. Article V indicates response to the complaints of the ordinary citizen. Part of this section was quoted by Shinran to the effect that when the rich man goes to court it is like throwing a stone in to water, while when the poor person goes to court it is like throwing water into a stone. Article X indicates the humaneness and realism of the Prince. We must accept

differences and encourage mutuality. In article XV, the official is urged to act for the public good and not for private interest. In XVII government is by consultation and discussion.

While these are not all direct principles of Buddhism, they carry forward the attitude we have seen in Asoka's Edicts and the spirit of Buddhism. The Prince was assisted in his studies by Buddhist monks. (See Aston, Nihongi, XXII, pp. 122-123). One monk taught Shotoku Buddhism, while another taught him the Chinese Classics. Later two priests came and taught Buddhism and were regarded as "the mainstay of the Three Precious Things." Other monks brought the current sciences and arts of the day.

Turning to the Mahayana tradition, we have already discussed the Bodhisattva Dharmakara and his dedication to the spiritual liberation of all beings. The Bodhisattva ideal has been eloquently expressed in quotation, pp. 137-138. This passage may be understood to deal with both physical and spiritual well-being. It is generally understood that one cannot secure spiritual liberation without also attending to the material and physical well being of people.

Some Mahayana texts such as the Nirvana Sutra teach that force may be needed to vanquish evil. In such instances the monk takes off his robe and takes up the sword. The teacher Asanga (See below quotation, pp. 139-141) taught that it may be necessary to kill an evil king in order to save the people from greater suffering. "Accordingly the bodhisattva, if he has the capability, acts with a thought of mercy or the intention of doing benefit to overthrow kings or high officials from the power of ruling the dominion, stationed in which they spread great demerit by being generally violent and pitiless toward sentient beings and engaged in absolutist oppression of others." Whatever our attitude toward violence, and invoking the principle that the end justifies the means, such texts indicate that the monk, the Buddhist, cannot simply be indifferent to the sufferings of people.

Honen, Shinran's teacher, gave a sharp social analysis when he defended the teaching of the Primal Vow of Amida. He shows that, in his time, the means of salvation had been chiefly monopolized by those with money or various skills and abilities. In the face of these advantages, the ordinary person had little hope of gaining enlightenment. (See below quotation, p. 144)

A concrete illustration of Buddhist compassion in action can be found in the story of Eisai (1146-1215), a Rinzai Zen monk. A very poor person came to Eisai's temple seeking food for his starving family. Eisai wondered what to do and finally hit on selling the metal for the halo of a *Yakushi* image. This is the Bodhisattva of Healing. When Eisai was criticized by the other monks, he responded that even the Buddha would give his own body to save starving people. He said he was willing to go to hell to save the people from starvation. (See below quotation pp. 144-145)

We can see by these few indications from Buddhist tradition that there is a sufficient basis for Buddhists to develop a positive approach to society, working for social and economic justice, while remaining true to Buddhist principles. In addition to the texts and stories, there are several principles in Buddhism which can be applied socially. Among these are the general concept of existence, the five precepts all involve social relations, headed by non-injury, non-violence. The eightfold path has clear social implications and has often been interpreted as a system of ethics. The doctrines of interdependence and common karma establish the nature of the relation we have with all beings. The principles of non-soul and non-ego and the practices to encourage their experiential realization also have significant social implication.

Briefly Buddhism views the nature of human existence as a dynamic process. This process is seen through a succession of lives and is portrayed in the Twelve Link Chain of Dependent Co-Origination. Arranged in a circle, which continually revolves, the various

elements making of the person are set out. These are the five *skhanda* or basic elements constituting a sentient being. They are comprised by form, and mental aspects as sense organs, feelings, perception, mental-volitional functions, and consciousness. Through the interaction of these elements in the world, there is craving, then becoming-or thirst for life, birth, old age and death and ignorance. This process of one aspect bringing forth another creates the succession of lives in transmigration. The point of this analysis is that it is through our process of perception and passion, involved in ignorance and delusion, that creates our world of suffering, what we create for ourselves and for others. In effect, the Buddhist analysis of existence implies a social dimension, because our awareness of this process and the effort to transcend it through meditation etc. would bring about the betterment of the world. The progress we make toward enlightenment involves in itself the concern for the welfare of all beings.

Within this context, as a first step, Buddhism taught the five precepts for lay people, all of which involve human relations. These include no killing, no stealing, no adultery (illicit sex), no lying, no intoxication. These are principles in common with many lists of social principles, such as the ten commandments of the Bible.

The Eightfold Path also has social significance and has been viewed as an ethical system. The eight are right understanding or views, thought, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, concentration. According to Walpole Rahula, the eight may be organized in three topics of sila-discipline-morality, samadhi-mental discipline and panna (prajna)-wisdom. Three categories of the path are distinctly ethical, right speech, right action, and right livelihood.

The initial right views may be understood to reject prejudice and stereotypes; it requires understanding a situation correctly. Right speech means to communicate effectively with others in truth. Right livelihood is understood to avoid occupations which injure others in some way.

Right mindfulness means to be aware and motivated by Buddhist principles and insight.

Buddhist selflessness means not to be obstructive to other people's welfare, while Right concentration means to be focused and balanced through nurturing one's spiritual life. It means to develop inner awareness as the foundation for outer participation.

The essential point in all of these principles is to create social harmony and avoid violence and injury to others. Rahula states: " It should be realized that the Buddhist ethical and moral conduct aims at promoting a happy and harmonious life both for the individual and for society. This moral conduct is considered as the indispensable foundation for all higher spiritual attainments...." (Walpole Rahula. What the Buddha Taught. P. 47.)

The four Infinite Abodes or Sublime states (*Brahma-vihara*) are fundamental principles underlying Buddhist spirituality. They include *metta*, which is translated as lovingkindness and shows a concern for the welfare of others; It can be interpreted to seek justice, since we cannot have love for others and be friends if we do not wish justice and fairness for them. It is compassion (*karuna*) for others who are suffering. Sympathetic joy (*mudita*) refers to rejoicing for the good of others and counters our greed and envy. Equanimity (*upekkha*) means to have peace within oneself so that one can be and bring peace to others in all the difficulties of life. (Rahula. P. 75)

The principle of interdependence, illustrated in the wheel image, is a central concept of Buddhism and underlies the principle of non-ego. Buddhism makes a point that there is no fixed entity as a self. The point of this is to liberate people from their static understanding of the self and its isolation from others. Rather, Buddhism understands that our very selves and lives are created from the interaction of many factors. It means that we are all involved with others and thereby we have responsibility to ourselves, as well as others, to seek their welfare. This

principle is widely talked about in reference to our ecological dilemmas, though Buddhism has understood this principle for centuries.

We must remember, however, that Buddha did not have an abstract concept of society or the understanding of social forces that has developed in modern times. Originally karma was generally seen as an individual matter whereby each person suffers for his or her own action. However, there is a concept of common karma which can be interpreted in a social context. While each of us has our own karmic heritage, all people see the world and things in it in common. Our common experiences indicate that in our karmic histories we have intersected and find ourselves in a common world.

Since, in this theory, we can influence our future karma through what we do now, it means that we can also along with others influence the common karmic world that we will perceive and participate in the future. In effect there is a social karma that we are creating through our present actions. There is a social karma, largely unrecognized, that has brought us to our present as well. There is an ancient saying: “The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge.”

Today with our understanding of social forces, these concepts may appear somewhat simplistic. Increasingly Buddhist scholars recognize that there is a social karma that intertwines with our individual karma. We cannot simply blame a person's state of affairs on that person alone, appealing to individual karma. It is blaming the victim which cannot be accepted. Rather, we now understand that as in raising a child, it takes a village. We see that the character of the whole society contributes to a person's situation. While we may not have direct responsibility for what our ancestors did or did not do, we live with the results of those actions. From a Buddhist

point of view, when we understand this process, we become responsible to create a more positive future.

Through the passages which I have gathered and the principles that are fundamental to Buddhism, we can develop a Buddhist approach to society that is consistent with the spirit and teachings of Buddhism from its earliest history. That is not to say that Buddhists have always fulfilled their ideals or that the ideals can simply be translated into specific policies and political decisions. There are complex problems, but Buddhism can make a contribution in arousing awareness and affirming basic human values of fairness and justice which would assist in the solution of problems.

Unit Five A Contemporary Approach: Thich Nhat Hanh, Robert Thurman, Ken Jones

In our previous -units we have attempted to provide a background for the application of Buddhism to social issues within our own time. We have looked at historical and doctrinal aspects of the relationship of Buddhism and society. In this unit, I want to bring to your attention the work of some individuals who have been wrestling with these issues in our contemporary context. We will look at some of the principles advanced by Ven. Thich Nhat Hanh, Ken Jones and Robert Thurman.

Ven. Thich Nhat Hanh is especially well-known because of his activity during the Vietnam war and his many lectures around the United States. He has also been a prolific writer with more than 66 books. In these texts he presents his combination of spirituality, grounded in Zen meditation, and social practice focused on the Five Precepts. Recently Robert Thurman has published an eloquent and articulate book called Inner Revolution based on Tibetan history and Buddhist teaching with recommendations for Buddhist involvement in the social and political process. Ken Jones has authored a book entitled The Social Face of Buddhism in which he explores many aspects of Buddhist participation in social process. I will review the perspectives of these teachers as resources for the consideration of Engaged Shin Buddhism.

Thich Nhat Hanh was born in 1926, becoming a monk as a teenager. He came to the attention of people opposing the Vietnam war through his writings and struggles along with other monks to bring about reconciliation between the opposing forces, based on Buddhist teaching. He eventually founded a School of Youth for Social Service, Van Hanh Buddhist University and

the Tiep Hien Order. Because of his middle path Buddhist position, he was exiled from his country and settled in France where he writes and leads a community at Plum Village, dedicated to meditation and social action. He was nominated for the Nobel peace award by Dr. Martin Luther King. He coined the term Engaged Buddhism as it has become widely known today.

The Tiep Hien Order is also called the Order of Interbeing. It is based on the Zen tradition of *Lin-chi (Rinzai)* from China. According to Thich Nhat Hanh, it is a form of engaged Buddhism in daily life. It is not something just for a retreat center or a demonstration against some political situation. He defines the terms: Tiep means 'to be in touch.' The notion of engaged Buddhism already appears in the word tiep." (Being Peace, pp. 85-86). The term Hien means 'the present time.' It has the meaning also "to make real, to manifest, realization." It is a movement in the present time which is in touch with the world, making real the principles of Buddhism. Interbeing is a term he has created to represent the teaching of the Avatamsaka Sutra (Kegon) which is a major philosophical tradition in Mahayana Buddhism. According to this teaching, all things are mutually, interpenetrating, interpermeating, related and existing. It is the most comprehensive Mahayana understanding of Interdependence. This has become the basis for his Order of Interbeing which he calls his community.

Thich Nhat Hanh's approach is spiritually based. That is, his engaged Buddhism does not begin with a political position to which he then applies Buddhism. Rather, through Buddhism and its practice, he attempts to establish a foundation for the resolution of our various problems in society. The principle of compassion requires that the welfare of all participants in the issue be considered. He begins by seeking the transformation of the self of the practitioner before moving to the issue. He writes: "Engaged Buddhism does not only mean to use Buddhism to solve social and political problems, protesting against the bombs, and protesting against social justice. First

of all we have to bring Buddhism into our daily lives....." (Being Peace, p. 52.) For him engaged Buddhism is not a form of Buddhism different from Buddhism itself. Rather "engaged Buddhism is just Buddhism. If you practice Buddhism in your family, in society, it is engaged Buddhism." (Kenneth Kraft. Inner Peace, World Peace. (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press,1992.) p. 18.)

He writes: "Therefore we have to see the real truth, the real situation. Our daily lives, the way we drink, what we eat, has to do with the world's political situation. Meditation is to see deeply into things, to see how we can change, how we can transform our situation. To transform our situation is to transform our minds. To transform our minds is to transform our situation, because the situation is mind and mind is situation. Awakening is important. The nature of the bombs, the nature of injustice, the nature of the weapons and the nature of our own beings are the same. This is the real meaning of engaged Buddhism." (Being Peace, p. 74.)

As a consequence of his perspective, many of Thich Nhat Hanh's books teach meditation discipline as something which one does within a community, a Sangha, but may also do privately. It is the practice of mindfulness and awareness. Mindfulness is described as the energy of meditation; it is the awareness that looks deeply into the self and the object of meditation. He indicates the foundation of all the precepts of Buddhism is mindfulness (For a Future to be Possible, p. 8.) We may get a sense of mindfulness, when we consider how mindlessly we do some things. It is being aware, being here and being there. For Thich Nhat Hanh, "Meditation is not an escape from society. Meditation is to equip oneself with the capacity to reintegrate into society....." (Being Peace, p. 48.) "Meditation is a way of helping us stay in society." (Being Peace, p. 498.)

In the volume The Blooming of the Lotus, Thich Nhat Hanh teaches in detail a series of meditation exercises which involve breathing, mental exercises and sitting. He recognizes that a person may not always be near a community of meditators and so it may be done privately.

The aim of meditation is to "heal and transform", ourselves as well as others. In this process, we come to know ourselves and the world in which we are living more deeply. According to him, meditation brings freedom from ideology, the entanglement with words. He goes deeper than just non-violence. As he points out "With a gun in hand, a person can kill one, five, or even ten people. But holding onto a doctrine or a system of thought can kill tens of thousands of people." (Thundering Silence, p. 38.) This is a point worth pondering since we live in an age of information and propaganda, demagogues and pundits. He interprets the Buddhist precept not to kill as "breaking the bonds of attachment to ideology. He presents all of the five Buddhist precepts, not only in their traditional meanings, but more broadly in terms of their meaning for modern society. Thus when speaking of the second precept not to steal, he relates it to all forms of exploitation, social injustice and oppression. The way to fulfill the second precept is not merely negative abstention, but through giving material resources, technology or what is required to help people get on their feet.

Through the principle of Interbeing which is the principle of the oneness and interrelation of all things, Thich Nhat Hanh indicates that the five precepts are all essentially one which is the practice of lovingkindness and compassion in the various contexts of life. He describes them as the art of living and the basis of faith and confidence. They are the foundation of society. (For a Future to be Possible, p. 224.)

From his teaching on meditation, mediation and reconciliation Thich Nhat Hanh has developed fourteen precepts which if followed would go far to resolve modern conflicts between individuals and groups. (See below quotation, pp. 146-147)

1. Do not be idolatrous about or bound to any doctrine, theory or ideology, even a Buddhist one.
2. Do not think the knowledge you presently possess is changeless absolute truth.
3. Do not force others to adopt your views, whether by authority, threat, money, propaganda, or even education.
4. Do not avoid contact with suffering or close your eyes to suffering.
5. Do not accumulate wealth while millions remain hungry.
6. Do not maintain anger or hatred.
7. Do not lose yourself in distraction, inwardly or outwardly.
8. Do not utter words that can create discord or cause your community to split apart.
9. Do not say untruthful things for the sake of personal advantage or to impress people.
10. Do not use the Buddhist community for personal gain or profit, or transform your community into a political party.
11. Do not live with a vocation that is harmful to humans or nature.
12. Do not kill. Do not let others kill.
13. Possess nothing that should belong to others.
14. Do not mistreat your body. (Kenneth Kraft. Inner Peace, World Peace. (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992.) p. 20. From InterBeing, pp pp. 27-57, excerpted.)

Based on the experience of Buddhist monasteries, he enumerates seven principles for reconciliation of disputes. These are:

- 1.) Face to Face Sitting: a context of mindful sitting, breathing and smiling
- 2.) Remembrance: recall the incidents creating the conflict.
- 3.) Non-stubbornness: everyone must be willing to be reconciled.
- 4.) Covering Mud with Straw: an image from the country- covering mud with straw to make it safe to walk, indicates efforts to calm feelings and anger and get participants to look at themselves.
- 5.) Voluntary Confession: each person tells their own shortcomings
- 6.) Decision by Consensus: each agrees to accept the verdict of the community
- 7.) Accepting the Verdict by the community concerning the individuals' actions.

It is the practice of arbitration within the Buddhist context based on the principle of compassion and self-reflection. (Thich Nhat Hanh. *Being Peace*. (Berkeley, Ca.: Parallax Press, 1987.) pp. 74-79.)

We can note that Thich Nhat Hanh has not given directions for resolving specific social and political issues. He sets the stage for all parties to look at themselves, at the issues and the people and world affected by those issues or the stands taken. It may appear idealistic. Given our national and global situation it may seem impossible. However, we must consider that the means that have been used so far, while often staving off disaster, have not provided a stable and ongoing assurance that violence can be completely avoided. He also locates the center of responsibility within ourselves and not merely out there in the world. His popularity derives from the fact that from his own difficult experiences he brings a hopeful and positive attitude to frustrating and intractable contemporary issues of our time.

For Shin Buddhism, we may say that, while we do not employ or advocate the systematic form of meditation of Zen Buddhism and Thich Nhat Hanh and an aspect of Shin doctrine, the self-reflection encouraged by Shinran and reflection on the Nembutsu, focusing on the meaning of Amida Buddha, move in the same direction.

Amida Buddha is the symbol for the Interbeing which Thich Nhat Hanh sees as the basis of Buddhism, the interdependence and oneness of all beings. Amida Buddha's Vows are stated in such a way that they express the interdependence of all beings in the process of enlightenment.

Thich Nhat Hanh's process of meditation and reflection can be used, in our Shin path as a means to deepen our self-reflection. Shin adds the factor of our vivid recognition of our own passion-ridden nature as human being and our own complicities in the evils that afflict the world.

We will now briefly review Robert Thurman's [Inner Revolution: Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Real Happiness](#) which was just published this year. This text focuses on the impact of Buddhism on Tibetan culture and life and its significance in the personal and political realm.

He begins his considerations by noting that a "pure land" is the environment created by a fully enlightened being so that as many others as possible have the potential for developing into fully enlightened beings." (p. 25.) This was the aim of Buddha. He goes further, stating: "The Buddha's enlightenment movement sought from the beginning to take power from the ruling bodies and return it to the individual. The Buddha found that inner freedom--from our negative emotions and obsessive self concern--is the essential precondition for goodness and social liberty. (pp. 29-30.) "Enlightenment education provides a critique of authoritarian ideas that frees the individual from unquestioning obedience...."(p. 30.)

Based on this perspective, Thurman traces the history of Tibet in its transformation from a militaristic dynasty to a country where the number of monasteries outnumbered military garrisons. He views Tibet as "a laboratory for the enlightenment movement to create its model society, to evolve into an actual manifestation of a Buddha's pure universe, a "buddhaverse." (p. 32.) He declares: "Tibet is the prime example of a sustained attempt by an entire people to create a society, culture, and civilization that cherish the individual's pursuit of enlightenment over the needs of society." (p. 33.)

He contrasts Tibet and the West as two forms of modernity, an inner and an outer. In Tibet the secular became sacred, while in the West the sacred collapsed into the secular. Tibet flourished for 300 years, while the West has become more and more unstable with many problems. He notes that "In the United States we live in the first country on earth with founding documents that formally guarantee the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Yet we are miserable..." (p. 67.) We cannot say that this is a happy society.

The major principle of Buddhist teachings and practice is to get free from the belief in an "intrinsically solid self." From this liberation, arouses compassion for all life and myself. We are enabled to realize our relatedness to all things. Enlightenment then is an evolution toward this goal

which has its impact on society. The Buddha's achievement "was to shift the ethos from collectivism to individualism; to redefine the highest good as transcendent liberation., not mundane success. " (p. 97.) The means to do this was the formation of a monastic system as an alternative society which was open to women and low-caste people and ex-slaves. "The monastic community stood as an unmistakable reminder that society exists to serve the individual." (p. 97.)

The basis for social involvement is stated succinctly: "If we are free politically but not free of our unhappiness, how much liberty do we really have? If we make the effort to understand what life, liberty, and happiness are in the context of the work of enlightenment, then we can become real participants in the politics that aims for those goals." (p. 91.) Hence, the foundation of political life is a spiritual understanding. Through what he calls the "inner revolution" one "connects himself and therefore others to a transcendent reality that puts the demands of relative reality into the context of transcendence." (p. 93.) This revolution "transforms the outlook and behavior of many individuals and thereby slowly transforms a society....It educates people to think critically, to enter that realm of nonconformity that has always been the sources of change. When people have transformed their minds, they will naturally and coolly act to transform the society and eventually the polity."

We have already called attention to the Edicts of Asoka. Thurman observes five principles for what he calls the politics of enlightenment in those edicts. They are: transcendental individualism; non-violence; educational evolutionism; social altruism; universal democratism. Though Asoka's enlightened rule did not succeed him, his principles have provided an ideal throughout Asia.

The connection between the spiritual and the political lies in the effort to develop an altruism "that goes beyond good works to the desire to take responsibility for ending the suffering of other beings." (p. 141.) The way to this is through study and the practice of meditation which cultivates a mind of joyous altruism. This involves contentment and tolerance, displacing prejudices and pride. He

outlines seven steps of meditation of Asanga (fourth century). These include: "(1) the recognition of all beings as having been one's mother; (2). remembering their kindnesses; (3). grateful resolve to repay their kindnesses; (4). Great love that wills their happiness; (5). great compassion that wills their freedom from suffering; (6) universal responsibility that resolves to save them all; and (7) the resulting soul of enlightenment, which fuses together the first six in the determination to join the buddhas in working for the good of all beings." (p. 151.)

As a result of such meditation, one comes to understand that we have more power without anger and are more effectively aggressive without hatred. Thurman calls it "cool heroism." (p. 173.) "When we become cool, we don't project enmity onto others; we can observe them more objectively, and if they are in fact out to cause trouble, we can quickly act to avoid it." (p. 177.) We give up retaliation and competition which nourish hatred.

The aim of such practices is to bring about self-transformation. Thurman illustrates this goal through stories of great Tantric adepts in the Tibetan tradition in which savage deities were transformed to servants of the Dharma. He stresses that we can also become great adepts, true individuals, agents of compassion as we constantly create our world through our own visions and the courage to realize them. (p. 215.) We can also transform our culture by studying "the culture like an anthropologist and then fit in with that world picture, fulfill its ideals, and in some sense align with its myths. But the messianic adept cannot just fit in. He or she also must transform the culture, graft the new enlightenment-oriented shoots onto the old traditions." (p. 216)

In his view of Buddhism, Thurman distinguishes three modes: the monastic-Theravadin, the messianic--Mahayana, and the apocalyptic--Vajrayana-Tibetan. In order to integrate these three approaches, he focuses on the necessity for a teacher through whom one rapidly attains realization of the goal. Tibet became a lama- centered society developing a distinctive social system designed for people

to "cultivate the soul through education, purification, and realization." (p. 236). Comparing the Tibetan transformation to the generally contemporaneous European developments, materialism, industrialism, and militarism became the central pursuits in a secularized culture. Tibet sacralized life and individual spiritual progress was the major concern with monasticism becoming the primary institution. (pp. 245-247.) These are the outer and the inner modernities which now confront us as a challenge to integrate.

Thurman stresses optimism based on the Dalai Lama's view of the changes that have taken place in this century. He sees that there has been a shift from military to peaceful means of resolving disputes; more reliance on the individual than on institutions; recognition that materialism and technology are not omnipotent, recognition of the fragility of the eco-system. These areas of change have stimulated the love of peace, freedom, a greater unity of the spirit and the material and focus on ecological relationships. (pp. 271-279.)

Thurman's combination of historical insight and the interpretation of Buddhism provide the basis for his working axioms which could implement an inner revolution and the formation of a politics of enlightenment. (Quotations, summarized, pp. 28-31.) These axioms reflect his discussion in the volume and focus on the achievement of the Tibetan tradition. Following the axioms, Thurman suggests a ten point platform for an enlightened political system, grounded in the five principles of the politics of enlightenment (See below quotation, summary, pp. 147-150)

These materials offer a basis for our own reflections on the approach to society we may make as Buddhists. Thurman is in harmony with Thich Nhat Han in stressing the spiritual basis for any involvement in society and politics. We have to come to terms with our own egos, prejudices and delusions. He points to a process of meditation and spiritual discipline as the means for this transformation. With Thich Nhat Hanh he sees that the foundation is compassion and love which reaches

out to all. The principle Interbeing is indicated in transcending non-dualities through spiritual transformation.

Perhaps more concretely, Thurman links his approach to the historical experience of Tibet and the model of the Dalai Lama. He has a broader historical, cultural and political perspective than appears in Thich Nhat Hanh, though they probably would not disagree on fundamentals. Individuals must be transformed but ultimately the society and culture must be transformed.

As Shin Buddhists, we might observe, along with Shinran, that self-powered efforts to do good never by themselves completely fulfill their goal. We aspire toward ideals and work to those ends, but always recognizing that our limited understanding and persistent ego attachments prevent us from fully realizing our goals. The transformation we must experience is the deep awareness of our own passions and attachments.

As Shin Buddhists we may have some reservation concerning the exaltation of the teacher that appears in Thurman's writing. Shinran said that he had no disciples and essentially gave freedom to his followers. Rennyō, however, points to the importance of the teacher in the process of the arising of trust in the Vow of Amida (*shinjin*). The good friend is important in Buddhism for the personal element. There must be some connection or means by which the teaching comes to us and is clarified. However, contemporary religion has witnessed the misuse of religious authority by masters and gurus. Consequently, devotion to a teacher must be carefully constrained.

In any case, Thurman presents us with a visionary potential for Buddhism in modern society. His presentation helps us think more practically concerning the role of Buddhism within a political context, while maintaining spiritual orientation.

Our third text is Ken Jones. The Social Face of Buddhism: An Approach to Political and Social Activism. The orientation of the book is given by the Dalai Lama who states: "While the main emphasis

of the Buddha's teaching is on inner development, that is no reason for Buddhists not to participate in the society in which they live. We are all dependent on others and so responsible to others." (p. 9.) Bhikku Tiradhammo of England defines a Buddhist activist: "A Buddhist social activist then is someone who is living Wisdom and Compassion in a social context; learning to share selfless spiritual treasures with all beings." (p. 16.) Ken Jones has been active in interfaith work, and prison chaplaincy. He leads workshops and retreats, and has written pamphlets and articles on engaged Buddhism. His book covers a wide area including an analysis of modern society, Buddhist training and lifestyle, the justification of Buddhist activism, Buddhist thought and movements in Asian countries, textual bases for activism, and consideration of the issues of violence, peacemaking and conflict resolution. As with the previous writers, the book concludes with the need for personal transformation.

With respect to the issue of violence, Jones indicates that "the task of Buddhist meditative practice (is) to expose for each of us the roots of coerciveness and violence within ourselves and of Buddhist activism and social psychology to point to the dynamic mutual reinforcement of this largely unconscious ill will and the social conditions which are intimately sustained by it." (p. 295.) He makes an important observation: "We are not living now in the comparatively simple societies in which the great world religions were conceived. Personal help and example are still essential and may be all we can give, but they will fall short of fully effectively helping... Again, it is the Buddhist recognition of the power of conditioning--including social conditioning-- that points up the importance of a radical and transformative social activism." (pp. 295-296.) The alternative of creative non-violence espoused by the author does not demonize the opponent, but attempts to raise the consciousness of the adversary, to encourage a search for alternatives. It does not seek a victory but a transformation. He outlines the six principles which include research into the issue, negotiation and arbitration, education and publicity,

making a case to the adversary, preparation for creative non-violent action through meditation etc; escalation from the use of constitutional means to the use of non-cooperation and civil disobedience.

In the area of conflict resolution, the author notes there is a considerable literature dealing with the methods to resolve conflicts. Buddhists can benefit from the best of them, while also employing Buddhist insight such as that given by Dogen: "When you try to say something to someone he may not accept it, but do not try to make him understand it rationally. Don't argue with him; just listen to his objections, until he himself finds something wrong with them." (p. 314.) The ideal would be to get to the point when people can work together on a problem rather than fighting about it. (p. 315.)

The section on Buddhist social values is useful for our reflection. They are harmonious with democratic and egalitarian values, but also go beyond capitalist and communist values. (p. 325.) 1.) Each and every person is real; 2.) the pluralism of equality in diversity, 3.) self transcendence and social service, 4.) self reliance and a human scale of things, 5.) sufficiency and simplicity. These values or principles deal with the dehumanizing character of modern culture; its tendency to reduce diversity in the name of equality; promoting self-discovery and increasing concern for others; increasing personal autonomy by encouraging decentralization of bureaucratic government and transnational corporations; and finally "reducing the depletion of natural resources and waste products." Simple living would emphasize more *being* rather than *having*. In effect, a real consideration of the social implications of Buddhist teaching would have considerable impact socially and politically, if these principles were put into practice even to a small degree. However, it is also to be noted that "the Good Society cannot be created by means which contradict the end. That society can be established through cooperation with other traditions which are moving in the same direction such as the Quakers, the Fellowship of Reconciliation and Catholic Peace and Justice.

The three texts we have surveyed can be integrated into an overall perspective. Thich Nhat Hanh focuses on the meditation practice as the foundation for inner revolution. Thurman presents a vision of synthesis of the inner-modern society which gives primacy to spiritual values and cultivation and the outer-modern which tends to the material needs of life. It unites religion and science and a politics which encourages the spiritual development of the person. Ken Jones offers insight into more practical ways to approach the goal of a society influenced by the enlightenment principles of Buddhism. Thich Nhat Hanh presents the engine; Thurman the rudder; Jones prow of the ship of engaged Buddhism.

Unit Six Shin Buddhism and Society: Historical and Doctrinal Background

Pure land teaching has been involved with society in one form or another over the centuries. We have already called attention to the story of Bodhisattva Dharmakara, who gave up his throne in order to seek a spiritual way to construct an ideal world. This is a judgment on politics as the means to human fulfillment. Politics are like band-aids to a final cure (enlightenment) for a disease. Chinese rulers understood this judgment on the secular realm and thought at first to prohibit the teaching. It was avoided when scholars pointed out that if people bow to the Buddha they will bow to the king, that is, they would accept authority. Religion conditions people to accept authority.

As we have noted in our earlier discussions, Buddhists were actively engaged in society throughout the history of Japanese Buddhism. Monks participated in the development of Japanese governmental organization. It is little known, but Japanese culture and political organization were developed by the work of Korean monks who transmitted cultural artifacts such as art, architecture, metal working and political organization to Japan. They created the early legal codes that were the basis for centralizing government. They worked with Prince Shotoku (7th C.) in establishing the Japanese state. (W.G. Aston, trans. Nihongi:Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697. (Rutland Vt.: Charles E. Tuttle & Co, 1972.) II, pp. 122, 123, 126, 140.)

The symbolism of Buddhism was used to encourage and express the unity of the Yamato tribes, culminating in the construction of Todaiji and the great Buddha. That structure which remains today expressed the unity of the Japanese concretely based in the Kegon philosophy.

The emperor Shomu established the provincial temple system for the welfare and spiritual protection of the state. Several Sutras were chanted magically as nation-protecting Sutras. The best known is the Lotus Sutra. Various monks such as Dosho and Gyogi (668-748) traveled about the country engaged in social work. Saicho (767-822), the founder of the Tendai sect in Japan, aimed to train monks who would be national treasures and assure the spiritual well-being of the country. Shingon ritual was used to avoid or overcome disasters.

In the Kamakura period the Rinzai monk Eisai (1146-1215) wrote a text On the Protection of the Country Through Zen Practice (Kozengokokuron). Nichiren claimed that he was the pillar of the country, the ship of Japan. National leaders should follow his teaching.

In the Pure Land tradition, Honen made a critical statement on society when he outlined the universality of the Primal Vow of Amida. The Buddhist establishment of his day recognized the threat that his movement posed to their dominance, because Buddhist institutions such as Kofukuji in Nara and Mount Hiei (which also served the state) were rendered irrelevant. People could gain deliverance directly through the recitation of the nembutsu and did not need the elaborate and expensive services of the temples. In the Kofukuji appeal to the government Honen's group was charged as subversive because it broke up the communality of Japan by creating a new sect without government permission and singling out one teaching as the true way. He was accused of ridiculing the gods who were the spiritual basis for the security of society by advocating sole reliance on Amida Buddha. (See James Dobbins. Jodo Shinshu: Shin Buddhism in Medieval Japan. (Bloomington In.: Indiana University Press, 1989.) Pp. 14-15.)

Shinran followed Honen and created the *dobo-dogyo* community of equal companions in the Dharma. He made his own statement of non-discrimination within the context of faith. His teaching is without class distinction. He wrote:

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 of religious practices is of no concern. It is a matter of neither practice nor good acts, neither sudden attainment nor gradual attainment, neither meditative practice nor non-meditative practice, neither right contemplation nor wrong contemplation, neither thought or no-thought, neither daily life nor the moment of death, neither once-calling nor many-calling. It is simply shinjin that is inconceivable, inexplicable and indescribable. It is like the medicine that eradicates all poisons. The medicine of the Tathagata's Vow destroys the poisons of our wisdom and foolishness. (Collected Works of Shinran, Kyogyoshinsho, II, Faith Volume, p. 107.) (See below quotation p. 157)

Concerning the exile of Honen and his chief followers, Shinran criticised the government from the Emperor down for their lack of due process and fairness.

Reflecting within myself, I see that in the various teachings of the Path of Sages, practice and enlightenment died out long ago, and that the true essence of the Pure Land way is the path to realization now vital and flourishing.

Monks of Sakyamuni's tradition in the various temples, however, lack clear insight into the teaching and are ignorant of the distinction between true and provisional; and scholars of the Confucian academies in the capital are confused about practices and wholly unable to differentiate right and wrong paths. Thus, scholar-monks of Kofukuji presented a petition to the retired emperor in the first part of the second month, 1207.

The emperor and his ministers, acting against the dharma and violating human rectitude, became enraged and embittered. As a result, Master Genku--the eminent founder who had enabled the true essence of the Pure Land way to spread vigorously [in Japan]-and a number of his followers, without receiving any deliberation of their [alleged] crimes, were summarily sentenced to death or were dispossessed of their monkhood, given [secular] names, and consigned to distant banishment. I was among the latter. Hence, I am now neither a monk nor one in worldly life. For this reason, I have taken the term Toku ["stubble-haired"] as my name. Master Genku and his disciples, being banished to the provinces in different directions, passed a period of five years [in exile].

On the seventeenth day of the eleventh month, 1211, during the reign of the emperor Sado-no-in, Genku received an imperial pardon and returned to Kyoto. Thereafter, he lived in the capital, at Otani, north of Toribeno in the western foothills of Higashiyama. In 1212, during the midday hour of the twenty-fifth day of the first month, he passed away. The auspicious signs [that occurred then], too

numerous to record here, may be found in his biography. (Kyogyoshinsho: Chapter on Transformed Buddha-Bodies and Lands. Collected Works of Shinran, p. 289. See below quotations, p. 150)

He showed his awareness of injustice in society when he quoted Prince Shotoku's Constitution which declares that when the rich go to court it is like throwing a stone into water-- very smooth and easy. However, when the poor go into court, it is like throwing water into a stone. Difficult and impenetrable. (Shotoku Constitution Article V, Collected Works of Shinran. #75, p.446; Shinshu Shogyo Zensho, II, p. 540 #75.) He criticized the authorities who persecuted the Pure Land followers as the eyeless and earless people prophesied in the last age of *Mappo*. (Collected Works of Shinran. "A Collection of Letters," #4, pp. 563-564; #5 p.566.) He severely castigated the Buddhist Order for its pagan ways and degradation of the meaning of being a monk. (Collected Works of Shinran. "Gutoku's Hymns of Lament and Reflection," pp. 421-424.) According to Shinran, Buddhism had lost its true spirit and meaning of bringing enlightenment for all when it came to serve worldly interests.

However, Shinran also had a positive view that his followers should be good citizens and that they should pray for their enemies, the well-being of the country and the peace of the world. (Collected Works of Shinran. "A Collection of Letters," #2, p. 560; #8, p.570.) The context of Shinran's letter to Shoshin, a leading disciple, was the court suit in Kamakura based on complaints about the Pure Land followers. Shin people were also included. Apparently there were also uprisings associated with these events. The suit was thrown out and Shoshin and Shin Buddhists were exonerated. Shinran rejoiced at Shoshin's success in defending Shin Buddhism. He wrote:

Your general defense, as you have written of it in your letter, has been well thought out. I am very pleased. In the final analysis, it would be splendid if all people who say the nembutsu, not just yourself, do so not with thoughts of themselves, but for the sake of the imperial court and for the sake of the people of the country. Those who feel uncertain of

birth should say the nembutsu aspiring first for their own birth. Those who feel that their own birth is completely settled should, mindful of the Buddha's benevolence, hold the nembutsu in their hearts and say it to respond in gratitude to that benevolence with the wish, "May there be peace in the world, and may the Buddha's teaching spread.!" (Collected Works of Shinran, "A Collection of Letters," p. 560)

In the course of Shin history, the relationship of faith to society was formulated in the teaching of two truths, the absolute and conventional (*shinzokunitai*) which we will discuss more in detail later in our next lecture. This concept was first developed by the philosopher Nagarjuna as a philosophical teaching for understanding reality and experience. Later it was applied to society by Saicho in the Tendai tradition in the Mappotomyoki which Shinran quoted in the Kyogyoshinsho. It was later taken up in Shin Buddhism by Kakunyo, the third Abbot in Shin Buddhism, and his son Zonkaku as they promoted the institutionalization and social acceptance of Shin Buddhism.

The doctrine received significant emphasis with Rennyō when he struggled with his followers who were rising up in peasant revolts to overthrow the exploitation of the Daimyō warlords in what are known as the *Ikko-Ikki*. He used it to restrain his followers when they refused to pay taxes and sometimes resorted to violence in throwing off the dominance of the Warlords.

Shin followers were successful in Kaga prefecture where they set up a virtual Shinshū kingdom which lasted for almost a century. In the 16th century, Nobunaga tried to gain dominance over all of Japan. The Hongwanji, , was an obstacle in his path to unify and control Japan, since they allied often with other warlords. After destroying Mount Hiei in 1571, Nobunaga took 11 years to defeat the Shin forces at Ishiyama temple in Osaka. Rennyō had strategically placed and fortified it. Later defenders also made great use of firearms. (G.B. Sansom. A History of Japan 1334-1615. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961.) pp. 273-

290.) Finally, Tokugawa Ieyasu took advantage of a dynastic succession dispute over the abbacy, which resulted from the struggle for Ishiyama, to split the power of the Honganji. The two branches became known as East and West Honganji with the Tokugawa favoring the Higashi or East branch.

Under Tokugawa domination all Buddhist groups became politically weaker and subject to the authority of the Shogunate. The Shogunate established the parish system to control and keep track of the doings of people in the towns and villages. Temples kept records of births and deaths and the travels of members. They reported to the government. The object was to prevent the spread of Christianity and Nichirenism. When the Shogunate was abolished with the restoration of Emperor Meiji in 1868, there was a reaction against Buddhism for its collaboration with the despotic Shogunate.

In previous units we discussed the efforts that were made in the modern period to revitalize Buddhism generally. Some Buddhist leaders advocated a return to precepts and serious practice. Kiyozawa Manshi, a Shin scholar, tried to reform the Higashi Hongwanji with his teaching of spirituality (*seishinshugi*). His approach was more eclectic, using ancient classics such as Epictetus, a Greek stoic philosopher, the Agamas of Southern Buddhism and the Tannisho in Shin Buddhism. He tried to encourage a deeper awareness of Shin faith, expressed in more modern western terms, in contrast to the formalism of the traditional, politically entrenched, ritualistic ecclesiastical system. (In a TV series on Tokugawa Yoshinobu, when the regent Yoshinobu went to Kyoto he stayed in the Higashi Hongwanji compound.) Social welfare activities, which we noted in earlier lectures, emerged inspired in part by Christian activity. Scholarship was also promoted to upgrade the understanding of Buddhism in society. Schools were reorganized into modern colleges and universities.

During the course of Shin History, and particularly in the Tokugawa era known for its formalism, there appeared a remarkable group of people called *Myokonin*, “Wondrously Good People.” These individuals upheld the inner spirit of Shin Buddhism and came from all walks of life. Many stories are told about them today. There is one individual, Shoma of Sanuki, who is worth mentioning in connection with the social outlook of Shin Buddhism. He represents the critical element in Shin and its awareness of social injustice. He was a person who did odd jobs. On one occasion he was working in a bath house. One day a chief magistrate came to stay at the home of the village headman.

Soon after the guest's arrival, he was ushered to the bathroom to take a bath after his long trip. As the honored guest entered the bath room he called out, "Hey, bathroom tender, come in here and scrub my back." Without any feelings of apprehension as to who the guest was, Shoma answered, "Okay, I'll come in and scrub your back." As he was scrubbing the guest's back, Shoma said, "Ah.... always eating like a rat, no wonder you're so fat. . . hey, chief magistrate, don't you ever forget to express kindness?" (Internet Document, from Shinshu Resources. translated by Rev. James Yanagihara, San Luis Obispo Buddhist Temple)

One version has it that he declared "Eating off the people you have become fat." Those who heard him were sure that he would be punished by the official since samurai could kill a person on any pretext. However, the magistrate called Shoma in and commended him for being an honest person. Shoma also expressed similar insight with respect to the formalistic and ritualistic Shin Buddhism of his time.

In a more sophisticated way, the critical spirit of Shin Buddhism was manifested in the work of Bishop Yemyo Imamura (bishop from 1899-1932) in Hawaii. He was a disciple of the renowned educator Fukuzawa Yukichi (1834-1901) who founded Keio University in Tokyo. Fukuzawa, though supporting the newly arisen Meiji absolutism, encouraged the modernization of Japan and the introduction of Western thought. He stressed freedom, equality and progress. (Ienaga Saburo, et al. eds. *Nihonshi*. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, Iwanami Kojiten, 1957.) p. 168.)

According to Fukuzawa, "Comparing the Confucianism of the East with the ideas of Western civilization, we find that two things are lacking in the East. The first is, among material things, mathematics. The second is among immaterial things, the independent spirit." (quoted in Hajime Nakamura. Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples. (Honolulu: East West Center Press, 1964. p. 576. Sansom (History of Japan. III p. 85) notes that Fukuzawa's samurai father was angered when he learned that his son was learning arithmetic. This was a way for shopkeepers.

Fukuzawa's attitude may account for the more independent path Bishop Imamura took in rooting Buddhism in Hawaii. We can observe Bishop Imamura's social interests in his support of the sugar strikes.

One can imagine that Bishop Imamura took seriously the passage from the Juseige which states: "Should I fail to save all in need (the poor and foolish), I would never attain Enlightenment." This passage is based on the Mahayana principles of compassion and interdependence. In social relations it suggests that the bodhisattva shares and uplifts the sufferings of sentient beings.

With this broad ideal in the background, Bishop Yemyo Imamura (Bishop 1900-1932) involved himself in a variety of efforts to educate and improve the welfare of the Japanese immigrants who labored on the sugar plantations. He stated that since he came to Hawai'i, "I continued in my small way to work together with my fellow immigrants on religious, educational, social welfare and other vital services." In the face of opposition to Buddhism in the mainly Christian community, he wrote essays defending the compatibility of Buddhism with democracy ("Democracy According to the Buddhist Viewpoint") and science.

Bishop Imamura's commitment to the welfare of workers was first demonstrated in 1904 when he was called in to mediate a labor dispute at the Waipahu plantation, which even the Japanese consul could not resolve. As a result of this incident and the influence of religion in

ending the strike, the planters donated land and assistance in building temples, probably aimed at coopting the members. However, these gestures did not prevent Bishop Imamura and the Hongwanji from supporting the workers' just demands in later disputes such as that in 1920.

In this difficult strike Bishop Imamura brought the weight of Hongwanji together with the Bishops of the other Buddhist denominations to the support of sugar strikers. The Bishops wrote a letter to the Hawai'i Sugar Planters Association urging them to improve wages and working conditions in response to their efforts over the years to encourage workers to be faithful and productive. They supported their demand that wages be increased from 77 cents a day to \$1.25, calling attention to the Kutadanta Sutta which states that disturbances arise when people do not have sufficient income to live contentedly. (referred to in Quotations, pp. 9-10)

Their effort was met with disinformation and charges of "alien conspiracy" and anti-americanism. The minister of the Central Union Church, Rev. Albert Palmer, recognized the justice of their complaint and tried to help, while Japanese Christian ministers urged their members not to participate. Despite recriminations, 3000 strikers marched in Honolulu, carrying a picture of Lincoln borrowed from the Soto Mission.

This incident, among the numerous labor struggles, extending from 1886 to 1939, was particularly onerous because issues of wages, ethnicity, nationality, politics and religion complicated the labor situation and were exploited by management. The suffering of the strike was further increased by the outbreak of an influenza epidemic which took 1,088 lives. Strikers who were evicted from their plantation homes took refuge in temples. Bishop Imamura and other Buddhist leaders were called ungrateful for the support temples had received from the growers, as well as censured for interfering in the strike and advising the workers. Denunciation of Buddhism

continued, alleging that it was an effort to compete with Christianity and dominate the sugar industry.

Bishop Imamura was a social activist in the broadest sense of the term, motivated by a deep desire for the well-being of all people. In his vision and achievements which extend beyond those dealing with labor disputes, we can observe the potentiality of Buddhism not only to speak a word of consolation about human destiny in the hereafter, but also in the here and now.

(references: Honpa Hongwanji Mission, A Grateful Past A Promising Future. Honolulu: 1989. 278 pp.; Hunter, Louise, Buddhism in Hawaii. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1971; Kuykendall, Ralph S. and A. Grove Day, Hawaii: A History: From Polynesian Kingdom to American State. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1948,1961. 331 pp.; Tabrah, Ruth, Hawaii, A History. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1980. 233 pp.)

In the 1920's in addition to the sugar strike, there was a serious controversy over Japanese language schools. Against the background of rising anti-Japanese feeling on the international scene, it became widely believed that there was an effort to Japanize Hawaii and that Japanese could not be americanized unless the influence of Buddhist priests was restrained.

Bishop Imamura and other Buddhist leaders, confronted by such opposition, made an effort to forestall the abolition of the schools by supporting a bill regulating the qualifications of teachers as a means to safeguard citizenship. Act 30 of the Territory of Hawaii, signed on November 24, 1920, stipulated that a teacher of a foreign language school must be knowledgeable in American history, government and its ideals, as well as speak, read and write English. Classes could only be held after public school and only for one hour a day. However criticism of, and hostility to, Buddhism continued as it grew in the islands. A committee, without Buddhist representation, moved from revising texts to changing the school system and ultimately intending to abolish the language schools. Bishop Imamura, among others, challenged the new regulations. As the issue developed, laws regulating the language schools were declared

unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court on February 21, 1927. Bishop Imamura refused, when approached by young Nisei, to prevent Buddhist schools from participating in the litigation. He maintained he was powerless to stop them in this situation. (Louise Hunter. Buddhism in Hawaii. pp. 124-149.)

In an effort to make Buddhist more understandable to the Nisei and also to offer it to non-Japanese, Bishop Imamura established the English Department in 1918. It was his belief that "true religion ought to rise above and be applicable to any country and nationality and so assimilate with every state and nation." (Hunter, p. 132.) M. T. Kirby whom he recruited to assist him turned out to be a contentious figure through his denunciations of Christianity. This office was in line with Bishop Imamura's educational and social philosophy. As Hunter describes it: ""If Buddhism were to become meaningful to Hawaii's Americans of Japanese ancestry, its priesthood would have to do more than imitate the forms and methods of Christianity." Also Buddhism would have to be taught bilingually.

While Kirby was active on Oahu, Ernest Hunt began Buddhist Sunday schools on the Big island. In 1924 Bishop Imamura ordained Hunt to the Mahayana Order with the name Shinkaku. By 1928 there were some sixty Caucasians studying Buddhism with him. From these activities there emerged the International Buddhist Institute which combined educational and social activities as part of its program.

We can see a broad range of social activities rooted in Buddhist attitudes, values and social insight. However, after the death of Bishop Imamura, the English department and the IBI was closed down. The war disrupted temple activity. From the end of the war the Japanese community and Buddhist temples had to re-establish themselves.

Bishop Imamura was intensely interested in social affairs and wrote books and essays on the American spirit and democracy. The essence of democracy for him was the freedom of religion and the right of individual conscience. He saw the contradiction between the American profession of freedom of religion and the efforts to restrict Buddhism, claiming it was un-American. He was critical of Americanism which opposed the pluralistic character of America but he attempted to bring about assimilation. However, he advocated working within the system to overcome any legal restrictions resulting from prejudice and criticism of Buddhists. He declared that Buddhists based on Americanism, "must always anticipate and predict accusations from many quarters and must strive to stand on our own convictions at all costs." (trans, Tsuneichi Takeshita. Unpublished essay by Tomeo Moriya. "The Role Played by a Disciple of Fukuzawa Yukichi in Hawaii's Japanese American Society: Yemyo Imamura's Educational Activities." p. 25.)

Imamura believed that democracy and Buddhism were harmonious since the equality supported by Buddhism is the basis of social happiness. (p. 26.) He was aware that the actions of the advocates of democracy did not always match their words. He urged that Buddhists focus their energies "to open an unhindered path toward the advance of democratic ideals." (p. 27.) He wrote: "let every person know his present and immediate duty and to fight all betraying actions performed, opposing, unknowingly or purposely, against a substantial peace." (p. 27.) According to Imamura, Buddhism transcends all ideologies such as autocracy or democracy which have no absolute value in themselves. They arise depending on conditions. However, Buddhism views the equality of all individuals from the ultimate standpoint of Buddha nature. Moriya describes Imamura's view as "a Buddhist style democracy born in American from the

democratic thought held within himself and American society as an external environment." (p. 29.)

Published in the year he died 1932 Bishop Imamura wrote an essay on "The Democratic Ideal of the Shinshu Sect," in the Hawaiian Buddhist Annual (pp. 56-57). In his essay on Democracy (Quotations, pp. 35-36.) Bishop Imamura was aware of the struggle taking place among the various ideologies of the time and their threat to peace. One statement is especially pertinent today:

One reason for this contradictory state of affairs is that the principles of democracy are being interpreted by politicians. They are not necessarily men of low ideals, but often they will sacrifice high ideals for the sake of temporal gain. What a pity that the politicians are not philosophers or men of high spiritual culture, then the grandeur, harmony and peace to be found in the ideal of democracy would not be lost sight of in the practical manifestation. This is certainly to be deplored. But perhaps this has been unavoidable in the past struggle to bring about a material civilization. In the future, however, Buddhism may help us to turn our attention from the world without and concentrate on the worlds within. Thus, to open the way for the advance of truly democratic ideals and to lay the foundation of a new civilization based on brotherhood and truth. This is the ideal which Buddhism proclaims to all the modern advocates of democracy.

What we have tried to show in this unit is that Shin Buddhism has been involved with society and important issues from the time of its inception in one form or another. Though conditions of history have limited its social involvement and the understanding of its role as a Buddhist community, conditions in our contemporary world have brought Buddhist perspectives and values to the fore and given a new opportunity for Buddhism and Buddhists to express themselves in our democratic society. A new awareness of society and its many problems has created an openness to Buddhism and other non-Christian teachings in the general society and even among Christians.

The Dalai Lama and the Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh have been able to capture the attention of people with Buddhist insight and concerns. In our own community Buddhism is finding its voice through the various programs sponsored by the ecumenical organization, the Hawaii Association of International Buddhists. However, the distinctive voice of the Hongwanji as the leading Buddhist denomination is not heard clearly in the community.

We need to discuss the appropriateness of group expression, as well as individual, concerning major issues affecting society, religion and justice. We can gain some insight from the fact that in Japan Hongwanji has seen fit to take a stand against the repeal of the War clause of the post-war Japanese constitution, the re-establishment of Yasukuni shrine, a symbol of the state Shinto and militarism as a government-supported shrine. Hongwanji also strives for the abolition of discrimination of the Burakumin, the outcaste group, and nuclear armament. Also scholars in the Hongwanjis, as well as the Soto sect, are researching and critiquing the use of the teaching in support of the war. Shin Scholars have been analysing "wartime theology." In the Soto sect it is known as Critical Buddhism.

Historically Shin Buddhists have expressed themselves in various ways. Understandably during wartime, they supported their national effort, ideologically, as well as by participation. During the Meiji period as Japan was ascending in foreign relations, Buddhist groups were more nationalistic, supporting the nation in the Sino-Japanese war (1894-1895) and the Russo-Japanese war (1904-1905). In the period leading to, and during, World War II Buddhists also understandably supported their war effort as patriotic citizens. Since the war Shin Buddhism in Japan has gained a more independent voice, addressing the community on various issues. In our context we must consider how we can effectively address the community and present our perspectives within the pluralism and freedom we enjoy. This is all the more important since

there are active forces among the Christian community working to secure the domination of Christian views over all other alternatives within the society.

Unit Seven: Toward a Pro-active Engaged Shin Buddhism: Reconsideration of the Double Truth Teaching (*Shinzoku-nitai*)

In this unit, I will focus particularly on the doctrine known as the Double Truth Theory or *shin-zoku-ni-tai*. This theory has been prominent throughout the history of Shin Buddhism and indicates the continuing concern for the relation of Shin teaching and institutions to society. We have shown earlier that Shin Buddhism, despite being considered an otherworldly teaching, has been intimately involved with society. The teaching of the two truths became particularly important within Shin Buddhism in modern times, beginning with the reign of Emperor Meiji at the end of the 19th Century. Employing imperial absolutism to advance its political goals, nationally and internationally, the government exploited religion, by directing religious devotion to the state. Shin Buddhism played a large role in this effort and the emphasis of the teachings has been affected by the nationalistic political orientation.

Other Buddhist sects in one way or another have also been involved with social affairs but Shin Buddhism is distinct from other Buddhist traditions in rejecting the monastic life as the necessary environment for realizing spiritual ideals. It also maintains that the assurance of ultimate human fulfillment, that is, attaining Buddhahood, can be received through one's experience of faith and trust in Amida Buddha's Vows in one's own heart-mind within the context of everyday life. In the experience of the one-thought moment of faith, we glimpse, even though only for a split second, the ego transcendence that is the goal of Buddhism. Such an awareness highlights our continuing egoistic, passion-ridden life, and it has implications for ethical and social relations in the secular world.

In addition, Shin Buddhist religious organization is based on a monarchical, hereditary lineage of abbots which gained a position among the aristocracy. It is a parallel to the idea of the unbroken line of the Imperial house, and the Abbots have been regarded as living Buddhas. They have been able to command a broad devotion within the sect which enabled it to mobilize great numbers of people in support of national goals.

Despite the apparently other-worldly character of traditional Shin Buddhism, the issue of religion and society has frequently been discussed throughout its history. The issue arose most clearly, as we noted previously, during the time of Honen and Shinran when some disciples violated social conventions, believing that Amida Buddha's salvation permitted them to do as they pleased in society. We call this antinomianism or "licensed evil."

We should note, however, that this is not merely a problem of Pure Land teaching. It also appears in early Christianity. The Apostle Paul declared: "God forbid that we should sin in order that grace may abound." Shinran cautioned his followers that one should not drink poison just because there is an antidote. Such people believed that salvation freed them from the constraints of society because they were sure of their salvation. (Tannisho 13)

Initially the ethical challenge to Shin Buddhism was expressed in Shinran's admonitions to respect the gods and buddhas. Later regulations to control the behavior of disciples appeared, supported by exclusion or excommunication. Rennyō ascribed these rules to Shinran. (Tannisho 13; Zen'en's rules, (in James C. Dobbins. Jodo Shinshu: Shin Buddhism in Medieval Japan. P. 67). The problem of absolute Other Power salvation in Shin Buddhism, particularly, required a theory to integrate religious faith and ethical life. This took the form of *obo-buppo* (secular dharma and Buddhist dharma) or *shin-zoku-ni-tai*.

The term *shin-zoku-ni-tai* may be translated as the two truths, supra-mundane or absolute and mundane or conventional, i.e. sacred truth and secular truth, the absolute and relative dimensions of experience. The concept began with the ancient teacher Nagarjuna (2nd century CE) when he tried to explain the nature of human knowledge and insight. With our ordinary spiritual eyes it is impossible to see the highest truth, and the highest truth cannot be contained simply in our ordinary thought. However, the absolute can be approached through conventional ideas and speech. We have to use *upaya* (S) or *hoben* (J), tactful devices, to point to the absolute truth, though we cannot capture it in our thought or speech completely. We use parables and similes or metaphors. This was an important consideration for Buddhist philosophy in showing the limitation of words and concepts to apprehend or transmit the truth. It also served to provide a basis for Buddhist discipline such as meditation as the means for transcending the world of discriminating thought. However, in the course of Buddhist history this philosophical distinction was also applied to society in defining the relation of Buddhism, as the sphere of the sacred or absolute, to the relative, secular order.

In order to put this discussion in perspective and context, I want to divert for a moment and look at the problem as it appears in Christian tradition. By this we will see that the way in which the concept was used in Japan has its counterpart elsewhere. This enables us to see these problems in a broad way as an ongoing issue of religion and society, even today.

All societies establish the position and role of religion within society. Societies that develop from tribal communities have religion as the unifying factor based on common ancestral devotion or tribal gods. With religions of salvation, the relationship becomes problematic and religious movements have to demonstrate in some fashion that they are beneficial for the society. Initially there may be opposition and persecution. New religions may appear to be a threat to the

established order. We can observe this in the persecution of Christians by Roman authorities and the opposition to Buddhism in China and early Japan.

In the New Testament this problem arose when the Jewish teachers posed a question for Jesus, asking whether it was right to give tribute to Caesar (who was regarded as a god, and thereby rejected by Jews who believed only in the One God. Jesus asked for a coin which had Caesar's image. Then he declared what belongs to Caesar give to Caesar and what belongs to God, God. He indicates a division of spheres of obligation, similar in a sense to the *shin-zoku-ni-tai*. Later the Apostle Paul declared: "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.... For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil....for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him who doeth evil...Render therefore to all their dues, tribute to who, tribute is due....(Romans 13: 1-7). From this type of thinking we developed in the West the dominance of religion over the state and later the autocratic, divine right of kings.

The relation of religion and society took various forms in the history of western societies. Augustine distinguished the City of God and the City of Man. Each had its own character. It was the ideal versus the real; the kingdom of God and the kingdom of man. In Western Europe, dominated by the Catholic Church, the Church claimed supremacy over the state, while in eastern Europe, the state was more dominant over the Orthodox churches. In Protestantism, The Anglican Church became the state religion, while the reformist Lutheran Churches in Germany and Scandinavia also became state religions, subject to the state. In America the Puritans established a theocracy with religion dominant. We have the reflections of this in the claims that this is a Christian nation and Christianity should be the main religion. However, Baptists or free churches attempted to be free from the state and developed the principle of separation of church

and state. It was Roger Williams, a Baptist, in Rhode Island who established a community based on the rights of conscience. That principle made it into our U.S. Constitution.

Judaism through the Torah and Islam through the *Shari'a* has the ideal of a world governed by God's law, so that religion and principles of society are one. In our contemporary society, it is important that we understand this background in the eastern or western context, because the problem of the relation of religion and society continues to be a major issue underlying many of our problems and has implications for our understanding of the principle of *shin-zoku-ni-tai*.

The principle of *shin-zoku-ni-tai*, as it developed in Japan and Shin Buddhism, is generally understood to involve the two major dimensions of our existence, the aspect of salvation and our social obligations and relationships. The term *shintai* or highest truth refers to the fundamental guiding principles for achieving our liberation from the stream of births and deaths and rebirth into the Pure Land or attaining Buddhahood. It concerns, faith, *nembutsu*, the principle of gratitude, rebirth and the various concepts that explain religious reality. It may also include aspects of human activity which express faith. The *zokutai* or secular area, comprises either governmental relations or the requirements and obligations of citizenship and the principles of ethics such as the five major values of Confucian morality. In more recent times the Imperial Rescript on Education promulgated in 1890 became a virtual sacred text for Japanese and defined the content of Japanese morality and nationalism in the modern period.

Imperial Rescript on Education

Know Ye, Our subjects:

Our Imperial Ancestors have founded Our Empire on a basis broad and everlasting, and have deeply and firmly implanted virtue; Our subjects ever united in loyalty and filial piety have from generation to generation illustrated the beauty thereof. This is the glory of the fundamental character of Our Empire, and herein also lies the source of Our education. Ye, Our subjects, be filial to your parents, affectionate to your brother and

sisters; as husbands and wives be harmonious, as friends true; bear yourselves in modesty and moderation; extend your benevolence to all; pursue learning and cultivate arts, and thereby develop intellectual faculties and perfect moral powers; furthermore, advance public good and promote common interests; always respect the Constitution and observe the laws; should emergency arise, offer yourselves courageously to the State; and thus guard and maintain the prosperity of Our Imperial Throne coeval with heaven and earth. So shall ye not only be Our good and faithful subjects, but render illustrious the best traditions of your forefathers.

The Way here set forth is indeed the teaching bequeathed by Our Imperial Ancestors, to be observed alike by Their Descendants and the subjects, infallible for all ages and true in all places. It is Our wish to lay it to heart in all reverence, in common with you, Our subjects, that we may attain the same virtue.

The 30th day of the 10th month of the 23rd year of Meiji.
(October 30, 1890).
[Reader, Andreasen, Stefansson]

In the case of Shin Buddhism, the two truth concept it appears first in the Mappotomyoki (Lamp for the Latter Dharma Age), attributed to Saicho, the founder of the Tendai sect in Japan in the 9th century. Saicho wrote:

The benevolent-king and the dharma-king, mutual correspondence, give guidance to beings. The supramundane truth and the mundane truth, depending on each other, cause the teaching to spread. Thus the profound writings are everywhere throughout the land, and the benevolent guidance reaches everywhere under heaven. (Collected Works of Shinran. Kyogyoshinsho, VI-1, #80. p. 244.)
(Quotations p.34.)

The concept, though never stressed by Shin, himself, was taken up in Kakunyo, the third Abbot and later frequently invoked by Rennyō. (Quotations, p. 34.) Kakunyo (1270-1351), the third abbot, gives the first definition of the issue. He exhorted the followers to store up faith inwardly, while externally observing the principles of Confucian ethic. In his text Gaijashō, he writes:

The teaching passed down to us is that we should observe benevolence, justice, propriety, wisdom and sincerity (known as "the five precepts [gokai]" in the

supramundane dharma [shusse] and as the "five virtues [gojô] in the mundane dharma [seppô]) and store within our hearts the inconceivable working of Other Power. (Rennyô's Letters, Minor L. Rogers, Ann T. Rogers, Rennyô: The Second Founder of Shin Buddhism, p.215, p. 186.)

A passage which becomes problematic for the discussion is III-12 in which

Rennyô states:

"In particular, first of all, take the laws of the state as fundamental and, giving priority to [the principles of] humanity and justice, follow the generally accepted customs; deep within yourself, maintain the settled mind of our tradition; and outwardly, conduct yourself in such a way that the transmission of the dharma you have received will not be evident to those of other sects and other schools. This distinguishes the person who fully knows our tradition's right teaching, which is true and real."

He defines nembutsu practitioners as "ones who faithfully abide by the Buddha-dharma and the laws of the state."

In the modern era, following the spirit of the Emperor's Rescript on Education promulgated in 1890, the Abbot of Nishi Hongwanji, Konyô, also issued his last letter exhorting people to devotion to the nation:

Of all those born in this imperial land, there is no one who has not received the emperor's benevolence, These days especially, labors from morning to night in his deliberations in administering the just government of the restoration, maintaining order among the many people within [the country], and standing firm against all foreign countries. Is there then anyone, priest or lay, who would not support the imperial reign and enhance its power? Moreover, as the spread of Buddha-dharma is wholly dependent on the patronage of the emperor and his ministers, how can those who trust in Buddha dharma disregard the decrees of imperial law?

On the background of these various declarations in earlier Shin Buddhism a number of theories on the relationship of the two dimensions have arisen. Shigaraki Takamaro has observed that there are five theories. These theories arose in the late Edo and Meiji periods to deal with various criticisms of Shin Buddhism. Briefly the various relationships are: (1) the sacred and secular are of one essence; (2) the sacred and secular are parallel and unrelated; (3) they are mutually related

and mutually assisting; (4) religious truth onesidedly influences the secular; and (5) the secular truth is an *upaya* (a compassionate means) in order to lead to the ultimate truth. Though each alternative has problems, the mutual relationship is generally proposed as more appropriate, meaningful or realistic. In any case, despite issues in the relations, this division of spheres can be useful for discussing religion and society. Shigaraki has critiqued all the alternatives as leading to the subservience of Buddhism to the social order. Futaba Kenko has pointed out that with the priority of the Emperor and Confucian morality in modern society, the existence of Shin Buddhism was reduced to an otherworldly teaching and whether Shin Buddhism existed or not, its deeper meaning was lost. The teachings of *shin-zoku-ni-tai* revealed the meaninglessness of Shinran's teachings for society. When we look at the teachings historically, they were very different, being based on Buddhist principles. In addition, belief in the afterlife is not as strong today as it was in former times.

Professor Takamaro Shigaraki, however, critiques all the alternatives stated above as leading to the subservience of Buddhism to the social order. They all assume Confucian morality as the basic ethical system, whereas Shinran did not regard the value system of society as ultimate or absolute. For Shinran, the world is a lie and deceptive. Thus in the Kyogyoshinsho Shinran quotes a Sutra which declares that the monk (for him, the person of faith) does not bow before the King, or to his parents nor serve the six closely related persons such as mother, father, elder, younger brothers, elder or younger sister. (Collected Works of Shinran. p. 274, #102.) Shinran's understanding of life and reality relativizes all forms of power within the world. There is only one absolute -- the compassion of Amida -- which transcends our limited human judgments of good and evil. Shinran relativizes all egoistic claims, as well as all worldly value systems. (Collected Works of Shinran. pp. 679-680.)

While we may not find specific answers to contemporary problems in Shinran's writings -- or in Buddhism as a whole, he delineates an understanding of ourselves and the world which can critique the ideologies of our time for their implications in bringing compassion and justice to people and motivate more compassionate, humane solutions to problems, personal and social in concert with others, whatever tradition, who also strive for the highest good. Minor Rogers comments concerning Shinran's thought:

The Shin Buddhism as a Japanese Buddhist tradition appears to have inherited from Shinran's teaching few resources, conceptual or other, to question, much less to resist, the demands of the state. The absolute authority of the emperor in prewar Japan may be seen as an extreme instance within this pattern. Shinran's symbols for the transcendent - Amida, Primal Vow, faith, and nembutsu -are, in theory, differentiated from the mundane and thus hold a capacity for criticism of all temporal authority, including that of the state. Instead, these religious symbols were subsumed by symbols for the national polity and imperial system. (Minor L. Rogers and Ann T. Rogers. Rennyō: The Second Founder of Shin Buddhism. (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1991.) p. 332.)

In recent years there has been much discussion among Shin scholars concerning "Wartime Doctrine." Scholars have made great efforts to show that the theory of two truths, Buddha Dharma and Royal or Imperial Dharma, distorted the true character of the ethical, as well as doctrinal meaning of Shin Buddhism. Much of the criticism of Rennyō that appeared during this time of the 500th commemoration of his death centers on his stress on the doctrine of two truths. It is an effort to develop a more critical, and perhaps activist, and socially responsible Shin Buddhism in the face of the severe problems confronting Japanese society.

As we can see from these theories, the relationships between the respective spheres may vary. However, the content of each is generally regarded as the same, being either the result of faith or the product of human reasoning. It is clear that the concept developed within an imperial and Confucian society. The discussions in recent doctrinal textbooks are carried out based simply

on the traditional terms and do not take into account the experience of modern Japanese history or envision any alternative society, such as our democratic, western society.

While the discussion of religion and social relations is useful for us, we must remember the context of Japanese society from which they emerge. Consequently, the alternatives given assume good citizenship in the prevailing society, depending on the period, and do not discuss the possibilities of proactive efforts to influence society based on one's spiritual convictions and values. While the theory of mutual dependency and mutual influence is widely held, it emphasizes the influence of the spiritual dimension on the individual in society, and does not indicate influence on society as a whole. Nor, as a mutual system, is the influence of society on religion, the possible manipulation of religion by government, indicated, though it happened in recent Japanese history. It is not suggested that the religious sphere provides any critique of the social or governmental sphere. Here we must refer to the manipulation of religion by the government and leaders of the sect to engage the commitment and devotion of the people through religious sanction. In wartime doctrine, Amida was identified with the Emperor; Yasukuni, where the spirits of military and national heroes are believed to reside has been identified with the Pure Land. The principle of selflessness was used to encourage devotion to the Emperor and country, putting aside personal ambition. One Professor Kamegawa Kyoshin stated: "The joy of religion is to be found in the life of gratitude where the self is cast away. In this crisis, what is demanded of us is to do away with our petty selves and become shields of the Emperor." (Ronald Anderson, unpublished PhD thesis Nishi Honganji and Japanese Buddhist Nationalism 1862-1945. Stanford Univ. p. 103.)

Despite the democratization of contemporary Japan, it has a background of imperial rule which still operates, as witness right wing advocates, perhaps, in the minds of older members of society and educators from that period.

Consequently, Shin Buddhists outside Japan must reinterpret the relation of religion and ethic within the context of their contemporary societies and replace the traditional content of Confucian morality and the assumptions of an imperial society in using this thought.

What must be developed among Shin Buddhists in the West is a more proactive stance as within the context of faith. We must understand that in a democratic society it is assumed that individuals and groups will strive to realize their spiritual values and ideals in society or bring them to bear on an issue. However, this effort is on a consensual basis with respect for individual rights. A truly democratic approach will reject attempts to legislate for all people irrespective of their beliefs on issues that have clear religious roots. From the side of society or the state all efforts to control religion politically or use it for political ends should be rejected. A religious basis for such an effort might be found in the Juseige which we recite in services. Here the Bodhisattva declares that he will open up the treasury of the dharma universally and always among the masses speak with a lion's voice. Further there was Shinran's experience on the road to Kanto after the exile, when he decided to recite the 3000 sections of the sutra for the sake of the salvation of all beings. However, after a while he stopped and realized that the true way to repay the benevolence of the Buddha was to share his faith with others (*jishin-kyonin-shin*). While this refers to a religious act, what it shows is that Shinran changed from dealing with people in an indirect and abstract way to one of direct contact with the people. With this motivation and the life he shared with the people, Shin Buddhism began. In our time, in whatever way possible, we must consider the actual lives of the people and how our religious

faith can enhance that life in society. We must show clearly that Shin Buddhists can contribute to society by supporting the equal treatment of all people and supporting their pursuit of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

As religious people strive to persuade others to their understanding of reality, so in social issues, religious people should make known their views in matters of legislation by showing how their view actually conduces to the well-being of society and not simply a demand to conform to their religious viewpoint.

There is, therefore, room in social debate for religious groups to express their views and take positions which result from their best insight and study. The re-conception of *shin-zoku-ni-tai* is required for Shin Buddhists to participate significantly in contemporary society.

Unit Eight: Contemporary Perspectives on Shin Buddhist Approaches to Society

Part I Shin Buddhism in Society

Our topic in this unit will be Contemporary Perspectives on Shin Buddhist Approaches to Society. There are a variety of viewpoints from which to discuss the relevance of Shin Buddhism in society. To discuss this issue I will review articles that offer some perspective for our thinking. In previous discussions we showed that Shin Buddhism through its long history has had to grapple seriously with its role in society. We have seen that the concept of *shin-zoku-ni-tai* has been useful for reflecting on this relationship and the interpretation that the spheres of spirituality and secular morality mutually influence each other has become dominant. We have also seen that in the light of earlier Shin history the concept needs to be re-interpreted to meet the needs and situation of contemporary western society. There is need for a more positive and pro-active approach by Shin Buddhists in our present democratic society.

Nevertheless, the nature of Shin Buddhist religious experience and its supporting thought has made it difficult to find an adequate mode of expression for Shin social concerns. Hee sung Keel, a Korean Christian theologian in his book, Understanding Shinran: A Dialogical Approach, sees the lack of a clear social ethic as the most pronounced weakness of Shin Buddhism. We need to give careful attention to this issue.

This difficulty is illuminated by an essay critiquing Buddhist ethics from the Shin point of View. [Stephen J. Lewis, Galen Amstutz. "Teleologized "Virtue" or Mere Religious "Character"? A Critique of Buddhist Ethics From the Shin Buddhist Point of View. (Internet: Journal of Buddhist Ethics, IV 1997. ISSN:1076-9005 (1/21/98)]

In this essay, the authors show that Buddhism generally does not harmonize well with a comparative ethic based on western and Christian understandings of ethics. However, Buddhism generally seems to accord with teleological (we may say today goal-oriented or intentional) and virtue (or character) theories insofar as good behavior conduces to the attainment of some end. Hence, Buddhist practice and monastic life would eventually bring a person to Nirvana. There is the belief in moral perfectibility.

However, according to the authors: "Several of the above issues come to a head in Jôdô Shinshû Buddhism. Its holistic rhetoric is radically non-teleological and radically non-virtuous." (p. 3) They point out that Shin shares certain feature with the Tendai and Zen Mahayana traditions along this line, but historically Shin became a mass-based movement in contrast to a monastic movement. In all these traditions, though one becomes aware of interdependence and is inspired by compassion or openness to the world, these traits or values are not defined in a specifically behavioral way. Rather, such ethics as appear are contingent on the awareness of these truths, and ethics becomes a process rather than a specific set of

requirements. Outsiders, however, have take the hesitancy to prescribe behavior in Buddhism as a hesitation to act in society.

Further, in Shin Buddhism the attainment of faith, the assurance of ultimate emancipation, is attained through an "involuntary existential leap." (p. 4) It cannot be attained by intention or rationally. The Shin Buddhist understanding of Other-Power went beyond prior traditions, removing any inconsistency to the principle of spontaneity in the process of salvation by the requirements of monastic life and practice. From Shinran's point of view there were no prior actions on the part of individuals that would promote or secure their "leap to enlightenment." (p. 5) "The existential leap was no longer even demarcated as a specific moment, but as a developing religious process outside of normal self-observation or self-consciousness. Institutional change in Buddhism was among the most important implication of these ideas." (p. 5)

As a consequence, there was no "stipulative moral rhetoric" in Shin Buddhism. Nevertheless, Shin Buddhism became "a conservative social organization and a powerful tradition of practical wisdom." Despite the apparent lack of ethical requirements, Shin Buddhists have lived moral lives in common with the general society. According to the authors, the reason for this lies in the fact that "Shinran's teachings actually raised expectations for the average member of the Buddhist community because of its anti-magical stance, its egalitarianism, and its dispersal of power." (p. 6) The context for Shin life was wider than that of a monastery and life in society required positive behavior. While Shin Buddhism set aside the traditional Buddhist ethical formulations, it acquired an empirical wisdom which was grounded in the Mahayana philosophy of emptiness, according to the authors.

Their essay indicates that Shin Buddhism possesses ethical outcomes, though there is no explicit ethical requirement involved with its understanding of salvation based on Other-Power. The authors do not refer to the historical struggles in Shin Buddhism around this point and the development of ethical theory based on the relationship of transcendent truth and worldly life (*shin-zoku-ni-tai*) which we have discussed earlier. Nevertheless, the implications of the teaching which suggest an openness to ethical orientation, that is, interdependence and compassion, historically, have been taken up by politically and socially required Confucian morality and, in modern times, by Imperial absolutism. It should be possible, however, within the framework of Shin teaching to develop an ethical and social orientation beyond acquiescence to the given social order.

An essay by Dr. Taitetsu Unno, "Shin Buddhism in the West: The Question of Authenticity," (Kenneth K. Tanaka, Eisho Naus, eds. Engaged Pure Land Buddhism: The Challenges facing Shin Buddhism in the Contemporary World. (Berkeley: WisdomOcean Press, 1998.) pp. 3-26.) considers that the problem of the relation of Shin Buddhism and society lies with the way the teachings have been interpreted in within the sect. Dr. Unno comments on the basic conservatism of the Hongwanjis, stating: "Since no fundamental change seems to be occurring in mainstream academic Shinshu-gaku (Shinshu-ology), the students who graduate from Shin seminaries and universities are unprepared to deal seriously with social and ethical issues." (p. 9) While taking into account the ethnic character of many American Christian churches, he maintains that "it does not mean that the ethnic Buddhist Church should remain as such, if it is to be historically meaningful." (p. 13) In order for Shin Buddhism to be truly authentic in American society, it must not only renew its religious elements in doctrine and ritual, but it must "develop the ethical and social implications of Shin teachings." (p. 18) Here he

takes up the challenge of excessive American individualism for Buddhism generally and Shin Buddhism, and illustrated in the tension within the Bodhisattva ideal between ascent to attain enlightenment (for oneself) and descent which is to return to the world, and work compassionately for the liberation of all beings. (p. 19)

The teachings of the Hua-yen (Kegon) Sutra offer the basis to counter the western individualistic understanding of the self. According to Dr. Unno, the Sutra teaches an organismic worldview. Here everything is relational and relations take precedence over the individual. The sense of interdependence must be achieved or realized within the person. To arrive at this realization, a religious view of life is needed. In this context, he interprets the *nembutsu* in which the *namu* is my ego-centric, blind self embraced by the compassion of Amida Buddha (*Amida Butsu*). The *nembutsu* expresses an understanding of true selfhood which gives meaning and direction to our life in the world. Our life in society is the nexus or cross-point in which the transcendent truth of reality and life becomes expressed in our historical life through our faith. Shin Buddhism can contribute and participate in American society, according to Dr. Unno, by making "even a small contribution towards fulfilling the goal of balancing 'genuine individuality and nurturing both public and private life.'" (p. 22)

In another essay "Personal Rights and Contemporary Buddhism," (Taitetsu Unno. "Personal Rights and Contemporary Buddhism," in Leroy S. Rouner. Human Rights and the World's Religions. (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988.) pp. 129-147.) Dr. Unno takes up the foundation for understanding human rights in Buddhist teaching. He notes that there was no concept of human rights in traditional Asian thought, but that should not be taken to mean that there was no concern for the welfare of others.

Going back to the earliest times of Buddhist history he contrasts Buddhism with the Hinduism in the background. Where Hinduism stressed permanence or being, Buddhism stressed impermanence; where Hinduism proposed an eternal soul-self, Buddhism held no-self, no-soul. Where Hinduism aimed at bliss, Buddhism focussed on suffering. Buddha rejected simply accepting authority and promoted the power of reasoning and analysis in contrast to revelation, tradition and authority. One must see for oneself. Further, Buddha rejected birth as the basis for the value of people and emphasized ethical life. Thus even the lowest-born person, the outcaste, could have a high value as a person. The term *Aryan* which denoted originally a group of people was transformed to mean noble in the path of achieving enlightenment.

Buddhist philosophy and practice involved a process of personal transformation to illuminate the depth of our ignorance and egoism. The ego boundaries of the self dissolve as one becomes aware that there is no fixed entity or self and positively sees that oneself is related to all other beings. As Dr. Unno points out: "What all this implies is that true appreciation for a person, other living things, or inanimate objects in nature means seeing each in its own nonobjective mode of being, from its own center and not from an anthropocentric or egocentric standpoint." (p. 137) This awareness is expressed in the *Hua-yen* (J. *Kegon*) philosophy which we noted previously. This is the foundation of the principle of interdependence and is expressed on the popular level as *okage-sama*, where we recognize the contribution of all the many unseen beings, people and factors have made our lives.

More specifically, The Pure Land teaching in Japan, represented by Honen and Shinran, transformed the understanding of religion when they declared that Amida's Vow pertained directly to those who are regarded as evil in society and rejected by the traditional sects of Buddhism. Pure Land teaching in its broadest perspective was offered to hunters, fishermen,

traders, peasants and women. Hence, Shinran declared, that "if the good person can be saved, how much more the evil person!" Religion has always exalted and praised the good person, while excoriating the evil.

With the background of Buddhist and Pure Land thought, Dr. Unno addresses the issue of personal rights. He maintains that rights must be expanded beyond the simply human and personal to include the world of nature, animate and inanimate. Here the ecological issue is implied. The expansion of rights to all aspects of human life and nature suggest also that even those groups in human society who are despised should have their rights. Within the western context where principle of human rights has become adversarial, we must be aware of the egocentrism that is hidden within the pursuit of rights. We must search for an understanding of rights that does not simply glorify self-interest. According to Dr. Unno, the introduction of the Buddhist principles of the not-self, and compassion into western discussion may balance the more adversarial approach.

Dr. Ken Tanaka explores similar issues in his essay: "Concern for Others in Pure Land Soteriological and Ethical Considerations: A Case of Jogyo daihi in Jodo Shinshu Buddhism." (Kenneth K. Tanaka, Eisho Nasu, eds. Engaged Pure Land Buddhism: The Challenges facing Shin Buddhism in the Contemporary World. (Berkeley: Wisdom Ocean Press, 1998.) pp.88-110.) In this essay he is responding to the observations of scholars concerning the failure of Shin Buddhism to attain stronger influence or inroads into American society, despite its long history here. The reason usually given is that its otherworldly character has limited its appeal. What social activism there is in Shin Buddhism is limited in scope and the average member is still socially conservative. (p. 90)

Along this line, we have Rev. Masao Kodani's essay on "The BCA Human Rights Statement." (Ryusei Takeda. Shinran and America: Problems and Future of Propagation in America. (Kyoto: Ryukoku University, 1996. pp. 254-259.) Rev. Kodani raises serious question about the statement that was given to the BCA National Council. He raises question how an organization can represent the body of diverse opinion in the group. While Buddhism "is a religion of awakening to the Truth and Oneness of Life--and Oneness does not mean or even imply sameness." (p. 254) He concludes: "No single body of the BCA should therefore even harbor the thought of speaking for the rest of it." p.255.) Rather, the institution should encourage individuals to speak for themselves.

He then takes up the question of human rights, noting that the statement of unalienable rights, life, liberty and pursuit of happiness, is a statement framed on the basis of the Christian idea of the Creator and based on an idea of divine Law.

He notes also that Buddhism does not speak of rights, rather, in the context of interdependence and Oneness, all beings have responsibility to all other beings. The issue is one then of responsibility which arises from reflection and cooperation. According to him, it requires more moral courage. (p. 256.) The transformation brought about through Buddhism would contribute to the aims of the idea of human rights.

What Rev. Kodani indicates concerning the nature of human rights in Buddhism is essentially correct. However, by reducing concern for human rights to simply individual support and participation, the principle of the *sangha* or community in Buddhism is set aside. Also in a representative democratic organization, such as BCA (Buddhist Churches of America), the mind or sense of the whole can be ascertained, while still noting minority opinion. The democratic

character of the group allows it to speak, if even tentatively, within a society that solicits the views of public organizations.

Further, with the expression of corporate views, the education of the membership can be more unified, facing the larger society. If only individual views are credited, the corporate tradition would be fragmented and incomprehensible.

We must understand that engagement and concern for social issues means enabling people to make good choices that are consistent with our religious understanding and, as far as possible, contribute to the welfare of the whole society. We cannot be partisan for the sake of being partisan, but when the issues become clear to us, we should be able to articulate our views based on our religious teaching in a corporate manner. We must always remember Shinran's declaration that in the final analysis, the choice is up to you and me. (*menmen no onhakarai nari*, Tannisho 2.)

Part II Ethical Perspectives In Shinran's Teaching

In his analysis of Shin Buddhism, Professor Futaba sharply questions the relationship between the faith as the practice of gratitude and morality. He calls attention to the thought of Kiyozawa Manshi, who saw morality as indispensable for the perfecting of humanity and ourselves, but a morality not of social conformity but defined by faith alone. (Ama Toshimaro. "Towards a Shin Buddhist Social Ethics," *The Eastern Buddhist*, Vol. 33-2 (New Series 2001). pp. 3551.) However as Futaba points out, Kiyozawa sought only a spiritual satisfaction in the world and rejected the other-worldly character of Shin Buddhism. Nevertheless, he ignored the actual conditions of society and did not criticize the Shinto cult which supported imperial

absolutism or the political system that “negated human personality. (Futaba Kenko, “Shinran and Human Dignity: Opening an Historic Horizon,” Kenryu Tsuji, trans., Pacific World, (New series Fall 1988), No. 4. 51-59. See also Futaba Kenko. Ed., *Shinran no Subete*. (Tokyo: Shinjimbutsu Oraisha, 1984.) pp. 7-26.)

For Futaba, the stance provided by Shinran for approaching the ethical life was the principle "believing oneself, teach others to believe" (*Jishinkyō ninshin*). According to him, it is this principle which demonstrated the critical thrust of Shinran's thought, piercing the false, hypocritical "good" of society and religion in his day.

Although Shin traditionalists still may define the practice of morality as the expression of gratitude, actually such has seldom been the case. Instead, under the impact of Japanese social history, the principle of morality as the expression of gratitude more often meant uncritical subservience to the reigning ethic.

The boundless freedom of Shin Buddhism was thus obscured during much of the Tokugawa and Meiji eras and, indeed, Buddhism, as an acceptable set of rites for funerals and memorial services, with few exceptions supplanted the original spiritual focus of Shinran and his Kamakura contemporaries on Buddhism as the very way and meaning of life itself. It became a way to fulfill one's familial and social obligations.

It is this element of Shinran's critical insight into religion and society that has importance for contemporary Shin Buddhism if the true meaning of his teaching is to be made relevant and effective in the modern world. As Professor Futaba says:

Whatever occupations all the successive followers of Shinran participate in, is it not imperative that they reject becoming virtuous in the world of political power. Rather, in the end they must focus on (the principle of *jishin kyo ninshin* (to teach others the faith one holds oneself). Shouldn't the people of the world accept Shinran's standpoint that, within the conflict of enormous political powers

which have grown like monsters, the only moral path is *jishin kyoninshin*, as a society of non-authoritarian believers.

The belief in material things and political authority reveals that a primitive faith in the gods pervades modern times. These are regarded as rational and intelligent, bringing the world to fruition, and are firm and reliable. However, it is clear that the history (of such an understanding) is false and absurd. The standpoint of faith which brushes aside a self-power mentality and rejects belief in gods is the only way that people can seek through their lives to confront the delusions of history even in the modern age. (Futaba Kenko. *Shinran no Kenkyu*, *Shinran ni okeru shin to rekishi*. (Kyoto: Hyakkaen, 1962.) pp. 364-365.

In the light of the collapse of traditional moralities East and West, Shin thought offers the possibility of a new approach to the relationship of faith, and action. In our present period, belief in objective structures of morality has weakened if not collapsed. We have too often seen such structures manipulated and applied in the interests of special classes and groups.

Now forced to live in a world which cannot guarantee the validity of one's ideals through some supernatural or cosmic guarantee, contemporary people have been given the responsibility to establish ethical existence from within themselves.

In this context, Shinran's religious perspective, with its roots in deep inward transformation and commitment, become an important resource for considering contemporary issues. We are not attempting to discover the precise content of Shinran's ethical outlook in terms of specific do's and don'ts (although some are present in his writings). Rather, we are trying to discover the basic underlying principles that govern his perspective.

For that reason, we have directed attention to Shinran's statements on "Sage Path" and "Pure Land compassion," as recorded by Yuiembo in Tannisho. IV.

In the matter of compassion, the Path of Sages and the Pure Land path differ. Compassion in the Path of Sages is to pity, sympathize with, and care for beings. But the desire to save others from suffering is vastly difficult to fulfill.

Compassion in the Pure Land path lies in saying

the Name, quickly attaining Buddhahood, and freely benefitting sentient beings with a heart of great love and great compassion. In our present lives, it is hard to carry out the desire to aid others however much love and tenderness we may feel; hence such compassion always falls short of fulfillment. Only the saying of the Name manifests the heart of great compassion that is replete and thoroughgoing. Thus were his words. (Dennis Hirota, tr., *Tannisho a Primer*, p. 24.)

This passage might be titled the “Limit of Compassion.” When brought into relation with Shinran's understanding of karma, his experience of the futility of reciting Sutras on the road to Inada, and when viewed also in relation to Shinran's concept of Neither-priest-nor-layman, it yields insight into the context for his ethical thought.

The point of this passage seems very clear. The Sage Path approach to compassion with its attempt to help beings falls short of its own goal. As limited beings in the world, we cannot generate sufficient power on our own to effect the release of all. Shinran discovered this for himself when on the road to Inada, he vowed to save all beings through reciting the thousand parts of the three Pure Land sutras. Realizing that this effort was futile, he abandoned the practice.

In asserting that saying the nembutsu is the final compassion, does not mean, I believe, that we are supposed to sit on our hands and do nothing in the face of evils in the world and ourselves. The realistic limits that Shinran observes means that we are not to strive for human betterment merely on the strength of some limited worldly ideal, but we must view our efforts within the context of more fundamental reality, in this case, Buddha's compassion. Such a perspective enables us to act without despair or expectations. Rather, we are nourished by our hopes for the fulfillment of a higher order through our efforts.

In Chapter 13 of Tannisho there appears an interesting discussion of the role of karma in determining action. Yuienbo quotes Shinran as saying:

Remember that no evil is ever done, that does not originate from a past karma, be it so minute as a grain of dust on the point of a hair of a lamb or rabbit.

Shinran here appeals to the reality and strength of karma which places us in this life and directs our actions in this world. Nothing we do can be done unless there is the karmic basis for it. What it suggests is that our deeds are always bounded by the given conditions and contexts of our actions. Hence from that side of existence, we are utterly powerless to act on our own as though we were totally autonomous beings.

As Shinran contemplated his relation to other beings, and his efforts to save them, the utter limitation of being able to do anything on his own was his basic realization. This was his way of facing his historical reality which, as with the later *myokonin*, heightened his sense of imperfection and evil. Through this historical reality which bounds our lives, we become aware of deeper forces at work which strive to save us and all other beings. This is the faith in Buddha's compassion which has no superior power to compete with it, and which cannot be obstructed by any evil. Therefore, in the Pure Land faith the goal is to become Buddha and, by uniting with that power of compassion which we call Amida Buddha, to attain the salvation of all beings.

Despite the futuristic element of Pure Land teaching, which places this attainment in another life, there is built into such a faith a guard against despair as to either our own capacities or the results which may be achieved through our limited efforts.

Shinran, while indicating the limits of human action, does not reject action as such. In this way he reaches out to the despairing, alienated men and women of his age and our. He understands that we will be moved to act through compassion. We may have aspirations and

hopes, but he cautions against expectations. Such a viewpoint goes against much of contemporary ideas of "thinking big," but its realism is quite evident when one considers the failure of the many movements for social changes in our time. In countless cases, the participants have had too high expectations and when they failed to reach their goal, they turned on society and those about them with bitterness. They sought escapes and dropped out. Many also perceived they needed a deeper understanding of reality and frequently joined extreme religious movements.

By contrast, Shinran's way sets the direction for ethical action by providing a realistic assessment of the possibilities of human effort in a world such as ours and with people like ourselves. When we understand his idea of "poisoned good," we see that his major concern was how egoism infects all our actions. Understanding that, we can limit the effect of egoism by recognizing it in our own actions. We can place social or religious action in a context where we may act but realize the true foundation or context of that act as proceeding from the realm beyond, which he terms the realm of no calculation or contrivance, from the realm where working is no working. It is the supernal realm of *jinen-honi*, of Buddha nature, of the Unimpeded Infinite Light, a realm beyond shape or definition, a realm symbolized in the compassion of Amida Buddha as depicted in the sutras.

What does such a basis mean for ethic and ego? In his effort to avoid the possibility of arrogant presumption on the part of his disciples, Shinran cast this participation in the ultimate nature of compassion into the future -- after our birth in the Pure Land. We can never believe that we fully realize that ethic, even though we may understand that we are sustained by the power of the Vow itself. Over against our efforts to work ceaselessly for the good of our fellow human beings in the light of the Vow of Amida without discrimination or being judgmental, we

are illumined by the power of that Vow, and aware of our egoism, defilements and desire for power and fame. (Takuwa. Perfect Freedom in Buddhism. pp. 89 - 99)

Shinran's definition of compassion is thus not meant to inhibit ethical action of an outgoing, positive type, but to instill in such ethical action a sense of deep limitations with respect to our capabilities, our intentions, our prospects. While this view may well induce a passivity in face of a well-established social order which limits any criticism or efforts for change, I do not believe Shinran would have entirely condoned subservience to the status quo. He was himself able to make judgments concerning the justice and righteousness of the society which exiled his teacher Honen, his fellow students, and himself. He could not fight back on that society's political terms, and he probably did not desire to do so. His motivation went far deeper and he continued in exile, despite government prohibitions, to propagate the teaching of the Pure Land way.

In cases when his followers faced persecution, he did not counsel that they merely be servile to the state, but in the interests of the further progress of the teaching to be more sensitive to their actions and the social implications of their actions. Thus, he advised not to despise the gods and buddhas of traditional communal religion, but to regard them as manifestations of Amida and therefore essentially benefactors. He counseled against useless arguments which created hatred, and urged that believers practice their faith quietly. There is a quotation given by Rennyō to the effect that even though we might be charged as cattle thieves, we should not appear like those who seek the hereafter. That is we should appear as ordinary people and not wear our religion on our shirtsleeves.

He advised also that his followers should have aspirations for the welfare of society in general, for when there is peace and tranquility, the conditions are better for the spread of the

teaching. His stance toward society was not one of acquiescence to the *status quo*, but one which viewed the situation from a higher plane and attempted to act in harmony with that plane.

To fully comprehend this essential dimension of Shinran, we must emphasize, particularly as exemplified in chapter IV of Tannisho, that the important point is non-egoistic action, action which is not an instrument merely for advancing the self but which is action that reveals the compassion of the Buddha. This perception supplies a major consideration in determining in our own time what actions are appropriate to a Shin Buddhist. I believe that one important determination would be -- what does that action do to bring meaning into other people's lives?

Rather than the Shin Buddhist focusing on the meaning of his or her own life (which may under these conditions seem not to have meaning), we may consider how meaningful our actions are in the lives of others -- all in light of the boundedness of our lives.

For Shinran, the directive influence in determining one's moral activity must be Buddhism. As illustration of this, in chapter V, Tannisho, Shinran makes a statement which is truly remarkable in view of the nature of the importance of filial piety in his time.

I, Shinran, have never invoked the Nembutsu even once in the feeling of filial piety for my parents. All sentient beings have been, and will be at one time or another, our fathers, or mothers, brothers, or sisters in the course of transmigration. So, we, after becoming Buddha in our next life, should save each one of them.

While we might agree with Shin scholars that in this passage Shinran is not advocating disrespect of parents, but is actually broadening the meaning of filial obligation to all beings. The fact remains that from traditional Confucian viewpoints (which were also promoted in Buddhism through its memorial services), society is based on graded love. One's parents and family have a

greater claim on one's duty than have the broader masses of people. This was an ancient issue between Confucianists and the advocates of Universal Love, such as Mo ti in ancient China. Buddhists in China argued that they fulfilled filial piety through services on behalf of departed ancestors. Yet Shinran, guided by his own understanding of Buddhist universality and his awareness of absolute Other Power, confessed that he never performed such *nembutsu*. In reality, he is saying that there is nothing special about his parents over against all other beings, and in this life he is in any case powerless. He does concede to human sentiment, however, that when one has become a Buddha:

. . . he can, by means of miraculous power, save those people closely related to him first of all, and then others no matter how deep they may be sunk into the slough of Karma . . . 5

This statement hardly displaces the earlier, since he has already stated that everyone at some point is mother and father to us. Is it only the last in succession that would qualify for special treatment? It is difficult to reconcile Buddhism universalism and Confucian hierarchy at this point. We must, I believe, accept Shinran's personal re-direction of ancient Japanese social morality.

It should be noted that the familial basis of social morality in Japan came to be transferred to the state, which was viewed as a great family headed by the Emperor. This orientation was symbolized in the values of *chu-ko* -- loyalty and filial piety which are particularistic in comparison to the values of *jin-gi* --benevolence and righteousness or justice.

We can observe another implication in Shinran's assertion which gives background to the problem of the Shin community in the ancient society. In traditional Japanese religion, the function of the ancestors in that agrarian society was to support the descendants in their work on the land. The ancestors therefore had to be cared for to secure the benefits of rain and fertility re-

quired for sustaining the life of the community. There was a magical connotation in Buddhist, as well as Shinto activities on behalf of the ancestors. It is striking that Pure Land tradition particularly has been charged with belittling and ridiculing the gods and undermining society. The words of Shinran, in his own writing and in the recollections of Yuienbo in Tannisho, indicate he viewed the ancestors with complete altruism and with no expectation of benefits from them as was common in the folk religions of Japan at that time.

The charge that Shin Buddhism is generally other- worldly is misplaced, when Shinran's teachings themselves are given serious consideration. While there are instinctual and important concerns for afterlife which we all face as mortal beings, the center of gravity of his thought lies in this life because of the deep confidence and assurance we have that Amida has embraced us never to abandon and the Vow covers all times and space. With destiny assured, life can be lived, ethically and critically, with meaning, dedication, hope and courage. Such faith supplies the context for positive living in society.

Unit Nine Doctrinal Foundations for a Shin Approach to Society

In this unit I will focus on various passages from Shinran's writings that have social relevance or give his perspective on society which can support our participation in the contemporary democratic process as Shin Buddhists. We must be careful to understand that Shinran was not a social reformer as we understand it today. He was however, a person motivated by a deep concern for the life and welfare of the people that he lived with. He himself was sensitive to issues of justice and how people were regarded in his time by the powers controlling society. He took his stand with the common person, the farmer, the merchant, the

hunter and fishermen whom he understood were, from the perspective of the world, simply worthless pieces of tile, though from the standpoint of faith were really pieces of gold. Shinran had a high evaluation of those who were regarded as the lowest in the society. He notes that even though he might be ridiculed, he wrote for the unlettered or illiterate people of that time.

While he was not a reformer or activist in the modern sense, Shinran expressed socially relevant insights for our time in giving a broad spiritual context in the compassion of the Bodhisattva-Buddha for our social involvement which responds to the needs of our own time.

There are several key passages such as the story of Dharmakara's renunciation and Vows, passages from the Juseige, the Sea of Great faith passage from the Kyôgyôshinshô, and his counsel in his letters from the Goshosokushu. For Shinran's view of society, there is the passage commenting on his exile in the Kyôgyôshinshô, his Laments in the Shôzômatsumasan, the wasan-verse on Prince Shôtoku and his view on good and evil.

We have mentioned the story of Dharmakara earlier in the series but perhaps to refresh your memory, you will recall that he was a king, who looked out on his kingdom and witnessed the suffering of the people. He then renounced his throne and took vows before the Buddha Lokeshvararaja to create an ideal world. He had surveyed all the possible worlds and selected the ideal elements from each to establish his own perfect world.

There is no question that he had a spiritual intent, aiming to create an environment where all beings could eventually achieve enlightenment. What is important to note here is the insufficiency of political action alone to achieve the highest fulfillment for human beings and relieve their sufferings. In the selection process of the formation of his Vows, the Bodhisattva exhibits a critical approach, evaluating all the alternatives that were available and selecting what

seemed to be the best. Then there was his dedication to construct this ideal spiritual environment, taking five kalpas or aeons to fulfill them and create his ideal world.

It offers a model for our approach to social and spiritual life, that we have in view not only our individual welfare but that of other beings and people; that we are critical of the alternatives and develop an approach that hopefully fulfills the highest ideals; and finally to devote ourselves to the fulfillment of these goals. The Bodhisattva practiced for a long time to fulfill his vows and finally gained enlightenment as Amida Buddha, establishing the western Pure Land.

This passage provides a paradigm for spiritual and social life, recognizing the limits of purely political means to solve underlying problems of society which root in the ego, greed and delusions of all people. While the thrust and orientation is spiritual, its social application is important for consideration today.

The passage from the Juseige is constantly recited. This text is a summary of the intent of the 48 vows made by the Bodhisattva in the story related above. In the text there is the line:

Fusaishobingu. "I will universally save the poor and suffering." There are those interpreters who see this passage as completely religious or spiritual. However, the terms poor and suffering are capable of a broader interpretation since the Bodhisattva would certainly aspire to elevate the whole of life, economic poverty as well as spiritual poverty. While we cannot know the intention of the writer precisely, the terminology permits a more flexible interpretation.

Passages employing the ideal of the Bodhisattva appear in other texts and reinforce this wider interpretation: For instance, there is this expression of the Bodhisattva ideal:

A Bodhisattva resolves: I take upon myself the burden of all suffering. I am resolved to do so, I will endure it..... And why? At all costs I must bear the burdens of all beings. In that I do not follow my own inclinations. I have made the vow to save all beings. All beings I must set free. The whole world of living beings I must rescue, from the terrors of

birth, of old age, of sickness, of death and rebirth, the whole cycle of birth-and-death, of the jungle of false views, the loss of wholesome dharmasI myself must grapple the whole mass of suffering of all beings. To the limit of my endurance, I will experience in all states of woe found in any world system, all the abodes of suffering...(see E. A. Burtt. The Compassionate Buddha. pp. 133-134.)

The Bodhisattva could hardly remove the sufferings of beings without also being concerned for their material and social well being. In any case it is a very broad ideal in which the compassion of the Bodhisattva extends to all aspects of a being's life.

In Mahayana Buddhism there is the concept of the Bodhisattva's return to this world to work for the liberation of all beings. Shinran stressed this concept as the true goal of religious faith. As he presents the doctrine in Volume Four on Realization in the Kyogyoshinsho, it is clear that it essentially relates to after death for the general believer.

However it is possible to understand it in a wider sense relating to the fulfillment of Dharmakara's Vows and the nature of Amida Buddha. That is, as Dharmakara Bodhisattva fulfilled his Vows, he returned to this world as the spiritual reality which motivates our faith and our understanding of human relations. That is, our faith is the manifestation in historical context of Dharmakara's intention to liberate all beings. Through our faith we participate in that process. Hence, Shinran wrote in the Kyogyoshinsho:

Thus, when the Tathagata, in profound compassion for the ocean of sentient beings in pain and affliction, performed bodhisattva practices for inconceivable millions of measureless kalps, there was not a moment, not an instant when his practice in the three modes of action was not pure or lacked this true mind. With this pure, true mind, the Tathagata brought to fulfillment the perfect, unhindered, inconceivable, indescribable and inexplicable supreme virtues. The Tathagata gives this sincere mind to all living beings, an ocean of beings possessed of blind [passions, karmic evil and false wisdom. This mind manifests the true mind of benefiting others. For this reason, it is completely untainted by the hindrance of doubt. This sincere mind takes as its essence the revered Name of supreme virtues. (Collected Works of Shinran. p. 95.)

It is from this perspective of the Bodhisattva- Buddha's mind shared with us that Shinran includes the benefit of constantly practicing among the benefits of true entrusting (*shinjin*)(p. 112) and also declares that "the mind that aspires for Buddhahood is the mind to save sentient beings. The mind to save sentient beings is the mind to grasp sentient beings and bring them to birth in the Pure Land of peace. This mind is the mind aspiring for great enlightenment. This mind is the mind of great compassion." (p.113.)

We may also note that Shinran's conception of Amida Buddha differs from traditional understanding. In the traditional view Amida is in the western Pure land where he resides. Though he is able through his spiritual powers to project himself into other world, essentially he is the Buddha of the western Pure Land.

For Shinran, Amida has become the essence of reality himself. He is not merely a Buddha residing in the distant world, but is present here in this world as the Buddha-nature in all things and the source of the spiritual aspiration that drives all beings to seek a higher life and fulfillment. Amida is not distant but close. This is why Shinran rejected the practice of rituals representing the Buddha and his host descending from the Pure Land to greet the devotee on his/her death.

Consequently, our concern for others and the compassion we extend to the world, though limited and mixed with our own egoistic interests, may also be viewed as inspired by the mind of the Buddha's compassion activated in us through our faith. There is thus what may be called a "dharmalogical" basis for our social involvement and bring to bear the compassion of Buddhism on pressing issues.

Shinran's perspective on the whole of Buddhist reality provided the basis for his *dôbô-dôgyô* community. It is marked by the teaching of non-discrimination in the sense that reality-

Amida embraces all beings and rejects all forms of socially imposed distinctions to delimit the faith. There is a remarkable quote in the *Kyôgyôshinshô* which indicates this non-discriminating view:

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 of religious practices is of no concern. It is a matter of neither practice nor good acts, neither sudden attainment nor gradual attainment, neither meditative practice nor non-meditative practice, neither right contemplation nor wrong contemplation, neither thought or no-thought, neither daily life nor the moment of death, neither once-calling nor many-calling. It is simply shinjin that is inconceivable, inexplicable and indescribable. It is like the medicine that eradicates all poisons. The medicine of the Tathagata's Vow destroys the poisons of our wisdom and foolishness (CWS. p. 107; SBTS, *Kyogyoshinsho*, II, Faith Volume, pp. 249-250).

From a social standpoint all beings are equal before Amida, and they should be before their peers. While there was no social revolution accompanying Shinran's insight, we can see its reflection in his own attitude as he regarded his followers as companions, declaring that he did not have any disciples because all had received their faith alike from Amida Buddha. He addressed them with honorific, polite language. Shinran was very sensitive to issues of justice, first in his own case when he and his teacher Honen, as well as other members of Honen's community, were unfairly sentenced to exile without proper investigation or due process as we would say today. His *wasan-verse* praising Prince Shotoku contains this quote from the Prince's famous 17 Point Constitution. "when a rich man goes to court, it is like throwing a stone into water. When a poor man goes to court it is like throwing water into a stone." The non-discriminating character of Shin Buddhism has led in modern times to socialists and communists claiming Shinran as a precedent or similar teaching in Japan. Justice in every culture has always been dictated by money and political power. Shinran observed this in his own time. In that sense he was a realist about society, as he was about human nature.

In his letters Shinran cautioned his followers not to give excuse to the authorities to persecute them. However, he also recognized the intent of the authorities to obstruct the teaching. He describes them as eyeless and earless, fulfilling the prophecy of the Buddha concerning the latter ages. When he described the Buddhist order as simply lackeys of the state and more pagan than Buddhist, he observed the hypocrisy of the temple institutions.

Acknowledging his own limitation, Shinran viewed the world as deceptive and false in contrast to the truth and purity represented by Amida. He declared that he was so degenerate and passion-ridden that he could not distinguish good and evil, as Amida would know good and evil. He also confessed that his desire for fame and power led him to pose as a teacher. In all these expressions, Shinran maintained a critical view of the self and society which later supported peasant uprisings in the time of Rennyō, sparked by Shin teaching.

In his interpretation of Buddhism worldly power was relativized and served clearly the interests of the lower, repressed and oppressed classes as against the rich and powerful. Privileged classes generally do not support full equality, even in modern democratic societies. There are always efforts to define people out of the privilege. Financial considerations do not apply in Shin Buddhism as Yuiembo notes in an odd account where some followers believed that the size of the Buddha one might see in the Pure Land was dependent on the amount of offerings one made to support the sangha. Yuiembo makes it clear that no one is to be intimidated on the basis of knowledge and money (chs. 12, 18).

These passages do not advocate social action in themselves, but they are socially aware. They are relevant for our thinking about the attitudes that we should take toward society and those who are socially in need. It could hardly be that we could be concerned for people's life in the hereafter and ignore their suffering and deprivation in this life. The material, limited though

it may be, which we discover in Shinran's writings suggests a more positive, open and compassionate view of society that would motivate our participation in seeking the welfare of the people about us.

In taking this position, we must be mindful of Shinran's perspective in the Tannisho which distinguishes self-power compassion and Other Power compassion. It is clear that efforts in society motivated out of our ego-concerns to achieve something in society are inadequate to the enormous task, if we forget the spiritual basis for such effort. Compassion which recognizes the limits of human effort will operate in a more interdependent way and will avoid disillusionment by understanding that the ultimate resolution of problems of human greed, anger and delusion are beyond us. For this reason Shinran declares that only the Nembutsu is true and when we become Buddha we may finally resolve all problems.

As I would understand Shinran's perspective, we have a basis for social action and participation consistent with his Other Power understanding which means that we place our egoistic, self-assertive motivation in the context of the universal standpoint of Amida's compassion and recognize our limits. However, it does not mean that we avoid dealing with pressing problems. We will now have to take up the forms of action which can arise from our compassionate concern in society as individuals and as a sangha.

Unit Ten The Shin Buddhist Approach to Engaged Social Action

We have taken up many aspects of Engaged Buddhism and Engaged Shin Buddhism to lay the basis for practical participation in society on the sangha level. I have tried to make clear that in a democratic situation it is necessary for the various spiritual and moral communities

within the total society to express their views concerning urgent questions and issues. However, we also made clear that such effort must be done in a manner consistent with the nature and spirit of the teaching and with the view to help all people in the society and not merely benefit one's own tradition and teaching. The next question is how can this be done?

We live in a context of representative democracy at almost every level of society. However, it would be highly unusual if there were total agreement on every issue confronting the community. We must develop a means to achieve the widest consensus of the members even in the face of disagreement as a guide for our representatives and spokesmen. There are practical methods for approaching such issues.

In the first place our members must be informed about the issues. Each temple and district should form a social concerns committee which studies current issues in the society. Individuals can be assigned to keep current on specific issues and report to the whole on the nature and development of an issue.

The various social concerns committees can form a network supported by the use of e-mail, internet and fax communications. Information can be shared through the sangha and members alerted to issues that arise.

Social concerns committees can hold educational sessions, seminars, develop reading materials, etc., for giving members necessary information. Naturally, the pros and cons of any issue should be presented fairly and occasionally proponents of various viewpoints may be invited to present their case to the group. It is important that religious bodies do not support directly any political party or specific candidate.

In connection with the annual legislative assemblies, the various committees can pool their information and develop brochures or informative material to present to the representatives

of the assembly. If the members of the legislative assembly have attended the meetings in their respective districts they will come prepared to indicate their stance on an issue.

In the course of the year and as a result of considered study, resolutions will have been formulated and offered to the body for approval or disapproval. These resolutions represent the opinion of the network of committees and contain their considered views. There should be an effort to achieve a broad consensus before presenting it to the main body.

When the legislative body receives the resolutions, they can be discussed thoroughly, resulting in a vote to accept or reject the resolution. Because of differences in opinions and the democratic character of the proceedings, there should be a majority and minority report, recording the reasons pro and con in the voting. While the majority opinion generally becomes the normative view of the body, there must always be recognition of differences that will allow individuals to hold their own approach to the matter in question. There is nothing coercive about the process.

By this means the sangha can provide direction to the society at large as to how Buddhist insights and values relate to the larger community. It can also give strength to members as they work in the community as Buddhists to show that Buddhists have the interest of the whole community in view.

The results of the vote, and the discussion underlying it, can be published as information and reference for those interested in observing how spiritual communities deal with significant social issues. It will provide guidelines for people in voting or otherwise participating.

As to what type of issues might come into the purview of the committees, we may suggest that they are issues of human rights and dignity, economic issues that impinge on the quality of life, health and well-being of people, aspects of education, church state issues, peace

issues etc. Issues dealing with race, religion, gender or any form of discrimination should be taken up. Matters of abortion are also important. Many of our contemporary issues have a religious background.

Actions which may be contemplated are joining with other groups that have common purpose and focus. While most issues may involve mainly educational activities to illumine the issue for the community, there may be questions that will call forth more direct action which will be taken up by individuals. The sangha may indicate its understanding and compassion for those who engage in more direct action. However, the sangha as such will not engage these actions itself in respect for the differences of view among the members. There should be no pressure to participate, suggesting that one may not be a good person, if one does not participate in an action.

The sangha, as a community in search of truth, is transcendent to the community as a whole, though participating in it. Its members may play particular roles, but the sangha cannot assume a role as an individual may. It provides the spiritual context from which individuals will take their stance, drawing on the teaching of the sangha. The sangha will, nevertheless, support as necessary the commitment of its members in achieving justice in the society. The sangha cultivates commitment through its spiritual and educational activities. It also provides a supportive community that can aid people voluntarily in their struggle.

The Buddhist principles which underlie this perspective are interdependence which involves our relation to the whole of society. We all share together as individuals and groups. It recognizes the need for non-dichotomous relationship which avoids simply an “us against them” mentality. Buddhism recognizes the ambiguity and delusory character of all human insight and perspectives. As Shinran has said all the world is deceitful and a lie and we are ourselves. It

is with humility that we engage the issues and seek for the most adequate, if not perfect understanding. In many issues there may not be a clear cut right and wrong. No judgment on a person is to be implied in disagreements over the options. In this way we can agree to disagree and find a more universally acceptable solution to issues.

Epilogue

These ten units of study have attempted to show that Buddhism generally and Shin Buddhism in particular can contribute in a positive way to the solution of problems facing all people and religions the world over. Through a non-dichotomous approach of problems based on the broad philosophy of Interdependence, Emptiness and universal compassion, we, as Buddhists, can relate to those who disagree leaving aside the venom that often attends social conflict and non-violently maintain relations with those we oppose. This is not an easy task, to be sure, but it conforms to the approach Buddhists have taken, despite differences in history and culture. It is in harmony with basic Buddhist principle.

Shin Buddhists, as members of a long tradition going back thousands of years to Gautama and 800 years to Shinran in Japan, can find in their own tradition the basis for engaging with others in efforts to improve society and participants as fellow human beings and good citizens. Shinran's interpretation of Buddhism and teaching of salvation by Other-Power, the activity of absolute compassion in Amida Buddha, also shows the limitations of human action, individually or in a group and the limitations of political solutions for problems which ultimately have spiritual roots.

As we have pointed out in the discussion, we cannot simply state the solution to specific problems based in the teaching. Rather, the teaching provides a perspective on life and reality and human relations which enable us to approach problems in a positive manner and work with others toward a solution. Religious faith provides the broad context and spiritual insight to deal with human problems. However, human beings must solve the problems using the best knowledge they have and a proper attitude toward those who disagree. Religious faith is educative and as Buddhism, the ideal of enlightenment is held up. The figure of light is used in many religions for becoming aware of truth. The light illumines the darkness and reveals the true nature of a situation. Amida is the Buddha of Infinite Light, as well as Eternal life. Whatever illumines our human situation cannot be unrelated to Amida and whatever enhances the quality life for all people is also not unrelated to the essential nature of Amida. All Buddhas manifest wisdom and compassion and we should become the channels for that compassion to reach even the lowest person in society. It is to that end that we have presented these unit studies and hope that followers of Buddhism and Shin Buddhism may discover some insight that will help them in making important decisions for the welfare of world society and in our particular society.

Supplement

The passages given below represent the texts which I have been able to discover in my studies and do not exhaust the possibilities of useful passages contained in the texts. Any additions would be great appreciated.

Socially Aware Selections from Theravada Buddhist Texts

APPANAKA SUTTA:

"This individual, householders, is said to a tormentor of others, addicted to the practice of tormenting others.

"And which individual 0 householders, is a tormentor of self and others, is addicted to the practice of tormenting self and others?"

"Here, householders, a certain individual is an anointed king of the warrior caste (He fasts and practices austerities himself, and worries hls slaves, servants and workmen who) terrified with sticks, driven by fear, with woeful faces and in tears, do the work.

"This individual, householders, is said to be a tormentor of self and others, addicted to the practice of tormenting self and others.

"And which individual, 0 householders, is neither a tormentor of self nor of others, is not addicted to the practice of tormenting self or others: who, neither tormenting himself nor others, in this life itself is desireless, quenched (of passions), cool, experiences happiness, lives nobly?"

MAHA-SUDASSANA SUTTA. (THE GREAT KING OF GLORY)

63- "Now, to the Great King of Glory, Ananda, occurred the thought:

" Suppose, now, I were to establish a perpetual grant by the banks of those Lotus-ponds-to wit, food for the hungry, drink for the thirsty, raiment for the naked, means of convenience for those who have need of it, couches for the tired, wives for those who want wives, gold for the poor, and money for those who are in want."

"Then, Ananda, the Great King of Glory established a perpetual grant by the banks of those Lotus-ponds-to wit, food for the hungry, drink for the thirsty, raiment for the naked, means of conveyance for those who needed it, couches for the tired, wives for those who wanted wives, gold for the poor, and money for those who were in want.

UNIVERSAL LOVE (Metta-sutta)

He who is skilled in good and who wishes to attain that state of Calm should act (thus):

He should be able, upright, perfectly upright, compliant, gentle, and humble.

Contented, easily supported, with few duties, of simple livelihood, controlled in senses, discreet, not impudent, he should not be greedily attached to families.

He should not commit any slight wrong such that other wise men might censure him. (Then he should cultivate his thoughts thus:)

May all beings be happy and secure; may their minds be contented.

Whatever living beings there may be-feeble or strong, long (or taU), stout, or medium, short, small, or large, seen or unseen, those dwelling far or near, those who are born and those who are yet to be born-may all beings, without exception, be happy-minded!

Let not one deceive another nor despise any person whatever in any place. In anger or ill-will let not one wish any harm to another.

Just as a mother would protect her only child even at the risk of her own life, even so let one cultivate a boundless heart towards all beings.

Let one's thoughts of boundless love pervade the whole world -above, below and across-without any obstruction, without any hatred, without any enmity.

Whether one stands, walks, sits or lies down, as long as one is awake, one should maintain this mindfulness. This, they say, is the Sublime State in this life.

Not falling into wrong views, virtuous and endowed with Insight, one gives up attachment to sense-desires. Verily such a man does not return to enter a womb again. (Suttanipata, 1. 8)

BLESSINGS (Mangala-sutta)

Thus have I heard:

The Blessed One was once living at the monastery of Anathapindika in Jeta's grove, near Savatthi. Now when the night was far advanced, a certain deity, whose surpassing splendour illuminated the entire Jeta Grove, came into the presence of the Blessed One, and, drawing near, respectfully saluted Him and stood on one side. Standing thus, he addressed the Blessed One in verse:

'Many deities and men, yearning after happiness, have pondered on Blessings. Pray, tell me the Highest Blessing!'

Not to associate with fools, to associate with the wise, and to honour those who are worthy of honour-this is the Highest Blessing.

To reside in a suitable locality, to have done meritorious actions in the past, and to set oneself in the right course-this is the Highest Blessing.

Vast learning (skill in) handicraft, a highly trained discipline, and pleasant speech-this is the Highest Blessing.

Supporting one's father and mother, cherishing wife and children, and peaceful occupations-this is the Highest Blessing.

Liberality, righteous conduct, the helping of relatives, and blameless actions-this is the Highest Blessing.

To cease and abstain from evil, abstention from intoxicating drinks, and diligence in virtue-this is the Highest Blessing.

Reverence, humility, contentment, gratitude and the opportune hearing of the Dhamma-this is the Highest Blessing.

Patience, obedience, seeing the Samanas (holy men), and (taking part in) religious discussions at proper times-this is the Highest Blessing.

Self-control, Holy Life, perception of the Noble Truths, and the realisation of Nibbana--this is the Highest Blessing

If a man's mind does not shake when touched by worldly vicissitudes-this is the Highest Blessing.

Those who thus acting are everywhere unconquered, attain happiness everywhere-to them these are the Highest Blessings. (Suttanipata, II. 4)

SUMMARY OF THE TEN DUTIES OF A KING

The Buddha was just as clear on politics, on war and peace. It is too well known to be repeated here that Buddhism advocates and preaches non-violence and peace as its universal message, and does not approve of any kind of violence or destruction of life. According to Buddhism, there is nothing that can be called 'just war'-which is only a false term coined and put into circulation to justify and excuse hatred, cruelty, violence and massacre. Who decides what is just or unjust? The mighty and the victorious are 'just', and the weak and the defeated are 'unjust'. Our war is always 'just', and your war is always 'unjust'. Buddhism does not accept this position.

The Buddha not only taught non-violence and peace, but he even went to the field of battle itself and intervened personally and prevented war, as in the case of the dispute between the Sakyas and the Koliyas, who were prepared to fight over the question of the waters of the Rohini. And his words once prevented King Ajatasattu from attacking the kingdom of the Vajjis.

In the days of the Buddha, as today, there were rulers who governed their countries unjustly. People were oppressed and exploited, tortured and persecuted, excessive taxes were imposed and cruel punishments were inflicted. The Buddha was deeply moved by these inhumanities. The Dhammapadam records that he, therefore, directed his attention to the problem of good government. His views should be appreciated against the social economic and political background of his time. He had to show how a whole country could become corrupt, degenerate and unhappy when the heads of its government, that is the king, the ministers and administrative officers become corrupt and unjust. For a country to be happy it must have a just government. How this form of just government could be realized is explained by the Buddha in his teaching of the 'Ten Duties of the King' (dasarajadhamma), as given in the Jataka text.

Of course the term 'king'(Raja) of old should be replaced today by the term 'Government'.

'The Ten Duties of the King', therefore, apply today to all those who constitute the government, such as the head of the state, ministers, political leaders, legislative and administrative officers, etc.

The first of the 'Ten Duties of the King' is liberality, generosity, charity (dana). The ruler should not have craving and attachment to wealth and property, but should give it away for the welfare of the people.

Second: A high moral character (sila). He should never destroy life, cheat, steal and exploit others, commit adultery, utter falsehood, and take intoxicating drinks. That is, he must at least observe the Five Precepts of the layman.

Third: Sacrificing everything for the good of the people (pariccaga), he must be prepared to give up all personal comfort, name and fame, and even his life, in the interest of the people.

Fourth: Honesty and integrity (ajjava). He must be free from fear or favour in the discharge of his duties, must be sincere in his intentions, and must not deceive the public.

Fifth: Kindness and gentleness (maddava). He must possess a genial temperament.

Sixth: Austerity in habits (tapa). He must lead a simple life, and

should not indulge in a life of luxury. He must have self-control.

Seventh: Freedom from hatred, ill-will, enmity (akkodha). He should bear no grudge against anybody.

Eighth: Non-violence (ahimsa), which means not only that he should harm nobody, but also that he should try to promote peace by avoiding and preventing war, and everything which involves violence and destruction of life.

Ninth: Patience, forbearance, tolerance, understanding (khanti). He must be able to bear hardships, difficulties and insults without losing his temper.

Tenth: Non-opposition, non-obstruction (avirodha), that is to say that he should not oppose the will of the people, should not obstruct any measures that are conducive to the welfare of the people. In other words he should rule in harmony with his people.

'It is interesting to note here that the Five Principles or Pancha-sila in India's foreign policy are in accordance with the Buddhist principles which Asoka, the great Buddhist emperor of India, applied to the administration of his government in the 3rd century B.C. The expression Pancha-sila (Five Precepts or Virtues), is itself a Buddhist term.

PARABHAVA-SUTTA (Downfall)

While the Mangala Sutta deals with the way of life conducive to progress and happiness, the Parabhava Sutta supplements it by pointing out the causes of downfall. He who allows himself to become tarnished by these blemishes of conduct, blocks his own road to worldly, moral and spiritual progress and lowers all that is truly noble and human in man. But he who is heedful of these dangers keeps open the road to all those 38 Blessings of which human nature is capable.

Thus have I heard. Once the Exalted One was dwelling at Anathapindika's Monastery, in the Jeta Grove, near Savatthi.

Now when the night was far spent a certain deity whose surpassing splendour illuminated the entire Jeta Grove, came to the presence of the Exalted One and, drawing near, respectfully saluted him and stood at one side. Standing thus, he addressed the Exalted One in verse:--

The Deity: Having come herewith our questions to the Exalted One, we ask thee, O Gotama, about man's decline. Pray, tell us the cause of downfall !

The Buddha: Easily known is the progressive one, easily known he who declines. He who loves Dhamma, progresses; he who is averse to it, declines.

The Deity: This much do we see: 'this is the first cause of one's downfall. Pray, tell us the second cause.

The Buddha: The wicked are dear to him, with the virtuous he finds
No delight, he prefers the creed of the wicked--this is a case of one's downfall.

Being fond of sleep, fond of company, indolent, lazy and irritable - this is a cause of one's downfall.

Though being well-to-do, not to support father and mother who are old and past their youth--this is a cause of one's downfall.

To deceive by falsehood a Brahmana or ascetic or any other mendicant - this is a cause of one's downfall.

To have much wealth and ample gold and food, but to enjoy one's luxuries alone--this is a cause of one's downfall.

To be proud of birth, or wealth or clan, and to despise one's own kinsmen - this is a cause of one's downfall.

To be a rake, a drunkard, a gambler, and to squander all one earns - this is a cause of one's downfall.

Not to be contented with one's own wife and to be seen with harlots and wives of others--this is a cause of one's downfall.

Being past one's youth, to take a young wife and to be unable to sleep for jealousy of her-- this is a cause of one's downfall.

To place in authority a woman given to drink and slandering, or a man of a like behaviour --this is a cause of one's downfall.

To be of warrior birth, with vast ambition and of slender means, and to crave for rulership - this is a cause of one's downfall.

Knowing well these causes of downfall in the world, the noble sage endowed with insight shares a happy realm.

VYAGGHAPAJJA SUTTA

Conditions of Spiritual Progress

Four conditions, Vyaghahapajja, conduce to a householder's weal and happiness in his future life. Which four?

The accomplishment of Faith (saddha-sampada), the accomplishment of virtue (sila-sasampada), the accomplishment of Charity (caga-sampada) and the accomplishment of Wisdom (panna-sampada).

What is the accomplishment of Faith ?

Herein a householder is possessed of faith, he believes in the Enlightenment of the Perfect One (Tathagata) Thus, indeed, is that Blessed One: he is the Pure One (araha), fully enlightened, endowed with knowledge conduct, well-gone, the knower of worlds, the incomparable leader of men to be tamed, the teacher of gods and men, all-knowing and blessed. This is called the accomplishment of Faith.

What is the accomplishment of virtue ?

Herein a householder abstains from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and from intoxicants that cause infatuation and heedlessness. This is called the accomplishment of Virtue.

What is the accomplishment of Charity ?

Herein a householder dwells at home with heart free from the stain of avarice, devoted to charity, openhanded, delighting in generosity, attending to the needy, delighting in the distribution of alms. This is called the accomplishment of Charity.

What is the accomplishment of wisdom ?

Herein a householder is wise: he is endowed with wisdom that understands the arising and cessation (of the five aggregates of existence); he is possessed of the noble penetrating insight that leads to the destruction of suffering. This is called the accomplishment of Wisdom.

These four conditions, Vyagghapajja, conduce to a householder's weal and happiness in his future life.

"Energetic and heedful in his tasks,
Wisely administering his wealth,
He lives a balanced life,
Protecting what he has amassed.

"Endowed with faith and virtue too,
Generous he is and free from avarice
He ever works to clear the path
That leads to weal in future life.

"Thus to the layman full of faith,
By him. .so truly named 'Enlightened,'
These eight conditions have been told
Which now and after lead to bliss.'

ADVICE TO SIGALA

'In this way the northern quarter is protected and made safe and secure for him.

'A master ministers to his servants and employees as the nadir in five ways: by assigning them work according to their capacity and strength; by supplying them with food and wages by tending them in sickness; by sharing with them unusual delicacies; and by giving them leave and gifts at suitable times.

'In these ways ministered to by their master, servants and employees love their master in five ways: they wake up before him; they go to bed after him; they take what is given to them; they do their work well; and they speak well of him and give him a good reputation.

'In this way is the nadir protected and made safe and secure for him.

'A member of a family (a layman) should minister to recluse and brahmins (the religious) as the zenith in five ways: by affectionate acts; by affectionate words; by affectionate thoughts by keeping open house for them; by supplying them with their worldly needs. -----etc

When the Blessed One had thus spoken, Sigala the young householder said this: 'Excellent, Sir, excellent! It is as if one should set upright what had been turned upside down, or reveal what had been hidden away, or show the way to a man gone astray, or bring a lamp into darkness so that those with eyes might see things there. In this manner the Dhamma is expounded by the Blessed One in many ways. And I take refuge in the Blessed One, in the Dhamma and in the Community of Bhikkhus. May the Blessed One receive me as his lay-disciple, as one has taken his refuge in him from this day forth as long as life endures.' (Digha-nikaya 31)

CAKKAVATTI-SIHANADA SUTTANTA.

The Lion Roar on the Turning of the Wheel

[61] 5. But what, sire, is this Ariyan duty of Wheel-turning Monarch?

This, dear son, that thou, leaning on the Norm [the Law of truth and righteousness] honouring, respecting and revering it, doing homage to it, hallowing it, being thyself a Norm-banner, a Norm-signal, having the Norm as thy master, shouldst provide the right watch, ward, and protection for thine own folk, for the army, for the nobles, for vassals, for brahmins, and householders, for town and country dwellers, for the religious world, and for beasts and birds. Throughout thy kingdom let no wrongdoing prevail. And whosoever in thy kingdom is poor, to him let wealth be given.

The king, the sovran war-lord, spake thus : Ye shall slay no living thing. Ye shall not take that which has not been given. Ye shall not act wrongly touching bodily-desires. Ye shall speak no lie. Ye shall drink no maddening drink. Enjoy your possessions as you have been wont to do.

(According to the text, when there was a crime, the king was lenient and gave the criminals what they needed to secure their lives. If poor, he gave money etc. However, people took advantage and thought that if they would do evil, the king would reward them. Things got worse. The king then beheaded criminals and violence still followed. Human life-span declined to 20 years. Finally the people realized that only by doing good would they be safe and they decided to follow the good:)

22. Then this, brethren, will occur to those beings: Now we, because we have gotten into good ways, increase in length of life and comeliness. Let us now do still more good. Let us now abstain from taking what is not given, let us abstain from adultery, let us now abstain from lying, let us now abstain from evil let us now abstain from abuse and from idle talk, let us now abstain from covetousness, from ill-will, -from false opinions, let us now abstain from the three things-incest, wanton greed and perverted desires; let us now be filial towards our mothers, and our fathers, let us be pious toward holy men, let us respect the heads of clans, yea, let us continue to practise each of these good things. (Digha Nikaya XXVI.)

KUTADANTA SUTTA

11. 'Thereupon the Brahman who was chaplain said to the king: " The king's country, Sire, is harassed and harried. There are dacoits abroad who pillage the villages and townships, and who make the roads unsafe. Were the king, so long as that is so, to levy a fresh tax, verily his majesty would be acting wrongly. But perchance his majesty might think: ' I'll soon put a stop to these scoundrels' game by degradation and banishment, and fines and bonds and death!' But their licence cannot be satisfactorily put a stop to so. The remnant left unpunished would still go on harassing the realm. Now there is one method to adopt to put a thorough end to this disorder. Whosoever there be in the king's realm who devote themselves to keeping cattle and the farm, to them let his majesty the king give food and seed-corn. Whosoever there be in the king's realm who devote themselves to trade, to them let his majesty the king give capital. Whosoever there be in the king's realm who devote themselves to government service, to them let his majesty the king give wages and food. Then those men, following each his own business, will no longer harass the realm; the king's revenue will go up; the country will be quiet and at peace; and the populace, pleased one with another and happy, dancing their children in their arms, will dwell with open doors."

Mahaparinibbana Sutta

THUS HAVE I HEARD:

Once the Bhagava dwelt at Rajagaha, on the hill called Vultures' Peak. At that time the king of Magadha, Ajatasattu, son of the Videha queen, desired to make war against the Vajjis. He spoke in this fashion: 'These Vajjis, powerful and glorious as they are, I shall annihilate them, I shall make them perish, shall utterly destroy them.,

And Ajatasattu, the king of Magadha, addressed his chief Minister, the brahmana Vassakara, saying: 'Come, brahmana, betake yourself to the Bhagava, pay homage in my name at the feet of the Bhagava, wish him good health, strength, ease, vigour and comfort, and speak thus: 'O Lord, Ajatasattu, the king of Magadha, desires to wage war against the Vajjis. he has spoken in this fashion : 'These Vajjis, powerful and glorious as they are, I shall annihilate them, I shall make them perish, I shall utterly destroy them.'" And whatever the Bhagava should answer you, keep well in mind and make it known to me; for Tathagatas do not speak falsely.'

3. 'Very well, Sire,' said the brahmana Vassakara in assent to Ajatasattu, the king of Magadha. And he ordered a large number of magnificent carriages to be made ready, himself mounted one and, accompanied by the rest, drove out from Rajagaha towards Vultures' Peak. He went by carriage as far as the carriage could make its way, then, dismounting, approached the Bhagava on foot. After exchanging courteous greetings with the Bhagava, together with many pleasant words, he sat down at one side and addressed the Bhagava thus : 'Venerable Gotama, the king of Magadha pays homage at the feet of the venerable Gotama and wishes him good health, strength, ease, vigour and comfort. He desires to wage war against the Vajjis and has spoken in this fashion: "These Vajjis, powerful and glorious as they are, I shall annihilate them, I shall make them perish, I shall utterly destroy them."

Conditions of a Nation's Welfare⁴

4. At that time the Venerable Ananda was standing behind the Bhagava, fanning him, And the Bhagava addressed the Venerable Ananda thus: 'What have you heard, Ananda; do the Vajjis have frequent gatherings, and are their meetings well attended ?' 'I have heard, Lord, that this is so.'

'So long, Ananda, as this is the case, the growth of the Vajjis is to be expected, not their decline.'

'What have you heard, Ananda; do the Vajji assemble and disperse peacefully, and attend to their affairs in concord?'

'I have heard, Lord, that they do.'

'So long, Ananda, as this is the case, the growth of the Vajjis is to be expected, not their decline.'

'What have you heard, Ananda; do the Vajjis neither enact new decrees nor abolish existing ones, but proceed in accordance with their ancient constitutions ?'

'I have heard, Lord, that they do.'

'So long, Ananda, as this is the case, the growth of the Vajjis is to be expected, not their decline.'

'What have you heard, Ananda; do the Vajjis show respect, honour, esteem and veneration towards their elders and deem it worth while to listen to them?' I have heard, Lord, that they do.'

'So long, Ananda, as this is the case, the growth of the Vajjis is to be expected, not their decline.'

'What have you heard, Ananda; do the Vajjis refrain from abducting women and maidens of good families, and detaining them ?'

'I have heard, Lord, that they refrain from doing so.'

'So long, Ananda; as this is the case, the growth of the Vajjis is to be expected, not their decline.'

'What have you heard, Ananda; do the Vajjis show respect, honour, esteem and veneration towards their shrines, both those within the city and those outside it, and do they not deprive them of the due offerings as given and made to them formerly?'

I have heard, Lord, that they do venerate their shrines, and that they do not deprive them of their offerings.'

'So long, Ananda, as this is the case, the growth of the Vajjis is to be expected, not their decline.'

'What have you heard, Ananda; do the Vajjis duly protect and guard the Holy Ones, so that those who have not come to the realm yet, might do so, and those already come might live there in peace?'

I have heard, Lord, that they do.'

'So long, Ananda, as this is the case, the growth of the Vajjis is to be expected, not their decline.'

And the Bhagava addressed the brahmana Vassakara in these words 'Once, Brahmana, I dwelt at Vesali, at the Sarandada shrine, and there it was that I taught the Vajjis these seven conditions leading to (a nation's) welfare. So long, Brahmana, as these endure among the Vajjis, and the Vajjis are known for it, their growth is to be expected, not their decline.'

Thereupon the brahmana Vassakara spoke thus to the Bhagava: 'If the Vajjis, venerable Gotama, were endowed with only one or the other of these conditions leading to welfare, their growth, truly, would have to be expected, not their decline. What then of all the seven! No harm, indeed, can be done to the Vajjis in battle by Magadha's king, Ajatasattu, except through treachery or discord. Well, then, venerable Gotama, we will take our leave, for we have much to perform, much work to do.'

'As it now seems fit to you, Brahmana.' And the brahmana Vassakara, the chief Minister of Magadha, approving of the Bhagava's words and delighted by them, rose from his seat and departed.

BUDDHIST LEGENDS : TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL PALI TEXT OF THE
DHAMMAPADA COMMENTARY (DHAMMAPADATTHAKATHA)
BOOK XV. HAPPINESS, SUKHA VAGGA

XV. 1. A QUARREL AMONG BRETHREN

Oh, happily let us live! This religious instruction was given by Teacher while he was in residence among the Sakiyas with reference to the cessation of a quarrel among kinsmen. [254]

The story goes that the Sakiyas and the Koliyas caused the waters of the river Rohini to be confined by a single dam between the city of Kapilavatthu and the city of Koliya, and cultivated the fields on both sides of the river. Now in the month Jeththamula the crops began to droop, whereupon the laborers employed by the residents of both cities assembled. Said the residents of the city of Koliya, "If the water is diverted to both sides of the river, there will not be enough both for you and for us too. But our crops will ripen with a single watering. Therefore let us have the water."

The Sakiyas replied, "After you have filled your storehouse we shall not have the heart to take ruddy gold and emeralds and black pennies, and, baskets and sacks in our hands, go from house to house seeking favors at your hands. Our crops also will ripen with a single watering. [255] Therefore let us have this water." "We will not give it to you." "Neither will we give it to you." Talk waxed bitter, until finally one arose and struck another a blow. The other returned the blow and a general fight ensued, the combatants making matters worse by aspersions on the origin of the two royal families.

Said the laborers employed by the Koliyas, "You who live in the city of Kapilavatthu, take your children and go where you belong. Are we likely to suffer harm from the elephants and horses and shields and weapons of those who, like dogs and jackals, have cohabited with their own sisters?" The laborers employed by the Sakiyas replied, "You lepers, take your children and go where you belong. Are we likely to suffer harm from the elephants and horses and shields and weapons of destitute outcasts who have lived in jujube-trees like animals?" Both parties of laborers went and reported the quarrel to the ministers who had charge of the work, and the ministers reported the matter to the royal households. Thereupon the Sakiyas came forth armed for battle and cried out, "We will show what strength and power belong to those who have cohabited with their sisters." Likewise the Koliyas came forth armed for battle and cried out, "We will show what strength and power belong to those who dwell in 'jujube-trees."

As the Teacher surveyed the world at dawn and beheld his kinsmen, he thought to himself, "If I refrain from going to them, these men will destroy each other. It is clearly my duty to go to them. Accordingly he flew through the air quite alone to the spot where his kinsmen were gathered together, and seated himself cross-legged in the air over the middle of the river Rohini. [256] When the Teacher's kinsmen saw the Teacher, they threw away their weapons and did reverence to him. Said the Teacher to his kinsmen, "What is all this quarrel about, great king?" "We do not know, Reverend Sir." "Who then would be likely to know?" "The commander-in chief of the army would be likely to know." The commander-in-chief of the army said, "The viceroy would be likely to know." Thus the Teacher put the question first to one and then to another,

asking the slave-laborers last of all. The slave-laborers replied, "The quarrel is about water, Reverend Sir."

Then the Teacher asked the king, "How much is water worth greatking?" "Very little, Reverend Sir." "How much are Khattiya worth, great king?" " Khattiyas are beyond price, Reverend Sir. "It is not fitting that because of a little water you should destroy Khattiyas who are beyond price." They were silent. Then the Teacher addressed them and said, "Great kings, why do you act in this manner? Were I not here present to-day, you would set flowing a river of blood. You have acted in a most unbecoming manner You live in enmity, indulging in the five kinds of hatred. I live free from hatred. You live afflicted with the sickness of the evil passion I live free from disease. You live in eager pursuit of the five kind of sensual pleasure. I live free from the eager pursuit of aught. So saying, he pronounced the following Stanzas:

197. Oh, happily let us live! free from hatred, among those who hate;
Among men who hate, let us live free from hatred.

198. Oh, happily let us live! free from disease, among those who are afflicted
with disease; Among men who are afflicted with disease, let us live free
from disease.

199. Oh, happily let us live! free from longing, among those who are possessed
with longing; Among those who are possessed with longing, let us live free
from longing.

BOOK XIX. THE RIGHTEOUS, DHAMMATTHA VAGGA XIX. 1. THE UNJUST JUDGES

Not therefore is a man called a justice. This religious instruction was given by the Teacher while he was in residence at Jetavana with reference to the ministers of justice.

For on a certain day the monks made their rounds for alms in settlement at the north gate of Savatthi, and returning from the pilgrimage, to the monastery, passed through the center of the city. At that moment a cloud came up, and the rain began to fall. Entering a hall of justice opposite, they saw lords of justice taking bribes and depriving lawful owners of their property. Seeing this, they thought, these men are unrighteous! Until now we supposed they rendered righteous judgments." When the rain was over, they went to the monastery, saluted the Teacher, and sitting respectfully on one side, informed him of the incident. Said the Teacher, "Monks, they that yield to evil desires and decide a cause by violence, are not properly called justices; they only that penetrate within a wrong and without violence render judgment according to the wrong committed, are properly called justices." So saying, he pronounced the following Stanzas,

256. Not therefore is a man called a justice because he derides a cause arbitrarily; Nay rather is it he that inquires into both right and wrong, he that is wise.

257. He that leads others without violence, justly and righteously,
He that is protected of the Law, he that is intelligent, he alone is properly called a justice.

[KINDNESS AND PUNISHMENT.]

35. 'Venerable Nâgasena, the Blessed One said:

"Doing no injury to any one
Dwell full of love and kindness in the world 1."

And on the other hand he said: "Punish him who deserves punishment 2, favour him who is worthy of favour." [185] Now punishment, Nâgasena, means the cutting off of hands or feet, flogging 3, casting into bonds, torture 4, execution, degradation in rank 5.

p. 255

[paragraph continues] Such a saying is therefore not worthy of the Blessed One, and he ought not to have made use of it. For if the first injunction be right then this must be wrong, and if this be right then the injunction to do no injury to any one, but to dwell full of love and kindness in the world, must be wrong. This too is a double-edged problem now put to you, and you have to solve it.'

36. 'The Blessed One, great king, gave both the commands you quote. As to the first, to do no injury to any one, but to live full of love and kindness in the world--that is a doctrine approved by all the Buddhas. And that verse is an injunction, an unfolding of the Dhamma, for the Dhamma has as its characteristic that it works no ill. And the saying is thus in thorough accord with it. But as to the second command you quote that is a special use of terms [which you have misunderstood. The real meaning of them is: "Subdue that which ought to be subdued, strive after, cultivate, favour what is worthy of effort, cultivation, and approval"]. The proud heart, great king, is to be subdued, and the lowly heart cultivated--the wicked heart to be subdued, and the good heart to be cultivated--carelessness of thought is to be subdued, and exactness of thought to be cultivated--[186] he who is given over to wrong views is to be subdued, and he who has attained to right views is to be cultivated--he who is not noble 1 is to be subdued, and the noble one is

p. 256

to be cultivated--the robber 1 is to be subdued, and the honest brother is to be cultivated.'

37. 'Let that be so, Nâgasena. But now, in that last word of yours, you have put yourself into my power, you have come round to the sense in which I put my question. For how, venerable Nâgasena, is the robber to be subdued by him who sets to work to subdue him?'

'Thus, great king--if deserving of rebuke let him be rebuked, if of a fine let him be fined, if of banishment let him be banished, if of death let him be put to death.'

'Is then, Nâgasena, the execution of robbers part of the doctrine laid down by the Tathâgatas?'

'Certainly not, O king.'

'Then why have the Tathâgatas laid down that the robber is to be taught better?'

'Whosoever, great king, may be put to death, he does not suffer execution by reason of the opinion put forth by the Tathâgatas. He suffers by reason of what he himself has done. But notwithstanding that the doctrine of the Dhamma has been taught (by the Buddhas) 2, would it be possible, great king, for a man who had done nothing wrong, and was walking innocently along the streets, to be seized and put to death by any wise person?'

'Certainly not.'

p. 257

'But why?'

'Because of his innocence.'

'Just so, great king, since the thief is not put to death through the word of the Tathâgata, but only through his own act, how can any fault be rightly found on that account with the Teacher?'

'It could not be, Sir.'

'So you see the teaching of the Tathâgatas is a righteous teaching.'

'Very good, Nâgasena! That is so, and I accept it as you say.'

[Here ends the problem as to kindness and punishment.]

-----.

Radhagovinda Basak

Asokan Inscriptions

Calcutta: Progressive Publishers, 1959

162 pp.

ROCK EDICT IX

p. 49

King Priyadarsi, the Beloved of the Gods said:-People observe diverse (high and low)

ceremonies or ceremonial rites. In illness, at marriage of sons and marriage of daughters, birth of children and departure for journey-on these and such other occasions people observe many ceremonies. In such matter, the mothers and (other) women (capable of bearing children) perform many and manifold ceremonies which are petty (trivial) and useless (worthless). Ceremonies, however, are surely to be observed. But this kind bears little fruit. On the other hand, this sort namely the Dharma-ceremonial (i.e. ceremonial of the Law of piety) bears great fruit. In this are included right treatment towards slaves and servants, reverence towards teachers, restraint (from injury) to living creatures, and charity towards (Buddhist) ascetics and Brahmanas. These and other similar acts are what may be called Dharmamangala (i.e. the ceremonial of the Law of piety). Therefore, this ought to be said by a father, a son, a brother and a master (or a husband), a friend and an acquaintance., even by a neighbour-"This is excellent, and this is the ceremonial which should be performed until that purpose is accomplished". How is this? That which is the ceremonial of the other kind is dubious (in its effect)-it may accomplish that (desired) end or may not do (so), for, it pertains to this world. But this ceremonial of the Law of piety takes no account of time (either of this world or of the next). Even if it cannot accomplish that (desired) end in this world, it produces endless merit in the world after. If again it accomplishes that (desired) end here (in this world), then both gains are secured. namely, that (desired) end here and in the world beyond endless merit is produced on account of that ceremonial of the Law of piety.

N.B. The G, D and J versions contain the following additional passages after 'That which is etc'. And this is also said :-"Liberality (or charity) is -excellent". But there is no such liberality or favour as the liberality of the Law of piety and the favour of the Law of piety. Therefore, by a friend (or an ally), a loving associate, a relative or a comrade should it be exhorted on this or that occasion-, this should be done, this is excellent. By this heaven can be won". For this reason 9 what else is to be better achieved than the gain of heaven?

Rock Edict XIII

pp. 71-73

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

By King Priyadarsi, the Beloved of the Gods, when consecrated eight years, was conquered the Kalinga country. One and a half hundred thousand people were carried away (as captives) from that place, one hundred-thousand were killed (or wounded) and many times that number died (there). Thereafter, now when Kalinga has been annexed, practice of Dharma (the

Law of piety), love of Dharma and inculcation of that Dharma (were adopted) by (the king), the Beloved of the gods. For his having conquered Kalinga, there arose remorse or repentance in (the mind of the king), the Beloved of the Gods. For when an unconquered country is (newly) conquered, there occur such things as slaughter, death and carrying away captive of people and these things are exceedingly felt and regarded as serious by (the king), the Beloved of the Gods. There live everywhere Brahmanas and (Buddhist) ascetics, people of other (religious) sects and house-holders, among whom these (virtues) are practised, namely, service (or hearkening) to superiors (or elder brothers), hearkening to mother and father, hearkening to preceptors and proper behaviour towards friends, acquaintances, comrades and relatives, as well as to slaves and servants and also steadfast devotion (to duties). There to them (also) occur injury (or taking away or tearing off of dear ones), slaughter and banishment of persons attached to them. And of those who are well settled in life and whose affection remains unreduced or unvanishing, their friends, acquaintances, comrades and relatives fall into calamity. There to them that too is a kind of injury (or seizure by force). This lot (or ill-luck) of all men is regarded as serious by (the king), the Beloved of the Gods. There is no such country except that of the Yavanas, where do not live communities (or groups of people) like these Brahmanas and Sramanas. There is also no such country where, amongst men, does not exist (religious) faith in some one sect or another.

So, whatever number of men was then killed (or wounded), and died and was carried away captive at the time of annexation of Kalinga, a hundredth part or -the thousandth part (of that number is -regarded as serious by (the king), the Beloved of the Gods. And moreover, if any one does wrong (to him), he should be tolerated or pardoned by the king, the Beloved of the Gods, so far as it is possible to tolerate (or to pardon). To the forest-tracts (i.e., the people thereof) that exist in the dominion of (the king), the Beloved of the Gods, the majestic power of (the king), the Beloved of the Gods, should bring consolation, should make (them) reflect (properly) and should also make them feel remorseful (in wrong deeds), This should be thus told-"you should feel ashamed (for your wrong-doing), if you do not want to be perished (or utterly ruined)." For, (the king), the Beloved of the Gods, wishes to all beings freedom from injury (i.e., security), self-control, proper behaviour (or mental tranquillity) and gentleness (or joyousness, rabhasa). In the opinion of (the king), the Beloved of the Gods, the chiefest conquest is the Dharma-vidhya (i.e., the victory of the Law of piety). And that conquest has been achieved by, (the king), the Beloved of the Gods, both here (in his own dominions) and, among all the border (or neighbouring) regions as far as six yojanas where dwells the Ionian ;(or Greek) King named Antiochos, and beyond that Antiochos (ie., in the northwest,) (where live) the four kings named Ptolemy, Antigonos, Magas and Alexander and also downwards (i.e., in the South) among the Cholas and Pandyas as far as the Timraparni (river)-people and thus also in the king's own provinces viz., in the countries of the Ionians or Greeks and Kambojas, the Nabhapantis of Nabhaga, the Bhojas and the Pitinikas, the Andhras and the Pulindas. (For), everywhere (these people) follow the instruction in the Law of piety (given) by (the king), the Beloved of the Gods. Even where the envoys (or messengers) of (the king), the Beloved of the Gods, do not go, they on hearing of the ordinances preached on the Law of piety and his instructions on the Law of piety follow (or practise) and will follow the Law of piety. And the same conquest is achieved thereby everywhere and this conquest is full of delight. This delight is won through the Law of piety. But this delight, however, is a small matter. (The king), the Beloved of the Gods, considers that (gain) which concerns the other world as being of great fruit. And for this purpose this Edict of the Law of piety has been written-what is that?-so that my sons and great-grand-sons, whoever may be, may not think of conquering a new conquest. If ever, they take up any conquest of their

own (or as giving delight to themselves), they should find pleasure in forgiveness (or toleration) and lightness in (giving) punishment. And they consider that to be the (real) conquest-which is conquest through the Law of piety. That (conquest) avails both for good in this world and the next. May all their deep joy be in what is joy in effort (or, as elsewhere, in what is joy through exertion). For, that (joy) concerns both this world and the next.

Pillar Edict IV
pp. 95-96

Thus says King Priyadarsi, the Beloved of the Gods:-by me, having been consecrated twenty-six years, this Edict of the Law (of piety) was caused to be written. My (high officers of the designation of) Rajjukas are placed in charge of many hundreds of thousands of lives amongst my subjects. I have granted to them full freedom or independence in the matter of bringing an accusation or plaint, or punishing (offenders), and why? The Rajjukas, feeling confident and being fear] may execute all their works (or conduct business), may make arrangements for the welfare and happiness of the people of the countryside and may grant favours (on them). They will know the cause of (their) happiness and misery and will specially exhort or warn or give instruction to the people of the countryside through the officers of the Law (of piety). Why so? So that they may work to gain the blessings of both this life and the life hereafter. My Rajjukas also engage themselves or strive to give service to me. My agents or servants also, knowing my will, give service (to me). They (agents) will also exhort some people and for this reason, the Rajjukas will be able to please (or serve) me. just as (a person), having made over his child to a skilful or wise nurse, feels confident (with the idea) that the skilful nurse will easily be able to protect my child. Thus (with such an idea), my Rajjukas have been appointed for the welfare and happiness of my country-people, with the purpose that they being fearless, feeling confident and not becoming depressed or disconsolate in mind, will execute their works. For this reason have I granted full freedom to the Rajjukas in the matter of arrest and punishment, For, this is to be desired for-what is that? That there should be uniformity in judicial procedure and also uniformity in the criminal. So far too, in this matter, my rule (or injunction) is that-with regard to men, who are confined to prison and later sentenced to death, after their punishment has been adjudicated (or settled in court), a grace (a respite) of three days is granted by me. Their relatives (during this reprieve) will make some (of the Rajjukas) to ponder (as a revision or review case) over the question of saving their life

(i.e., by submission of an appeal for life concession). If there does not occur any such person for making them reconsider (the matter), they (the condemned persons) may (by themselves) will give alms or gifts, or will observe fasts (for benefits) in the other world. For, this is (also) my desire that even in the time of confinement or imprisonment (they) may (strive to) gain (the benefits of) the next world; and there may increase at the same time, among the people, manifold virtuous practices, self-control and distribution of gifts (or charity).

Buddhism advocates that one should always take into considera-

tion the example to be learned from the experience of others,

"Here am I, fond of my life, not wanting to die, fond of pleasure and averse to pain. Suppose someone should rob me of my life (fond of life as I am and not wanting to die, fond of pleasure and averse to pain), it would not be a thing pleasing or delightful not wanting to die, one fond of pleasure and averse from pain, it would not be a thing pleasing or delightful to him. For a state that is not pleasant or delightful to me must be so to him also: and a state that is not pleasing or delightful to me, - how could I inflict that upon another? As a result of such reflection he himself abstains from taking the life of creatures and he encourages others so to abstain, and speaks in praise of so abstaining. Thus, as regards bodily conduct he is utterly pure." (Kindred Saying v, P. 308)

So as regards conduct in speech and mental attitude he makes himself pure and encourages others to do so. Thus, Buddhist five precepts alone, if practised consciously, are capable of establishing justice and fair-play in society.

Selections from Mahayana Buddhism

THE BODHISATTVA IDEAL

E.A. Burtt. The Teachings of the Compassionate Buddha. New York: Mentor Books, 1955.) pp.133-134.

A Bodhisattva resolves: I take upon myself the burden of all suffering, I am resolved to do so, I will endure it. I do not turn or run away. do not tremble, am not terrified, nor afraid, do not turn back or despond. And why? At all costs I must bear the burdens of all beings. In that I do not follow my own inclinations. I have made the vow to save all beings. All beings I must set free. The whole world of living beings I must rescue, from the terrors of birth, of old age, of sickness, of death and rebirth, of all kinds of moral offence, of all states of woe, of the whole cycle of birth-and-death, of the ' jungle of false views, of the loss of wholesome dharmas, of the concomitants of ignorance, -from all these terrors I must rescue all beings.

...I walk so that the kingdom of unsurpassed cognition is built up for all beings. **My endeavours do not merely aim at my own deliverance. For with the help of the boat of the thought of all-knowledge, I must rescue all these beings from the stream of Samsara, which is so difficult to cross; I must pull them back from the great precipice, I must free them**

from all calamities, I must ferry them across the stream of Samsara. I myself must grapple with the whole mass of suffering of all beings. To the limit of my endurance I will experience in all the states of woe, found in any world system, all the abodes of suffering. And I must not cheat all beings out of my store of merit. I am resolved to abide in each single state of woe for numberless aeons; and so I will help all beings to freedom, in all the states of woe that may be found in any world system whatsoever.

And why? Because it is surely better that I alone should be in pain than that aU these beings should fall into the states of woe. **Therefore I must give myself away as a pawn through which the whole world is redeemed from the terrors of the hells, of animal birth, of the world of Yama; and with this my own body I must experience, for the sake of all beings, the whole mass of all painful feelings. And on behalf of all beings I give surety for all beings, and in doing so I speak truthfully, am trustworthy, and do not go back on my word. I must not abandon all beings.**

And why? There has arisen in me the will to win all-knowledge, with all beings for its object, that is to say, for the purpose of setting free the entire world of beings. And I have not set out for the supreme enlightenment from a desire for delights, not because I hope to experience the delights of the five sense-qualities, or because I wish to indulge in the pleasures of the senses. And I do not pursue the course of a Bodhisattva in order to achieve the array of delights that can be found in the various worlds of sense desire.

And why? Truly no delights are all these delights of the world. All this indulging in the pleasures of the senses belongs to the sphere of Mara.

Nagarjuna's advice to the king of Udayi, from Jewel Garland (Precious Garland) text. Extract from Robert Thurman. Inner Revolution: Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Real Happiness. (New York: Riverhead Books, 1998.) p.167.

Nagarjuna instructed] the king first in what he needed to know for his own liberation and development, in line with Ashoka's first principle of enlightened politics, the transcendent value of the individual. Nagarjuna then advised King Udayi on the basic principle of enlightened social action, the universal altruism of great love and great empathy: **"O King! Just as you love to consider what to do to help yourself, so should you love to consider what to do to help others!"** He taught his friend the king how to care for every being in his kingdom: by building schools everywhere and endowing honest, kind, and brilliant teachers; by providing for all his subjects' needs, opening free restaurants and inns for travelers; by tempering justice with mercy, sending barbers, doctors, and teachers to the prisons to serve the inmates; by thinking of each prisoner as his own wayward child, to be corrected in order to return to free society and use his or her precious human life to attain enlightenment.

MAHAYANA ETHIC

Bodhicarya Avatara:

chapter 8 verses 91-99. > Translation from Santideva. *A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life*.

Translated by Alan Wallace and Vesna Wallace. Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 1997

The relationship between ethics and interdependence:

"91. Just as the body, which has many parts owing to its division into arms and so forth, should be protected as a whole, so should this entire world, which is differentiated and yet has the nature of the same suffering and happiness.

92. Although my suffering does not cause pain in other bodies, nevertheless that suffering is mine and is difficult to bear because of my attachment to myself.

93. Likewise, although I myself do not feel the suffering of another person, that suffering belongs to that person and is difficult [for him] to bear because of his attachment to himself.

94. I should eliminate the suffering of others because it is suffering, just like my own suffering. I should take care of others because they are sentient beings, just as I am a sentient being.

95. When happiness is equally dear to others and myself, then what is so special about me that I strive after happiness for myself alone?

96. When fear and suffering are equally abhorrent to others and myself, then what is so special about me that I protect myself but not others?

97. If I do not protect them because I am not afflicted by their suffering, why do I protect my body from the suffering of a future body, which is not my pain?

98. The assumption that "it is the same me even then" is false; because it is one person who has died and quite another who is born.

99. If one thinks that the suffering that belongs to someone is to be warded off by that person himself, then why does the hand protect the foot when the pain of the foot does not belong to the hand?"

-----.

Mark Tatz. Trans. Asanga's Chapter on Ethics With the Commentary of Tsong-Kha-Pa, The Basic Path to Awakening, The Complete Bodhisattva. (Lewiston/Queenston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1986. Pp.70-72.

(69a.3) Even in the case of what is reprehensible by nature, the bodhisattva acts with such skill in means that no fault ensues; rather, there is a spread of much merit.

Accordingly, the bodhisattva may behold a robber or thief engaged in committing a great many deeds of immediate retribution, being about to murder many hundreds of magnificent living beings--auditors, independent buddhas, and bodhisattvas--for the sake of a few material goods. Seeing it, he forms this thought in his mind: "If I take the life of this sentient being, I myself may be reborn as one of the creatures of hell. Better that I be reborn a creature of hell than that this living being, having committed a deed of immediate retribution, should go straight to hell." With such an attitude the bodhisattva ascertains that the thought is virtuous or indeterminate and then, feeling constrained, with only a thought of mercy for the consequence, he takes the life of that living being. There is no fault, but a spread of much merit.

Accordingly the bodhisattva, if he has the capability, acts with a thought of mercy or the intention of doing benefit to overthrow kings or high officials from the power of ruling the dominion, stationed in which they spread great demerit by being generally violent and pitiless toward sentient beings, and engaged in absolutist oppression of others. The bodhisattva confiscates property from robbers and thieves--those who steal the property of others--who take a great deal of the property of community and shrine by theft for their own enjoyment. He thinks, "Let not this enjoyment of property result in extended harm and misfortune for them." Upon that condition only, he steals it back and restores that of the community to the community, and that of the shrine to the shrine. The bodhisattva investigates storekeepers or park custodians who clumsily waste the property of the community or shrine, and those who use it for themselves. He thinks, "Let not that deed and that misuse result in extended harm and misfortune for them," and removes them from power. In this way the bodhisattva, while taking what has not been freely given, incurs no fault; but there is a spread of much merit.

Accordingly, the lay bodhisattva comes to a woman with the dharma of sexual embrace, she being single and her thought subjected to an agony of desire to end her celibacy. He thinks, "Let her not develop a thought of enmity, and much demerit spread. Rather, let her come under my influence for abandonment of the unwholesome, and whatever is desired be employed as a root of good." Adopting a thought that is nothing but merciful he resorts to an uncelibate dharma of copulation, and there is no fault, but a spread of much merit. (For the monastic bodhisattva, who guards against breaking the auditors' training, to resort uncelibacy is entirely out of the question.)

Accordingly the bodhisattva, in order to save the lives of many sentient beings, to save them from bondage, to save them from mutilation, will speak a false word, whereas a bodhisattva will not knowingly speak a false word for the sake of his own life. In short, the bodhisattva sees only what [will accomplish] the welfare of sentient beings, not the reverse. Having no thought of self-interest, no basis but a desire of the benefit of sentient beings, he changes his (expressed) opinion and knowingly speaks a word that diverges from it. There is no fault thus speaking, but a spread of much merit.

Accordingly the bodhisattva, relying upon a thought of mercy toward sentient beings who have been captured by an unwholesome adviser speaks as well as he is able, as well as he can, words to divide them from the unwholesome adviser. He thinks, "Let not extensive harm and misfortune come to those sentient beings through contact with a sinful companion." He enjoys it, and even delights in it. In that way, although he creates discord among friends, there is no fault, but a spread of much merit.

Accordingly, the bodhisattva rebukes sentient beings who are taking the wrong path, who are doing wrong, with words harsh and severe, which means to move them from an unwholesome to a wholesome situation. Although there is harsh speech on the part of the bodhisattva there is no fault, but a spread of much merit.

Accordingly the bodhisattva, for sentient beings inclined to dance, song, and instrumental music, and for those inclined to tales of kings and robbers, food and drink, prostitutes and street scenes, is learned in varieties of dance, song, music, and narrative. With a merciful intention he pleases them with varieties of narrative containing dance, song and music, and endowed with

idle chatter. He bends them to submission to his will and influence. Having drawn them in to listen to his word he moves them from an unwholesome to a wholesome situation. So although there is idle chatter on the part of the bodhisattva, there is no fault, but a spread of much merit.

-----.

PRINCE SHOTOKU SEVENTEEN POINT CONSTITUTION

Composed in Chinese in 604 A.D., the Seventeen Article Constitution is the first major work of political theory in Japan. The only source of the Constitution, the Nihongi, tells us that Prince Shotoku, the imperial consort, was its author. While some Western scholars question this attribution, there's little reason to doubt the Japanese account of their history.

The most important and universally foundational of the constitution's articles is the first which enjoins harmony (in Japanese, wa). This principle became one of the most repeated values in Japanese culture and history and one still finds it in political and management theory in Japan. The concept itself is derived from Confucianism, as is most of the constitution. However, much of the constitution is derived from Buddhism; the second article in particular specifies that the nation and its government reverence the Three Treasures of Buddhism: the Buddha, the Buddhist laws, and Buddhist priests. Shinto, however, is never mentioned in the Constitution; most scholars believe that Shotoku's intent was to create a society entirely based on Chinese models.

Summer, 4th month, 3rd day (604 A.D.). The Prince Imperial in person prepared for the first time laws. There were seventeen clauses, as follows:

I. Harmony is to be valued, and an avoidance of wanton opposition to be honoured. All men are influenced by class-feelings, and there are few who are intelligent. Hence there are some who disobey their lords and fathers, or who maintain feuds with the neighbouring villages. But when those above are harmonious and those below are friendly, and there is concord in the discussion of business, right views of things spontaneously gain acceptance. Then what is there which cannot be accomplished!

II. Sincerely reverence the three treasures. The three treasures, Buddha, the Law and the Priesthood, are the final refuge of the four generated beings, and are the supreme objects of faith in all countries. What man in what age can fail to reverence this law? Few men are utterly bad. They may be taught to follow it. But if they do not betake them to the three treasures, how shall their crookedness be made straight ?

III. When you receive the Imperial commands, fail not to obey them scrupulously. The lord is Heaven, the vassal is Earth. Heaven overspreads, and Earth upbears. When this is so, the four seasons follow their due course, and the powers of Nature obtain their efficacy. If the Earth attempted to overspread, Heaven would simply fall in ruin. Therefore when the lord speaks, the vassal listens; when the superior acts, the inferior complies. Consequently when you receive the Imperial commands, fail not to carry them out scrupulously. Let there be a want of care in this matter and ruin is the natural consequence.

IV. The Ministers and functionaries should make decorous behaviour their leading principle, for the leading principle of the government of the people consists in decorous behaviour. If the superiors do not behave with decorum, the inferiors are disorderly: if inferiors are wanting in proper behaviour, there must necessarily be offences. Therefore it is that when lord and vassal behave with propriety, the distinctions of rank are not confused: when the people behave with propriety, the Government of the Commonwealth proceeds of itself.

V. Ceasing from gluttony and abandoning covetous desires, deal impartially with the suits which are submitted to you. Of complaints brought by the people there are a thousand in one day. If in one day there are so many, how many will there be in a series of years? If the man who is to decide suits at law makes gain his ordinary motive, and hears causes with a view to receiving bribes, then will the suits of the rich man be like a stone flung into water while the complaints of the poor will resemble water cast upon a stone. Under these circumstances the poor man will not know where to take their complaints. Here too there is a deficiency in the duty of the Minister.

VI. Chastise that which is evil and encourage that which is good. This was the excellent rule of antiquity. Conceal not, therefore, the good qualities of others, and fail not to correct that which is wrong when you see it. Flatterers and deceivers are a sharp weapon for the overthrow of the State, and a pointed sword for the destruction of the people. Sycophants are also fond, when they meet, of dilating to their superiors on the errors of their inferiors; to their inferiors, they censure the faults of their superiors. Men of this kind are all wanting in fidelity to their lord and in benevolence towards the people. From such an origin great civil disturbances arise.

VII. Let every man have his own charge and let not the spheres of duty be confused. When wise men are entrusted with office, the sound of praise arises. If unprincipled men hold office, disasters and tumults are multiplied. In this world, few are born with knowledge: wisdom is the product of earnest meditation. In all things, whether great or small, find the right man, and they will surely be well managed. On all occasions, be they urgent or the reverse, meet but with a wise man, and they will of themselves be amenable. In this way will the State be lasting and the Temples of the Earth and of Grain will be free from danger. Therefore did the wise sovereigns of antiquity seek the man to fill the office, and not the office for the sake of the man.

VIII. Let the Ministers and functionaries attend the Court early in the morning and retire late. The business of the state does not admit of remissness and the whole day is hardly enough for its accomplishment. If, therefore, the attendance at Court is late, emergencies cannot be met. If officials retire soon, the work cannot be completed.

IX. Good faith is the foundation of right. In everything let there be good faith, for in it there surely consists the good and the bad, success and failure. If the lord and the vassal observe good faith one with another, what is there which cannot be accomplished? If the lord and the vassal do not observe good faith towards one another, everything without exception ends in failure.

X. Let us cease from wrath and refrain from angry looks. Nor let us be resentful when others differ from us. For all men have hearts, and each heart has its own leanings. Their right is our wrong, and our right is their wrong. We are not unquestionably sages, nor are they

unquestionably fools. Both of us are simply ordinary men. How can any one lay down a rule by which to distinguish right from wrong? For we are all, one with another, wise and foolish, like a ring which has no end. Therefore, although others give way to anger, let us on the contrary dread our own faults, and though we alone may be in the right, let us follow the multitude and act like them.

XI. Give clear appreciation to merit and demerit and deal out to each its sure reward or punishment. In these days, reward does not attend upon merit nor punishment upon crime. All you high functionaries who have charge of public affairs, let it be your task to make clear rewards and punishments.

XII. Let not the provincial authorities or the Kuni no Miyakko levy exactions on the people. In a country there are not two lords; the people cannot have two masters. The sovereign is the master of the people of the whole country. The officials to whom he gives charge are all his vassals. How can they, as well as the Government, presume to levy taxes on the people?

XIII. Let all persons entrusted with office attend equally to their functions. Owing to their illness or to their being sent on missions, their work may sometimes be neglected. But whenever they become able to attend to business, let them be as accommodating as if they had had cognizance of it from before, and not hinder public affairs on the score of their not having had to do with them.

XIV. All you ministers and functionaries! Be not envious. For if we envy others, they in turn will envy us. The evils of envy know no limit. If others excel us in intelligence, it gives us no pleasure; if they surpass us in ability, we are envious. Therefore it is not until after a lapse of five hundred years that we at last meet with a wise man, and even in a thousand years we hardly obtain one sage. But if we do not find wise men and sages, how shall the country be governed?

XV. To turn away from that which is private, and to set our faces towards that which is public—this is the path of a Minister. Now if a man is influenced by private motives, he will surely feel resentments, and if he is influenced by resentful feelings, he will surely fail to act harmoniously with others. If he fails to act harmoniously with others, he will surely sacrifice the public interests to his private feelings. When resentment arises, it interferes with order, and is subversive of law. Therefore in the first clause it was said that superiors and inferiors should agree together. The purpose of that first clause is the same as this.

XVI. Let the people be employed (in forced labour) at seasonable times. This is an ancient and excellent rule. Let them be employed, therefore, in the winter months, when they are at leisure. But from Spring to Autumn, when they are engaged in agriculture or with the mulberry trees, the people should not be so employed. For if they do not attend to agriculture, what will they have to eat? If they do not attend to the mulberry trees, what will they do for clothing?

XVII. Decisions on important matters should not be made by one person alone. They should be discussed with many. But small matters are of less consequence. It is unnecessary to consult a number of people. It is only in the case of the discussion of weighty affairs, when there is a

suspicion that they may miscarry, that one should arrange matters in concert with others, so as to arrive at the right conclusion.

Translated by W.G. Aston, *Nihongi* (London: Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1896)

Introduction by Richard Hooker

HONEN: SENCHAKUSHU

(Coates and Ishizuka, Honen The Buddhist Saint, II, pp. 344-345.

In the next place, if we look at it from the standpoint of difficulty and ease, the Nembutsu is easily practised, while it is very hard to practise all the other disciplines. For the above reasons thus briefly stated, we may say that the Nembutsu being so easily practised, is of universal application, while the others being hard to practise, do not suit all cases. And so Amida seemed to have made his Original Vow the rejection of the hard and the choice of the easy way, in order to enable all sentient beings, without distinction, to attain birth into the Pure Land. If the Original Vow required the making of images and the building of pagodas, then the poor and destitute could have no hope of attaining it. But the fact is that the wealthy and noble are few in number, whereas the number of the poor and ignoble is extremely large. If the Original Vow required wisdom and great talents, there would be no hope of that birth for the foolish and ignorant at all; but the wise are few in number, while the foolish are very many. If the Original Vow required the hearing and seeing of a great many things, then people who heard and saw little could have no hope of that birth; but few are they who have heard much, and very many are they who have heard little. If the Original Vow required obedience to the commandments and the Law, then there would be no hope of that birth for those who break the commandments or have not received them; but few are they who keep the commandments and very many are they who break them. The same reasoning applies to all other cases. If, then, we make the Original Vow to consist in the practice of these many forms of discipline, it follows that those who attain birth into Paradise will be few, while the many will fail. We conclude therefore, that Amida Nyorai, when He was a priest by the name of Hozo ages ago, in His compassion for all sentient beings alike, and in His effort for the salvation of all, did not vow to require the making of images or the building of pagodas conditions for birth into the Pure Land, but only the one act of calling upon His sacred name.

DOGEN

Reiho Masunaga. Trans. A Primer of Soto Zen. Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1971. Pp. 27-28; 44-45

Dogen instructed:

While the late Abbot Eisai was living at Kenninji, a poor man from the neighborhood came and said: "My home is so poor that my wife and I and our three children have had nothing to eat for several days. Have pity and help us out."

This was at a time when the monastery was completely without food, clothing, and money. Eisai racked his brains but could think of no solution. Then it occurred to him that just at this time a statue of Yakushi was being built at the temple and that there was a bit of copper that had been hammered out to make the halo. Eisai broke it up with his own hands, made it into

a ball, and gave it to the poor man. "Exchange this for food and save your family from starvation," he said. The poor man left overjoyed.

His disciples were critical: "You've given the halo of a Buddhist statue to a layman. Isn't it a crime to make personal use of what belongs to the Buddha?" You are right," the Abbot replied, "but think of the will of the Buddha. He cut off his own flesh and limbs for the sake of all sentient beings. Certainly he would have sacrificed his entire body to save starving people. Even though I should fall into the evil realms for this crime, I will still have saved people from starvation." Students today would do well to reflect on the excellence of Eisai's attitude. Do not forget this.

p. 28

In a talk one evening Dogen said:

In China during the reign of Emperor T'ai-tsung' of the T'ang, Wei Cheng⁴ remarked to the Emperor: "Your subjects are criticizing you."

The Emperor said: "If I am benevolent and draw criticism, I need not worry. But if I am not benevolent and am praised, then I should worry."

If even laymen have this attitude, how much more so should a monk. If you have compassion and a mind that seeks the Way, you need not concern yourself with the criticism of fools. If you don't have this mind, but people think you do, this is really a cause for concern.

pp.44-45

One day Dogen instructed:

The laws that control the world provide that each person, from Emperor to commoner, does the work that his position demands. When a person occupies a position he is not qualified to hold, it is known as disturbing the Will of Heaven. When the government accords with the Will of Heaven, the world is calm and the people at peace. Thus the Emperor arises early" in the morning to perform his duties; this is not easy work. The laws of the Buddha differ only so far as the occupation and type of work is concerned. When the Emperor governs on the basis of his own thinking, takes into account the precedents of the past, and seeks out virtuous ministers and when his government accords with the Will of Heaven, then good government prevails throughout the land. When these things are neglected, there is conflict with heaven, disturbances fill the world, and the common people suffer. From the Emperor on down-all officials, functionaries, warriors, and commoners-have the particular work that they must do. Those who follow their calling are true men. Because those who do not perform their duties disturb the affairs of heaven, they receive its punishment.

Therefore, students of Buddhism, in that they abandon both the world and their homes, must not think of bodily comfort even for a moment. Although this comfort may seem useful at first, later it can cause only great harm. Monks must train themselves to perform their duties fully and to do their work in the way expected. Governing a country requires an understanding of past rules and laws, but, when no examples have been transmitted from the former sages and

wise men, one must follow what seems the proper thing to do at the time. The Buddhist, however, has clear precedents and teachings to follow. Masters who have received the teachings handed down directly from the past are living today.

Once you realize that for each of the four dignified attitudes there are established precedents and that you must just practice in the manner of your predecessors, then you cannot help but gain the Way. Ordinary people think of conforming to the Will of Heaven; Zen monks think of conforming to the will of the Buddha. While each must approach his labors in the same way, what is gained differs, for the monk gains something far better, something that once attained lasts forever. For the sake of this great tranquility, the practitioner must only determine in his own heart to undergo the temporary hardships that befall this illusory body during one lifetime and to follow the will of the Buddha.....

Contemporary Mahayana

Extract from Kenneth Kraft. Inner Peace, World Peace. (Albany: State University Press of New York, 1992.) p. 21.

In 1964, while still in Vietnam, Nhat Hanh founded a Buddhist community of activist-practitioners known as the Tiep Hien Order. As he later wrote, "The aim of Tiep Hien is to study, experiment, and apply Buddhism in an intelligent and effective way to modern life, both individual and societal. The original Vietnamese community did not survive the Communist takeover, but a group called the Order of Interbeing has become its successor in the West. The most committed adherents serve an apprenticeship of one to five years before ordination, and each year they are expected to spend a certain number of weeks in retreat. Ordained and lay members strive to uphold the first five precepts of Buddhism (no killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, or taking of intoxicants) plus a related set of fourteen precepts. The supplementary precepts can be summarized as follows:

1. Do not be idolatrous about or bound to any doctrine, theory or ideology, even a Buddhist one.
2. Do not think the knowledge you presently possess is changeless absolute truth.
3. Do not force others to adopt your views, whether by authority, threat, money, propaganda, or even education.
4. Do not avoid contact with suffering or close your eyes to suffering.
5. Do not accumulate wealth while millions remain hungry.
6. Do not maintain anger or hatred.
7. Do not lose yourself in distraction, inwardly or outwardly.
8. Do not utter words that can create discord or cause your community to split apart.
9. Do not say untruthful things for the sake of personal advantage or to impress people.
10. Do not use the Buddhist community for personal gain or profit, or transform your community into a political party.
11. Do not live with a vocation that is harmful to humans nature.
12. Do not kill. Do not let others kill.
13. Possess nothing that should belong to others.
14. Do no mistreat you're your body.

These precepts are administered in a tolerant manner, because it is recognized that even the best-intentioned people cannot adhere to them absolutely.

Extracts from: Robert Thurman. Inner Revolution: Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Real Happiness. (New York: Riverhead Books, 1998.) 322pp.
pp.291-297 Epilogue: Working Axioms for Realizing and Implementing Inner Revolution and the Politics of Enlightenment

1. Life is boundless; it has an infinite horizon of positive development as well as infinite danger of degeneration. There is an ultimate goal for human evolution, an enlightened state, a full development of wisdom, love, happiness, and power that is beyond our wildest dreams, inconceivable to our habitual notions.
2. Materialists and nihilists have no room for such an ideal....But Buddhists have identified such a state as that of an enlightened person....They consider it accessible to everyone.....
3. The perfect enlightenment of buddhahood--selfless freedom--transcends all dichotomies and is just as powerful in the social realm as it is peaceful in personal existence.....
4. 4. Buddhahood as universal love and wisdom is the supreme power, the diamond vajra strong force that blazes from every atom of the universe. Buddhahood manifests itself actively in human society as an inner revolution, a politics of enlightenment.
5. Since a "world" is more accurately a collective mind-field of living beings than a mass of inorganic element, to become a buddha means to transform the entire mind-field.....
6. Buddhahood is the complete truth-conquest of the whole world, the creation of a perfect buddha-environment....
7. A buddha's enlightenment is expressed as the ultimate artistry of plant-transformation....the process of taming violence by non-violence...
8. Buddhaverse development is especially appropriate for human beings.....The human life form is itself a very high embodiment of evolutionary generosity, sensitivity and tolerance.....
9. Truth-conquest, or buddhaland building, can proceed only nonviolently, since individuals can be conquered only from inside, from their hearts, by their own free understanding.....
10. Hence perfect buddhas must carry on their truth-conquest by means of education....neither indoctrination nor training....

11. The insight of psychological selflessness has been the inexhaustible source of the creative individualism that Buddhism has always nurtured.
12. The educational institution Shakyamuni founded is the Jewel Community (Samgharatna). It is an alternative social world founded on enlightenment.....
13. Monasticism is the core of the Jewel Community. It is the original invention of the Buddha.
14. The monastic core provides the cocoon for the free creativity of the lay Jewel Community.....
15. Monasticism is a mediating institution, centrist in every sense, midway between city and wilderness, priest and hermit.....
16. The main rival of monasticism is imperialistic militarism, the core institution for secular and religious rulers of ordinary societies....
17. . Since the Buddha's time, the monastic-based Jewel Community has gradually gained ground over militaristic societies by promoting a sane humaneness....
18. This politics of enlightenment is based on transcendental individualism, heroic pacifism, educational universalism, social altruism, and democratic liberalism....
19. This politics of enlightenment, as a body of theory and repertoire of political strategies, has always lain and still does lie at the hearts of the more durable and effective social and political systems in all parts of the planet in all eras of history...
20. The politics of enlightenment continues to defeat the politics of compulsion (as proven by our continued survival). Because of not only the moral force of its principles but also its natural alliance with the mercantile expansion of wealth and the bureaucratic maintenance of popular governments...
21. The Jewel Community operates on three levels in every culture in which it exerts its influence: revolutionary, evolutionary and fruitional or millennial.
22. The revolutionary phase is radically dualistic. During it, the Jewel Community presents itself as an alternative to ordinary society, stresses its own religious distinctiveness....
23. The evolutionary phase is educatively nondualistic...promoting a new social ethic through a variety of lay educational institutions...
24. The millennial phase is pervasively nondualistic. During it, the society is able to enjoy the universe of enlightenment, and the Jewel Community institutions openly take responsibility for the society's direction....still mainly a potential for the future....
25. Tibetan society is the only one in planetary history in which this third phase has been partially reached...

26. Elements of the fruitional phase were central in the Renaissance and Reformation that eventually created the modern world, but materialistic extremism twisted the Western transformation...
27. The modern world....has come to the brink of the abyss of total self-annihilation.
28. ...the implementation of the politics of enlightenment is the only way to avoid planetary disaster.
29. All one needs to understand the inner revolution and live the politics of enlightenment is wisdom about one's long-term self-interest, good humored tolerance of one's own and others' faults, trust in the adequacy of the environment and our fellow beings, and the courage to take up the responsibility of enlightenment.
30. Buddha is as Buddha does. Just be happy. At least act enlightened. Feel enlightened. It is more pleasant, and enlightenment will follow.

 Some Contemporary Ideas for an Actual Political Platform Based on Enlightenment Principles
 pp. 301-322.

Based on five principles of the politics of enlightenment: transcendent individualism, nonviolent pacifism, educational evolutionism, ecosocial altruism and universal democratism...

Ten Suggested Platform Planks

1. We affirm the priority of the individual over the community in all areas...
2. Acknowledging the very grave injustices that are still inflicted on billions of beings, we proclaim everyone's right to equality of opportunity, in all respects, regardless of racial, sexual, religious, national, ethnic or economic group membership, and we deny any group's right to oppress its individuals under the cloak of national sovereignty, religious absolutism, or any other excuse.....
3. We pledge to adopt a fully consensual tax system that will allow individual taxpayers to earmark their contributions for programs they choose, though for practical reasons they must give government several options.....
4. We deplore capital punishment and resolve to eradicate it in our aspiring-to-be-civilized-society. We deplore also lifetime incarceration if it does not at the same time offer a full-scale evolutionary-transformation program of education. Prison systems should be the education systems last line of defense and thus fully interconnected with that system's resources....
5. We affirm each woman's right to choose for herself whether she will offer residence in her body to a new life, and therefore we pledge to deploy all forms of sex education and contraception to give women maximum control....
6. We affirm each individual's right to freedom of choice in lifestyles and medical therapies, free conscience in matters of religion, freedom of speech and freedom in sexual preference--as long as these freedoms are not harmful to others...

7.We pledge to cut our defense budgets by two-thirds, reappropriating \$200 billion a year in America alone and hundreds of billions in many other countries; and to build enlightened, disarmed democracies on the Tibetan and Costa Rican models, which can lead the world toward enlightenment, liberty and peace.
8. We pledge to make lifelong education for all citizen's the nation's top priority....
9. We reaffirm the enlightenment principle of altruistic support for all, implementing rights to a job, education, shelter, sustenance, a healthy environment, and a universal health-care system along Canadian or European lines, which would encompass a competitive plurality of health systems, including Chinese, Tibetan, Indian and others.
10. At the heart of our system, and in this hour of its crisis, we affirm the need for strong executive leadership in all democracies, reinvolving the democratic ideal that free individuals elect for their protection a strong, dedicated, trusted, and empowered chief executive. To insure that, we pledge to (1) register everyone to vote, using the computer from the Department of Motor Vehicles; (2) use television and telephone to create an electronic referenda system of individual feedback to the executive and legislative branches; (3) reimplement a democratic media policy to prevent monopolies over the press; and (4) finance campaigns with public money to prevent executive indebtedness to rich individuals and institutions.

Shin Buddhism-Hongwanji

Kyogyoshinsho: Chapter on Transformed Buddha-Bodies and Lands. Collected Works of Shinran, p. 289.

117 Reflecting within myself, I see that in the various teachings of the Path of Sages, practice and enlightenment died out long ago, and that the true essence of the Pure Land way is the path to realization now vital and flourishing.

Monks of Sakyamuni's tradition in the various temples, however, lack clear insight into the teaching and are ignorant of the distinction between true and provisional; and scholars of the Confucian academies in the capital are confused about practices and wholly unable to differentiate right and wrong paths. Thus, scholar-monks of Kofukuji presented a petition to the retired emperor in the first part of the second month, 1207.

The emperor and his ministers, acting against the dharma and violating human rectitude, became enraged and embittered. As a result, Master Genku--the eminent founder who had enabled the true essence of the Pure Land way to spread vigorously [in Japan]-and a number of his followers, without receiving any deliberation of their [alleged] crimes, were summarily sentenced to death or were dispossessed of their monkhood, given [secular] names, and consigned to distant banishment. I was among the latter. Hence, I am now neither a monk nor one in worldly life. For this reason, I have taken the term Toku ["stubble-haired"] as my name. Master Genku and his disciples, being banished to the provinces in different directions, passed a period of five years [in exile].

On the seventeenth day of the eleventh month, 1211, during the reign of the emperor Sado-no-

in, Genku received an imperial pardon and returned to Kyoto. Thereafter, he lived in the capital, at Otani, north of Toribeno in the western foothills of Higashiyama. In 1212, during the midday hour of the twenty-fifth day of the first month, he passed away. The auspicious signs [that occurred then], too numerous to record here, may be found in his biography.

Shinshu Shogyo Zensho, II, p. 527. Shinran's Laments

Even though I take refuge in the Jodo Shinshu,
It is difficult to have a mind of truth.
I am false and untrue,
And without the least purity of mind.

We men in our outward forms
Display wisdom, goodness and purity.
Since greed, anger, evil and deceit are frequent,
We are filled with naught but flattery.

With our evil natures hard to subdue,
Our minds are like asps and scorpions.
As the practice of virtue is mixed poison,
We call it false, vain practice.

(Collected Works of Shinran, Kyogyoshinsho, II, Faith Volume, p. 107.)

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 of religious practices is of no concern. It is a matter of neither practice nor good acts, neither sudden attainment nor gradual attainment, neither meditative practice nor non-meditative practice, neither right contemplation nor wrong contemplation, neither thought or no-thought, neither daily life nor the moment of death, neither once-calling nor many-calling. It is simply shinjin that is inconceivable, inexplicable and indescribable. It is like the medicine that eradicates all poisons. The medicine of the Tathagata's Vow destroys the poisons of our wisdom and foolishness

Collected Writings on Shin Buddhism. D.T. Suzuki, trans. Kyoto: Shinshu Otani-ha, 1973. pp. 122-123.) (262 pp.)

Shujisho

This self who is unable to distinguish right from wrong, good from evil, who has no claim even for little deeds of love and compassion, and yet who is willing just for name and gain to pose as a teacher--[how shameful!]...(Daisetsu Suzuki,

In the text Lamp for the Last Dharma Age (Mappô-tomyôki) which has been attributed to Saicho, Founder of the Japanese Tendai school, and is quoted by Shinran in the Kyôgyôshinshô, we read:

The benevolent king and the dharma-king, in mutual correspondence, give guidance to beings. The supra-mundane truth and the mundane truth, depending on each other, cause the teaching to spread. Thus, the profound writings are everywhere throughout the land, and the benevolent guidance reaches everywhere under heaven.1

Kakunyo (1270

1351), the third abbot, gives the first definition of the issue. He exhorted the followers to store up faith inwardly, while externally observing the principles of Confucian ethic. In his text Gaijashô, he writes:

The teaching passed down to us is that we should observe benevolence, justice, propriety, wisdom and sincerity (known as "the five precepts [gokai]" in the supramundane dharma [shusse] and as the "five virtues [gojô] in the mundane dharma [seppô]) and store within our hearts the inconceivable working of Other Power.

Rennyô's Letters, Minor L. Rogers, Ann T. Rogers, Rennyô: The Second Founder of Shin Buddhism, p.215, p. 186.

A passage which becomes problematic for the discussion is III-12 in which Rennyô states: **"In particular, first of all, take the laws of the state as fundamental and, giving priority to [the principles of] humanity and justice, follow the generally accepted customs; deep within yourself, maintain the settled mind of our tradition; and outwardly, conduct yourself in such a way that the transmission of the dharma you have received will not be evident to those of other sects and other schools. This distinguishes the person who fully knows our tradition's right teaching, which is true and real."** He defines nembutsu practitioners as **"ones who faithfully abide by the Buddha-dharma and the laws of the state."**

Hawaiian Buddhist Annual 1932. Publication of the International Buddhist Institute, Hawaii Betsuin. Edited by Yemyo Imamura and Kaundinya Hunt (Shinkaku). 2476 B.A. (Buddhist Age)----1932 C.E.

THE DEMOCRATIC IDEAL OF THE SHINSHU SECT OF BUDDHISM

By Y. Imamura, Hongwanji Temple, Honolulu.

It is a great pity that we always seem to be rebellious, to be fighting against something, to be trying to uproot evils in some form or other.

A great ocean where a wave once stirred up causes another to arise and yet others ad infinitum. Republicanism versus imperialism, the state versus the individual, democracy versus autocracy--struggles between these two antagonistic movements have been going on from the

beginning of history. Modern democracy which has lately attracted so much attention must also be said to be one of those innumerable thought waves which disturb the eternal serenity of the great ocean of life.

Communism seems to be another counter movement, one which is striving to upset the present form of democracy. If things go on like this, when will Peace prevail over the earth? Are we to continue fighting and suffering forever? Perhaps! We leave this question to the law of adjustment. What intimately concerns us is the present. Each generation has its own problems to solve. Let us solve ours, and future difficulties will be met in their turn. But let us not shirk or fear what immediately confronts us-this would be shameful and ungrateful indeed.

Let us not forget the value of Buddhism to help us solve the difficulties of today, for Buddhism not only shows us how our wounds may be healed but also points out a Way whereby we may develop a vital force which will enable us to realize our ideals. This, surely, is the foundation of social happiness and at the same time an approach to the Land of Eternal Purity leading to the true philosophy of life and the things that belong to the permanent and the everlasting. From this point of view, we would ask if the modern upholders of democracy are really sincere, logical and thoroughgoing and if they are earnestly engaged in the realization of democratic principles and all that they signify? I feel that my question is in order, for do we not see among those who, outwardly at least, are emphatic supporters of democracy supporting imperialistic militarism with all its questionable practices? Are they unconscious or conscious offenders? When theory and practice thus contradict each other, it causes one to stop and ask one's self, is the so-called modern democracy a genuine thing?

Falsified democracy is a most dangerous thing. How often crimes have been committed under a beautiful and alluring name. Imperialism may be all right if assigned to its legitimate sphere, but Imperialism under the guise of democracy, how hypocritical! how disgusting!

Under the present world conditions, militarism is to some extent inevitable, but as a part of the order of democracy, how barbarous! Yet we cannot deny the existence of these glaringly inconsistent facts. From falsehood nothing real and permanent can grow. Peace based on a contradiction is doomed by its very nature to be a sham.

One reason for this contradictory state of affairs is that the principles of democracy are being interpreted by politicians. They are not necessarily men of low ideals, but often they will sacrifice high ideals for the sake of temporal gain. What a pity that the politicians are not philosophers or men of high spiritual culture, then the grandeur, harmony and peace to be found in the ideal of democracy would not be lost sight of in the practical manifestation. This is certainly to be deplored. But perhaps this has been unavoidable in the past struggle to bring about a material civilisation. In the future, however, Buddhism may help us to turn our attention from the world without and concentrate on the worlds within. Thus, to open the way for the advance of truly democratic ideals and to lay the foundation of a new civilisation based on brotherhood and truth. This is the ideal which Buddhism proclaims to all the modern advocates of democracy.

The Hawaiian branch of the International Buddhist Institute consists of a group of Buddhists of several nationalities and ancestries. It knows nothing of sectarianism, colour or race, and is willing to work in harmony with Buddhists anywhere, irrespective of label.

The only qualification necessary for membership in the International Buddhist Institute of Hawaii is a recognition of Sorrow, Sorrow's cause, and a compassion which shows itself in a

desire to serve and walk the Buddha's Golden Eightfold Path.

The Aims of the International Buddhist Institute of Hawaii

- (1) To disseminate the Buddha-thought in the community.
- (2) To strive to allay prejudice and misunderstanding.
- (3) To give all in the Hawaiian Islands who desire it a chance to hear, in whatever language they best understand, what Buddhism really is.
- (4) To cooperate with all of whatever creed or sect in bettering the conditions under which people (particularly children) live.
- (5) To help the large number of Hawaiian-born of Japanese ancestry by pointing out to them in the English language the outstanding features of Buddhism, and showing them that it is the Highest Wisdom.
- (6) To strive earnestly to decrease sadness and suffering (evil) by trying to eliminate every cause which tends to bring it about.
- (7) To encourage everything that tends to increase wholesome pleasure (good).
- (8) To banish the war thought and establish thoughts of peace.
- (9) To foster international-mindedness.
- (10) To demonstrate in a practical manner universal sympathy and belief in the Oneness of all Life by practising compassion and mutual aid, and extending kindness to animals and all forms of life.

What the International Buddhist Institute of Hawaii is Doing

A weekly gatha singing programme and talk at the Oahu Prison and Leahi Home for Consumptives, also bed-to-bed visiting at latter.

A weekly visit to patients at the Queen's hospital and a fortnightly gatha singing programme and talk at the Kalihi leper hospital.

A bimonthly ceremony and address conducted in the nurses' home at the Queen's hospital (for nurses only).

An occasional visit to the hospital for the insane.

The visiting of children's temple schools, Y.M.B.A.'s and Y.P.B.A.'s on all islands at least once a year.

The conducting of a ceremony and address for adults at the Fort Street temple every Sunday evening at 7:45 from the beginning of September until the end of June.

The conducting of a Forum as occasion requires. Private and public study classes.

The maintenance of a Buddhist library.

A weekly Sunday School at the Territorial School for the Deaf and Blind.

Hisao Inagaki, trans. The Three Pure Land Sutras. pp.303-305
LARGER SUTRA section 40

The Buddha said to Maitreya, "People of this world are as I have described. All the Buddhas pity them and with divine powers destroy their evils and lead them all to goodness. If you give up wrong views, hold fast to the scriptures and the precepts, and practise the Way without committing any fault, then you will finally be able to attain the path to emancipation and Nirvana."

The Buddha continued, "You and other devas and humans of the present and people of future generations, having received the Buddha's teachings, should reflect upon them, and while following them, should remain upright in thought and do virtuous deeds. Rulers should abide by morality, reign with beneficence and decree that everyone should maintain proper conduct, revere the sages, respect men of virtue, be benevolent and kind to others, and take care not to disregard the Buddha's teachings and admonitions. All should seek emancipation, cut the roots of Samsara and its various evils, and so aspire to escape from the paths of immeasurable sorrow, fear and pain in the three evil realms."

"In this world, you should extensively plant roots of virtue, be benevolent, give generously, abstain from breaking the precepts, be patient and diligent, teach people with sincerity and wisdom, do virtuous deeds, and practise good. If you strictly observe the precepts of abstinence with upright thought and mindfulness even for a day and a night, the merit acquired will surpass that of practising good in the land of Amitayus for a hundred years. The reason is that in that Buddha-land of effortless spontaneity all the inhabitants/- 303 -do good without committing even a hair's breadth of evil. If in this world you do good for ten days and nights, the merit acquired will surpass that of practising good in the Buddha lands of other directions for a thousand years. The reason is that in the Buddha-lands of other directions many practise good and very few commit evil. They are lands where everything is naturally provided as a result of one's merit and virtue, and so no evil is done. But in this world much evil is committed, and few are provided for naturally; people must work hard to get what they want. Since they intend to deceive each other, their minds are troubled, their bodies exhausted, and they drink bitterness and eat hardship. In this way, they are too preoccupied with their toil to have time for rest.

"Out of pity for you and other devas and humans, I have taken great pains in exhorting you to do good deeds. I have given you instructions appropriate to your capacities. You have, without fail, accepted my teachings and practised them, and so have all entered on the Way as you wished.

"Wherever the Buddha comes to stay, there is no state, village which is not blessed by his virtues. The whole country reposes in peace and harmony. The sun and the moon shine with pure brilliance; wind arises and rain falls at the right time. There is no calamity or epidemic, and so the country becomes wealthy, and its people enjoy peace. Soldiers and weapons become useless; and people esteem virtue, practise benevolence and diligently cultivate courteous modesty."

The Buddha continued, "My concern for you, devas and humans, is greater than the care of parents for their children./- 304 - I have become a Buddha in this world, destroyed the five

evils, removed the five sufferings, and extinguished the five burnings. I have countered evil with good, eradicated the suffering of birth-and-death, and enabled people to acquire the five virtues and attain the peace of unconditioned Nirvana. But after I have departed from this world, my teaching 'I gradually decline and people will fall prey to flattery and deceit, and commit various evils again, resulting in the recurrence of the five sufferings and the five burnings. As time goes on, their sufferings will intensify. As time goes on, people will become even more wicked. As it is impossible to describe this in detail, I have given you only a brief outline."

The Buddha said to Maitreya, "You should each ponder on this well, teach and admonish each other, and be on guard against disobeying the Buddha's instruction." The Bodhisattva Maitreya, with his palms together, said, "O Buddha, how sincere and earnest your admonition is! People of the world are just as you have described. O Tathagata, you take pity on and care for us without discrimination and seek to deliver us all from suffering. Having accepted the Buddha's repeated exhortations, I will be careful not to disobey them."

Collected Works of Shinran, Notes on Once-Calling and Many-Calling, p. 484.

It is those who argue over once-calling and many-calling who are termed people of other teachings and different understanding. Other teachings applies to those who incline toward the Path Sages or nonbuddhist ways, endeavor in other practices, think other Buddhas, observe lucky days and auspicious occasions, depend on fortune-telling and ritual purification. Such people belong to nonbuddhist ways; they rely wholly on self-power.

This passage is taken from a collection of stories concerning the famous Shin Myokonin Shoma of Sanuki and translated by Rev. James Yanagihara, San Luis Obispo Buddhist Temple.

DON'T FORGET KINDNESS

A chief magistrate was invited to stay as a guest at the home of a village head man in the village of Mibu. Shoma was hired by the headman as a bathroom tender.

Soon after the guest's arrival, he was ushered to the bathroom to take a bath after his long trip. As the honored guest entered the bath room he called out, "Hey, bathroom tender, come in here and scrub my back." Without any feelings of apprehension as to who the guest was, Shoma answered, "Okay, I'll come in and scrub your back." As he was scrubbing the guest's back, Shoma said, "Ah... always eating like a rat, no wonder you're so fat. . . hey, chief magistrate, don't you ever forget to express kindness?"

Upon hearing what Shoma had said to the official, the headman began to tremble with fear knowing only harsh punishment was sure to follow for Shoma. To say anything disrespectful to an official was unheard of.

After bathing, the official retired to the guest room and asked the headman, "Say headman. Go and bring that bathroom tender here. I want to see him." The headman lowered his head to the tatami and humbly said, "He is such a foolish man. I do not even know his name, but please forgive him." Impatiently, the official said, "Don't worry. Just bring him here." Quickly the headman went seeking for Shoma. After locating Shoma and explaining to him of the request of the official, Shoma nonchalantly said, "Okay. I'll go and see what he wants," and went to the room of the official. Upon entering, the official asked with a smile, "What is your name?" Upon telling the official his name, the official said, still smiling, "Shoma, eh. . . you are an honest person and I wish you the best of health." With these words of praise, he excused Shoma.

Everyone was overjoyed to hear what actually took place in the guest room. The unconcerned behavior of Shoma, again, reveals the "Great Path of Unobstructed Freedom" as stated in the Tannisho. This type of behavior which comes from Shoma's heart is, in reality, the manifestation of truth within the Nembutsu.

A CONTEMPORARY VIEW

Extract from Kenneth K. Tanaka. Ocean: An Introduction to Jodo Shinshu Buddhism in America.

Conduct: Daily Activities and Participation in the World

p. 207

What do you mean by "matters of the world"?

Well, I can think of charities for the underprivileged and also ethical guidelines for such social and medical issues as abortion, organ transplant, and the environment.

The first category-social welfare (what you call "charities")--has been a large part of the Buddhist tradition from its earliest period. For example, selfless giving (*dana*) is a way of sharing with others who need help without expecting any return or recognition. Bodhisattvas are people of deep understanding and caring whose purpose in life is to help others. All Buddhists, by virtue of their spiritual growth, will automatically try to have the Bodhisattva ideals.

The great Buddhist ruler of India, King Ashoka, from the third century before the Common Era, is a prime example of one who lived according to Buddhist ideals. Throughout his vast empire he set up hospitals and drug dispensaries for the sick. He also made the travelers' task safer and easier by building convenient hostels and tree lined roads. The Buddhists after King Ashoka have looked up to him as a model of social welfare and personal

p.208

humility. Such people are careful not to let their deeds become a source of self-righteousness and false pride.

One such person in the Jodo-Shinshu tradition is Lady Takeko Kujo (1887-1928), a daughter of Monshu Myonyo Otani who was the 21st Abbot of the Nishi-Honganji Branch.

During her short 42 years of life, Takeko Kujo dedicated much of her adult life to giving greater voice to the Buddhist women, for which she is regarded the founder of the Buddhist Women's Association (*fujinkai*). When the 1923 Great Kanto Earthquake devastated the Tokyo area, she marshalled rescue efforts for the victims which led to the building of Asoka Hospital in line with the spirit of the Indian Buddhist King. It is said that Lady Kujo died from physical exhaustion stemming from her social welfare efforts.

Today Christians seem to be more active in charities and social issues than Buddhists are.

Before the nineteenth century, I think the degree of social involvement was about even when comparing the Buddhist activities in Asia with that of Christianity in Europe. The gap in the degree of involvement between the two religions started about one hundred-fifty years ago, especially in the United States, when the eighteenth century ideas of equality and liberty inspired such movements as the Social Gospel among some Christians. However, not all Christians agree. Still, even today, some Christians feel that their religious teachings have little to do with social welfare and issues. Religion, they insist, should stay within the boundaries of spiritual matters.

p.209

Another important factor for the gap lies in the degree of government control over religious institutions that effectively limited their social involvement. Christianity freed itself from the oppression of kings a few centuries before the Buddhists. In Japan during the Tokugawa period (1603-1867), for example, the state tightly regulated religious activities. The Buddhist priests were forbidden to talk about their teachings to the followers of other Buddhist schools! Further, all members of the family were forced to belong to the same Buddhist school. Do you recall our earlier discussions of the government's oppressive handling of the Sango-wakuran controversy (see page 87)? The situation did not immediately improve even during the modernizing Meiji period (1867-1912) because the government still dictated many of the practices of Buddhism. For example, the government adopted the policy of encouraging the monks of all Buddhist schools to marry. Their Buddhist brothers and sisters in the other Asian countries did not fare much better in their relationship with the state.

Are you saying that the political system in Asia is the main reason for the attitude of many Buddhists toward matters of the world?

Yes, but not all. The Buddhist emphasis on the mind and self-reflection puts more emphasis on personal growth before helping others. We cannot truly help others if we have not helped ourselves first.

Self-reflection helps many Buddhists realize that charities are often motivated by the donors' desire to "feel good" by being a good person or better than others. The

p. 210

good feeling we get when we give to a charity or a beggar is not necessarily bad, but from the Buddhist view can be a distraction. Motivation often determines the outcome of our action. If we hold some prejudicial attitudes toward someone or some groups of people, yet try to be charitable to them, our actions will not be as effective as if we were free from negative views. Again, the aim in Buddhism is to cultivate oneself in order to awaken to how things are and not just to be a good person. One becomes a good person as a natural outcome of awareness. But one should not make being morally good the primary goal, for that would be another form of

ego.

But you are not saying that Buddhists should not get involved, right?

Yes, that's correct. I've just explained some of the reasons for my position. Basically, if we understand the teachings, we will automatically want to get involved. Look at Shinran Shonin and King Ashoka and their accomplishments (see Chapt. 4 and page 207)! I believe this is also true for the great people in the other major religions: Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., Mother Teresa, and Elie Weisel, to name a few.

In Jodo-Shinshu, Shinran Shonin serves as an inspiring example, and the Daily Aspirations and the Golden Chain give us guidelines in clear modern wording. We must remember that our actions are to be rooted in our spiritual life of "expressing our deepest gratitude for the benevolence" (hoon gyo). This benevolence is normally thought of as that of Amida Buddha, but I feel that the source of our gratitude must expand to include much

p.211

more, i.e., the other Buddhas, family, teachers, friends, society, sentient beings, physical matters, and the universe.

How would you state the basic values for Jodo-Shinshu conduct in the world?

Professor Sen'e Inagi, a noted Jodo-Shinshu scholar and teacher in Japan, suggests the following five values based on Rennyo Shonin's teachings: (87)

1. Listen to the teachings throughout one's life,
2. Refrain from quarreling with other schools and religions,
3. Fully actualize the mind of equality (byodo-shin) that sees and treats people and events in our lives with equanimity,
4. Respect and honor life,
5. Abandon superstitious and magical practices.

Can you possibly offer some more concrete guidelines, particularly with regard to social issues?

I must start by telling you that the following guidelines are the view of one person and are not intended to speak for any group or to be regarded as mandatory for Shinshu Buddhists. They should certainly not be thought of as a practice or means for realizing Shinjin awareness. They are intended, instead, to address a need among many American Shinshu Buddhists for a practical framework to

87 Inagi Sen'e. Jodo-Shinshu no rinri (Ethics in Jodo-Shinshu) (Kyoto: Tankyusha, 1987), pp. 100-119.

p.212

....think about today's social issues from their religious perspective.

I have concentrated on four of today's ethical topics: abortion, social welfare, capital

punishment, and environment. After each point, "()" denotes the topic/s among the four that are more impacted and "[]" indicates parallel ideas found in statements and preambles in existing Shinshu service books.

1) I believe the world-universe in which we find ourselves, despite its downside and tragedies, is fundamentally compassionate. This vision finds expression in the Larger Sutra's Bodhisattva Dharmakara whose selfless sacrifices aspire to spiritually nourish and liberate all sentient beings (all four issues) [*Jodo-Shinshu Preamble* (See Appendix III) and *Daily Aspiration*].

2) The universe is an interconnected network in which I play a vital role. As a member of this community, I must do my share to contribute to its welfare. We cannot wistfully depend on transcendent beings to bail us out from the grave environmental, medical, and social crises that now threaten the survival of the world (social welfare, environment) [*Preamble, Daily Aspirations, Golden Chain, Pledge*].

3) In making my contribution to the world, I should not be motivated by a desire to be a "good person" or feel righteous that I have done a "good deed." What I give back to the world pales in comparison to what I receive from the world. Plus, given my ego-centered ways, a "good" deed today will quickly be snuffed out tomorrow,

p.213

or even the next moment, by acts driven by selfish motives. Shinran speaks to this:

Difficult is it to be free of evil nature
The heart is like snake and scorpion
Good acts also are mixed with poison
They are but deeds vain and false.

(social welfare) [*Preamble*]

4) I believe that most criminal offenses are a result of causes and conditions reflecting the socio economic environment of the offender. Though the offender must bear the responsibility for his or her actions, as a member of society I should help correct the underlying social problems as well as help rehabilitate the offender. Furthermore, I should not feel righteous in looking down upon these people, for I am reminded of Shinran's insight:

It is not that you keep from killing because your heart is good. In the same way, a person may wish not to harm anyone and yet end up killing a hundred or thousand people.

(*Tannisho*, Chapter 13)

5) I believe there are no absolutes in matters of the conventional, everyday world. Crucial issues, in particular, involve complex sets of factors and yield no readymade, black and white answers (abortion).

6) If at all possible, utmost effort must be made to preserve and foster life, and not to take life (abortion, capital punishment) [first of the Five Precepts, Precepts in the Six Paramitas].

p.214

7) If I must terminate life, utmost care should be taken to be well informed about the subject matter. The decision making must include a serious consideration for the welfare of all whose lives would be impacted; for a person is involved in a much wider interconnected set of relationships (abortion, capital punishment, environment).

8) Whatever decision I make, I must be willing to bear my share of the responsibility for its consequences and not shift blame or responsibility onto others (abortion, capital punishment, environment) [Preamble].

9) I do not make my ultimate aim in life to accumulate wealth, gain fame or garner power (social welfare, environment) [*Preamble, Aspiration, Golden Chain*].

10) I strive to live simply and to share my energy, time and resources for the betterment of the world (social welfare, environment) [*Preamble, Daily Aspiration, Golden Chain*].

11) I strive to refrain from idle talk and to neither purposely create discord among people nor speak ill of others without any constructive intention. (social welfare) [*Preamble*]

12) I do not feel any need to consult or petition supernatural forces to satisfy worldly objectives or to allay fears and anxieties stemming from such forces. I, therefore, do not rely on horoscope reading, fortune-telling, or superstitious beliefs to serve as a guide in my life. [*Preamble*].

How would you approach matters related to sexuality and gender issues from a Jodo-Shinshu perspective?

p.215

I recently was asked to provide an answer to that same question for an article, "Sexual Ethics in Religious Institutions" in a newspaper. The categories were provided, and I responded with the following:

Buddhism is concerned primarily with personal awakening to the spiritual truth of wisdom or understanding and compassion or caring. Because Buddhist spiritual insights do not produce automatic, black-and-white answers concerning ethical matters that apply to all people and all circumstances, individual Buddhists are encouraged to think for themselves in arriving at their own conclusions based upon their spiritual insights. The teachings are not about one's adherence to a rigid moral set of absolute right and wrong. Consequently, Buddhist groups have generally refrained from taking absolutist positions on ethical issues, including most of the sexual ethical issues being considered in this survey. (Of course, this does not apply to the monks and nuns who take vows to observe strict precepts related to sex.)

Although spiritual insights do not lead to ethical absolutes, there are some basic principles on which an individual may choose to base his or her ethical decisions. They can be expressed as: 1) I shall try to be mindful and take responsibility for my actions, 2) I shall try not to bring pain to others, and 3) I shall try not to be judgmental of others because I, too, am far from being perfect.

The views expressed below are those of one individual and do not speak for the Buddhist Churches of America or any other Buddhists; they are meant for the household-

p.216

ers (non-monastic clergy and lay) within the contemporary American context.

Teenage Sex: Strongly discouraged since, due to their immaturity, teenagers generally take neither full responsibility nor precautions for the potential consequences of pregnancy and disease.

Premarital Sex: Strongly discouraged for minors for the same reason as above. Adults, on the other hand, are encouraged to be mindful of the three basic principles (See above).

Masturbation: No basic problem or moral stigma attached to the act.

Extramarital Sex: Strongly discouraged since it brings pain upon the spouse and family and shows a lack of responsibility for one's marital commitment.

Divorce: Not prohibited or condemned if all sincere attempts to work out the differences have been exhausted.

Abortion: Discouraged but does not condemn those who after having exhausted all other options found no recourse but to abort; they then should take responsibility and reflect upon future actions.

Contraception: Accepted.

Married Clergy: Believing that members of the clergy should enter marriage and experience normal life, the founder of the school, Shinran, married after twenty years as a monk and had several children. Most Jodo Shinshu priests have married throughout the school's 800 year history, making it unique among Buddhist

p.217

schools, although in recent modern times other Japanese Buddhist schools allow their clergy to marry.

Female Clergy: Accepted. Three out of the sixty priests in the Buddhist Churches of America are female. No doctrinal grounds to prohibit or discourage the ordination of women. Other American BCA women have been ordained.

Homosexual Orientation: Not condemned. No doctrinal grounds exist for a judgmental attitude by others. All beings are equally embraced by Amida Buddha, the symbol of understanding and caring.

Homosexual Acts: Not condemned- keeping of the three principles are encouraged.

Same-Sex Blessings in Churches: Accepted.

Ordination of Homosexuals: Not prohibited. No doctrinal grounds exist for barring candidates for reason.

How would you sum up the Jodo-Shinshu outlook on conduct and participation in the world?

I cannot help but look to Shinran Shonin, whose life of ninety years was dedicated to reaching out to the world by sharing the teachings in person and through writings. This spirit is exemplified by the fact that virtually chantings during Jodo-Shinshu services conclude with verse:

May this merit-virtue
Be shared equally with all beings
May we together awaken the Bodhi Mind,
And be born in the realm of Serenity and
Joy.

