



The Six Aspects of Faith-Mind in Shinshu

by Seigen H. Yamaoka

In Buddhism, Flow is a natural process of life. In the natural process of life there is inter-action and inter-relationships which harmonize and give meaning to the whole of existence. This Flow Process exists in the vastness of the universe as well as in every aspect of the personal life of the individual. Therefore, the process of flow is the very foundation of Buddhist Education.

However, how does the person discover the process in his personal life? Shinran, in his exposition of the endowed Faith-Mind of Shinjin, clarifies the meaning of the Flow Process in a personal growth process. Shinran, in expanding on the content of the endowed Faith-Mind, reveals six basic aspects within the one-mind of Faith-Mind. The *Six Aspects* are *Expanding*, *Self-Reflection*, *Great Compassion*, *Great Joy*, *Gratitude*, and *Life of Meaning and Growth*.

By *Expanding* we mean that in the inter-related process of life, all meaning begins as something enters or expands our lives. It can be a question, experience, event or incident. *Expanding* is that process which initiates the process of meaning for the individual—whether he/she knows it or not. In other words, *Expanding* means to be given a point of reference and to feel its flow and growth in the inner self.

By *Self-Reflection* we mean the personalization of the *Expanding* process. That is, we look into ourselves and begin to see the reaction that we have. It can cause us to see the total selfishness of ourselves at the deepest level or we can see the faults of others and be critical of them at the shallowest level. In the depth of *Self-Reflection* there is the experience of aloneness which shatters the loneliness of self and brings forth the self which comes to be awakened to the realization of aloneness-is-not aloneness. It is a trip on honesty. In other words, *Self-Reflection* means to see how the inner self interacts with the flow of others.

By *Great Compassion* we mean the self's realization that regardless of "what we are," "what we have been," and "what we will be," we have always been, will be, in the pro-

cess of meaning. Through the *Great Compassion* of all things—Truth, we come to this moment of realization. In other words, *Great Compassion* means the realization of how the greater flow of others helps us to awaken to the other's flow in ourself.

By *Great Joy* we mean the realization of Oneness, wholeness or simply "aloneness-is-not aloneness": The realization of the Universe/Truth and I Being One. In other words, *Great Joy* means to be awakened to the joyful realization that the flow of others is the flow of the universe which is inter-related to the flow in ourselves.

By *Gratitude* we mean the *Great Joy* which naturally manifests itself into words and deeds. Yet, gratitude brings forth a sense of responsibility. Realizing the totality of the inter-relationship we are reminded of our responsibilities. In other words, *Gratitude* means that the flow of the universe awakens us to the natural realization of grateful responsibility.

By *Life of Meaning and Growth* we mean the putting into effect the sense of grateful responsibility. Whatever action we do, feel, or think—the process begins once again to make life and meaning an ever deepening process. In other words, *Life of Meaning and Growth* means the entire flow experience opens the process of an ever deepening—*Expanding*, *Self-Reflection*, *Great Compassion*, *Great Joy*, *Gratitude*, and *Life of Meaning and Growth* as we interact with the flow of others.

The *Six Aspects* are not new. Whether we know it or not, we experience it even at this moment. It is real and it is personal. Yet, through the *Six Aspects* we find meaning because it is a process which clearly defines and points to the way of meaning and wholeness. Thus, we can say, that the *Six Aspects* is the key which opens the door to ourselves and the world around us, and ultimately to the religious truth of Enlightenment.