

The Idea of *Tamashii* in Buddhism: Who is the “Self”?¹

Akira Ōmine

Ryūkoku University, Kyoto

WHAT IS BORN IN the Pure Land? Where does the self come from and where does it go? Who is this self? In seeking to answer these fundamental questions, we will engage in a discussion of ideas beginning with Plato up through modern and contemporary Western philosophy. Our inquiry will also look into ideas developed in Mahayana and Pure Land Buddhism, with emphasis on the thoughts of Dōgen (1200–1253) and Shinran (1173–1262).

LOCATING THE PROBLEM

Where do we go when our human existence comes to an end? Is it that nothing exists after death and that death simply returns this self to nothingness? Or is it that some other world exists after death and that we will go to live there in some form? These questions are as ancient as the history of the human race. Yet, though we are living today in a modern technological age, these are questions that are not far removed from us at all.

It is likely that primitive people had already faced these questions, albeit in a nebulous way. However, they were probably first posed self-consciously in around the fifth Century B.C.E., a time that Karl Jaspers referred to as the “axial age” (*Achsenzeit*). It could be said that Western metaphysics, which began with Plato, as well as world religions such as Buddhism and Christianity, were set in motion by questions such as these.

These questions perplexed philosophers in modern Europe as well. The fundamental problem addressed in Descartes’ *Meditations on First Philosophy* concerned proofs for the existence of God and the immortality of the soul. The critical philosophy of Kant later denounced as dogmatic the proofs set forth by those metaphysicians, but it did not consider the questions themselves to be meaningless. The existence of God and the immortality of the soul (*Seele*) could not be proven through theoretical reason. However, it was possible to inquire into them as the

objects of faith within the scope of practical reason. What this means is that the inquiry of practical reason is a matter of great significance as it relates to the depths of human existence itself. Metaphysical studies of subjectivity in German idealism after Kant, including Fichte and Hegel, further sought to resolve the same problems in the new direction that had been established by Kant. In place of the traditional schools of metaphysics, which from the time of the Greeks had considered such things as “god” or “mind” from the standpoint of their substance (*Substanz*), there arose a new perspective that viewed them as subject (*Subjekt*), or as “spirit.” Yet despite this shift, the problems themselves continued to exist. The thinking of Kierkegaard, who opposed Hegel’s metaphysical speculation, and that of the existentialists associated with Kierkegaard focused on these problems as well. Their thinking dealt exclusively with the problem of transcendence in human existence.

In Mahayana Buddhist thought, this problem corresponds more than anything else to the issue of birth in the Pure Land as set forth in the Pure Land teachings. “Birth in the Pure Land,” it could be said, actually constitutes a Buddhist symbol for transcendence. However, in Pure Land thought and faith, the words “Pure Land” and “birth” are losing the potent sense of reality and the power to arouse that they had previously possessed. This phenomenon parallels one found in Western philosophical and Christian thought, in which views pointing to the transcendent are on the verge of vanishing.

Such is the state of the contemporary age. For this reason, in order for the idea of birth in the Pure Land to be restored to its place of importance within the life experiences of people in the contemporary age, it will definitely be necessary to approach the problem with the proper attitude. That is to say, we must break through the outer shell of those concepts and enter into their interior, and there seek to comprehend the concepts once again, from a point of life that exists prior to concepts. I am referring here to the hermeneutical situation that Heidegger and others set forth for the interpretive study of classic texts.

In an early essay entitled, “Phenomenological Interpretations with Respect to Aristotle,”² Heidegger discussed the significance of the hermeneutical method. When we who live in the present seek to understand ideas from the past, he stated, we must also comprehend them experientially. The extent to which we can grasp ideas from the past will be dependent upon the extent to which, and whether, we who are presently engaged in interpretation can keep alive our own questions. Nowhere does there exist a transparent text that will always be clearly evident to all people. Our questions are established vertically, up from the ground of the present reality of the hermeneutical situation. That source of our questions is also the fundamental situation that allows the past to talk about the past itself.

Questions like “What is birth?” or “What is born?” can be rephrased as “Where have I come from and where will I go?” or “Who is this self?” I do not know whether or not these questions were asked in the traditional studies of Shin Buddhism. However, these questions cannot possibly be answered simply by combining or enlarging upon the existing doctrinal knowledge or through analysis of such concepts as birth or Pure Land. Of course, any interpretation is apt to cast excessive light, in the direction of its point of view or tenor of observation, upon any object that we ourselves consider to be the main subject. Hence, the light that we cast upon it must be dimmed whenever appropriate. However, by passing through the excessive illumination of the hermeneutical condition an object that has always been viewed only under a dim light can, for the first time, be comprehended just as it appears within that dimness. One such object that we must consider in this manner today is the problem of “birth in the Pure Land.”

T'AN-LUAN'S “BIRTH OF NON-BIRTH”

T'an-luan (476–542) was a major figure in the development of Chinese Pure Land Buddhist thought. In his major work, *Ching-t'u-wang-sheng-lun-chu* (*A Commentary on the Treatise of the Pure Land*; Jpn. *Ōjōronchū*), there appears a famous passage presented in a question and answer form.³ The question begins by stating that all of the texts of Mahayana Buddhism, such as the *Vimalakīrti Sutra* or the commentaries on the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā Sutra*, teach that the fundamental nature of the existence of sentient beings is that of “non-birth” (Jpn. *mushō*), in which they neither are born nor die. It is like empty space, which is not possessed of self-nature (*svabhāva*) or substantial nature. In other words, the fundamental realization of Mahayana Buddhism is that all things are “empty” (*śūnyatā*). If that is so, then what does it mean when Bodhisattva Vasubandhu (ca.4–5 C.E.) states that he “aspires to be born” in the Pure Land?

T'an-luan goes on to answer this question in the following way,

Answer: There are two meanings to the explanation that the nature of sentient beings' existence is that of non-birth, just like empty space. The first is that “real” sentient beings, as conceived by ordinary beings, and “real” birth-and-death, as viewed by ordinary beings, are ultimately non-existent, just like hair on the shell of a tortoise. They are just like empty space. The second is that all things are born of causes and conditions; hence, they are “not-born.” They are non-existent, just like empty space. The birth to which Bodhisattva Vasubandhu aspires signifies birth that is the arising

of causes and conditions. Since birth means the arising of causes and conditions, it is provisionally called “birth.” It is not used in the way that ordinary beings refer to the “real” sentient beings or “real” birth-and-deaths.⁴

The birth to which Vasubandhu refers when he says, “I aspire to be born” is not birth that is conceived as “real” by ordinary beings. Ordinary beings view birth (or, life) as something “substantial,” or that is, something having real substance. For example, a human possesses something with “real” substance called a body, which performs many actions. In addition, one possesses something with “real” substance called a mind, which thinks of various things. Thus, birth (or, life) is used to refer to the activity of an existing thing that is endowed with a “substantial” mind and body. Death means that all such activity ceases to exist. This is the way in which ordinary beings view birth as “real.”

In actuality, however, this way of viewing birth implies a certain self-centeredness. Self-centeredness is an attitude whereby one seeks to discover the basic substance present in all things. By grasping that substance, it is believed, one will realize peace of mind. In fact, however, one’s grasping onto basic substance means, on the contrary, that one’s own self actually becomes seized and made captive by that basic substance. Birth that is viewed by ordinary beings who are being held captive in this way cannot be called the true form of birth.

In contrast, the birth of Vasubandhu’s aspiration to be born is birth as seen from the standpoint of the arising of causes and conditions. The phrase “causes and conditions” refers to the mutual interdependence of all existences (*pratitya-samutpāda*). It is an alternative name for emptiness. All things exist in a manner that is neither self-centered nor substantialized. T’an-luan says that such birth is not “real” birth, but is “provisionally called ‘birth’” (*kemyō no shō*). This does not mean that birth is like a fantasy or illusion. Rather, it means that ordinary beings refer to the birth that they are seeing as “real.” Thus, the true way of viewing birth is to refer to it as what is “provisionally called birth.” This is the manner in which T’an-luan answers the question in his text.

However, that alone is not reason enough to explain why Vasubandhu says that he “aspires for birth.” Birth is originally non-birth and, if that is the actual state or truth of birth, then shouldn’t Vasubandhu have stated that he aspired for non-birth instead? That is the reason why there arises a second question, “Question: In what sense does he speak of ‘birth’?” Again, the issue raised here is why birth is desired instead of non-birth.

This becomes an inquiry into the relationship between birth in this defiled realm (*sahā* world), which is what ordinary beings see, and birth in the Pure Land. Why is the same term used to refer to birth in the

defiled realm and birth in the Pure Land? T'an-luan answers that,

That which is provisionally called a person in the defiled realm and that which is provisionally called a person in the Pure Land are neither definitely the same nor different.⁵

In other words, it cannot be said that birth in the *sahā* world and birth in the Pure Land are identical; nor can it be said that they differ. Both views—that they are identical or different—come about when one understands the two forms of birth substantially. But that is not the case. They are “neither the same nor different.” This might also be referred to as the “continuity of dis-continuity.” Yet, this explanation alone is still somehow insufficient, for it does not penetrate thoroughly into the source or fundamental essence of birth itself.

Here, we must go another step deeper with our inquiry into the fundamental essence of birth. Bodhisattva Vasubandhu states that,

I take refuge in the Tathāgata of Unhindered Light and aspire to be born in the realm of peace and bliss.⁶

Yet, birth is the origin of our self-centered existence; it is the source from which the multitude of samsaric sufferings arises. Hence, although we might turn away from birth or life in the *sahā* world and aspire for birth in the Pure Land, wherever we go we would just end up being born once again. Would this not mean then that we could not become free from transmigrating in samsaric existence no matter where we might go?

T'an-luan answered this question in the following way,

(Birth in) that Pure Land is the birth of non-birth (*mushō no shō*) that is brought about by the pure, Primal Vow of Amida Tathāgata. It is revealed not to be like birth within falsity and emptiness in any of the three existences. This can be said because Dharma-nature is pure; ultimately, it is non-birth. We speak of “birth” only when we refer to the feelings of the person who seeks to attain birth (in the Pure Land). Since birth is actually non-birth, how could birth be exhausted?⁷

The manner in which this answer is presented is quite different from those of the preceding questions-and-answers. What we see here is a fundamental inversion of the standpoint from which birth is viewed. Up until this point, birth had been viewed from the human standpoint of the person who wishes to be born. That is, the previous explanations had made distinctions between “real” birth and birth that is “provisionally called birth.” They had also stated that “provisionally-named persons of the defiled realm” and “provisionally-named persons of the Pure Land”

were neither the same nor different. In other words, their point of view was from the side of “real” birth.

In contrast, T’an-luan is now trying to view birth from the source of birth itself. This is revealed where he states that,

(Birth in) that Pure Land is the birth of non-birth that is brought about by the pure, Primal Vow of Amida Tathāgata.⁸

This means, in other words, that birth in the Pure Land does not result from our aspiration for birth. Rather, it originates in the Primal Vow of Amida Tathāgata.

That is the reason why birth in the Pure Land, or, the birth of non-birth is not the same as birth “that is provisionally called birth.” Rather, we must call it true birth, or, fundamental birth, which is based in the Primal Vow of the Tathāgata. Passing through its own self-negation as non-birth, birth casts off its self-centeredness and comes to be revealed as birth that wells up from the fundamental activity of existence—Amida Tathāgata’s Primal Vow. Birth of non-birth refers to the non-birth from which birth arises, and at the same time, to the birth that arises from non-birth. The phrase, “since birth is actually non-birth, how could birth be exhausted?” expresses the fundamental affirmation of birth that has passed through negation. Birth into the Pure Land does not simply refer to birth in a separate world of tranquility where samsaric existence has been transcended. It signifies an unlimited, active dynamism that turns and goes back into the very midst of the ocean of samsaric existence, thereby seeking to work exhaustively to the ends of that ocean of birth-and-death.

We ordinary beings cannot grasp the birth of non-birth through our own self-power. The Pure Land is not a place in which we can be born simply by wishing to be born there. Rather, we must abandon our self-powered calculation, with which we try to grasp birth, and entrust ourselves to the Tathāgata’s Primal Vow, which originally aspires on our behalf, saying that it cannot help but cause us to be born. When we do, we will discover ourselves, already in the midst of that life. What is born? It is this self that entrusts in and relies on the Primal Vow of the Tathāgata.

THE IDEA OF TRANSCENDENCE IN THE WEST

Let us now take a look at a number of ideas regarding transcendence of the present life as expressed in the sphere of Western culture. Plato’s philosophy of the Idea was the origin of traditional metaphysics that viewed the non-extinction and eternal life of the soul as lying at the base

of the workings of human culture and life, which includes death. According to Plato, nothing that we can observe in the realm of the senses actually or truly exists. Rather, all things exist temporarily. Things are nothing more than shadows of transcendent ideas. Still, he considered the realm of ideas that transcends the senses not simply to lie at the base of human culture. It is also the religious principle that enables human beings to live in transcendence of death. Humans who understand eternal ideas are eternal and inextinguishable, just like ideas. The core of Platonic philosophy lies in his teaching as to the path of the human soul, which ascends to the world of ideas in the heavens.

Among his Dialogues, *Phaedo* is a work that has provided encouragement to the hearts and minds of countless people. In it, Plato has Socrates say the following,

When death draws near to human beings, those among people who are bound to die will die. As for those who will not die, their death is postponed at that time and thus, completely whole, they get up and leave without incurring ruin.⁹

If we treat the soul as if it were immortal, what concerns me about that is not just this brief period of time that we call human life. Rather, it must be the entire period of its immortality. Further, the dangers that we incur are great, but right now they appear before our own eyes. It is the danger that we will incur if we treat the soul without respect.¹⁰

According to Plato, death is the occurrence in which the human soul becomes separated from the physical body. However, there are cases when this separation is carried out purely and cases when it is not. In order for the soul to take on a pure form and separate cleanly from the physical body it is necessary to practice the separation constantly while one is still alive. One trains in focusing on the soul itself in order to avoid having the soul become mixed with the physical body. The content of this practice is philosophical speculation, or, the path of the “soul as the power of speculation that preserves self-identity.” This is the reason why philosophical speculation is none other than the training in preparation for death. For Plato philosophy was not simply for the satisfaction for intellectual curiosity or for the performing of polemic techniques. It was the way to transcend death and reach the dimension of the immortality of the soul.

One point is noteworthy in Plato’s notion of transcendence. It lies in his thinking in regard to the original power of the human soul, or that is, the power of self-identifying reason. This is the idea of substance, an idea that was followed even in seventeenth century Europe. It was

reflected in the thought of Descartes, who understood the fundamental essence of the human soul to be a “thinking substance” (*res cogitans*). This metaphysics of substance included the thought of Aristotle, flowed through medieval Christian theology, and was inherited by modern philosophers like Descartes, Spinoza and Leibnitz. Such metaphysics finds, in the fundamental essence of our soul or mind, a self-identifying thing that exists in transcendence of temporality and creation. This it calls “substance.” With Kant’s criticism of substantiality (*Substanzialität*), for the first time the principle of the subject (*Subjekt*) or spirit (*Geist*) took its place. Hegel’s well-known thesis was that “substance is subject.” However, as we will see below, the clearest exemplar of a criticism of the Platonian or Cartesian notion of the immortality of the soul can be seen in the thought of Fichte.

For instance, in his work, *Science of Knowledge (Wissenschaftslehre 1804)*, Fichte states the following.

The science of knowledge cannot recognize the immortality of the soul. The reason is that according to the science of knowledge the soul does not exist. Death and potential do not exist as well. There is only life (*Leben*). Life exists eternally within life itself; that which now exists within life is, like life, eternal. For that reason, the science of knowledge sustains life and, just like Jesus, it states the following, “One who believes in me will not perish. You will come to possess life within yourself.”¹¹

In place of a god that is substance, like that of Spinoza, Fichte considered the principle of philosophy to be the self as activity, which is totally free. This subjective self is not a substance that thinks, but is the self-awareness that precedes substance. The self-awareness of knowing oneself constitutes the true self as subject. Viewed from this standpoint of self-awareness, when we substantialize and become attached to an immortal soul that is separate from the body we are mistakenly taking that which is not the self to be the self. Fichte said that the soul that we consider to be substantial is nothing more than our own spirit. Fichte’s view of religion was that our true self is the self that abandons the individual self and lives within God, who is great, expansive life. Fichte echoed the words of Jesus in the *Gospel According to St. John* when he said that the true God is neither personalized character nor substance; He is this life that we are now living.

THE IDEA OF *TAMASHII* IN DŌGEN AND SHINRAN

In Buddhism it has often been thought that what corresponds to the soul or reason (*nous*) of Western metaphysics is consciousness (*vijñāna*),

in particular, the storehouse consciousness (*ālaya-vijñāna*) as set forth in the commentaries of the Yogācāra school. It is well known that, in response to the question of whether the soul does or does not exist after death, Śākyamuni remained silent. This signified his denial of the existence of a substantial soul of the kind that we have been examining. It did not mean that he was advocating a simple materialistic position. If human beings simply consisted of physical bodies, not only Buddhism, but also religion itself would be ineffective. Therefore, from ancient times the problem has been found in the question of what we think of the thing that we have come to call the “soul” (*tamashii*) or the “mind” (*kokoro*).

The words of Dōgen that appear in the “Bendōwa” (On the Endeavour of the Way) Chapter of his work, *Shōbōgenzō* (Treasury of the True Dharma Eye),¹² represent some of the sharpest criticism of the generally-held concepts of the substantial soul or the conscious self, including those of Platonism. In this chapter, a certain person asks a question regarding the meaning of realization in the teachings of the Buddha. Is it to know that the body constantly changes through deaths and births, but that “mind-nature” or, soul, transcends birth-and-death and is thus indestructible in its permanent self-identity?¹³ In response, Dōgen answers that any teaching that “mind-nature” is permanent is similar to the heretical views of Senika, who was a religious thinker prior to Śākyamuni.¹⁴ It does not accord with the Buddha-dharma at all. This kind of thinking — that the body may perish, but the mind does not cease to exist — is actually the fundamental cause of samsaric delusion. It is the height of foolishness to have these thoughts, which are the cause of samsaric existence, and then seek to gain emancipation from samsara through them. That is a pitiable, false view.

In contrast, the standpoint of Dōgen’s teaching was that no division can be made between the body and mind, or that is, between that which undergoes temporal change and that which is eternal. Dōgen’s expressions for this included phrases such as “oneness of body and mind” (*shinjin ichinyo*), “non-duality of nature and form” (*shōsō funi*), and “samsara is identical with nirvana” (*shōji soku nehan*).¹⁵ Needless to say, the standpoint of attachment to an impermanent physical body is not present in the Buddhist teachings. At the same time, however, any thinking that the mind transcends the body and is thus imperishable also operates from a standpoint that substantializes the mind and forms attachments to it. Both the substantializing of the body and the substantializing of the mind arise from our egoistic attachment and false views as to the self. They equally serve to destroy the Buddha-dharma.

From the standpoint of “the oneness of body and mind,” it is not just the body that perishes; the mind also perishes. Yet, it can also be said neither the mind nor the body perishes. This is because, even while

perishing and not perishing stand in opposition to each other, they are also identical. That is to say, true emancipation from samsara arises, not where one exists separately from samsara, but only where one becomes completely identical with samsara itself. “Samsaric birth-and-death is the Life of the Buddha.” Dōgen also referred to the world of the Buddha-dharma, which is established outside of the confines of the self, as the realm of the mind—the “one mind.” The ideas of “the oneness of body and mind” and “samsara is identical with nirvana” are based on the standpoint that views the mind in this sense.

This does not differ at all from the Pure Land Buddhist teaching that *shinjin* of Other Power signifies this vast world of the mind. This “mind” however, is not one that can be produced by ordinary beings’ own powers. Rather, it is given to ordinary beings from the side of the Tathāgata. Shinran explained this through the idea of “directing of virtue by Other Power” (*tariki ekō*). For that reason, although *shinjin* refers to “mind”, it is not a thing that we call “mind”; that is to say, it is not a substantialized mind. That kind of self-centered substance is the mind that is eradicated by the Buddha’s mind. That is, the framework of self-consciousness in which the self knows the self is the mind that is overturned by the Buddha’s mind. It could be said that *shinjin* is the event in which one discovers one’s true self within the vast, boundless and open space of the Buddha’s mind.

When one realizes true and real *shinjin*, one is immediately grasped and held within the heart of the Buddha of unhindered light, never to be abandoned. “To grasp” (*sesshu*) means to take in (*setsu*) and to receive and hold (*shu*). When we are grasped by Amida, immediately—without a moment or a day elapsing—we ascend to and become established in the stage of the truly settled; this is the meaning of *attain birth*.¹⁶

(Shinran, *Notes on Once-Calling and Many-Callings*)

Since those who have realized *shinjin* necessarily abide in the stage of the truly settled, they are in the stage equal to the perfect enlightenment. . . . Since those counted among the truly settled are of the same stage as Maitreya, they are also said to be equal to the Tathagatas. Know that persons of true *shinjin* can be called the equal of Tathagatas because, even though they themselves are always impure and creating karmic evil, their hearts and minds are already equal to Tathagatas. . . . In the *Hymns (on the Samadhi) of All Buddhas’ Presence* Shan-tao, the Master of Kuang-ming temple, explains that the heart of the person of *shinjin* already and always resides in the Pure Land. “Resides” means that the heart of the person of *shinjin* constantly dwells there. This is to say that such a

person is the same as Maitreya. Since being of the stage equal to enlightenment is being the same as Maitreya, the person of *shinjin* is equal to the Tathagatas.¹⁷

(Shinran, *Lamp for the Latter Ages*)

In these passages Shinran explains that *shinjin* constitutes a transcendent event, which he describes through such phrases as “attainment of birth” or “settlement of birth.” This manner of human existence transcends time, even as it dwells in the midst of time. The one thought-moment of *shinjin* (*shin no ichinen*) can be expressed metaphorically, not as Kierkegaard’s “atom of temporality,” but as that instant that is an “atom of eternity.” What Shinran’s teaching of the true essence of the Pure Land way (*jōdo shinshū*) emphasized above all is the utmost and irreplaceable importance of the one thought-moment of *shinjin*, which is the first glint of eternity. The instant in which *shinjin* becomes settled represents one’s point of departure to the Pure Land. Shinran stated that persons of *shinjin* have already realized the settlement of birth, or that is, they have attained birth, even while they are still possessed of their physical bodies. In addition, Shinran expresses their arrival in the Pure Land with these words, “they transcend and realize great, complete nirvana on the eve of the moment of death.”¹⁸ This means that the mind of *shinjin*, which accompanies the physical body in the present life, becomes buddha, or that is, completely becomes mind itself. In the traditional studies of Shin Buddhism, this is referred to with the phrase, “birth is identical with the attainment of enlightenment” (*ōjō soku jōbutsu*).

In one of his letters Rennyō (1415–1499) writes about the same idea that Shinran had sought to explicate through his use of the word “mind” (*kokoro*). Rennyō, however, called it “spirit” or *tamashii*. The letter was written at the time of the death of Rennyō’s second daughter, Kengyoku-ni (1448–1472), who died at the age of twenty-five on the fourteenth day of the eighth month in the fourth year of Bunmei (1472).¹⁹

Rennyō records that Kengyoku-ni had rejoiced over realizing *shinjin* of Other Power, in accordance with the Jōdo Shinshū teachings. He states that, after warmly thanking the nurses who had cared for her, she quietly passed away. Following that, he describes a wondrous dream that was seen by a certain person at the dawn of the fifteenth day of the month, the night of her cremation.

According to the dream, the white ashes and bones of the cremated body of Kengyoku-ni lay in the garden where the funeral had taken place. As the person looked, three blue lotus flowers arose from the ashes. Between the flowers there appeared to be a gold-colored buddha, only one-inch tall, emitting rays of light. Suddenly, the buddha seemed to turn into a butterfly and vanish from sight. Thereupon, the person

awoke from the dream. Rennyo follows this description with the following words,

This vision was a manifestation of the gem of suchness and dharma-nature found in her name, *Kengyoku*. She became a butterfly, which then disappeared from sight. This indicates without question that her spirit (*tamashii*) was transformed into a butterfly, which went into the sky of dharma-nature, to the world of ultimate bliss—the city of nirvana.²⁰

What Rennyo here refers to as spirit, or *tamashii*, is not like a soul based on some primitive form of religious animism. It does not correspond to a substantial, metaphysical soul that can be differentiated from the physical body. Nor does it point to a kind of being from the spiritual world of the after-life of the type that is often brought up in stories of near-death experiences. Rather, it refers to something other than all of those substantialized realms of existence. The word signifies the existential reality of the young woman, *Kengyoku*. She must have known full well that all of those realms simply represent the fleeting and illusory thoughts of ordinary beings. Hence, she entrusted her entire self, without the slightest doubt, to the Tathagata's Vow, which was so worthy of her trust. We can see that, for Rennyo, the word *tamashii* was vividly imbued with the lucid colors of his sadness and joy. This was the sense in which he used it. Rennyo would be indeed troubled if we were to persist in our mistaken opinion that, in order to propagate to the masses, he simply compromised his beliefs to fit the secular sentiments that were prevalent in Japan at that time.

Translated by David Matsumoto

NOTES

1. Originally published in Japanese as “Bukkyō no tamashiiron”, in *Bukkyō*, no. 4, *Tamashii no mikata* (Views on Tamashii) (Kyōto: Hōzōkan, 1998), pp. 12–22. The text of this article and, unless otherwise noted, all of the quoted passages have translated into English by David Matsumoto.
2. *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles: Einführung in die phänomenologische Forschung* (Written 1921–22). For further reference and English translation, see “Phenomenological Interpretations with Respect to Aristotle: Indication of the Hermetical Situation,” translated by M. Baur, *Man and World* 25 (1992): pp. 355–393.
3. T’an-luan, *Ōjōronchū*, in *Shinshū shōgyō zensho*, vol. 1 (Kyoto: Ōyagi Kōbundō, 1941), pp. 283–284. For further reference and English translation, see also, *T’an-luan’s Commentary on Vasubandhu’s Discourse on the Pure Land, A Study and Translation*, Hisao Inagaki, trans. (Kyoto: Ryukoku University, 1998), pp. 132–133.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*
6. T’an-luan, *Ōjōronchū*, p. 327; Inagaki, p. 239. See also Vasubandhu, *Jōdoron*, in *Shinshū shōgyō zensho*, vol. 1, p. 269.
7. T’an-luan, *Ōjōronchū*, in *Shinshū shōgyō zensho*, vol. 1, p. 327; Inagaki, pp. 239–240.
8. *Ibid.*
9. Plato, *Phaedo*. For further reference and English translation, see also Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, eds., *Plato: The Collected Dialogues* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 88.
10. Plato, *Phaedo*; see also *Plato: The Collected Dialogues*, p. 89.
11. Fichte, J.G., *Science of Knowledge*. This is a translation of the Japanese version of the passage that is included in “Bukkyō no tamashiiron,” pp. 18–19.
12. Dōgen, “Bendōwa,” in *Shōbōgenzō*, vol. 1, Mizuno Yaoko, ed. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1990), pp. 10–49. For further reference and English translation, see also Kazuaki Tanahashi, ed., *Moon in a Dewdrop: Writings of Zen Master Dōgen* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1985), pp. 143–160.
13. Dōgen, “Bendōwa,” p. 31–32; Tanahashi, *Moon in a Dewdrop*, p. 153.
14. Dōgen, “Bendōwa,” p. 32–34; Tanahashi, *Moon in a Dewdrop*, p. 153.
15. Dōgen, “Bendōwa,” p. 34; Tanahashi, *Moon in a Dewdrop*, p. 154.
16. Shinran, *Notes on Once-Calling and Many-Callings*, (A translation of

Ichinen Tanen Mon'i), Shin Buddhism Translation Series, *The Collected Works of Shinran*, Vol. 1 (Kyoto: Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-ha, 1997), p. 475.

17. Shinran, *Lamp for the Latter Ages*, (A translation of *Mattōshō*), *The Collected Works of Shinran*, Vol. 1, p. 528.

18. Shinran, *The True Teaching, Practice and Realization of the Pure Land Way*, (A translation of *Ken Jōdo Shinjitsu Kyōgyōshō Monrui*), *The Collected Works of Shinran*, Vol. 1, p. 123.

19. Rennyō, *Jōgai no Gobunshō*, no. 10, *Shinshū shōgyō zensho*, vol. 5 (Kyoto: Ōyagi Kobundō, 1941), pp. 306-308.

20. *Ibid.*, 308.