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Identity in Difference: Reading Nishida's Philosophy through the Lens of Shin Buddhism

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INTRODUCTION: THE NEED TO (RE)CONSIDER NISHIDA'S PHILOSOPHY THROUGH JŌDO SHINSHŪ THOUGHT

> *[Nishida's] friends have recorded his remarks that if all other books were to disappear, one could get by with only the* Rinzai-roku *and the* Tannishō*, and that there are sections in the* Tannishō *that show the thrust of a master swordsman.*
>
> —Nishitani Keiji[1]

Nishida Kitarō (西田幾多郎, 1870–1945) is often described as Japan's first philosopher.[2] As Japan's "first philosopher" Nishida is also—more appropriately—considered the founder of the Kyoto school of philosophy (Kyoto *gakuha*, 京都学派).[3] Concerning Nishida's relationship with other thinkers in the Kyoto school, James W. Heisig notes, "Nishida was without a doubt the most creative and, not surprisingly, the one about whom the most has been written."[4]

Although Nishida's thought is typically described as being a Zen philosophy, this essay seeks to reappraise Nishida's philosophy by examining possible influences from his own Jōdo Shinshū (True Pure Land Buddhism, 浄土真宗) background and Jōdo Shinshū thought in general. In particular, this essay will argue that Nishida's concept of the "self-identity of absolute contradiction" (*zettai mujunteki jiko dōitsu*, 絶対矛盾的自己同一) may be better understood through Jōdo Shinshū doctrinal concepts rather than Zen concepts. Examining Jōdo Shinshū ideas of self and other through Jōdo Shinshū doctrinal formulations will shed new light on Nishida's idea of the "self-identity of absolute contradiction."

I start with some general background for discussing how Nishida has generally been studied as Zen philosophy. Then I go on to discuss Jōdo Shinshū influences in Nishida's life and in his philosophic project. I will show that throughout his life Nishida on both personal and professional levels was influenced by contacts with Shin Buddhists in Kyoto and his reading of Shin Buddhist texts such as the *Tannishō*.

Problems in Understanding Nishida's Thought as Zen Philosophy

One of the most common, albeit controversial, ways Nishida's philosophy has been studied in the West is as *the* philosophy of Zen Buddhism, Mahāyāna Buddhism, and/or Eastern philosophy. Bernard Faure and Robert H. Sharf, among others, have argued that descriptions of Nishida's philosophical project as being representative of Zen Buddhism have dangerous implications.[5] Given that there are a number of similarities between Faure and Sharf's arguments, and Sharf's concession that Faure's work has rendered his arguments in this area "superfluous," the following paragraphs will present Faure's argument as well as some of the responses it has elicited.[6] While the following paragraphs are critical of Faure's reading of Nishida's philosophy, I agree with Faure that Nishida's philosophy is not an example of a Zen philosophy, although for different reasons. Whereas Faure questions the very existence of what is described as the Chan/Zen tradition, this essay limits its questions to the description of Nishida as a Zen philosopher.

Faure begins by questioning the notion that Nishida's philosophical project had the goal of elucidating a Zen philosophy. Faure traces this idea to Suzuki Daisetsu's introduction in Nishida's first book, *Zen no kenkyū* (*An Inquiry into the Good,* 善の研究),[7] in which Suzuki claimed Nishida's philosophic mission was to introduce Zen Buddhism to the West.[8] More recently, introducing his 1990 translation of *Zen no Kenkyū*, Abe Masao states, "As both a philosopher and a Zen Buddhist, Nishida transformed Zen into philosophy for the first time in the history of this religious tradition and, also for the first time, transformed Western philosophy into a Zen-oriented philosophy."[9] Faure notes that it was not until late in Nishida's career, after he retired from teaching, that Nishida explicitly identified "his standpoint with Zen (and Pure Land)."[10] The question, as asked by Faure, is "whether Nishida actually set out to 'explain Zen to the West' and compare it with Western spirituality or whether he was merely perceived as doing so?"[11]

It is of interest here to note that Nishida does not explicitly refer to Zen in *An Inquiry into the Good*. In spite of this, both Suzuki and Abe introduce *An Inquiry into the Good* as having a mission of introducing Zen to the West. The closest Nishida comes to directly referencing Zen in *Inquiry into the Good* is in the final paragraph when he states,"Vedantic teachings in India, Neo-Platonism, and the Gateway of the Holy path-type of Buddhism [*shōdōmon*, 聖道門] refer to knowing God, whereas Christianity and Pure Land Buddhism refer to loving and relying on God."[12] Nishida's use of the term *shōdōmon* complicates the idea that Nishida wrote *An Inquiry into the Good* with the intention of introducing a Zen philosophy. *Shōdōmon* is a term that in the Japanese Buddhist context is used predominantly in the Pure Land discourse of Hōnen (法然, 1133–1212) and Shinran (親鸞, 1173–1262) in conjunction with the terms self-power/other-power (*jiriki/tariki*, 自力／他力) to contrast Pure Land Buddhism from other schools of Buddhism, but rarely vice versa.[13] In short, there is no reference to Zen Buddhism in *An Inquiry into the Good.* Rather, Nishida uses Pure Land Buddhist terminology. Thus even in this work, we see some influence from Jōdo Shinshū that needs to be explored further.

Responding to Faure's questions as to whether Nishida actually set out to provide Zen with a philosophic basis or if he is merely perceived as having such a goal, as well as the claim that nowhere in *An Inquiry into the Good* is Zen Buddhism explicitly referenced, Heisig surprisingly argues, "Ironically it is the lack of references to Zen in his [Nishida's] writings that shows their importance."[14] Heisig speculates that although Nishida gave up practicing *zazen* (seated meditation, 坐禅) at the age of thirty-five, he continued to see his philosophic project as being an "unfolding of Zen within himself."[15]

While conceding Heisig's argument that Nishida's understanding of "pure experience" (a term Nishida borrows from American philosopher William James) was in fact influenced by Nishida's understanding of Zen, this does not require that one accept Nishida's philosophy as a philosophic expression of Zen Buddhism. Heisig himself presents two contradictory arguments concerning the idea that Nishida saw himself as a Zen philosopher. On one hand, Heisig says that Nishida had an implicit goal of elucidating a "rational foundation to Zen from outside of Zen."[16] On the other hand, Heisig argues that Nishida's use of Buddhist terms does not necessarily imply that Nishida was giving a philosophic explanation of Zen. Heisig states: "Even where the occasional Buddhist

term appears . . . it is reading too much into it to think that Nishida had accomplished any kind of Buddhist-philosophical synthesis by using it. It was his disciples, beginning with Nishitani, who developed Nishida's intimations into philosophical ideas and related them to Buddhist ideas."[17] In this brief quotation Heisig—perhaps inadvertently—leads us to consider to what extent Nishitani's development of Nishida's ideas has influenced the study of Nishida. In other words, at present, is Nishida's thought being understood through the lens of Nishitani's ideas? Heisig notes that Nishida was diligent in his efforts to ensure that Zen was not a "grist for his scholarly career."[18]

More recently, another of Nishida's commentators, Robert J.J. Wargo, makes clear that Nishida, although influenced by Zen, was not seeking to provide a philosophic account of Zen experience. Wargo explains: "Nishida's aims are different. He is not out to translate the content of 'enlightenment' in academic terms or anything of the sort. While it seems clear that he regards the religious experience as the deepest and most meaningful of experiences, he is not attempting to lead the reader to such an experience nor to relate accounts of the experience to others. What he does try to do is give a precise formulation of the structure of the world that takes into account this kind of experience."[19] Wargo's understanding of Nishida's goals provides a useful point from which to begin a reexamination of Nishida. One can acknowledge that Zen Buddhism influenced Nishida's philosophic project without claiming Nishida's philosophy is a Zen Buddhist philosophy. This allows for and acknowledges the need to explore other areas of influence on Nishida's philosophic project.

While not the focus of this essay, given the tremendous impact Nishida's philosophy had at the time of the Japanese imperial campaign, it is imperative that studies of Nishida's work consider what if any role Nishida's philosophy had in these efforts. In this vein, Faure argues that the rhetoric of the Kyoto school, including that of Nishida, has remained "trapped in Orientalist and nativist structures."[20] Nishida often refers to the emperor and the imperial throne as being central to the *kokutai* (national polity, 国体) of Japan. However, as Agustín Jacinto Zavala claims, the imperial throne that Nishida locates at the center of his philosophical project is mythical rather than historical.[21] Nishida's language, however, when talking about the role of the emperor, is at best ambiguous. Consider the following passage from a lecture Nishida

presented to Emperor Hirohito in January 1941, in celebration of the New Year:

> In the history of our country, the whole and the individual usually did not stand in opposition. Rather, [history] has unfolded with the imperial family (*kōshitsu* [皇室]) as its center, while the individual and the whole mutually self-negated. Certainly, there were times when the power of the "whole" overshadowed that of the individual, but each time we returned to the founding spirit of Japan (*chōkoku no seishin* [彫刻の精神]), and by maintaining the central presence of the imperial family, we took a step forward into the new era and created a new epoch. I said earlier that history moves on from the present, which contains within itself the past and future, to another present, which contains the past and the future. In the case of our country, I think that the imperial family has been playing the role of the "present" that encompasses within itself the past and the future. For this reason, I think that for us to return to the original founding spirit of Japan is not just to go back to ancient times but to take a step forward into an ever-new era. I humbly submit that "restoration of the old ways" (*fukko* [復古]) ought to mean "thoroughgoing renewal" (*ishin* [維新]).[22]

In this passage, Nishida makes clear that he sees the imperial family as being central to the identity of Japanese people. What is not so clear is that the imperial family Nishida describes is not based in history but rather in myth. Nishida's ambiguous word choice may also have a more practical reason: many in the Japanese Army considered Nishida and other members of the Kyoto school subversive. Nishida, aware of the rather precarious position he was in, was thus perhaps deliberately ambiguous. Nishida, as Yusa Michiko notes, questioned if Emperor Hirohito was able to understand the aforementioned speech.[23]

Such comments are particularly troubling when read in light of the escalation of the Pacific War in 1941, Japan's continued efforts to colonize East Asia, and the bombing of Pearl Harbor. While we cannot blame Nishida for events he could not possibly have predicted, it is important to acknowledge how this passage may be interpreted at present. In this style, Faure notes that while Nishida's philosophy may not be intrinsically nationalistic, he does "question the readiness with which this rhetoric [Nishida's use of Zen and other Buddhist sources] can lend itself to appropriation by nationalistic ideologies."[24] The ease with which this appropriation occurs combined with Nishida's simplistic reductions, for example East versus West, lead Faure to conclude

the ideological function of Nishida's work "undermines the validity of 'Nishida philosophy' (*Nishida tetsugaku* [西田哲学])."[25]

Heisig concedes that Nishida's philosophy "lent validity to the question of the identity of the Japanese spirit."[26] Heisig further concedes that Nishida's "idea of the nation shared with the ideological propaganda of the day important assumptions about the imperial household and the special mission of the Japanese people vis-à-vis the other peoples of Asia."[27] Heisig, unlike Faure, sees Nishida's political philosophy as an aberration from his larger philosophical project, which was not well attuned to historical realities. In Heisig's interpretation, therefore, Nishida is faulted for failing to realize or even ignoring his own limitations.[28]

While questions concerning Nishida's (and other members of the Kyoto school's) nationalism and support of the Japanese imperial campaign are intriguing, they tend only to focus on Nishida's political philosophy, which as previously noted was not well attuned to historical realities.[29] This article is concerned with Nishida's philosophy as it pertains to the relationship of self and other and the possibility that Jōdo Shinshū thought influenced Nishida's thought in this area.

Jōdo Shinshū Themes and Influences in Nishida's Life and Philosophy

Shortly after the publication of *An Inquiry into the Good*, Nishida published a short essay, "Gutoku Shinran" 愚禿親鸞, in which he expressed his admiration for Shinran.[30] The importance of this brief work, as Dennis Hirota points out, is that in relation to the corpus of Nishida writings this essay "provides evidence of Nishida's lifelong interest in Shinran and the importance of Shinran to his philosophy of religion."[31] However, after the publication of this essay Nishida does not mention Shinran again in his writings for nearly three decades (with the exception of brief mentions of Shinran and the Pure Land Buddhist tradition in his diaries and letters). Hirota, following Hase Shōtō, speculates that this silence is due to "Nishida's awareness of his inability to treat Shinran's thought within the logic he developed in his middle period based on the context of absolute nothingness."[32]

After nearly three decades of not mentioning Shinran in his philosophic writings, it is striking that Shinran occupies a central role in Nishida's final completed essay, "Basho-teki ronri to shūkyō teki sekaikan" ("The Logic of Topos and the Religious Worldview," 場所的論理と宗教的世界観).[33] Takemura Makio notes that in this essay, Nishida

discusses with ease Zen, Jōdo Shinshū, and Christianity. Takemura explains that upon closer examination he came to believe that the roots of this essay were not found in Zen, but rather in Pure Land Buddhism.[34]

That Nishida would devote considerable energies to Pure Land Buddhism when detailing his philosophy of religion shows the influence that Pure Land Buddhism had on his life. Nishida's family, as Takemura points out, were followers of Pure Land Buddhism. The house where Nishida was born was near Chōraku Temple, a temple of the Ōtani sect of Pure Land Buddhism.[35] In the very first sentence of his "Gutoku Shinran," Nishida notes that his mother was a devout Pure Land Buddhist.[36] Yusa, in her biography of Nishida, describes his mother, Tosa, as "a woman of iron will, a devout Pure Land Buddhist, with a heart of gold." Nishida, according to Yusa, "as a young child grew up imbibing his mother's generosity and religious devotion through her milk (which he did not give up until the age of three or four)."[37] Yusa's use of language is more than poetic waxing, as Takemura details: "When Nishida would pester his mother to breastfeed him, his mother usually would say, 'If you can recite Rennyo's *Letters*, I will feed you.' Then Nishida would easily recite one of Rennyo's letters, rub his mother's bosom, and then his mother, satisfied, would breastfeed him."[38] While this is highly anecdotal, and other similar stories substitute *Tannishō* for Rennyo's *Letters*, the point is that from a young age Nishida was aware of, and on a basic level influenced by, Jōdo Shinshū teachings.

That *Tannishō* is often substituted for Rennyo's *Letters* in the above stories is not surprising, given that in his later years Nishida would express great interest in the *Tannishō*. Takemura notes that there is a genuine lack of consensus as to when Nishida first read *Tannishō*: some claim Nishida encountered it for the first time while enrolled as a special student in the philosophy department of Tokyo University; others claim he read it on his own. However, it is known that when Nishida was teaching at the Fourth Higher School he would on occasion skim through its pages.[39]

In spite of his family background and early exposure to Shin thought, scholars have tended to focus on Nishida's philosophic project almost exclusively as a philosophy of Zen. Jōdo Shinshū, we have already seen, was a salient presence in his childhood home. Contrast this with Nishida's experience with Zen—he began serious practice in 1897, was given the lay Buddhist name Sunshin 寸心 in

1901, and in 1905 ceased practicing Zen; from 1907 there is no mention of Zen in Nishida's diary.[40] In 1910, Nishida and his family moved to Kyoto as Nishida had been appointed assistant professor of ethics at Kyoto Imperial University (present-day Kyoto University). During his first week in Kyoto Nishida and his family spent some time sightseeing. Notable on the list of places Nishida and his family visited was the Higashi-honganji 東本願寺, head temple of the Shinshu Ōtani-ha sect 真宗大谷派 of Pure Land Buddhism.[41] Absent from this list are the famous Zen temples of Kyoto. Finally, after Nishida's death, his ashes and bones were divided into thirds and buried at three sites: his family's temple in Unoke (Jōdo Shinshū), Tōkeiji in Kamakura (Rinzai Zen), and Myōshinji in Kyoto (Rinzai Zen).[42]

From this we can conclude that Zen and Pure Land Buddhism both occupied prominent roles in Nishida's life. The near exclusive focus on the influence of Zen on Nishida's philosophy, or the idea that Nishida had as his goal elucidating a Zen philosophy, thus ignores the impact and influence that Jōdo Shinshū thought and practice had on his life.

While acknowledging the influence of Zen on Nishida's thought, particularly his early philosophic thought, there is an increasing recognition of a need to understand how Nishida uses Shinran's conceptions of Pure Land Buddhist thought in his philosophic project. At the same time it is not the case that Nishida's thought is an example of a Shin philosophy, any more than it is of a Zen philosophy. Rather, Nishida's philosophy was influenced by his experiences of growing up in a Pure Land Buddhist household, and Jōdo Shinshū doctrinal concepts provide a useful hermeneutic lens for understanding Nishida's philosophy because he himself made use of Shin concepts to understand Zen.

Shin Buddhist scholars, according to Heisig, have historically dismissed Nishida's thought for "having disagreed with traditional interpretations of Shinran."[43] In the rare instances when scholars have documented a connection between Pure Land thought and Nishida's philosophy, it has become all too common to simply note the connection in passing without further development. For example, Hirota, explaining the dualism of self-power and other-power in Pure Land Buddhism, states, "Nishida Kitarō sketches a broad vision of the advance of human knowledge as an overcoming of 'subjective delusions' and a move toward true knowledge that is also love, employing the dichotomy of self-power and other-power."[44] After noting the connection

in this one sentence Hirota returns to his discussion of Shinran without probing further Nishida's understanding of Shinran's thought or even explaining why the inclusion of Nishida's thought was necessary in the scheme of Hirota's paper.

One final reason that may lead many scholars to avoid a sustained discussion of Nishida's thought is the difficulty of reading Nishida. Ueda Shizuteru has suggested that "it is as if the 5,000 pages of Nishida's writings were a single essay which took him a lifetime to write, so that the conclusion of any particular published unit is a mere fiction, soon to turn into the starting point for the next step in the argument."[45]

The Relationship of Self and Other as a Concept for Understanding Nishida

Nishida's philosophic project was influenced by a number of sources, including Pure Land and Zen. Recognizing that there are few works that have explored the influence of Jōdo Shinshū thought on Nishida's philosophy, this essay attempts to explore the relationship of self (religious practitioner) and other (Amida Buddha) as it relates to Nishida's concept of the "self-identity of absolute contradiction."

The self-identity of absolute contradiction, according to Gereon Kopf, is the key to understanding Nishida's philosophy.[46] Nishida explains the self-identity of absolute contradiction as follows:

> The self is that which acts. Action arises in, and from, a mutual relationship between things. Action presupposes a relationship of mutual negation, wherein one negates the other and the other negates the first. This mutual negation is simultaneously a mutual affirmation. Each thing realizes its own uniqueness. That is, each thing becomes itself. That two things stand opposed to each other and negate each other means that they are mutually conjoined and compose one form.[47]

Scholars have already noted the compatibility of this idea with general Mahāyāna theories of non-duality. For example, Kopf explains the self-identity of absolute contradiction means that "the absolute is defined by and expresses itself in its opposite the relative, and the transcendence in immanence."[48] In other words, that which is absolute does not exist apart from the relative, and the relative does not exist apart from the absolute. This description seems to be rooted in and echoing the well-known theory of the two truths.[49]

Although conforming to general Mahāyāna descriptions of Buddhism, Nishida often refers to Pure Land doctrine and concepts

when explaining the self-identity of absolute contradiction. It is therefore necessary to examine how Shin Buddhism explains the relationship between the absolute and the relative.

The Shin Buddhist tradition seems to have understood the relationship between religious practitioner and buddha in two radically different ways.[50] First, Shinran believes that a person of *shinjin* 信心 is equal to the buddhas.[51] Shinran makes this clear in a letter to Jōshin when he states: "the person of true *shinjin* is said to be equal to the Buddhas. He is also regarded as being the same as Maitreya, who is in [the rank of] succession to Buddhahood."[52] Similarly, Rennyo (蓮如, 1415–1499), the eighth head priest of Jōdo Shinshū, describes the relationship between religious practitioners and buddha using the cryptic phrase *butsu-bon ittai* (仏凡一体, the oneness of Buddha's mind and foolish beings).

However, Yuien-bo, the author of the *Tannishō*, records that Shinran "gives himself as an example in order to make us realize that we are in delusion, knowing nothing at all of the depths of our karmic evil or the vastness of Amida's benevolence."[53] Similarly in the "Postscript" of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* 教行信証, Shinran, quoting Daochuo, describes a process in which "those who have been born first [in the Pure Land] guide those who come later."[54] Shinran throughout his writings argues, "Nirvana is attained without severing blind passions."[55] In these statements, it becomes clear that within the Pure Land Buddhist tradition we find two seemingly contradictory conceptions concerning the relationship of sentient beings with Amida, the Pure Land, and nirvana; the first statement is that of equality, the second is one of inequality.

These contradictory understandings of the relationship between sentient beings and buddha can be used to illuminate Nishida's explanation of the self-identity of absolute contradiction. For example, Nishida states, "That two things stand opposed to each other and negate each other means that they are mutually conjoined and compose one form." Shinran maintains that sentient beings are both equal and not equal to the buddhas. Nishida similarly argues that through a process of mutual negation and affirmation, a unity between the absolute and the relative is achieved and the uniqueness of both self and other are maintained. The goal of this essay is to show in greater detail how Jōdo Shinshū doctrinal concepts are useful in elucidating the meaning of Nishida's philosophy.

Overview

The following sections expand on and seek to substantiate the claims outlined above. The next section explores how Nishida conceived of the relationship of self and other by examining Nishida's thought and the Shin Buddhist influences on his thought. Recognizing that philosophic work does not occur in a vacuum—that there is no Archimedean point from which philosophizing occurs—Nishida's works will be read in light of certain events in his life. Reading Nishida's philosophy in this way will point to possible influences of Shinran's thought and Jōdo Shinshū religious experiences in Nishida's life.

In order to understand the significance of this aspect of Nishida's philosophy more fully, we next focus on Shinran and Jōdo Shinshū thought concerning the relationship of self and other. The notion that sentient beings are both equal to and different from buddhas will be explored further. Additionally, a discussion of the metaphors Shinran uses when describing Amida and the Pure Land path will be explored. Special consideration will be given to the idea that the Pure Land path is an intersubjective path. Intersubjectivity in this context is understood as the recognition that the individual grows in and through relationships with others. Furthermore, intersubjectivity maintains that in recognizing the other, we need to see the other as both "different and alike."[56] This theory will be especially useful in elucidating the concept of *butsu-bon ittai* in that the oneness is not a mystical union between sentient beings and buddha, but rather a non-dual one in which differences are maintained. Up until now, Shin Buddhist scholars have largely ignored this concept, in part because the necessary hermeneutic tools have not been available. Thus, in this section the concept of *butsu-bon ittai* will be read in light of feminist psychoanalyst Jessica Benjamin's theory of intersubjectivity, and doing so will help to clarify the idea of oneness between sentient beings and buddha.

In the last section these two—Shin thought and intersubjectivity—are brought together, allowing us to reread Nishida in light of Jōdo Shinshū thought. This rereading and reconsideration of Nishida's thought fills a lacuna present in both studies of Nishida's philosophy and Shin Buddhist studies, giving sustained attention to Nishida's understanding and use of Pure Land Buddhist sources. This study also contributes to the field of Buddhist studies more generally, exploring the dynamics of the intersubjective relationship between religious practitioner and buddha.[57] Even more broadly, this study contributes

to what James Heisig has described as a "broadening of the map" of philosophy by exploring the understanding of a person in a philosophy of non-being.[58]

SHIN BUDDHIST INFLUENCES ON NISHIDA'S THOUGHT

It has been well documented that Nishida practiced Zen Buddhism for a number of years. Nishida's relationship with Pure Land Buddhism, however, has not been as well documented, particularly in English-language publications. Within Japanese publications, as Kopf reports, recent years have seen renewed interest in how Nishida's thought can be applied to post-modern issues, such as environmentalism.[59] This shift marks particularly exciting times for Nishida scholars as it comes after decades of focus on the role of Nishida philosophy in Japanese nationalism and militarism in the period leading up to and including World War II.[60] An additional part of this shift has been to reexamine influences on Nishida's philosophy based on close readings of Nishida's writings, both philosophic and personal correspondence. Of particular interest to this essay has been the examination of Nishida's use of Shin Buddhist sources.

Shin Buddhism was a constant presence during Nishida's formative years, and both Shin and Zen were present in Nishida's adult life as well. While a number of works have examined the role of Zen in Nishida's philosophic project, with the exception of recent Japanese scholarship, an examination of the influence Shin Buddhism had on Nishida's philosophy remains for the most part unexplored. Thus, while acknowledging the role of Zen in Nishida's philosophy we will focus here almost exclusively on Nishida's use of Shin Buddhism in his writing and on possible Shin influences in Nishida's thought, drawing largely on the work of Takemura Makio, professor of modern Buddhist studies at Tōyō University, and Fujita Masakatsu, chair of the Department of Japanese Philosophy at Kyoto University.

The following sections will show that Shin Buddhism had a larger role than previous English-language studies have acknowledged. Doing so will make clear not only the necessity of this reconsideration, but also why Shin Buddhist thought is a better way to understand the key concepts of Nishida philosophy, particularly the self-identity of absolute contradiction. We begin by exploring Nishida's early work, as represented by *An Inquiry into the Good* (1911) and "Gutoku Shinran" (1911). This is followed by an examination of Nishida's later work,

as represented by "The Logic of Topos and the Religious Worldview" (1945). This allows us to understand Nishida's non-duality, particularly as it relates to the relationship between the religious practitioner and buddha.

Shin Buddhist Influences on Nishida's Early Works

Nishida's first book, *An Inquiry into the Good*, was published on February 6, 1911. *An Inquiry into the Good*, as Yusa explains, was greeted with enthusiasm among philosophical circles. For example, Takahashi Satomi (高橋里美, 1886–1964), then a graduate student at Tokyo Imperial University, stated in a review that *An Inquiry into the Good* "marked the first time since the Meiji Restoration that a Japanese thinker had offered the fruit of serious philosophical reflection."[61] The staying power and popularity of this work, however, came in 1921 when popular author Kurata Hyakuzō (倉田百三, 1891–1943) described Nishida's work as one that brings "pure joy."[60]

Nishida wrote *An Inquiry into the Good* during a period of his life when he was devoting much of his energy to Zen practice. In spite of being devoted to Zen practice while writing it, Nishida does not refer to Zen in this book. Ueda Shizuteru attempts an apology for Nishida, explaining that, given the nature of Nishida's philosophical project in *An Inquiry into the Good*, he had to leave Zen behind if his philosophy was to be truly a philosophy of Zen: "The fact that Zen is able to become non-Zen and engage in philosophy is a self-development of 'Zen which is not-Zen, and therefore Zen.' It is in the original nature of Zen to empty itself and manifest various forms, engaging in all the activities of daily life."[63]

Ueda argues that Nishida's philosophy is not a philosophy of Zen Buddhism. It is, however, an expression of Zen containing the full force of Nishida's enlightenment experience. Ueda further explains that Zen is not philosophy in that the goal of Zen practice is engagement with the world. Zen is not a philosophical discourse, and yet Nishida's philosophy, according to Ueda, bears the traces of Nishida's enlightenment. In Nishida's thought, Zen has been transformed into philosophy. "Nishida philosophy neither signifies the philosophical understanding of Zen nor the entry of Zen thought into the realm of philosophy. Zen has left itself behind to engage in philosophy while opening up the field of philosophical inquiry within itself. Zen which demands that thought be left behind has embarked on a creative task; not as Zen,

but as thought."[64] Nishida had thus successfully abandoned himself to *mu* (nothingness, 無), and realized the truth that all Zen practitioners must realize, "that one must leave behind all doctrines, even those of Zen Buddhism."[65]

According to Ueda, Zen provided Nishida with the space to question philosophy. However, Zen could not provide the answer to Nishida's questions. Nishida's philosophy therefore became the embodiment of his Zen experience.[66] That is, Nishida's philosophy was not a manual for how to achieve awakening, but rather Nishida's philosophy was an expression of Zen awakening. It is for this reason that Nishida acknowledged that there was something of Zen "in the background" of his thinking.[67] Given this, there is no reason to question whether or not Zen thought and experiences shaped Nishida's philosophy.

Nevertheless, it is also possible to raise the issue of Jōdo Shinshū thought and practice in both Nishida's philosophy and in Nishida's experience of Zen. Even during the period of his life in which Nishida was most devout in his Zen practice, Nishida remained interested in the happenings within Jōdo Shinshū intellectual circles. For example, in January 1898, Nishida went to Kyoto to take part in the New Year *sesshin* (intensive meditation retreat, 接心) at the Zen temple Myōshinji. On January 5, while still in Kyoto, Nishida visited a bookstore where he purchased three books: *Taikōroku* 退耕録, which dealt with issues of education; *Mujintō* 無尽燈, the academic journal of the Ōtani school of Shin Buddhism; and a book containing autobiographies of Zen monks, of which the title is unknown.[68] Writing about Nishida's experiences at this *sesshin* Yusa notes that Nishida was beginning to question himself and his capabilities as a Zen practitioner. However, he quickly reaffirmed his commitment to Zen practice, to the extent that he "took a few extra days in Kyoto, thus missing the school ceremony that marked the beginning of a new term."[69]

Nishida's reason for buying *Mujintō*, however, may not have been an interest Pure Land Buddhism itself. Yamamoto Annosuke 山本安之助, who Nishida knew from his days as a student at Tokyo Imperial University, had published an article entitled "Shūkyō to risei" (Religion and Reason, 宗教と理性), and Nishida would publish his response to this article in the June issue of *Mujintō*. In his response Nishida criticizes Yamamoto for failing to consider religious experience in his article.[70] This biographical detail is worth noting: while Yamamoto's article does not explicitly address Shin Buddhism, Nishida was aware

of—and on occasion participated in—the discussions occurring in Shin Buddhist academic circles.

Nishida's connections with Zen and Pure Land, however, were not limited to an awareness of what was occurring in Shin Buddhist circles. Nishida came to understand Zen's foundational concepts, such as *mu*, through Shinran's thought. In a letter to Watsuji Tetsuro, Nishida writes: "Although I have a deep-seated longing for a religious life, a merely formal religious life that denies humanity is not something that I would embrace. I don't even think that such is the ideal of human existence. What I mean by 'nothingness' (*mu*) is closer to the warm heart that Shinran possessed, which acknowledges everyone's freedom and embraces every sinner (although I don't know whether Shinran actually put it into words this way)."[71] Based on this letter, Takemura argues, "Nishida, in this passage, clearly explained *mu* through Shinran. *Mu* is usually thought to originate in Zen; [however] for Nishida, in reality, this was not always so."[72] Although this letter was written in 1930, it shows that Shin Buddhism was more than an academic interest for Nishida. Shin Buddhism was a hermeneutic device Nishida used to make sense of his Zen practice.

In the fourth and final section of *An Inquiry into the Good* Nishida discusses his ideas concerning religion. Here we find that Nishida's basic philosophy of religion also shows the influence of Jōdo Shinshū thought. Earlier it was pointed out that Nishida describes two types of Buddhism, the *shōdōmon* (gate of the path of sages) and the Pure Land path, in this section of *An Inquiry into the Good.* It was noted that these terms are used almost exclusively in Pure Land discourse to distinguish Pure Land paths of awakening from other Buddhist paths. Takemura notes that subtly imbedded within this paragraph is another phrase that indicates Jōdo Shinshū influence on Nishida's thought:[73] "In distinct individual phenomena, learning and morality are bathed in the glorious light of other-power, and religion touches the limitless buddha itself [*mugen no Butsuda sono mono*, 絶對無限の佛陀其者] extending throughout the universe."[74] Takemura argues that the phrase "the limitless buddha itself" corresponds with the religious thought of Kiyozawa Manshi (清沢満之, 1863–1903), a leading Shin Buddhist scholar during the late nineteenth century. For example, Kiyozawa described religion as being the "limitless working of the inconceivable (*zettai mugen no miyōyō*, 絶對無限の妙用)."[75] Nishida does not cite Kiyozawa's work in *An Inquiry to the Good*. However, Fujita explains, Nishida was familiar

with Kiyozawa's work and in his dairies had expressed a basic agreement with Kiyozawa's understanding of religion.[76] Additionally, it is worth mentioning that Nishida references Shinran twice in *An Inquiry into the Good*, in conjunction with quotes from the *Tannishō*.[77] While this number is not striking on its own, combined with the fact that Nishida, as mentioned above, does not reference Dōgen , Rinzai, or Zen thought in *An Inquiry into the Good*, we once again see that at this stage in his life, although practicing Zen Nishida was familiar with and continued to be influenced by Shin Buddhism.

Nishida closes the fourth section of *An Inquiry into the Good* with a chapter titled "Knowledge and Love" ("Chi to ai," 知と愛), which was originally published as an independent article in the August 1907 issue of *Seishinkai* 精神界, a journal founded by Kiyozawa in 1901.[78] The goal of *Seishinkai* was promoting Kiyozawa's religious ideals, namely the need for spiritual reform.[79] Yusa notes that Nishida wrote this chapter while grieving the death of his second daughter, Yūko, from bronchitis. She was five years old, and her "death shook Nishida profoundly."[80] Further, Yusa asserts that Nishida realized that by means of philosophy alone he could not find a reason for Yūko's death, and that it was Nishida's mother, sustained by her faith in Amida Buddha, who consoled Nishida. As a result, "Nishida threw himself into the ocean of divine compassion."[81] That Nishida would find solace in Shin Buddhism suggests that Shin Buddhism, although not satisfying him intellectually—as is evidenced by the fact that Nishida does not credit Shin as functioning in his philosophic project—was a pneumatic force, that is a vital energy, in Nishida's life.

Shortly after the publication of *An Inquiry into the Good*, Nishida published "Gutoku Shinran" (Foolish Stubble-Haired Shinran, 愚禿親鸞) in April 1911 as part of collection of essays compiled by the alumni of Ōtani University in commemoration of the six hundred fiftieth anniversary of Shinran's death—further indication that Nishida was actively involved in Shin intellectual circles at this time. Coincidentally, 1911 also marked the year Nishida began teaching part time at Ōtani, in addition to his position at Kyoto University.[82]

In "Gutoku Shinran," Nishida places great emphasis on the role of religious transformation. For example, Nishida writes: "Every person, no matter who he is, must return to the original body of his own naked self; he must let go from the cliff's ledge and come back to life after perishing, or he cannot know them [wisdom and virtue]. In other words,

only the person who has been able to experience deeply what it is to be 'foolish/stubble-haired' can know wisdom and virtue."[83] There are a number of ways in which to interpret this paragraph. Those familiar with Zen may find similar concepts within Nishida's writing, particularly the phrase "let go from the cliff's ledge and come back to life after perishing" with the concept of *shinjin datsuraku* (身心脱落, casting off of body and mind).[84] Shin Buddhists, on the other hand, may find this phrase echoing the transformation that occurs upon the abandoning of one's own efforts at enlightenment and entrusting in the workings of Amida Buddha's primal vow.

This Nishida article gives two examples to explain his point, one from Zen used to introduce the problem, and one from Shinran's writing to explain the effect and meaning of religious transformation. Nishida's citation of Shinran is the oft-quoted passage from *Tannishō*, in which Shinran says: "When I consider deeply the Vow of Amida, which arose from five kalpas of profound thought, I realize that it was entirely for the sake of myself alone! Then how I am filled with the gratitude for the Primal Vow, in which Amida resolved to save me, though I am burdened with such heavy karma."[85] Nishida argues in this quote one finds the fundamental significance of Shin Buddhism. That is, no matter how evil a person is, he or she can be saved by the workings of Amida Buddha, and that at the moment of religious transformation one realizes that Amida's vow was made specifically for one's self alone.[86]

One final consideration of "Gutoku Shinran" shows Nishida was interested in and influenced by Shin thought and scholarship. As Fujita points out, Nishida's writing style in "Gutoku Shinran" is similar to Kiyozawa's style of writing in the *Seishinkai*.[87]

From the above, it is clear that Nishida was familiar with both Zen and Pure Land texts. We also see that Nishida was influenced by his contemporaries with ties to both Zen and Pure Land thinkers. Based on this it is possible to conclude that Nishida was familiar with both Zen and Pure Land religiosity. As Nishida's philosophic project progressed, following the publication of *An Inquiry into the Good* and "Gutoku Shinran," Nishida would not make any explicit reference to Shin Buddhism in his writing for thirty-four years, until "The Logic of Topos and the Religious Worldview" (1945).

Shin Buddhism and "The Logic of Topos"

"The Logic of Topos" is one of Nishida's most difficult works. Heisig explains that in this essay Nishida sets out to summarize his philosophy for himself.[88] Heisig points out that Nishida's summary is not done for the benefit of his readers. He elaborates: "Rather than tie up the loose ends of his thinking, as he may have intended to do, it ["The Logic of Topos"] wraps up everything in a *furoshiki*—the way he must have each day for years when he set off for the university, tossing pencils and papers and books in and joining the corners of the cloth into a knot for carrying. The *furoshiki* is religion."[89] What Heisig is saying here is that Nishida came to see religion as the unifying force of his philosophy. That Nishida would engage in an explicit discussion of religion is not at all surprising when we consider that Nishida's goal from the very beginning was to provide an explanation of the world that allowed for religious experience. Nishida's writings, particularly his early and late writings, reveal that Nishida often refers to Buddhism to explain key philosophical concepts. Kopf's analysis of Nishida's use of Buddhist sources reveals that Nishida refers to Tendai 天台, Kegon 華厳, Zen, Pure Land, and general Mahāyāna texts such as the *Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna* (Jpn. *Daijōkishinron*, 大乗起信論). Kopf explains further that Nishida's "usage of the *Tannishō* reflects a greater familiarity with the text, he confines references to other text [*sic*] to occasional quotations to well-known passages such as Linji Yixuan's (Japanese *Rinzai Gigen* [臨済義玄]) (810/15–866/7) 'have a shit/take a piss [*ashisōnyō,* 痾屎送尿]' and Dōgen's (1200–1253 [道元]) 'to know the self is to forget the self [*jiko o narafu toifu wa, jiko o wa surrurunari,* 自己をならふといふは、自己をわするゝなり]."'[90] Regarding Nishida's use and familiarity with the *Tannishō,* we have already noted that Nishida found solace in it when mourning the death of his daughter, and it is the only Buddhist text Nishida refers to in *An Inquiry into the Good*. Kopf concludes, "Nishida does not cite Buddhist ideas or texts to analyze, interpret, or apply them, but to illustrate his own philosophy and to claim the Buddhist tradition as his heritage."[91]

In "The Logic of Topos," Nishida refers to Pure Land, Zen, general Mahāyāna, and Christianity. In a letter to Hisamatsu Shin'ichi 久松真一, one of his first students at Kyoto University and a well-known Zen Buddhist thinker, Nishida explained that in "The Logic of Topos," "he had grappled with 'the roots of life and death' . . . had spent some time delineating 'the uniqueness of Buddhism as distinguished from

Christianity,' and had 'touched on the excellent points of Buddhism.'"[92] What is striking about Nishida's use of Buddhist sources when read in conjunction with Kopf's description is not only that they highlight the excellent points of Buddhism, but also reinforce Nishida's ideals regarding the philosophy of religion.

While there is at present a growing consensus among scholars that Nishida's thought in "The Logic of Topos" was influenced by Shin Buddhism, there remains debate concerning how much influence. Additionally, the claim that Nishida's interest in Pure Land was lifelong has been questioned. Central to this debate are two terms, *gyakutaiō* (inverse correspondence, 逆対應) and *byōjōtei* (everyday awareness, 平常底), which as Kopf notes "are characteristic of, and central to, Nishida's very late philosophy, which he develops in the second half of his *Logic of Bassho* [*Topos*]."[93] Kopf explains that these terms "constitute the most radical expressions of Nishida's non-dualism; the former term [*gyakutaiō*] referring to the non-dualism between the absolute and the relative, the latter [*byōjōtei*] the non-dualism between transcendence and immanence."[94] In other words, *gyakutaiō* refers to the relationship between religious practitioner and the absolute. *Byōjōtei* refers to the fact that religious truths are not external from the world, but rather found in the mundane reality of life. While Nishida himself equates *byōjōtei* with a number of well-known passages from the Zen tradition, such as Rinzai's "have a shit/take a piss," a number of scholars have argued that this term has roots in Shin Buddhism as well. Although these two terms both seem to have similarities with both Pure Land and Zen teaching, it is important to remember that these ideas represent Nishida's glossing of Pure Land and Zen texts, and not traditional interpretations of either tradition. In short, *byōjōtei* and *gyakutaiō* are Nishida's own ideas.[95]

Regarding the connection of *byōjōtei* and Shin Buddhist thought, Takemura explains that "of course *byōjōtei* is connected with Zen, but it is also connected with Pure Land as well."[96] Fujita's argument echoes Takemura's argument; when Fujita first explains *byōjōtei* through Rinzai's remarks concerning relieving oneself, he notes that the idea of *byōjōtei* is found in the Jōdo Shinshū concept of *jinen hōni* (natural working of the dharma, 自然法爾).[97] A connection has also been made between Shinran's thought and *gyakutaiō*. Surprisingly, this connection is not made by Fujita or Takemura, but rather by Kosaka Kunitsugu, who is usually reluctant to note a connection between Pure Land thought

and Nishida philosophy. For example, Kosaka argues that Nishida was not aware that his thought bore any resemblance to Pure Land thought until it was pointed out to him by D. T. Suzuki and Mudai Risaku, another of Nishida's students.[98] It thus comes as a surprise to see that Kosaka writes that the inspiration for "*gyakutaiō* is found in the *Tannishō*."[99] Kosaka believes that the inspiration for this idea comes from Shinran's oft-quoted phrase, "Even a good person attains birth in the Pure Land, so it goes without saying that an evil person will."[97] Kosaka argues that this phrase shows "there is no limit to the Buddha's compassion."[100] Thus, Kosaka suggests a correspondence between Nishida's non-dualism of absolute and relative (*gyakutaiō*) and the idea that Amida's vow is made for the evil person.

Nishida's thought here resembles the well-known Shin Buddhist concept of *nishu jinshin* (two aspects of [the] deep mind, 二種深心). *Nishu jinshin* is the description of the realization that one's own person is unable to awaken the aspiration for birth in the Pure Land due to one's karmic evilness. Simultaneous with this realization is total entrusting and rejoicing in the fact that one has attained birth in the Pure Land, brought about by the activity of Amida Buddha's primal vow. Simply put, at the very moment one rejoices in the assurance of birth in the Pure Land through the activity of Amida Buddha, one also realizes that one's existence is controlled by samsaric delusions and passions.[101]

Turning our attention to "The Logic of Topos" itself we see that, not counting the sections devoted to Pure Land and Zen Buddhism, the number of times Nishida explicitly refers to Pure Land and Zen are nearly equal (17 Pure Land, and 18 Zen). What is most striking is the language Nishida uses when discussing Pure Land and Zen. For example, when Nishida begins describing the logic of Zen Buddhism he states, "Regarding Zen Buddhism, which has exerted a great deal of influence on Japanese culture, I must defer to specialists."[100] Later in this same section Nishida attempts to use Shinran's teaching to explain his understanding of Zen. Nishida writes, "The logic of paradox is not irrationality. It is, in Shinran's words, to take as the discriminating principal that which goes beyond discrimination."[103] As shown above regarding the concept *mu*, Nishida understood Zen through Shinran's teaching. Perhaps realizing that he did not understand Zen in the terms of Zen, Nishida defers to experts regarding Zen.

When discussing Pure Land Buddhism, however, Nishida appears more confident. For example, describing what he believed to be authentic religion Nishida wrote, "In authentic religion, one reaches faith by way of a sharply honed will, not out of mere sentiment. One embraces faith only after having completely exhausted one's resources. As the Pure Land parable of 'the white path between two rivers' teaches, sooner or later one has to choose between faith and non-faith."[105] Another example of Nishida's confidence can be found when he states: "Truly other-reliant religion can be explained by the logic of *topos* alone; and once properly understood, this other-reliant religion which centers on the compassionate vow of Amida can become vitally relevant to contemporary scientific culture."[106] From these two quotes, we see that Nishida was confident when describing Pure Land tradition. Nishida seems to understand the experience of *shinjin* as being a complete entrusting that is brought about when one realizes the failure of one's own power to bring about enlightenment. In the first quote, Nishida refers to the well-known Pure Land parable of the river of fire and the river of water, put forth by Shan-tao and quoted by both Shinran and Hōnen.

One also wonders if Nishida's statement that "one embraces faith only after having completely exhausted one's resources" expressed how Nishida felt while writing this essay. Yusa explains that in the years preceding this essay Nishida mourned the death of many close friends.[107] Nishida began writing "The Logic of Topos" in 1945 as the allied bombings of Japan were rapidly increasing. In fact, while Nishida was writing this last essay, with the assistance of a hired laborer his wife was digging a bomb shelter.[108] No doubt more stressful than the allied bombings was the death of Yayoi, Nishida's oldest daughter, on February 14, a mere ten days after he began writing "The Logic of Topos." With all of this occurring, perhaps Nishida felt that not only his own resources had been exhausted but the resources of those near to him as well.

Nishida's Non-Duality: Identity and Difference

It is clear that there were a variety of influences on Nishida's thought. We have seen that while Zen was influential on Nishida's thought he often deferred to scholars when describing Zen, and that he understood such foundational Zen concepts as *mu* through the lens of Jōdo Shinshū. In addition, terms central to Nishida's understanding

of non-duality may have been inspired by Pure Land Buddhist sources. This section offers a brief overview of Nishida's non-duality as it relates to his understanding of identity and difference. It is not a comprehensive understanding of Nishida's non-duality, but seeks to provide the foundation for rereading Nishida's non-duality through the lens of Jōdo Shinshū thought.

Earlier it was argued that the key to understanding Nishida's philosophic project is understanding the self-identity of absolute contradiction, the idea that the absolute is defined and expressed by its opposite, the relative. The self-identity of absolute contradiction represents a late (1930) development of Nishida's philosophy, which reached its fulfillment in "The Logic of Topos." Kopf notes, "Nowhere does Nishida use this concept to maintain the balance between identity and difference as forcefully as in his last completed work."[109]

Although the self-identity of absolute contradiction was not put forth in *An Inquiry into the Good*, it is possible to see the early roots of this idea in this work. For example, when discussing the relationship between God and the world, Nishida argues that "individuality is an offshoot of divinity and each person's development completes God's development."[110] Nishida here does not say that at any moment in time God is not fully developed, but rather, that though fully developed God continues to develop from one moment to the next.[111] In other words, were it possible to freeze everything for a moment and examine both God and the world, God would be seen as being fully developed, yet if we froze another moment, God would be fully developed in that moment as well. God for Nishida is never not fully developed and yet always continuing to change.

Nishida makes clear that one enters into a relationship with the absolute through mutually negating activities. It is for this reason that Nishida describes the relationship as being one of inverse correspondence. As Heisig explains, this means that the more strongly two things are opposed, the more closely they are related.[112] It is through this opposition that one discovers the relationship with the absolute. According to Nishida, this action of the self-identity of absolute contradiction is found in the *nenbutsu*. He argues further that this relationship "culminates in a state of existence described as 'being artless and one with the working of the dharma.'"[113] Through the negation of one's own self-power and Amida's negation of absolute being—that is, Amida Buddha taking form—sentient beings are able to enter into relationship

with Amida or become one with the working of the dharma. To "be one" here does not mean that one's individuality is lost, but rather that one's individuality is an expression of the dharma.

For Nishida the absolute is only absolute insofar as it can negate itself. The negation of the absolute is what allows the relative to be the expression and activity of the absolute. The absolute then does not stand apart from the relative, as it is reflected in the relative, nor does the absolute stand apart from the relative. Rather, they are inversely correlated and are thus mutually defining, determining, and negating.

Throughout Nishida's life, even when he was devoting himself to his Zen practice, Nishida was still aware of and participated in Shin Buddhist intellectual circles. In addition, on more than one occasion Nishida interpreted Zen Buddhism through Shinran's thought. Most important for our purposes here is how Nishida conceived of the relationship between the absolute and the relative, as it regards God/Amida/Buddha and the religious practitioner. In the following, it will become clear that although using different terms, Nishida's explanation of this relationship is structurally similar to Pure Land Buddhist discourse as regards self and other.

THE OTHER IN SHIN BUDDHISM

Addressing the role of the other in Shin Buddhism, or for that matter in any school of Buddhism, may strike the reader as being odd or even misguided. The Buddhist doctrine of no-self (Skt. *anātman*; Jpn. *muga*, 無我), it seems, would imply that there is no other as well. However, in recent years both Kopf and Ziporyn have published a number of articles and books in which they argue two points. First, the role of the other is generally underdeveloped in both academic studies of Buddhism and the tradition itself; second, the role of the other—at least at the level of provisional truth—is central to Mahāyāna Buddhist paths of awakening.[114] Similarly, Varghese J. Manimala argues the Buddhist sangha (community) as Śākyamuni Buddha defined it was "an example of intersubjective existence." Manimala also suggests that in the bodhisattva ideal we find the "true nature of the intersubjective person."[115]

Although Kopf, Manimala, and Ziporyn have all shown that intersubjectivity is an integral part of Buddhist paths of awakening, at present there are few if any works that have dealt with the role of the relation between the individual and others. Thus our next step is to explore

the role of the other in Shin Buddhism, both philosophically and psychologically. Following Kopf, Manimala, and Ziporyn, this discussion of otherness will be grounded in philosophic and psychoanalytic theories of intersubjectivity.

Following a general overview of the theory of intersubjectivity—the recognition that an individual grows in and through relationships with others—we will then briefly look at the role of the self and other in Mahāyāna Buddhism, particularly as developed in *The Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna* and the Huayan school (Kegon, 華嚴宗).[116] This will establish a basis for a detailed examination of intersubjectivity in Shin Buddhism. Particular attention will be paid to the Shin Buddhist path as presented by Shinran and Rennyo. In addition, traditional Shin Buddhist scholarship concerning the role of self and other will be analyzed.

Recognizing the Need for Multiple Subjects: Intersubjectivity

Intersubjectivity, simply put, is the philosophical and psychological theory that individuals are affected by other individuals (subjects). Theories of intersubjectivity are rooted in the existential philosophies of the twentieth century. The philosophic position generally referred to as existentialism was first postulated by Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855) and Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900), who emphasized the role of the individual in their critiques of G. W. F Hegel's (1770–1881) rationalism. Existentialism reached its apex as a movement with Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980), who transformed the phenomenological methods of Martin Heidegger in such a way that it was no longer reclusive, but rather became a starting point for activism.[117]

"Existentialism" has been used to describe the philosophies of Karl Jaspers, Martin Heidegger (although he himself renounced this label), Martin Buber, Simone de Beauvoir, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Gabriel Marcel, among others. Traces of existentialism can also be found in the post-structuralism and deconstruction movements led by such notable figures as Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida. At present, the influence of existentialism is found in a number of diverse areas. For example, American philosopher Judith Butler's work has been foundational in number of diverse areas, including literary criticism, gay and lesbian studies, and queer theory. Butler's work, as we see below, has been instrumental in shaping Benjamin's understanding of intersubjectivity. Existentialism has also long been influential in the

fields of literary studies, philosophical anthropology, psychology, and theology.

The breadth of existentialism is perhaps best understood in its blurring of traditional academic and scholarly lines. For example, in addition to citing Freud and other well-known psychoanalysts, Jessica Benjamin, whose work on intersubjectivity we will be using to uncover the meaning of the other in Buddhism, often cites philosophers such as Butler, Derrida, Foucault, and Jürgen Habermas.[118] Existentialism, with its call for engagement with the world, in many ways can be understood as a return to Socratic ideas concerning what philosophy is. Philosophy for Socrates' disciples, as Pierre Hadot explains, "was conceived both as a specific discourse linked to a way of life, and as a way of life linked to a specific discourse."[119] In other words, philosophic discourses are informed by the world we live in while simultaneously seeking to better understand or even transform the world.

Benjamin's understanding of intersubjectivity fits this understanding as it is grounded in her experiences as a practicing psychoanalyst, while simultaneously being informed by philosophical understandings of self and other. This understanding of intersubjectivity as having roots in both philosophy and psychology will become important later in this essay, when discussing both the philosophical and psychological necessity of conceiving of the relationship of buddha and practitioner as being both equal and not equal.

Benjamin explains that the intersubjective view "maintains that the individual grows in and through relationships with other subjects. Most important, this perspective observes that the other whom the self meets is also a self, a subject in his or her own right. It assumes that we are able to recognize the other subject as different and yet alike, as an other who is capable of sharing mental experience."[120] Elaborating on the meaning of intersubjectivity in a later work Benjamin explains "the other must be recognized as another subject in order for the self to fully experience his or her subjectivity in the other's presence."[121]

Describing the encounter between self and other as a relationship of two subjects rather than a relationship between a subject (self) and object (other) is not merely a matter of semantics. Benjamin explains that when the other is seen as an object the other is an internalized representation that does not exist in reality.[122] When the other is described in terms of an object, the reality of other subjects is denied. The other as an object is not capable of sharing an experience of recognizing

one's self as both different and alike, since the other as object is wholly other. Within this brief explanation of intersubjectivity, it is possible to identify two fundamental characteristics of the intersubjective encounter: recognition and subjectivity.

Regarding the fundamental need for recognition, Benjamin explains, "A person comes to feel that 'I am the doer who does, I am the author of my acts,' by being with a person who recognizes her acts, her feelings, her intentions, her independence."[123] Based on this need for recognition it becomes clear that one's sense of self grows out of one's relationship with an other. As Butler explains, "the self never returns to itself free of the Other . . . 'relationality' becomes constitutive of who the self is."[124] In other words, relationships with others are internalized in that relationships not only connect us to others but also define who we are or what we will become. Relationships are, therefore, constitutive, that is, they are essential to one's very being.

That recognition from another subject is necessary in establishing one's understanding of self as subject leads to what Benjamin describes as the paradox of recognition. Benjamin explains, "at the very moment of realizing our own independence, we are dependent upon another to recognize it. At the very moment we come to understand the meaning of 'I, myself,' we are forced to see the limitations of that self. At the moment we realize that separate minds can share the same state, we also realize these minds can disagree."[125] In other words, the very awareness that we are individuals is dependent upon an awareness of our limitations. Throughout her work Benjamin provides a number of examples showing that even in relationships of domination, where one seeks control of the other, recognition and a sense of otherness must be maintained, for if one subsumes the other into one's self, both self and other cease to exist.

The intersubjective relationship does not seek to collapse the relationship of self and other into a unified understanding of self and other, where the self is all that exists and the other is wholly other or an object of the self's psyche. Rather, "intersubjective theory sees the relationship between self and other, with its tension between sameness and difference, as a continual exchange of influence. It focuses, not on a linear movement from oneness to separateness, but on the paradoxical balance between them."[126] In other words, self and other do not exist in two wholly separate worlds, as self and other are not wholly different. Nor are self and other undifferentiated; differences remain.

The boundary that separates self and other is, at best, fuzzy. While we may have shared experiences with the other, that the other remains an other is what makes these experiences so powerful. Benjamin explains, "The fact that self and other are not merged is precisely what makes experiences of merging have such high emotional impact. The externality of the other makes one feel one is truly being 'fed,' getting nourishment from the outside, rather than supplying everything for oneself."

In her later work Benjamin clarifies that in shared experience the other, by necessity, remains an other. When self denies the externality of the other through forced assimilation of the other, one is plunged "into unbearable aloneness . . . creating an identity that demands the destructive denial of the different."[127] Benjamin repeatedly shows how the denial of difference can lead to abusive situations. Yet, even in relationships of domination, which seek to destroy the other, Benjamin finds that the need for other subjects remains primary. Relationships of domination, as Benjamin explains, depend on the other subject recognizing the power the self wields through submission.[128]

Intersubjectivity, as presented by Benjamin, makes clear the necessity or other consciousness in forming identity. It is through our relationships with others that we come to understand what it means to be. Relationships not only affirm who we think we are but also by necessity negate conceptions of who we are as well. One's identity as a unique individual occurs not in realization of sameness, nor in recognition that the other is different from one's self, but rather in the other recognizing and confirming that the self is, the self does.

There are, therefore, both philosophic and psychological necessities for understanding the other as both similar to and different from the self. This discussion, grounded in the feminist psychoanalytic project of Benjamin, will be the heuristic lens used in the following to explore the relationship of self and other in Mahāyāna Buddhism, with particular emphasis on the Jōdo Shinshū tradition.

Intersubjectivity in Early Mahāyāna Buddhist Thought

In the American context, Buddhist practice is often understood and presented as a solitary endeavor. The impact and importance of other subjects has often been downplayed or denied when describing Buddhist paths towards awakening (*satori*, 悟). For example, in recent years Jeff Shore, a longtime Rinzai Zen practitioner and professor of

international Zen at Hanazono University, has spent his breaks from teaching by traveling throughout Europe and North America teaching what he claims to be the basic principles of Zen practice. Shore explains that at its most basic Buddhist practice is "getting to the very bottom of who and what we are."[129] According to Shore, this process is a solitary one: "This does not require going somewhere else, nor does it involve entering transcendent or blissful states of mind. Each of you, right here and now has all you need. A teacher is not necessary for this, nor are books. According to the records, Gotama Buddha sat under a Bodhi tree and got to the bottom of himself. He did it on his own. And that—not some doctrine or dogma—is the basis of Buddhist practice."[130] This way of talking about the Buddha's experience as solitary is very common in Buddhist teachings in the West and perhaps represents a conflation with the concept of the *pratyekabuddha*, who attains buddhahood during a time when no buddha or dharma exists and also significantly does not teach others the path to buddhahood. However, when we remember that the Buddha also visited a number of teachers prior to sitting under the Bodhi tree, and that the Buddha's consumption of milk gruel offered by Sujāta signified the Buddha's rejection of ascetic practices and discovery of the Middle Way, we may want to rethink such presentations of the Buddhist path. The Buddha's rejection of asceticism and discovery of the Middle Way, as Hajime Nakamura points out, are commonly associated with the Buddha's enlightenment.[131] However, the statement that the Buddha "did it on his own" loses some of its thrust upon considering the role of the Buddha's teachers and Sujāta's offering of milk in his enlightenment experience.

Shore's argument that Gotama "did it on his own," and that all people can do the same, does seem to echo the teaching of the Buddha before entering *parinirvāṇa*. In the Buddha's final teaching, recorded in the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta*, the Buddha encourages his followers to rely on themselves in order to determine the true teaching of the dharma.[132] However, Roger J. Corless argues the Buddha is not encouraging solitary practice, but rather, that in the time of the Buddha's absence from the world the "sangha" is charged with preserving the dharma. Corless explains, "the monks and nuns are *collectively* their own lights and refuges."[133] It does not come as a surprise then that one of the few practices shared by all Buddhists is the act of taking the triple refuge (*sankie,* 三歸依).[134] From this brief example and counter example, we can first conclude that from the time of the historical Buddha to the

present others have been an integral part of Buddhist paths of awakening. Second, we again see that with a few notable exceptions, Buddhist scholars and teachers have had a tendency to downplay the role of self and other.

However, things are not as nearly as neat as the above indicates. Brook Ziporyn explains: "[C]urrent reconstructions of the early (Pali) Buddhist doctrine, especially as found in Abhidharmic dharma analysis, reveal an approach to consciousness that can be described as atomistic and empiricist, if not almost solipsistic. . . . The same can be said for Indian Mahāyāna doctrine . . . in one way or another, most Indian Mahāyāna schools deny the ultimate existence of other minds, either because all minds are really manifestations of one essence (Tathāgatagarbha, Suchness, and the like), or because the category of 'otherness' (like "sameness") belongs to the realm of those delusions dispelled by an insight into Emptiness."[135] Alterity, that is, a state of being other, in Abhidharmic thought is thus understood as being an example of the conventional truth of this world. Any sense of alterity, like a sense of self, thus fades away when one realizes the ultimate truth of emptiness (Skt. *śūnyatā*; Jpn. *kū,* 空).[136]

Both Kopf and Ziporyn argue that in Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism, with the introduction of the bodhisattva ideal, we find the beginnings of Buddhist theories of intersubjectivity.[137] Simply put, the bodhisattva ideal is rejection of individual enlightenment in favor of universal enlightenment. The denial of individual enlightenment usually occurs through a series of vows often taking the form of "If X occurs and Y does not follow, then I will not attain universal enlightenment." Perhaps one of the most well-known vows is the that of Amida Buddha (Amida Butsu, 阿彌陀仏), then Dharmākara Bodhisattva (Hōzō Bosatsu, 法蔵菩薩), who vowed: "If, when I attain Buddhahood, sentient beings in the lands of the ten directions who sincerely and joyfully entrust themselves to me, desire to be born in my land, and think of me even ten times should not be born there, may I not attain perfect enlightenment. Excluded, however are those who commit the grave offenses and abuse the Right Dharma."[138] The bodhisattva vows are thus an act of great compassion. However, they also seem to introduce a binary understanding of self and other into the Buddhist discourse. Early Mahāyāna Buddhist discourse, as Ziporyn argues above, is somewhat solipsistic when it comes to understandings self and other. In order to better understand the role of self and other, consideration must be

given to the meaning of identity in Mahāyāna discourse. For this we turn our attention to Chinese Buddhism, as Ziporyn claims it was in this context that understandings of provisional truth came to be seen as equal with ultimate.[139]

Issues of identity and difference in many ways took center stage in Chinese Buddhist discourse. Leading monks in both the Tiantai and Huayan schools devoted considerable amounts of energy to elucidating and explaining the nature of identity and difference. These understandings of identity and difference not only represent the sinification of Buddhism, but also became foundations for nearly all understandings of Buddhism that developed in China, Korea, and Japan.[140]

The Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna is a seminal text for Chinese and Japanese Mahāyāna Buddhist thought. Reading the names of individuals who have written commentaries on the *Awakening of Faith* is in many ways a who's who of early East Asian forms of Buddhism. For example, Hui-yüan (壞苑, 523–592), an early Chinese Pure Land Buddhist thinker, wrote a commentary on *The Awakening of Faith* that would inspire commentaries by such leading figures as Wŏnhyo (元曉, 617–686), a prolific writer and popularizer of Mahāyāna Buddhism in Korea, and Fa-tsang (法藏, 643–712), the third patriarch of the Chinese Huayan school.[141] Jacqueline I. Stone, in her landmark study of original enlightenment (*hongaku*, 本覚), notes that *The Awakening of Faith* is "the most influential early source for the term original enlightenment."[142]

The Awakening of Faith explains that original enlightenment means "the essence of Mind is grounded on the Dharmakāya."[143] In other words, from the very beginning, sentient beings have the essential seeds for enlightenment, and through practice, this knowledge is made manifest. Enlightenment, as conceived in *The Awakening of Faith*, is paired with delusion. The author of *The Awakening of Faith* makes this clear by stating, "Independent of the unenlightened mind, there are no independent marks of true enlightenment itself that can be discussed."[144] Stone explains that in *The Awakening of Faith*, "'original enlightenment' is posited in distinction to 'actualized enlightenment'; it represents the inherence of suchness in the deluded mind and thus the ever-present possibility of transforming that mind into the mind of awakening."[145] Original enlightenment as inherent potential for actualized enlightenment can thus be seen as maintaining a tension between identity and difference, between original enlightenment and actualized enlightenment.

The tension between the inherent potential for enlightenment and actualized enlightenment was in no way static. Stone notes that the *hongaku* thought that shaped the medieval Japanese Tendai experience was radically different from the *hongaku* thought found in *The Awakening of Faith*. She explains that in medieval Japan "*hongaku* is equated with suchness itself and assigned an absolute meaning; it is no longer merely an abstract principal but the actual, true aspect of all things (*ji jissō* [事実相])."[146] This conflation of potential enlightenment to suchness itself raises a whole host of questions, including: why is practice necessary if all sentient beings are already inherently enlightened, and what differentiates a sentient being from a buddha? In order to answer these questions we must examine the Huayan and T'ian-t'ai thought in regards to understandings of identity and difference.[147]

Identity and Difference in Huayan Buddhism

Huayan thought, as Paul Williams notes, is "less philosophy than the systematic explanation of the *dharmadhātu* [*hōkkai*, 法界], the world of visionary experience and magic."[148] Williams's description of the *dharmadhātu* as being a world of visionary experience and magic seems to point towards the recognition that humans' spatial and temporal understandings of the world are not adequate when attempts are made at understanding the *dharmadhātu*. However, before examining the systematic explanation of the *dharmadhātu* it is necessary to first make clear what is meant by the term *dharmadhātu*. Edward Conze explains that in Mahāyāna discourses, *dharmadhātu* is defined as being the absolute dharma. Conze then goes on to list definitions for dharma in Buddhist contexts: (1) transcendental reality that is the absolute truth; (2) the order of the law of the universe; (3) a truly real event; (4) "objective data whether true or untrue"; (5) characteristic, quality, or attribute; (6) moral law; and (7) Buddha's teachings of the above. *Dhātu*, as Conze explains, means "the realm of, essence of, [and] source of."[149] With the above explanation, it is apt to say that by studying the *dharmadhātu*, we are studying reality itself.

The image of reality, as presented in the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* (Ch. *Huayan ching*; Jpn. *Kegon-kyō*, 華厳経), is filled with exceedingly rich imagery. As David L. McMahan explains, "the ordinary world seems but a colorless after-image of the lustrous mythical worlds [the sutra] presents."[150] This overwhelming imagery, according to McMahan, is a variation of emptiness discourse while further implying that although

"the pure lands may be far away, to one with a pure mind even the ordinary defiled world is itself a pure land."[151] In the final section of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*, upon entering Vairocana Buddha's (Birushana Butsu, 毘盧遮那仏) Tower, Sudhana, the pilgrim, is confronted with a series of visually overwhelming images. The narrator of the sutra explains, "[Sudhana] also looked inside, [and he saw] numerous, hundreds and thousands of beautiful, fabulous towers. Each tower was similarly ornamented, very vast and very beautiful. Each tower was vast as all of space, containing all other towers, yet each tower was distinct. All towers were inside one tower."[152] Attempting to understand this imagery can be a very frustrating and humbling experience. One quickly finds that everyday spatial and temporal understandings of the world are simply not equipped to aid in comprehending a world containing multiple towers of infinity. However, what is perhaps the most surprising attribute about the world of these towers is that it is the very world in which we find ourselves.

Given the above, one quickly sees why Huayan thinkers focused on the systematic explanation of the *dharmadhātu*. One example of this explanation is Tu-shun's (杜順, 557–640) *Meditation on the Dharmadhātu* (Ch. *I fa-chieh*; Jpn. *Ikkan hōkai*, 一觀法界). Tu-shun's *Meditation* is helpful in that it begins by explaining the world of our everyday consciousness and then methodologically advances in four steps to an understanding of the world as the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* presents it. Tu-shun's four meditations are the *dharmadhātu* of (1) *shih* (Jpn. *ji*, 事), (2) *li* (Jpn. *ri*, 理),[153] (3) non-obstruction of *li* against *shih* (Ch. *li-shih wu-ai*; Jpn. *ji ri muge*, 理事無礙), and (4) non-obstruction of *shih* against *shih* (Ch. *shih-shih wu-ai*; Jpn. *ji ji muge*, 事事無礙).[154]

The first *dharmadhātu*, *shih*, is the *dharmadhātu* of particulars or events. This understanding, one that is ultimately rendered untenable, creates distinctions and distance between particulars. Individual particulars are seen as being wholly other from all other particulars. All particulars in this understanding are rendered as individual things—devoid of any similarity and therefore alienated from one another in an autistic state of existence.

The second *dharmadhātu*, *li*, is the realm of suchness, or as Chang translates it, "immanent reality (*tathatā*)."[155] *Li*, according to Chang, is the "invisible controller of all events." He goes on to describe *li* as "the all-inclusive and many-sided principal for all existence.[156] However, as Peter N. Gregory points out, understandings of *li* as immanent

reality, although accurate, reflect a shift to a more ontological nature in Huayan doctrine that Tu-shun had not anticipated. For Tu-shun, *li* pointed towards the inherent emptiness of all dharmas, not an underlying nature of all things. It was with Ch'eng-kuang (澄觀, 738–839) that *li* was understood as an underlying principle for all existence.[157] Whether one understands *li* as signifying the emptiness of all dharmas or as an underlying principle, that *li* and *shih* are connected becomes clear. This connection leads to the third meditation.

The third *dharmadhātu*, the non-obstruction of *li* against *shih*, makes clear the relationship of the one expressed in the many, thereby expanding upon the realization that *li* and *shih* are linked. In this meditation, the dynamic relationship between *li* and *shih* is made clear. *Li* is the formational basis for all particulars (*shih*). One also finds there is a certain amount of tension between *li* and *shih*, given that "*shih* can hide *li*."[158] For Tsung-mi (宗密, 781–841), the fifth patriarch of the Huayan tradition, the non-obstruction of *li* against *shih* is central in that it makes clear that *li* brings *shih* to completion.[159] Perhaps the best way to understand this principal is to place it in the context of dependent origination (Skt. *pratītyasamutpāda*; Jpn. *engi*, 縁起). In that, *li* and *shih* are distinct and not-distinct, interdependent and separate. While these statements describing *li* and *shih* appear to be contradictory, they make sense when understood in the context of the non-obstruction of *li* against *shih*, where any *li* is an expression of *shih* and vice versa, and yet *shih* is not *li*.

The fourth *dharmadhātu*, that of the non-obstruction of *shih* against *shih*, is often described as the *dharmadhātu* of "all in one." Within every particular are all other particulars. As Chang explains this is the only *dharmadhātu* that really exists, the previous three are all teaching methods leading up to and culminating in this final meditation. However, as Gregory makes clear, from the time of Tsung-mi meditation on the third *dharmadhātu* was central, thus signaling a shift in the Huayan metaphysical understanding of the world.[160] This fourth *dharmadhātu* is perhaps the most difficult of all the meditations on the *dharmadhātu* to understand. That within one phenomenon all other phenomena are present and complete seems to be simply impossible. Within the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra,* this *dharmadhātu* is presented using descriptive language that simply overwhelms the senses. The mutual interpenetration of all phenomena as presented in this meditation is the worldview of an advanced bodhisattva. It is the world as illustrated by

Indra's net (a net with a jewel tied in at every knot, each jewel reflecting all the other jewels in the net), where each and every *shih* reflects all other *shih ad infinitum*.

Tu-shun's *Meditation* is one of many attempts by Huayan thinkers to explicate the meaning of the *dharmadhātu*. Perhaps the most well-known attempt is Fa-tsang's *Treatise on the Golden Lion* (Ch. *Chin-Shih-Tzu Chang*; Jpn. *Kin Shishi Shō*, 金獅子章), delivered at the request of Empress Wu (武則天, 625–705). Williams's summary of Fa-tsang's teachings is especially illuminating regarding how Huayan thinkers approached issues of identity and difference. Williams writes,

> [P]henomena are nothing more than noumenon in a particular form, and form does not in itself exist, so all phenomena are identical. Moreover, noumenon cannot in itself be divided. One piece of gold and another piece of gold, as gold, are not different. The difference lies in spatial separation, and that is something to do with shape or form, not gold *qua* gold. Since a phenomenon is only a noumenon, and since between any two "instantiations" of noumenon there is, as noumenon, no difference, so each phenomenon is in fact the same as any other phenomena. Furthermore, since each instantiation of noumenon is noumenon itself (noumenon cannot be divided), so each phenomenon is also all phenomena. Hence there is mutual identity and interpenetration. Second, since the *dharmadhātu* is a totality of interdependent elements, and according to Mādhyamika teaching each entity lacks inherent existence and only *is* in terms of an infinite network of casual interrelationships so, if any entity were taken away, the entire Universe would collapse. This means that each entity is a cause for the totality. Moreover the totality is, of course, a cause for each entity.[161]

From this we can surmise that for Fa-tsang, and likely the larger Huayan tradition as a whole, self and other are not inherently different, nor are they entirely the same. Self and other are different as a result of not only spatial separation, but also as a result of causes and conditions that bring self and other into existence through cycles of birth and death. The reality of otherness is important in that if otherness is subsumed into the self, the entire universe collapses, including the self.

All too often lost amid the complex philosophy of the Huayan school is the emphasis on teachers on the Buddhist paths of awakening. McMahan's work is a notable exception to this, given that his focus is not on how Huayan Buddhism developed in China, but rather on how

the *Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra* itself functions. McMahan describes Sudhana's encounter with teachers, fifty-two in all, as being "a dramatization or symbolically charged visionary representation of a specific Buddhist teaching."[162] The variety of teachers whom Sudhana meets is simply outstanding. Twenty of the teachers Sudhana meets are women, all of whom have vastly different lifestyles and social classes: a prostitute, healer, nun, even the Buddha's mother is a teacher of Buddhist practices for Sudhana. Other teachers Sudhana meets include mathematicians, ascetics, kings, perfumers, goldsmiths, children, and bodhisattvas.

Sudhana's meeting with these teachers is quite formulaic, as Sudhana first asks each teacher to explain his or her practice. Following Sudhana's inquiry, each teacher explains his or her practice and then, with the exception of the final two teachers, "plead[s] ignorance regarding the most profound way and send[s] him on to the next teacher."[163] The *Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra* thus emphasizes not only the need for teachers (others), but also the fact that teachers may be those whom we least expect them to be.

Both philosophically and textually others are central to the Huayan tradition. Philosophically, given that a myriad of causes and conditions are responsible for shaping all existence, others are both the same as and different from the self. Textually, the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* emphasizes the role of teachers as an integral part of Buddhist paths of awakening. Williams's observation that according to Huayan thought when an entity is destroyed the entire universe collapses can be seen as applying analogously to the relation between self and other, thus highlighting the importance of others to Huayan thought and practice. Within the context of medieval Japanese Buddhism, Huayan thought, that of the Tiantai school, and the teachings of *The Awakening of Faith* were the dominant intellectual milieu from which Shin Buddhism arose. Therefore if we are too explore how the role of others has been understood by Shin Buddhists we must explore possible sources our authors were drawing upon.

The Necessity of Others in Shin Buddhist Paths of Awakening

Not only are others important for psychological well-being, they are also central to Buddhist paths of awakening. Yet others are not wholly other, given that our relationships are constitutive of who we are and what we will become. Thus, it is the relationship of sameness and difference between self and other that is necessary both for

psychological well-being and for Buddhist paths of awakening. This section begins the process of reconsidering the role of concrete others on the Shin Buddhist path. It argues that the relationship between Amida Buddha and sentient beings is one of both duality and non-duality, in that sentient beings are seen as both equal and not equal to the *tathāgatas*. As we shall see, the doctrine of equality and inequality is inextricably linked with Shinran's conceptions of both Amida Buddha and the Pure Land, which are characterized by philosophies of duality and non-duality. This examination will first explore how Shinran conceived of equality and inequality. It will then conclude with a discussion of Rennyo's concept of the unity of the individual and Amida Buddha.

Before entering into Shinran's and Rennyo's ideas, we must note that discussing the relationship between religious practitioner and Amida Buddha in terms of self and other presents a number of difficulties. First, there is a well-developed discourse of otherness within Shin Buddhism, but it is not the kind of otherness we have discussed to this point. Notably, although Shinran often encourages Jōdo Shinshū adherents to trust in the other-power (*tariki*, 他力) of Amida's vow, this understanding of other-power differs from an other as opposed to self. As Stone explains, "The 'Other' on whom Shinran taught his followers to rely is not 'Other' as opposed to 'self' but an Other in which self/other distinctions are dissolved. At the moment of relinquishing utterly all self-calculation, one is seized by the compassionate working of Amida's vow, never to be let go; such a person has in that moment become one with Amida, 'equal to Tathāgatas.'"[164] Through entrusting in Amida's vow, the dichotomy of self and other is overcome. While this understanding of Shin Buddhism seems to characterize many presentations of Shin Buddhism in English, it will be shown to be quite limited and divorced from the medieval context in which it was written.

First, let us examine typical understandings of the other in Shin Buddhist scholarship. Generally, a sense of otherness is rendered as being an immature understanding of Shinran's teaching. For example, Hirota often describes the Shin Buddhist path as beginning with a duality that ultimately reaches a state of maturity and fulfillment in non-duality. Hirota argues that the Pure Land path begins with an initial engagement characterized by a dualistic understanding of Amida Buddha and the Pure Land.[165] As one's faith matures and *shinjin* is realized, the

dualisms of this initial engagement dissolve as one comes to understand the non-duality of the Pure Land path.[166]

However, some scholars have recently acknowledged the role of concrete others as a form of dualism that is part of the Shin Buddhist path to awakening. James Dobbins, a leading Shin Buddhist historian, has noted that while Shinran does present a non-dual understanding of the relationship between religious practitioner and Amida Buddha or the Pure Land, Shinran also teaches a dualistic understanding of the Pure Land path: "There is indisputable evidence that Shinran himself never actually abrogated this dualistic understanding. At the level of day-to-day interchanges with his companions he frequently treated the Pure Land as an otherworldly place where one would be born after death. For instance, in one of his letters Shinran wrote to a disciple that, because he himself was advanced in years, he would pass away first, be born in the Pure Land, and be waiting for his disciple there."[167] Shinran's explanation of the Pure Land path as dualistic, as Dobbins goes on to explain, was "fundamental to Pure Land discourse at the practiced level of religion no matter how important nondualism was at the idealized level of doctrine."[168] That Shinran continued to teach ideas of dualism suggests that dualistic understandings of the Pure Land path are far more than immature understandings of the Pure Land path. Recognizing Shinrans's emphasis on the Pure Land as being otherworldly and Amida as other prompts a reconsideration of issues of identity and difference in Shin Buddhist thought. This reconsideration must also address arguments that understandings of duality on the Shin Buddhist path are signs of an immature faith.[169]

Statements in Shinran's writings demonstrate his idea of the Pure Land path as one of both duality and non-duality. Of particular interest to us here is how Shinran describes the relationship between religious practitioner and Amida Buddha. An examination of Rennyo's writings also reveals a conception of Pure Land Buddhism as both dual and non-dual.

Shinran on the Relationship between Religious Practitioner and Amida Buddha

Shinran's conception of the Shin Buddhist path of awakening describes the relationship between religious practitioner and Amida Buddha in two fundamentally different ways—both in terms of duality and in terms of non-duality. Shin Buddhist scholarship has tended

to place emphasis on the non-dual aspects of this relationship. However, Shinran used various ideas to explain the relationship of religious practitioner and Amida Buddha. That scholars have tended to focus on the aspect of non-duality has led to a distorted understanding of Shin Buddhist paths of awakening. Using the lens of intersubjectivity will help to highlight the need for others, without denying the role and importance of non-duality, on Shin Buddhist paths of awakening. Shinran's conception of the relationship of practitioner and Amida Buddha becomes clear when viewed through the lens of intersubjectivity.

Let us look at some examples of Shinran's statements regarding identity and non-identity of religious practitioner and Amida Buddha. Reading the *Lamp for the Latter Ages* (*Mattōshō*, 末燈鈔), a collection of letters written towards the end of Shinran's life (1251 and 1262), one often finds Shinran explaining that practitioners who have attained *shinjin* are equal to the *tathāgatas* (*shobutsu to hitoshi*, 諸仏とひとし) or equal to Maitreya (Miroku Bosatsu, 弥勒菩薩). For example, Shinran writes in a letter to Jōshin 浄信: "The Buddhas in the ten quarters rejoice in the settling of this mind and praise it as being equal to the hearts and minds of all Buddhas. Thus, the person of true shinjin is said to be equal to the Buddhas. He is also regarded as being the same as Maitreya, who is in [the rank of] succession to Buddhahood."[170]

In another letter to Jōshin, written approximately three months later, Shinran begins with a statement that is almost identical to the one quoted above. "The *Garland Sutra* [*Avataṃsaka-sūtra*] states that those who attained true shinjin are already certain to become Buddhas and therefore are equal to the Tathagatas. Although Maitreya has not yet attained Buddhahood, it is certain that he will, so he is already known as Maitreya Buddha. In this manner, the person who has attained true shinjin is taught to be equal to the Tathagatas."[171] "Equal" (*hitoshi*, ひとし) in these passages means that one is assured of enlightenment that comes with rebirth in the Pure Land. Equal here does not mean "the same as" (*onaji*, 同じ). In other words, it is not the case that religious practitioner + *shinjin* = buddha. Rather, "equal" means that one is assured of enlightenment at some point in the future. Sentient beings must experience death and rebirth in Amida's Pure Land where, freed from delusions, they can attain supreme enlightenment.[172] Equality with the buddhas changes and is transformed over time. Sentient beings are the same as Maitreya in that both must go through the cycle

of birth and death once more. To say sentient beings are the same as Maitreya means that it is certain that both will attain buddhahood. Maitreya and sentient beings must transmigrate through the cycles of birth and death once more before attaining buddhahood.

However, at the end of the second letter above, Shinran makes clear that one should *not* think of one's self-power as being equal to the *tathāgatas*. Shinran writes, "To think in self-power that one is equal to the Tathagatas is a great error. But it is because of the shinjin of Other Power that you rejoice; how can self-power enter into it? Please consider this fully."[173] Shinran believes that blind passions and delusions are so strong that it is impossible to entrust in the activity of the vow through one's own calculation (*hakarai*, はからひ). It is only through the calculation (*onhakarai*, 御はからひ) of Amida Buddha that *shinjin* is attained and enlightenment is ensured. One is fundamentally different from buddhas in that blind passions still shape the way one acts and views the world.

Shinran's understanding of identity as being one of change where the religious practitioner is transformed from a state of delusion to a state of buddhahood is centered in Mahāyāna Buddhist thought, particularly the thought of Chih-i (智顗, 538–597), the founder and systematizer of the Tiantai school in China, who put forth the doctrine of the six identities. The doctrine of the six identities clarifies not only the relationship of identity and difference, but that of doctrine and practice as well. The six identities, as explained by Neil Donner, are:

> 1. Identity in principle. This affirms inherent Buddhahood.
>
> 2. Verbal identity. Here intellectual understanding that we are Buddhas is gained.
>
> 3. Identity of religious practice. Here behavior and mental state are brought into correspondence with the prior verbal formulations. The *Mo-ho chi-kuan* [Jpn. *Maka shikan*, 摩訶止觀] compares this to the practice of archery, in which one begins by aiming at large targets, then gradually reduces the target size until finally one can hit the hundredth part of a hair.
>
> 4. Identity of resemblance. One's "thoughts and evaluations approach what has been expounded in the sūtras of previous Buddhas."
>
> 5. Identity of partial truth. "Ignorance weakens and wisdom becomes increasingly prominent."
>
> 6. Ultimate identity. Buddhahood, the final fruit.[174]

Chih-i's six stages suggest a number of different kinds of identity and that identity with the buddhas is dynamic rather than static.[175] While Shinran does not describe the six identities in his writing, he would have been influenced by—if not aware of—the six identities given the role of the *Mo-ho chi-kuan* in medieval Tendai thought and practice.[176]

For Shinran, the issue of fundamental difference remains as long as one is a sentient being. Yet, Shinran also finds truth in the present life as well. Truth for Shinran represents the formless taking form at various points throughout history. This becomes clear in Shinran's construction of the Pure Land lineage. For example in the *Tannishō* (A Record in Lament of Divergences, 歎異抄), Shinran is recorded as having said: "If Amida's Primal Vow is true, Śākayamuni's teachings cannot be false. If the Buddha's teaching is true, Shan-tao's commentaries cannot be false. If Shan-tao's commentaries are true, can Hōnen's words be lies? If Hōnen's words are true, then surely what I say cannot be empty."[177] Shinran's teachings in this paragraph are true not because Shinran himself utters them, but rather their truth is found in that they are in accordance with the teachings of those who came before Shinran.

Although textual analysis of Shinran's teachings with those of Shan-tao and Hōnen reveals a number of differences and non-traditional readings of texts, Eisho Nasu has argued that Shinran's methodology and reading of texts would not have been disputed or unusual in the context of medieval Japanese Buddhism.[178] Similarly, Corless, in his examination of the Pure Land lineage, argues that unlike Zen, which places a great deal of importance on the student-teacher relationship of its lineage, Shin Buddhism emphasizes a textual lineage. Corless explains further, "Shinran's texts do not really support or transmit anything; they are marshaled as evidence in support of one point, the supreme efficacy of Amida's Hongan [primal vow]—and although that point is, from a Buddhological standpoint, peripheral or even mistaken, it is both central and clear for Shinran."[179] The truth of Amida's vow for Shinran is expressed in various ways at different times in history; issues of historicity are really non-issues for Shinran. While there are significant differences between Shinran's, Hōnen's, and Shan-tao's teachings, these differences are historical. Amida's vow is trans-historical and thus provides the necessary link for one to be equal with the buddhas. This uniting is the activity of the vow, not the calculation of the religious practitioner.

That the unifying experience of *shinjin* is so powerful is due to the fact that it brings one into relationship with that which is other. The power of the unifying experience of *shinjin* is that one comes to feel that the primal vow, to use Shinran's words quoted previously, was made "for myself alone." That Amida's vows are made for all sentient beings means that potentially all sentient beings are equal to the buddhas. Shinran makes clear, however, that this equality is not brought about by one's own doing, but is rather the working of Amida's primal vow.

The Shin Buddhist path as put forth by Shinran comes out of the realization that sentient beings and Amida Buddha are fundamentally different. Sentient beings' existence in the world is characterized by blind passions and delusions that are so strong one is unable to escape the cyclic nature of life and death. Shinran clearly believed that the only way one could awaken *shinjin* and become equal to the buddhas was through the working of the buddhas. Equality for Shinran is found in inequality. That is, through the working of Amida Buddha's vow one is made to be equal to the buddhas. For Shinran, Amida Buddha is fundamentally other in that Amida Buddha and the primal vow are alone true and real. Sentient beings are made to be one with the buddhas only through the working of the buddhas.

As we have seen, Shinran conceives of the relationship between Amida Buddha and religious practitioner as both equal and not equal. Equality within Shin Buddhism refers to the fact that the practitioner is assured of enlightenment, and in that respect is equal with the *tathāgatas*. The practitioner, however, is also at the same time fundamentally apart from Amida Buddha because the practitioner still has to go through another cycle of birth and death before attaining buddhahood.

The religious practitioner and Amida Buddha are therefore separate. Amida Buddha is beyond form, yet Amida is capable of manifesting form so that Amida Buddha becomes "present to all living beings of the world—wherever they are, whatever point in history at which they exist, and whatever their capacities for religious practice—and to dispel their ignorance and awaken them to what is true and real."[180] Yet, in meeting sentient beings precisely wherever they are, Amida is fundamentally part of this world; there is nowhere Amida is not present. As Oka Ryoji explains: "Amida Buddha is not somewhere outside of this universe manifesting his limitless light of wisdom. Shinran saw the

entire universe as consisting of Amida Buddha's light of wisdom. It is not a question of where the light of wisdom originates. Shinran's view is that because the entire universe is Amida's light of wisdom, everything in the universe is grasped by this light of wisdom and is made to live because of this fundamental unity with this light."[181] Amida Buddha is thus simultaneously formless, as Amida is suchness, in that all forms are Amida's light which surrounds all forms and brings them into unity with Amida Buddha. In this way there is not a single form that is apart Amida Buddha, which in this formulation is suchness itself.

However, although Shinran saw the entire universe as being the manifestation of Amida's form, he also believed that one is apart from Amida Buddha as well. It is, perhaps, for this very reason that Shinran emphasizes the otherness of Amida Buddha. Given that forms are by their very nature filled with delusion, the entire universe is also filled with delusion. The reality of Amida, for Shinran, is not in the form Amida takes but rather the formless. Shinran in the *Jōdo wasan* explains:

> The majestic light, transcending form, is beyond description;
> Thus Amida is called "Buddha of Inexpressible Light."
> All the Buddhas praise this light—
> The cause by which Amida's Buddhahood was fulfilled.[182]

Within this hymn, we see that Amida Buddha has gone beyond form and is beyond sentient beings' capabilities for expression, thus all the buddhas praise the light of Amida Buddha. However, sentient beings can only realize Amida Buddha as form, given the delusions that characterize sentient beings' existence. Shinran explains that Amida by necessity has to take form. In a *Kōsō wasan* written in praise of Hōnen, Shinran writes:

> Amida Tathagata, manifesting form in this world,
> Appeared as our teacher Genkū;
> The conditions for teaching having run their course,
> He returned to the Pure Land.[183]

Shinran here clearly believes that Amida Buddha, realizing the necessity of taking form in the world, appeared as Hōnen. The form that was made manifest ceased to be in the world, but the teaching remained, and perhaps even for some of those who were to follow the Pure Land path at present Shinran has come to be seen as Amida.

In Shinran's thought the absolute, that is, suchness, takes form. In taking form, the absolute is able to encounter sentient beings in the midst of their delusions. Shinran and many other Buddhist thinkers

felt that the age of *mappō* (end of the dharma, 末法) was at hand. Thus it was no longer possible to realize awakening through practice; one had to rely on the power of a buddha to bring about awakening. Hōnen's appearing in the world as Amida was the formless taking form as a concrete other that Shinran and others could identify with suchness and thus attain *shinjin*, assuring birth in the Pure Land. In other words, for Shinran, Pure Land soteriology is characterized by the formless manifesting form, enlightenment in the midst of delusion.

Rennyo and the Unity of Buddha and Foolish Beings

As the Shin Buddhist tradition developed in Japan, new doctrines and new hermeneutic devices were used in order to better understand the relationship between Amida Buddha and sentient beings. Among Hōnen's disciples, Shinran was not the only one to put pen to paper as a means of preserving Hōnen's teachings.[184] Also, in the centuries following Shinran's death new leaders of the fledgling Jōdo Shin movement read and incorporated ideas from Hōnen's disciples as a means of understanding Shin Buddhism. One example of this is the doctrine of *kihō ittai* (unity of individual and dharma [i.e., buddha], 機法一体) which was influential for Rennyo's teaching. Rennyo was fond of reading the *Anjin ketsujōshō* (Notes on Firm Faith, 安心決定鈔), a text of unknown authorship that has its origins in the Seizan Branch 西山 of the Jōdo-shū 浄土宗, in which the doctrine of *kihō ittai* is put forth. Rennyo often alluded to the *Anjin ketsujōshō* in his teachings and described it as being a fundamental text for the Shin tradition.[185]

Although Rennyo never mentions *kihō ittai* specifically in his letters, many scholars have noted a connection between *kihō ittai* and Rennyo's understanding of the relationship between the person of *shinjin* and Amida Buddha, particularly when Rennyo writes, "the Buddha's mind and the mind of the ordinary being become one (*busshin to bonshin to hitotsu ni naru* 仏心と凡心とひつになる)."[186]

Rennyo's doctrine, commonly referred to as *butsubon ittai* (unity of buddha and foolish beings, 仏凡 一体), although inspired by the doctrine of *kihō ittai* found in the *Anjin ketsujōshō,* is as Naitō Chikō points out fundamentally different from *kihō ittai*. Naito explains, *kihō ittai* represents a fundamental state of unity between the religious practitioner and the dharma. *Ki* 機 and *hō* 法, the practitioner and the dharma, cannot be separated from one another: although they seem different they are the same. Naito explains this as the difference

between steam and ice; visually we see them as being different, yet fundamentally ice and steam are the same.[187] In contrast, *butsubon ittai* understands the relationship between practitioner and buddha as fundamentally distinct.[188] Naito elaborates on this by explaining each character in this phrase individually. *Butsu* 仏 refers to the mind of the *tathāgatas*, which is true, clear, and real.[189] *Bon* 凡 describes the mind of sentient beings, which is controlled by the delusions of worldly desires.[190] *Ittai* 一体 refers to a state of unity where sentient beings are in a continual process of becoming buddha. In this world, although *butsu* and *bon* appear to be one they are fundamentally different, and yet *butsu* and *bon* are not two. Naito explains: "The salvational power (*chikara* 力) and working of Amida Tathagata cannot be distinguished from ourselves. We ourselves are the locus (*ba* 場) for the operating of Amida Tathagata's salvational power and working."[191] In other words, Naito argues, the working of Amida Buddha in the world cannot be separated from sentient beings. Sentient beings, however, are not the same as Amida Buddha, nor do they cease being sentient beings in this relationship. Particularly important is that this understanding does not deny the reality of sentient beings in the world. Although sentient beings are the locus of Amida's work, sentient beings still suffer in the world of samsara. This understanding of unity is representative of East Asian understandings. Consider for example Ziporyn's explication of the meaning of "one" in early Chinese thought: "[A] 'one' or a 'unity' is conceived not as a homogenous or abstract mathematical unit but, rather, as an indivisible harmony of diverse elements. . . . [I]t signifies a holistic harmony between two identifiably different elements that nonetheless are virtually present in one another due to the inseparability and reciprocal determination that follows from their foundational holistic relation."[192]

Read in this way, the doctrine of *butsubon ittai* implies that the relationship between sentient beings and Amida Buddha can be characterized as "not one, not two, but both one and two." In other words, sentient beings are the locus of Amida Buddha's work in the world and exist in a relationship of mutual determination that is *shinjin*. From the perspective of the religious practitioner, Amida Buddha is wholly other, true and real; sentient beings suffer due to the fact our very being is characterized by innumerable passions and cravings. From the perspective of Amida Buddha, sentient beings are not separate from

Amida Buddha as they are the locus for the operating of Amida Buddha in this world.

Using the lens of intersubjectivity opens up for us the issues of otherness within Shin Buddhism. Shin Buddhist thought conceives of the relationship of religious practitioner and Amida Buddha as being fundamentally different. Due to blind passions and delusions, the religious practitioner is destined to a life of samsaric wanderings. However, as an other Amida Buddha vows to save all sentient beings, thereby assuring that through entrusting in Amida's primal vow sentient beings will attain buddhahood. Because of this assurance, sentient beings are equal to the buddhas. However, as long as sentient beings' existence remains characterized by the wanderings and delusions of samsara they are fundamentally different from the buddhas. This relationship is intersubjective in that upon realizing the difference between their present states of existence and enlightenment, sentient beings also realize what it means that enlightenment is assured by Amida Buddha's primal vow.

(RE-)READING NISHIDA'S PHILOSOPHY THROUGH SHIN THOUGHT

Nishida's philosophy was influenced by both traditional and contemporaneous Shin thought, and, as exemplified by Shinran and Rennyo, Shin thought conceives of the relationship between Amida Buddha and the religious practitioner as being both equal and not equal. For these reasons Shin thought provides a useful hermeneutic for understanding Nishida's non-dualism, allowing us to bring into dialogue Shin ideas of the relation between Amida and religious practitioner and Nishida's understanding of the relationship between absolute and relative.

(Re-)Reading[193]

As discussed previously, Nishida conceives of the relationship between absolute and relative through the phrase" the self-identity of absolute contradiction." Nishida uses this term to explain that the absolute is included in and expressed by its opposite, the relative. For Nishida this relationship is dynamic in that absolute and relative are, as we have already seen, mutually defining and determining. From the very beginning of his philosophic writings to his final completed work, Nishida sought to show that all phenomena/forms exist in a unity with God,[194] while simultaneously arguing that at times, "when seen from

one angle, God's spirit is unknowable."[195] In other words, although sentient beings are one with the absolute (God, Amida Buddha, etc.), they are differentiated from the absolute in that sentient beings' view of reality is askew and truth is hidden.

Given this difference and the compassionate desire of that which is absolute to enter into relationship with all that is relative, Nishida argues, the absolute is only absolute insofar as it contains its own negation.[196] Nishida explains this *qua* Shin Buddhist soteriology. The formless that is suchness, through self-negation, takes on form; Amida Buddha, arising out of suchness, itself takes form in this world. Amida Buddha's self-negation is so strong that Amida "saves sentient beings even by manifesting himself as a devil."[197] Sentient beings, or that which is relative, although existing in a unity with the absolute, are incapable of self-negation; they therefore must rely on the activity of the absolute in order to enter fully into relationship with the absolute.

Nishida derives his understanding of "negation" from Shinran's explication of Amida's calculation and the practitioner's entrusting. For example, as the idea that Shinran would be able to attain enlightenment through his own calculations was abandoned, Shinran came to entrust in the activity of Amida Buddha, and thus realized that Amida's primal vow "was entirely for [Shinran's] sake alone."[198] It was through Amida as suchness taking form that Shinran was able to awaken the mind of *shinjin*. The transcendent thus not only identifies with its opposite but takes form and expresses itself as that which is immanent.

Through the *nenbutsu* sentient beings become expressions of Amida Buddha's primal vow in that they effortlessly reach "a state of existence described as 'being artless and one with the working of the dharma' (*jinen hōni*)."[199] Nishida goes on to explain that through becoming one with the working of the dharma sentient beings are able to act with true compassion, which means to act without regard for the "I" and in accordance with the working of Amida Buddha's primal vow, being one with the working of the dharma.

The entire universe is for Nishida the expression of suchness itself. The formless negates itself and takes form. Shinran understood this as Amida appearing in this world as Hōnen at a time when it was no longer possible, according to Shinran, for sentient beings to awaken aspiration for enlightenment on their own. Eshinni's letters also make clear that Shinran viewed Hōnen and other select individuals in this way.[200] Nishida expressed this relationship as the self-identity of absolute

contradiction, where the distance between the absolute is contained in and expressed by the relative. Absolute and relative do not stand diametrically opposed. Rather, as Nishida argues in the final paragraph of "The Logic of Topos," the absolute and relative, as Pure Land and this world respectively, reflect each other. Nishida explains: "Just as the congregation centered around the Buddha on this shore sees the Pure Land, so this shore is seen by the congregation of the other shore. The world of human beings (*shaba* [娑婆]) reflects the Pure Land (*jōdo* [浄土]), and the Pure Land reflects the world of humanity. Clear mirrors mirror each other. This suggests the intrinsic identity of the Pure Land and the human world."[201]

Nishida's description of how the Pure Land and world relate in this paragraph echoes much of the above discussion. The Pure Land, as Nishida explains above, is not known apart from this world. This world mirrors the Pure Land and the Pure Land mirrors this world. Nishida seems to be suggesting here that one's experience of the Pure Land is intersubjective. One can only understand the experience of birth in the Pure Land through the experiences of this world. Whether it be the realization of Amida's light breaking into ones everyday existence or Amida taking form in this world to teach, the way in which one views the Pure Land is shaped by one's experiences of this world. Our experiences of this world are shaped by those around us. Thus, much like Shinran came to believe that Hōnen was the form taken by Amida Buddha in this world, Nishida allows in his philosophy for the absolute to manifest itself as form in this world. Nishida believed it is this ability—the ability of the absolute to willingly take on form—to cease being absolute that makes something absolute. While much of the above is common to general Mahāyāna Buddhist thought, when we read this in light of what has been presented above, we can speculate that Nishida's introduction to these ideas came from Jōdo Shinshū. When we consider that Nishida grew up in a home where Shin Buddhism was a constant presence, that he had professional ties with a number of influential Shin thinkers, and that he came to understand foundational Zen Buddhist concepts through the lens of Shin Buddhism, it seems to follow that Shin Buddhism may have been the wellspring from which Nishida drew when developing the above ideas.

The purpose of placing Nishida's ideas into a Jōdo Shinshū context has not been to argue that Nishida's philosophy is a Pure Land theology, but rather to show the resonance between Nishida's ideas

and Jōdo Shinshū doctrinal concepts. While these concepts may not be unique to Jōdo Shinshū, it is through Jōdo Shinshū that Nishida learned about them, and by an understanding of how Jōdo Shinshū uses and talks about such concepts as self/other and non-duality Nishida's ideas become more intelligible.

As is well known, Nishida wanted to explain the entire world. With this as his goal, Nishida drew from a wide variety of sources. This, then, is both the strength and weakness of Nishida's philosophy. It is the strength, as Kopf explains, because in Nishida's philosophy one finds "a network of terminology, which, when developed carefully, provides a model for an intercultural philosophy."[202] It is a weakness in that Nishida's philosophy is at times at best ambiguous, and sources are cut off from the socio-historical context within which they developed.

Conclusions and Opportunities for Future Studies

The study of Nishida's philosophy and its relationship to Buddhism is messy at best. In the past scholars have tended to see Nishida's philosophy as *the* philosophy of Zen Buddhism, thus giving a distorted vision of both Zen and Nishida's philosophy. For example, Steve Odin's *The Social Self in Zen and American Philosophy*, while an exemplary model of how comparative philosophy ought to look, deals very little with Zen and more with the philosophy of the Kyoto school philosophers in conversation with the Chicago school of American pragmatism, particularly the thought of George Herbert Mead.[203] While Odin's project of dialoging the thought of the Kyoto school with American pragmatism is welcome, the equation of Kyoto school philosophy with Zen Buddhism is problematic, as is the equation of Mead's pragmatism with American philosophy. Simply put, Odin does not differentiate how or where the thought of the Kyoto school is different from Zen Buddhism.

While the Shin tradition and Nishida's philosophy do have a number of commonalities, in essence they are fundamentally different. As indicated by the quote from Wargo above showed, Nishida was not interested in leading others to religious awakening; rather, he wanted to provide an explanation of the world that allowed for religious experience beyond the role of "superstition." Shinran and Rennyo set out to explain a religious path that would lead others to awakening; whether the path was rational by philosophic standards, frankly, did not concern them.

I believe that future studies of Nishida philosophy will need to continue to separate Nishida's philosophy from the field of Buddhist studies. While Nishida was clearly influenced by and drew upon a number of Buddhist sources, the true genius in Nishida's philosophy is found more in the hermeneutic that he was struggling to develop. Nishida may have created one of many philosophies of religion, and it is perhaps in the context of philosophy of religion that he will eventually be studied in the United States. In Japan, the study of Nishida's philosophy is currently being shaped by a number of individuals. With Kyoto University now having a Department of Japanese Philosophy, it seems Nishida studies have for the time being found a home. This home is significantly positioned apart from both the fields of religious studies and European and American philosophy, and is perhaps even in the midst of a revival as a philosophic movement given the focus of a number of recent Japanese publications. The future of Nishida studies thus looks bright throughout the world. At present a number of individuals in the United States, Europe, and Japan are at work on not only sourcebooks of Japanese philosophy, but on developing increasingly nuanced philosophic positions based on the groundbreaking work of Nishida.

Regarding the study of "the other" within Buddhist paths of awakening, it is clear that more studies need to be done. This study has examined mainly founder figures and traditional Buddhist sources. It would be welcome to read how both medieval and contemporary Buddhists describe their faith, with an eye toward whether others are important in what they both say and do. It was noted above that in the American Buddhist context, Buddhism has often been presented as a solitary pursuit. One wonders, therefore, whether American Buddhists too consider others as integral parts of the Shin Buddhist path. Additionally there is a need to delve deeper into traditional Buddhist texts to look at how the role of others is conceptualized. Ideally, these studies would look not only at the text itself but also at the socio-historical context within which these texts developed. Textual understandings as we have seen are not static. Scholars have documented how such seemingly basic Buddhist concepts such as nothingness, suchness, or the idea of a buddha have changed quite dramatically as the Buddhist tradition has developed. It is my opinion that the role of others has been conceptualized in a number of ways throughout Buddhist discourse. Employing the idea of intersubjectivity as it has

been developed in modern philosophy and psychotherapy has allowed us to understand both the extent to which Pure Land thought played a key role in the development of Nishida's philosophy and the necessity of others in Shin Buddhist paths of awakening.

NOTES

1. Nishitani Keiji, *Nishida Kitarō*, trans. Yamamoto Seisaku and James W. Heisig (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 26.

2. This description is problematic, as John C. Maraldo argues that it is dependent upon a rather narrow definition of philosophy. Maraldo notes that both critics (Nakamura Yūjirō) and supporters (Takahashi Satomi, Funayama Shinichi, and Shimomura Torarō) have described Nishida's work as being the first example of Japanese philosophy. However, Maraldo argues that describing Nishida as Japan's first philosopher implies "a double closure: premodern, indeed pre-Nishida Japanese (and Asian) thought was excluded from the title of philosophy, strictly speaking; and philosophy in Japan after him was bound to take a stance toward him, be it emulation, inspiration, outspoken criticism or silent rejection." Maraldo continues by calling for a broader understanding of philosophy that is constantly in a state of "trans-lation." Trans-lation, as Maraldo explains, describes a continual process of "transference and transposition, incorporation and expulsion, creation and destruction, writing and rewriting." Maraldo concludes by arguing that at present Japan has a long philosophic history, which includes figures such as Kūkai, Dōgen, and Shinran. See John C. Maraldo, "Tradition, Textuality, and the Trans-lation of Philosophy: The Case of Japan," in *Japan in Traditional and Postmodern Perspectives*, ed. Charles Wei-hsun Fu and Steven Heine (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 228, 233, and 239–240.

3. On the development, naming, and membership of the Kyoto school, see James W. Heisig, *Philosophers of Nothingness: An Essay on the Kyoto School* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), 3–7.

4. Ibid., 32.

5. See, for example, Bernard Faure, *Chan Insights and Oversights: An Epistemological Critique of the Chan Tradition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 52–88; Bernard Faure, "The Kyoto School and Reverse Orientalism," in *Japan in Traditional and Postmodern Perspectives*, ed. Charles Wei-Hsun Fu and Steven Heine (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 245–281; Robert H. Sharf, "The Zen of Japanese Nationalism," in *Curators of the Buddha*, ed. Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 107–160; Robert H. Sharf, "Whose Zen? Zen Nationalism Revisited," in *Rude Awakenings: Zen, the Kyoto School and the Question of Nationalism*, ed. James W. Heisig and John C. Maraldo (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1995), 40–51.

6. Sharf, "The Zen of Japanese Nationalism,"144.

7. Nishida Kitarō, *Zen no kenkyū* 善の研究 (An Inquiry into the Good) (Tokyo: Kōdōkan, 1911).

8. Faure, *Chan Insights and Oversights,* 84.

9. Abe Masao, introduction to *An Inquiry into the Good*, by Nishida Kitarō, trans. Abe Masao and Christopher Ives (New Haven, NY: Yale University Press, 1990), xii. There are two translations of *Zen no kenkyū* available in English. The first, *A Study of the Good*, trans. V. H. Viglielmo (Tokyo: Ministry of Education, 1960), contains Suzuki's introduction. The second translation by Abe Masao and Christopher Ives (cited above) contains Abe's introduction rather than Suzuki's. For the Japanese see Nishida Kitarō, *Nishida Kitarō zenshū*, 19 vols. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1948; repr. 1988), 1:3–200.

10. Faure, *Chan Insights and Oversights,* 81.

11. Ibid.

12. Nishida Kitarō, *An Inquiry into the Good*, trans. Abe Masao and Christopher Ives (New Haven, NY: Yale University Press, 1990), 176.

13. I thank Professor Eisho Nasu of the Institute of Buddhist Studies for pointing this out.

14. Heisig, *Philosophers of Nothingness*, 38.

15. Ibid., 39.

16. Ibid., 38.

17. Ibid., 52.

18. Ibid., 29.

19. Robert J. J. Wargo, *The Logic of Nothingness: A Study of Nishida Kitarō* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005), 3.

20. Faure, *Chan Insights and Oversights*, 86.

21. Agustín Jacinto Zavala, "The Return of the Past," in *Rude Awakenings: Zen, the Kyoto School and the Question of Nationalism*, ed. James W. Heisig and John C. Maraldo (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1995), 142.

22. Nishida Kitarō, "A New Year's Lecture to the Emperor: On the Philosophy of History," trans. Yusa Michiko; quoted in Yusa Michiko, *Zen and Philosophy: An Intellectual Biography of Nishida Kitarō* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), 318.

23. Yusa, *Zen and Philosophy*, 311.

24. Faure, *Chan Insights and Oversights*, 75.

25. Ibid., 84.

26. Heisig, *Philosophers of Nothingness*, 98.

27. Ibid., 98–99.

28. Ibid., 99.

29. For more on questions of nationalism and imperialism in the Kyoto school see James Heisig and John C. Maraldo, eds., *Rude Awakenings: Zen, the Kyoto School and the Question of Nationalism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1994). Recently, David Williams has argued that questions of nationalism in projects of the Kyoto school are an example of how the "Allied gaze" has been used to frame understandings of Japan. Williams argues that in the Kyoto school one finds the first examples of post-White philosophy, and that questioning the Kyoto school on grounds of nationalism is a tactic to maintain both philosophic and academic hegemony. Williams arguments fall apart in that he fails to consider that a number of Japanese works have questioned the role of nationalism in the Kyoto school. In fact, eight Japanese authors contributed to *Rude Awakenings*, and every author draws upon Japanese sources in either critiquing or defending the Kyoto school. See David Williams, *Defending Japan's Pacific War: The Kyoto School Philosophers and Post-White Power* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004).

30. *Nishida Kitarō zenshū*, 1:407–409. For an English translation see Dennis Hirota, "Nishida's 'Gutoku Shinran,'" *Eastern Buddhist* 18, no. 2 (1995): 242–244.

31. Ibid., 231.

32. Ibid., 239.

33. *Nishida Kitarō zenshū* 7:371–464. For English translation see Nishida Kitarō, "The Logic of Topos and the Religious Worldview I," trans. Yusa Michiko, *The Eastern Buddhist* 19, no. 1 (1986): 1–29, and Nishida Kitarō, "The Logic of Topos and the Religious Worldview II," trans. Yusa Michiko *The Eastern Buddhist* 20, no. 2 (1987), 81–119.

34. Takemura Makio 竹村牧男, *Nishida Kitarō to Bukkyō Zen to Shinshū no kontei wo kiwameru* 西田幾多郎と仏教禅と真宗の根底を究める (Tokyo: Daito Shuppansha, 2002), 47.

35. Ibid., 48.

36. *Nishida Kitarō zenshū* 1:407; Hirota, "Nishida's 'Gutoku Shinran,'" 242.

37. Yusa, *Zen and Philosophy*, 6.

38. Takemura, *Nishida Kitarō*, 49.

39. Ibid., 50.

40. Heisig, *Philosophers of Nothingness*, 30.

41. Yusa, *Zen and Philosophy*, 117.

42. Ibid., 337.

43. Heisig, *Philosophers of Nothingness*, 278. Heisig cites the work of Takeda Ryūsei as being one of the few works from a Jōdo Shinshū perspective that is not dismissive of Nishida's understanding of Shinran. See for example Takeda Ryūsei, *Shinran Jōdokyō to Nishida Tetsugaku*_親鸞浄土教と西田哲学 (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshodo, 1991).

44. Dennis Hirota, "Images of Reality in the Shin Buddhist Path," in *Toward a Contemporary Understanding of Pure Land Buddhism: Creating a Shin Buddhist Theology in a Religiously Plural World*, ed. Dennis Hirota (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), 48.

45. Heisig, *Philosophers of Nothingness*, 34.

46. Gereon Kopf, "Between Identity and Difference: Three Ways of Reading Nishida's Non-Dualism," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 31, no. 1 (2004): 83.

47. Nishida, "The Logic of Topos and the Religious Worldview I," 3.

48. Kopf, "Between Identity and Difference," 83.

49. For an in-depth study of the two truths theory see Paul L. Swanson, *Foundations of T'ien-t'ai Philosophy* (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1989).

50. References to buddha are to the cosmological buddha (which is without features or form), not the historical Buddha, Śākyamuni. When references to Śākyamuni Buddha are made either the name or the particle "the" will precede the word "Buddha."

51. *Shinjin* has often been translated as "faith." This essay, following the precedent set by the Shin Buddhism Translation Series, leaves the term untranslated. As Ueda Yoshifumi explains, "the concept of faith stands on the duality of God (creator) and man (created), shinjin is the oneness of Buddha and man, or man's becoming a buddha" (Ueda Yoshifumi, "Response to Thomas P. Kasulis' Review of Letters of Shinran," *Philosophy East and West* 46, no. 3 [1981]: 507). In other words, faith, according to Ueda, is predicated on the notion of dualism, whereas *shinjin* is representative of a non-dual relation between buddha and sentient being. Challenging Ueda, Takeda Ryūsei, a member of the advisory board to the Shin Buddhism Translation Series, has argued that *shinjin* ought to be translated as "faith" given that both faith and *shinjin* are relational concepts, and that by not translating *shinjin* the Shin Buddhism Translation Series has committed itself to an exclusive position that prevents a dialogue among religions from occurring. See Takeda Ryūsei 武田龍精, "Shinran's View of Faith," in *Shinran Jōdokyō to Nishida Tetsugaku* 親鸞浄土教と西田哲学 (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1991), 74.

52. Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-Ha, *The Collected Works of Shinran*, 2 vols. (Kyoto: Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-Ha, 1997), 2:532; Shinshū Shōgyō Zensho Hensansho 真宗聖教全書編纂所, *Shinshū shōgyō zensho* 真宗聖教全書, 5 vols. (Kyoto:

Ōyagi Kōbundo, 1940), 1:667.

53. *Collected Works of Shinran*, 1:679; *Shinshū shōgyō zensho*, 2:792.

54. *Collected Works of Shinran*, 1:291; *Shinshū shōgyō zensho,* 2:203.

55. *Collected Works of Shinran*, 1:517; *Shinshū shōgyō zensho,* 2:44.

56. Jessica Benjamin, *The Bonds of Love: Psychoanalysis, Feminism and the Problem of Domination* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1998), 20.

57. See Brook Ziporyn, *Evil and/or/as The Good: Omnicentrism, Intersubjectivity and Value Paradox* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000).

58. James W. Heisig, "Non-I and Thou: Nishida, Buber, and the Moral Consequences of Self-Actualization," *Philosophy East and West* 50, no. 2 (2000): 180.

59. Gereon Kopf, "On the Brink of Postmodernity: Recent Japanese-Language Publications of the Philosophy of Nishida Kitarō," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 30, nos. 1–2 (2003): 134.

60. Kopf, "On the Brink of Postmodernity," 134.

61. Yusa, *Zen and Philosophy*, 128–129.

62. Ibid., 130.

63. Ueda Shizuteru, "Zen and Philosophy in the Thought of Nishida Kitarō," trans. Mark Unno, *Japanese Religions* 18, no. 2 (July 1993): 187. The first sentence of Ueda's quotation may represent a formulation of the logic of *sokuhi* 即非, found in the *Diamond Sutra* and often employed by D. T. Suzuki as "A is not A therefore it is A," which Nishida identified later in his career as being synonymous with his logic of the self-identity of absolute contradiction. However, as Gereon Kopf has shown, the logic of *sokuhi* that Nishida employed is fundamentally different from the logic expressed in the *Diamond Sutra*. See Gereon Kopf, "Critical Comments on Nishida's Use of Chinese Buddhism," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 32, no. 2 (June 2005): 318–321.

64. Ueda, "Zen and Philosophy in the Thought of Nishida Kitarō," 188.

65. Thomas Kasulis, *Zen Action/Zen Person* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1981), 59.

66. Ueda, "Zen and Philosophy in the thought of Nishida Kitarō," 166. The reader will recall that both Faure and Sharf have questioned the construction of the Zen tradition that Ueda and Kasulis are using; see *supra*, note 5.

67. Ueda, "Zen and Philosophy in the Thought of Nishida Kitarō," 168.

68. Takemura, *Nishida Kitarō*, 50.

69. Yusa, *Zen and Philosophy*, 55. Nishida was at this time a middle school English teacher in Kanazawa.

70. Takemura, *Nishida Kitarō*, 50; Yusa, *Zen and Philosophy*, 55.

71. Nishida Kitarō, "Letter no. 595, 4 January 1930, NKZ 18:396-398," trans. Yusa Michiko, quoted in Yusa, *Zen and Philosophy*, 246.

72. Takemura, *Nishida Kitarō*, 64–65.

73. Ibid., 52.

74. *Nishida Kitarō zenshū*, 1:199; Nishida, *An Inquiry into the Good*, 176 (modified).

75. Takemura, *Nishida Kitarō*, 52.

76. Fujita Masakatsu 藤田正勝, "Kiyozawa Manshi to Nishida Kitarō 清沢満之と西田幾多郎," in *Kiyozawa Manshi: Sono hito to shisō* 清沢満之—その人と思想, ed. Fujita Masakatsu 藤田正勝 and Yasutomi Shinya 安富信哉 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2002), 120.

77. Nishida first uses Shin Buddhism to explain what the "true religious experience" is. Nishida writes, "Shinran is quoted in the *Tannishō*: 'The *nembutsu* chanted in the heart to increase works leading to rebirth in the pure land is a practice based on one's own efforts." The second quotation comes when Nishida explains the unity of absolute and relative. "Reflection is the route along which we attain a profound unity. (Shinran declares in the *Tannishō*, 'If even a good person attains rebirth in the Pure Land, how much more so does an evil person.')." Nishida, *An Inquiry into the Good*, 150, 170.

78. Fujita, "Kiyozawa Manshi to Nishida Kitarō," 132–133.

79. Thomas Kirchner, "The Life of Manshi Kiyozawa," in *December Fan: The Buddhist Essays of Manshi Kiyozawa*, trans. Nobuo Haneda (Kyoto: Higashi Honganji, 1984), 87.

80. Yusa, *Zen and Philosophy*, 86.

81. Ibid., 87.

82. Ibid., 127.

83. Hirota, "Nishida's 'Gutoku Shinran,'" 243; *Nishida Kitarō zenshū,* 1:408.

84. Nakamura Sōichi 中村宗一, *Zenyaku Shōbōgenzō ikkan* 全訳 正法眼蔵一巻 (Tokyo: Seishin Shobō, 1971), 2.

85. *Collected Works of Shinran*, 1:679; *Shinshū shōgyō zensho*, 2:792.

86. This quote seems to have intrigued not only Nishida but other members of the Kyoto school as well. Nishitani Keiji 西谷啓治 (1900–1990), the third major figure of the Kyoto school after Nishida and Tanabe Hajime 田辺元 (1885–1962), took up this passage in his article "The Problem of Time in Shinran," trans. Dennis Hirota, *The Eastern Buddhist* 11, no. 1 (1978): 13–26.

87. Fujita, "Kiyozawa Manshi to Nishida Kitarō," 134.

88. Heisig, *Philosophers of Nothingness*, 99.

89. Ibid., 100.

90. Kopf, "Critical Comments on Nishida's Use of Chinese Buddhism," 314.

91. Ibid., 326.

92. Yusa, *Zen and Philosophy*, 330.

93. Kopf, "Nishida's use of Chinese Buddhism," 322. Kopf notes that Nishida first use of *gyakutaiō* occurs in "The Logic of Topos," while Nishida first use of *byōjōtei* occurred in *Philosophical Essays*, volume 3 (*Tetsugaku ronbunshū daisan* 哲学論文集第三), See Kopf, "Nishida's use of Chinese Buddhism," 328n52.

94. Kopf, "Critical Comments on Nishida's Use of Chinese Buddhism," 322.

95. Heisig, *Philosophers of Nothingness*, 103.

96. Takemura, *Nishida Kitarō*, 244.

97. Fujita Masakatsu 藤田正勝, *Gendai shisō toshite no Nishida Kitarō* 現代思想としての西田幾多郎 (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1998), 208.

98. Kosaka Kunitsugu 小坂国継, *Nishida tetsugaku to shūkyō* 西田哲学と宗教 (Tokyo: Daito Shuppansha, 1994), 306.

99. Kosaka, *Nishida tetsugaku to shūkyō*, 252.

100. *Collected Works of Shinran*, 1:663; *Shinshū shōgyō zensho*, 2:775.

101. Kosaka, *Nishida tetsugaku to shūkyō*, 252.

102. On the history and development of *nishu jinshin* see Ryōshō Yata, "An Examination of the Historical Development of the Concept of Two Aspects of Deep Belief, Part 1 and Part 2," trans. David Matsumoto, *Pacific World*, n.s., 3 (2001): 157–175 and *Pacific World*, n.s., 4 (2002): 237–257.

103. Nishida, "The Logic of Topos and the Religious Worldview II," 105.

104. Ibid., 106.

105. Ibid., 92. Shinran quotes the Pure Land parable of "the white path between two rivers" in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*; see *Collected Works of Shinran*, 1:89–90; *Shinshū shōgyō zensho*, 2:221–222.

106. Nishida, "The Logic of Topos and the Religious Worldview II," 100.

107. Yusa, *Zen and Philosophy*, 323.

108. Ibid., 330.

109. Kopf, "Three Ways of Reading Nishida's Non-Dualism," 83.

110. Nishida, *An Inquiry into the Good*, 170.

111. Nishida uses the term "God" as a signifier for the highest of absolutes. At other times, Nishida interchangeably refers to the absolute as the Buddha, Amida Buddha, dharma, and absolute nothingness.

112. Heisig, *Philosophers of Nothingness*, 103.

113. Nishida, "The Logic of Topos and the Religious Worldview II," 104.

114. Gereon Kopf, *Beyond Personal Identity* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2001), 53–54; Brook Ziporyn, *Evil and/or/as The Good*, 199–201. Both Kopf and Ziporyn have published arguments that show the necessity of the role of the "Other" in Buddhist thought that are similar to those cited here, see for example Gereon Kopf, "In the Face of the Other," in *The Couch and the Tree*, ed. Anthony Molino (New York: North Point Press, 1998), 276–289; Brook Ziporyn, "What Is the Buddha Looking At? The Importance of Intersubjectivity in the T'ien-t'ai Tradition as Understood by Chih-li," in *Buddhism in the Sung*, ed. Peter N. Gregory and Daniel A. Getz, Jr. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 442–476; and, Brook Ziporyn, *Being and Ambiguity* (Chicago: Open Court, 2004) 293–294.

115. Varghese J. Manimala, *Being, Person and Community* (New Delhi: Intercultural Publications, 1991), 182.

116. Given that Shinran was originally ordained as a Tendai monk, it may strike the reader as being apropos to explore intersubjectivity and issues of identity and difference in Tiantai; however, these issues have previously been explored in great detail. Tiantai and Tendai notions of intersubjectivity that may have influenced Shinran's thought will be discussed in the section on Jōdo Shinshū conceptions of identity and difference. Although beyond the scope of this essay, for an excellent account of intersubjectivity in Tibetan Buddhism see B. Allan Wallace, "Intersubjectivity in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism," *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 8, nos. 5–7 (2001): 209–230.

117. W. T. Jones and Robert J. Fogelin, *A History of Western Philosophy: The Twentieth Century to Quine and Derrida*, 3rd ed. (New York: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1997), 359.

118. Notably absent in much of Benjamin's work and the present discussion is the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas. Benjamin makes clear that she disagrees with any psychological or philosophic theory that conceives of the Other as transcendent and ineffable. Benjamin, as will become clear in the ensuing discussion, notes the philosophic and psychological necessity for a relationship between self and other as interdependent. While Benjamin would most likely agree with Levinas concerning the danger of subsuming the Other to the self, Levinas's focus on the Other as transcendent and ineffable is ultimately untenable for theories of intersubjectivity. On Benjamin's rejection on an ineffable other, see Jessica Benjamin, *Shadow of the Other: Intersubjectivity and Gender in Psychoanalysis* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 94. An excellent overview of Levinas's philosophy regarding Otherness is Colin Davis, *Levinas: An Introduction* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996), 34–62. Levinas's most well-known and often quoted work regarding the Other is Emmanuel Levinas, *Time and the Other*, trans. R. A. Cohen (Pittsburgh: Duquesne

University Press, 1987).

119. Pierre Hadot, *What Is Ancient Philosophy?*, trans. Michael Chase (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 23.

120. Benjamin, *Bonds of Love*, 19–20.

121. Jessica Benjamin, *Like Subjects, Love Objects: Essays on Recognition and Sexual Difference* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 30.

122. Ibid., 28.

123. Benjamin, *Bonds of Love*, 21.

124. Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 148.

125. Benjamin, *Bonds of Love*, 33.

126. Ibid., 49.

127. Jessica Benjamin, *Shadow of the Other*, 96.

128. Benjamin, *Like Subjects, Love Objects*, 185.

129. Jeff Shore, "Basics of Zen Practice," *Hanazono Daigaku Bungakubu Kenkyū Kiyou* 花園大学文学部研究紀要 36 (March 2004): 3.

130. Shore, "Basics of Zen Practice," 3.

131. Hajime Nakamura, *Gotama Buddha* (Los Angeles: Buddhist Books International, 1977), 63.

132. Edward J. Thomas, *The Life of the Buddha: As Legend and History* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1951), 146.

133. Roger J. Corless, *The Vision of Buddhism* (New York: Paragon House, 1989), 13. Corless's emphasis here on the word "collectively" is done in response to the all too common presentation of Buddhist practice as solitary.

134. Richard F. Gombrich explains that the words of the Triple Refuge (I take refuge in the Buddha, I take refuge in the dharma, and I take refuge in the sangha), when said with intention, are the means by which one becomes a Buddhist. See Richard F. Gombrich, *Precept and Practice: Traditional Buddhism in the Rural Highlands of Ceylon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 65.

135. Ziporyn, *Evil and/or/as the Good*, 199.

136. Paul Williams and Anthony Tribe, *Buddhist Thought: A Complete Introduction to the Indian Tradition* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 93.

137. Kopf, *Beyond Personal Identity*, 97; Ziporyn, *Evil and/or/as the Good*, 200.

138. Inagaki Hisao and Harold Stewart, trans., "The Larger Sutra on Amitāyus," in *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2003), 16.

139. Ziporyn, *Evil and/or/as the Good*, 200.

140. Dan Lusthaus postulates a number of reasons both historical and epistemological to account for the marked differences between Sinitic forms of Mahāyāna Buddhism and Indo-Tibetan forms of Buddhism. One of the most striking reasons is the development of a Chinese Buddhist shift from psychology to meta-psychology, whereas in the Indo-Tibetan traditions we find a shift from psychology to logico-epistemology. See for example Dan Lusthaus, *Buddhist Phenomenology: A Philosophical Investigation of Yogācāra Buddhism and the Ch'eng Wei-shih lun* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002), 356–373.

141. Kenneth K. Tanaka, *The Dawn of Chinese Pure Land Buddhism: Ching-ying Hui-yüan's Commentary on the Visualization Sutra* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 21.

142. Jacqueline I. Stone, *Original Enlightenment and the Transformation of Japanese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 5.

143. Yoshito S. Hakeda, trans., *The Awakening of Faith: Attributed to Aśvaghosha* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 43.

144. Hakeda, *The Awakening of Faith,* 48.

145. Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, 6.

146. Ibid., 37.

147. Stone notes that the Japanese *hongaku* thought is "indebted not only to the specific category of 'original enlightenment' set forth in the *Awakening of Faith* and developed in its commentaries, but more broadly to the great totalistic systems of Chinese Buddhist thought, especially those of Hua-yen and T'ien-t'ai." See Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, 6.

148. Paul Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 127.

149. Edward Conze, *Buddhist Thought in India: Three Phases of Buddhist Philosophy* (Ann Arbor: Ann Arbor Paperbacks University of Michigan Press, 1967), 92–106.

150. David L. McMahan, *Empty Vision: Metaphor and Visionary Imagery in Mahāyāna Buddhism* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002), 112.

151. Ibid., 117.

152. Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎, Watanabe Kaigyoku 渡邊海旭 et al., eds., *Taishō Shinshū Daizokyō* 大正新脩大藏經, vol. 10, no. 279 (Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1924–1934), 432a.

153. Both *shih* and *li* have numerous English translations. Depending on context *shih* has been translated as "thing," "event," "matter," "the particular," "the concrete," and "phenomenon." Translations for *li* include "principle,"

"universal truth," "reason," "the abstract," "the law," "noumenon," "judgment," and "knowledge." It should be noted that phenomenon and noumenon are problematic in this context given their connection with the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, where the noumenon is unknowable.

154. Garma C. C. Chang, *The Buddhist Teaching of Totality: The Philosophy of Hwa Yen Buddhism* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1971), 141–171.

155. Ibid., 142.

156. Ibid., 143.

157. Peter N. Gregory, *Tsung-Mi and the Sinification of Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), 67–68.

158. Chang, *The Buddhist Teaching of Totality*, 144.

159. Gregory, *Tsung-Mi and the Sinification of Buddhism*, 188–189.

160. Ibid., 68.

161. Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, 133.

162. McMahan, *Empty Vision*, 122.

163. Ibid., 122.

164. Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, 87.

165. Hirota, "Images of Reality in the Shin Buddhist Path," 50.

166. Ibid., 56.

167. James C. Dobbins, *Letters of the Nun Eshinni: Images of Pure Land Buddhism in Modern Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), 71.

168. Ibid., 72.

169. Presentations of non-duality in Buddhist scholarship, characterizing dualistic understandings of the world as "immature," are perhaps part of a larger trend in both doctrine and scholarship that tries to portray Buddhism as a "rational" religion. Although beyond the scope of this essay, there are a number of historical reasons for the presentation of a rationalized form of Buddhism. Gerard Clinton Godart notes that during the Meiji period (1858–1912) Buddhism in Japan faced a number of challenges, including (1) decreasing popularity among the intellectual elite; (2) anti-Buddhist sentiment during the Meiji Restoration, in which a rising nationalism characterized Buddhism as a threat due to its foreign origins; (3) scholarly treatments, both Japanese and European, of Mahāyāna Buddhism as inauthentic; and (4) a general perception that Buddhism was "no longer a credible explanation of the world" (Gerard Clinton Godart, "Tracing the Circle of Truth: Inoue Enryō on the History of Philosophy and Buddhism," *Eastern Buddhist* 36, nos. 1–2 [2004]). In response

to this Inoue Enryō 井上円了 (1858–1919), a Jōdo Shinshū priest and founder of the Tetsugakkan 哲学館 (which later became Tōyō University 東洋大学), coined the term "Buddhist philosophy" (*bukkyō tetsugaku* 仏教哲学). The goal of Buddhist philosophy, as Godart explains, was to "separate the philosophical parts and the religious parts that exist in Buddhism"; additionally, "Inoue interpreted Buddhism as a religion based on philosophy" (Godart, "Tracing the Circle of Truth," 111–112). While the categories of Buddhist philosophy are no longer used in Japanese academia, Inoue's legacy and formulation of Buddhism seems to survive at present given the history of Buddhist studies in the United States. For more see Godart, "Tracing the Circle of Truth." For more on the history of Buddhism during the Meiji era see James Edward Ketelar, *Of Heretics and Martyrs in Meiji Japan: Buddhism and Its Persecution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 43–86. An excellent overview of themes and challenges that have shaped the field of Buddhist studies is Jacqueline I. Stone, "Buddhism," in *Nanzan Guide to Japanese Religions*, ed. Paul L. Swanson and Clark Chilson (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), 38–64.

170. *Collected Works of Shinran*, 1:532; *Shinshū shōgyō zensho*, 2:667.

171. *Collected Works of Shinran*, 1:546; *Shinshū shōgyō zensho*, 2:680–681.

172. *Collected Works of Shinran*, 2:182–183.

173. *Collected Works of Shinran*, 1:546; *Shinshū shōgyō zensho*, 2:681.

174. Neil Donner, "Sudden and Gradual Intimately Conjoined: Chih-i's T'ien-t'ai View," in *Sudden and Gradual: Approaches to Enlightenment in Chinese Thought*, ed. Peter N. Gregory (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1987), 204.

175. Donner, "Sudden and Gradual Intimately Conjoined," 204.

176. Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, 45. For more on medieval Tendai methodology and its influence on Shinran, see Eisho Nasu, "'Rely on the Meaning, Not on the Words': Shinran's Methodology and Strategy for Reading Scriptures and Writing the *Kyōgyōshinshō*,"in *Discourse and Ideology in Medieval Japanese Buddhism*, ed. Richard K. Payne and Taigen Daniel Leighton (London and New York: Routledge, 2006).

177. *Collected Works of Shinran*, 1:662; *Shinshū shōgyō zensho*, 2:774–775.

178. Nasu, "Rely on the Meaning, Not on the Words."

179. Roger Corless, "Who Was Shinran's Teacher?: A Comparison of Lineage Authentication in Zen and Shin," *The Pure Land*, n.s., nos. 13–14 (1997): 217.

180. Yoshifumi Ueda and Dennis Hirota, *Shinran: An Introduction to His Thought* (Kyoto: Hongwanji: International Center, 1989), 112.

181. Oka Ryoji, "Amida Buddha and the Pure Land," in *Beyond Comparison: Religious Pluralism and Religious Truth*, Shinran's Thought in the Contemporary World III, ed. Takeda Ryūsei (Kyoto: Ryūkoku Daigaku Bukkyo Bunka Kenkyūjo,

1997), 71–72.

182. *Collected Works of Shinran*, 1:328; *Shinshū shōgyō zensho*, 2:487.

183. *Collected Works of Shinran*, 1:390; *Shinshū shōgyō zensho*, 2:514.

184. Concerning the development of Japanese Pure Land Buddhism following Hōnen's death, see Mark L. Blum, *The Origins and Development of Pure Land Buddhism: A Study and Translation of Gyōnen's* Jōdo *Hōmon Genrushō* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002). It is interesting to note that Gyōnen does not include Shinran in his survey of Pure Land Buddhism. Blum notes a number of reasons why Gyōnen would not have included Shinran in his survey: (1) Shinran had a low profile among Hōnen's senior disciples; (2) Gyōnen's hermeneutic categories would have deemphasized Shinran's uniqueness in that he would share the position of Kōsai and Gyōkū; (3) Shinran had disdain for contemplative practices; and (4) Shinran rejected monastic life (Blum, *Origins and Development of Pure Land Buddhism*, 41–44).

185. Minor L. Rogers and Ann T. Rogers, *Rennyo: The Second Founder of Shin Buddhism* (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1991), 92–93.

186. Rogers and Rogers, *Rennyo*, 184; *Shinshū shōgyō zensho*, 3:439. On the connection of *kihō ittai* and Jōdo Shinshū doctrine, see Rogers and Rogers, *Rennyo*, 184n25.

187. Naitō Chikō 内藤知康, *Anjin rondai o manabu* 安心論題を学ぶ (Kyoto: Hongwanji Shuppansha, 2004), 193.

188. Ibid., 315.

189. Ibid., 313.

190. Ibid., 314.

191. Ibid., 319.

192. Ziporyn, *Evil and/or/as the Good*, 50.

193. Though not explicitly cited, the work of Thomas Kasulis has been influential in formulating my approach and reading of the work of Shinran, Rennyō, and Nishida. In particular, see Thomas Kasulis, "Philosophy as Metapraxis," in *Discourse and Practice*, ed. Frank Reynolds and David Tracy (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 169–195; and Thomas Kasulis, *Intimacy or Integrity: Philosophy and Cultural Difference* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002).

194. Nishida, *An Inquiry into the Good*, 163.

195. Ibid., 165.

196. Nishida, "The Logic of Topos and the Religious Worldview I," 19.

197. Nishida, "The Logic of Topos and the Religious Worldview II," 98.

198. *Collected Works of Shinran*, 1:679; *Shinshū shōgyō zensho*, 2:792.

199. Nishida, "The Logic of Topos and the Religious Worldview II," 104.

200. Dobbins, *Letters of the Nun Eshinni*, 147.

201. Ibid., 119.

202. Kopf, "Nishida's use of Chinese Buddhism," 326.

203. Steve Odin, *The Social Self in Zen and American Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996).