

Toward a Pro-Active Engaged Shin Buddhism: A Reconsideration of the Teaching of the Two Truths (*shinzoku-nitai*)

Michio Tokunaga

Kyoto Women's College

Alfred Bloom

Professor Emeritus

University of Hawai'i

IN THIS ESSAY WE will focus on the well-known teaching of the “two truths” (Jpn. *shinzoku nitai*). This theory has been notably prominent in the history of modern Shin Buddhism and indicates the continuing concern for the relation between Shin teaching and the institutions to society. The theory is one of the most problematic concepts in Shin Buddhism today, encountering sharp criticism from many contemporary thinkers. The reason is that the traditional acceptance of Buddhist truth and its reflection on social ethics have not been mutually integrated, but have been separated to imply two different ways of living by one person. In addition, whether such a view of “two truths” originated in Shinran’s thought or not has also been called in question. The concept of “two-truths” originated in the Mādhyamikan Buddhist tradition. However, it has come to be used in Shin Buddhism to mean Buddha’s Law (Jpn. *buppō*, Skt. *buddhadharma*) and King’s Law (Jpn. *ōbō*), which has nothing to do with the original Mādhyamikan usage.

It is the purpose of this essay to survey the historical development and application of the concept of “two truths” in the history of Japanese Buddhism. We will take up its modern interpretation and offer a reinterpretation more consonant with the contemporary situation of Shin Buddhism within democratic society.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE TEACHING OF THE TWO TRUTHS

The idea of “two truths” is derived from Mādhyamikan teaching found in the following verses of the *Chūron*, a Chinese translation of Nāgārjuna’s

(150–250) *Mūlamādhyaṃaka kārikā* by Kumārajīva (344–413):

All Buddhas expound the teaching for all sentient beings
 On the basis of the “two truths”;
 One is the mundane truth
 And the other, the highest truth.
 If one cannot understand
 And discern the meaning of the “two truths,”
 One cannot understand the true meaning
 At the depth of the Buddha Dharma.
 If not based on the mundane truth,
 The highest truth cannot be obtained.
 If the highest truth is not obtained,
 One cannot attain nirvāna.¹

“The highest truth” (Skt. *paramārtha-satya*) and “the mundane truth” (Skt. *loka-samvṛti-satya*) in the above verses have traditionally been called in Japanese *shintai* (supramundane truth) and *zokutai* (mundane truth), which are combined to create the phrase *shinzoku nitai*. As we clearly see in these verses, the notion of the “two truths” refers to the two phases of ultimate reality taught in Mahāyāna Buddhism, i.e., *sūnyatā* (emptiness, void). *Sūnyatā* cannot be understood unless these two phases are taken into consideration; one is the negative phase which is totally beyond conceptual understanding, while the positive is within the realm of human comprehension. It is the sphere of our ordinary, conventional truth.

In actuality, however, “mundane truth” means presenting the teaching in words and concepts in order to reveal the ultimate reality or *sūnyatā*, which is beyond human comprehension. It is because of the function of such words and concepts that the teaching is likened to “a finger pointing to the moon.” Without the finger (words and concepts, or mundane truth), one cannot be aware of the moon (highest reality beyond words and concepts, or supramundane truth).

At the core of Shinran’s Pure Land thought, we can definitely find the original Mādhyamikan sense of the “two truths.” He was much influenced by T’an-luan (476–542), who is the third of the Seven Patriarchs of Shin Buddhism, and who first applied the Mādhyamikan concept of *sūnyatā*, or “emptiness” as the basis of the Pure Land way of thinking. Shinran regarded it as the fundamental structure of the concept of Amida and the Pure Land. Moreover, it is the Mādhyamikan concept of the “two truths” that frees the concepts of Amida and the Pure Land from being a mere mythological story.

The notion of “form” and “formless” (Jpn. *katachi* and its negative) in Shinran’s terminology refers to the two phases of *sūnyatā* in Mādhyamikan thought. Through “form” which is captured by human understanding,

śūnyatā can be described and expounded in words and concepts in contrast to the “formless” which transcends any conceptual understanding. In the following passage by Shinran we find this way of grasping ultimate reality applied to Amida Buddha:

... there are two kinds of dharmakāya in regard to the Buddha. The first is called dharmakāya-as-suchness and the second, dharmakāya-as-compassion. *Dharmakāya-as-suchness has neither color nor form; thus, the mind cannot grasp it nor words describe it. From this oneness was manifested form, called dharmakāya-as-compassion.* Taking this form, the Buddha proclaimed his name as Bhikṣu Dharmākara²

According to Shinran, the two phases of ultimate reality are clearly shown by the “form” and “formless” aspects of Amida Buddha. That is, Dharmākara-Amida is the manifestation in form of the “formless” reality, which is expressed as “oneness” or “treasure ocean of oneness.” It goes without saying that this way of viewing Amida by Shinran is firmly based on T’an-luan’s “twofold *dharmakāya*” (Jpn. *nishu hosshin*), i.e., “*dharmakāya* as suchness” and “*dharmakāya* as compassionate means.”³ It is quite clear that Shinran’s view of Amida Buddha in terms of the form-formless relationship as seen in the above quotation from *Notes on Essentials of Faith Alone* is based on Nāgārjuna’s Mādhyamikan thought by way of T’an-luan’s understanding of the “twofold *dharmakāya*.”

THE TRANSFORMATION IN THE USAGE OF THE TEACHING OF THE TWO TRUTHS

As explored above, the original sense of *shinzoku nitai* refers to the Mādhyamikan “two truths.” We have shown that they are grasped by Shinran through the relation between form and formless in his conception of Amida Buddha. But as already mentioned, this understanding by Shinran is not what is called *shinzoku nitai* in traditional and contemporary Shin Buddhist terminology.

The “two-truths” as frequently used in Shin Buddhist tradition does not express its original Mādhyamikan meaning. Rather, it is similar to the usage that became popular during the Heian and Kamakura periods. At this time the “supramundane” truth referred to “Buddha’s Law” and “mundane” truth, the “King’s Law.” It is not accurately known when this usage first appeared.⁴ However, we can definitely find it in the *Mappōtōmyōki*, or *The Lamp of the Last Dharma Age*, the authorship of which is attributed to Saichō (767–822), founder of Japanese Tendai school. Almost all of it is quoted by Shinran in the “Chapter of Transformed

Buddha and Land" in his *Kyōgyōshinshō*.

He is a dharma-king that, basing himself on oneness, sets flowing the cultivation of beings.

He is a benevolent king that, widely reigning over the four seas, sends down the winds of virtue.

*The benevolent king and the dharma-king, in mutual correspondence, give guidance to beings. The supramundane truth and the mundane truth, depending on each other, cause the teaching to spread. Thus, the profound writings are everywhere throughout the land, and, the benevolent guidance reaches everywhere under heaven.*⁵

"Dharma king" here signifies the Buddha Śākyamuni, and the "benevolent king" is the ruler of the nation. The intention of this passage is that "supramundane truth" or Buddha's Law, and "mundane truth" or King's Law should co-exist harmoniously in order to encourage peace in the nation. As will be noted below, this is often likened to the two wings of a bird or the two wheels of a carriage. However, it is not a praise of governmental policy by the Buddhist organization of those days. Rather, it is actually a protest against its control over the Buddhist monks and nuns. Perhaps *Mappōtōmyōki* was composed as a protest against government laws which were enacted in 798 to screen out Buddhist monks and nuns for violating the precepts.

Shinran's intent in quoting from *Mappōtōmyōki* was also to criticize the government of those days in Japan, which placed Buddhist monks and priests strictly under its control. Needless to say, Shinran's criticism of the government for its despotic control of Buddhists emerged out of his own experience at the age of 35, when the nembutsu community led by Hōnen was persecuted and crushed by the government. Far from depending on secular authority in spreading the teaching, Shinran must have aimed at the independence of the nembutsu community from any control by secular authority, including control by other traditional Buddhist schools then in existence. If Shinran had an ideal of the nation, it was certainly realized by a person like Prince Shōtoku, who aimed to administer the state in a Buddhist spirit. Among his *Wasans* in praise of Prince Shōtoku, the following is notable:

He composed the seventeen-article constitution
As the standard for the imperial law.
It is the rule for the peace and stability of the state,
The treasure that makes the country prosperous.⁶

We have so far examined the transformation of the concept of supramundane truth and mundane truth, from its original sense of the Mādhyamikan way of grasping ultimate reality, into Buddha's Law and King's Law, which is specific to Japanese Buddhist usage. Shinran was familiar with this distinctive usage of *shinzoku nitai* in which the supramundane truth and mundane truth are equated with Buddha's Law and King's Law. However, in Shinran, it was Buddha's Law to which King's Law was to be subordinate as had been observed in Prince Shōtoku's way of governing the state.

DEVELOPMENTS IN SHIN BUDDHISM

From its beginnings Pure Land Buddhism implied a judgment on this defiled world, and, despite its otherworldly character, it has been intimately involved with society. Shin Buddhism also, as a lay movement, has implications for society as a whole, particularly because of its emphasis on absolute Other Power which offers emancipation regardless of social or moral standing.

The teaching of the "two truths," supramundane and mundane, became especially prominent within Shinshū in modern times, beginning with the reign of Emperor Meiji at the end of the nineteenth century. Employing imperial absolutism to advance its political goals, nationally and internationally, the government exploited religion, by directing religious devotion to the state. Shin Buddhism played a large role in this effort through its advocacy of loyalty to the Emperor and maintenance of public morality in the Testament issued by Abbot Kōnyo in 1872.⁷ The Hongwanji branch had early supported the Chōshū conspirators in restoring the Emperor with money and personnel. From that time the interpretation of the teachings have been affected by nationalistic, political interests.

Other Buddhist sects in one way or another have also been involved with social affairs, but Shin Buddhism is distinct from other traditions in rejecting the monastic life as the required environment for realizing spiritual ideals. It also maintains that the assurance of ultimate human fulfillment, that is, attaining Buddhahood, can be received through one's experience of faith and trust in Amida Buddha's Vows in one's own heart-mind within the context of everyday life without moral criteria.⁸ In the experience of the one-thought moment of faith, we glimpse, even though only for a split second, the ego transcendence that is the goal of Buddhism. Such an awareness highlights our continuing egoistic, passion-ridden life, and has implications for ethical and social relations in the secular world. Such ethics and morality are to flow out of the awareness of Amida's compassion and not merely to be dictated by the state.

The problem for Pure Land teaching and Shin Buddhism was religiously justified antinomianism in which the believer might engage in anti-social activity on the presumption that Amida's compassion would save him/her. The issue arose most clearly during the time of Hōnen and Shinran when some disciples violated social conventions, believing that Amida Buddha's salvation permitted them to do as they pleased in society. They ridiculed the gods and other Buddhas. We call this antinomianism or "licensed evil." The established Buddhist orders of Tendai on Mount Hiei and Kōfukuji in Nara called for the prohibition of the teaching. Finally Hōnen and his leading disciples, including Shinran, were banished from Kyoto because of indiscretions of some members.

Within the Shin community Shinran urged his followers to respect the gods and buddhas and not to ridicule others for their faith, but to live at peace with them. In later times regulations to control the behavior of disciples appeared, supported by exclusion or excommunication. Rennyō (1415–1499) later refers to regulations made by Shinran.⁹ The problem of absolute Other Power salvation in Shin Buddhism, particularly, required a theory to integrate religious faith and ethical life. This later took the form of *ōbō-buppō* (King's Law and Buddha's Law/*buddha-dharma*) or *shinzoku nitai*.

Kakunyo (1270–1351), the third Abbot, and Zonkaku (1290–1373), his son, also had to defend Shin Buddhism against critics. Zonkaku in his *Haja kenshōshō* ("Treatise on Refuting Error and Manifesting the Truth") took up a variety of charges against Pure Land and Shin Buddhism made by the monks of Mount Hiei.¹⁰ He described the then current view of the relation of the state and Buddhism:

Buddha's Law and King's Law are a pair, just like the two wings of a bird; like the two wheels of a carriage. Neither of the two should be missing. Therefore, Buddha's Law is to protect the King's Law and King's Law is to respect Buddha's Law.¹¹

The Muromachi period, a time of upheaval and social change, was the background for Rennyō, the eighth Abbot. Facing continued opposition from established orders, he instructed his disciples concerning their social obligations and stressed the principle that externally, the secular law is basic (*hon-moto*), and the principles of Confucianism have priority (*sen-saki*). Internally, one treasures faith for birth in the Pure Land after death. Externally one follows the laws of society.¹²

In the transition to modern times, when the Shogunate collapsed and the Emperor was restored to power, the new nationalist leadership, dominated by National Learning proponents and Confucianists, questioned the usefulness of Buddhism in the new society, despite the assistance from the Hongwanji-ha. In response Buddhist leaders, such as Kōnyō and his

successors, promoted Shin Buddhism as loyal to the emperor and a supporter of social morality. Other leaders such as Inoue Enryō stressed the benefits of Buddhism to society.

The modern *shinzoku nitai* or two truth theory essentially took over Kakunyo's and Rennyo's interpretation of the relationship of secular dharma (*ōbō*) and Buddha-dharma (*buppō*) as a means of demonstrating the utility and benefit of Buddhism for the new society. While the theory is not specifically a doctrine, in the traditional sense, which illuminates the path to enlightenment, it provided a framework which influenced the interpretation of the teaching in general by stressing the aspect of afterlife as the essence of faith and conformity to the present socio-political order as one's obligation in this life. Life became compartmentalized into the religious domain and the social domain.

The establishment of *shinzoku nitai* as an orthodox principle in the Hongwanji came about on the background of incidents of *haibutsu kishaku* (Destroy Buddha; throw down Sākyamuni) which resulted from the official separation of Shintō and Buddhism (*shinbutsu bunri*) and also the practice of destroying temples and making one central temple in a province (*haigōji*). For example, in Toyama prefecture more than 1330 temples were to be reduced to one. There were also efforts to reform the sect organization. Hongwanji was seen to be useful to the government which followed the principle of *saisei itchi* (the unity of government and rituals, based on the divinity of the Emperor). It was in this environment that *shinzoku nitai* doctrine was strongly advocated.¹³

Against this background the Abbot of Nishi Hongwanji, Kōnyō issued his last letter exhorting people to devote themselves to the nation and stressing the dependency of the teaching on the good will of the state:

Of all those born in this imperial land, there is no one who has not received the emperor's benevolence. These days especially, he labors from morning to night in his deliberations, administering the just government of the restoration, maintaining order among the many people within [the country], and standing firm against all foreign countries. Is there then anyone, priest or lay, who would not support the imperial reign and enhance its power? Moreover, as the spread of Buddha-dharma is wholly dependent on the patronage of the emperor and his ministers, how can those who trust in Buddha dharma disregard the decrees of imperial law?¹⁴

This statement lays great emphasis on the duty of followers to support the state, because the dharma is totally dependent on the good will of the state. In other words the Buddha-dharma is subordinated to the interests of the state. The content of the *zokutai* or secular area comprises either governmental relations or the requirements and obligations of citizenship and the

principles of ethics such as the five major values of Confucian morality and later the *Imperial Rescript on Education* promulgated in 1890.

In the history of the principle within Shin Buddhism we can observe transformations, inspired by historical circumstance, from Shinran who does not specifically interpret it to the modern period where the *Buddha-dharma* became subject to the interests of the state. While the aspect of faith appears to be maintained, it became increasingly restricted to matters of the individual afterlife and of little relevance within society, while the secular *dharma* referred to either Confucian values or the *Imperial Rescript on Education*. Minor Rogers comments concerning Shinran's thought:

The Shinshū as a Japanese Buddhist tradition appears to have inherited from Shinran's teaching few resources, conceptual or other, to question, much less to resist, the demands of the state. The absolute authority of the emperor's command in prewar Japan may be seen as an extreme instance within this pattern. Shinran's symbols for the transcendent—Amida, Primal Vow, faith, and nembutsu—are, in theory, differentiated from the mundane and thus hold a capacity for criticism of all temporal authority, including that of the state. Instead, these religious symbols were subsumed by symbols for the national polity and imperial system.¹⁵

INTERPRETATIONS OF THE TWO TRUTHS THEORY

In modern discussions, there have been a variety of theories on the relationship between the two dimensions, the supramundane and the mundane or secular.¹⁶ Shigaraki Takamaro has been greatly influential in the discussion through his observation that there are five theories. These theories arose from a background in the late Edo and Meiji periods when officials and Kokugaku (National Learning school) advocates regarded Buddhism as useless. Briefly the various relationships are: (1) the sacred and secular are of one essence; (2) the sacred and secular are parallel and unrelated; (3) they are mutually related and mutually assisting; (4) religious truth onesidedly influences the secular; and (5) the secular truth is an *upāya* (a tactful device) in order to lead to the ultimate truth.

Ōhara Shōjitsu and Fugen Daien in their studies also outlined and critiqued various relationships between the areas of secular and sacred. They see three basic relations, namely that they are of one essence, parallel or mutual. Though there are problems with each alternative, the mutual relationship is proposed as more appropriate and meaningful or realistic.¹⁷

This division of spheres and categories of relationship can be useful for discussing religion and society. However, while the structure is useful, the content of each dimension must be considered carefully. Shigaraki has

critiqued all the alternatives as leading to the subservience of Buddhism to the social order. Futaba Kenkō has pointed out that with the priority of the Emperor and Confucian morality in modern society, it did not make much difference whether Shinshū existed or not, and its meaning was lost. The teachings of *shinzoku nitai* revealed the meaninglessness of Shinran's teachings.¹⁸ When we look at the teachings historically, they were very different, being based on Buddhist principles. In addition, today belief in the afterlife is not as strong as it was in former times.

The various alternatives relating the two spheres of truth all assume Confucian morality as the basic ethical system, whereas Shinran did not regard the value system of society as ultimate or absolute. For Shinran, the world is a lie and deceptive. Amida Buddha is the only basis for judging good and evil and not any worldly authority. According to Futaba Kenkō, Shinran stands on the Buddhist teaching of no-self (*muga/higa*). As such, Buddhist reality transcends history and the dichotomy of self power and Other Power, which assumes existing selves. Absolute Other Power which transcends history in the Vow of Amida manifests itself within the person in faith-*shinjin* and takes the form of *hōon* (gratitude) and *jishin kyōninshin* (sharing one's faith with others). The true way of expressing gratitude is to relate to people, bringing the truth to them.

Shinran's understanding of "despising the world," which is a characteristic of Buddhism and Pure Land teaching, involves criticism of the political authority and the primitive gods. The principle of *jishin kyōninshin* implies a perspective for manifesting Shin Buddhism in society without dependence on the state or worldly power.¹⁹ Consequently, Shinran criticized the Emperor and his ministers and the scholars who decreed the unjust punishment meted out to Hōnen and his followers, including himself. As a mark of his refusal to accept their judgment, he gave himself his own surname, not accepting the official name. He also declared that he was neither a priest nor a layperson, that is, he did not fit the official categories.

In the *Kyōgyōshinshō* Shinran quoted a sūtra which declared that the monk (for him, the person of faith) does not bow before the King, or to his parents nor serve the six closely related persons such as mother, father, elder or younger brothers, elder or younger sisters.²⁰ While Shinran acknowledges that one may pray for the welfare and peace of the state, it was in order to facilitate the spread of Buddhism. However, there is to be no reliance on external authorities to achieve this goal. Buddhism is the primary object of devotion and commitment.

Shinran's understanding of life and reality relativizes all forms of power within the world, as well as all egoistic claims and worldly value systems. For Shinran, there is only one absolute—the compassion of Amida—which transcends our limited human judgments of good and evil.

Although we may not find specific answers to contemporary problems in his writings—or in Buddhism as a whole, he delineates an understanding of ourselves and the world which can critique the ideologies of our time. The thrust of Shinran's teaching can inspire compassion and justice among people and motivate the search for humane solutions to problems, personal and social. It can be a foundation for our working in concert with others, whatever their tradition, who strive for the highest good.

In recent years there has been much discussion among Shin scholars concerning "Wartime Doctrine." Some consider that the theory of "two truths," Buddha-dharma and Royal or Imperial dharma, distorted the true character of the ethical, as well as doctrinal meaning of Shin Buddhism. Much of the criticism of Rennyo that appeared during the 500th memorial commemoration centered on his stress on the doctrine of "two truths." It is an effort to develop a more critical, and perhaps activist, and socially responsible, Shin Buddhism in the face of the severe problems confronting Japanese society and the world.

As we have noted, the relationships between the respective spheres may vary. However, the content of each is generally regarded as the same, being in the respective spheres either the result of faith or the product of human reasoning. It is clear that the concept developed within an Imperial and Confucian society. The discussions in recent doctrinal textbooks are based to some degree on the traditional terms and do not take into account the experience of modern Japanese history or envision any alternative society, such as our democratic, western society.

While the discussion of the teachings and their relation to society is useful for us, we must remember the context of Japanese society from which they emerge. Consequently, the alternatives given assume good citizenship in the prevailing society, depending on the period, and do not discuss the possibilities of pro-active efforts to influence society based on one's spiritual convictions and values.

The theory of the mutual dependency and mutual influence of faith and society is widely held. It emphasizes the influence of the spiritual dimension on the individual in society. However, it does not indicate influence on society as a whole. Nor, being a mutual system, is the influence of society on religion and the possible manipulation of religion by government indicated, though it happened in recent Japanese history. It is not suggested that the religious sphere provides any critique of the social or governmental sphere. Here we must refer to the exploitation of religion by the government and leaders of the sect as a means to engage the commitment and devotion of the people through religious sanction.

In wartime doctrine, Amida was even identified with the Emperor; Yasukuni with the Pure Land. The principle of the selflessness of the devotee of Amida was used to encourage selfless devotion to the Emperor

and country, putting aside personal ambition. Kamegawa Kyōshin stated: "The joy of religion is to be found in the life of gratitude where the self is cast away. In this crisis, what is demanded of us is to do away with our petty selves and become shields of the Emperor."²¹

Shin Buddhists in Japan have learned from their wartime experience and are actively seeking to bring the implications of Shinran's teaching to bear in society. Hongwanji has been a leader in movements to overcome discrimination, resist changing the Constitution, oppose the reestablishment of Yasukuni Shrine, and oppose nuclear weapons. It has acknowledged publicly its responsibilities in uncritically supporting the war effort. It is now important to recover the historical meaning of Shinran which would transform society into a world of personal equality and individual dignity. It is the task and subject of Shin Buddhism to create such a world through a true understanding of faith and history.

RECONSIDERING THE DOUBLE TRUTH THEORY: A PROPOSAL

The criticism of the past in contemporary Japan has opened the door to reconsideration of the relation of faith and society in a more creative way. Shin Buddhists in democratic societies outside Japan must reinterpret the relation of religion and ethics within the context of their contemporary societies, and replace the traditional content of Confucian morality and the assumptions of an imperial society that still unconsciously remain in the presentation of the teaching. What must be developed in the West is a more pro-active stance based on, and acceptable within, the context of faith.

We must understand that within a democratic society it is assumed that individuals and groups will strive to realize their spiritual values and ideals in society or bring them to bear on an issue. However, this effort is to be done on a consensual basis with respect for individual rights. A truly democratic approach will reject attempts to legislate for all people irrespective of their beliefs on issues that have clear religious roots.

From the side of society or the state all efforts to control religion politically or use it for political ends are rejected. Hence, the separation of religion and state is essential. A religious basis for such an effort might be found in the *Jūseige* or *Sanseige* which are taken from the *Larger Sukhāvāivyaūha Sūtra* and chanted in worship services. According to the text, Dharmākara Bodhisattva vows to emancipate the suffering and poor. He also declares that he will open up the treasury of the *dharma* universally and constantly proclaim the *dharma* with a lion's voice. While Buddhism is often criticized for lacking a strong social awareness, there are materials within Buddhist tradition to show that Buddhism has always been broadly concerned for the welfare of people and is not only a spiritual or otherworldly way.

Further, there was Shinran's experience on the road to Kantō after the exile, when he decided to recite the Three Pure Land Sūtras 1000 times for the sake of the salvation of all beings. However, after a while he stopped and realized that the true way to repay the benevolence of the Buddha was to share his faith with others (*jishin kyōninshin*). He recognized his continuing self-striving nature. While this refers to a religious act, we may also interpret it that Shinran changed from an indirect approach in securing the salvation of people to one of direct contact with them. This is indicated in his affirmation of teaching the people (*kyōninshin*). Shin Buddhism began as a movement with his effort in sharing the dharma with the people among whom he lived in the Kantō region. While Shinran was not a social reformer, his style of human relations and spiritual perspective can assist our efforts in social action.

In our time, in whatever way is possible, we must consider the actual lives of the people and how our religious faith can enhance life in society. In a recent sermon Rev. Tatsuo Muneto²² clearly indicated that Shin Buddhists should contribute to society by supporting the equal treatment of all people and supporting their pursuit of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. This may at times call for positive efforts to assist those members of society who are discriminated against.

Followers of a religious faith should strive to persuade people individually to their understanding of reality. Likewise in social issues, religious people should make known their views, as individuals and groups, in matters of legislation by showing how their view actually conduces to the well-being of society and not simply a demand to conform to their religious viewpoint. We have learned that not to act is really also an action which may cause great suffering for people. There is, therefore, room in social debate for religious groups, as well as individuals, to express their views and take positions which result from their best insight and study.

This study has shown that the understanding of the relationship of Buddhism and society has shifted through the centuries, responding to the necessities of history and social change. Particularly, the modern character of Shinshū has been influenced by the requirements of an authoritarian society. The principle of *shinzoku nitai* has shaped the presentation of doctrine through the division of domains which turned Shin Buddhism into an otherworldly religion, excluding strong social interest and critique.

As Futaba Kenkō has indicated, the restriction of Shin Buddhism to only spiritual or otherworldly concerns renders it irrelevant for society. At bottom a major issue discussed by Futaba is the interaction of history and faith. Faith is always in history which means that the experience of the eternal takes place within the historical and social context where we find ourselves. The truth expressed through Pure Land teaching must find its meaning and expression within historical life. It is not simply an otherworldly truth beyond history and experienced only at death.

We often hear it said that religion must relate to everyday life. The implication of such a statement, if taken seriously, means that the truth of the teaching must be realized within our historical social experience, not merely subjectively in piety and emotions, but in human relations and worldly life. For those who demur, holding that religious faith deals with eternal matters and not temporal issues that come and go, we may recall that time is the passing shadow of eternity. The eternal has its import for the temporal. Though religious faith gives us hope for ultimate enlightenment beyond history, its truth is to become real in this life as well.²³

CONCLUSION

A major part of this study has been historical. The reason for this is that it is important to show that Buddhist and Shin teaching has not been static but has been shaped by historical forces. In the course of time the principle of "two truths" was transformed from a metaphysical to a social perspective which had considerable consequences in Shin history. The understanding of the relation of Shin Buddhism and society has shifted through the centuries. As it moves into new societies and cultures it must further adapt itself in meeting the spiritual needs of the various peoples who find their meaning through it.

In the western context it is widely understood that the influence of religion on the social process is not merely to create good citizens who are obedient and subservient to the laws of society, but also to inspire members to evaluate the justice of society and to lend its weight to positive social change. Compassion that is not concerned for social justice is hardly compassion. One cannot claim to be compassionate and not give food to a starving person. The difficulties and complexities in dealing with social issues by a religious group does not remove the responsibility to attempt to arrive at some solution or offer insight.

Setting aside the earlier historical conditionings of society and its influence on the teaching, it is the argument of this paper that Shin Buddhism must go beyond the traditional interpretations of *shinzoku nitai*. Full participation in democratic society requires that people of faith, as individuals and groups, to be sensitive to, and offer their insights on, the many problems of society. In this way Shin Buddhism will be liberated into society and also liberate people in society.

NOTES

1. *Chūron*, Chapter 24, verses 8-10, in *Taishō*, vol. 30, p. 32. Translation appearing in the text and notes are by the authors unless otherwise noted.
2. *Notes on 'Essentials of Faith Alone,' A Translation of Shinran's Yuishinshōmon'i*, Shin Buddhism Translation Series (Kyoto: Hongwanji International Center, 1979), p. 43. (Emphasis added.) A similar passage is found in *Notes on Once-calling and Many-calling, A Translation of Shinran's Ichinen-tanen-mon'i*, Shin Buddhism Translation Series (Kyoto: Hongwanji International Center, 1980), p. 46, which reads: "From this treasure ocean of oneness form was manifested, taking the name of Bodhisattva Dharmākara, who, through establishing the unhindered Vow as the cause, became Amida Buddha."
3. In T'an-luan's *Commentary on the Treatise on Birth in the Pure Land*, the following passage is well-known: "Among Buddhas and bodhisattvas there are two aspects of dharmakāya: dharmakāya as suchness and dharmakāya as compassionate means. Dharmakāya as compassionate means arises out of dharmakāya as suchness, and dharmakāya as suchness emerges [into the realm of human comprehension] through dharmakāya as compassionate means. These two aspects of dharmakāya differ but are not separable; they are one but not identical" (*Shinshū Shōgyō Zenshō*, vol. 1 [Kyoto: Ōyagi Kōbundō, 1941], pp. 336-7).
4. Perhaps the earliest usage appears in the *Shitennōji goshuin engi* (attributed to Prince Shōtoku, but more probably composed in 1007 by some other author), where we find the following passage: "Composing the *Seventeen Article Constitution*, he made up the discipline of the King's Law and spreading the teaching of "Do not commit evils . . ." he established the foundation of the Buddha's Law" (*Shōtoku Taishi denryaku*, in *Dainihon Bukkyō zensho*, vol. 112 [Tokyo: Bussho Kankōkai, 1912], p. 18).
5. A passage from the *Mappōtōmyōki* ("Lamp for the Last Dharma-age"), quoted in *The True Teaching Practice and Realization of the Pure Land Way*, in *The Collected Works of Shinran* (hereafter, CWS), vol. 1 (Kyoto: Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-ha, 1997), p. 244. (Emphasis added.)
6. "Hymns in Praise of Prince Shōtoku," in CWS, vol. 1, p.443.
7. Suzuki Shūken, "*Shinzoku nitai ron hihan*," in *Kyōdan kaikaku e no hatsugen*, Oka Ryōji, ed. (Kyoto: Nagata Bushōdo, 1971), p. 156.
8. See "Chapter on Shinjin (51)," *The True Teaching Practice and Realization of the Pure Land Way*, in CWS, vol. 1, p. 107.
9. See Renny's *Letters*, III-11 and IV-1 in Minor Lee Rogers and Ann T.

Rogers, *Rennyō: The Second Founder of Shin Buddhism* (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1991) pp. 212–213 (III-11) and p. 218 (IV-1). Rogers and Rogers note that there is no evidence that Shinran ever established regulations (p. 212, n. 39). See also *Tannishō*, 13 in *CWS*, pp. 670–67, and Zen'en's rules, in James Dobbins, *Jōdo Shinshū: Shin Buddhism in Medieval Japan*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), p. 67. Jitsunyo refers to Zen'en's rules as made by Shinran.

10. James Dobbins, *Jōdo Shinshū*, pp. 89–90.

11. *Haja kenshōshō*, in *Shinshū shōgyō zenshō*, vol. 3 (Kyoto: Ōyagi Kōbundō, 1941), p. 173.

12. Rennyō's *Letters*, III-12, in Rogers and Rogers, p. 217.

13. Hino Kenryū, "Kindai ni okeru shinshū no kyōgaku rosen: toku ni shinzokunitai o chūshin to shite," *Bukkyōshi Kenkyū* 19 and 20 (1984): pp. 147–162. See also *CWS*, vol. 1, p. 244.

14. Rogers and Rogers, p. 320.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 332.

16. Kizuki Hironori, "Shinzoku nitai ron ni tsuite no ichikōsatsu: mō hitotsu no senji kyōgaku," part 1, *Bukkyōshi kenkyū* 27 (1990): pp. 21–35. Different formulations of the relation are:

1. *Shinzoku-ittai*, sacred and secular are of one essence (Fukuda Gidō), *Dōtoku-ittai* (Maeda Eun), *Shintai-ittai* (Shichiri Gōjun, Kaneko Daiei).

2. *Shinzoku-hankō*, faith and social actions are parallel and unrelated (Nonomura Naotarō).

3. *Shinzoku* mutually related, Zonkaku's idea of mutually assisting and mutually dependent (*sōshi sōe*) like two wheels of a cart or two wings on a bird.

4. The theory that religious truth onesidedly influences social action like perfume or a light in a lantern (Akamatsu Renjō, Tōyō Engetsu).

5. Secular truth is *upāya* (Kiyozawa Manshi).

17. Ōhara Shōjitsu, *Shinshū kyōgakushi kenkyū* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1953), pp. 217–254, and Fugen Daien, *Shinkōto jissen* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1959), pp. 122–132.

18. Futaba Kenkō, *Nihon bukkyōno kadai: mōhitotsu no bunka no kōchiku ni mukete* (Tokyo: Mainichi Shimbunsha, 1986), p. 262.

19. Futaba Kenkō, *Shinran no kenkyū* (Kyoto: Hyakkaen, 1962), p. 355.

20. "Chapter on Transformed Buddha-Bodies and Lands (102)," *The True Teaching Practice and Realization of the Pure Land Way*, in *CWS*, vol. 1, p. 274.

21. Ronald Anderson, "Nishi Honganji and Japanese Buddhist Nationalism 1862–1945," (Ph. D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1956), p. 103.
22. "Finding Equality in the Dharma," October 18, 1998, at the Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin in Honolulu, Hawai'i.
23. Unfortunately, this is not the appropriate setting in which to go into detail on the practical means by which Shin followers can relate to contemporary social issues. The authors would like to suggest, however, that there are some practical means that can be used which are not radical in their character, but which may be effective in assisting members to arrive at their own understanding of and approach to problems. We can only suggest that there be formed social concerns committees in temples which research and study issues that might be relevant for consideration by members. Study of the relation of the teaching and society can be an ongoing project. A social concerns committee can develop educational programs and cooperate with other community organizations in focusing issues and arousing public opinion. Information can be placed in newsletters. A temple might arrive at a public position through democratic procedure within the temple giving majority and minority positions for members to evaluate.