



Demythologizing Pure Land Buddhism

YASUDA RIJIN AND THE SHIN BUDDHIST TRADITION

Paul B. Watt



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Series Editor's Preface

In this work, Paul B. Watt introduces us to Yasuda Rijin (1900–1982), one of the important Pure Land thinkers of twentieth-century Japan. Modern Shin thought is deeply informed by attempting to address concerns arising simultaneously from the radical social and intellectual changes created by the modernization of Japan while retaining a connection with the Buddhist tradition. Yasuda was associated with the Ōtani branch, and he drew on the creative works of Kaneko Daiei and Soga Ryōjin—today considered pivotal thinkers in the development of modern Shin thought. Watt provides a brief general background to Pure Land Buddhism before introducing us to the personal history that contributed to the formation of Yasuda's thought. Although initially attracted to Zen, Yasuda came to study at Ōtani University where other important figures, such as Nishida Kitarō and D. T. Suzuki, were influential. Like many thinkers of his generation, Yasuda engaged modern European philosophers and theologians in dialogue. Particularly important for him were Heidegger, Barth, and Buber. Watt has included translations of several of Yasuda's writings: two from the prewar period, the others from the 1960s and 1970s.

Today in Western-language Buddhist studies, there is an increasing attempt to undertake serious comparative and constructive work. Much of these works draw on Indian and Tibetan thinkers, seeking to understand them against the background of modern philosophy, psychology, and cognitive science. It often seems that these works are undertaken without awareness that Japanese thinkers of both Pure Land and Zen traditions were engaged in much the same kind of project a century ago. This speaks to the way in which Pure Land Buddhism remains a terra incognita for many contemporary Buddhist scholars, who still seem to consider it philosophically and theologically unsophisticated. If contemporary thinkers attempting to bridge the streams of Buddhist and modern Euro-American thought are willing to engage the unfamiliar conceptual landscape of modern Japanese religio-philosophic thought, they may in fact find much that will be of use for their own projects. Watt's work here will do a great deal to dispel the misconception that Pure Land is philosophically uninteresting.

We are happy to be able to add *Demythologizing Pure Land Buddhism: Yasuda Rijin and the Shin Buddhist Tradition* to the Pure Land Buddhist Studies Series. We would like to thank Paul B. Watt, the anonymous reviewers, and the staff of the University of Hawai'i Press—particularly Pat Crosby, under whose guidance this work began its passage as a submission, and Stephanie Chun, under whose guidance it has reached the goal of publication. Thanks also go to the Fraternal Benefit Association of the Buddhist Churches of America, who wisely invested in the future and created the endowment that supports this series of publications. The members of the Pure Land Buddhist Studies Editorial Board also deserve appreciation for their intellectual and academic support of the series.

Richard K. Payne
Series Editor

Preface

This book is an introduction to the thought and writings of the modern Shin Buddhist thinker Yasuda Rijin (1900–1982). Part I provides background information about Yasuda's life, the Shin Buddhist tradition on which he drew, and a short summary of major themes in his writings. Part II, the longer and more significant section of the book, contains annotated translations of a number of Yasuda's lectures and writings ranging from the 1930s to 1972. Yasuda was associated with the Higashi Honganji or Ōtani branch of Shin Buddhism. He drew on the understanding of Shin developed by his teachers at Ōtani University, Kaneko Daiei (1881–1976) and Soga Ryōjin (1875–1971), to articulate an interpretation of Shin Buddhism that, when first developed by his teachers was seen as heretical, but today stands in the philosophical mainstream of Ōtani Shin Buddhism.

Over the years that I have worked on this volume, I have benefited from the support of many people and institutions. I could not have completed it without the aid of Ōtani University colleagues who gave so generously of their knowledge and time. This very long list includes Yasutomi Shin'ya, Kaku Takeshi, and Robert F. Rhodes, in particular, but also Higuchi Shōshin, Inoue Takami, Inui Fumio, Itō Eshin, Kigoshi Yasushi, Kuroda Shinji, Minoura Akio, Miyamoto Hirotaka, Miyashita Seiki, Ogawa Naohito, Ozawa Chiaki, Saito Ken, Tamura Akinori, Watanabe Hiromasa, Yamamoto Kazuhiko, and Michael Conway. Honda Hiroyuki, who was a disciple of Yasuda's and who is currently director of the Shinran Buddhist Center in Tokyo, kindly responded to my many questions and provided insights into Yasuda's thought. From time to time, many of the individuals that I have mentioned would gather at the Shin Buddhist Comprehensive Research Institute at Ōtani for long sessions in which the translations included here were critiqued. Scholars who were translating the works of other modern Shin leaders also joined these seminars. Mark L. Blum and the late Jan Van Bragt were among them, and they provided much valuable advice. Outside Ōtani, J. S. A. Elisonas and Ugo Dessi kindly read and commented on an earlier version of this study. I am deeply grateful for the knowledge of Japan, Japanese Buddhism, and the Shin tradition that all of these people shared with me.

I would also like to express my sincere thanks to the several anonymous readers of the manuscript whose comments and suggestions enriched it immeasurably.

Three of the pieces included in Part II—“The Practical Understanding of Buddhism,” “The Mirror of Nothingness,” and “A Name but Not a Name Alone”—first appeared in Mark L. Blum and Robert F. Rhodes, eds., *Cultivating Spirituality: A Modern Shin Buddhist Anthology* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2011), although significant revisions have been made to the last of these translations. A short excerpt from “A Name but Not a Name Alone” also appeared in James W. Heisig, Thomas P. Kasulis, and John C. Maraldo, eds., *Japanese Philosophy: A Sourcebook* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2011). I am grateful to these publishers for permission to include these materials here.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the institutions that have supported my work during the time that this book was being prepared: DePauw University, where I taught from 1989 until 2010, and Waseda University, where I currently teach. Both universities have provided generous research support. I am indebted as well to the Japan Foundation for a short-term grant that helped bring this project to completion. Finally, I am grateful to Richard K. Payne, editor of the Pure Land Buddhist Studies Series in which this volume appears, for his comments on content as well as his support in bringing this book to completion; to Patricia Crosby, executive editor (East Asian Studies); acquisitions editor Stephanie Chun; and to Michael Bohrer-Clancy of Westchester Publishing Services for their careful attention to detail in the final production of this book.

A Word about the Translations

In translating Yasuda's lectures and writings, I have aimed to provide a readable and reliable English rendering of his works while at the same time remaining relatively faithful to his language and style. Readers of the original Japanese know that, at times, Yasuda can be not only eloquent but even poetic; at other points, he may strike the reader as repetitive and plodding. A freer treatment of his language might have smoothed over those latter passages, but my judgment was that even those passages have a point to them, and they too give us a sense of Yasuda as a teacher and lecturer. Following this same policy, where Yasuda included many German philosophical terms, such as in "The Homeland of Existence," I have left the German in the English translation and have provided translations or comments in the notes. Further, while I have provided Chinese and Japanese characters for important proper names and concepts in part I of the volume, I have included them only when absolutely necessary in part II in the hope of providing more readable translations.

One cluster of terms deserves special mention. I have rendered the term *shinjin* 信心, a term of absolute importance in Shin Buddhism, as "the entrusting mind." As much as possible, I have also rendered the related terms of *shinkō* 信仰 and *shinsuru* 信ずる as "entrusting" or "to entrust." As Yasuda repeatedly explains, through the experience of the entrusting mind, one realizes that one's own life is an expression of the Tathāgatha Amida. The Tathāgatha is not "an other" existing apart from sentient beings; rather, the Tathāgatha takes form as sentient beings. "The entrusting mind," therefore, indicates a state of mind and a way of being. I have occasionally used the word "trust" as a translation for *shinkō* or the term "to trust" for *shinsuru* either when English grammar seems to require it or when Yasuda is referring to a misconception of the "entrusting mind" as involving belief in something outside one's true nature.

Several of the translations included in part II are divided into subsections by roman numerals. Those divisions reflect the texts as included in the *Yasuda Rijin senshū* 安田理深選集 (*The Selected Writings of Yasuda Rijin*),

the source from which the texts were selected. On occasion, especially in the last piece included in part II, “Fundamental Vow, Fundamental Word,” Yasuda’s paragraphs can be exceedingly long. Rather than take the liberty of breaking them into shorter paragraphs, however, I have followed the format of the Japanese texts.

Demythologizing Pure Land Buddhism

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Part I

Introduction: Yasuda Rijin and the Shin Buddhist Tradition

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One of the major characteristics of Mahayana Buddhism, the branch of the religion that initially emerged in India in the first century BCE and then gradually spread across East Asia in the first seven centuries of the Common Era, is the proliferation in Mahayana sutras of countless celestial buddhas, buddhas virtually unknown in the earlier Buddhist tradition. In the vastly expanded cosmic vision of Mahayana, buddhas are imagined as working to lead sentient beings to enlightenment not only in our earthly realm but in all quarters of this billion-world galaxy, as one sutra describes it. Arguably the most popular of the celestial buddhas has been Amitābha, the buddha of Infinite Light, also known as Amitāyus, Infinite Life, or Amida 阿弥陀 in Japanese, who is portrayed as engaging in his compassionate salvific activities in a Sukāvātī, a Happy Land or, as it is called in East Asia, a Pure Land (*Jōdo* 浄土) to the West.¹ Within the Buddhist tradition, there have been harsh critics of what is sometimes termed Amida devotionism, as will be shown later, but it is remarkable that, across the long history of Mahayana Buddhism, Amida has been embraced by clergy and laity alike in an inclusive way regardless of school and sectarian boundaries. While some followers have interpreted Amida and the Western Pure Land as objects of meditation aiding in the attainment of the transformation of mind and insight into the true nature of reality—the classic Buddhist goals—others have looked to Amida as a buddha who could grant birth in his Pure Land at death or who, even more mundanely, could offer protection against life’s calamities.²

In Japan as well, after Buddhism’s introduction in the sixth century CE, Amida, as he is variously interpreted, came to enjoy a broad following across sectarian lines. Amida was known in Japan as early as the seventh century,³ and the major Buddhist sects of the Heian period (794–1185), the Shingonshū 真言宗 and the Tendai shū 天台宗, both had a place for Amida in their expansive meditational and ritual practices. At the beginning of the Kamakura period (1185–1333), however, during a time of dramatic political, social, and religious change, two Buddhist leaders emerged who advocated an exclusive reliance on Amida for birth in his Pure Land. Questioning the efficacy of the traditional Buddhist practices of morality (Sanskrit [Skt.] *śīla*, Japanese [J.] *kai* 戒), meditation (Skt.

samādhi, J. *jō* 定), and wisdom (Skt. *prajñā*, J. *e* 慧), these innovators advocated the arousal of a state of mind called *shinjin* 信心, “the entrusting mind,” as the path for achieving that goal. These figures are Hōnen (法然, 1133–1212), the patriarch of the Jōdoshū 浄土宗 or Pure Land Sect, and his disciple Shinran (親鸞, 1173–1262), who came to be regarded as the originator of the Jōdo Shinshū 浄土真宗 or True Pure Land Sect, or Shin Buddhism as it is often called in modern scholarship. These men saw themselves standing in a long tradition that reached back across the history of Pure Land Buddhism in Japan and China to its roots in India.

Hōnen and, following in his footsteps, Shinran identified the foundations of Shin Buddhism in three sutras: *The Sutra on Immeasurable Life* or *The Larger Sutra*, *The Sutra on the Contemplation of Immeasurable Life* or *The Contemplation Sutra*, and *The Sutra on the Buddha Amitāyus* or *The Smaller Sutra*.⁴ As Fujita Kōtatsu has pointed out, there is general agreement that, while the *Larger* and *Smaller Sutras* likely originated in India during the second century CE, *The Contemplation Sutra* “appeared much later in some crossroads of cultures in Central Asia, colored by Chinese influence.”⁵ The fourth century has been suggested as a date of origin for this later text.

Significant differences have been noted in the contents of these sutras.⁶ Yet in a popular reading, they came to be interpreted as revealing that the Buddha Amida, as a result of innumerable lifetimes of effort as the Bodhisattva Dharmākara (J. Hōzō Bosatsu 法蔵菩薩), is able to promise birth in his unsurpassed Pure Land to all who are devoted to him. To attain the goal of birth in that Pure Land, the sutras recommend that followers undertake a variety of practices, among them sincerely desiring birth in Amida’s land and meditating upon him. It is this latter phrase, which comes from the Sanskrit *buddhānusmṛti*, originally meaning “to be mindful of or meditate on the Buddha,” that later gave rise to the Chinese *nien-fo* and the Japanese *nenbutsu* 念仏, understood to mean “to say or recite” Amida’s name. The readers of these sutras are told at certain points that, through Amida’s compassion and his vow to bring all beings into his Pure Land, even the lax practitioner who expresses sincere trust in the vow can enter Amida’s pure world where the attainment of enlightenment is assured.

Following certain Chinese Pure Land masters, Hōnen and Shinran found support for the tradition in treatises attributed to the famed Mahayana Indian scholars Nāgārjuna (second to third centuries CE), the initiator of the Madhyamika school, and Vasubandhu (fourth to fifth centuries CE), who, with his brother Asaṅga, established the Yogācāra school. That both of these giants of Mahayana philosophy could be as-

sociated with Pure Land Buddhism lent great legitimacy to it. Nāgārjuna's comments on the Pure Land were found in the *Treatise on the Ten Bodhisattva Stages* (J. *Jūjūbibasharon* 十住毘婆沙論), especially in the "Chapter on Easy Practice."⁷ Scholars have questioned Nāgārjuna's authorship of this work, but its place in the Pure Land canon is secure. In it, the author recommends an easy path for the attainment of the Pure Land that consists of being mindful of the buddhas, including Amida, and reciting their names. Vasubandhu was regarded as the author of the *Pure Land Treatise* (J. *Jōdoron* 淨土論), a meditational guide focusing on Amida and his Pure Land that became a major source text for Chinese and Japanese Pure Land advocates.⁸

From the perspective of the Japanese Pure Land tradition, three Chinese masters were seen as shaping the tradition in important ways. Tanluan (曇鸞, 476–542), in particular, was viewed as a pivotal figure. Although he was a student of Nāgārjuna's philosophy of emptiness, he also composed an influential commentary on Vasubandhu's *Pure Land Treatise*, commonly known in Japanese as the *Jōdoronchū* 淨土論註.⁹ Yet while embracing Vasubandhu's goal of the transformation of consciousness and birth in the Pure Land, he concluded that, in contrast to Vasubandhu's time, he lived in an age in which the accomplishments of the buddhas and bodhisattvas of the past were beyond the reach of most ordinary mortals. Drawing on language that Nāgārjuna was thought to have used, Tanluan advocated the Pure Land way of entrusting in Amida's vow as an "easy path" (Chinese [Ch.] *yixing*, J. *igyō* 易行), which stood in contrast to the difficult paths offered by other Mahayana movements. Tanluan was also the first to describe Pure Land Buddhism as relying on other power (Ch. *tāli*, J. *tariki* 他力), that is, the other power of Amida Buddha, as opposed to self-power (Ch. *zili*, J. *jiriki* 自力), the approach, as he saw it, of traditional Buddhist practice. Further, it was Tanluan who first urged the practice of saying Amida's name, in the proper state of mind, as a practice that could lead even the defiled person into the Pure Land. The second Chinese master, Daochuo (道綽, 562–645), was also seen as emphasizing the difference between the easy path of Pure Land Buddhism (Ch. *Jingtu men*, J. *Jōdomon* 淨土門) and the Path of the Saints (Ch. *Shengdao men*, J. *Shōdōmon* 聖道門), but he was remembered too for stressing the idea that Pure Land Buddhism was well suited to the degenerate age (Ch. *mofa*, J. *mappō* 末法) in which he concluded he and his contemporaries lived. Third, Shandao (善導, 613–681), in addition to systematizing and popularizing Pure Land teachings in China, was interpreted as giving special weight to the recitation of the name of Amida as the primary expression

of the entrusting mind, although he recognized a variety of practices as legitimate aspects of the tradition.

The Japanese master Hōnen came upon the Pure Land path while studying and practicing as a Tendai monk on Mount Hiei just northeast of Kyoto. He was deeply impressed by Genshin's (源信, 942–1017) famous work, the *Ōjōyōshū* (往生要集 Essentials for Birth), which depicts life in ten realms of existence, from the lowest realms reserved for those with the heaviest karmic burdens to the highest realm of Amida's Pure Land, and which urges people living in a degenerate age to seek the Pure Land. Hōnen was further influenced by the Chinese master Shandao, who had stressed the value of the recitation of the name of Amida as a practice that could be embraced by all. However, Hōnen emphasized even more than Shandao the efficacy of saying Amida's name with a sincere mind, that is, saying the *nenbutsu* or the words *Namu Amida Butsu* 南無阿彌陀仏, over all other Pure Land practices such as reciting the sutras, reverencing images, and the like. What was required above all was the embracing of a pure trust in Amida and his Pure Land. Still, while Hōnen recognized that saying the *nenbutsu* sincerely even once could ensure birth in the Pure Land, he continued to live according to the monastic code and he encouraged the frequent saying of the name, especially at the critical moment of death.¹⁰

Shinran often claimed that he taught only what he had learned from Hōnen, but in fact he contributed to the development of the tradition in dramatic and, some would say, revolutionary ways. Extending even further the efficacy of *shinjin*, Shinran taught that its expression involved only a sudden transformation of mind; it did not depend on numerous recitations or, much less, on traditional Buddhist practice; and it was therefore open to everyone, even those who had violated the most basic of Buddhist precepts. Moreover, Shinran made it clear that those who were able to embrace the entrusting mind, even those with a heavy karmic legacy, attained the stage of the truly settled (*shōjō* 正定), here and now, and were equal to the *tathāgathas*, the truly enlightened ones.¹¹ Through the interpretation of Pure Land Buddhism that he formulated, Shinran was able to establish the foundation of a lay movement, headed by a married clergy, that was grounded in the core philosophical vision of Mahayana Buddhism.

It is easy to miss the subtleties and nuances of Pure Land thought and to conclude, as many have, that it is a rather un-Buddhist kind of Buddhism, one that rejects the requirements of Buddhist practice as well as the goal of enlightenment and instead recommends “faith” in an other-

worldly buddha in the hope of escaping the degenerate world of sentient beings and gaining entry into his heavenly realm. The Pure Land sutras themselves use language suggestive of this characterization of Pure Land belief. Pure Land masters of both China and Japan stressed the degenerate nature of the world they inhabited. Elaborate rituals were developed with the special aim of focusing the mind of the believer at the moment of death so that he or she might travel unimpeded to the Pure Land, and a rich artistic tradition grew up that celebrated the moment when Amida and his retinue of bodhisattvas would come to meet the dying believer. What is more, Western interpreters have tended to reinforce this popular view of Pure Land, in part because the language and practices of the Pure Land tradition itself strongly suggest it, but also because Westerners have seen in Pure Land parallels to Christianity.

This book introduces the thought and selected writings of Yasuda Rijin (安田理深, 1900–1982), a modern Shin Buddhist thinker who regarded Pure Land Buddhism as described immediately above as a profound misunderstanding of the tradition and especially of the teachings of Shinran. Yasuda was affiliated with the Ōtani 大谷 or Higashi Honganji 東本願寺 branch of Shin Buddhism, which was established in the early seventeenth century when the sect was split by Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542–1616), the first Tokugawa shogun, with the aim of weakening Shin’s considerable influence. In later centuries, organizational issues and history, more than doctrinal differences, came to distinguish Higashi Honganji from the former parent sect, henceforth commonly known as Nishi Honganji 西本願寺.

Yasuda naturally held the teachings of the sect’s founder in high esteem, but he also saw himself as part of a modern tradition that began with Kiyozawa Manshi (清沢満之, 1863–1903) and extended through Yasuda’s teachers, Kaneko Daiei (金子大栄, 1881–1976) and Soga Ryōjin (曾我量深, 1875–1971). These were men who lived through the period of Japan’s rapid modernization, and they were intensely aware of the challenges facing Shin Buddhism both from old ways of thinking and acting embedded within the sect itself and from the sophisticated nature of Western scientific and philosophical thought. More important, these were men who sought to restate Shin teachings in ways that would transmit their existential significance to modern men and women, and Kaneko, Soga, and Yasuda in particular did not hesitate to speak of their work as involving a “demythologizing” of the popular understanding of Shin Buddhism. For these individuals, Amida did not exist in some otherworldly paradise; rather, Amida and his Pure Land were to be experienced as lived realities in the present.

Although Yasuda inherited the legacy of all these figures, he was most indebted to his teacher Soga Ryōjin. Soga stressed the importance of the Yogācāra school of Mahayana philosophy in interpreting the Shin tradition. That emphasis gave direction to Yasuda's scholarship throughout his adult life. Indeed, one of Yasuda's students has suggested that Yasuda should be viewed in a lineage that extends from Soga to Shinran, and then on to Vasubandhu and Asaṅga, the founders of Yogācāra.¹² For Yasuda, perhaps the defining feature of Shin Buddhism is that it offers to ordinary human beings the possibility of a transformation of consciousness, the realization of the true nature of both self and reality, and the achievement in the present of a mind both at ease and engaged in the world. This, for Yasuda, is birth in the Pure Land.

A second feature of Yasuda's thought is his evident awareness of Western philosophy and theology.¹³ His references to Western philosophers and theologians are usually passing ones and are chiefly indicated only by the philosophical vocabulary he sometimes adopts in explaining Shin ideas. His interest in Western philosophy in part reflects the tradition of modern Shin scholarship that began with Kiyozawa Manshi, who was himself a serious student of the subject. However, Yasuda's exploration of modern European existential thought in particular was also stimulated by his contacts with the influential Kyoto school of philosophy led by Nishida Kitarō (西田幾多郎, 1870–1945), Tanabe Hajime (田辺元, 1885–1962), and Nishitani Keiji (西谷啓示, 1900–1990), all of whom drew on Western, especially modern continental thinkers as well as Buddhist sources. At various points in the translations included in part II of this book, Yasuda draws on the thought of Nishida, the critic of traditional Western religion and culture Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900), the German existential philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889–1976), the Jewish theologian Martin Buber (1878–1965), and others.

A Brief Biography

Yasuda was born in 1900 in the town of Umigami on the Sea of Japan side of Hyōgo Prefecture and was given the personal name Kameji. His father, Tsuruzō, had married into the Yasuda family, which for generations had provided the local *shōya*, or village headman. A brother, Takuji, was born in 1901. At age six, Yasuda was placed in a Christian kindergarten. Although Christianity had been banned during the Tokugawa period (1600–1868), missionaries were again permitted to enter the country as early as 1858 and, among other activities, they established kindergartens

and schools. Yasuda's interest in Christianity continued for the rest of his life.

Yasuda's parents divorced when he was seven, and he was raised by his mother. After completing primary school in 1913, he attended a private night school in the nearby city of Tottori from 1914 to 1916, where he studied morals, classical Japanese and Chinese, history, math, English, and maritime affairs.¹⁴ During these years, he also developed a serious interest in Buddhism and received the precepts from Hioki Mokusen (日置黙仙, 1847–1920), a Sōtō 曹洞 Zen master who in 1916 became head of Eiheiji 永平寺, the Sōtō center established by the sect's founder Dōgen 道元 in the thirteenth century. While working at a bank in 1917 and 1918, Yasuda continued his study of English and also read books on Christianity as well as Buddhism. In 1919 he encountered Kaneko Daiei's *Bukkyō gairon* (仏教概論 *Survey of Buddhism*),¹⁵ a book that made a deep impression on him both for its style and for what he judged to be the depth of its treatment of Buddhist thought.

After the death of his mother in 1920, Yasuda moved from his native prefecture to Kyoto. Although his grandparents lived there, he did not stay with them, and by 1922, both grandparents had passed away. For a short time he worked at the water purification plant at Keage on the east side of the city, but his real interests lay in the study of Buddhism. His attraction to Zen Buddhism continued. He listened to sermons and lectures at the famous Kyoto Zen temples Shōkokuji 相国寺 and Nanzenji 南禅寺. When he asked the Nanzenji monk Nisshu Jōzan (日種讓山, n.d.) about how he might pursue his study of Buddhism, he was referred to Sasaki Gesshō (佐々木月樵, 1875–1926), a professor at Ōtani University. Instead of contacting Sasaki, however, Yasuda wrote to Kaneko Daiei, whose work had earlier so impressed him, and he received an encouraging reply about the possibility of studying at Ōtani.¹⁶ Around this time, Yasuda also became aware of the writings of Soga Ryōjin, who was then teaching in Tokyo at Tōyō University. As a result, Yasuda appears to have reached the conclusion, in his early twenties, that Shin Buddhism was the most persuasive form of the tradition, in spite of his interest in Zen. In a diary entry from 1923, he cites approvingly Soga Ryōjin's criticism of the path of *jishō* 自証 or self-realization as overly "individualistic and idealistic." Soga praised, instead, "the eternal practice of the bodhisattva."¹⁷ These references suggest that the attraction of Shin Buddhism for Yasuda was its commitment to giving expression to Mahayana teachings in the context of everyday life. Also in 1923, Yasuda read Vasubandhu's *Pure Land Treatise*, a central text in the Pure Land tradition, and decided to

make it and Yogācāra scholarship, along with the writings of Shinran, the focus of his Shin studies.¹⁸

With the aid of Kaneko Daiei, Yasuda became an auditor at Ōtani University in 1924. In 1925, Soga Ryōjin joined the faculty, and Yasuda attended his lectures. Also at Ōtani during Yasuda's student years was Suzuki Daisetz (鈴木大拙, 1870–1966), who became famous as a promoter of Zen in the West but who was also a sympathetic interpreter of Shin Buddhism. Suzuki joined the faculty in 1921 through the aid of his close friend Nishida Kitarō, who provided an introduction. Nishida had taught at Ōtani part-time for at least a decade beginning in 1911, the year he published his first major work, *Zen no kenkyū* (善の研究 *An Inquiry into the Good*).¹⁹ In this groundbreaking volume, Nishida demonstrated his wide-ranging knowledge and appreciation of Western philosophy, from the Greeks down to his nineteenth- and twentieth-century contemporaries, but he proposed a starting point for thinking about reality that was fundamentally different from most of those philosophers. Reflecting Mahayana Buddhist thinking concerning the primacy of consciousness in the construction of reality, rather than seeing the myriad things of the world as discrete objects of analysis existing apart from individual consciousness, Nishida argued, “Subjective consciousness and the objective world are the same thing viewed from different angles”²⁰ Therefore, the endeavor to attain knowledge of reality involved the expansion of ordinary consciousness and the transcendence of the everyday self so that it could encompass and realize its true nature as the unifying activity of all things. In Nishida's view, our individual existences should be understood as our relative and finite attempts to express “the infinite and unifying power of reality.”²¹ “If we regard our authentic self as being this unifying activity,” Nishida wrote, “then to know the truth is to accord with this greater self, to actualize it.”²² And actualizing it, he maintained, ultimately involved acting out of a concern for the well-being of all living beings. Even after his term at Ōtani ended, Nishida lectured at the university from time to time.

The nature of Yasuda's contacts with these men during these years is not entirely clear. Yet even as a student, Yasuda had the opportunity to listen to Nishida's lectures at Kyoto University and to read his early works, and as Yasuda's later writings indicate, Nishida had a profound impact on his thought.²³ Yasuda sometimes uses terms that Nishida himself had used; there are parallels in their understanding of the true self as the self-expression of the absolute, or as Yasuda often writes using more distinctively Pure Land language, as the self-expression of the Tathāgata, that

is, Amida. Yasuda remained a student at Ōtani until 1930, completing a secondary course of studies known as the *Senka* 選科.²⁴ Most likely, his lack of a formal middle school education prevented him from entering the mainstream program. During his student years, he began to publish his own writings in small-circulation publications.

The late 1920s, however, were a time of academic turmoil at Ōtani. Sasaki Gesshō, who had become president of Ōtani in 1924 and who had sought to foster a new era of rigor and openness in Shin scholarship, died suddenly in 1926. In 1928, the highest organ overseeing doctrine within the Ōtani branch, the *Jitōryō* 侍董寮, successfully pressured the university to dismiss Kaneko Daiei for his demythologizing interpretation of Shin Buddhism, about which more will be said later. Further, in 1929, Kaneko's name was removed from the registry of Ōtani priests. Soga Ryōjin, who had also been a target of criticism, resigned from the school in the spring of 1930 in solidarity with his colleague. Following Soga's resignation, there were student protests, and other faculty members were suspended by the Higashi Hongaji authorities. The situation did not stabilize until August 1930, when a new president of the university was appointed.²⁵ During this time of unrest, a few students who wished to continue their studies with Kaneko and Soga formed a private academy called the *Kōbō Gakuen* 興法学園, or the Academy for Advancing the Dharma, where the two scholars occasionally lectured. Yasuda served as head of the academy, and the students associated with it studied and lived together. Although the academy was disbanded in less than three years, Yasuda published a number of philosophical essays in the group's journal, *Kōbō* 興法, two of which have been translated in part II, "The Practical Understanding of Buddhism" (*Bukkyō no hōhōteki haaku* 仏教の方法的把握) and "The Mirror of Nothingness" (*Mu no kagami* 無の鏡).

By 1933, Yasuda seems to have established his intellectual identity, and for years he made his living as an independent Shin scholar. His income came chiefly from lectures he would give at temples in the Shin heartland of Niigata and Toyama, where Shinran had spent time in exile, or to Ōtani students. The focus of his lectures was usually one or another of the *Yogācāra* texts—*Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi-śāstra* (J. *Jōyuiishikiron*, 成唯識論, *The Discourse on the Theory of Consciousness-only*), for example, or the *Mahāyānasamgraha-śāstra* (J. *Shōdaijōron*, 撰大乘論, *The Summary of the Great Vehicle*)—or the writings of Shinran.²⁶ In 1935, Yasuda established another private academy with which he was chiefly identified for the rest of his life, the *Sōō Gakusha* 相応学舎, or the School of Practice That Accords with Reality. Soga Ryōjin chose the name for the school by drawing on a line

from Vasubandhu's *Pure Land Treatise*. The line in question concerns the manner in which the name of Amida should be called and it reads in part: "One calls the name of the Tathāgata which describes his light, the embodiment of wisdom, wishing to practice in accord with reality."²⁷ Over the course of Yasuda's life, the school was moved several times and often no more than a small group of individuals would attend his talks. However, it became the focal point for a small community of Shin followers who were dedicated to Yasuda and to his contemporary restatement of Shin teachings.

Yasuda married Nakai Ume in 1938, and they had a son later that year. In 1943, Yasuda formally entered the Shin clergy and received the name Rijin from Soga. From 1944 until 1946, Yasuda held a full-time position at Ōtani University; later, from 1961 until 1966, Yasuda taught at the university on a part-time basis.²⁸ During the war years, the student body was reduced to a mere handful of students because most had been sent off to battlefields, factories, or farms.²⁹ In the mid-1950s, Yasuda continued to study Nishida's writings, and he read works by Heidegger and Buber and by Protestant theologians such as Karl Barth (1886–1968), Rudolf Bultmann (1844–1976), Emil Brunner (1889–1966), Friedrich Gogarten (1887–1967), Reinhold Niebuhr (1892–1971), and Paul Tillich (1886–1965).³⁰ Within the Kyoto school of philosophy, Heidegger, among others, was an influential figure; Heidegger's rejection of the widely accepted dichotomy in Western philosophy between subject and object and his understanding of human existence as *Dasein*, "being-in-the world"—that is, as a being that confronts at every moment the challenge of its self-actualization against the backdrop of the "nothingness" at the base of all existence—opened the way for dialogue with several strains of Asian thought, including Mahayana Buddhism and especially Zen.³¹ The Kyoto school philosophers also refer frequently to the theologians noted here, which underscores the religious nature of the philosophy they articulated.³²

Yasuda nowhere treats these philosophers and theologians in any systematic way, although clearly, among the philosophers, he was inspired by Nishida and Heidegger in particular. Among the theologians, for different reasons, he felt a special affinity with Buber and Barth. One might think that Yasuda would have been drawn to Bultmann, himself heavily influenced by Heidegger and known for his demythologizing of the New Testament, that is, for his rejection of the outdated cosmology of the Bible and of the supernatural acts one encounters there in favor of an existential interpretation of the biblical message.³³ Yasuda knew Bultmann's writings well, but he seems to have been stimulated more by

the neo-orthodox Barth for his conception of the special nature of the Christian community in a time of crisis, a conception that Yasuda felt had important implications for the Shin community of his day.³⁴ Impressed by the attention given to the church as a fellowship of believers in Barth's theology and sensing a lack of any such understanding of the community within the Shin Buddhism of his day, Yasuda sought to provide the intellectual foundation for a renewed consciousness among Shin followers as constituting an existential community who "in a world that is not the Pure Land open up the Pure Land."³⁵ They were to be the true community or Sangha that bore witness to life lived as Amida's form or as the Tathāgata made manifest in the world.

In 1959, Yasuda joined the translation committee, in effect led by Daisetz Suzuki, which was charged with rendering into English Shinran's *Kyōgyōshinshō* 教行信証. The translation was eventually published in 1973 under the title *The Kyōgyōshinshō: The Collection of Passages Expounding the True Teaching, Living, Faith, and Realization of the Pure Land*.³⁶ In 1960, Yasuda had the opportunity to meet and have an extended conversation with Paul Tillich, which inspired Yasuda to present the lecture "A Name but Not a Name Alone" (*Na wa tan ni na ni arazu* 名は単に名にあらず), which is translated in part II of this book. Two other of Yasuda's works published in the early 1960s are also translated in part II: "Humans as Bodhisattvas" (*Bosatsuteki ningen* 菩薩的人間, 1962) and "The Homeland of Existence" (*Sonzai no kokyō* 存在の故郷, 1964). The latter two pieces in particular illustrate well the manner in which Yasuda drew on Heidegger in presenting his interpretation of Shin teachings.

Yasuda had the first of his bouts with tuberculosis in 1967. Constant dedication to his scholarship and to lecturing, both in and outside Kyoto, contributed to recurrences of the disease in 1969 and 1975. An important statement of his thought dating from these years, "Fundamental Vow, Fundamental Word" (*Konpongan, konpongen* 根本願, 根本言, 1972) has also been included in part II. On February 19, 1982, Yasuda died in Kyoto of heart failure at Kyōgokuji 京極寺, his home and the last location of his private academy.

Because Yasuda's life spanned the rise of Japan's militarism and imperialism in Asia, it is natural to ask about his stance toward these developments. It is fair to say that, while Yasuda was not an overt resister, neither did he lend his support to his country's adventurism.³⁷ There are few published lectures or essays by Yasuda dating from the war period. However, one revealing document is the manuscript of a lecture that he probably presented in 1944 entitled "The Land of the One Vehicle" (*Ichijō*

no kokudo 一乗の国土).³⁸ The One Vehicle is a Mahayana concept, most closely associated with the *Lotus Sutra* (Hokeyō 法華經) but mentioned in other texts as well, used to communicate the idea that Mahayana, in contrast to certain earlier Buddhist paths, could lead all beings to the ultimate goal of Buddhahood. Yasuda's lecture was given as part of a series that had the title "Lectures on the Doctrine of Japan" (*Nihon kyōgaku kōza* 日本教学講座). At the beginning of his remarks, Yasuda notes that "the doctrine of Japan (*Nihon kyōgaku*) is an historical problem now frequently posed to Japanese intellectuals." But Yasuda goes on to argue that if one is to consider the Japanese not just as a people (*minzoku* 民族) or as a state (*kokka* 国家), then one must consider the problem of Japan in relation to the world, and this point of departure allows him to shift the focus of his remarks to the universalistic vision of Mahayana Buddhism, focusing in particular on Shin teachings that reach out especially to the ordinary human being. Near the end of his lecture, he notes that "the world of *Namu Amida Butsu*," as he puts it, is the world of ordinary human beings. "In this sense, even if we speak of the country of the One Vehicle, it is the world of ordinary human beings that needs no heroes."³⁹ In the last paragraph of his lecture, he writes, "It is easy to think that the doctrine of Japan is direct speculation about the Emperor, but that is not the case . . ."⁴⁰ For Yasuda, it involved reflection on the meaning of the One Vehicle whose goal is to speak to the religious needs of all human beings.

The Development of the Shin Buddhist Tradition

The development of the Pure Land tradition is a complex subject that reaches far beyond the scope of this book; however, several critical turning points in Shin history need to be noted as a backdrop for understanding both Shinran's and Yasuda's interpretation of the tradition. In general, it can be said that Pure Land Buddhism arose on the basis of certain fundamental Mahayana concepts, on selected passages contained in the Pure Land sutras indicating the possibility of birth in the Pure Land for even the worst offenders of Buddhist precepts, and on the unique experiences of a number of advocates of the Pure Land tradition who interpreted the sutras in light of their experiences.

When Mahayana Buddhism arose around the beginning of the first century BCE, its goal seems to have been to address certain distortions that its advocates saw in the historical development of the earlier Buddhist tradition, which they called Hinayana, or the Small Vehicle. As known through its earliest texts, such as *The Perfection of Wisdom Sutras*,

representatives of Mahayana or the Great Vehicle perceived flaws in the conduct of the monks of the earlier tradition who, they charged, had become too self-absorbed and too attached to the forms and practices of the religion. Mahayanists further charged that this conduct also led to the neglect of the larger world of sentient beings. To address these problems, the followers of Mahayana expanded the early Buddhist concept of the bodhisattva (J. *bosatsu* 菩薩), which had earlier applied to the historical Buddha alone, into a new ideal that all practitioners should embrace. At the same time, they advocated a refined understanding of the early Buddhist teaching of no-self (J. *muga* 無我), which they called the teaching of emptiness or void (J. *kū* 空) or thusness (J. *shinnyo* 真如). In contrast to the Hinayana monk, the Mahayana bodhisattva was an individual who, by definition, understood his or her own spiritual advancement as inextricably linked to that of others. To make this point clear, early Mahayana texts articulated a bodhisattva career or vehicle (J. *bosatsujō* 菩薩乘) that began with the bodhisattva taking a vow to lead all sentient beings to liberation and that involved the practice of the six *pāramitās* (J. *rokuharamitsu* 六波羅蜜) or the perfections of giving, morality, patience, vigor, meditation, and wisdom.

The doctrine of emptiness or thusness was intimately related to the bodhisattva ideal. The problem with the Hinayana monks as they were portrayed in the early Mahayana texts was that they seemed not to grasp fully the central Buddhist teaching of the “selfless” nature of all things. In the early Abhidharma commentarial tradition, the no-self teaching seems to have been chiefly understood as applying to persons and things. But the behavior of the monks who had become attached to forms and practices showed that they had failed to understand that the no-self teaching applied to all objects of consciousness. To push individuals beyond even such subtle attachments, the Mahayana Madhyamika school taught a doctrine of radical emptiness that applied even to the forms and practices of Buddhism itself. Because the bodhisattva fully understood emptiness in this way, he or she could work in the relative worlds that are the mind creations of sentient beings without becoming attached to them. To put it differently, because all relative worlds are ultimately empty, all are mediums through which the bodhisattva could communicate the Buddhist message of liberation; hence the skill of bodhisattvas in *upāya* (J. *hōben* 方便) or expedient means.

At the same time that Mahayana advocated the bodhisattva ideal and the teaching of emptiness, it also developed a devotional dimension to reach out to larger numbers of people than could be moved by subtle

philosophy. Indeed, in this way, Mahayana could compete with contemporary devotional movements within Hinduism and other religions in the region and in fact become a Great Vehicle. Given the teachings of emptiness and the related teaching of expedient means, there existed within Buddhism a philosophical basis for expansion in this direction, even though it might appear to run counter to the original stress in Buddhist teachings on self-reliance and self-responsibility. Be that as it may, Mahayana developed a great number of celestial buddhas and bodhisattvas who are portrayed as laboring in various times and places for the well-being of sentient beings, often responding to their special pleas for help. Amida is only one of hundreds of buddhas whose names are encountered in Mahayana scriptures, and Amida himself appears in hundreds of Mahayana texts.⁴¹

From the perspective of the later Japanese Pure Land and Shin traditions, however, the three texts mentioned earlier—*The Sutra of Immeasurable Life* or *The Larger Sutra*, *The Sutra on the Contemplation of Immeasurable Life* or *The Contemplation Sutra*, and *The Sutra on the Buddha Amitāyus* or *The Smaller Sutra*—took on special significance. As previously noted, the contents of the texts are by no means identical, and present in the sutras are the ambiguities that became the source of debates about the nature of Amida, his Pure Land, and the method for attaining birth. *The Larger Sutra* recounts the story of the Bodhisattva Dharmākara who, we are told, after gaining a glimpse of innumerable buddha lands, determined to establish a land of his own that surpasses all others and, to that end, took forty-eight vows.⁴² Having fulfilled those vows, he now resides as the Buddha Amida in his own Pure Land. The tradition has attached special weight to several of Amida's vows. Vow eighteen is especially important and reads as follows: "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 five grave offenses and abuse the Right Dharma."⁴³ The sutra later informs the reader, in the portion of the text known as the fulfillment stage (J. *ka'i* 果位), in contrast to the causal stage (J. *imi* 因位), that Dharmākara indeed achieved buddhahood; therefore, the follower can rely on this and all other vows he made. In vow eleven, for example, Amida promises that those who achieve his Pure Land will "dwell in the definitely assured stage and unfailingly reach nirvana." Vow seventeen states that innumerable buddhas in the ten directions

“will praise and glorify my Name.” Vow nineteen states that Amida will meet on their deathbeds those who aspire to enlightenment and do various meritorious deeds. Further, this sutra recognizes three grades of aspirants. The lowest grade in particular was given great attention later in the tradition and is described in the following manner:

The lower grade of aspirants are the *devas* and humans in the worlds of the ten directions who sincerely desire to be born in that land. Although unable to do many meritorious deeds, they awaken aspiration for highest enlightenment and singlemindedly [*sic*] think of Amitāyus even ten times, desiring birth in his land. When they hear the profound Dharma they joyfully accept it and do not entertain any doubt; and so, thinking of the Buddha even once, they sincerely aspire to be born in that land. When they are about to die, they will see the Buddha in a dream. Those aspirants, too, will be born in the Pure Land.⁴⁴

The Contemplation Sutra, the second of the Pure Land sutras, relates the story of an evil prince, Ajātaśatru, who imprisons his father, King Bimbisāra, as well as his mother, Queen Vaidehi, to take over the throne. Lamenting the situation in which she finds herself, Vaidehi calls on the Buddha to show her a land without sorrow where she might be reborn. After the Buddha has given her a vision of many buddha lands, she chooses Amida’s Pure Land as the best, and asks the Buddha to teach her “how to contemplate that land and attain *samādhi*.”⁴⁵ *Samādhi* here refers to a state of concentrated meditation. The Buddha then teaches Vaidehi thirteen types of contemplation for attaining the Pure Land, but as the first steps of the path, the Buddha explains that whoever wishes to be born there should practice the three acts: “[F]irst, caring for one’s parents, attending to one’s teachers and elders, compassionately refraining from killing, and doing the ten good deeds; second, taking the Three Refuges, keeping the various precepts, and refraining from breaking the rules of conduct; and third, awakening the aspiration for enlightenment (*bodhicitta*), believing deeply in the law of causality, chanting the Mahayana sutras, and encouraging people to follow their teachings.”⁴⁶ As this passage makes clear, meritorious conduct is valued and expected, although *The Contemplation Sutra* later became part of a movement that stressed sincere trust in Amida’s vows as the sole means for entering the Pure Land. Toward the end of the sutra, the text takes up nine grades or categories of aspirants. Of the lowest grade, “evildoers who commit the gravest offenses,” it states that if they call the name of Amida ten times before they die, their evil karma will be erased and they will be born in the Pure Land on golden

lotus flowers, which much later will open, allowing the aspirants to hear Amida's teachings and to engage in practice.

The third of the sutras, *The Sutra on Amitāyus Buddha* or *The Smaller Sutra*, presents the Buddha as teaching one of his disciples, Śariputra, about the qualities of the land of Utmost Bliss, located “westward from here,” some hundreds of thousands of buddha lands away. The text describes the land where Amida reigns with fantastic imagery. It is a place where beings suffer no pain, the structures are made of precious jewels that emit wondrous lights, heavenly music plays continuously, the singing of birds constitutes the teaching of the Buddha's message, and soft breezes blow through the jeweled trees to create a wondrous sound. “Everyone who hears the sounds spontaneously becomes mindful of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.”⁴⁷ Amida rules in this indescribably pure place, his light shining over all worlds of the ten directions; innumerable disciples and bodhisattvas surround him. The sutra makes the following statement about the requirements for entry into that land. “Śariputra, if a good man or woman who hears Amitāyus holds fast to his name even for one day, two days, three, four, five, six or seven days with a concentrated and undistracted mind, then, at the hour of his death, Amitāyus will appear with a host of holy ones. Consequently, when their life comes to an end, the aspirants' minds will not fall into confusion and so they will be born immediately in the Land of Utmost Bliss of Amitāyus.”⁴⁸

Although these three sutras give special attention to Amida and stress the importance of having trust in his vows, they are not unusual as Mahayana texts. They continue to give an appropriate place to the traditional Buddhist practices of observing the precepts, meditating, and gaining wisdom through the study of Buddhist teachings. Further, it is within the larger context of Mahayana Buddhism that Nāgārjuna and Vasubandhu appear to have embraced practices that involved Amida. Both recommended meditation on Amida and his Pure Land, not exclusively but along with other practices, as a way to attain liberation. As Ueda Yoshifumi and Dennis Hirota point out in describing the meditation practice Vasubandhu presented in his *Pure Land Treatise*, Vasubandhu's conception of the Pure Land path was “an adaptation of the bodhisattva path to the Pure Land context.”⁴⁹ In addition, for Vasubandhu to enter the Pure Land was to purify the mind, to perceive the true nature of reality and participate in the compassionate activity represented by Amida's vows, which is critically important for understanding the Pure Land Buddhism of figures such as Shinran and Yasuda.

The earlier two of the three Pure Land sutras were translated into Chinese beginning in the second century, roughly one hundred years after Buddhism was introduced and almost as soon as the texts themselves were compiled, it would seem. It is worth repeating that respect for the Pure Land sutras, meditation on Amida and his Pure Land, and the *nen-fo* or the reciting of Amida's name became widely accepted parts of the larger Chinese Buddhist tradition. Indeed, as Robert Sharf and others have argued, there is no solid evidence that Pure Land ever constituted a distinctive Buddhist school in China.⁵⁰ Rather, Pure Land texts and practices were seen as representing one among many of the approaches that Buddhism taught for the achievement of the goal of liberation, and followers of the major Chinese schools of Chan and Tiantai, for example, embraced it. However, from the perspective of the Japanese Pure Land founders Hōnen and especially Shinran, three Chinese individuals—Tanluan, Daochuo, and Shandao—came to be recognized as patriarchs in the Pure Land movement and each was interpreted as contributing to the development of Pure Land Buddhism in significant ways.⁵¹

Tanluan in particular had a significant impact on the thought of Shinran and deserves special comment. Tanluan knew well the teachings of Nāgārjuna's Madhyamika school, yet his major work was his commentary on Vasubandhu's *Pure Land Treatise*, a text that focuses on a visualization practice, as Richard Payne refers to it, a visualization practice that reflects Yogācāra thought.⁵² As others have indicated, Tanluan brings both strains of Mahayana philosophy to bear in his treatment of the *Pure Land Treatise*.⁵³ On the one hand, there is much evidence of his deep knowledge of Madhyamika texts.⁵⁴ Tanluan begins his *Commentary* with a reference to the *Treatise on the Ten Bodhisattva Stages*, noting that in contrast to the path of difficult practice, Nāgārjuna held that having trust in Amida and his vows was an "easy practice," "like a pleasant journey on water."⁵⁵ Also in line with Nāgārjuna's emptiness philosophy, Tanluan indicates in his *Commentary* that birth in the Pure Land is the birth of "nonbirth," that is, it is a mental transformation rather than a physical one.⁵⁶

On the other hand, Tanluan develops his own views concerning birth in the Pure Land as he comments on the Yogācāra visualization practice that Vasubandhu advances in the *Pure Land Treatise*. At the heart of Vasubandhu's practice are the *gonenmon* 五念門, or five gates of mindfulness, leading to birth in the Pure Land. These five gates are (1) worshipping Amida (J. *raihai* 禮拜), (2) praising Amida (J. *sandan* 讚歎), (3) making the vow to be born in the Pure Land (J. *sagan* 作願), (4) contemplating Amida

and the Pure Land (J. *kansatsu* 觀察), and (5) transferring one's merits to other sentient beings (J. *ekō* 回向). In terms of the two traditional categories of meditative practice—*śamatha* (J. *shi* 止) or cessation and *vipaśyana* (J. *kan* 觀) or contemplation—Vasubandhu understood the third gate of making the vow to be born in the Pure Land as the practice of *śamatha* and the fourth gate of contemplating Amida and his Pure Land as *vipaśyana*. As noted earlier, Vasubandhu conceived of this entire course of practice within the framework of the bodhisattva path, which always aims at benefiting both self and others. In his view, the first four gates of mindfulness were understood as leading to enlightenment and entrance into the Pure Land, while the fifth signaled the acceptance of the bodhisattva's mission to serve others.⁵⁷

The fourth gate of contemplation, or visualization, takes up more than half of Tanluan's *Commentary*. It focuses on the pure qualities of the land, the Buddha Amida, and the bodhisattvas who inhabit the land. However, Vasubandhu asserts and Tanluan further explains that these qualities are all manifestations resulting from insight into the One Dharma Principle (J. *ippokku* 一法句), which represents the true nature of reality that is expressed in Mahayana by terms such as “emptiness,” “thusness,” or “suchness,” “dharma-nature” (J. *dharmatā* 法性), “Dharma-body” (J. *hosshin* 法身), and many more.⁵⁸ The fundamental claim involved here is that a pure world emerges from a mind that has attained insight into the true nature of reality.

In terms of Tanluan's contributions to the development of Pure Land Buddhism, two points deserve particular mention. The first is his opening up of the possibility of entry into the Pure Land to ordinary believers. It is frequently pointed out that Vasubandhu's practice was intended for advanced bodhisattvas. However, Tanluan developed a logic that made it possible to believe that ordinary people could also gain birth in the Pure Land.⁵⁹ He did this by noting passages in *The Contemplation Sutra* that support the view that ordinary people can enter the Pure Land, by privileging certain vows in *The Larger Sutra* over others, and by drawing on Vasubandhu's understanding of the qualities of mind that lead to birth in the Pure Land. The relevant passages in *The Contemplation Sutra* are those that affirm that even “sentient beings who commit such evils as the five grave offenses, the ten evil acts, and all kinds of immorality” can enter the Pure Land through the power of the name, although the sutra also notes that their full enjoyment of that state will not be immediate.⁶⁰

The vows of *The Larger Sutra* to which Tanluan directs our attention are the eleventh, the eighteenth, and the twenty-second. The well-known

eighteenth vow states that when Dharmākara attains enlightenment, all sentient beings “who sincerely and joyfully entrust themselves to me, desire to be born in my land, and think of me even ten times” will be born in his Pure Land. Yet this vow, standing in some tension with *The Contemplation Sutra*, also excludes those “who commit the five grave offenses and abuse the Right Dharma.”⁶¹ The eleventh vow states that when Dharmākara attains enlightenment and becomes the Buddha Amida, all beings in his land will dwell “in the definitely assured stage and unfailingly reach nirvana.”⁶² Vow twenty-two is a long vow that initially promises buddhahood after one lifetime to all bodhisattvas in other lands who visit Amida’s Pure Land; however, it goes on to single out “those who wish to teach and guide sentient beings in accordance with their original vows.” Concerning these beings the vow concludes, “Such bodhisattvas transcend the course of practice of ordinary bodhisattvas, manifest the practices of all the bodhisattva stages, and cultivate the virtues of Samantabhadra.”⁶³ Samantabhadra (J. *Fugen bosatsu* 普賢菩薩) is generally interpreted as embodying the ideal of Buddhist practice.

Tanluan interprets these three vows together as indicating that through sincerely entrusting themselves to Amida and thinking of him (which Tanluan understands to mean saying his name with complete trust in his vows), sentient beings will be born in his land; that they will enjoy the “definitely assured stage” and reach nirvana; and that, through the entrusting mind, the bonds of karma can be immediately overcome, that is, as Roger Coreless explains, without passing through the usual bodhisattva stages.⁶⁴ The last point indicates the basis on which Tanluan and later Pure Land followers addressed the exclusionary clause of vow eighteen. It is the quality of one’s trust in Amida, the state of one’s mind, that is determinative. The mind that is sincere, that is single, and that is constant in its trust in Amida has the power to overcome all obstructing karma. Above all, as Vasubandhu himself indicated, trusting in Amida with “singleness of mind” is key.⁶⁵

The second major contribution made by Tanluan to the development of the Pure Land tradition relates to this last point, the nature of the entrusting mind. The usual interpretation of Vasubandhu’s five gates of mindfulness viewed the practice as moving in two directions, from the practitioner to Amida and his Pure Land in gates one through four, and then from Amida and his Pure Land back to the world of sentient beings in gate five, the gate of transference. Tanluan recognizes that this view reflects the traditional understanding of the bodhisattva practice, aiming at the attainment of both self-benefit and other-benefit. But he is the

first to assert that both types of benefits come from Amida, that even one's entrance onto the path or one's first arousing of the entrusting mind is due to the power of Amida's vow to lead all sentient beings to the Pure Land. "When we ponder the Other-Power, it is the predominant condition [for our rapid attainment of *anuttara-samyak-sambodhi*],"⁶⁶ that is, it is the predominant condition for the practitioner's attainment of the highest, perfect enlightenment.

Tanluan asserted this because he understood Amida in two ways: as formless, ineffable reality itself, or more technically, as the Dharma-body of dharma-nature (Skt. *dharmatā dharmakāya*, J. *hosshō hosshin* 法性法身), and as the Dharma-body of means or expediency (Skt. *upāya dharmakāya*, J. *hōben hosshin* 方便法身), expressed as the qualities of Amida, his Pure Land, and its inhabitants. These two bodies are inextricably related. Tanluan also describes these two aspects of Amida, respectively, as the body of reality (Skt. *dharmatākāya*, J. *jissōshin* 實相身) and the body for the sake of living beings (Skt. *sattvajetukāya*, J. *imotsushin* 為物身).⁶⁷ From this derives the importance for both Vasubandhu and Tanluan of calling Amida's name, "which describes his light, the embodiment of wisdom," and which must be said "wishing to practice in accord with reality, that is, in agreement with the significance of the name."⁶⁸ This conception of *nenbutsu* practice becomes central to both Shinran and Yasuda, and, as noted earlier, the phrase "to practice in accord with reality" (J. *nyojitsu shugyō sōō* 如実修行相応) was adapted to become part of the name of Yasuda's academy, the *Sōō Gakusha*. Inasmuch as self-motivated activity reflects a failure of understanding of the ultimate, selfless nature of reality and one's relationship to it, of one's total embedment in the world of empty forms, it stands over against that reality. Thus, opening up to the entrusting mind involves a relinquishing of self-power mentality and an acceptance of the fundamental nature of reality that supports all sentient beings.

Shinran always presented himself as a devout follower of his teacher Hōnen and especially of Hōnen's teaching regarding the selected *nenbutsu* as the entry point into the Pure Land in a degenerate age. Through his studies as a Tendai monk on Mount Hiei and through the time spent with Hōnen, Shinran gained both a broad knowledge of Buddhism in general and a deep commitment to the Pure Land way. As is widely recognized, however, Shinran relied heavily on Tanluan's *Commentary*, citing it frequently in his major work, the *Kyōgyōshinshō*.⁶⁹ And as Bandō Shōjun reminds us, the characters for Shinran's name are a combination of one character taken from the Japanese reading of Vasubandhu's name

(Tenshin 天親) and another character taken from the Japanese reading of Tanluan's name (Donran).⁷⁰

In his formulation of Pure Land teachings, Shinran extended the logic of *shinjin* as the one and only practice. Because one could enter the Pure Land only by entrusting oneself to the other power of Amida, he argued, all acts undertaken with the intention of self-justification were self-defeating and had to be abandoned. This meant, first, that the widely accepted practice of saying the *nenbutsu* many times, especially at the moment of death, was not required for birth in the Pure Land and, second, and more dramatic, even the traditional practices of the monastic life—the observation of the precepts, the practice of meditation, and the like—should be given up. To demonstrate this point, Shinran himself rejected the monastic life and married. For Shinran, all that ultimately mattered for entrance into the Pure Land was a complete and single moment of entrusting oneself to the reality that Amida and his Pure Land embodied, and that moment could be accessed by everyone, even the uneducated layperson, even the individual who had violated Buddhist precepts. Shinran compiled the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, a collection of passages from a wide range of Buddhist and even non-Buddhist sources, to demonstrate the truth of this assertion.⁷¹

Shinran's own comments, it is worth noting, make up only a small portion of the total text and therefore carry great weight. In the preface, after a reference to the story of Vaidehi in *The Contemplation Sutra*, he writes, "We know, therefore, that the auspicious Name, embodying the perfectly fulfilled supreme virtues is true wisdom that transforms our evil into virtue and that the diamond-like *shinjin*, so difficult to accept, is true reality that sweeps away doubt and brings us to attainment of enlightenment."⁷² In subsequent pages, he develops the central themes of his teaching: namely, everything depends on *shinjin*, which is characterized by sincerity, trust, and the desire for birth; *shinjin* can be realized quickly in the present through the practice of the *nenbutsu* that accords with reality; those who realize *shinjin* have broken the bonds of karma and are assured of enlightenment; those who fail to experience *shinjin* are, as has always been the case in Buddhism, blinded by ignorance and the passions; and, finally, those who embrace *shinjin* dwell in a state of joy and participate in Amida's compassionate activity. The *Kyōgyōshinshō*, along with certain other works—such as the *Tannishō* 歎異抄 or *Passages Deploring Deviations of Faith*, a recounting of Shinran's views compiled by his disciple Yuienbō 唯円房 shortly after Shinran's death—became the basis for the Shin movement.⁷³

During the time that Hōnen and Shinran were alive, they were harshly criticized by the larger Japanese Buddhist community, and agitation by some Buddhist leaders led to their persecution and exile. The chief charges against them were that their teachings encouraged unethical conduct and that they ran counter to the long-held Mahayana teaching that the path to enlightenment began with the arousal of *bodhicitta* (J. *bodaishin* 菩提心), the aspiration for enlightenment, and progressed to the practice of morality, meditation, and wisdom. Some Buddhists agreed with Hōnen and Shinran about the degeneracy of their times, but they held that the path to liberation remained unchanged.

At the heart of Shinran's teaching, however, was an insight that others in the Mahayana tradition, outside Pure Land Buddhism, had articulated from time to time and that, it could be argued, stood at the heart of all of Buddhism—namely, that what matters above all else for the attainment of enlightenment is the transformation of mind and insight into the true nature of reality. Just what occasioned that transformation could not always be attributed to Buddhist practices. On this point, Chan or Zen masters often come close to a Shin point of view. The famous Sixth Patriarch of Chan, Huineng (慧能, 638–713), for example, is said to have attained enlightenment while working as an impoverished peddler of firewood, even before he had undertaken any sort of Buddhist practice. We are told in *The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch* that, one day after he had completed a sale of wood, he “happened to see another man who was reciting the *Diamond Sutra*. Upon hearing it my mind became clear and I was awakened.”⁷⁴ *The Diamond Sutra* is included in the class of Perfection of Wisdom texts that set forth Mahayana's bodhisattva path and the teaching of emptiness, and it is certainly not a text that most people could comprehend through a casual hearing. The later Chan teacher Huangbo (黄檗, ninth century CE), who was not an admirer of Pure Land Buddhism, illustrates the point in question more directly. According to his recorded sayings, he told his students: “Enlightenment springs from Mind, regardless of your practice of the six pāramitās and the rest. All such practices are merely expedients for handling ‘concrete’ matters when dealing with the problems of daily life. Even Enlightenment, the Absolute, Reality, Sudden Attainment, the Dharmakāya and all the others down to the Ten Stages of Progress, the Four Rewards of virtuous and wise living and the State of Holiness and Wisdom are—every one of them—mere concepts for helping us through samsāra; they have nothing to do with the real Buddha-Mind.”⁷⁵ While Chan and Zen continued to stress the importance of the monastic life, as indeed almost all Buddhist schools traditionally

did—something, of course, that Shinran had abandoned—we see expressed in the instances quoted here an insight into the nature of enlightenment that Shinran could share and that he conceptualized in terms of the entrusting mind. In Shinran's view, one could enter the Pure Land by giving up the mind of self-centered cravings and calculations through a moment of total entrusting in the reality that is Amida, which itself arose from the true empty nature of *samsāra*, the world of birth and death. Through that moment of entrusting, one could gain entrance to the Pure Land and, just as one is, be supported by the sustaining power of that reality.

Yasuda's Modern Predecessors

There is no need here to recount in any detail the development of Shin Buddhism after Shinran and before the modern period because Yasuda's teachers were responding to the situation they encountered in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and because Yasuda himself looked back through his teachers directly to Shinran and beyond. Suffice it to say that, at first, Shinran's teachings spread slowly. Not until the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, largely through the work of Rennyō (蓮如, 1415–1499), the so-called second founder of the sect, did Shin Buddhism become a countrywide movement.⁷⁶ Although members of all classes of society were gradually drawn to Shinran's teachings, Shin became especially popular among ordinary people, those with no particular education or status who were faced with the struggles of life day in and day out. Over the centuries, the philosophical depth of Shinran's teachings was often lost, but Shin's rejection of a monastic elite and its eager embrace of ordinary believers who were joined together in their total trust in Amida produced tightly knit communities. So strong were those ties that, during the fifteenth and sixteen centuries, when the feudal domains of central Japan were engaged in almost continuous civil war, Shin communities established islands of self-rule that enabled them, for a time, to withstand attacks by would-be conquerors. George Elison has observed that the Shin sect "was particularly well entrenched" in the domains of Owari, Mino, Ise, Ōmi, Echizen, Noto, and Kaga. Drawing on the work of Fujita Hisashi, Elison further explains that the sect's temple precincts (*jinai* 寺内) were not simply fortresses but also "independent provincial towns possessing extraterritorial rights" and commercial centers.⁷⁷

The major communities of this sort, including the headquarters of the Single-Minded Sect (Ikkōshū 一向宗) as the Shin sect was also known, the

Osaka Honganji 大阪本願寺, were gradually brought under centralized control by Oda Nobunaga (織田信長, 1534–1582), Toyotomi Hideyoshi (豊臣秀吉, 1536–1598), and Tokugawa Ieyasu (徳川家康, 1543–1616), as were all of Japan's feudal domains. The Tokugawa shoguns extended their dominance throughout Japanese society, and by 1639, they had closed off the country to most of the rest of the world. As has often been noted, for the next two and a quarter centuries, until the collapse of the Tokugawa regime in 1868, Japan enjoyed relative peace if not always prosperity. Confucianism had been known in Japan for centuries, but in a variety of forms (Neo-Confucian, Ancient Learning, as well as more popular interpretations), and it gradually came to permeate Japanese society during this period. Having been a source of resistance to centralized control in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Buddhism was forced to submit to state power. Within the shogun's government, an Office of Temples and Shrines (*Jishabugyō* 寺社奉行) was established to regulate religious institutions. Temple regulations (*jiin hattō* 寺院法度) were issued that encouraged monks to devote themselves to scholarship, set criteria for the granting of clerical ranks, and formally organized temples within each sect according to a main temple-branch temple (*honmatsu* 本末) system. Further, the government employed the temples in its efforts to stamp out Christianity and control the lives of the populace by requiring all Japanese to register at temples, thus laying the foundation of the parishioner system (*danka seido* 檀家制度), the legacy of which is still felt today. As with other forms of Buddhism, Shin Buddhism was also regulated in these ways, but especially noteworthy in Shin's case was the splitting of the sect's main temple in Kyoto, the Honganji, into Higashi Honganji and Nishi Honganji (which was mentioned earlier). At the same time, however, Shin Buddhism also received the patronage of the shoguns and, as a religion of the people, it continued to enjoy a massive following. Over the course of the Tokugawa period, it became Japan's largest sect.

When the Tokugawa period came to an end in 1868 and Japan was forced by Western nations to open up to the world, it became apparent that Japan faced daunting challenges if it were to remain independent. A country that, for the most part, had been cut off from the world for more than two centuries now had to modernize, and in the first decades of the Meiji period (1868–1912), dramatic changes were made. The feudal regime of the Tokugawa was replaced by a bureaucratic state that, in theory, was subjected to a reinvented imperial sovereign; in actuality, it was run by a counsel of state staffed mainly by young samurai from the domains of

Satsuma and Chōshū, the domains most instrumental in the fall of the Tokugawa. The new government replaced the feudal domains with prefectures. The old class system that had given the samurai a privileged status was abolished. Industries of all sorts were created, often with the help of the central government. Compulsory education was instituted, and the list of changes goes on and on.

In this new setting, the old religions also faced extraordinary challenges. The Meiji leaders sought to foster a new form of Shinto as a state-sponsored institution that would unify the country. In myth, and at times earlier in Japanese history, Shinto, “the way of the kami [or deities]” had been presented as a uniquely Japanese religion that provided sacred legitimation for imperial family power and for the view of Japan as a “divine land.” In actuality, for most of its history, Shinto had existed as part of a Buddhist-dominated blending of the two religions, with temples and shrines standing side by side and with Buddhist monks often officiating at Shinto shrines. Hence, in 1868, the Meiji government decreed that Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines had to be separated, and at the beginning of the Meiji era in some regions of the country, Buddhism was harshly persecuted as a foreign and parasitic religion.⁷⁸ In this new context, Buddhism was under enormous pressure to show that it had some relevance to a world consumed with modernization, material progress, and new learning of all kinds.

Shin Buddhism was in a particularly difficult position. For centuries, its reputation had been fixed in Japanese society as a sect that had adopted conventional, largely Confucian morality as the standard for conduct in this life and held out the hope of birth in Amida's Pure Land in the next.⁷⁹ Although traditional seminaries existed within Shin Buddhism, many within the Shin clergy were uneducated and owed their temple positions above all to heredity. And while some young people in Shin Buddhism, as in other Buddhist sects, felt the attraction of the new learning that was entering Japan through contact with the West, the structure of authority within the sect was hierarchical and slow to embrace change.⁸⁰

In this environment, Kiyozawa Manshi labored to make Shin Buddhism a religious force in the modern world.⁸¹ Kiyozawa, or Tokunaga Manno-suke 徳永満之助 as he was first known, was born into a family of lower samurai at the end of the Tokugawa period. The abolition of the samurai class in the early Meiji period plunged his family into poverty. Yet Kiyozawa's outstanding performance in primary school opened doors for

him. At fifteen, he was ordained a Shin priest, even though he had little knowledge of Buddhism at the time, and he entered the Ikuei School 育英学校, a school operated by Higashi Honganji for the purpose of educating future priests. Here, too, he was a stellar student and he developed a genuine sympathy for the Buddhism he studied. In 1881, he was selected by the school administration to study philosophy and the philosophy of religion at Tokyo Imperial University, Japan's premier university that had been founded just a few years earlier in 1877. After a year of preparatory studies, he entered its College of Letters, where he remained for six and a half years and where he met the famous foreign scholar Ernest Fenellosa and gained his first exposure to philosophers such as Spinoza, Kant, Hegel, and Spencer. At the university, he also met Inoue Enryō (井上円慮了 1858–1919), who had also been sponsored by Higashi Honganji, and he joined him in establishing The Philosophical Association (Tetsugakkai 哲学会), as well as serving as editor of *The Journal of the Philosophical Association* (Tetsugakkai zasshi 哲学会雑誌). Inoue would later become known as a Buddhist philosopher, a popular lecturer, and a critic of what he judged to be the overenthusiasm for the West among many Japanese leaders of his day.

In 1888, Kiyozawa was called back to Kyoto to head a middle school run by Higashi Honganji. Also at this time, he married into the Kiyozawa family, which looked after the Shin temple Saihōji 西方寺 in Nagoya. But Manshi had little interest in the life of a Shinshū priest and instead, in 1890, he entered into a period of strict ascetical living and study with the aims of distancing himself from the materialism of modern society and of inspiring the Shin clergy to embrace a more disciplined way of life. This period came to an abrupt end in 1894, when he contracted tuberculosis and nearly died.

After his recovery, Kiyozawa worked tirelessly to focus the energies of the Shin sect on its religious message and to present Shin Buddhism as a teaching that could speak to modern, educated people. Along with other like-minded reformers, Kiyozawa pushed for representative government within the sect and, through articles published in the journal he founded in 1896, the *Kyōkai jigen* 教界時言 (*Timely Words for the Religious World*), and in other ways, he urged educational reforms that aimed at a broadened curriculum and greater freedom of thought. Although there was support for these initiatives among some within the sect, in the end the Shin leadership rejected them. As a dramatic indication of their level of resistance to reform and to Kiyozawa, in 1897 they removed his name from the list of the sect's clergy. Yet surprisingly, in 1898, he was reinstated and sum-

moned to serve as the tutor to the son of the sect's head, a sign both of the deep divisions within the sect and of the great respect that many within the Higashi Honganji had for him.

Shortly thereafter, in 1899, the Higashi Hongaji authorities charged him with the task of establishing a new institution of higher learning, Shinshū University 真宗大学, in Tokyo. The university officially got its start in 1901. While serving as its president, he lived in a dormitory called the Kōkōdō (浩々洞 The Vast Grotto) along with several students. With them, he published a magazine entitled *Seishinkai* 精神界 or *The Spiritual World*. In its articles, he articulated the ideas of a religious philosophy that he called *seishinshugi* 精神主義, or spiritual awareness. After a little more than a year, however, students at the university began to resist his strict leadership. He also suffered another attack of tuberculosis and resigned his position in 1902. That year he lost his wife and son. Kiyozawa himself died in June 1903.

Kiyozawa left behind several important works that transmit his interpretation of Shin teachings. Perhaps the most famous is his *Shūkyō tetsugaku gaikotsu* 宗教哲学骸骨 (*Outline of the Philosophy of Religion*) published in 1893.⁸² The work reflects his broad knowledge of Western philosophy, but it is the last chapter, where he places Shin Buddhism within the context of his philosophy of religion, that is most relevant here. As Johnson and Wakimoto point out, "In agreement with much of the German metaphysical thought that he had studied, Manshi conceived of the universe as a great organic whole."⁸³ He referred to this whole with the term *banbutsu ittai* 万物一体, "the oneness of all things," and in commenting on it, he drew on the central Buddhist concept of dependent origination (*engi* 縁起). In a world in which all things are ultimately empty, things exist, not autonomously, but in mutual dependence. Manshi spoke of the powerful awareness of the totality of this reality as *anjin* 安心, or the mind at ease, a concept central to Shin Buddhism. Although Kiyozawa was famous for both his personal self-discipline and his prodigious intellectual achievements, he openly stated that, in the face of the totality of reality, all of his efforts, even his best effort to distinguish right from wrong and to act morally, counted for nothing. True peace of mind came through entrusting oneself to this reality. This belief constituted the foundation of Kiyozawa's Shin Buddhism. In Kiyozawa's experience, what the Shin tradition called self-power only served to teach him the limits of self-effort and prepare him for entrusting himself to what he sometimes called *zettai mugen* 絶対無限 or absolute infinity. He also spoke of this infinity in religious language, referring to it as the Tathāgata, the Thus-Come One or

the One Who Comes from Thusness, a term in Shin Buddhism understood to refer to Amida.

Kiyozawa's critique of self-power and his awareness of the limits of individual effort, however, did not mean that he lacked a basis for action in society. It is true that he gave absolute priority to the religious transformation of the individual and that, as Ugo Dessi has pointed out, there are ambiguities in Kiyozawa's "articulation of the social significance of the Buddhist teaching of no-self."⁸⁴ On occasion Kiyozawa also expressed views that seem to reflect the traditional Shin perspective that, following Rennyo, urged acceptance of a commonly followed Japanese moral code of behavior largely grounded in Confucian teachings. Soga Ryōjin himself, for a time, criticized Kiyozawa's *Seishinshugi* as "a form of passive acceptance of fate."⁸⁵ However, Kiyozawa explicitly rejected this interpretation. In *Seishinkai*, Kiyozawa wrote: "When one interacts with things and people outside of oneself, he should seek to increase the happiness of both self and others. This is not rejected by *Seishinshugi*, but rather something we welcome. *Seishinshugi* thus is not a practice of renunciation and escape."⁸⁶ And one can see in Kiyozawa's thought a recognizable Buddhist stance toward the world in his belief that once spiritual awareness had been attained, one had achieved the proper foundation for engagement with the world. In describing this aspect of Kiyozawa's thought, Johnson and Wakimoto write, "When one realizes a knowledge of the infinite, the mind is set at rest and can go about the business of cultivating virtue without undue exertion."⁸⁷ In this strain of Kiyozawa's thought, by abandoning self-effort and entrusting oneself to ultimate reality, one gained both a mind at ease and a source for positive action in society, however imperfectly that might be expressed.

Unlike Kiyozawa, Kaneko Daiei was born into a family of Shin priests in Niigata Prefecture.⁸⁸ After an upbringing in the countryside, he moved to Kyoto and entered a Shin middle school, which in the educational system of his day was roughly equivalent to a modern high school. He graduated in 1899 when he was seventeen. In 1901, he moved to Tokyo and entered Shinshū University, headed by Kiyozawa. There Kaneko met many students who would become leaders in the Shin sect just a few years later, including Soga Ryōjin, at the time a researcher at the institution. Kaneko had contact with Kiyozawa's Kōkōdō group and published in journals associated with the group, *Seishinkai* and *Mujintō* 無尽灯, *The Inexhaustible Lamp*.

After his graduation in 1904, Kaneko returned home to Niigata, but he continued to publish and lecture widely. In 1909, he spoke at Kiyozawa's

seventh-year memorial service, noting the impact that Kiyozawa had on him, especially with regard to Kiyozawa's stress on "abiding at ease in the present" (*genzai anjū* 現在安住).⁸⁹ Kaneko's first major academic work was *Shinshū no kyōgi oyobi rekishi* 真宗の教義及び歴史 (*Shinshū's Doctrine and Its History*), which was published in 1911.⁹⁰ Terakawa Shunshō argues that this work, which was critical of the interpretation of Shin Buddhism that emphasized the importance of the reception of grace from an other-worldly Buddha Amida, was one of several that marked "a new beginning for Shin studies."⁹¹

In 1915, Kaneko returned to Tokyo and joined the Kōkōdō group that was carrying on Kiyozawa's work there. He taught at Tōyō University for a short time in 1916, but he moved that same year to Kyoto and became a faculty member at Shinshū Ōtani University. Shinshū University had been moved to Kyoto in 1911 and renamed; this move was designed in part to bring the university closer to the sect's headquarters in Kyoto, which was suspicious of the liberal tendencies of the university's leadership. The school would again change its name to Ōtani University in 1922, when it received government recognition as a university.

Kaneko continued a particularly active publishing career throughout the late 1910s and into the 1920s. In 1916, he published *Shinran Shōnin no shūkyō* 親鸞聖人の宗教 (*The Religion of Saint Shinran*), which presented Shinran not as a sectarian leader but as a representative of the larger Mahayana tradition. In 1919 came his widely read *Survey of Buddhism*, a book that, as already noted, had a life-altering impact on Yasuda. But his most controversial publications came in 1925, when he published *Jōdo no kannen* 浄土の観念 (*The Concept of the Pure Land*), and in 1926, when his lecture on "Shinshū ni okeru Nyorai to Jōdo no kannen" 真宗における如来と浄土の観念 ("The Concept of the Tathāgata and the Pure Land in Shin Buddhism") appeared in print.⁹² In these writings he pushed further his interpretation of both the Tathāgata Amida and the Pure Land as states of mind rather than as external realities. As Robert Rhodes has commented, for Kaneko, the Pure Land was "a symbol of our deepest yearnings" and a "spiritual homeland, a world from which we have become totally estranged but which still serves as the focus of our hopes and aspirations."⁹³ Echoes of these themes are found especially in Yasuda's "The Homeland of Existence," which is included in part II of this book. Kaneko also urged a new approach to the tradition, stressing the importance of going directly to the teachings of Shinran and the still earlier classical texts and of not being bound by more recent sectarian interpretations. These publications led to his forced resignation from

Ōtani in 1928 and his removal from the registry of Higashi Honganji priests in 1929.

It is worth noting that a still more radical treatment of the concept of the Pure Land had been attempted in 1923 by Nonomura Naotarō 野々村直太郎, a priest in the Nishi Honganji branch and a professor at Bukkyō University (now Ryūkoku University). In his *Jōdokyō hihan* 浄土教批判 (*Critique of Pure Land Teachings*), as Rhodes has summarized his position, “he attacked the popular understanding of the Pure Land, as being backward and feudalistic and suggested that the notion of the Pure Land be expunged from Shin Buddhist discourse.”⁹⁴ For taking this hard-line stance, after much controversy, Nonomura lost his positions as both priest and professor. Yasuda had heard Nonomura lecture in his student days, and he later spoke of his great admiration for him.⁹⁵

For thirteen years, until 1942, Kaneko worked outside the Shin establishment, lecturing at the Hiroshima University of Liberal Arts and Sciences, where he taught Buddhist philosophy, and lending his support to the efforts of younger scholars like Yasuda. Aided both by friends within the sect as well as by non-Shin scholars who knew his writings, he was able to return to Ōtani in 1942.⁹⁶ After the war, occupation forces purged Kaneko from the university for comments he had made in support of Japan’s war effort. However, he returned to Ōtani again in 1951 at the age of seventy-one and, along with Soga Ryōjin, became one of the schools most famous lecturers and writers.

Although Soga was several years Kaneko’s senior, the two were active at approximately the same time in advancing their fresh interpretations of Shin teachings.⁹⁷ Like Kaneko, Soga was born into a family of Shin priests in Niigata. He was the third son in the poor but devout Tomioka 富岡 family that cared for the temple Entokuji 円徳寺. As a boy, he was an excellent student. He entered the Shin clergy at the early age of eleven and moved from his home to a regional Shin-sponsored high school in 1888, graduating in 1892. The following year he moved to Kyoto for further education in Shin schools of higher education. He quickly became aware of Kiyozawa’s efforts to reform and democratize the administration of the Shin sect, and in 1896, he signed a petition in support of that movement.⁹⁸ In 1897, he returned to Niigata and married into the Soga family that ran Jōonji 浄恩寺, a temple where he had stayed during his teen years while he was in school. It was around this time, in his early twenties, that he began to publish his first articles.

In 1901, he moved to Tokyo and enrolled as a graduate student in the new Shinshū University. Although he seems to have had some doubts

about the degree to which Kiyozawa's Spiritual Awareness movement accurately embodied Shinran's teachings, in the end he joined the Kōkōdō group in 1903, the year after Kiyozawa resigned.⁹⁹ In 1904, after completing his graduate studies, he became a lecturer in Yogācāra thought at the university.

When Shinshū University was moved from Tokyo to Kyoto in 1911, Soga resigned his position at the school, signaling his resistance to the move. He spent the next several years back at Jōonji, continuing his research and writing. During this time he published one of his most influential essays, "Chijō no kyūshu" 地上の救主 or "A Liberator on Earth," in which he argued that, in contrast to the interpretation of Amida as dwelling in a faraway Pure Land, he existed on earth as human beings.¹⁰⁰ To trust in Amida is to awaken the consciousness of his bodhisattva form, Dharmākara, in our own minds and to embrace his vows to benefit all sentient beings. At the beginning of this essay, Soga notes the sudden realization he had in the summer of 1912 that "The Tathāgatha (i.e., Amida Buddha) is myself."¹⁰¹ Later in the essay he expands on this realization: "As a human buddha, Dharmākara Bodhisattva is, as such, the eternally existent Amida Buddha; at the same time, in another aspect, he is the true subject of the self that seeks salvation. I have expressed this idea with the words, 'the Tathāgatha is none other than myself,' and again have sensed it as 'the Tathāgatha becomes me.'"¹⁰² As the title of this essay suggests, Soga also sought in its pages to distinguish Shin teachings from Christianity. In Soga's understanding of Buddhism, the Tathāgatha and sentient beings are united in sentient beings, and thus the Shin position contrasts with the transcendent conception of the sacred in Christianity. In a much later lecture, published in 1947 as "Lectures on the Tannishō" (*Tannishō chōki* 歎異抄聴記), he further explained that it is not just human beings who are the Tathāgatha in his form as the Bodhisattva Dharmākara; "the very earth with all the things on it, are his body."¹⁰³

In 1916, Soga returned to Tokyo and joined the faculty of Tōyō University, where he taught until 1925. In that year, the year after he published a collection of essays that featured "A Liberator on Earth," he was persuaded to assume a position at Ōtani University in Kyoto. There he continued to develop his interpretation of Shin teachings, advancing the view, in a 1926 lecture, that the deepest layer of our consciousness, the *ālaya-vijñāna* as it is known in the Yogācāra school, is identical to the mind of the Bodhisattva Dharmākara. By this time Kaneko had already come under suspicion for what the leadership of the sect viewed as heretical teachings, and Soga also became a target for criticism. While Kaneko was

forced to resign in 1928 and was struck from the registry of Shin priests in the following year, Soga forestalled any such action in his case by resigning from the university in 1930. Unlike Kaneko, he retained his status as a Shin priest.

Along with Kaneko, Soga supported the work of Yasuda and other students while continuing to lecture publicly and to publish. He was ultimately called back to Ōtani University in 1941, but like Kaneko, he too was purged from his teaching position in 1949 by the occupation authorities because of statements he had made supporting the war. He was able to return to Ōtani in 1952 and went on to have a distinguished career there. He became president of the school in 1961, at the age of eighty-seven, and served until he was ninety-three.

Yasuda's Restatement of Shin Buddhism

Yasuda Rijin's interpretation of Shin Buddhism drew on the legacy that he inherited from Kiyozawa, and especially from Kaneko and Soga, but it can be argued that Yasuda became its most articulate spokesperson. Like these men, he too looked beyond the Japanese sectarian commentarial tradition in interpreting Shin Buddhism and focused directly on the teachings of the founder Shinran, on the Chinese Pure Land masters, on Vasubandhu and Nāgārjuna in India, and on the Pure Land Sutras themselves. As already noted, Shinran, Tanluan, and Vasubandhu were especially important guides for him in interpreting the tradition. Like Kiyozawa, Kaneko, and Soga, he too taught a conception of Amida and the Pure Land that made them existential realities in the present; especially in line with the thought of Kaneko and Soga, Yasuda sought to dispel in his listeners and readers the idea that Amida and the Pure Land were otherworldly realities. In Yasuda's view, the Tathāgata is made manifest only through sentient beings, and the Pure Land is that place where sentient beings discover their true identity as the Tathāgata.

In contrast to his predecessors, Yasuda formulated his ideas not in books but in lectures and essays. These learned and tightly focused pieces, which often read more like meditations rather than philosophy, draw on both the tradition of Shin scholarship discussed above and, as noted earlier, on certain concepts that he encountered in his study of Nishida, Heidegger, Buber, and others. I summarize some of the major themes of his thought next by way of an introduction to the translations that follow.

As one would expect, Yasuda makes it clear that Shin Buddhism is grounded in the fundamentals of Mahayana Buddhist thought, especially

the Madhyamika and the Yogācāra schools. In almost all of Mahayana Buddhism, the problem of human suffering is seen as rooted in ignorance of the true, empty nature of reality and of the fact that ordinary human beings live in self-centered worlds of their own mental construction. These themes appear again and again in Yasuda's lectures and writings. In his treatment of emptiness, Yasuda characteristically stresses that emptiness signifies more than simple negation; rather, in line with the larger Mahayana tradition, he understands it as the absolute negation that makes all existence possible. In one of his early works, "The Mirror of Nothingness," published in 1931, he provides his readers with a short meditation on emptiness, which he presents as constituting the unifying ground of all existence. "The emptiness that functions as the negating unifier of sentient beings is a mirror that reflects sentient beings within it and through it. A mirror itself contains nothing, yet it reflects all things in itself. The ultimate basis must be the basis that has no basis. It is precisely because of that, that it is able to provide a foundation for the realm of sentient beings."¹⁰⁴

Yasuda takes up this same theme in a much later work, "The Homeland of Existence," completed in 1964. "The unique Buddhist concepts of emptiness and no-self are not merely concepts of negation . . . [The no-self of dharmas] signifies the no-self of things that through discrimination have become the objects of attachment; . . . The negation in question is, to the end, the negation of the nature of attachment and not the negation of the nature of existence. To the contrary, it is the negation that serves the purpose of revealing the nature of existence as it is."¹⁰⁵ If emptiness, or thusness as Yasuda so often refers to this concept, is the background against which all existence must be understood, then the activities of the mind must be seen as the force behind the creation of the subjective worlds that the unenlightened mistakenly regard as reality. As noted earlier, the Yogācāra school of thought was of particular importance to Yasuda, and references to it occur throughout his writings. In one of his best-known lectures, "A Name but Not a Name Alone," given in 1960 and published shortly thereafter, Yasuda presents one of the fundamental contentions of Yogācāra thought, namely, that human beings "do not exist within reality itself" but only within their subjective interpretations of reality, which are created through names.

Human beings do not exist in reality itself; rather they function within the context of their interpretation of reality. Humans are able to function in and be concerned about the human world alone; they cannot function in a world that transcends humans. We are like silkworms who make cocoons and who

live within the cocoons we ourselves make. We do not live in a world of direct experience. Discriminating among names and objects is the basis of human existence. If that were not so, there would be no way for the passions and the like to arise in a world of direct experience. Human beings function within the world they construct. In that sense, humans are beings of the world. It is not that humans would exist whether or not there were names. In a sense, humans are beings who, through names, are deluded by names.¹⁰⁶

Later in this same work Yasuda brings together the philosophies of both the Madhyamika and the Yogācāra schools. Here the Madhyamika school is referred to by one of its alternative names, the Prajñā or Wisdom school.

To have the consciousness of a buddha, one must be a buddha. The consciousness that has trust in the Buddha must be the mind of a buddha. One cannot hold up the Buddha as an object of consciousness. Therefore, in Buddhism, this idea is expressed in the concept of emptiness. In the teachings of the Prajñā School, they speak of “emptiness as the nature of all things.” In the Yogācāra School, they speak of “the nature that is made manifest through emptiness.” . . . In the case of the Prajñā School, while emptiness is initially understood as negation, it is also understood as indicating wondrous existence. It is not simply a negative concept. Prajñā is a concept that expresses simultaneous negation and affirmation. In any event, the fact that a concept expressing negation is used indicates that speculation about the eternal is forbidden. Seeking the eternal as an object of consciousness is to follow a path that takes one away from eternity. Instead, by abandoning the search one may find the eternal at one’s feet.¹⁰⁷

From these few passages one can begin to sense the existential problem that, in Yasuda’s view, ordinary beings face. Unaware of the true empty nature of existence, ordinary beings are trapped in the ultimately unsatisfying worlds that are their own mental creations. They are beings whose lives run counter to the very nature of existence. Ordinary beings, Yasuda writes, “are beings who, while originally existing in thusness, have in reality lost that thusness.”¹⁰⁸ Having lost their original “homeland,” they are caught up in endless cycles of transmigration. Thus, human yearnings for an end to the frustrations of such an existence are built into the nature of existence. Yasuda observes, “That human beings become a problem for themselves, then, is because the basis for unease resides in the structure of existence itself.”¹⁰⁹ For Yasuda, recognition of this fact, that is, recognition of the unease and frustration that is inherent in the structure of ordinary human consciousness, provides the moment when that unease can be addressed. Yasuda’s role as an expounder of Shin Bud-

dhism, one imagines, was to illicit an awareness of that profound unease among his listeners and readers and to awaken in them an appreciation of the true significance of Shin teachings.

For Yasuda, movement out of the world of unease involves self-negation, self-transcendence, and the achievement of a new self-awareness. Kiyozawa, Kaneko, and especially Soga had earlier taken up this related set of ideas, but it constitutes one of the most dominant themes of Yasuda's thought. From his earliest lectures and writings in the 1930s through his latest works in the 1970s, he repeatedly returns to this topic. Yasuda treats this theme, for example, in "The Mirror of Nothingness:"

That sentient beings can be human beings in reality depends upon their basing the self on that which causes the self to be the self, while at the same time transcending the self. However, to base the self on the transcendent is not to form a union between the transcendent and sentient beings. This is because, as long as the transcendent exists over against sentient beings, the union of the two is impossible. Thus, to base the self on the transcendent must mean the discovery of the self within the transcendent or the discovery of sentient beings as the self-determination of the transcendent. Therefore the transcendent is the structural unifier of sentient beings with respect to the self. Through this unification, the self can establish the self as the self while at the same time transcending the self.¹¹⁰

Another early expression of this theme occurs in a 1932 work entitled *Chōetsu* 超越 or *Transcendence*. There Yasuda writes:

For the self to be the self, the self must die to the self. Only by negating the self can the self be the self. It is not that the self is established after the negation of the self; the negation of the self is the establishment of the self. To die is immediately to live. . . . One dies to the old self and becomes the new self. That is what is referred to as transcendence. To become the self through the negation of the self is the self's transcendence of the self. Transcendence cannot be realized until it involves negation. Transcendence must be the affirmation of the self through self-negation.¹¹¹

In both his presentation of Madhyamika and Yogācāra thought and in his call for self-transformation, Yasuda was expressing viewpoints that almost all Mahayana Buddhists could embrace. What is unique about Yasuda's philosophy is his understanding of the way Shin Buddhism accomplishes the transformation of consciousness that liberates human beings from the false and unsatisfying worlds they ordinarily inhabit.

Yasuda, of course, accepts as axiomatic Shinran's view that a transformation of mind and entrance into the Pure Land can be achieved in the present through a pure expression of *shinjin*, or the entrusting mind.

Yasuda also accepts the Shin tradition's view that this entrusting mind is open to all, regardless of moral qualifications. And, like his teachers, Yasuda stresses that the object of one's expression of trust is not a being beyond oneself; rather, what one trusts and accepts is an understanding of the nature of ultimate reality that both provides a mind at ease and a constructive basis for action in the world.

Central to Yasuda's Shin philosophy is his interpretation of the *nen-butsu*, the saying of the name of Amida or the phrase *Namu Amida Butsu*. As illustrated above, Yasuda understands the ordinary individual to be living in a subjective world constructed through names, that is, through the discriminating activity of the mind. It is not that we have a choice in the matter. As he argues in "A Name but Not a Name Alone," ultimate reality is beyond names, but we have no alternative but to create an interpretation of the world in this way. We create names; that is, we make distinctions to function in the ordinary world, but when we regard that which we name as reality, from a Yogācāra perspective, we fall into delusion. When we fail to see that names are only provisional in nature, we fail to see their true empty and mentally constructed character. As in all of Yogācāra thought, to regard the provisional as true is to bind oneself to a sham existence. The ideal in Mahayana Buddhism generally and in Yasuda's Shin Buddhism is to be able to accept the provisional while understanding its true empty nature. Or to use a phrase that Yasuda borrows from Asaṅga, "one abides among names among which no discrimination of objects is made."¹² Only when that state of mind has been realized, according to Yasuda, can we speak of the individual as having achieved a true self-awareness. Such individuals, Yasuda points out, are what the tradition means by bodhisattvas, enlightened beings.

In a world constructed through names, the name of Amida, the Tathāgata, "the One Who Comes from Thusness" or emptiness, takes on special meaning. It is the name that points to one who has understood the ultimate emptiness of all names. To say the name, according to Yasuda, is to share in the Tathāgata's wisdom. The name of the Tathāgata is the name that liberates people from the shackles of names improperly understood. It leads them into the Pure Land characterized by the Tathāgata's wisdom and by his compassionate action as represented in his vow—the Primal Vow—to lead all sentient beings into his pure world. The name of the Tathāgata refers not to a buddha but to a state of mind. Yasuda elaborates on this idea at several points in his writings, as he does in the following passage:

Amida is something without form; when something without form becomes a name, that which is without form calls to that which has form. No matter how much it may call, that does not mean that there is something that is calling. Rather we receive the call at that place where there is no thing that calls. It is the voiceless voice. It is not that, having been called, I exist. Rather I myself take form as the call. I am transformed as the call. It is not that the call exists outside of us and that we listen to it and are moved. I take form as the call.¹¹³

To say the *nenbutsu*, therefore, is to step out of the artificially constructed world of human subjective meanings and to enter the world of the Tathāgata, which simultaneously transcends and embraces the humanly constructed world. The *nenbutsu* does not work magically; that interpretation of it, Yasuda insists, is a perversion of the *nenbutsu*.¹¹⁴ Rather, to say the *nenbutsu* is to give expression to a new state of mind and a new way of being. It is to indicate one's awareness of one's true identity as an embodiment of the Tathāgata. Yasuda drives home these points near the conclusion of "A Name but Not a Name Alone." In the opening line of the passage in question, he refers to the new state of mind as the mind that has achieved "the wisdom of non-discrimination" (Skt., *avikalpa-jñāna*; J., *mufunbetsushi* 無分別智), "the entrusting mind," and the mind that has realized the stage of "non-retrogression" (Skt., *anivartin*, J., *futai* 不退), all traditional Buddhist and Shin terms.

Our attainment of the wisdom of non-discrimination, or the attainment of the entrusting mind, or again the realization of the stage of non-retrogression, all exist as practice. That which we call the name is the name that is the practice of sentient beings. It is the name of the Buddha, but the name of the Buddha does not indicate the Buddha; rather, it is the name that is the practice of sentient beings. It is the name that causes the Tathāgata to reveal itself as sentient beings; in other words, it causes thusness as non-thusness to return to thusness. It is that kind of practice. To attain the entrusting mind or to realize birth in the Pure Land is for sentient beings to return to their original nature, and it is the name that causes that return.¹¹⁵

The name causes that return by pointing to the ultimate emptiness or thusness that is the basis of and embraces all things. In a telling comment about the way the name functions, Yasuda explains that the Primal Vow, which is used synonymously with the name, is "a *shingon* 真言 or 'true word.' The name is a word, a word about the true nature of reality; in other words, it is a true word. The true words of esoteric Buddhism may be called *dharanis*. . . . The name of the Primal Vow is the true word of exoteric Buddhism."¹¹⁶ In other words, in Yasuda's thought, it is the name

that points directly to the true nature of reality and of the relationship of sentient beings to it.

It articulating this understanding of Amida and the name, Yasuda carried forward the efforts especially of Kaneko and Soga to demythologize and internalize Amida and the Pure Land. Also like them, Yasuda understood the entrusting mind or the mind at ease as a positive basis for action. One of the defining features of Shin Buddhism over the centuries was its critique of all non-Shin forms of the religion as misunderstanding the true basis of the enlightened mind and the activity that stems from it. While the larger tradition had proposed a path of morality, meditation, and wisdom that led to enlightenment and compassionate activity, Shinran had claimed that it was when the individual reached the limits of such self-effort that the true nature of reality revealed itself and that the individual became aware of the insignificance of the efforts he or she had made. In the modern period, Kaneko, Soga, and other contemporary proponents of Shin Buddhism tried to make it clear that their critique of the path of self-effort did not simply signify an abandonment of constructive activity or the adoption of an attitude of resignation about the possibility of such activity. Rather, they held that the achievement of the entrusting mind or the wisdom of nondiscrimination and the mind at ease that came with it provided a new point of departure for compassionate activity. These individuals had no illusions about the difficulty of realizing the Pure Land in the everyday lives of human beings, but they held that the struggle to do so was a natural consequence of realizing the entrusting mind.

Yasuda speaks directly to this point in his 1962 essay “Humans as Bodhisattvas.” Early in the piece, he writes of the connection between the self-awareness achieved through Shin practice and the world of transmigration, that is, the relative world in which sentient beings are born and die. “Self-awareness does not merely have the passive meaning of the cutting off of transmigration; it also signifies transforming transmigration in a positive sense. One takes on reality. There is the Tathāgata who takes on the reality of sentient beings. In that one does not avoid but takes on reality, there is the transcendence of transmigration while transmigrating. At the same time that one transcends transmigration, one transcends *into* transmigration. In that lies the positive significance of transmigration. Here, we can think of sentient beings as the Tathāgata who has taken on reality.”¹¹⁷

Later in the essay, Yasuda develops this line of thought by taking up two Buddhist technical terms, *bundan shōji* 分段生死, or the birth and

death in different forms, and *hennyaku shōji* 変易生死, or the birth and death of transformation. The former is the sort of transmigration undergone by ordinary sentient beings who have yet to become aware of the true nature of reality and who live only in the relative human world. The latter is the sort of transmigration that the enlightened embrace. Yasuda explains the two concepts as follows:

The birth and death in different forms is the birth and death of the human being who has lost his or her existence, the birth and death that has degenerated into everydayness. The birth and death of transformation is the birth and death in which one has become aware of existence; it is existentially aware birth and death. It is the birth and death of thusness that takes on both good and evil. Only the heart of thusness takes on the differently maturing effects of karma. Transmigration does not simply vanish; it has the positive meaning of practice in which transmigration is taken on and transformed. For the bodhisattva, the place of transmigration is, at the same time, the place of the path to self-fulfillment (the training ground for self-fulfillment). It is the place of the path where one realizes the thusness that is the self itself. In short, without erasing karma, by becoming aware of the source of its original nature, it becomes the place where one realizes that original nature. The human being who becomes that place is the bodhisattva.¹¹⁸

Hence, in Yasuda's interpretation, a tradition that had become known in Japanese history for its resignation to the imperfections of the present world and its yearnings for an otherworldly paradise is transformed into a religion of existential engagement informed by insight into the true nature of reality. Yasuda himself was not a social activist, and he did not set forth specific ethical guidelines for conduct nor, following Shin tradition, did he recommend the traditional Buddhist precepts of non-killing, nonstealing, and the like. Nonetheless, the Shin philosophy articulated by him provided a basis for ongoing, positive action grounded in the understanding of human beings as Amida's form and compassionate activity.

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Part II

Translations

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Writings from the Kōbō Years (1930–1933)

The formation of the Kōbō Gakuen or Academy for Advancing the Dharma in 1930 came after Kaneko Daiei had been dismissed from the university and Soga Ryōjin had resigned under pressure. These were dark years for the scholars and students at Ōtani who viewed these men as leaders of a movement to bring Shin Buddhism into the modern era. The thrust of Kaneko's and Soga's scholarship was to shift the focus of Shin belief from a Pure Land and an Amida conceived of as actually existing in some other world to an understanding of Amida as embodied and expressed through sentient beings, and the Pure Land as the place where humans seek to realize Amida's vows in the present. Although both Kaneko and Soga would later return to Ōtani and become leaders there, the repression of their views in the late 1920s caused the founding members of Kōbō Gakuen to live with a sense of urgency about their times and about the need to preserve and explore further the fresh understandings of Shin Buddhism that these scholars had articulated.

One of the consequences of the new interpretations that Kaneko and Soga advanced was to put Shin Buddhism in a closer dialogue with the larger Buddhism tradition, which had often viewed Shin as existing on the margins. No longer concerned merely with passing on sectarian tradition, Kaneko, Soga, and the young students they inspired were engaged in a debate about the fundamentals of Mahayana Buddhist teachings. This character of their scholarship is reflected in the two essays by Yasuda translated below. Neither essay appears to be especially concerned with Shin Buddhism; however, one encounters in these essays themes that are central to his understanding of Shin Buddhism and that recur in his later writings.

In the first essay, "The Practical Understanding of Buddhism" (1931), Yasuda begins by distinguishing between Buddhism as an existential path to understanding the true nature of the self and reality, and Buddhism as an object of academic or cultural study. Only the former interests him because, in his view, only Buddhism as "practical understanding" leads

human beings beyond a false reification of things to insight into their true empty character and, ultimately, to an understanding of the Dharma or Buddhist truth as something that can only be lived in the present reality. Although Yasuda recognizes that the study of past teachings can lead to the discovery of past embodiments of the Dharma, the Dharma is not static and fixed. Rather insight into the Dharma—that is, insight into conditioned existence and the empty nature of all things—provides the individual with a worldview, as he terms it here, that can unify or integrate the self and make it possible for him or her to live fully in the present. Yasuda does not explain here his reason for taking up this subject, but he may have been responding to the remarkable growth of the academic study of Buddhism in Japan in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, especially the study of Indian Buddhist languages, texts, history, and thought.¹ It is noteworthy that Soga also expressed dissatisfaction with the merely academic study of Buddhism. While he recognized that modern scholars had made contributions to the understanding of Buddhist history, he contended that they focused on the development of doctrine and forgot about “the matter of practice whereby buddhahood is realized.”²

In the second essay, “The Mirror of Nothingness” (1931), Yasuda explores the related theme of the meaning of self-realization in a world that is fundamentally empty. Through the realization of the emptiness of things, he argues, the ordinary, limited self is negated and self-transcendence is possible. Thus, through absolute negation, the true nature of sentient beings is revealed and, from a new perspective, their world is affirmed as “the Complete One, the One Dharma Realm.” As Yasuda indicates especially toward the end of this essay, in this realm, sentient beings understand their existences as part and parcel of the reality that is the totality of emptiness and form, the reality that, in the Shin interpretation, is nothing other than the Tathāgata Amida himself. For sentient beings to understand their true nature, therefore, is to understand their lives, each in their own way, as expressions of the Tathāgata. Kaneko and Soga had articulated a similar understanding of the relationship between sentient beings and the Tathāgata.

These essays also indicate Yasuda’s early awareness of the writing of Nishida Kitarō, especially *An Inquiry into the Good*. In both essays, Yasuda’s aim is to present an understanding of the true self as a lived expression of the Dharma. The realization of this self is not accomplished through “intellectual discernment,” as Yasuda writes in “The Practical Understanding of Buddhism”; rather, it is achieved through negating and tran-

scending the self that merely seeks knowledge of static and fixed things and through realizing the self that sees the conditioned as grounded in the unconditioned. Through this understanding of reality, Yasuda writes, “the unification and systematization of the actual self” is possible, and the Dharma as a lived truth becomes real. Writing in a similar vein in “The Mirror of Emptiness,” Yasuda points out, “At the same time that sentient beings are sentient beings through self-negation, emptiness manifests itself as sentient beings through the self-delimitation of emptiness itself. . . . Emptiness is not an empty, abstract concept; rather it can be thought of as the function that empties all things infinitely. Through this function there is the unification of the realm of sentient beings.”³

In Nishida’s understanding of both the nature of reality and the true self, there are similarities to Yasuda’s writing. In Yasuda’s critique of the academic study of Buddhism, he points out that “abstract reflection,” the sort of reflection that leads away from the life of Buddhist practice, “has the presupposition of substance and real existence at its base.”⁴ In *An Inquiry into the Good*, Nishida is also critical of the view that “things exist in the external world apart from consciousness.”⁵ “From the perspective that the world exists apart from consciousness, we might say that all things exist individually and independently, but from the standpoint that phenomena of consciousness are the sole reality, we must say that there is one unifying power at the base of the myriad things in the universe and that these things are the developmental expression of one and the same reality.”⁶ Our true self, Nishida asserts, is “the fundamental unifying activity of reality,”⁷ and as such, it is never passive, always seeking greater degrees of unity and empathy with all things.

Another theme that Yasuda develops in these early writings concerns the nature of transcendence. Transcendence is pivotal for self-realization, but as Yasuda writes in “The Mirror of Nothingness,” “to base the self on the transcendent is not to form a union between the transcendent and sentient beings. This is because, as long as the transcendent exists over against sentient beings, the union of the two is impossible. Thus, to base the self on the transcendent must mean the discovery of the self within the transcendent or the discovery of sentient beings as the self-determination of the transcendent.”⁸ Elsewhere in this essay, he points out that it is through the realization of emptiness that self-transcendence is possible. “It is not that there is the realization of the transcendent after the negation of sentient beings; rather it is the absolute negation of sentient beings itself that is the unification of the self of sentient beings, that is, the realization of the transcendent.”⁹ Emptiness signifies that

absolute negation. Although this conceptualization of transcendence has its roots in Madhyamika philosophy in India and was expressed, for example, in Zen in East Asia, Nishida also emphasized it in *An Inquiry into the Good*. Using the word “God” to signify not a being that exists external to the world and controls it but rather a being that functions to negate and affirm all things absolutely, he wrote: “God is not something that transcends reality, God is the basis of reality.”¹⁰ And in a nearby passage, he states, “. . . God is absolute nothingness. God is not, however, mere nothingness. An immovable unifying activity clearly functions at the base of the establishment of reality, and it is by means of this activity that reality is established.”¹¹

Both of Yasuda’s essays reflect his dense philosophical style.

“The Practical Understanding of Buddhism”

It goes without saying that to study within the Buddha path and to study the Buddha path have different standpoints. To study within the Buddha path is to study the self within the Buddha path. The standpoint of studying the self within the Buddha path already presupposes that to study the Buddha path in regard to the self is the reason for study. For that reason, to study within the Buddha path is to assume the standpoint that the Buddha path is concerned with the study of the self and it signifies practical understanding. We take up here the problem of the practical understanding of Buddhism, distinguishing it from the standpoint that takes Buddhism as the object of academic analysis, because we want to consider the meaning that the Buddhist worldview has for practice or the meaning of the realization of the Dharma.

When we say that we study the self within the Buddha path, the concepts of path and self must first have a clear definition. Moreover, as long as the exploration of the self itself is the proper object of study within the Buddha path, there can be no path apart from the study of the self. At the same time, we may ask what sort of thing the self is before it is seen in relation to the path. Our inquiry, therefore, cannot depart from the present existence of the self that exists in relation to the path. Through exploring the self that can be gained through reflection on the present and through exploring the Dharma that causes the self to be the self, we hope to be able to ground the self in the realization of the Dharma. Through reflection on the present, it becomes clear that the self understood within the Buddha path is that which makes the Dharma real, and the Buddha path seen in relation to the self is the method for self-understanding.

The important point that should be made in distinguishing the practical understanding of Buddhism that entails study within the Buddha path from an analytical comprehension that entails study of the Buddha path is that the former has a relationship to the present existence of the self that has everyday life problems; thus, it rests on the demands that arise in conjunction with the unification and systemization of the actual self. In other words, it rests on the practical demands of the realization of the Dharma.¹² In contrast, the latter approach treats the Buddha path as the object of analytical interest or of cultural studies. The difference between the two approaches is based on the totally different demands of those associated with a worldview¹³ and those arising from cultural interests. As long as one treats Buddhism as the object of an analytical comprehension, that which is given as the object of study can only be static and fixed teachings and theories, but the Buddhism that is demanded as practical is the Dharma that functions as reflection on the sublation¹⁴ and systemization of everyday life experiences. Of course, even though we speak of static teachings, it goes without saying that they constitute a worldview that has a historical status. Thus, even though we take the standpoint of exploring the Dharma as practical understanding, in terms of procedure, we regard historical teachings as a medium for the study of the Dharma. Yet to the end, they are systems that have historical limitations or thought that has been systemized with everyday life experiences as its content; they cannot be the systems or the thought of this age or of our everyday life experiences. Furthermore, they have the significance of media that point to the existence that causes history to be history. In that case, when we study them, we do not travel backward to the past; rather, we enter the basis of present reality. To return to the basis of present reality is nothing other than to discover the Dharma that causes the past to be the past as functioning, in a practical way, in the present.

As long as teachings and theories, no matter of what kind, cannot be found in the Dharma that is discovered in relation to the self's problems of everyday life, they cannot, at their core, be teachings that provide practical guidance, nor can they have the meaning of theories of a worldview. In a word, as long as they are that kind of thing, they don't even become the classics and teachings that have taken on the significance of materials for study. Teachings in the classical sense, even if they are responses to certain problems of everyday life, for the present, can be spoken of as something given. As long as they are something given, for the self they are something "other," something "distant." As long as they are

something other and distant, one cannot find the Dharma that systemizes experiences or the Dharma that sublates present reality. Teachings that cannot be expressions of the Dharma, in the strict sense, cannot be called teachings. Therefore, that which causes teachings to be teachings is the Dharma that causes the self to be the self, and the Dharma that causes the self to be the self is something discovered in the given problems of everyday life. In other words, the eternal Dharma that is discovered in the given problems of everyday life is truly that which causes one to discover the present Dharma in the given teachings.

Ultimately, as long as the Dharma is the Dharma, it must be something eternal and present. It is for that reason that it causes this to be this and that to be that. Before this was this and that was that, this could not be this and that could not be that. In the present reality, that which causes the present reality to be the present reality is indeed the path that can be called Mahayana and the Buddha path; it is the Dharma that is called the Dharma-body and the Dharma-realm.¹⁵ That it cannot be grasped as the name of a particular fixed and thus historical body of thought or teachings signifies that it is the Dharma of the eternal present. Moreover, because it is eternally present, it can also be particular and historical. This is because the universal that cannot be particular, in the end, is nothing more than a general, abstract concept. That which cannot be validated as having a systemizing function in a particular present reality cannot be called something universal; in short, it cannot be called the Dharma. Of course, given teachings, unless they have already functioned in some present reality as the Dharma that systemized experience, would not have a reason to have an historical status as teachings. However, that would pertain to some present reality and not this present reality. One cannot replace this particular present reality with that particular present reality. That is because the theories about the Dharma manifested in that particular present reality, in regard to this present reality, become, just as they are, given teachings that are the object of analytical comprehension.

Reflection that sublates present reality and systemizes experience in Buddhism is called the view that accords with reality.¹⁶ As long as we think of the Dharma as that which causes the self to be the self, the self is something reflected upon in relation to the Dharma, and the Dharma is reflection related to self-understanding. Therefore, apart from the view that accords with reality, there cannot be that which we call the self or the Dharma. It is because it is reflection in which one is aware of the original nature of the self and in which one understands the transcendental na-

ture of experience that we can speak of it as reality. Prior to that, the self can be nothing more than the content of something one has intellectually discerned. At the same time, as long as the Dharma cannot be the realization of this kind of reflection, it is nothing more than mere abstract conceptual existence. Therefore, that which we call the view that accords with reality clearly views the self and realizes the Dharma. By clearly viewing the self, we mean that the view that accords with reality naturally takes on itself the problems of present reality. The view that accords with reality gives to itself the problems of the given present reality and through exploring their original nature manifests and realizes the Dharma. By the manifestation of the Dharma, we mean that the present reality is the present reality and the self is the self. It is the understanding of the self as that which unifies and that which gives. This is the systemization of the true present reality and the establishment of the self. In a word, the view that accords with reality is reflection that transforms that which is given into that which gives.

When we say that the view that accords with reality functions by transforming the given present reality, what meaning does the word “transforming” have? That which is given is that which is given in relation to the view that accords with reality. What does it mean to say that something is given in relation to the view that accords with reality? Here the function of negation associated with the view that accords with reality has an important meaning. To be given in relation to the view that accords with reality negates the standpoint prior to the view that accords with reality that has the presupposition of the given. The structure that depends upon this negation must have the meaning of transformation or contemplation. In Buddhism, that the view that accords with reality is explained as the contemplation on conditioned arising that negates the standpoint of intellectual discernment, I think, has this meaning. The standpoint of intellectual discernment is the standpoint of abstract reflection on existence, nonexistence, arising, and perishing. Abstract reflection, regardless of whether or not it is commonsensical or academic, has the presupposition of substance and real existence at its base. The standpoint that sees the Dharma, regardless of whether it is experiential reflection or abstract reflection, negates the substantial and real nature that that reflection presupposes. With regard to that which is given, as long as its existence is clung to, it becomes impossible for the giving to take place. The present reality cannot have meaning as the present reality. As long as one has that standpoint, the world is fixed and static, and the self exists within the inevitable limitations of the external and

mechanical. In a view of the world as fixed and in a view of life as externally limited, the possibility of the life of practice cannot exist. The view that accords with reality, by negating such a fixed nature and external inevitability, causes experience to conform to reality. The world that exists as the unification of the Dharma and the practice that is the realization of the Dharma are realized through the medium of negation.

The view that accords with reality is something that takes present reality as given and that negates abstractness and realness in relation to the given. Thus we may ask, What kind of meaning does systemization in regard to negation have? The systemization that has negation as its medium can be thought to cause the internalization of the external. In other words, in regard to the view that accords with reality, the Dharma that systemizes experience is investigated internally. However, “internally” cannot mean “individualistically” and “subjectively” because individualistic subjectivity, as before, can only be a kind of external thing. Therefore, it must be that the internal that stands in contrast to experiential phenomena understands those phenomena in their original nature, totality, and concreteness. External investigation seeks that which causes things to be themselves outside those things. The internal investigation of those things sees them in their original nature. It is said that one who sees conditioned arising sees the Tathāgata, the One Who Comes from Thusness.¹⁷ Thusness is the thusness of those things. Beyond thusness there cannot be the original concrete form of those things. By “concrete” we mean experience based on thusness. The Dharma, in contrast to experience, transcends experience, but as long as it is that which makes experience possible, it is the original nature of experience. To transcend does not mean to make abstract, but rather it signifies the unifying systemization that makes experience possible. There cannot be an unconditioned Dharma apart from the conditioned. The unconditioned that is separate from the conditioned can only be the abstract concept of transcendence. That which truly causes the conditioned to be the conditioned and causes experience to be experience cannot be the object of abstract reflection. That the systemization of experience is discussed using a negative term like “emptiness,” it can be thought, is because it involves the concrete concepts of self-realization and inner realization. That it is spoken of with such representational language as “Tathāgata” and “Dharmabody,” it can be thought, is because it has the meaning of total nature or concrete nature.

In regard to the view that accords with reality, we have considered the fact that we have that which is given, that it is mediated through nega-

tion, and that, thereby, that which is given is structured as that which gives. Here the Dharma that unifies and systemizes is truly something discovered through the view that accords with reality. Because it is something discovered, it has the power to unify. However, that which has been discovered can actually also be thought to be that which discovers. Through the view that accords with reality, the Dharma was discovered. That is because the view that accords with reality is the Dharma's realization as Dharma. The fact that the self is caused to be the self would not be possible without the logic of the Dharma being the Dharma. The process of discovery through the view that accords with reality, if it is not at the same time the unfolding of the Dharma, means that the reflection involved in that discovery is subjective and not objective and that the Dharma discovered is representational and not real. The Dharma is said to be quiescent and eternally abiding—doesn't that mean that it is objective? It is precisely because it is objective that it is possible for it to be real in relation to all things. Such self-understanding that is objective and real is what is said to be the study of the self in the Buddha path and the practical understanding of the Buddha path.

Source: Yasuda Rijin senshū hensan iinkai, ed., *Yasuda Rijin senshū*, vol. 1 (Kyoto: Bun'eidō, 1994), 122–127; originally published in *Kōbō*, no. 2 (April 1931).

“The Mirror of Nothingness”

The Complete One, the One Dharma-realm,¹⁸ is the ultimate object of the questing of sentient beings as self-aware existences. As long as the problem of sentient beings remains within the bounds of a problem of knowledge or a problem of realism, it is like an object that cannot yet properly become a problem. It can be said that everything that is the product of the rational labor of sentient beings limits the meaning of the existence of those sentient beings. Thus the objective world that is the product of those sentient beings can be thought of as an interpretation at the stage or within the realm of the sentient beings who produced it. Therefore, in accord with the respective perspectives of the quests of sentient beings who are physical and historical existences, the states of their understanding are formed. However, from these perspectives, can sentient beings themselves or the ultimate state of sentient beings be completely understood? Is it possible, at least, from such perspectives, to call into question sentient beings themselves or the ultimate state of sentient beings? The Complete One, the One Dharma-realm, is the understanding of the

realm of sentient beings as a complete unity or as a unified Dharma-realm. At this point, we may call sentient beings into question not as sentient beings who exist as a fixed aspect of the limited world of possible limitations but rather as beings who embrace all limitations and who, therefore, are also self aware, as finite living things, of the totality of possible limitations and of the total structure of existence. The reason that sentient beings take on such a quest as their own is nothing other than that they want to become sentient beings in reality. They want to become sentient beings who are self-aware existences. Thus, the interpretation of such a structure is not a mere matter of understanding, nor does it stop at mere practice, inasmuch as one stands within the quest. That is because it is a problem of sentient beings as self-aware existences, a problem of the self itself. Until one attains the Complete Dharma-realm, a sentient being cannot establish the self itself. That which is called a religious quest, in the end, is summed up in this. And because it concerns the fundamental structure of understanding, it can also be said to be a philosophical quest.

That sentient beings can be human beings in reality depends upon their basing the self on that which causes the self to be the self while at the same time transcending the self. However, to base the self on the transcendent is not to form a union between the transcendent and sentient beings. This is because, as long as the transcendent exists over against sentient beings, the union of the two is impossible. Thus, to base the self on the transcendent must mean the discovery of the self within the transcendent or the discovery of sentient beings as the self-determination of the transcendent. Therefore, the transcendent is the structural unifier of sentient beings with respect to the self. Through this unification, the self can establish the self as the self while at the same time transcending the self. The Complete One is, in short, this unification. It is the totality that is the unifier and the unified, the understanding of the self as the self-expression of the transcendent. To truly transcend opposition must mean to encompass that opposition within. An absolute that stands in opposition to the relative is still relative and can only be an abstraction. True transcendence unifies opposition; the true absolute encompasses the relative as the systematic totality of parts. Therefore, to base the self on the transcendent is not to add to the self a transcendent that exists outside the self but to understand sentient beings with respect to the transcendent as abiding in the nature of self-nature. For the transcendent, this is self-manifestation or self-delimitation, but for sentient beings it is the self's return to its self-nature. To return to the transcendent that is

the foundation upon which the self is realized is, in reality, for the self to return to the self itself. As long as the quest for the transcendent and the understanding of the self are not the same, the transcendent is “other” and, as long as it is other, it must be unrelated to the self. However, for the self to be the self, the self must rely on the transcendent. For the self to be the self, even if the transcendent is the transcendent, it cannot be the transcendent unless it realizes itself in the moment when it is related to sentient beings who are selves. Thus we can ask, What does it mean when we say that sentient beings depend upon the transcendent, and the transcendent is related to sentient beings?

That sentient beings are sentient beings and as such are dependent on the transcendent means that sentient beings negate sentient beings themselves. That sentient beings can achieve unification of the self through dependence on the transcendent, not by the addition of a transcendence that is other, means that everything that is given as possible is given as things associated with sentient beings, as non-transcendent things. Thus, that sentient beings achieve unification of the self through the transcendent is nothing other than sentient beings achieving a self-awareness of their limited world as sentient things, in other words, their achieving self-delimitation. Self-delimitation as sentient beings is the negation of the self of sentient beings. Because the dharmas of the five skandhas¹⁹ that constitute the existence of sentient beings are dharmas that arise through dependence, that is, are conditioned dharmas, is why their self-nature is negated. Moreover, just as there is the unconditioned that transcends the five skandhas through the negation of the self-nature of the five skandhas, so transcendence is realized through the negation of the self of sentient beings. It is not that there is the realization of the transcendent after the negation of sentient beings; rather it is the absolute negation of sentient beings itself that is the unification of the self of sentient beings, that is, the realization of the transcendent. Therefore, the unifier of sentient beings in this sense cannot be a substantive existence. Rather it is emptiness itself that signifies absolute nothingness, that is, absolute negation. It can be said that that which makes possible all existence is absolute nothingness. If one thinks of existence as infinitely discriminated unique phenomena, that which actually makes possible those unique phenomena is the emptiness that is the ultimate universal. The world of sentient beings can truly be realized as the world of sentient beings through the unification that depends upon that sort of absolute negation. It goes without saying that, just as we think that the absolute is not something that stands in opposition to the relative, we

cannot think of this sort of emptiness as something that stands in opposition to existence or as emptiness as an actually existing thing. In the fact that negation is absolute negation lies the significance of emptiness. In other words, it must be the case that emptiness, because it is empty, encompasses existence. At the same time that sentient beings are sentient beings through self-negation, emptiness manifests itself as sentient beings through the self-delimitation of emptiness itself. There can be no significance to emptiness beyond its manifestation as sentient beings. Emptiness is not an empty, abstract concept; rather it can be thought of as a function that empties all things infinitely. Through this function, there is the unification of the realm of sentient beings. The self-manifestation of emptiness is, at the same time, the unification of sentient beings.

The emptiness that functions as the negating unifier of sentient beings is a mirror that reflects sentient beings within it and through it. A mirror itself contains nothing, yet it reflects all things in itself. The ultimate basis must be the basis that has no basis. It is precisely because of that that it is able to provide a foundation for the realm of sentient beings. That we regard ignorance as the last condition for the realization of the realm of sentient beings can be understood to mean that the realm of sentient beings has no ultimate conditions, in other words, that it has the nature of having no basis. But it is in the nature of having no basis that, on the contrary, one can find ultimate unification. Thus, through absolute nothingness, it is not that the realm of sentient beings is rejected but rather that its original nature is made manifest. A mirror, through its quiescence and purity, reflects sentient beings. What we call original nature is, of course, not an experiential existence but the fundamental state of experiential existence. It can be said to be the existence with marks within the nature of emptiness, the worldly truth within the absolute truth. Perhaps it can be said to be movement that has been quieted or purity that has been sullied. That which can encompass the sullied and cause it to exist is itself original purity. The sullied that exists through original purity is truly the originally sullied. A mirror causes all things to exist within itself and manifests all things within it. In that sense, it can be said that a mirror is able to store all things. It is said, "All sentient beings exist within the Tathāgata's wisdom."²⁰ Just as the truly absolute encompasses the relative within it, so sentient beings, with respect to their true state, take the Tathāgata as the place of realization. "All sentient beings never depart from the state of thusness." True sentient beings are reflected in the mirror of the Tathāgata's wisdom; in other words, they are sentient beings that exist as the object of the abso-

lute's self-realization and the content of the absolute's self-awareness. Doesn't the ultimate structure of sentient beings lie in the fact that sentient beings exist within the Tathāgata's womb? Isn't it also that those whom we call "religious sentient beings" are sentient beings who are reflected in the mirror of nothingness? If we regard philosophical reflection as distinct from enlightened reflection, don't we have to imagine something like the self-aware wisdom of nothingness? If we regard the Complete One that stores and is stored, that unifies and is unified, as the deepest root of sentient beings, then the various interpretations of sentient beings can be thought of, as it were, as delimited aspects of the Complete One.

Source: Yasuda Rijin senshū hensan iinkai, ed., *Yasuda Rijin senshū*, vol. 1 (Kyoto: Bun'eidō, 1994), 128–132; originally published in *Kōbō*, no. 3 (May 1931).

“A Name but Not a Name Alone” (1960)

“A Name but Not a Name Alone” deals with a subject at the heart of Shin Buddhism, the correct understanding of the name of Amida Buddha. In 1960, Yasuda had the opportunity to participate in an extended discussion with the Protestant theologian Paul Tillich (1886–1965), one of several theologians whose writings he had studied. In the summer of that year, Tillich visited Japan and expressed the desire to meet with Buddhist leaders. Yasuda actually met Tillich twice that summer. The first meeting took place in Kyoto and was a brief encounter, along with other scholars, at the Shingon temple Tōji 東寺. Because there was not sufficient time for a conversation on that occasion, another meeting was arranged at a hotel in Karuizawa in early July. In addition to Tillich and Yasuda, Nobukuni Atsushi (信國敦 1904–1980), then president of Ōtani Senshū Gakuin 大谷専修学院, a school that trained Shin priests, and Richard DeMartino, a Zen scholar and a professor at Temple University in Philadelphia, joined the discussion. DeMartino served primarily as an interpreter. Yasuda’s encounter with Tillich spurred him to present a lecture at the Kyoto temple Senyūji 泉涌寺 on the occasion of the celebration of his sixtieth birthday in September 1960. The title he chose for the lecture was “A Name but Not a Name Alone,” words that, as Yasuda explains at the beginning of his talk, Tillich wrote on a *tanzaku*—a narrow strip of paper intended for short poems or calligraphy—as a memento of their meeting.

A record of the Karuizawa discussion remains, and it sheds light not only on the lecture translated below but also on Yasuda’s thought as a whole.¹ The discussion ranged over several topics, but it is clear that Yasuda was concerned that Tillich understand that, contrary to popular treatments of Shin Buddhism, it is not based on belief in an otherworldly Buddha and the experience of his grace. In the exchanges that Yasuda and Tillich had on the topics of destiny and freedom, for example, Yasuda takes up the Buddhist teaching of karma, noting in particular that “I myself create my destiny, not a deity.” He goes on to characterize the

related topic of transmigration as a “mythic” and “ancient expression.” For modern people, “the significance of karma is that one has a sense of responsibility for one’s existence,” a sense of responsibility that is expressed within the historical and social conditions of one’s life.² In their conversation about the nature of Amida, Yasuda explains that Amida has no form. “Amida is sentient beings themselves, human beings themselves. Amida is one and the same with human beings. He has no form. Rather, through human action, the Tathāgata who has no form becomes form or takes form.”³ When pressed by Tillich to expand on what it means to say that Amida is without form, Yasuda describes Amida as “the basis of form, not an other,”⁴ and by the basis of form, it becomes clear, Yasuda means thusness or emptiness, the true nature of reality. The name of Amida is what allows human beings to awaken to the true nature of reality and of themselves, not in any magical way, but by achieving a transformation of consciousness.⁵ Through this transformation of consciousness, one not only gains a new and true self-awareness but is also able to participate in the work of Amida’s Primal Vow to save all sentient beings. “Through the name, sentient beings are awakened. The Tathāgata himself is realized in the mind of awakened sentient beings.”⁶

Yasuda used the occasion of his lecture at Senyūji to elaborate on these ideas. Readers familiar with Mahayana thought will be able to pick up on his line of argument most easily beginning about a quarter of the way into the lecture. Drawing on the thought of both the Madhyamika and Yogācāra schools, Yasuda portrays ordinary individuals as unaware of the true empty nature of reality and of the false and mentally constructed character of the worlds they inhabit. They are like silkworms, he explains, bound up in worlds of their own creation. Human worlds are constructed through mental discrimination and the creation of names. On the one hand, human beings have no alternative but to construct mental worlds in this way; on the other when they fail to see that such mentally constructed worlds are empty and have only a provisional character, they generate the attachments and passions that characterize the lives of the unenlightened. In a world of provisional names, the name of Amida Buddha is also a provisional name, but within the context of Yasuda’s interpretation of the Shin tradition, it is more than a name. It is the name that negates the relative human world of provisional names while at the same time affirming the world of provisional names and empowering the individual to work in it. It is the name that makes it possible for people to abide in the place of non-abiding or in the realm of mere consciousness. As he noted in his conversation with Tillich and in this lecture as well,

Amida has no form. The call *Namu Amida Butsu* is directed to no being; rather, it is a manifestation of a transformed consciousness, an awareness of “the relationship between that which has form and that which does not.” The individual who has this awareness, Yasuda argues, “just as he or she is, is the Tathāgata.”⁷

While Yasuda situates his understanding of the name of Amida Buddha and of the call *Namu Amida Butsu* within the context of the major schools of Mahayana thought, early in this lecture he takes up several texts and figures that have special significance within Shin Buddhism. In this section, Yasuda seeks in particular to clarify the relationship that exists between the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life*, the central sutra of Shin Buddhism, and the *Pure Land Treatise* by Vasubandhu as that relationship was understood by Shinran and expressed in his *Kyōgyōshinshō*. In the course of this discussion, Yasuda refers to yet another important text in the Shin tradition, the *Commentary on the Pure Land Treatise* by the Chinese master Tanluan. These pages can be difficult reading because Yasuda shifts his focus back and forth among these texts and because he discusses the proper interpretation of Vasubandhu’s five gates of mindfulness, which appear in the *Pure Land Treatise*, in light of the Primal Vow of the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life*.

The *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* is brought into the discussion almost immediately when Yasuda refers to the fact that “the name of the Tathāgata is the name of the Primal Vow.” The Primal Vow is vow eighteen in the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life*. As noted in part I of this book, this sutra tells the story of the Bodhisattva Dharmākara, who under the guidance of another buddha and in line with the requirements of Mahayana’s bodhisattva path, sets forth vows, forty-eight in all, that he pledged to fulfill before accepting perfect enlightenment himself. In the end, the sutra states that Dharmākara fulfilled these vows and, in recompense, became Amida Buddha who resides in a Pure Land to the West. As indicated earlier, vow eighteen affirms that “sentient beings in the lands of the ten directions who sincerely and joyfully entrust themselves to me, desire to be reborn in my land, and think of me even ten times” will be born in his Pure Land.

Yasuda then considers how this position taken in the *Sutra* relates to Vasubandhu’s presentation of the five gates of mindfulness. The five gates were Vasubandhu’s attempt to establish a system of meditation on Amida and his Pure Land within the framework of the bodhisattva path, with the first four gates (of worshipping Amida, praising Amida, making the vow to be born in the Pure Land, and contemplating Amida and the Pure

Land) representing progress toward the Pure Land and with the fifth gate (of transferring one's merits to other sentient beings) interpreted as signaling the bodhisattva's return to the life of service to others. Yasuda points out that it is possible to interpret the five gates of mindfulness within the context of the Yogācāra practice of cessation and contemplation. In that case, he says, the center of the five gates becomes contemplation, the topic to which Tanluan also gives the greatest attention in his *Commentary*. However, if one gives primacy to the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* in interpreting the five gates of mindfulness, there are two centers: “Those are the second gate of praise and the fifth gate of transference. In the second gate of praise, the name appears. In the fifth gate, transference appears. Transference refers to the fact that the Tathāgatha, without losing his identity as the Tathāgatha, becomes the practice of sentient beings. It is transference by means of the name.”⁸ As Yasuda states near the outset of this discussion, “the name of the Primal Vow is the practice of sentient beings, but the practice of sentient beings is, in fact, the practice of the Tathāgatha himself. The practice of the Tathāgatha himself, without losing his identity, is the practice of sentient beings. It is the so-called bodhisattva practice. That meaning is indicated through the five gates of mindfulness.”⁹

This lecture also provides further illustrations of the manner in which Yasuda drew on the philosophical language of Nishida as well as the existential philosopher Heidegger and the Jewish theologian Buber. As early as his first major work, *An Inquiry into the Good*, Nishida wrote of “the religious demand” as “the deepest and greatest demand of the human mind.”¹⁰ “It is the demand in which the self, while perceiving its relativity and finitude, yearns to attain eternal, true life by uniting with an absolute infinite power. . . . True religion seeks the transformation of the self and the reformation of life.”¹¹ Early in this lecture, Yasuda also brings up the topic of what he calls, not the “religious demand,” but the “problem of religion,” which the name has the capacity to address. “The name of the Primal Vow, it goes without saying, is *Namu Amida Butsu*, but its fundamental significance is that it responds to human existence. That sort of thing in general relates to the problem of religion. When it comes to responding in a fundamental way to the problem of human beings, it is through transcendence that they are simultaneously negated and embraced. Through the negation and affirmation of human beings, the problem of human beings is responded to in a fundamental way.”¹² Both in language and conception, there are strong parallels between Yasuda and Nishida on this point.

The references to Heidegger and Buber come late in the lecture and are brief, but they also serve to shed light on Yasuda's interpretation of Shin Buddhism. Because language and concepts borrowed from Heidegger appear not only in this lecture but also especially in the two essays following "A Name but Not a Name Alone" in this section ("Humans as Bodhisattvas" and "The Homeland of Existence"), a brief additional comment on Heidegger's thought may be useful. As I indicated in part I of this book, central to Heidegger's thought is his rejection of the commonly accepted distinction in Western philosophy between subject and object and his understanding of humans beings as being-in-the-World (*Dasein*), that is, as beings for whom the world is not simply given but rather must be created through the choices they make in the concrete circumstances of their lives. Humans are thrown into the world and, to exist authentically, as Heidegger would put it, they must confront the challenge of realizing the possibilities of their existence. But hovering in the background of their efforts, he asserts, is an awareness of or an anxiety about "the obstinacy of the 'nothing and nowhere' within-the-world," or the "utter insignificance" of the world.¹³ Heidegger also describes this awareness as one of "not-being-at-home" in the world.¹⁴ To grossly oversimplify Heidegger's argument, to be at home, one must embrace the 'nothing' at the base of existence and existentially engage existence in a new way, cognizant of the fact that one's own existence is linked to that of others, that it is a shared existence.

According to Heidegger, the individual's creation of a world is done through language. Quoting Heidegger, Tetsuaki Kotoh notes, "Language is not the 'the means to portray what already lies before one,' but rather it 'grants presence—that is Being—wherein something appears as existent.'"¹⁵ Humans may flee the challenge of self-actualization by choosing to exist on the level of *das Man*, the "they" of everyday society, and in terms of language, this choice entails a fall into the language of "idle talk," "curiosity" and "ambiguity."¹⁶ "Each of these aspects of fallen-ness," writes Michael Wheeler, "involves a closing off or covering up of the world (more precisely, of any real understanding of the world) through a fascination with it"¹⁷ and, we might add, a covering up of the potential of language to point to its ultimate source, which Heidegger poetically refers to variously as "the echo of silence" and "the soundless voice of Being."¹⁸ "Silence which belongs to and listens to the echo of stillness," Kotoh concludes, "clings endlessly to the language which corresponds to the truth of Being both at the beginning and in its phenomenological process. In

this sense, the true nature of language is characterized as ‘not saying and at the same time saying’ or ‘silent indication’ (*Erschweigen*).”¹⁹

This last thought provides the context for understanding Yasuda’s first explicit reference to Heidegger late in this piece. To illustrate his understanding of the name of Amida as a name that points beyond itself to that which is not a name, Yasuda uses the symbol \#name and explains, “This manner of expression follows Heidegger. The line through the name does not signify the nullification of the name; here rather the name indicates that which is not the name.”²⁰

His reference to Buber concerns Buber’s conception of the relationship of the individual to the ultimate as an “I and Thou” relationship. In his famous work *Ich und Du*, Buber posits two kinds of relationships that govern human consciousness, I and Thou and I and It.²¹ The former is a dialogic relationship in which the I and the Thou meet one another in a mutual and totally encompassing encounter. In the latter, the human being interacts with the other as an unrelated object. Buber writes: “The primary word *I-Thou* can be spoken only with the whole being. Concentration and fusion into the whole being can never take place through my agency, nor can it ever take place without me. I become through my relation to the *Thou*; as I become *I*, I say *Thou*.”²² Drawing on Buber’s language, Yasuda writes: “The name of the Primal Vow does not indicate a thing. It is a name that indicates a relationship. It indicates the relationship of I and Thou, not the existence of something. However, the relationship is not the relationship of one thing to another; it is the relationship between that which has form and that which does not.”²³

“A Name but Not a Name Alone”

I.

I have put forth the title “A Name but Not a Name Alone,” but that was simply a last resort. When the world-famous scholar Professor Paul Tillich came to Japan in early July [of 1960], I had the opportunity to have a conversation with him through the efforts of people at Higashi Honganji and Tōji. As a memento of that meeting, I had Professor Tillich write something for me on a *tanzaku*. What he wrote were the words, “A name but not a name alone.” I have taken those words for the title of today’s talk.

Now the name I mention here is the name of the Tathāgata.²⁴ However, having had the experience of the conversation with Professor Tillich, I became aware of the problem that, while the name of the Tathāgata has

a deep meaning, it is not easy for us to understand how that deep meaning is expressed in the name. Hence we are made to rethink the name.

It is said that the name of the Tathāgata is the name of the Primal Vow. That the name is not just any name is indicated by the fact that it is the name of the Primal Vow. However, in his *Kyōgyōshinshō*, Shinran says that this name, the name of the Tathāgata, is practice. “The great practice is to say the name of the Tathāgata of Unobstructed Light.”²⁵ I wonder if, with this statement alone, this isn’t difficult to understand. The name is the name and practice is practice. Even if one says that the name is practice, this is not something that can be immediately understood. The meaning of the line “A name but not a name alone” is that the name also has the meaning of practice. In order to indicate that point, we speak of it as the name of the Primal Vow. The name is the name of the Tathāgata, but when we speak of it as practice, it is the practice of sentient beings. The name is always the name of the Tathāgata. The name indicates the Tathāgata. Yet while that is the case, at the same time, it also has been given the meaning of the practice of sentient beings. In other words, the name is the Tathāgata, but because of the Tathāgata, the name of the Tathāgata is not just the name of the Tathāgata; it is also responding to sentient beings. Therein lies the meaning of the line “A name but not a name alone.”

The name of the Primal Vow, it goes without saying, is *Namu Amida Butsu*, but its fundamental significance is that it responds to human existence. That sort of thing in general relates to the problem of religion. When it comes to responding in a fundamental way to the problem of human beings, it is through transcendence that they are simultaneously negated and embraced. Through the negation and affirmation of human beings, in that sense, the problem of human beings is responded to in a fundamental way. The problem of religion can be expressed in this form. When religion takes on that kind of meaning, then, in regard to the Buddha way of the Primal Vow, the name has religious meaning. In other words, the name is not just a name. It has religious meaning. To indicate that religious meaning, the name is used. The name may be a common thing, but it has a unique significance. Therefore, the name is not just any name. It is a unique name.

In regard to the problem of religion, without using anything else, the name in particular was chosen. That which tells us this is the Primal Vow. This Primal Vow is called the selected Primal Vow.²⁶

That which the Tathāgata used to delimit himself is the name. The Tathāgata delimited himself as the name. Without delimiting himself as

anything else, he delimited himself as the name. That is because names are not incidental to human beings but have an essential relationship to them. In other words, the name is the name of the Tathāgata, but originally the Tathāgata had no name. However, that the Tathāgata defines himself with the name is because names are peculiar to human existence itself. In other words, the name is the Tathāgata’s definition of himself as sentient beings. The Tathāgata manifested himself in the form of sentient beings. That by which the Tathāgata becomes sentient beings is the name. Therefore, sentient beings return to the Tathāgata through the name.

Names are peculiar to human beings. From that perspective, I think that the name must be considered again from the standpoint of Buddhist ontology.

As I said earlier, in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, the name is used to indicate the great practice. There it says, “The great practice is to say the name of the Tathāgata of Unobstructed Light.” Of course, these are Shinran’s own words, but if we go back, we can see that they are based on Vasubandhu’s words in the *Pure Land Treatise*. In the *Pure Land Treatise*, the practice of the Pure Land is indicated as being the five gates of mindfulness. In the second gate, that of praise, the calling of the name appears as the content of the practice of praise in the line “One should say the name of that Tathāgata.” The Great Teacher Tanluan interpreted that line as “One should say the name of the Tathāgata of Unobstructed Light.” Here he added the words “Unobstructed Light.” Whether one says, “Say the name of that Tathāgata” or “Say the name of the Tathāgata of Unobstructed Light,” the meaning does not change, but Shinran takes as his own the words of the *Commentary on the Treatise*, which interprets the *Pure Land Treatise*. That he uses these words in particular has a deep meaning.

When the *Commentary on the Treatise* interprets the *Pure Land Treatise*, in the background of the *Treatise* is the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life*. The *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* explains the Tathāgata’s Primal Vow. That which determines the meaning of the *Treatise* is not one’s personal impression. Simply because “one thinks so,” one cannot determine the meaning of the *Treatise*. In interpreting the *Treatise*, one views the *Treatise* by transcending it. In this way, an interpretation can be formed. In other words, by viewing it in the light of Amida Buddha’s Primal Vow, the meaning of the name was determined. Thus, although the *Pure Land Treatise* describes practice as the five gates of mindfulness, when one returns to the Primal Vow of Amida Buddha, there it talks about “up to ten moments of mindfulness.” Therefore, if one looks at the *Treatise* on its own, apart from the *Sutra*, one interpretation may be possible, but when one views the *Pure*

Land Treatise as that which clarifies the meaning of the Primal Vow of the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life*, one cannot view the “mindfulness” of the phrase “up to ten moments of mindfulness” as different from “the five gates of mindfulness.”

The phrase “up to ten moments of mindfulness” refers to the *nenbutsu*. The five gates of mindfulness is not an analysis of the *nenbutsu*; rather, it tells of the history of the *nenbutsu* from the perspective of the *nenbutsu*. In the “Chapter on Practice” of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, it says that “the name of the Primal Vow is the right act.”²⁷ Thus, when we speak of the *nenbutsu*, we should understand that it has the meaning of act. That which we call an act is, in fact, practice. Acts and practice are similar things. The *nenbutsu* may be called either a practice or an act. However, when we speak of practice, I think that there is a problem that must be considered in a more focused way. When we regard the *nenbutsu*, as promised in the Primal Vow, as an act, the meaning it has of “being developed in five ways” indicates practice. I think that it was the *Treatise* that made that meaning clear.

Should we speak of acts, we refer to the three acts of the *Pure Land Treatise* where it speaks of the “three acts and the two benefits.” These acts are performed at some time, at some place, and by someone. That is, someone, at some time and at some place performs some sort of act. However, I wonder if practice doesn’t have a deeper meaning. Rather than just being an act, practice implies a loftier concept. After all, in the *Pure Land Treatise* there is mention of “practice that accords with reality.”²⁸ When we consider practice with that point in mind, it is the practice of the Tathāgata, the One Who Has Come from Thusness. Thusness, as thusness, just as it is, practices. Without thusness, there is no practice. Thusness is a word that indicates the original meaning of all existence. Existence—things, just as they are—practice.

The words “One Who Has Come from Thusness” can be restated as thusness comes; however, unless one adds the stipulations of where thusness comes from and how, the concept does not become clear. But “the where” is thusness, “the what” is thusness, and “the how” is thusness. Thusness comes from thusness as thusness. If it doesn’t have that meaning, I think that we can’t speak of genuine practice. Practice transcends merely individual acts.

From that perspective, the name of the Primal Vow is the practice of sentient beings, but the practice of sentient beings is, in fact, the practice of the Tathāgata himself. The practice of the Tathāgata himself, without losing his identity, is the practice of sentient beings. It is the so-

called bodhisattva practice. That meaning is indicated through the five gates of mindfulness. When viewed from the perspective of the Primal Vow, that practice is the *nenbutsu*, but that *nenbutsu* was chosen as the practice of sentient beings. And, at the same time, it is the practice of the Tathāgata. At that point, mindfulness is divided into five aspects. This is not simply an analysis of the concept of the *nenbutsu*; rather it indicates how, through the *nenbutsu* or through being mindful of the Tathāgata, the entire history of thusness is formed within one who is mindful. In this sense, the five gates of mindfulness were established.

If one looks only at the *Pure Land Treatise*, the central practice of the five gates of mindfulness is not clear. The *Pure Land Treatise* is a Yogācāra treatise and the practice of Yogācāra is cessation and contemplation. In the *Pure Land Treatise*, mention is made of “contemplation on the marks of that world” and “contemplation on the power of the Buddha’s Primal Vow.”²⁹ Thus, it is natural that, when we speak of practice, we mean Yogācāra practice. Viewed in that way, the gate of contemplation is the center. Or the two gates of making the vow and contemplation become the center. Yet it is customary to think that contemplation, understood as the system of practice of cessation and contemplation and as the practice of cessation and contemplation focused on the Primal Vow, is central.

While not negating that view, the center of the practice shifts when one looks at the five gates of mindfulness in the light of the Primal Vow. This is a complicated problem, but when the five gates of mindfulness are viewed from the standpoint of the Primal Vow, there are two centers. Those are the second gate of praise and the fifth gate of transference. In the second gate of praise, the name appears. In the fifth gate, transference appears. Transference refers to the fact that the Tathāgata, without losing his identity as the Tathāgata, becomes the practice of sentient beings. It is transferred by means of the name. That which we call the name is the name understood within the broad context of religion. In the Buddha path of the Primal Vow, the name is not just the name; rather, it is the name that has religious significance. The name is regarded as religion. The name responds to the problem addressed by religion. In the Buddha path, in responding to the problem of religion, it responds by means of the name. There, the problem of human beings transcends human beings and the transference of the Tathāgata is fulfilled. That the name has a deep meaning is because it has the meaning of transference.

When expressed in Chinese, the term “transference” is made up of the two characters [read in Japanese as] *e* 回 and *kō* 向. One can talk about

what each character means, but simply speaking, the concept of *e* is especially important. *E* means “to turn or revolve.” It refers to the fact that something turns from something toward something. Hence the character *kō* (to face forward) emerges naturally in this context. Talking about the separate meanings of *e* and *kō* is a Chinese style of interpretation. The critical thing is that the concept of “turning or revolving” is important; it refers to the turning of thusness. The thusness that transcends names returns as the name. In the form of the return of the Tathāgata, the problem of human beings is responded to by transcending human beings and further—without human beings becoming the humanistic standard—by transcending human expectations. This is what is known as the fulfillment of transference.

The solution to the problem of human beings is not for humans to become just as they think they should be; the problem of human beings is deeper than we human beings think. Hence, that which responds to the problem of human beings before humans do so themselves is the Primal Vow. Thus, the problem of human beings is responded to by transcending human expectations. That is what is meant by the fulfillment of the Primal Vow. The problem of human beings is responded to in the form of the Tathāgata. It is precisely because it has the meaning of transference that the meaning of the name is profound. Herein lies the significance of Shinran having spoken of the True Pure Land way, rather than simply the Pure Land way. The unique significance of the Buddhist teaching of the Primal Vow is made manifest in the concept of transference. It is the name that embraces that transference, the name that has within it that transference.

From that perspective, the five gates of mindfulness have the two centers of the name of the second gate of praise and the name of the fifth gate of transference. Apart from the name that is transferred that I was just discussing, the name appears in the section on the second gate of praise. When one simply looks at the *Pure Land Treatise* apart from the Primal Vow, the practice is contemplation, but when one views the matter through the Primal Vow, the name is practice. And it is not just a name but the name of the Tathāgata. To say that name is the praise of the second gate of mindfulness. When one asks how the name should be said, it should be said according to its *myōgi* 名義, the object to which it refers. In other words, broadly speaking, the name refers to the object of the name. The name is something that stands in relation to its object; it is that which expresses its object. And that which is intended by the name is its object.

In the doctrines of Yogācāra, *myōgi* holds an important place. The term *myōgi* may be understood to mean “concept.” The *myōgi* of Amida Buddha is the concept of Amida Buddha. *Myōgi* is something that has a very profound and great significance for human existence.

In the *Pure Land Treatise*, it appears briefly, but when one takes the standpoint of the doctrines of Vasubandhu’s Yogācāra, one sees that, in regard to the problem of human existence, *myōgi* holds an important place. *Myōgi* expresses the idea of mental discrimination or conceptualization. It is also spoken of as the discrimination of objects and the discrimination of names.

We experience “reality” and speak about “reality,” but we cannot directly conceptualize “reality” itself. We think that we are experiencing reality, but that which we experience becomes human experience through names. Reality itself is not a name. However, by establishing names, reality is conceptualized as an object. Therein lies the secret of human experience. As I said earlier, names are not associated with the Tathāgata; rather, names are associated with human beings. Hence, human experience is not the direct experience of reality itself or the Tathāgata himself; rather, the Tathāgata becomes human experience as a concept (*myōgi*). Of course, even if the Tathāgata becomes human experience, it does not exist apart from the Tathāgata. However, where the Tathāgata ceases to be the Tathāgata, there the world of human beings is established through concepts. Although the world of human beings does not exist apart from the Tathāgata, the Tathāgata is transformed by humans into a concept. If I use provocative language, I might say that the relationship between the Tathāgata and human beings is turned upside down.

Human beings do not exist in reality itself; rather, they function within the context of their interpretation of reality. Humans are able to function in and be concerned about the human world alone; they cannot function in a world that transcends humans. We are like silkworms who make cocoons and who live within the cocoons we ourselves make. We do not live in a world of direct experience. Discriminating among names and objects is the basis of human existence. If that were not so, there would be no way for the passions, and the like, to arise in a world of direct experience. Human beings function within the world they construct. In that sense, human beings are beings in the world.³⁰ It is not that humans would exist whether or not there were names. In a sense, humans are beings who, through names, are deluded by names. If we ask why the Tathāgata delimited himself through the name, it is because human beings are, through names, deluded by names. In order to awaken those

human beings, the only alternative was to rely on the name. Because humans are beings deluded by names, to awaken humans there was no alternative but to use the name.

To be deluded by names is to regard them as having a real substance. Our experience is formed on the basis of the substantiation of names. However, substantiated names, originally, are provisional names rather than real things. The fact that names are provisional is important; they are established provisionally in contrast to objects. Without objects, there are no names. That is the point I want to speak about today. Don't we think of names as "real names"? But names are originally provisional. When we refer to the name of the Primal Vow, you may think it is a "real name," but even the name of the Primal Vow is a provisional name.

II.

The character for *ke* 仮 (provisional) has the meaning of something "temporarily established." Something that is "constructed" is also referred to as *ke*. The German word is *setzen*. In other words, *ke* refers to something that did not originally exist. Hence, in contrast to something that is original, that existed from the beginning, it is something that is contingent. Therefore, it is also called an "incidental name." The concept of provisional names is not made clear in Hinayana Buddhism. Even if the Abhidharma of Hinayana speaks of "no-self," it refers to the no-self of the *puṅgala*, the no-self of persons. In contrast, in Mahayana scholarship, phrases such as "all dharmas are mere consciousness" and "all dharmas are empty" are intended to make clear the emptiness of all things. It is in that connection that provisional names are given so much attention.

Provisional names are clearly discussed not only in the scholarship of Vasubandhu but also in Nāgārjuna's *Fundamental Verses on the Middle Way*.³¹ According to the Tiantai interpretation of the verse on the three truths contained in the well-known chapter on the Four Noble Truths, a distinction is made among the empty, the provisional, and the middle aspects of truth, but there too that which is empty is indicated to be a provisional name.³² It further says that "this is the middle way." In the opening of Vasubandhu's *Thirty Verses on Consciousness Only*, it says, "Because they are provisional, the Buddha explained them as the self and dharmas."³³ The self and dharmas, existent things, are merely names. All existing things are referred to as the self and dharmas, but the self and dharmas are merely those things that have names. In Chinese, perhaps the phrase indicating their nature would be "To have a name but no substance."

Speaking from that perspective, the essence of names is fundamentally that they are provisionally established. I believe that this is a point worthy of special consideration.

The Great Teacher Tanluan has said that the name of the Tathāgata is different from ordinary names in that it has the function of saving sentient beings. As an example—one that probably comes out of Daoist texts—is the view that if one calls the name of the Tathāgata, illnesses will be cured. This is probably a misinterpretation that arises from overenthusiasm for the name; but if that were the case, the name would become a magical spell or incantation. This is one of the great dangers that the name possesses and is a great pitfall.

When *Namu Amida Butsu* becomes a magical incantation, the name no longer fulfills its religious function. It obstructs its religious function. By destroying the human being in a fundamental way, religion thereby provides a foundation for the human being. If that doesn't happen, it cannot be called religion. If the name becomes an incantation, it obstructs the absolute negation that destroys human beings. When it is substantiated, the world of religion becomes something magical. This is a danger inherent in religion. When one thinks about that, the fact that names are only provisional has great significance. To regard names as real is not to respect names; rather, it is to be deluded by names. By understanding names as provisional, one becomes able to use names without being deluded by them.

Because we use the term “provisional names,” one may think that it refers to something of little value, but using the term “provisional names” is correct. Viewing names as representing reality is completely delusional. In Buddhist ontology, names have a special significance. For example, in Yogācāra treatises, names exist in contrast to objects. Names are established in contrast to objects and objects are established in contrast to names. In the *Treatise on Consciousness Only*, there are the well-known words, “names and objects are incidental to one another.”³⁴ This passage refers to the concept of incidental names that I mentioned previously. These are probably the words that first revealed the key to understanding concepts.

For us human beings, there are two fundamental arbitrary views. Philosophically speaking, the first is called naive realism. By the first arbitrary view, I refer to the position that holds that there is some object of consciousness and that we become conscious of that object. In this view, consciousness is something that represents the object of consciousness. For example, according to this view, a flower exists before there

is consciousness of it. We think that by coming into contact with the flower, the content of “flower” is formed in the previously contentless consciousness. This content is the representation of the flower. Believing that the representation of the flower reflects the flower, just as it is, is one great arbitrary view.

When we are conscious of a flower, we think that the flower exists outside consciousness. But we cannot say that the object itself exists. An object does not exist apart from consciousness. In the realm of consciousness, all things are objects. It is not that existing things alone become objects. Nonexisting things also become objects. Inasmuch as there is the consciousness of nothingness, in the realm of consciousness both existing and nonexisting things become objects. Therefore, we cannot say an object called a flower exists unless we presuppose consciousness.

The second arbitrary view is that we think that there is a flower itself and that it is indicated with the concept of flower, or we think that the concept of flower transmits the flower itself, without losing its essence, or we think that the word “flower,” that word itself, indicates the actual existence of the flower. We think that the concept of flower transmits the flower that actually exists without losing its true nature. This is the second arbitrary view.

In this way, for human beings, there are two arbitrary views. The world of human naturalistic experience is based on such arbitrary views. In Buddhism, this type of experience is called delusion. It is not that there is something that deludes us; rather, without there being something that causes delusions, humans are deluded about the fundamental structure of consciousness. That being the case, it is as though the name “flower” is something the flower itself originally spoke. That would be a “real name.” But that is something that cannot be; names are constructed things. Therefore, the words “names and objects are incidental to one another” are the first to reveal these arbitrary views that have existed from the beginningless past.

Even the name of the Primal Vow is not a special name. It is the fundamental nature of names that, in the end, they are all provisional names. Therefore, we can refer to the Primal Vow as a *shingon* 真言, or “true word.” The name is a word, a word about the true nature of reality; in other words, it is a true word. The true word of esoteric Buddhism is called a *dharani*. Now I am discussing the true word of exoteric Buddhism.³⁵ The name of the Primal Vow is the true word of exoteric Buddhism. In that case, it might be called the word about the true nature of reality, but when we use these words, we are not contrasting real names with the provi-

sional names mentioned earlier; rather, provisional names are true words. It is not that one abandons provisional names for true words; provisional names are themselves true words.

Within Mahayana scholarship, from the perspective of a purely religious standpoint, human beings are existences that are affirmed in an absolute way after passing through an absolute negation. If that is not the case, human beings cannot become human beings. That understanding of the human being is the human being seen from the standpoint of religion. Human beings are existences that carry a great contradiction within them. To speak of human beings as existences of absolute contradiction is something that can be said on the basis of religious self-awareness; apart from religion, that probably cannot be said. In Buddhism, that sort of deep, fundamental self-awareness is expressed through words like “entrusting” or “awakening.” In short, those words refer to the wisdom of nondiscrimination.

Whether we speak of common sense or philosophy or science, it is undeniable that all transmit a kind of wisdom, but the difference between them and religious wisdom (*jñāna/ prajñā*) lies in the idea of awakening. Awakening is not rational or objective understanding. Even if one speaks of it as truth, it refers to a truth to which one has awakened. Consciousness that is in conformity with the truth is called understanding. It is not the kind of truth that, once experienced, allows one to remain just as one formerly was. Even though we may attain a scientific understanding of things, there is no need to cease being the type of human being we were because of that understanding. Indeed, the fact that we are human beings is further reinforced. But in regard to understanding to which one has become awakened, once that sort of understanding has been attained, one cannot return to the human being one was before. It represents a kind of truth that transforms human beings. That kind of truth is truth to which one has become awakened. The awakened human being is the Tathāgata. The human being, just as he or she is, is the Tathāgata. That sort of wisdom is called the wisdom of nondiscrimination. When one thinks about this in relation to the problem of names I have been discussing, it takes on some interesting dimensions.

According to Asaṅga, when a bodhisattva achieves the wisdom of nondiscrimination, that is, when people attain that understanding, sentient beings who existed as ordinary people are transformed into bodhisattvas. In that state, they abide among names among which no discrimination of objects is made. Here the concept of *myōgi* or names and objects appears. In other words, Asaṅga describes the state of our having achieved

the wisdom of nondiscrimination with the words, “they abide among names among which no discrimination of objects is made.”³⁶ The word “abide” means “to abide with ease”; in other words, they abide with ease in the realm of names. The ordinary person abides in the realm of discrimination. When discrimination is negated, one becomes a bodhisattva. Asaṅga’s words are a response to the problem of where those bodhisattvas abide.

Perhaps it is hard to follow what I am saying when I use words like “bodhisattva” and “ordinary person.” Those who are deluded are ordinary people; those who are awakened are bodhisattvas. A bodhisattva is not an especially eminent person. A true human being who exists with a self-awareness of human existence—that is a bodhisattva. Human beings live but they also exist with an awareness of the fact that they are living. Dogs and cats live, but they are not aware of their existence. It is only human beings that, while they are alive, live with an awareness of their existence. Therefore, speaking from the perspective of existence, among all living things, the opportunity to have a self-awareness of existence exists only in the case of human beings. To live with an awareness of oneself—the being who lives in that fashion is called a bodhisattva. An ordinary person exists without a self.³⁷

To define an ordinary person is a matter of discriminating among names and objects; that is the realm in which an ordinary person abides. In contrast, the realm in which a bodhisattva abides is the realm of the nondiscrimination of names and objects. To abide among names that do not discriminate among objects means to abide in the realm where there is no place to abide, to abide in the place of non-abiding. To have no place in which to abide, that is the realm where self-aware beings abide. This is the type of expression one finds in the Prajñā sūtras.³⁸ To abide in the realm of non-abiding is a paradox. In the teaching of Yogācāra, paradoxical expressions are presented analytically.

Vasubandhu expresses this idea with the words “to abide in the true nature of mere consciousness.” This refers to the mind at ease.³⁹ “To abide” means “to abide with ease.” The nature of mere consciousness refers to the original nature of consciousness; consciousness is at ease with the original nature of consciousness itself. I think that the term “a mind at ease” is a Chinese phrase. It probably arose in connection with the Chan and *nenbutsu* schools. I don’t think there is such a word in the languages of India, but if we were to look for a parallel, it would probably be “to abide in the nature of mere consciousness.” The phrase mentioned earlier, “to abide among names among which no discrimination of objects

is made,” refers to the mind at ease. The method for bringing to light the mind at ease is “observation of the mind” (*kanjin* 観心). That so much attention is given to observation of the mind is because it is the method for attaining a mind at ease. To have one’s mind be at ease with itself is only possible when the mind returns to its original nature. When the mind arises as names and objects, it takes on a form that negates its original nature; when the mind returns to its original nature, that is awakening (*satori* 悟り). The *sato* さと of *satori* has the meaning of original nature. To recover one’s original nature (*satotoru* さととる)—until one returns to one’s original nature, the human mind cannot be at ease. When one asks what kind of original nature it is that one recovers, it is the original nature of an uneasy mind.

When we say that the entrusting mind is a mind at ease, there are three minds associated with the ease of mind attained through the *nenbutsu* as far as Pure Land Buddhism is concerned. It was the Great Teacher Shandao who first established [the concept of] a mind at ease as a precise and technical term. In the Great Teacher Tanluan’s works as well, the words “a mind at ease” appear, as in the line “The Pure Land is the abode of the mind at ease attained through practice.”⁴⁰ But it was from Shandao onward that it became established as a precise, technical term. The line “The entrusting mind is a mind at ease” is true insofar as “entrusting” has the meaning of “awakened.” “Awakened” means “realized.” Inasmuch as entrusting has the meaning of realization, trust leads one to a mind at ease. Generally speaking, trust is viewed as the beginning of realization; the stage before one has yet to achieve realization is spoken of as trust. But trust in that case has the meaning of unease.

That entrusting can be spoken of as realization is because entrusting itself has the meaning of realization. Entrusting is not just the beginning of realization. Realization is said to be the end point, but it actually begins from the end point. The customary idea is that entrusting is entrusting and realization is realization; but at the same time that entrusting reaches its conclusion in realization, entrusting begins from the realization that has been reached. That entrusting and realization have this circular relationship is something that cannot be said apart from the Primal Vow. It cannot be said apart from the name.

III.

That which we call names are provisional, things that are temporarily established; this is the original meaning of names. In other words, this is

the meaning of names to which one is awakened. Therefore, the phrase “names and objects are incidental to one another” exposes the profound arbitrariness associated with names. This arbitrariness exists when we regard names as real. Names are something temporarily established. Originally, that which we call “real” has the meaning of “that which itself proclaims its own existence,” but provisional names are incidental. In other words, this means that their relationship to objects is incidental.

That “the name is not just a name” also means that the name is simply a name. In that sense, it indicates that it is not just a name. Although it is a complicated matter, the name is originally just a name; hence it indicates that it is not a name. Yet we are not saying, therefore, that it represents a reality that denies provisional names. Even if we refer to it as a real name, we are not denying that names are things that are temporarily established and asserting that the name itself is real. Rather we are saying that that which has been temporarily established is reality. I wonder if this isn’t the fundamental character of names.

Asaṅga indicates the wisdom of nondiscrimination with the words “to abide among names among which no discrimination of objects is made.” The wisdom of nondiscrimination is Buddhist wisdom or *prajñā*. When a consciousness characterized by entrusting becomes the wisdom of nondiscrimination, it can be spoken of as characterized by a pure entrusting. In other words, when we say the name of the Primal Vow, through the name, the wisdom of nondiscrimination is aroused. That the name was originally taken up is because it is related to discrimination. Through names, human beings discriminate among names and objects. The phrase “names and objects” indicates discrimination. Because it is related to discrimination, the name causes discrimination to be transformed and nondiscrimination to be aroused. If the name itself is not related to discrimination, then it would be impossible to indicate nondiscrimination through the name.

An object is a concept. The term “object” in the line “to abide among names among which no discrimination of objects is made” in Sanskrit is *artha*. In Chinese translations, it is rendered with the character *yi* 義 (*J. gi*). Along with the sense of “meaning,” *gi* also indicates an object of consciousness. In the present case, it is perhaps correct to refer to it as “object” rather than “meaning.” The term “abide” in the line “to abide among names among which no discrimination of objects is made” means “to abide with ease.” In this case, it means to abide in dharma-nature. From the perspective of *noesis*, it constitutes nondiscrimination; from the perspective of *noema*, it is dharma-nature or the original nature of all things.⁴¹

In a certain treatise, there is the line “to abide in the true nature of the mind.” In other words, the mind abides in the true nature of the mind. Or the mind is at ease when it discovers the original nature of mind itself. In that situation, Asaṅga indicates that in the line “to abide among names,” using the word “name.” This is an interesting expression. One abides in the consciousness that all things are provisional names.

Discrimination is also related to concepts. With discrimination, for the first time, an object of consciousness is formed. Therefore, our consciousness is fundamentally related to objects; it consists of the discrimination of objects. By making our own selves an object, we are conscious of that which has been objectified. We cannot be conscious of anything that is beyond consciousness; consciousness is being conscious of consciousness. In that case, the consciousness of which we are conscious can be cognized by making the self an object. That is the structure of discrimination. However, in that case, the mind is not at ease. From that standpoint, there can be no human consciousness without objects. It is not that there are objects and that we then become conscious of them. This view is based on the idea that consciousness is from the start consciousness of something. From that perspective, all existent as well as nonexistent things are objects of consciousness.

Consciousness has no objects beyond consciousness; whether it be existent or nonexistent things that appear to be beyond consciousness, both in the end are expressed as objects within consciousness. That is consciousness as we usually think about it. Therefore, consciousness expresses itself as an object and is then conscious of the object, which is its self-expression. In connection with that structure of consciousness, various emotions arise. Consciousness arises as the consciousness of some object. It is not that there are flowers of which we become conscious; rather, the consciousness of flowers arises. Because we are conscious of objects of consciousness, consciousness is bound by those objects. Therefore, that which binds consciousness is consciousness itself.

In this sense, consciousness in fact is manifested in a form that is not itself. The consciousness that ordinarily arises conceals consciousness itself. When consciousness arises, consciousness itself is manifested in a way that negates its original nature. Therefore, a consciousness that has objects cannot be at ease in consciousness itself. Consciousness is constantly being changed by the objects of consciousness. It moves from one moment of discrimination to the next. Therefore, in that situation, there is no way for the consciousness of entrusting (expressed as wisdom) to form.

From this standpoint, the consciousness of entrusting that is manifested as the wisdom of nondiscrimination is a consciousness without objects. When that is the case, the consciousness of entrusting can be distinguished from all other instances of consciousness for the first time. That which we call the consciousness of entrusting, if expressed generally as a concept in the philosophy of religion, is consciousness of the eternal. The eternal is not something that can be made into an object. One cannot think of the eternal as an object. A consciousness that expresses the eternal as an object is not a religious consciousness. In a form that is not religious consciousness, religion is made manifest. If one is conscious of the eternal, then that is the same as saying that one is conscious of something that can be represented as an object. I think that, even with regard to the Tathāgata or the Pure Land, and the like, if one grasps them as objects, one does not have a religious consciousness. Even with regard to acts such as meditating on the Buddha or having trust in the Buddha, if one's consciousness is concerned with thinking about the Buddha or if the Buddha himself is treated as an objective existence, I doubt that one's consciousness can be said to be a religious consciousness.

To have the consciousness of a buddha, one must be a buddha. The consciousness that entrusts in the Buddha must be the mind of a buddha. One cannot hold up the Buddha as an object of consciousness. Therefore, in Buddhism, this idea is expressed in the concept of emptiness. In the teachings of the Prajñā School, they speak of "emptiness as the nature of all things." In the Yogācāra School, they speak of "the nature that is made manifest through emptiness." In teachings such as these, there are different interpretations. Things that are not empty are empty, how much more so are things that are not existing things—the teachings indicate that sort of thing. In any event, the concept of emptiness expresses pure negation. In the case of the Prajñā School, emptiness is initially understood as negation, but it is also understood as indicating wondrous existence. It is not simply a negative concept. Prajñā is a concept that expresses simultaneous negation and affirmation. In any event, the fact that a concept expressing negation is used indicates that speculation about the eternal is forbidden. Seeking the eternal as an object of consciousness is to follow a path that takes one away from eternity. Instead, by abandoning the search one may find the eternal at one's feet.

In short, to express the eternal through the concept of emptiness is to indicate that the eternal is not an objective existence and further that it is part of the original nature. The mind that seeks the eternal is the original mind. That is the eternal. The mind that seeks the eternal is itself

the eternal. Because people don't understand that, they seek the eternal outside themselves. If one does not awaken to the mind that seeks the eternal itself, nowhere can one find that point that distinguishes Buddhist religious consciousness from that of other religions.

In the passage under consideration, Asaṅga indicates “the empty nature” of things through names. This is an approach unique to him. Nāgārjuna uses the word “emptiness,” which is the same as the provisional. In the Tiantai interpretation, the three concepts of the empty, the provisional, and the middle are established, but in Nāgārjuna's *Fundamental Verses on the Middle Way* itself, the empty and the provisional are synonyms. Emptiness is also a provisional name. In this sense, the line “to abide among names among which no discrimination of objects is made” is the same as abiding in the empty nature of things. “The empty nature of things” is already a name, but as long as it is expressed as emptiness, it is not emptiness. In other words, the ideal of the eternal and the eternal itself are different. The representation of the eternal and the eternal itself are different. The eternal transcends time, but the representation of it exists in time. The eternal itself does not enter time. The Tathāgata, the Pure Land, and the like, they are eternal. But if one tries to express the eternal in time, there is no alternative but to express it as the future. We say that “we will be born in the Pure Land in the future,” expressing the eternal as an extension of time. We indicate the eternal as an infinite extension of time. By so doing, we have the concept of the future.

However, one cannot put one's mind at ease in a future Pure Land represented in that way. As long as consciousness has objects, one cannot be at ease in consciousness itself. One cannot be at ease unless one returns to the place of one's departure. One cannot be at ease along the way. Because being at ease makes contact with the origins of delusion, one is able to be at ease. The mind that has made contact with the origins of delusion and that has clarified the real character of delusion will no longer be deluded. Once the origins of delusion have been identified, going to the trouble of negating delusion is unnecessary.

The term of negation “emptiness” indicates something that is not empty. It indicates the original nature that is not a negation. Hence, that which is provisional is something temporarily established. There are the concepts of the “established” and the “nonestablished” truths; the term “the empty nature of things” belongs to the category of established truth.⁴² However, the name “the empty nature of things” does not indicate emptiness. Emptiness itself cannot have even the name of “emptiness.” In other words, something that is not a name is being indicated

by a name. That consciousness is the self-awareness of names. People may think that the meaning of “provisional names” is shallow and that of “real names” is profound, but in fact that is not the case. There are no “real names.” The fact that all things that exist are nothing other than names brings one into contact with the awakened state by transforming the perspective that sees real things as objects. The awakening that involves seeing the things one sought as objects as originally a matter of self-awareness is indicated by names. When we say that existent things exist as names, the things we made into objects become subjective consciousness.

As I said previously, it is impossible to grasp the original nature of things as objects; rather, they exist as a matter of subjective self-awareness. With regard to consciousness as well, it is first a consciousness of objects. However, as Descartes says, we can be conscious of consciousness. We are conscious of things as objects, but we can also be conscious of the function of consciousness. In that sense, we can speak of self-awareness, but with that sort of self-awareness, the self-awareness that is entrusting will not take form. If one stops at the point of knowing the function of consciousness, that cannot be called the self-awareness that is entrusting. Consciousness can see its function as an object, but if consciousness stops there, it is absolutely the case that awakening will not take form in consciousness.

By coming into contact with its origin, consciousness becomes aware of itself. If it is not the case that consciousness can awaken from dreams, then no matter how humans may seek to gain awakening, they cannot become awakened. We can say that, even in dreams, not only can we become conscious of things as objects but we can also be conscious of consciousness. That which can awaken us from such a consciousness is consciousness. Therefore, the self-awareness that is entrusting is the empty nature of the mind or the self-awareness that is consciousness returned to its source. If it is not that sort of consciousness, if one only vaguely refers to self-awareness, the sort of consciousness I am referring to is not made clear. The Zen master Dōgen used the phrase, “To shine the light back on oneself.” Usually when we shine a light on something, we shine it in a forward direction. If human beings are conscious only of the things before them, human beings can never escape delusion. However, consciousness shines both forward and backward. It can shine light on the dream that arises from shining one’s light only forward. In that way it returns to the true nature of the mind.

In that state of mind, even if one sees various things, one does not see them as objects. However, that doesn’t mean that one has abandoned con-

sciousness. There is a contradiction in the term “the wisdom of nondiscrimination.” If it is nondiscrimination, it is not wisdom, and if it is wisdom, then there is discrimination. In expressing the wisdom of nondiscrimination, Asaṅga asks whether wisdom is something associated with the mind or something that is not mind (i.e., matter). If wisdom is associated with the mind, in other words, if it is associated with consciousness, then it must be said that wisdom involves discrimination. Making discriminations is the essence of the mind, but if wisdom has to do with the mind, how can we speak of nondiscrimination? If wisdom is associated with nondiscrimination, then it is other than mind. In other words, it is matter. If it is the same as matter, then how can we say that it is wisdom? Therefore, the wisdom of nondiscrimination neither affirms nor abandons discrimination. The consciousness that is entrusting is not unconsciousness.

When the consciousness that is entrusting is called the wisdom of nondiscrimination, there is a conceptual contradiction. It is nondiscriminating, yet it is wisdom. It is not that consciousness has been abandoned. While conscious, one has nevertheless abandoned the clinging nature of consciousness. While conscious, one has nevertheless abandoned the form of consciousness. Although seeing the self itself as an object is consciousness, while conscious, one has abandoned that object. That is the original self-awareness of consciousness itself. Consciousness is incomprehensible. As long as it is comprehensible, a mind at ease will not form. Consciousness is incomprehensible to itself. By realizing that, at that point, consciousness becomes at ease. If it is not that way, the consciousness that is entrusting cannot be distinguished from all other types of consciousness.

Therefore, the wisdom of nondiscrimination is indicated by names. Hence, names are forms or phenomena. When we call them phenomena, they are no longer things.⁴³ Existence is a phenomenon. It is not that things exist as objects. They are phenomena. They are not objects. When we refer to names, they are the names of nameless things. They are wordless words. That is the real character of words.

It is not that words express something. If something is indicated by a name—in other words, if something expresses itself through a name—then that something would be an object. Consciousness expresses itself as an object and takes an interest in that object that has been expressed. What we call the passions is having an interest in things. As a result, the consciousness that is conscious of objects is bound by the things of which it is conscious.

Hence humans are fettered without fetters. Because that is the case, Asaṅga, commenting on the problem of names, spoke of “abiding among names among which no discrimination of objects is made.”

[In his *Summary of the Great Vehicle*,] Asaṅga established the ten names to encompass all names, expressing the idea in a verse.⁴⁴ In his list, both dharmas and objects are names. Through the ten names he encompasses all existing things, but he calls the tenth and last name the ultimate name. Both the previous nine names and the tenth name are names, and there is no difference among them in that regard. In this case, it is not that they are special names. Even in the realm of the Primal Vow, names are provisional names. When one thinks of them as special names, that constitutes the substantiation of names. In other words, *Namu Amida Butsu* becomes a magical incantation. If it is a magical incantation, it cannot be a provisional name. That constitutes not an awakening to the nature of names but the fact of being deluded by names. It constitutes not the consciousness of objects but objects on a grand scale. Therefore, human beings are not deluded merely by the things of the secular world but also by the name of the Tathāgata. They are deluded by the Tathāgata as well. In other words, they make an object of the Tathāgata. Therefore, both that which is not ultimate is a name and that which is ultimate is a name. Asaṅga says that all things are names. To indicate that which is ultimate through a name that can indicate that which is not ultimate—that is the meaning of the phrase “names among which no discrimination of objects is made” mentioned previously; among the ten names, it is the ultimate name.

When sentient beings arouse the wisdom of nondiscrimination, that constitutes abiding in the ultimate name. It is a name that indicates that which is ultimate or eternal. Temporal things are expressed through names and the eternal is expressed through names. Because it is just a name whether it is temporal or eternal, a name is just a name. It is not the case that a name is not just a name. A name is only a name. That fact indicates that it is not just a name.

In his *Summary of the Great Vehicle*, Asaṅga says that “cherry tree” is a name, “desk” is a name.⁴⁵ “Amida” is also a name. But Amida is something that indicates that which is ultimate. The name of the Buddha is an ultimate name. There is not only the example of the *Summary of the Great Vehicle*; even if one thinks of Vasubandhu’s *Pure Land Treatise*, he speaks of the abridged explanation of entrance into the One Dharma Principle⁴⁶ in contrast to the unabridged explanation of the twenty-nine

phrases. “Principle” and “name” are related concepts. Therefore the One Dharma Principle mentioned in the *Pure Land Treatise* is an ultimate name. The “One” is not one among twenty-nine. Twenty-nine is a number; the One that is contrasted with twenty-nine is not a number. It is the one of the One Dharma-realm. Rather than a number, it indicates totality. It is the One, the One Dharma Principle, that indicates all-encompassing totality.

The name of the Primal Vow has the meaning of the ultimate name or the One Dharma Principle. Whether it is the One Dharma Principle or the twenty-nine phrases, if one takes the name as an object—in other words, if one substantiates the name—the world that one experiences is the defiled land. If the name is just a name, then the world that one experiences is the Pure Land. The world that is indicated by phrases such as the One Dharma Principle and the twenty-nine phrases is the Pure Land. They are phrases that indicate that even regarding the Pure Land, there is no particular such object.

In his *Commentary on the Pure Land Treatise*, the Great Teacher Tanluan says, “The abode of the Pure Land is the so-called seventeen phrases.”⁴⁷ Beyond “phrases” there is no Pure Land. In this case as well, the One, the ultimate, is not something one speculates about as an object. If one applies the translations used in the *Mahāyānasamgraha-śāstra* to terms such as the One Dharma Principle and the ultimate, they would be “the all-pervading dharma” or “the all-encompassing dharma”; in other words, they indicate the totality of all things. “One” indicates something that is ultimate and all-encompassing; that which is all-encompassing is not an object. Because “pervading” indicates the comprehensive or the extreme, it refers to the most comprehensive, the comprehensiveness that is nothingness. If it is made into an object, it becomes an existing thing.

That which is comprehensive cannot exist as an object. That which is comprehensive is something that exists subjectively (although in fact even the word “subjective” is insufficient). It is not a subjective that merely negates the objective. It refers to something that cannot be objectified in terms of subjective and objective. Because subjective and objective can be made objects of consciousness, that which cannot be objectified in any sense, that is the self. Only by the self knowing the self, or by the self returning to its original self, can one grasp the absolute or eternity. It is not something that can be established as an object apart from oneself. That which has the function of turning an objective name into a non-object is the ultimate name referred to here.

IV.

Consciousness is not only something that can reflect on itself; it is also something that can achieve awakening. In other words, that which can awaken from a dream is consciousness. If it is not that sort of self-awareness, one cannot indicate religious self-awareness. Reflective self-awareness is merely subjective self-awareness. That is, it is objectified as a subject and stands in contrast to the object. As long as consciousness is objectified, it will not return to the self. Consciousness that does not return to the self is not at ease. The self-awareness that is entrusting—if we use the language of the *Kishinron*—is self-awareness similar to “the original awakened state” (*hongaku* 本覺).⁴⁸ *Gaku* 覺 is the awareness (*kaku*) of self-awareness, but it is also an awareness contrasted with illusion.

Names are incidental names. Even if it is the name of the Tathāgata, it is an incidental name. Although the name is just a name, the self-awareness that is just a name is not just a name. The awareness of religious self-awareness has two meanings. In other words, to be aware is not to know things. Although it has the meaning of the self-consciousness of knowing that one knows, at the same time, it also has the meaning of “to awaken,” which is contrasted with delusion.

If it stops at only knowing that one knows something, that would be a limited concept. No matter how much one traces back the subjective, it remains only a limited concept. It can only remain as cognition of the subjective. In that case, it is discrimination; one cannot achieve a mind at ease. It is the subjective self-awareness of the ego that is contrasted with the objective. It is still subjective. However, at the same time, awareness has the meaning of “to open one’s eyes.” It is not that which simply knows the self; it is that which is awakened. If it is that which can be known, it is no different than the ego. The self cannot be the self just as it is in its deluded state. The self is that which is awakened; it is self-awareness that is awakened. If it is not that, one cannot indicate the self-awareness that is trust.

Things that are not ultimate are names, but ultimate names are also names. A name is just a name. However, with regard to ultimate names, it is not that there is something, as named, that exists. All that exists is the name alone, and thereby that which is not just a name is symbolized. If that is not clear, I wonder if the name of the Primal Vow too won’t give rise to infinite misunderstandings. Therefore, the following representation of the name is perhaps best: ~~name~~.

This manner of expression follows Heidegger. The line through the name does not signify the nullification of the name; rather, here the name

indicates that which is not the name. When we think about this in relation to Tanluan’s concept of dharma-nature, that which nullifies is dharma-nature and the name is *upāya* or means. It is the name that is the sole method for bringing us into contact with that which is not the name. Names are things that do not originally exist in dharma-nature. They exist among deluded sentient beings. Sentient beings objectify things through the use of names. Consciousness then becomes restricted by the objectified consciousness. Names belong to human beings. If those who are deluded by names are human beings, then there is no way other than names to cause them to awaken from that delusion.

The name of the Primal Vow is the Dharma-body of means.⁴⁹ The Tathāgata has no form; thusness has no form. Even if one speaks of the name of the Tathāgata, the One Who Has Come from Thusness, by the time the Tathāgata has come, the Tathāgata is already a name. The “of” in “the name of the Tathāgata” is unnecessary. The name of the Tathāgata does not have the meaning of “the name that the Tathāgata has.” It is not the name that indicates the Tathāgata. The Tathāgata is the name. The word *Namu* [meaning “reverence”] is also attached to the name of the Primal Vow. Therefore, adding “reverence,” we call the entire phrase the name. It is not that Amida alone is the name. It is not that there is Amida Buddha to which “reverence” was later added. That which we cannot help but “reverence” is Amida.

In that way, “reverence” is part of the ultimate name of the Primal Vow. Whether it is the name of the Tathāgata or the name of Amida, they are words that prohibit the viewing of Amida as an object. It is not that there is Amida Buddha to which we attach a name. There is no Amida beyond the name. It is not that the name of the Primal Vow indicates an objective thing. There is no form to Amida himself. However, at the same time that it is the name of something without form, “reverence” is added. Because it is a name that encompasses “reverence,” it is not that a thing without form is actually something with form that is static.

Dharma-nature is something static. Through “reverence,” that which has been static becomes dynamic. In other words, when something without form takes form, it does not simply remain static. Because it has the function of transforming deluded sentient beings and returning them to their origin, it has the significance of “calling.”

Amida is something without form; when something without form becomes a name, that which is without form calls to that which has form. No matter how much it may call, that does not mean that there is something that is calling. Rather we receive the call at that place where there

is no thing that calls. It is the voiceless voice. It is not that, having been called, I exist. Rather I myself take form as the call. I am transformed as the call. It is not that the call exists outside us and that we listen to it and are moved. I take form as the call.

The name of the Primal Vow does not indicate a thing. It is a name that indicates a relationship. It indicates the relationship of I and Thou, not the existence of something.⁵⁰ However, that relationship is not the relationship of one thing to another; it is the relationship between that which has form and that which does not. It indicates the relationship of time and eternity. The relationship is always mutual. It is not one-sided. To be called is to have heard, is to have responded. It is not that there is the call and then, later, one responds.⁵¹

The call is something that exists only for those who have heard it. It does not exist for those who have not heard it. If we say that it exists for those who have not heard it, that kind of call would be an objective thing. Therefore, the call is at the same time a response to it. The relationship in this case is a mutual relationship. It is the name that indicates a relationship of call and response between that which has form and that which does not. If we express this idea using the unique language of the Chinese people, it would be “the mutuality of receptivity and response” between sentient beings and the Buddha. In today’s language it would be a “mutual relationship.” When the existing mind of sentient beings is receptive, the no mind of the Buddha responds. It is not a relationship of one thing to another. It is a relationship of existence and nonexistence. Just as we call the totality of all things the “all-encompassing dharma” or the “all-pervading dharma,” this too is not an objective thing. Because it prohibits objectification, it is called emptiness. We may also call it absolute nothingness. In that way, that which indicates the mutual relationship of existence and nonexistence is that which we call the name. That which is without form, through the name, takes on a relationship with that which has form.

The name of Amida Buddha is not simply referring to Amida. As I explained earlier, the problem of sentient beings is being responded to. Through *Namu Amida Butsu*, human beings are being responded to in a fundamental way. They are not responded to according to human ideas. This is something much deeper than humans merely reflecting on themselves. In other words, humans are responded to as Tathāgatas. But because of that, it is not that humans have become something other than humans. Rather, because of that, humans become humans for the first time. Therefore, *Namu Amida Butsu* is the means whereby humans are

caused to return to their origin. And it is also the term that indicates that return. That which causes the return refers to the words of the Primal Vow, but that which has returned refers to the words of the entrusting mind. In the sense that *Namu Amida Butsu* brings about the mind at ease, it is Dharma and it is also the person that gains the mind at ease.

When the Tathāgata becomes the name—that is, when we speak of saying the name—that the word “reciting” is expressly added to the name of the Primal Vow indicates that anyone can do it. It is the way by which anyone, anytime, anywhere, can return to his or her origin. The verb “to say” symbolizes the fact that anyone can do it. This is not just raising one’s voice. It symbolizes the fact that no effort is required. That it does not require our own effort is because it embodies the true effort that transcends our effort. That is because it is practice. Through the name, the Tathāgata is practicing.

Our attainment of the wisdom of nondiscrimination, or the attainment of the entrusting mind, or again the realization of the stage of non-retrogression, all exist as practice. The name is practice. That which we call the name is the name that is the practice of sentient beings. It is the name of the Buddha, but the name of the Buddha does not indicate the Buddha; rather, it is the name that is the practice of sentient beings. It is the name that causes the Tathāgata to reveal itself as sentient beings; in other words, it causes thusness as non-thusness to return to thusness. It is that kind of practice. To attain the entrusting mind or to realize birth in the Pure Land is for sentient beings to return to their original nature, and it is the name that causes that return. In that sense, the name of the Buddha is the name that causes sentient beings to become buddhas; therefore, when we refer to the name of the Primal Vow, it is the Dharma, the Buddha Dharma. The name of the Buddha is the Buddha Dharma. The name of Amida Buddha is the Buddha Dharma. In that sense, Dharma is language that stands in contrast to human beings. To say that it is Dharma is to say that it does not need human beings.

That the Tathāgata was made known in the form of the name expresses the fact that it is the Tathāgata on which we can rely and in which we can attain a mind at ease. That is the name. If that which is without form were only without form, we could not rely on it nor could we be saved by it. When it becomes the name, it is not that the Tathāgata exists in a personified form. It is not thought to be a personified existence; rather, it is Dharma. To take refuge in *Namu Amida Butsu* is to conform to the Dharma. When the name is made into a thing, it becomes a *persona*; in other words, in that case we establish Amida Buddha as an objective absolute or as a

personified existence that stands over against us as the other. If we regard Christianity as directed toward the other, then Buddhism is directed to the origin. The Tathāgata is the original nature of sentient beings, not the other that stands over against sentient beings. The other has form, but there is no form to original nature. That which does not require the power of the other is Dharma. When there is no Dharma, we have no choice but to set up the other. When there is Dharma, in other words, when there is the name, there is no need to set up an other. This is the reason that it is said that one should rely on the Dharma and not rely on an other.

In sum, what I wanted to say to you is that the name is originally a name, a provisional name. The name is just a name; however, it is the form and the dynamic working of that which is not just a name. It is also the practice that causes one to return to it. It is not that we negate provisional names and arrive at the true reality. Provisional names are the true reality. True reality, in the words of the Great Teacher Tanluan, is dharma-nature. This is not a dharma-nature that negates means. It is dharma-nature that affirms means.

Source: Yasuda Rijin senshū hensan iinkai, ed., *Yasuda Rijin senshū*, vol. I (Kyoto: Bun'eidō, 1994), 318–345.

“Humans as Bodhisattvas” (1962)

In “A Name but Not a Name Alone,” Yasuda clarified the meaning of the name, *Namu Amida Butsu*, as the expression of the existential realization of one’s ultimate grounding in the true nature of reality that transcends provisional names and yet enables one to engage the world of provisional names in a constructive way. In the essay translated here, “Humans as Bodhisattvas,” published in 1962, Yasuda develops further the latter theme. He touches again on the relationship between ordinary persons and bodhisattvas, as he did in the preceding lecture, and he also explains the connection between self-awareness and the bodhisattva’s world-engaging conduct. The ordinary person has lost his or her awareness as being the self-expression of the Tathāgata and, as a consequence, has become lost in everydayness (*nichijōsei* 日常性), a concept he borrows from Heidegger. In his explanation of karma and transmigration as experienced by the ordinary person, Yasuda also draws on Heidegger’s conception of the individual as “thrown” into existence and as further “projecting” him- or herself into the future, unaware of the true basis of his or her existence in the “nothing” of the world. For that person, karma and transmigration have become bondage. The bodhisattva, in contrast, lives the life of the Tathāgata and, by so doing, takes on karma in a positive way. At one point in this essay, Yasuda writes about the experience of transmigration for the bodhisattva: “Transmigration does not simply vanish; it has the positive meaning of practice in which transmigration is taken on and transformed. For the bodhisattva, the place of transmigration is, at the same time, the place of the path to self-fulfillment (the training ground for self-fulfillment).”¹

“Humans as Bodhisattvas: Reflections on the Vow and Entrusting”

I.

It can be said that the concepts of “Tathāgata” and “sentient beings,” rather than expressing two types of existence, tell us that, structurally, sentient beings originally depend on the Tathāgata and that the Tathāgata is sentient beings. The Tathāgata is sentient beings and sentient beings are the Tathāgata; when we speak of sentient beings as the Tathāgata, we can think about the Tathāgata as indicating the true nature of sentient beings. The Tathāgata is said to be “One Who Is Born from Thusness,” but this word “born” indicates sentient beings.² When we speak of the Tathāgata as sentient beings, there is the real nature of thusness. Thusness is also spoken of as the truth of thusness; hence, it is a word that indicates the truth of the originally selfless nature of existence itself. The originally true nature of sentient beings is indicated by the word “thusness.” At the point where truth takes on the nature of reality, there is the meaning of sentient beings. And the reality of sentient beings has a meaning beyond that of merely being considered objectively; it has the meaning of an expression of truth. As sentient beings who are the Tathāgata, for the first time, they can come into contact with the original nature of human existence.

“Sentient beings” is a broad category, but sentient beings in everyday life have the nature of ordinary beings. The everyday existence of sentient beings is that of ordinary beings. They are beings who, while originally existing in thusness, have in reality lost that thusness. But even though they have lost that thusness, they are not separated from their connection to thusness because of that. In other words, that relationship exists in a contradictory way. Sentient beings are contradictory to themselves. They are contrary to sentient beings themselves, yet they are identical to sentient beings themselves. That sentient beings are ordinary means that, while they have lost their original nature, they are still related to it; hence, in that relationship, the fundamental contradiction of the structure of human existence is indicated. Human beings are related in a contradictory fashion to their own selves. Having an awareness of that structure is what we refer to as unease. In general, that awareness refers to the religious mind. Human beings become a problem for themselves because the basis for unease resides in the structure of human existence.

Therefore, we can say that to be ordinary is to be a sentient being who is unaware of the fact that he or she is a sentient being. The sentient be-

ing is unaware of the self itself. When one becomes aware of that self, we may speak of a sentient being as a bodhisattva. To exist in a contradictory state and yet to have no consciousness of that contradiction is to be an ordinary being. When one becomes aware of that contradictory structure, one has the perspective of a bodhisattva. Therefore, the actual existence of human beings, in everyday life, has lost the self itself.³ Human beings have dissolved in everydayness and have been spiritually leveled.⁴ When one breaks through that everydayness and recovers the awareness of one’s original existence, there is the human being who is a bodhisattva. When one is a bodhisattva, for the first time, we may speak of a self-aware existence. In short, actual existence must be, at the same time, awakened existence (*kakuzon* 覚存).

The manner of existence in which, having lost the self itself, one manifests oneself in everydayness is called transmigration. The true meaning of transmigration lies in the Tathāgata. In short, sentient beings are the Tathāgata as sentient beings. However, those sentient beings who, while they are the transmigratory forms of the Tathāgata, transmigrate not knowing that they are the Tathāgata’s transmigratory forms, are ordinary beings. On the other hand, to become aware of transmigration does not mean that transmigration goes away, but rather it has the meaning of transforming transmigration. In the transformation of transmigration lies the positive significance of transmigration. It may appear that my words are contradictory, but what I mean is that one transmigrates in a self-aware manner. As it is explained, “Because conditioned dharmas have many faults, one should not have harmonious relations with them; at the same time, one should not become extinct—that is for the sake of the fulfillment of sentient beings.”⁵

Self-awareness does not merely have the passive meaning of the cutting off of transmigration; it also signifies transforming transmigration in a positive sense. One takes on reality. There is the Tathāgata who take on the reality of sentient beings. In other words, one does not avoid but takes on reality; there is the transcendence of transmigration while transmigrating. At the same time that one *transcends* transmigration, one *transcends into* transmigration. In that lies the positive significance of transmigration. Here, we can think of sentient beings as the Tathāgata who has taken on reality.

Therefore, a bodhisattva is not someone who has merely cut off transmigration; rather, he or she is a sentient being who has the self-consciousness of the Tathāgata who has taken on reality. In that, there is what we call the compassionate Vow in Mahayana scholarship. If we use

another expression, it is the way of existing for human beings called the *love of destiny (amor fati)*.⁶ In short, we must say that the compassionate Vow is something that has a positive meaning, like the love of destiny. It is a positive love, like the love of destiny.

Human beings who are established on the basis of the Vow are bodhisattvas. We may say that the Vow is the call that the original self makes to call back the nonoriginal self to the original self. In the sense that the Vow is that which is the source of human beings and that causes human beings to be human beings who are bodhisattvas, it is the Primal Vow. The source calls human beings back to the source. Entrusting is the response of human beings who have been called back; entrusting is the self-awareness of the source. This kind of Vow is the basis upon which human beings who are bodhisattvas are established. It must be said that the basis for human beings to be bodhisattvas lies in the original nature of human beings. The Vow is that which breaks through the covering of actual existence that has been spiritually leveled in everydayness and realizes the original nature of existence, that is, religious existence. That realized self-awareness we call entrusting.

II.

Running through the scholarship of both Hinayana and Mahayana, the concept of karma is used to express the nature of human beings indicated by words like “destiny” and “transmigration,” but karma has the meaning, not of a category of existence in which existing beings exist but, more particularly, it has the meaning of that which causes the existence of human beings to be actual existences. Thus karma, from the perspective of the existential understanding of human beings, carries an important meaning. Words like “transmigration” and “destiny” are concepts related to actual existence, but we can say that karma has the meaning of the category of actual existence in relation to the kind of actual existence expressed by such concepts.

Through karma, the human being that is a potential existence becomes an actual existence. It causes the “da” in “Da-sein” to be established.⁷ We can think of karma as the category of the nature of reality that causes existence to be real. In short, the human being who is a real existence exists *at some time, at some place, and as someone*. The “here” in “Here I am” and the “now” in “Now I am” indicate reality.⁸ The human being is a self that exists here and now and not as something, but as someone. This kind of self becomes real through the categories of “here” and “now.” Therefore,

these categories are not categories that express existence in regard to an existing being—for example, categories such as thought; or extension in time; or, to use a classical Buddhist expression, the five *skandhas*—rather they are categories of actual existence, and of the nature of reality.

The problem of karma has from long ago been regarded as a major problem in Mahayana and Hinayana Buddhism. In Vasubandhu’s scholarship as well, there is even a treatise entitled *The Treatise on the Formation of Karma in Mahayana*.⁹ In the Yogācāra scholarship completed by Vasubandhu, rather than *think* (*kangaeru* 考える) about the actual existence of human beings, we *contemplate* (*miru* 観る) that existence. In short, we reduce human existence to consciousness and discover the consciousness that opens up human existence as a consciousness called the *ālaya-vijñāna*, the storehouse consciousness, and we elucidate the deep structure of consciousness. Vasubandhu clarified the actual existence of human beings through the concept of the *ālaya-vijñāna*. Of course, human beings are thinking beings. Descartes said, “I think, therefore I am.” When the human being becomes a problem for the thinking human being, in Yogācāra one stops thinking and contemplates the human being that thinks. At that point, the actual existence that encompasses the thinking self comes into view. One does not think about the various objects of thought; one thinks about the self that thinks about various things. That kind of consciousness is called *manas*. *Manas*, in the sense that it involves thinking, is said to be calculation. In short, it is consciousness. It is not that there is thought and consciousness; it is that there is consciousness that is thought. It is consciousness that has the meaning of *denken*.¹⁰ Of course, even if we say the word “thought,” we do not mean “to think logically.” It refers to concrete human reflection that includes intellect, emotion, and will.

In this way, in Yogācāra scholarship, one stops thinking and contemplates; when thinking becomes a problem, we must reduce the thinking self to consciousness and contemplate it. More than the thinking self, the existing self beyond it is fundamental. The idea that “I think, therefore I am” is established on the basis of “I exist, therefore I am.” Therefore, we cannot say all that needs to be said about human existence with merely the words, “I think, therefore I am.” Before human beings are “thinking,” they are beings who are born and who live. The body witnesses to the fact that we are living. Human beings do not exist merely as a consciousness that thinks; they exist with a body. Karma is that which makes clear the consciousness of the body. Life exists in the body, not in the fact of thinking. In that they possess a body, there is the reality of human

beings. The self that is manifested through the body is the living, actually existing self. The body determines the “here” and “now.”

In that sense, *ālaya-vijñāna* is expressed through the concept of *vipāka-vijñāna*, the consciousness of the differently maturing effects of karma.¹¹ It means that the differently maturing effects of karma are, for the first time, provided with a basis only in the *ālaya-vijñāna*. Karma is that which determines the self that exists as a possibility—the self that can exist at any time, in any place, and as anyone—in the here and now. In short, it provides the self’s existence with the nature of reality. The differently maturing effects of karma express the meaning of the “da” in “Da-sein.” That which, for the first time, clarified how the differently maturing effects of karma are possible is the *ālaya-vijñāna*. With the consciousness of “I think, therefore I am,” one cannot provide a basis for the differently maturing effects of karma; by exploring consciousness more deeply, Vasubandhu discovered the *ālaya-vijñāna* as that which realizes the differently maturing effects of karma.

Vipāka literally means “to mature differently” according to karma. In terms of its etymology, actual existence (*Existenz*), which matures differently as compared to its *original* condition, means *to come out from (ex-sistere)*.¹² In short, it has the meaning of *out-set*.¹³ To say that it *matures differently* is to say that, in a way different from its original condition, it has matured in the here and now. This idea is also expressed as “the person that results from past karma.” The person that results from past karma is the presently existing self. The *ālaya-vijñāna* is the consciousness that causes that sort of being to be established. Therefore, that reality is as it is, is not accidental, nor is it decided by something beyond the self. That which determines the self as the self of the present reality is, in the end, the self. Human beings become human beings through human beings themselves. They do not depend on anything else. Human beings create themselves by themselves. In this way, the true character of human beings in which the self is created by the self was made clear through the concept of the *ālaya-vijñāna*. And that which determines *this human being*, who potentially could exist in various ways, in the present condition, we express as the differently maturing effects of karma. The *ālaya-vijñāna* is, in a sense, the human daily record of the self creating the self.

III.

However, various problems exist in the theory of karma. It can be said that, in Vasubandhu’s scholarship, the influence of Sautrāntika thought

is strong. On the basis of Sautrāntika thought, Vasubandhu criticized the Sarvāstivādins.¹⁴ According to Sautrāntika thought, speech itself is seen as an act, but the essence of action is intention. Where there is no intention, there is no act. This is the position advocated by the Sautrāntika school. Also, it was the scholarship of the Sautrāntika school that discovered the perfuming effect of karma.¹⁵ The daily record of human beings is established through the perfuming effect of karma.

Acts are done at a certain time, at a certain place, and by somebody. In short, an act is a human event in time. It is not mere movement; rather, it is action taken at a time in someone’s existence. That is the weighty meaning of action. Action depends upon the intentional decision of someone. When we act, we must choose among options. When we analyze intention, it is said to be the process of selecting, deciding, or expressing a choice, but that decision cannot be put off until tomorrow. At each moment, a choice must be made. If one does not choose, then the fact that one does not choose becomes a choice. In that fact lies the gravity of action. In response to each moment encountered, human beings must make an intentional choice. On that point, in regard to intention, there is freedom. Selection has freedom of intention as its premise.

That choice is an experience in time, made at a particular moment and also passing away at that moment. But at the same time, the meaning and significance of having acted remain, running through time. The intentional experience of having acted arises and passes away together with time, but the significance of having intended something remains, running through time. In short, this means that we have a responsibility. In action freely taken, there is responsibility. Where there is freedom, there is responsibility. Therefore, selections are made in time, but the significance of having made a selection does not vanish with time. In short, we are free to act, but we must bear the responsibility of the consequence of our action. It is inevitable that we must bear the responsibility of our action. We are free, yet the consequences are inevitable. The compound concept of freedom and inevitability is karma. Karma expresses the present reality of human beings.

Through our present actions, inevitability binds us. We are free to act, but we are made to bear the responsibility for our action. To say that we are made to bear that responsibility means that we are made to bear it until it is fulfilled; thus, it commits us to a future. We act now, but the meaning of our action extends into and delimits the future. In this way, in each human act, the future of the self is at stake. In short, the future is determined by destiny.

Just now I used the word “inevitability,” but today it seems that, rather than inevitability, the concept of destiny is often used. The concept of inevitability, historically, is a category of the natural sciences, and “cause and effect” in a phrase like “the inevitability of cause and effect” are categories from the natural world. Thus, when we think about human existence, and not the existence of nature, the concept of destiny is considered more appropriate. Therefore, we can express the humanness of human beings through the concepts of freedom and destiny.

In this way, actions of the present do not determine the present but determine the future. Thus, the present is a response to the commitments of the past. Therefore, that we were born is a response to the self of the past. That we are alive now is a response to the responsibility we have for acts committed in the past. In this way, karma is a word that expresses a sense of responsibility for life. Responsibility in this case is, of course, not limited to ethical responsibility; rather, it must be considered as having an existential significance that encompasses the ethical. To live is to have an unending responsibility. However, as I have already said, our birth, like destiny, has determined us. Within this determined existence, we act freely. Therefore, there is no simple freedom; what we have is freedom within the context of destiny. This freedom again determines the destiny of the self. The destiny of the self is created by the self. The self bears virtues and vices together.

In Heidegger’s analysis of existence, he speaks both of *being thrown out* into existence (*Geworfenheit*) and of *projecting* oneself toward the future (*Entwurf*).¹⁶ This “throwing” oneself into existence (*werfen*) brings to mind Pascal’s wager.¹⁷ In any event, human beings are wagering their future on the actions of the present. They are projecting themselves toward the future. Thinking from this perspective, the differently maturing effects of karma constitute the existence that has been thrown out into existence. It has matured differently from its *point of origin*. In regard to the consciousness of the past, we were free, but for the consciousness of the present, those acts are like destiny. From the condition of being thrown out into existence, we again project ourselves toward the future. Having matured differently from the point of origin, we mature differently again. As existences that repeat that process infinitely—that is what we call transmigration. We move from one circumstance to another. In that process, there is the self that is actual existence.

The consciousness that establishes the self as this sort of existence is called *vipāka-vijñāna*, the consciousness of the differently maturing effects of karma. The *vipāka-vijñāna* is the consciousness that contains past

karma. To reflect existentially is to have the self-awareness of the consciousness of the differently maturing effects of karma. It is to cause the consciousness of the differently maturing effects of karma to rise to consciousness. One does not understand human beings objectively; rather, one opens up to the awareness of human beings as existences just as they are. No matter what human beings do, they cannot separate themselves from reality. Even if we say that the Tathāgata is the original nature of the human being, if the Tathāgata were to separate himself from the reality expressed by past karma, the Tathāgata would not be real. It would be nothing more than merely an abstract concept of thusness. In short, sentient beings are the real structure of the Tathāgata. That which indicates the existential structure of the Tathāgata is sentient beings. But the meaning of the reality of the Tathāgata is included in past karma, just as it is. Reality is, to the end, true reality. Thus, to have an awareness of past karma is not to erase karma but rather to open up to the karma in one's consciousness and live in the reality that has been opened up. The awareness of past karma has the positive meaning of taking on reality. It does not merely have the passive meaning that, if one becomes aware of transmigration, transmigration vanishes; instead, the meaning of transmigration changes. Rather than transmigration *that one is made to* undergo, it becomes transmigration that one *undergoes*. One becomes aware of the Tathāgata of reality, the Tathāgata who can become sentient beings who transmigrate, in the consciousness of entrusting that is the Primal Vow. Through such a Vow, for the first time, the positive meaning of karma becomes clear. Through the Vow, karma is sublated as practice.

IV.

The reality of human existence is expressed as existence that has birth and death. Birth has the meaning of a response to the responsibility of the past karma of human beings, and death has the meaning of fulfilling that responsibility. As long as the human being does not fulfill his or her responsibility, one cannot die no matter how much one may want to die. This kind of birth and death of the ordinary person is called “birth and death in different forms.”¹⁸ It is the birth and death that has the passive meaning of the sentient being who exists in the phenomenal world but who has lost the thusness that is the essence of the Tathāgata itself, the sentient being who is thrown out into existence and who continues to project him- or herself out toward the future. If one says that karma and

birth have a relationship of “plus” to “minus” and that karma that has once been made controls us forever, that is the position criticized as a non-Buddhist view of past karma. Therefore, destiny is not destiny as an independent, metaphysical concept; rather, the destiny we now speak of is destiny as the conditions of human existence. The metaphysical concept of destiny can be expressed as a direct line extending from past karma. Rather than that kind of thing, our birth and death repeat, forming a circle. This is expressed as “birth and death in different forms.” To form a circle in this way is called “the attribute of receiving and exhausting.” One receives karma and one exhausts karma. It refers to the receiving and fulfilling of karma.

In contrast to this, one can transform the birth and death that one is made to undergo so that it becomes birth and death that one undergoes in self-awareness. To take on birth and death is called “the birth and death of transformation.” “The birth and death in different forms” is the way of being of ordinary people; “the birth and death of transformation” is the way of being of bodhisattvas. Rather than seeing these as two separate ways of being, one should understand that the bodhisattva takes on as the love of destiny what for the ordinary person is merely destiny. In that case, it has the positive nature of taking on birth and death. *Hennyaku* 変易 can be said to be the transformation (the turning) of meaning. We can say that it involves the transcendence and encompassing of birth and death and being aware of birth and death at a deeper level. It is being aware of sentient beings as the Tathāgata. Awareness has the meaning of “turning.” It is not that birth and death are cut off; rather birth and death are “turned.” In short, they become the birth and death that is the content of the compassionate Vow.

The birth and death in different forms is the birth and death of the human being who has lost his or her existence, the birth and death that has degenerated into everydayness. The birth and death of transformation is the birth and death in which one has become aware of existence; it is existentially aware birth and death. It is the birth and death of thusness that takes on both good and evil. Only the heart of thusness takes on the differently maturing effects of karma. Transmigration does not simply vanish; it has the positive meaning of practice in which transmigration is taken on and transformed. For the bodhisattva, the place of transmigration is, at the same time, the place of the path to self-fulfillment (the training ground for self-fulfillment). It is the place of the path where one realizes the thusness that is the self itself. In short, without erasing karma, by becoming aware of the source of its original nature, it becomes

the place where one realizes that original nature. The human being who becomes that place is the bodhisattva.

However, when karma (reality) does not become the silhouette that projects thusness (truth), that which hides the truth is self-consciousness. Self-consciousness stops at the standpoint of thinking “I think, therefore I am”; the consciousness that clings to the self closes off thusness from the reality that is the Tathāgata. On the basis of the closed-off self-consciousness, human beings themselves create karma and then understand themselves in that way. The self causes its own creation and beyond that there is no way of being or living for human beings, but in order for human beings to take on birth in a positive way and transform it into the original self’s self-delimiting and the realization of the self, there must be a break through the self that “thinks” of the self, a breakthrough that takes place through the call of the original self. The self that has been broken through is the self that has been opened up. It is the self that has been opened up to karma and that transcends *into* karma. “To take on” means to break through the closed-off self and transcend into karma. There, “to take on karma” and “to transcend karma” express the same thing. Earlier, to express the idea of karma I used words like “freedom” and “destiny,” but in order to express the idea of transcending karma and transcending into karma, I think it may be better to use the term “freely existing.” A bodhisattva truly takes on the obstructions of past karma and yet is unobstructed by those obstructions. In this way, the Vow expresses the positive nature of life. The Vow represents the self that has opened up. Through the Vow, karma is transformed into practice and life is fulfilled as actual existence.

V.

As I have stated above, that which causes actual existence to be actual existence is the Vow, and the consciousness that can be actual existence is trust. We express existence with words like “Vow” and “trust,” but what we mean by actual existence is that which should be and already is realized. In short, that which realizes actual existence is the Vow and that which is realized is trust. Existence is not merely that which is; it is that which should be fulfilled and attained. It is *not merely that which is*; it is *that which becomes*. By becoming, it witnesses to the fact that it truly is.

In general, the Vow and entrusting constitute the religious mind of Mahayana. The fundamental source of this religious mind of Mahayana we speak of as the Vow, and the aspect of its consciousness we call entrusting.

In short, through the religious mind, for the first time, the source of the self that is hidden by human thought (self-consciousness) can be brought to the surface of consciousness. The source of the self that has been closed off, by breaking through the thought that is closing off the self, is brought to the surface of consciousness. That self is not something that merely exists. That which merely exists is the everydayness of actual existence. Actual existence is something that must be won. It must be attained and realized. By realizing it, witness is born to it. Actual existence is witnessed as the entrusting of the realized Vow; it is that which is witnessed through the practice of the Vow. In this way, through the religious mind, for the first time, existential human beings are established. Through the religious mind, in other words, through the Vow and entrusting, the true religious existence of human beings is established.

Source: Yasuda Rijin senshū hensan iinkai, ed., *Yasuda Rijin senshū*, vol. 1 (Kyoto: Bun'eidō, 1994), 346–358; originally published in *Shinran kyōgaku*, no. 1 (December 1962).

“The Homeland of Existence” (1964)

Published two years after “Humans as Bodhisattvas,” “The Homeland of Existence” explores the theme of the deep human longing for a homeland and, as a response to that longing, the ultimate Pure Land as understood in Yasuda’s Shin philosophy. The Pure Land, as one might expect, is not a land different from the one humans inhabit; it is not external to us. Rather it is our land correctly understood. It is the land in which human beings understand their true natures as rooted in thusness, and that awareness liberates humans to live at ease in the present.

Yasuda begins this essay by citing two short phrases from *The Larger Sutra* that make reference to people who vow to be “born in that land” and who desire to be “born in my land.”¹ He writes: “The expression ‘to desire to be born in my land’ itself is the call of the religious mind that calls humans back to the source of existence,”² back to their true nature as rooted in thusness and as expressions of the Tathāgata. It is a call built into the very structure of human existence, and responding to it leads us not to a place outside human existence but to the realm that enables us to be truly human. Later in the essay, again commenting on the workings of the religious mind, Yasuda explains: “That the religious mind calls back present existence to the ‘my land’ of the line ‘to desire to be born in my land’ is to call back to interior existence itself the present existence that has been made external. If present existence were not external, there would be no need to call it back. The interior refers to the interior of existence. The interior of existence is existence just as it is. In other words, existence just as it is—the dharma-nature of the various dharmas—is thusness.”

Toward the end of this piece, Yasuda asserts that human beings who have achieved this awareness take on a new relationship to the everyday world. He describes this relationship as a “mediated existence” that encompasses both dharma-nature or thusness and the world of human existence. The land to which we return, he writes, “is the dharma-nature that is in a mediated relationship with human beings. The land must

exist in the human existence that has recovered that relationship. The land is, to the end, something that belongs to human beings as the structure of present existence.”³

Yasuda begins this essay with a reference to *The Larger Sutra*, refers numerous times in the course of the essay to Vasubandhu’s *Pure Land Treatise*, and draws on the language of Heidegger throughout. In this respect, the essay is reflective of Yasuda’s mature style of thought.

“The Homeland of Existence”

In the *Larger Sutra*, it is said that one “vows to be born in that land” and one “desires to be born in my land.” In those words, the fervent religious mind that calls out from the depths of human existence, and delves still deeper, and that is unceasing until it receives a response, represents that which runs through human existence as an entity of its own that requires no proof in doctrine or myth. But for human existence, what does “land” originally mean? The expression “land,” in its simple meaning, means nothing other than that place to which humans can return and be at ease. It is said, “Returning home, one sits at ease.”⁴ Thus, that place to which one can return and be at ease for human beings is truly the homeland of existence. The land that is indicated by such an existence as the “my” in “my land” and the “that” in “that land” means that, for human existence, it is a fundamental thing that internally transcends present existence and that also supports it. If it were not so, it would be meaningless to say that it is the place to which one returns and is the place of ease. To return is to return to the source, and to be at ease can be achieved only by returning to the source. The land that calls out to human beings and to which human beings respond is the *Heimatland* of human existence. What we call the *Heimat* of human existence, more fundamentally, must be existence itself.⁵

The expression “to desire to be born in my land” itself is the call of the religious mind that calls human beings back to the source of existence. In short, they are the words of existence itself that are expressed by the religious mind. They are the words that, by awakening human beings to existence itself, transform human beings into self-aware actual existences.⁶ Words of existence reveal existence itself to human beings as *Heimat*, and by causing them to gain insight into *Heimat* itself, they are words that cause human beings to be realized as self-aware existences. We can say that “revealing” and “leading to insight” are the essence of words (*Wort*) and that their inner reality is the existence that is *Heimat*.

Words (*Wort*), as based on *reden*, which is the call, have for human beings a meaning that goes beyond their excellent function.⁷ Human beings can speak not only through words; that act itself constitutes the essential structure of human existence. That which gives *Zwischenmenschlichkeit*, which is the essence of the existence of human beings who are *zwischen* (*aida*), is truly *wort* based on *reden*.⁸ Of course, when it is said that one “desires to be born in my land,” it is not that an existing being that is a human being is saying it to another existing being that is a human being. That which is speaking is existence itself that, for human beings, is the source. The source of human beings is calling out to human beings. In that sense, we can say that those words are the voiceless voice. If we speak about it from the perspective that it is a fervent call, those words have more of the character of pathos than logos. But as words that reveal the logos that arises from the depths of existence and, without losing that depth, expresses that depth just as it is, the fervent nature of the call is always wrapped in a quiet whisper. It is, to the end, the voiceless voice. The words of existence that are the voiceless voice are fundamental language (*Grund-Wort*).

Just as words have an essential meaning for the structure of human existence, “land” too is not something that simply has a coincidental meaning for human existence; rather, one cannot help but think of it as something that has an existential meaning for the structure of existence. Human beings as present existences do not exist merely as naked existences. Present existences are existences living as someone, at some place, and at some time. That is, the dharmas of the five *skandhas* are the manner of existence for existing beings. However, these cannot be the present reality of the five *skandhas* in their naked form. The existence of the five *skandhas* can first become a present existence at a certain time, at a certain place, and in certain circumstances. In other words, in circumstances expressed by the concept of transmigratory course, through the five *skandhas*, a living existence is formed. When a transmigratory course consisting of the five *skandhas* is set, the five *skandhas* can become a living existence that is bound for death. The transmigratory course is determined case by case. Existences determined case by case are truly actual existences (*Existenz*).

Of course, that which determines the situation of such human existences is nothing other than human action (*karman*). Human beings make their own destiny through their own will. They are existences of destiny dependent on freedom and of freedom that exists in relation to destiny. This is what we express through the concept of the differently

maturing effects of karma. It has the meaning of an existence in a situation differing in one case and maturing in another. Be that as it may, the similar outflows of karma constituted by the five *skandhas* that are distinguished from the differently maturing effects of karma are, to the end, similar outflows based on the differently maturing effects of karma. The five *skandhas*, in the sense that they are not deduced from the five *skandhas* of another, are dharmas having the nature of similar outflows. That which causes an existence that has the five *skandhas* as its dharmas to become, properly speaking, present existence is the action of human beings. Present existence takes form as the destiny brought forth as a result of the intention of actions. *Existenz*, as the meaning of the word indicates, is existence that has differently matured. In that sense, the fundamental structure of the present existence of human beings is that they are beings existing in a certain situation or status (*in der Situation sein*). And we can say that land fulfills the meaning of the fundamental structure that is *in-sein*.

What is necessary to clarify in regard to the problem of land is the meaning of *in-sein*. The expressions of land or realm are used, but the concept of realm does not necessarily have a single meaning. A realm that is a land cannot be an objective realm that stands over against human beings. When we speak of the realm of wisdom and virtuous conduct or the attributes of the wondrous realm, they are not *artha*, which has the meaning of object; they must be *gocara*, which has the meaning of realm. The realm that is a land is not a realm that is *Gegenstand*, that is the standing (*stehen*) place in contrast to (*gegen*) human beings; rather, it must be a realm that has the structure of existence for human beings, where human beings exist in it and, by being within it, can be human beings. That is why, in Vasubandhu's *Pure Land Treatise*, he interprets realm (*sekai*) as the world (*seken*). That is, realm has the meaning of worldly realm. The *se* of *sekai* already means world, and *kai* is a realm distinguished from the supramundane. The world that is a realm is generally spoken of as the birthplace of sentient beings; thus, existence is living existence as a being in the world. The world is the place where sentient beings are born and die. In the *Pure Land Treatise*, Vasubandhu interprets the sutra passage concerning the three kinds of realized adorned virtues as two kinds of pure worlds.⁹ He likely applied an Abhidharma-style of interpretation to the literary expression of the sutra. The realm adorned with the three kinds of attainments of land, the Buddha, and bodhisattvas has, in Vasubandhu's interpretation, the meaning of two kinds of pure worlds. The non-sentient land belongs to the category of container worlds, and the

Buddha and bodhisattvas belong to the category of sentient worlds. According to this view, land has the meaning of container in contrast to sentient beings. “Container,” as the meaning of the word indicates, refers to the environment, but the environment is not simply an objective world; it is the situation in which living existences take form.

Thus, sentient beings that exist in relationship to such an environment are beings that must have the meaning of *in der Situation sein*, that is, *in-sein*. *In-sein* is the structure of the world or realm. Environment and sentient beings are two existing things; they do not stand in the relationship of physical existence and subjective existence; rather, they are two facets of a relationship, two facets of the structure of existence. Thus, a sentient being, in the sense that the sentient being is in its substance situated in time and space,¹⁰ is indicated through the concept of body (*kāya*). Body is an expression that signifies substance. Being situated in time and space is a sentient being’s self itself or the substance of the self.

It is said that the realm is already an adorned realm and a purified place. Hence there must be that which adorns or that which purifies. As something that cannot be objectified in any way, Vasubandhu expressed it through the concept of mind (*citta*). It is the religious mind. It is the mind that aspires for birth in the Pure Land. Because the mind, even as a subjective reality, cannot be objectified, it opens up as a realm. It can be said that the mind is a *Monade* that has a window that opens up as a realm.¹¹ Sentient beings are beings that encompass such a mind and have it as the self’s substance. The environment that stands in contrast to this aspect of sentient beings is the environment that has the meaning of a sentient being that is “another,” in other words, the self of another that stands in contrast to the self of sentient beings. The environment is the facet that shares that which is self and other for sentient beings. Sentient beings have the substantial aspect of both and, at the same time, share their situation. If one regards the substance of both as the body of sentient beings, the situation delimits their physical boundaries. As beings delimited by situation and as beings that have physical boundaries, sentient beings are existences of a shared destiny. The land is the existential community of the religious mind.

When existences as described above are beings existing in relation to their environment, they are living existences, but it is the relationship expressed by the environment, which is the container, and the self, which is the sentient being, that is nothing other than life. This relationship is not a physical relationship between things or a relationship of consciousness between the subjective and the objective; it is a relationship expressed

by the concept of appropriation. “To enjoy the taste of the Buddha Dharma and regard samādhi as one’s food”—as noted in this line, it is a relationship in which the body is sustained through food.¹² To have a body is nothing other than to sustain life. The fact of receiving and maintaining a body is nothing other than living existence. Because of this, land has an essential relationship to the concept of life. We can say that the meaning of the life of sentient beings is provided through the existence of a land.

Of course, the realm that is expressed in the *Pure Land Treatise* is a transcendent realm adorned with realized virtues, and the world is the pure transcendent world. Thus, even though we speak of sentient beings, they are awakened existences of buddhas and bodhisattvas, and they are not sentient beings who are ordinary beings belonging to the impure world. Ordinary beings are the unawakened or as yet unawakened existences that have lost themselves in the world. However, concepts such as awakened and unawakened express the status of sentient beings rather than the substance of sentient beings. That is, it must be said that they express the status that is dependent upon the boundaries between existing beings. It is said that the realm is already adorned and realized. That is not a substantial existence, but it is the realm as something adorned and realized. The purified world is the world as a transformed thing. It is not the world as a natural existence. With regard to substantial existence or natural existence, situation and status cannot take form. The realm as situation or status is a conditionally existing form—on the condition of doing one thing, a certain result is achieved. As it is said, because there is this, there is that, because this arises, that arises; with the nature of dependent origination as its essence, for the first time, the realm as situation or status takes form. Whether as something realized as pure or as impure, the existence that is a realm is realized through conditioning. The nature of conditional existence dependent upon the conditions of karma or acts is the nature of existence as a realm.

A realm, treated comprehensively, can be said to be a phenomenon of the mind (*citta*) that exists based on karma or acts. And whether the status of an existing being is established as awakened or unawakened depends on viewing the existing being as a religiously actual existence. Awakened and unawakened are existential categories dependent on the religious mind that must be strictly distinguished from all other categories. If one departs from the religious mind, it is not simply that the statuses of buddhas and bodhisattvas are not established; the status of ordinary being is also not established. Ordinary beings are not

simply human beings who are devoid of the value of reason. An ordinary being is an actual existence who, as *das man*, has lost *das eigentliche Ich* in the world.¹³ However, the original nature of such a being is not simply reason. An ordinary being is one who, in relation to the very existence that cannot grasp through reason the real existence of human beings, is further seen as an existing being who has lost existence itself. An ordinary being is an existing being seen from the perspective of existence itself; it is not an existing being thinking about an existing being. Such an existing being, it must be said, is an existing being who feels the pain of the religious mind. If one departs from the religious mind, it is not simply that the self-aware actual existence is not established; the unawakened real existence also cannot be established. It must be said that the religious mind itself is that which causes existence to speak of itself. Neither the pure world nor the impure world can be established apart from the religious mind. Thus, that which exists as a general problem for human existence, running through both the pure and impure, is the question of land that belongs to the structure of present existence. The question of land becomes a question for all of human existence.

In the *Pure Land Treatise*, at the end of the passage on the adornment of the land that has the meaning of container world, Vasubandhu says, “All aspirations of sentient beings will be fulfilled,” and he interprets the passage himself as meaning, “The adornment of the realization of the virtues arising from the fulfillment of all that sentient beings seek.”¹⁴ Sentient beings, in this case, just as the term indicates, can be spoken of, for the present, as ordinary beings. With regard to the three kinds of adornments, it is profoundly significant that the three kinds of vows concerning sentient beings, the Buddha, and bodhisattvas are indicated. Regarding the adornment of the Buddha, the *Treatise* says, “When I contemplate the power of the Primal Vow, I see that those who meet with it do not pass in vain,” and regarding the adornment of the bodhisattvas, it says, “I vow to be born there to demonstrate the Buddha Dharma like a buddha.”¹⁵ That vow is the religious mind. It is the religious mind expressed as desire.

Sentient beings that are distinguished from the buddhas and bodhisattvas can be called ordinary beings. If we regard the aspirations of sentient beings who are ordinary beings from the perspective that their aspirations are expressed in the adornment of the land, we can say that the problem of land is fundamentally unique to sentient beings who are ordinary beings. Ordinary beings are present existences that have as their essential natures the fact of being existences within the world.

Thus, that the land becomes a problem for them, as I said before—that it becomes a problem for sentient beings as present existences in general—means that it becomes a problem as the essential nature of present existences. Present existences cannot settle down in present existence. They cannot live while living; they cannot die without dying. That ordinary beings are sentient beings who have lost *das eigentliche Ich* means that their land is, at the same time, the world that has lost *das eigentliche Selbst*.¹⁶ That is why we speak of transmigration. Transmigration signifies the loss of existence, the forgetting of existence. That which, in this way, calls into question the present existence of human beings with regard to the land is the religious mind that is much deeper than reason. Inasmuch as we speak of the question (*Frage*) of existence, it is a question that is supported by existential aspirations (*Sehnsucht*). At the same time that it is the religious mind that raises the question, it is the religious mind that responds. The response (*Lösung*) of existence is the existential fulfillment that replies to the aspirations that are the question. Land, as the inner reality that is both the question of aspiration and the response that is fulfillment, is truly *Heimatland*. That which opens existence as *Heimatland* is truly the religious mind.

We can say that the line “All aspirations of sentient beings will be fulfilled” that appears in the section on the adornment of the land is a response of the religious mind to the essential human problem, a response that comes from the depths of existence that transcends into the bottom of human beings. Even if they are ordinary beings, they are human beings who have awakened to the religious mind. The religious mind is the mind that flows at the depths of human beings as the exceedingly deep and vast nature of existence. To awaken to the religious mind is for human beings to awaken to an existence deeper than human reason. That which awakens is the awakened mind of existence. Thus, although the passage speaks of fulfillment, it is not that human beings can be humanly fulfilled. Human beings are fulfilled when their human yearnings are transcended. The religious mind that transcendently asks and responds is the deep basis of human existence; it is that which causes human beings to be human. The aspirations that transcend human beings are original aspirations. Through the religious mind that expresses original aspirations, human beings gain original fulfillment. Thus, with regard to the line “the aspirations of human beings all will be fulfilled,” we can look at it from the other side, and we can say that, by discovering the original land within the religious mind, all human aspects of those aspirations are dissolved. The important point of the line “the virtues stemming from

the fulfillment of all that sentient beings seek” is the “all.” If human beings can gain the one thing of the *Heimatland*, then through that, all wants are fulfilled and dissolve.

If we think, as I have above, then the problem of land is the problem of finding the place to which we should return, the place where we can be at ease. It is the problem of the inner reality of the place to which we should return and be at ease. Land is, to the end, an existential demand and a problem based on the structure that makes sentient beings sentient beings. However, the religious mind fulfills that demand for a land because of the bottomless depth of existence. That for present existence, it can provide the meaning of a place to return to is because it can only come from nothing other than present existence itself and not from any other existing thing. To return is to return from where one started.

That the religious mind calls back present existence to the “my land” of the line “to desire to be born in my land” is to call back to interior existence itself the present existence that has been made external. To call back is to turn the external inward. If present existence were not external, there would be no need to call it back. The interior refers to the interior of existence. The interior of existence is existence just as it is. In other words, existence just as it is—the dharma-nature of the various dharmas—is thusness. Thusness, indeed, is the dharma-nature of the various dharmas that makes up existence. The depth of existence is nothing other than for existence to be in conformity with its nature, thusness. That is why it is said to have an exceedingly deep and vast nature and to be limitless and bottomless. When we lose its “as-it-is-ness,” it becomes external. Real existence has as its essence being *in-sein*, but when the *Welt* or *Situation* that is *in-sein* becomes separated from the interior nature of existence, it becomes the external world. Existence does not separate itself from the *Welt* nor does it cause its nature to be lost; rather, those things are due to human beings who are actual existences.

In this sense, the fundamental condition for the establishment of the external world is found in ignorance. Ignorance is not ignorance about things related to existence, about things that are the content of the world, about physical or subjective existence. Rather, it is ignorance about the nature of existence that is the basis for the establishment of the world itself. Stated flatly, it is ignorance not about other things but about the self itself (*das eigentliche Selbst*). It is said, “Because one does not truly know the first principle of truth, one is called ignorant.” The truth of the first principle refers to the dharma-nature of the various dharmas. The truth of the first principle is the truth about existence. That is why thusness

that is dharma-nature is further called true thusness. The truth of existence is not simply the truth of reason. It is not the ignorance of a truth such that, by losing it, one is disadvantaged or an ignorance that simply signifies a mistake. Rather, by losing this truth, actual existence loses the self itself, and by knowing it, it recovers the self itself. That is, it is the truth of existence that establishes that its loss is more than a mistake and its attainment is more than a virtue. Thusness, just as it is, is truth. It is the principle of naturally being so. *Welt* is established on the condition of ignorance of such existence, that is, existence that arises through conditioning. Without ignorance, it is not itself established by itself. It is not an existence that exists on its own, whether or not there is ignorance or knowledge. It is an existence that is defined by conditions. It is an existence that by chance is thus.

Thus, the nature of that existence, whether it is a determined nature of existence or of nonexistence, must have an unlimited nature that cannot be determined. It must be said that the world is established as the delimitation of the nature of the unlimited. It is the delimitation of the dharma-nature that is the nature of the unlimited; however, we cannot immediately say that it is nothing. The unique Buddhist concepts of emptiness and no-self are not merely concepts of negation. As Vasubandhu too says, the no-self of the dharmas does not signify the nothingness of all kinds of things (in all cases); it signifies the no-self of things that, through discrimination, have become the objects of attachments. We do not say that dharma-nature that is separated from words is nothingness. That is, it is not only that the nature of emptiness does not negate, as mere negation, the nature of existence; it is also not something that seeks to negate existence itself. The negation in question is, to the end, the negation of the nature of attachment and not the negation of the nature of existence. To the contrary, it is a negation that serves the purpose of revealing the nature of existence as it is. It does not negate existence; rather, that which is revealed through negation is the nature of existence. The nature of the unlimited is itself the nature of existence. All present existences exist in the present through this nature of the unlimited. All present existences are delimitations of the unlimited. Delimited, they are unlimited. If there were an unlimited nature of existence beyond the existence of limited things, that would not be the nature of existence, just nothing more than another present existence. And if there were present existences separate from the unlimited nature of existence, they would be nothing more than an existing being that had lost the nature of existence.

For things to be just as they are means that, delimited as they are, they are unlimited. The relationship between the nature of existence and present existences, as Vasubandhu says, must be the “neither the same nor separate” relationship of the dharmas and dharma-nature. That is, it is a mediated relationship. The ontological relationship of dharmas and dharma-nature is a mediated relationship. For present existences to lose the self through ignorance means that the ontological relationship between dharma and dharma-nature is cut.

If we view the structure of existence as this kind of mediated relationship—at the point where present existences that, having been cut off from the unlimited nature of existence, having lost their selves themselves, are caused to recover the original structure of existence that is a mediated relationship—there is the “desire to be born” in the Pure Land that is the call of existence. To call to the present existence that is external and cause it to return to the internal is to cause it to return to the mediated relationship. By cutting off this mediated relationship, present existence becomes external. To return, therefore, is to return to this relationship. Present existences become original present existences. Those who have been cut off from and have lost the mediated relationship recover that relationship. To return does not mean that present existences become nothing; it means that they return to that relationship. In a sense, present existences become the silhouette of the nature of the unlimited that is the nature of existence.

Even though we speak of returning, it is not that one returns to something other than present existence. To move on to something other constitutes transmigration. The mode of moving from *Situation* to *Situation*, from *Welt* to *Welt*, is transmigration. That is why it is said, “When the earlier differently maturing effects of karma are exhausted, the habitual energy of various actions again give rise to other differently maturing effects of karma.”¹⁷ To use the word “return” in reference to something that is other is meaningless. By “return,” we mean that present existence takes the form of the nature of existence that has no form. It is to return to the original present existence. To return is not to become something other but to become the original thing.

However, to return to one’s origins is not to return but rather to realize what has originally been so. Returning to something other than the original nature of existence makes no sense. However, it is not that one’s original nature becomes so by the fact of returning. From the start it is so. That is, that which came out of the original state returns to it, but that which came out is that which returns. It is one and the same thing.

The returning takes place in the self-awareness of the present existence that is the returning human being. In the unchanging nature of existence in which there is neither returning nor coming out, we can see the meaning (*Sinn*) of returning to the place out of which one came.

When we speak of the “call” and the “land,” we are speaking of words that have the same meaning. The present existence that awakens through the call has become aware of the meaning of the existence that is the call. The call resides in the one that is called. “To desire to be born in my land” are the words of the dharma-nature that is separated from words; it is the voiceless voice. It is not the voice of a transcendent other. That there is no coming out or returning is because the nature of existence that is a mediated relationship for present existences is not an other.¹⁸

Thus, it must be said that the land to which one returns and is at ease, rather than the dharma-nature itself, is the dharma-nature that is in the mediated relationship with human beings. The land must exist in the human existence that has recovered that relationship. The land is, to the end, something that belongs to human beings as the structure of present existence. The land is particular to existing beings situated in the land. Existence “situated in time and space” is living existence. The land is the place where one lives, where one is born. That is why the text says, “[T]o vow to be born in that land” and “to desire to be born in my land.” The land is the world into which one is born.

However, dharma-nature itself is not born; thus, it cannot pass away. Without dharma-nature, one cannot discover the land to which one returns and is at ease, but dharma-nature itself is not the land. In the dharma-nature that has no attributes of the land, there human beings discover the meaning of the land. One finds birth in the unborn. The birth is the birthless birth¹⁹ that is the ontologically mediated relationship. The birthless birth is birth as it truly is. It is not that one abandons life and becomes nothing; rather, birth is the recovery of life. Thus, Vasubandhu says that the land that surpasses the three realms²⁰ has the attributes of that land and is not a nonexisting realm, and that world is not a nonexisting world but a pure world. That is the realm and world that reveals the exceedingly deep and vast nature of existence that was covered by ignorance. That is why Vasubandhu speaks of it as having the attributes of the wondrous realm of the truth of the first principle.

In this sense, we can say that the human beings who are actual existences discover the land in the dharma-nature that is existence, and existence gives to actual existences the meaning of land. Existence bestows the meaning of land, and actual existences receive the meaning of land.

Delimited human existences receive the meaning of the unlimited within their limitations. In other words, by fulfilling the meaning of land, they realize and fulfill the meaning of living existence. Land has the meaning of being fulfilled in the self itself. Through it, one gains the fulfillment of substance, regardless of the *Situation*, and through fulfillment of substance, one gains it in every *Situation*. That is, one is able to become one settled in existence.

In this way, “giving” and “receiving” are, of course, things that we speak of in relation to the religious mind. Dharma-nature is the depths of the religious mind, and the existing being that is an actual existence is the realization of the religious mind. In the teachings of Vasubandhu, in particular, there is also the expression “the dharma-nature of the mind” (*citta-dharmatā*). The religious mind reveals the structure of existence of human beings. That which calls human beings into question is the religious mind, and that which responds to human beings is the religious mind. The quest for a land is the fervent quest of existing beings and that which provides a substantively fulfilling response is dharma-nature. However, that which both questions and causes a response is the religious mind. The religious mind causes the unborn dharma-nature to provide the response of birth.

The religious mind has its source in the very depths of human beings. Human beings are the pain of the religious mind. That which transcends human beings and responds to them is the religious mind. From the perspective of the religious mind, the substantive fulfillment of human beings is the realization of the religious mind itself. By responding to human beings, the religious mind realizes the dharma-nature that is the religious mind itself. In short, the religious mind adorns the dharma-nature that has no attributes and that is the substance of the mind as the land. The land that is a response to human beings does not stop there. Rather, it is the self-benefiting fulfillment of existence. That is why Vasubandhu says that the adorned realm is the fulfillment of the Tathāgata. It does not stop at the fulfillment of other-benefit but is also the fulfillment of self-benefit.

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“Fundamental Vow, Fundamental Word” (1972)

This relatively late work, published in 1972, brings together many of the themes that Yasuda had lectured and written about for decades. Here he writes again about the deep connection between the Tathāgata and sentient beings, emphasizing once more that the Tathāgata should be understood as the true nature of sentient beings and sentient beings as the expression of the Tathāgata. He takes up the topic of the centrality of practice, and in this connection he discusses at length the significance of the name or the *nenbutsu*, the name that is practice and that makes the Tathāgata real. Again he characterizes the name as the *shingon*, the true word, of exoteric Buddhism that links us directly to the true nature of reality. “It is the *shingon* of the Dharma that bears witness to the Dharma that gave birth to the Buddha, and through the Buddha’s birth, all human beings as well have been caused to be buddhas.”¹ Here Yasuda considers once more the topic of the true land for which all human beings long. “The land,” he writes at one point, “is the community in which the Tathāgata and sentient beings share one and the same life.”² Yasuda even returns to a topic that he treated in the earliest of his writings translated here, “The Practical Understanding of Buddhism.” He points out again, “Buddhist scholarship is not the study that is the study of doctrine. . . . The study of the Buddha path, to the end, must be the study that causes the self to become a buddha.”³

In discussing these themes, however, he places them in a new context and, by doing so, he is able to develop his points in new ways and tease out fresh meanings. His focus in this essay are the eight vows that provide the framework of Shinran’s *Kyōgyōshinshō* and that are mentioned, with one exception, as the *hyōkyo* 標挙, the “extolled” or featured vow or vows at the beginning of each chapter. Specifically, these vows are:

- Vow seventeen, “The Vow that All the Buddhas Say the Name,” listed at the beginning of chapter two, which takes up the theme of “True Practice”

- Vow eighteen, “The Vow of Sincere Mind and Entrusting,” appearing at the beginning of chapter three, which addresses the topic of “True Shinjin”
- Vow eleven, “The Vow of the Necessary Attainment of Nirvana,” listed at the beginning of chapter four, which treats the subject of “True Realization”
- Vow twelve, “The Vow of Immeasurable Light,” and vow thirteen, “The Vow of Immeasurable Life,” both of which appear at the beginning of chapter five, which focuses on the topic of “The True Buddha and Land”
- Vow nineteen, “The Vow of Sincere Mind and Aspiration,” and vow twenty, “The Vow of Sincere Mind and Directing Merit,” again both appearing at the beginning of the first section of chapter six on “The Transformed Buddha-Bodies and Lands”

The one exception to this pattern is vow twenty-two, known as “The Vow for the Attainment of Buddhahood after One Lifetime” and as “The Vow of Directing Virtue for Our Return to This World.” This vow is taken up in chapter four on “True Realization,” but it is not listed at the chapter’s outset and is not specifically quoted within the chapter, although it is discussed there.⁴ As Yasuda notes toward the end of this essay, “the essentials of Shinran scholarship are encompassed in these eight vows.”⁵

In commenting on these vows, Yasuda divides them into three groups. The first group includes the twelfth, thirteenth, and seventeenth vows, all linked as vows of great compassion. Yasuda also refers to them as vows of the Dharma. Yasuda first mentions the seventeenth vow, which appears at the outset of the chapter on “True Practice” and which reads: “If, when I attain Buddhahood, the countless Buddhas throughout the worlds of the ten quarters should not all praise and glorify my Name, may I not attain supreme enlightenment.”⁶ Shinran states in the first paragraph of the “True Practice” chapter that “[t]he great practice is to say the Name of the Tathagata of unhindered light,” and he then observes, “This practice arises from the Vow of great compassion, which is known as ‘the Vow that all the Buddhas extol the Name,’ . . .”⁷

The twelfth vow reads: “If, when I attain Buddhahood, my light not be infinite and not illumine even a hundred thousand nayutas of kotis of Buddha-lands, may I not attain the supreme enlightenment.”⁸ Vow thirteen states: “If, when I attain Buddhahood, my life not be infinite and not span even a hundred thousand nayutas of kotis of kalpas, may I not attain the supreme enlightenment.”⁹ Again Shinran comments, at the

beginning of the chapter on “True Buddha and Land” where these vows appear: “Reverently contemplating the true Buddha and the true land, I find that the Buddha is the Tathagata of inconceivable light and that the land is also the land of immeasurable light. Because they have arisen through the fulfillment of Vows of great compassion, they are called true fulfilled Buddha and land.”¹⁰

Yasuda’s commentary on the first three vows is lengthy and free flowing, and these few words of introduction cannot do justice to the complexity of his thought. Behind many of his comments, however, is a conception of the Primal Vow as itself “the transcendent foundation of all worlds” as well as the Primal Vow that is spoken of as the name *Namu Amida Butsu*. “When we speak of the name of the Primal Vow, before we say the name, the Primal Vow, which is our transcendent source, declares itself to us and calls us. It then supports those who have been awakened through the call. By *Namu Amida Butsu*, we mean that when we *Namu* (reverence) Amida Buddha, through that reverence we participate in the support that Amida Buddha provides; that is the truth of the Primal Vow.”¹¹ At several points in this section, Yasuda stresses that the name is the practice that grounds human beings in the ultimate source of their existence and makes them aware of their true identity as buddhas. He also notes that it is individuals with this self-awareness who dwell in the true buddha land. That land, he writes, “is the community of life that shares the single taste of the dharma-nature; sentient beings discover that truth in the Tathāgata’s Primal Vow that is the transcendent foundation of human beings.”¹²

About two-thirds of the way into this essay, Yasuda takes up a second group of vows, the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth vows. He refers to these as “the three vows regarding the capacity of practitioners to receive the Dharma.” I have mentioned several times in this book the eighteenth vow, “the vow of sincere entrusting,” in which the Tathāgata vows to cause all sentient beings who “sincerely and joyfully entrust themselves to me” to be born in his land. The nineteenth vow, “the vow of sincere aspiration,” reads: “If, when I attain Buddhahood, sentient beings of the ten quarters—awakening the mind of enlightenment and performing meritorious acts—should aspire with sincere mind and desire to be born in my land, and yet I should not appear before them at the moment of death surrounded by a host of sages, may I not attain the supreme enlightenment.”¹³ And the twentieth vow, “the vow of sincere transference of merit,” reads: “If, when I attain Buddhahood, the sentient beings of the ten quarters, on hearing my Name, should place their thoughts on my

land, cultivate the root of all virtues, and direct their merits with sincere mind desiring to be born in my land, and yet not ultimately attain it, may I not attain the supreme enlightenment.”¹⁴

Yasuda does not discuss these vows in any detail. Inagaki has described them as vows offering “different methods of salvation,” while noting that vow eighteen is the best.¹⁵ Yasuda writes: “Through these three vows, three times sentient beings of the ten directions are being called . . .”¹⁶ Among the three, Yasuda also privileges vow eighteen, pointing out that “the vows of sincere aspiration and of sincere transference of merit exist with the vow of sincere entrusting as their backdrop.”¹⁷ It is worth stressing that, in his brief discussion of these vows, Yasuda is concerned with the mental states that each vow highlights and not, for example, with the deathbed appearance of Amida in vow nineteen.

Yasuda finally brings two additional vows into the discussion, the eleventh vow and the twenty-second vow. The eleventh vow, on “the necessary attainment of nirvana,” reads: “If, when I attain Buddhahood, the human beings and devas in my land do not dwell among the settled and necessarily attain nirvana, may I not attain the supreme enlightenment,”¹⁸ and vow twenty-two, on “the returning and transfer of merit,” is a long vow and reads in part: “If, when I attain Buddhahood, bodhisattvas in the Buddha-lands of the other directions who visit my land should not ultimately and unfailingly reach the stage of becoming a buddha after one more life, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.”¹⁹ Yasuda provides almost no comments on these two vows. Instead, he concludes this essay with a fairly long reflection on two vows: vow seventeen, “The Vow That All Buddhas Say the Name,” which is associated with the chapter on “True Practice” and is included in the first set of three “vows of compassion” or “vows of the Dharma,” and, vow twenty, “The Vow of Sincere Mind and Directing Merit,” which is associated with the chapter on “Transformed Buddha-Bodies and Lands” and is included in the set of three vows that deal with the capacities of practitioners. On these pages Yasuda once again develops his view on the centrality of practice. The name *Namu Amida Butsu* is the “unity of practitioner and the Dharma,” he writes.²⁰ He also writes, “The practice of reciting the name is the entrusting mind itself. It is not that entrusting is added to practice; the essence of the entrusting mind is practice. . . . It is simply that the *nenbutsu* is the essential practice of the entrusting mind. The entrusting mind itself has no content; if the mind had some mental content, it would be concepts. That which causes the mind to break through the mind and become the fact of *Namu Amida Butsu* is the true entrusting mind.”²¹

“Fundamental Vow, Fundamental Word”

The seventeenth vow regarding the saying of the name by innumerable buddhas, in Shinran scholarship as you know, is regarded as the vow through which the great practice of the Primal Vow is fulfilled. In this vow, Shinran found an entirely new meaning. The name of the Tathāgata who sought the praise of innumerable buddhas is not a name that is simply a marker that indicates who the name refers to, but it is the name that is the practice of the compassionate vow that causes sentient beings to reach unsurpassed nirvana. In a sense, it is the name that is the logos of the Primal Vow. In this vow, which heretofore had been recognized as having only a secondary significance, an important doctrinal significance as the principle of the path of practice was discovered. Even if we say “the saying of the name by innumerable buddhas,” we cannot say that the reason why that vow was made is entirely clear. But it is seen as having a unique, systematic significance not only, in particular, as the vow of great compassion, but as the vow of the transference of merit leading to birth in the Pure Land and as the vow in which saying the name is selected. It vows the activity²² of the Primal Vow’s great compassion through which, through the selection of the saying of the name, the Tathāgata in his entirety is transferred to sentient beings; in short, I think it has the content that we can describe as the vow that in truth fulfills the Primal Vow.

When we mention the vow of great compassion, we also think of the twelfth vow of infinite light and the thirteenth vow of infinite life, which are the backdrop for the vow of saying the name. The three vows, from long ago, have been interpreted by commentators as the vows of the selection of the Dharma-body. In other words, they are vows that were made by the mind of aspiration of Dharmākara of the causal stage for the purpose of fulfilling his Dharma-body.²³ However, the light, life, and name that express the virtues of that Buddha body have the general significance of being held in common by the buddha bodies of all buddhas. If there is any limitation to the light and life indicated by that language, we cannot be referring to the Dharma-body. In particular, we cannot think that they have unique significance that would warrant making these vows as separate vows. If we look at this by relying on the “Chapter on the True Buddha and Land,” we see that Shinran discovered in these vows the inherent significance of the vow of great compassion.²⁴ Because the vow takes as its substance the embracing of all sentient beings, its essence is compassion. If we speak of this vow that is motivated by the compassion that is everywhere the same, it must be a vow that has the intention of

saving all sentient beings. The self that is the fulfillment of the Primal Vow that made this intention of salvation concrete is not merely the original state that is the formless and attribute-less dharma-nature; it is the self that has been fulfilled, the so-called Dharma-body of means. To the last, when viewed from the perspective of the Tathāgata’s fundamental Primal Vow, it cannot be spoken of as separate from the vow of the selection of the Dharma-body or the vows of the selection of sentient beings or Pure Lands; to the end, it must be mediated. Of course, this kind of categorization of the Primal Vow is merely an interpretation from the standpoint of an explanation that sees the Primal Vow objectively. The Tathāgata’s Primal Vow is, to the last, fundamental as a vow of the Tathāgata, but it is not unrelated to the aspirations of sentient beings. I believe that in that fact is hidden a deep internal connection between the Tathāgata and sentient beings. The Tathāgata and sentient beings, through the vows that are their desires,²⁵ are united as one, even as they confront one another. The vows of the Tathāgata are surely not something aroused apart from the vows of sentient beings and are therefore meaningless for sentient beings. And on the other hand, the vows of sentient beings, if they were to part from the pure desire of the Tathāgata, would end up as merely subjective wishes, and it would be impossible for those vows to become the will²⁶ in which vow and practice are replete. There is the vow of the Tathāgata to save sentient beings and the vow of sentient beings to be born in the Pure Land, but if we can think that the Tathāgata and sentient beings, at the same time that they confront each other, are, through their vows, related as one, there is only one vow. The self-same religious need runs through both. This religious need, because it fulfills each, causes the relationship between the two to be established. Of course, because desire constitutes the core of existence, for the existence of sentient beings and for the existence of the Tathāgata, we can speak of the inner essence as *Seele*.²⁷ Sentient beings and the Tathāgata, through this inner essence that is *Seele*, are deeply joined. In general, no matter what the buddha, there is no buddha without his own causal vows; on that point, buddhas are different from gods that are “others” for human beings. If sentient beings who are ordinary people awaken, they are buddhas, and buddhas are originally sentient beings who were ordinary people. But with regard to the vows of the other buddhas, those vows are one-directional and they do not have a mutual causal relationship with sentient beings. The relationship is external and accidental, and not internal and necessary. The buddhas of the ten directions are the buddhas of the lands of sentient beings of the

ten directions; the sentient beings of the ten directions are the sentient beings of the lands of the buddhas of the ten directions. That is a particular relationship within the context of an abstract generality. In contrast, the Primal Vow of the Tathāgata is the universal foundation of the worlds of the ten directions and is that which causes the buddhas to be buddhas and sentient beings to be sentient beings. The Primal Vow of the Tathāgata is the transcendent foundation of all worlds. From the perspective of the Primal Vow that both transcends the world and encompasses the world, both buddhas and sentient beings must be viewed. The world, from within, has a relationship to the world transcending foundation. From this fact, in the separate vow of the Dharma-body, there must be the meaning of the great compassion that benefits others along with benefiting self. It must be the fulfillment of the one that perfectly encompasses both self-benefit and other-benefit. In both vows twelve and thirteen, the vows of the Buddha body have become, just as they are, vows of the Buddha land. The land is the land of infinite light. In other words, the Buddha adorns himself as the true land of all sentient beings. The Buddha has the meaning of being the foundation of great compassion. In Vasubandhu's *Verses on the Aspiration for Birth*, he explains that the land of the Primal Vow arose from the mind of aspiration of the impartial great compassion that stems from supermundane roots; therefore, the substance of that land is great compassion.²⁸ The land is the community in which the Tathāgata and sentient beings share one and the same life. Stated directly, the Primal Vow is itself the Buddha itself. From the perspective of sentient beings, one awakens to the Tathāgata's Primal Vow as one's true land. The land, in particular, is that which symbolizes the core of the inner emotion and will of human existence. The reason why sentient beings cannot achieve self-satisfaction is because, although they seek that land, they cannot find it. The Primal Vow taught in the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* is, in general, the Primal Vow of the land. It is the vow to make it a land that causes all sentient beings to fulfill the Buddha path. The place where all sentient beings can live and die has the meaning of "land." To discover a land is salvation for sentient beings. The natural pure land that is the original land is the community of life that shares the single taste of the dharma-nature; sentient beings discover that truth in the Tathāgata's Primal Vow that is the transcendent foundation of human beings. Because it is taken up in the "Chapter on the True Buddha and Land," it appears as though it is the final point of arrival, but in fact it is the point of departure. The native place of all sentient beings becomes the foundation of great compassion. Sentient beings return to

their source. To return is to die; to depart is to be born. The place where one is born and achieves nirvana is the world that is our land. That is why to return is to be born.

In contrast to the twelfth and thirteenth vows regarding the Buddha body and Buddha land, which are the source of great compassion, Shinran discovered the further important significance that the name of the seventeenth vow is the transference of great compassion. When we look at the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, we see that, concerning the cause and effect of practice and entrusting, he says they “emerge from the Vow,” but I notice that in the “Chapter on the True Buddha and Land,” concerning the true and the provisional, he says that they “exist in the Vow.” The word “emerge” in the phrase they “emerge from the Vow” is probably taken from the terms “entering and emerging” used in the *Pure Land Treatise*. This word “emerge” has the significance of the transference of great compassion. The name of the seventeenth vow is the name of the Primal Vow that causes the fulfillment of the transference of the cause and effect of practice and entrusting. “To enter” refers to the source of great compassion; “to emerge” refers to the transference of that great compassion. Transference, rather than meaning “to give something,” signifies the transference of the Tathāgata himself. Through the name, the entirety of the cause and effect of the Tathāgata that fulfills the Tathāgata himself is fulfilled and transferred to sentient beings. The Tathāgata, without ceasing to be himself, turns and changes himself, just as he is, into the self of another—that is transference. That Tathāgata, as the Tathāgata, becomes sentient beings. As it is said, “Because one relies on self-benefit, one can benefit others; unless one is able to achieve self-benefit, there can be no benefiting of others.”²⁹ The Tathāgata, in that way, witnesses to himself. Again, as it is said, “Because one relies on benefiting others, one can benefit oneself; unless one is able to benefit others, there can be no benefiting of oneself.”³⁰ The Tathāgata adorns himself as the land. With this as a foundation, it is expressed in the name. Thus whenever the name appears, within that name, the Tathāgata himself is given. In the name, the Tathāgata becomes actual activity.³¹ The Tathāgata and his world are both internal and transcendent to the highest degree. We must say that the name is nothing other than the spiritual world, in the most concrete way, expressed in realistic activity. It is not a representational existence perceived as an existence of external objects; rather, it is a world of meaning sensed directly through language. It is a spiritual world in which meaning functions and in which meaning has its effects. In the spiritual world, language that has “being established” as its essence becomes real. Things

(*Ding*) do not function; meaning (*Sinn*) functions, and language is that in which function becomes real. That is why it is said that the Tathāgata's world is the realm where, through language, the Tathāgata's wisdom acts. Vasubandhu says that the adornments of the Pure Land are "the attributes of the wondrous realm of the first principle."³² That is the world of meaning that is dharma-nature. The dharma-nature of the first principle is without attributes, but that is why it is said that, because it symbolizes limitless abundant meanings in its nature, there are attributes. In regard to the virtues of the unfailing sustenance that are at the center of the twenty-nine kinds of virtues of the three types of adornments,³³ Vasubandhu sings their praises, saying, "When I observe the power of the Buddha's Primal Vow, those who meet it do not pass in vain; they are enabled to quickly attain the great treasure ocean of virtues."³⁴ In short, this passage is describing the natural functioning of the power of the Vow that, within the world of adornment, causes one to truly attain the entirety of the adorning virtues. At that time, when the eye of inner contemplation opens, just as one is, immediately the virtues are caused to be attained. That which constitutes this path of inner contemplation is nothing other than the name. When, through and in the name, one encounters the Primal Vow that is the source of the name, one receives the wondrous realm of the first principle that is the adornment of the mind of aspiration. When Shinran wrote, "With utmost speed one gains completely the one reality of thusness and the treasure ocean of virtues; therefore it is called great practice," he drew on the passage regarding "the virtues of unfailing sustenance."³⁵ The realm of dharma-nature that is the adornment of the mind of aspiration is also the name as the fact of *wirklich*.³⁶ Wherever the name is said or heard, no matter what the time, place, or person, the Pure Land is opened to all. Thus, when we look at the development of the three vows, which may be called the three vows of the Dharma, we realize the process through which the realm of dharma-nature gradually makes itself concrete, moving from the Dharma-body to the land, and from the land to the name. Ultimately, through the name, religious desire was able to make itself concrete as the Dharma, as the path, and as the Buddha Dharma of the Primal Vow. It became the Dharma that causes all sentient beings equally to become buddhas; by "concrete," we mean present activity. The Dharma as principle became concrete as the Dharma as practice. Wherever the name of the Primal Vow spreads, there is the Buddha Dharma. If there were no name, in terms of content, everything—the Dharma-body, the Dharma-

realm—all would be nothing more than a conceptual existence. Or, in terms of its function, its will would stop at mere subjective wishes.

What is important about the significance of the vow regarding the saying of the name by countless buddhas lies in the importance of the significance that practice has in the Buddha path. That the Vow does not stop at the Vow but becomes practice has the significance that in practice is the fact of present existence. Through language, the will of sentient beings can be fulfilled as the Dharma of present activity. It goes without saying that the Vow, by becoming practice, is not dissolved. The essence of the Vow lies in *wollen*. It is the sentiment that seeks eternally without stopping; in short, it is the yearning that does not know satisfaction. By becoming present activity, one may think that it is momentarily satisfied, but instead, it thereby becomes the will of present activity. By being realized, the Vow is not dissolved; on the contrary, it becomes the perfected Vow. From within the Vow, one develops the Vow infinitely. The essence of the Vow is desire. Desire is the source spring of the Vow. *Ursprung* is not a principle of logic but a principle of production.³⁷ We call desire the Vow that gives birth to vows. It appears that practice is the end point of the Vow, but in fact it is the beginning of the Vow. The idea that before there is the Primal Vow, there is practice is here established. Regarding the importance of the Vow for practice, if it were not for the fact of *wirklich* that is practice, everything would end up as doctrine. Buddhist scholarship is not the study that is the study of doctrine. Even if the study of doctrine is study about the Buddha path, it is not the Buddhist studies that involves doing Buddhism or the Buddhist studies that involves the practice of the Buddha path. It is the study done by a bystander. It is study in which the self has not become a problem. The study of the Buddha path, to the end, must be the study that causes the self to become a buddha. The Buddha Dharma that causes the self to be a buddha cannot be mere doctrine. For Buddhism to become mere doctrine is not the flourishing of the Buddha Dharma but the demise of Buddhism. The demise of Buddhism is not for Buddhism, even its doctrine, to disappear; rather, it is for Buddhism to become mere doctrine. Doctrinal research is something completely unrelated to the history of the Buddhist path. In practice, religion becomes reality. If there were no practice, the religious will that does not desire doctrine could not fulfill the fact that it is will. The compassionate vow of the Tathāgata could not be realized, and the mind that aspires for birth could not be satisfied. In short, the Tathāgata could not save nor could sentient beings be saved; basically, it would be

the frustration of religious yearnings. As a result, it would be the de-religionizing of religion.³⁸ To have no doubts that the study of Buddhism is doctrinal research constitutes one form of de-religionizing religion. Not only is it the rationalizing de-religionizing of religion, it is also anti-rational. In short, the de-religionizing of religion is the transforming of religion into humanism. The importance of the doctrinal significance of practice becomes clear when there is no practice. Not only is this true when there is no practice, but even more important it is true when practice is misunderstood. That is why we speak of true practice and the practice of the Primal Vow. That is why the saying of the name, or the name itself, is considered practice itself.

It may seem strange, but this name of the Primal Vow is not clearly expressed as *Namu Amida Butsu* in the Large and Small *Sutras of Immeasurable Life*. However, in the tradition of the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life*, it is clear that the name of the Primal Vow is *Namu Amida Butsu*. That *Namu Amida Butsu* is the name of the Primal Vow and that the Primal Vow is the Primal Vow of *Namu Amida Butsu* is a fact of the tradition that precedes the texts. It is not something that someone thought of. Rather than being the result of research, it is something that exists as a historical reality. It must be said that the texts were established on the basis of this fact. Because the Primal Vow itself becomes presently active as *Namu Amida Butsu* and bears witness to itself through the present activity of *Namu Amida Butsu*, the history of the Buddha path is established. The history of the Buddha path has as its essence the condition that the Primal Vow expresses and bears witness to itself. Both its expression and its bearing witness are practice. Therefore, it is referred to as present activity and as the practice that leads to realization. That this point is not clear in the texts, it must be said, is because it is clear as the activity of reality. Rather than the Primal Vow of *Namu Amida Butsu* and the *Namu Amida Butsu* of the Primal Vow being seen as the thought content explained in the texts, there is the historical reality from which the texts arose. That which causes history to be established is tradition. "Tradition" is always present existence.³⁹ It is that which should be called the flow of the Primal Vow. In *Yogācāra* scholarship, the condition of the fundamental consciousness is explained as "always changing, like a violent stream."⁴⁰ In contrast to the consciousnesses that have as their content concrete experiences, that are conscious of something, that are like the waves of the revolving consciousnesses,⁴¹ the simile of the *strom* is used for the fundamental consciousness that is the *grund* of experience, from which all experiences arise and to which they return. The significance of that simile

is that it is “always changing.” “Always” means without ceasing, and “changing” means without permanence; in other words, it has the significance of a continuous stream of discontinuity. It is always presently existing. It moves from present existence to present existence. The experience that is “Tradition” is explained as the fundamental consciousness. That is because the fundamental consciousness is made up of the seeds of all experiences. Through the seeds of experience that depend upon the perfuming of experience, the experience of “Tradition” is established. When we speak of “a stream,” we mean the stream of seeds. In the revolving consciousnesses that are presently active, continuation is not established. In any event, the present that is discontinuous is always continuous as the present. In this point of consistency, there is life. The Primal Vow, as a stream, is sustaining the history of the Buddha Dharma. The Primal Vow is the principle of life of the Buddha Dharma. If it were the case that events that arise vanished after they arose, like waves, there would be no distinction between them and events that did not arise. Things that end in unconsciousness cannot be spoken of as historical. Historical facts are events in time, but if their meaning is not sustained through time, they do not become history. At the same time that the seed of the Primal Vow becomes presently active as the name, that present activity perfumes itself and realizes the Primal Vow. Because the Primal Vow is the name and the name is the Primal Vow, we can say that historical transmission is established. Of course, we must distinguish between history as the passage of events, *Geschichte*, and history as historical writing, *Historie*. The formation of the texts is a *historisch* event, and the texts themselves are historical writing about the Primal Vow of the name. That is why it is said, “Explaining the Tathāgata’s Primal Vow constitutes the true intent of the text.”⁴² Before there is the history that is explained, history exists as practice.

In any event, the name of the Primal Vow that is not spoken of in the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* exists. I repeat, the name is not the “Name” that is a response to a *Wer*.⁴³ The name is not just a name. It is not that we added *Namu* to *Amida Butsu* from without. If it had that sense, the name would simply be a sign and would not be practice. When we speak of the name of the Primal Vow, before we say the name, the Primal Vow, which is our transcendent source, declares itself to us and calls us. It then supports those who have been awakened through the call. By *Namu Amida Butsu*, we mean that when we *Namu* (reverence)⁴⁴ Amida Buddha, through that reverence we participate in the relief that Amida Buddha provides; that is the truth of the Primal Vow. The Primal Vow takes *Namu Amida Butsu*

as its essence, and the concrete fact of the Primal Vow lies in *Namu Amida Butsu*. The Primal Vow, through the name, through the aspects of *Namu*'s calling and Amida Buddha's response, bears witness to sentient beings. Witness is born to the fact that sentient beings have a dignity that transcends human beings. If one *Namus* (reverences) Amida Buddha, one becomes Amida Buddha; that is the logic of *Namu Amida Butsu*. By means of a very simple form, a world-transcending undertaking is being carried out. By "bearing witness to," we mean that the natural truth of *Namu Amida Butsu* is being practiced and realized. In the seventeenth vow, "saying the Name" is regarded as the practice of all buddhas; in the eighteenth vow, the *nenbutsu* is the practice of sentient beings. What is the relationship between the saying of the name by all buddhas and the *nenbutsu* of sentient beings? Although this kind of problem arises, it is secondary. Before that, there is the name of the Primal Vow. There is the fact that the Primal Vow as the name is presently active. In relation to the Primal Vow, the *nenbutsu* is the saying of the name, and it is *Namu Amida Butsu*. If one *Namus* (reverences) Amida Buddha, then as a natural law, one becomes Amida Buddha. The Primal Vow as the name practices and realizes the logic of the Primal Vow. This is the primal fact that stands before everything else. It is the primal, fundamental fact that is not doctrine. It must be said that it is there that exists the foundation of Buddhist studies that is not the study of doctrine. There, all sentient beings have become buddhas. Whether we speak of sentient beings or all buddhas, if there are no human beings, the Buddha Dharma does not become practice. If that is the case, it must eternally remain as the Dharma. Of course, as is indicated by the words, "the Dharma dwells in the Dharma state," in its unchanging unique nature, unaffected by humans, there is the essence of the Dharma. Even if it becomes practice, dharmature is not lost; rather, witness is born to it. Practice is, after all, the practice of the Dharma. It is the practice that bears witness to the Dharma. That is pure practice. It is the practice that conforms to reality explained in the *Pure Land Treatise*. The Dharma is practiced by humans. In a sense, the Dharma becomes human and witnesses to the Dharma. *Namu Amida Butsu* is not simply the Dharma. The name of the Primal Vow is the Dharma that is practice. It is the Dharma that has become humans. In a sense, the name has the significance of "Inkarnation."⁴⁵ Therefore, the name of the Primal Vow is not merely the appellation of Amida Buddha. Rather, it is the declaration of the name that places weight on *Namu* (reverence). It is the declaration of the name of the Primal Vow. To *Namu* (reverence) Amida Buddha is the call of Amida Buddha, the call of our

original country. Because it is the foundation of the self that transcends us, that calls us “thou” and awakens us, because it is that linguistic expression—Shinran speaks of it as “the command of the call” that is the absolute law of life.⁴⁶ The “thou” is the self that is born within the name. It is the self that transcends the self and becomes the self. Through *Namu Amida Butsu*, for the first time, one receives awareness of the self. Self-aware existence in the true sense begins with *Namu Amida Butsu*. In any event, humans that are born from the Dharma bear witness to the Dharma and transmit the Dharma. Through practice, humans are born from the Dharma, and the Dharma is transmitted by humans who have been born from the Dharma. There, history as *Geschichte* is established. If there was not human existence, the truth would eternally stop at the level of the truth and would not become fact. Thus, even though we speak of humans, they are buddhas who are awakened existences. Even though we speak of history, it is only the history of buddhas. It is the history of the Buddha Dharma. It is not the history of doctrine or the history of thought. It is not the history of historiography. The history that is saved by *Namu Amida Butsu* is the history that practices and bears witness to the great aspiration for enlightenment. It is the history of buddhas mutually being mindful of one another. It is the history in which there is not even one ordinary person. Even if physically they are an ordinary person, their status is that of a buddha. Even if we speak of practice, it does not signify practice that is human effort; that is why it is called great practice. The path of practice that involves saying the *nembutsu* is extremely simple; indeed, it is the practice in which no effort is required. There is no room for human effort. In Prajñā scholarship, dharma-nature is said to have the meaning of the nature of emptiness being empty; thus, it is said to be something that cannot be represented through speculation, it is said to be ungraspable emptiness, and it is explained as emptiness that is itself empty. Hence it is a word that prohibits speculation. The content of speculation on emptiness is not emptiness. The representation of emptiness and emptiness itself are unrelated. The nature of emptiness, in its meaning, is not an “Idee.”⁴⁷ It is a cipher or code word. Therefore, Nāgājūna called it “a provisional name.” In the same way, even though we speak of practice, it is not effort. It is not the practice of reason. As long as one discerns it as practice, practice in accord with reality cannot be established. A *nembutsu* that is a method of attaining a goal is not the *nembutsu* itself; it is merely a misunderstanding of the *nembutsu* that is interpreted as human effort. *Nembutsu* is saying the name, it is *Namu Amida Butsu*. There is almost no way of investing it with effort. The great

practice, for us, is the self-awareness that effort is unnecessary. Through it, one is given absolute fulfillment that requires nothing else. If one discards everything and takes refuge in the *nenbutsu*, everything will be satisfied in the *nenbutsu*. The *nenbutsu* is absolute good. Therefore, it is said, “it embraces all good acts and possesses all roots of virtue” and “with utmost speed it brings complete fulfillment; it is the one reality of true thusness, and the treasure ocean of virtues.”⁴⁸ Because it has that content, the *nenbutsu* is the practice that is an end in itself, and through the *nenbutsu*, the life of human beings becomes the life that is an end in itself. In the *nenbutsu*, the life of human beings begins. It is not that one is born in the Pure Land through the *nenbutsu*; the *nenbutsu* is birth in the Pure Land. Birth in the Pure Land signifies a new existence. Each day is a new life. The one practice of the *nenbutsu* encompasses one’s entire life; it is *das neue Sein*.⁴⁹ That which the Primal Vow practices through our entire body and spirit is the *nenbutsu*. We become existences for whom the end in itself is the dissolution of all questions such as “Why am I alive?” The Zen teacher Dōgen too says, “Don’t try to become a buddha.” He practiced simply sitting as the practice that accords with reality. This is not meditation undertaken to become a buddha; meditation itself is the practice of a buddha. The practice of a buddha is not a fixed method; rather, if one sits for a day, one is a buddha for a day; if one sits for two days, one is a buddha for two days. It is an infinite process of practicing being a buddha. At the source and beginning of human existence, there is the *nenbutsu*. Human beings do not discover the *nenbutsu* from within human beings; human beings from the beginning exist within the *nenbutsu*. The basis of human beings exists within the *nenbutsu* that transcends human beings. Whether human beings know it or not, and unrelated to the mode of existence of human beings, human beings exist within the name of the Primal Vow. This is the primal order of human beings that exists prior to all other modes of their existence. This primal order, unrelated to whether human beings know it or believe it or not, is the transcendent structure, the original order; in short, it is the Dharma-realm. It is because it is so that, at the appropriate time and for those of appropriate capacities, it is possible to awaken to it. Further, the reason why people rejoice in and are moved by the entrusting mind that arises through the hearing of the name of the Primal Vow exists within the name of the Primal Vow. In a sense, it has its origins in the fact that the basic mode of existence of human beings lies within the womb of the Tathāgata; it is existence within the Tathāgata, *in der Tathāgata Sein*.⁵⁰

In sum, if there is no connection to the present reality of history, then we cannot speak of practice. It is possible to observe history as an object; however, that observation, in fact, is practice that takes place within history. Engaging in inner contemplation on the Primal Vow takes form as the practice of the Primal Vow. Entrusting takes form as practice. History cannot be observed from the sidelines. In the history that is the present activity of the Primal Vow, there is a power that moves us. That which we call the awesome sacred power is the awesome power of history. The power of the Primal Vow that quickly causes satisfaction is the power of history that moves us. Along with the expression “mind of aspiration,” the expression “power of aspiration” exists in the *Pure Land Treatise*;⁵¹ the present activity of the mind of aspiration is the power of aspiration. The word *Macht*, along with *Tat*, belongs to the fundamental concepts of scholarship.⁵² It is said, “The saying of the name can break through all ignorance of sentient beings and fulfill all of their aspirations.”⁵³ The virtues of the land where “the aspirations of sentient beings are completely satisfied” are directed back to us in the saying of the name. Through the history of the Primal Vow, we come into contact with the land. History itself is the land. That kind of history is the history of the Primal Vow. However, the capacity of the name to break through ignorance is the premise for its capacity to fulfill. The name is called the voice of the name; hence, the name is the word that is the call of the mind of aspiration. It is the voice that calls to us and that awakens us within. The enabling power that breaks us and transforms us exists in practice. The present activity of history does not stand outside us as an object of observation. It does not permit our observation of it as a bystander. The history that can be watched from the outside is nothing more than the history that is *historisch*. Regarding history that is *geschichtlich*, we are placed within history.⁵⁴ True practice is not effort; it is the practice that is spontaneous. It has the power to cause one to stand on the Vow, breaking through the ineffectiveness and ignorance of effort. That which has the power to make trust possible is spontaneous practice. Through the power of history we come into contact with the inner face of history, and the eye of inner contemplation is caused to open. That becomes the path for living in the Primal Vow. To awaken within history is to live in history. It is to be systematized in the great practice of history. It is not going around the edges of history. Contemplating the Primal Vow is done within the Primal Vow. Only within the history of the Primal Vow does one know the Primal Vow. And to know the Primal Vow is at the same time to live in the Primal Vow. The history that involves living in the history of

the Primal Vow, even though we call it history, is not the *Histoire* that is written. It is the present reality that is the Primal Vow. The history that involves living in the Primal Vow cannot be written. It is not the history of historiography but the movement of the Primal Vow as it unfolds limitlessly. This history that is continuously transmitted is the living Buddha path itself. The present activity of the Buddha path itself is history. In sum, there is no Buddha path beyond the history of the Buddha path. The history that cannot be written is important. Its essence is the name. In the name is the entirety of the whole history of the development of the Primal Vow. That all sentient beings have been saved through the name—the entirety of that fact—does not go beyond the name of *Namu Amida Butsu*. The name that is the practice of the Primal Vow awakens all sentient beings to the Primal Vow, and the entirety of the functioning of the great practice that encompassed them all is, as it is, *Namu Amida Butsu*. *Namu Amida Butsu* is itself the Buddha path. The entire history of the Buddha path is contained within it. The religious demand that is the soul of the Buddha path discovered the name of *Namu Amida Butsu* as the path to completion of the self. It goes without saying that such a name is not simply an individual name for the sign that is the name. It is not that the name was added to the Buddha. The Buddha himself is the name that became the Buddha. Even if we call it an “individual name,” it is an inherent “individual” rather than a special “individual;” in other words, it is the “individual” that is the name of the Primal Vow. It is the name that should be called the original word. Rather than the mark of a personal existence, it is a word of truth. It is the word of the Buddha Dharma that causes the Buddha to be the Buddha. It is the *shingon* of the Dharma that bears witness to the Dharma that gave birth to the Buddha, and through the Buddha’s birth, all human beings as well have been caused to be buddhas. Words give birth to buddhas. Dharma-nature is truth that exists apart from words, but without losing the dharma-nature that exists apart from words, it becomes active as words. At the point where truth, *Wahrheit*, becomes reality, *Wirklichkeit*, it has the meaning that permits us to call it a *shingon*.⁵⁵ Of course, it is not a *dharani* that is a magical incantation. It is not a *shingon* of esoteric Buddhism, but a *shingon* of exoteric Buddhism; it is a real word. To the end, it is *klar* and it has been made *offen*.⁵⁶ Truth that has clearly been made public for anyone, at any place and at any time, is wise language. The name, “Name,” is something that is established, and having the nature of a sign is its essence, and because of that, it can become an expression.⁵⁷ As an expression, it is a symbol of that which it expresses. The very words expressed are them-

selves the mind of aspiration that expresses. In this sense, prior to the Buddha, there was the Dharma. Thereafter came the Buddha with which the original name began. Although we speak of a “beginning,” we are not talking about time. Because it is original, because it is preexisting, because it exists everywhere, we say “beginning.” By “beginning,” we mean the source. Beginning and end refers to the source and its branches. We speak this way about the manner of its existence. Shinran said of the meaning of the name, “The *go* of *myōgo* (the name) refers to the name of the Tathāgata after he became the Buddha; the *myō* is the name of the Tathāgata before he became a Buddha,”⁵⁸ and again, “The character for *myō* is the name of the causal stage, and the character for *go* is the name of the resultant stage.”⁵⁹ It is not only that *Namu Amida Butsu* is the name of the truly awakened one of the resultant stage; it is also the name of the Primal Vow of the causal stage. The name of the truly awakened one is not Amida Buddha, but *Namu Amida Butsu*. And the Primal Vow of the causal stage itself is already the Primal Vow of *Namu Amida Butsu*. The Primal Vow of *Namu Amida Butsu* became *Namu Amida Butsu*. *Namu Amida Butsu* encompasses the Tathāgata’s cause and effect. At the same time that *Namu Amida Butsu* is the Primal Vow, it is the realization of the Primal Vow; at the same time that the Primal Vow arose, it was already realized. When the Primal Vow discovered *Namu Amida Butsu*, already the Primal Vow was realized. Even though we speak of cause and effect, it is not the cause and effect that is a category of nature; rather, cause and effect are simultaneously and mutually cause and effect, and its essence is the one *Namu Amida Butsu*. The name *Namu Amida Butsu* thus is not the sign of someone or something; it is the principle of conditioning that is mutual cause and effect. It is the principle of response, of cause and effect mutually becoming the condition for the other, of the cause anticipating the effect and the effect responding to the cause. Regardless of whether one knows it or not, as “*Wahrheit an sich*,”⁶⁰ it is identical to the self.

I am speaking of the Primal Vow in a general way, but in referring to the Primal Vow, the premise is that, rather than the causal vows, it refers to the fundamental vow. If one speaks of the vows of the causal stage, we can say that all forty-eight of the vows expounded in the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* are the Primal Vow. However, when we speak of the fundamental vow, it must be the one vow. It is illogical that there could be a variety of fundamental vows. But the variety of vows must also be vows. It is like the fundamental consciousness of Yogācāra teachings. It explains consciousness not as one consciousness but as the three categories and eight kinds of consciousness.⁶¹ The names of the three categories of

consciousness indicate the classification of the various consciousnesses, but the order of the arrangement of the various consciousnesses indicates their layers. The storehouse consciousness that is the deepest layer is called the fundamental consciousness; the foundation of the various consciousnesses, the basis of the upper layers of consciousness that are the seven revolving consciousnesses, is consciousness. This is because the basis of consciousness cannot be established from unconscious *dharma*s. In a parallel fashion, we can speak of the vow that is the foundation of the various vows as the Primal Vow. Of course, even though we speak of the vow of the Tathāgata, it was the confusion of the Hossō school to think that the Dharma that is the vow could be spontaneously produced from the dharma-nature that is thusness.⁶² Dharma-nature is, to the last, the dharma-nature that is the mind-dharma of the mind of aspiration; there is no separate Dharma that is dharma-nature. Because it is the affective will of the mind that has awakened to dharma-nature, we call it the Primal Vow of the Tathāgata. It is not the desire of someone. It is not that there is someone who expresses a desire; rather, through desire, someone is established. We speak of the Tathāgata, of sentient beings, and again of the various Buddhas and bodhisattvas—they are merely stages of desire that have been established on the basis of the one desire. Speaking more generally, there is only the desire that is the one religious demand. Because its original nature is pure and clean, we speak of it as the Primal Vow of the one thusness. We call it pure and clean because, even if it becomes impure and sullied, it does not lose its original nature. That is, because it encompasses the impure and sullied and purifies them, we speak of it as the pure and clean. Because the original nature of the mind of aspiration is pure and clean and has no fixed substance as its original nature, its vow can be without limit, subjectively becoming more and more profound. And correspondingly, it can broaden in terms of its content; that is the vow's internal development. As it is explained, "The Tathāgata's sea of wisdom is deep and broad, without limits. It is not something that the two vehicles can fathom. Only the Buddha alone clearly understands this."⁶³ Hence, the Tathāgata's vow is limitlessly deep and broad, and without limit it can become still deeper and broader. No matter how it may develop, the vow will not become something other than the vow. Because it is not a vow that emerged from that which is not the vow, it will not come to an end in that which is not the vow; encompassing its entire development, it is the single vow. It encompasses all sentient beings, all buddhas, and all bodhisattvas; in a word, it is world-transcending. The Tathāgata's Primal Vow is this kind

of thing. It is the desire that is the religious demand itself. If the basis for this world-transcending desire were lost, the world itself would become totally meaningless. No matter how sentient beings transmigrated, they would be meaninglessly transmigrating. Apart from this fundamental desire, even transmigration would be impossible. As long as sentient beings have this fundamental desire at the foundation of the self, no matter how they may transmigrate, they cannot lose hope in the self. In any event, on the basis of this kind of fundamental Primal Vow, the significance of the forty-eight vows must be taught. We must understand the Primal Vow of the causal stage, variously numbered as twenty-four or forty-eight, as the spontaneous development of the single, fundamental Primal Vow. It has already been pointed out that the forty-eight vows are forty-eight practices. Speaking frankly, the five *kalpas* of Dharmakāra’s contemplation are the practice of the training for eternal *kalpas*. The development of the forty-eight vows is the practice of contemplation of the mind of aspiration. It is the practice of reflection in which the Primal Vow internally contemplates itself. In this way, the content of the vows became delimited. The fundamental vow that spontaneously developed as forty-eight vows must first be the foundation of the forty-eight vows. But as I said earlier regarding the name as *myōgō*, this is not clearly expressed in the text. The forty-eight vows that are explained in the text are the expression of the vows as cited in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*. The forty-eight vows that are expressed in language are so expressed on the foundation of the Primal Vow that is not expressed. The Primal Vow that is not expressed is truly the actually existing Primal Vow. The expression of the Primal Vow in language has the unexpressed Primal Vow as its premise. If there is not first the actually existing Primal Vow—the actually existing Primal Vow of present activity within which we are given life—we cannot be instructed by the teachings of the Primal Vow. It is not simply that we hear and ponder the teachings; rather, we are able to hear and ponder them. It is precisely because we are part of the actually existing Primal Vow that, drawn by its reverberations, we are able to hear and ponder it. And if we are not drawn by its reverberations, we cannot be instructed. If it is not this way, then it is a different way of thinking about the Primal Vow. It becomes Primal Vow thought. In other words, the Primal Vow becomes the Primal Vow of fables. To hear and ponder is not the hearing of a story; it must be the practice of inner contemplation. It must be the practice of self-awakening that opens up the interior of the self. What is important is the Primal Vow that is not expressed in language, the actually existing Primal Vow. That

is the fundamental Primal Vow, and the Primal Vow of the original state that exists before teachings. Its existence is the fundamental premise. It is not that it is not expressed in language; rather, because it is presently existing, it cannot be expressed in language. In that case, we may ask: How does the actually existing fundamental Primal Vow actually exist? With what attributes is it actually existing? To be actually existing is already the fact of present activity. Thus, it must exist in the words *Namu Amida Butsu*. The name of *Namu Amida Butsu* is the actual existence of the Primal Vow. The essence of the Primal Vow is entirely in the name. Beyond the name, there is no Primal Vow. Through the name, for the first time, the Primal Vow becomes the fact of present activity. The seeds give rise to present activity. In short, through that which is called the name, the Primal Vow was able to identify itself. The name *Namu Amida Butsu* is precisely the self that it had been forever desiring. It was the self's original face. Through the expression of itself, it was able to become self-aware. "The seeds giving rise to present activity" is, at the same time, "present activity perfuming the seeds."⁶⁴ It was able to bear witness to itself. In the Primal Vow itself, there is no shape or attributes. The self is not delimited. Through discovering *Namu Amida Butsu*, it was able to make itself concrete; in a sense, it was able to become a concrete concept. The Primal Vow that is the Dharma-body of dharma-nature was, through the name, able to become the Dharma-body of means; that which exists apart from words became words. As a result, however, the dharma-nature that exists apart from words was not lost but, on the contrary, became concrete. That which exists apart from words and that was buried was made apparent. That which exists apart from words was truly able to manifest that fact that it exists apart from words. That which became words was that which exists apart from words itself. That is what we mean by expression. Here the dharma-nature that was hidden by sentient beings is realized in a self-aware way by sentient beings, and once realized, it was nothing other than their original state. The realization of the original state we can speak of as "means." In this sense, the Primal Vow is the Primal Vow of the name, and the name is the name of the Primal Vow. The Primal Vow is the name, and the name is the Primal Vow. The reality of the Primal Vow is the name, and the Primal Vow is presently active as the name. If one reflects on that present activity, one realizes that the source of the name is the Primal Vow. The name is the concrete reality of the vow as the words of the vow that exists apart from words. First, there is the name of the Primal Vow and the Primal Vow of the name. This is the fundamental concept that is the basis of scholarship. By the Primal

Vow that has the meaning of being inherent, we mean the Primal Vow of the name. In contrast to *Grundwollen*, the name of the Primal Vow that is the name that has the meaning of being inherent must be placed at the basis of scholarship as *Grundwort*.⁶⁵ In the area of scholarship, the basic scholarship is the theory of the Primal Vow. Shinran scholarship is, to the end, the scholarship of principle. Can't we say that the framework of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* is its theory of the Primal Vow?

At the beginning of this essay, I spoke about the three vows, the twelfth, thirteenth, and seventeenth. I spoke about the fact that the name of the seventeenth vow had the twelfth and thirteenth vows concerning the Pure Land's immeasurable light and life as its backdrop and that these three vows had the significance of the three vows of the Dharma. They have the overall significance as being the vows of great compassion. But in contrast to the three vows of the Dharma, there are the three vows regarding the capacity to receive the Dharma, the eighteenth vow of sincere entrusting, the nineteenth vow of sincere aspiration, and the twentieth vow of sincere transference of merit. In them—the three vows that realize the capacities of practitioners—arises the problem of “the three capacities and three births.”⁶⁶ But ultimately, the vows of sincere aspiration and of sincere transference of merit exist with the vow of sincere entrusting as their backdrop. Through these three vows, three times sentient beings of the ten directions are being called. And the words “to desire to be born in my land,” which can be called the soul of the Primal Vow, appear. To desire to be born bears witness to entrusting. The realization of the capacity of the practitioner refers to development of the practitioner's sincere mind of entrusting. That is because, through this, for the first time, a sentient being becomes a subjective existence. The Primal Vow that speaks its name from within the state of entrusting is the desire to be born. It is the principle of the self-awareness of the entrusting mind that bears witness to the entrusting that, out of entrusting, transcends entrusting. If we call the three vows of the Dharma the vows of great compassion, the three vows regarding the capacity of practitioners to receive the Dharma are the vows of the wisdom of self-awareness. It is the content of the one mind that encompasses the three minds that appears in the question-and-answer section in the “Chapter on Entrusting.”⁶⁷ In the “Chapter on the Transformed Buddha-Bodies and Lands” as well, this is picked up and appears in the question-and-answer section.⁶⁸ Following the “Chapter on Entrusting,” it appears in the question-and-answer sections. A central problem of scholarship appears here. Furthermore, surrounding the three vows of the Dharma and the three vows

regarding the capacities of practitioners, there is the eleventh vow of the necessary attainment of nirvana and the twenty-second vow of returning and transferring merit. Although we speak of forty-eight vows, the essentials of Shinran's scholarship are encompassed in these eight vows. These things are generally known, and they carry within them various scholarly problems. In any event, in these eight vows are placed the principles of the system of scholarship called the "two transferences and four teachings."⁶⁹ Within that system, what is most important in Shinran's scholarship is, among the three vows of the Dharma, the seventeenth vow regarding the recitation of the name and, among the three vows regarding the capacities of practitioners, the twentieth vow regarding their attainment of birth—this, it is thought, is what Shinran discovered. In the passage declaring the realization of the vow regarding sincere entrusting, there are the important expressions of "hearing the name" and "sincere transference," but neither hearing the name nor transference are included in the vow of the sincere mind; rather, they appear in the twentieth vow that promises the attainment of birth. The significance of hearing the name in the twentieth vow and the meaning of the recitation of the name of the seventeenth vow—as indicated by the important vow that the name be heard throughout the ten directions—is that the recitation of the name is for the purpose of hearing the name. Shinran discovered in the name the significance of transference. The recitation of the name of the seventeenth vow and the transference of the twentieth vow are in a relationship in which the opposition between the Dharma and the capacity of the practitioner is maintained at the same time that they can never be separated. In his interpretation of the twentieth vow, Shinran takes up the problem of the transformed mind that enters the three vows, but about the mind of sincere transference of the twentieth vow he says, "The Dharma is sudden, the capacity of the practitioner is gradual."⁷⁰ The two vows of the seventeenth and the twentieth are tied together as the problem of the sudden Dharma and the gradual capacity of the practitioner. The two vows of the seventeenth and the twentieth are united in contrasting opposition. However, because it said that in general the three vows are for three different capacities of practitioners, the opposition is relative. On this point, there appears a detailed analysis of actual existence. This is a special characteristic of the so-called "Chapter on Self-Realization," the chapter after the "Chapter on Entrusting," which is developed with its separate introduction. It is an analysis of the capacities of practitioners that is supported by the Dharma. In contrast, the central focus of the "Chapter on Practice" that concludes

with the “Verse on True Entrusting” is the Dharma that encompasses the capacities of the practitioners, not simply the Dharma, but *Namu Amida Butsu* that is the unity of practitioner and Dharma.

The name *Namu Amida Butsu* comes before everything else. The doctrine of the two transferences and four teachings is granted through the name of the Primal Vow that is *Namu Amida Butsu*. The “Chapter on Practice” lays this out in its entirety. The entrusting mind of the “Chapter on Entrusting” is also established with the name as its essence. The entrusting mind is granted through the name. What is important in regard to the entrusting mind is practice. Where there is no practice, there is no way that entrusting can be established. Even if trust is established, it would be only a conceptualized trust, a trust that is individualistic and subjective. The content of the true entrusting mind is said to be the two kinds of deep trust that links the practitioner and the Dharma.⁷¹ It is the true entrusting mind arising from the transference of other power, but that is because it has the great practice of the name as its essence. The practice of reciting the name is the entrusting mind itself. It is not that entrusting is added to practice; the essence of the entrusting mind is practice. That is because that which cannot be doubted is the fact of its present activity. The fact of its present activity does not exist as an object; rather, practice fills our entire bodies. At that point where both body and mind become *Namu Amida Butsu* and where there is no room to distinguish it as an object, beyond that absolute acknowledgment, there is no entrusting. It is simply that the *nenbutsu* is the essential practice of the entrusting mind. The entrusting mind itself has no content; if the mind had some mental content, it would be concepts. That which causes the mind to break through the mind and become the fact of *Namu Amida Butsu* is the true entrusting mind. It is said that one truly receives the entrusting mind while reciting Amida’s name. Through recitation of the name, one receives entrusting. The entrusting mind is true because the establishment of the entrusting mind is true, because it is granted through the recitation of the name. It is not that the truth of the *nenbutsu* is established through the truth of the entrusting mind. It is the reverse. Because the recitation of the name is true, the entrusting mind is true. By “true,” stated more precisely, we mean sincere. As it is said, sincerity has the name as its essence.⁷² It is through entrusting that one establishes the sincerity that has the name as its essence and is totally without doubt regarding the name. In sum, with practice as the essence, one establishes entrusting. Through the transference of the name, one is granted entrusting. Through this entrusting, one reflects on oneself and the practice

that has been transferred to one and awakens to the mind of aspiration that transfers the great compassion; that is the aspiration of desiring birth in the Pure Land. Because it is entrusting that has been established through practice, by reflecting on practice, one can awaken to the mind of aspiration that is the wellspring of practice. Through the aspiration of desiring birth in the Pure Land, practice becomes central. In short, that which is essential is established. It is said that one is granted sincerity through the entrusting mind that takes practice as its essence. We speak of it as the passive aspect of the entrusting mind, but the desire for birth in the Pure Land is the active aspect; the movement is from passive to active. If one awakens to the mind of aspiration that is the source of practice, that aspiration causes entrusting to be established as the vow; the entrusting mind totally becomes the vow. Practice causes entrusting to be established, but the desire for birth bears witness to entrusting. In this way, because the true entrusting mind is explained in the “Chapter on Practice,” it is not that for the first time one learns about entrusting in the “Chapter on Entrusting;” rather, it is the “Chapter on Practice” that in fact explains the essence of the entrusting mind. That is why the name of the “Chapter on Practice” encompasses everything. Having established entrusting through practice, that which expresses that entrusting is the “Verse on True Entrusting.”⁷³ The “Chapter on Practice” begins with the words “There is the great practice.”⁷⁴ Shinran then chiefly explains great practice, but when he finishes explaining the transmission of great practice, he returns to the connection between practice and entrusting with the words “Thus one who gains true practice and entrusting . . .”⁷⁵ Practice and entrusting are simultaneous. That is because, through *Namu Amida Butsu*, they are united. In sum, the great practice and the great entrusting are one. That is the reality of the Primal Vow of *Namu Amida Butsu*. The line “one who gains the true practice and entrusting” refers to sentient beings. As a fact of present reality, it refers to us. If there is no relation to sentient beings, we cannot speak of practice. Practice must be related to sentient beings who are practitioners; and entrusting refer to those who are practitioners. Unless they are received by sentient beings, we cannot speak of practice and entrusting; that is, the Primal Vow becomes reality for sentient beings in practice and entrusting. Although it is reality for sentient beings, we speak of it as great practice and great entrusting, and as the true practice and entrusting, because it transcends sentient beings. But there is a difference in the direction of movement between practice and entrusting. When the Primal Vow is expressed through sentient beings, we speak of practice; practice is the result of the

Vow. In contrast, when we reflect on the movement from the practice that is the result to the Vow that is the cause, we speak of entrusting. Practice is something conferred on sentient beings, and because of that, it always transcends sentient beings; it does not become a possession of sentient beings. To acquire is not to possess but to experience. The content of the experience is practice; even though it is experienced by sentient beings, dharma-nature transcends sentient beings. On the other hand, even though entrusting is something conferred, it has to do with the individual him- or herself. That which entrusts without a doubt is sentient beings themselves. The entrusting mind is the self and self-awareness of the self. Although we may ask how practice is conferred, that which knows that it is conferred is the entrusting mind. In any case, it is in practice that the Primal Vow is experienced. It is entrusting that, reflecting on the essence of practice, first senses the Vow that is the source. There is this kind of difference between practice and entrusting, but both are transferred as *Namu Amida Butsu*. The pronouncement of this understanding of practice and entrusting is contained in the “Verse on True Entrusting.” The “Verse on True Entrusting” is Shinran’s pronouncement on entrusting. But when one examines its content, it is not a pronouncement of an individualistic, subjective trust. *Namu Amida Butsu* is the name of the Primal Vow. It is not an individualistic, subjective experience, and in that sense it is historical. *Namu Amida Butsu* is the history of the essence of the practice of the Primal Vow. The Primal Vow has been transmitted as the practice of the name. The Dharma that has been practiced and realized by countless numbers of nameless people who have been called by the Primal Vow, which has the name as its essence, is the name of the Primal Vow. Behind the eminent monks of the three countries, there are countless numbers of nameless people.⁷⁶ The sentient beings who have been born in the name and died in the name are buddhas. In this history, Shinran discovered the significance of great practice. The entrusting mind that has practice as its essence is not an experience of the individual’s subjective perception; rather, it must be spoken of as the firm entrusting of history. The line “That which should be trusted are the teachings of the eminent monks” refers to this firm entrusting.⁷⁷ These are not simply the words of the pronouncement; rather, the entirety of the Buddha Dharma is exhausted within them. Beyond the history of the Buddha Dharma, there is no Buddha Dharma. There is the “Chapter on Entrusting,” but it does not simply expound on the entrusting mind; rather, the place where the entrusting mind is expounded is the “Chapter on Practice.” The “Chapter on Entrusting,” rather than expounding upon

entrusting, takes up as its problem the entrusting mind. It presents the central problem of Shin scholarship and attempts a solution. The “Chapter on Entrusting” is something that was separately explained in a question-and-answer format. The “Verse on True Entrusting,” which is the general summary of the first two chapters—which are the explanatory part of the *Kyōgyōshinsho*—is the true, overall explanation of entrusting. It is not that the “Chapter on Practice” deals with practice and the “Chapter on Entrusting” deals with entrusting. This hymn and the questions and answers are the substance, the real content, of the framework provided in these chapters.

Source: Yasuda Rijin senshū hensan iinkai, ed., *Yasuda Rijin senshū*, vol. 1 (Kyoto: Bun’eidō, 1994), 440–462; originally published in *Shinran Kyōgaku* no. 21 (December 1972).

Abbreviations

Frequently Cited Works

- CWS Hirota, Dennis, Hisao Inagaki, Michio Tokunaga, and Ryushin Uryuzu, eds. *The Collected Works of Shinran*. 2 vols. Kyoto: Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-ha, 1997.
- ITSJ Hiromatsu, Wataru, Koyasu Nobuyuki, and Mishima Kenchi, eds. *Iwanami tetsugaku shisō jiten*. Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1998.
- T *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō*. Edited by Takakusu Junjirō, Watanabe Kaigyoku, and Ono Genmyō. 100 vols. Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1924–1934. Cited as follows: The number immediately following the *T* is the text number, followed by the volume number, page number, register, and line number.
- YRS Yasuda Rijin. *Yasuda Rijin senshū*. Edited by Yasuda Rijin senshū hensan iinkai. 22 vols. Kyoto: Bun'eidō shoten, 1994.

Language Abbreviations

- Ch. Chinese
J. Japanese
Skt. Sanskrit

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Notes

Introduction

- 1 Throughout this book, I refer to Amitābha or Amitāyus as Amida, except when cited materials use the Sanskrit form of this Buddha's name.
- 2 For discussions of the variety of ways that Amida has been incorporated into Buddhist practice in Tibet, Nepal, the People's Republic of China, Japan, and Taiwan, see Richard K. Payne and Kenneth K. Tanaka, eds., *Approaching the Land of Bliss: Religious Praxis in the Cult of Amitābha*, A Kuroda Institute Book, Studies in East Asian Buddhism, 17 (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004). On the magical appropriation of Pure Land Buddhism, see Ichiro Hori, "Nembutsu as Folk Religion," in *Folk Religion in Japan: Continuity and Change*, ed. Joseph M. Kitagawa and Alan L. Miller (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 83–139.
- 3 Robert F. Rhodes, "The Beginning of Pure Land Buddhism in Japan: From Its Introduction through the Nara Period," *Japanese Religions* 31, no. 1 (January 2006): 9.
- 4 Numerous translations of these texts into European languages have been made from Sanskrit in the case of the *Larger Sutra* and the *Smaller Sutra*, and from Chinese in the case of all three sutras. For a list of these translations, see Hisao Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras: A Study and Translation*, rev. ed. (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshodo, 2000), 388–391. For a detailed discussion of the formation of these texts, see Fujita Kōtatsu, "Pure Land Buddhism in India," in *The Pure Land Tradition: History and Development*, ed. James Foard, Michael Solomon, and Richard K. Payne (Berkeley, CA: Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series, 1996), 1–42. Although the *Larger* and *Smaller Sutras* have been translated more than once into Chinese, they are most commonly known in Chinese as the *Wuliangshoujing* 無量壽經 and the *Amitoujing* 阿彌陀經. *The Contemplation Sutra* has been rendered as the *Guanwuliangshoujing* 觀無量壽經. In Japanese, these sutras are known, respectively, as the *Muryōjūkyō* or *Daikyō* 大經, the *Kanmuryōjūkyō* or *Kangyō* 觀經, and the *Amidakyō* or *Shōkyō* 小經. The Chinese texts and traditional Japanese readings of these sutras can be found in Shinshū seiten hensan iinkai, ed., *Shinshū seiten* (Kyoto: Higashi Honganji shuppanbu, 1978).
- 5 Fujita, "Pure Land Buddhism in India," 6–11.
- 6 For a discussion of these differences, see Fujita, "Pure Land Buddhism in India," as well as John C. Huntington, "Rebirth in Amitābha's Sukhāvati" in *The Pure Land Tradition*, ed. Foard et al., 43–105.

- 7 The Sanskrit and Chinese titles of this work are, respectively, the *Daśabhūmikāvibhāsa-śāstra* and the *Shizhu piposha lun*.
- 8 The complete title of this work, which exists only in Chinese, is (Ch.) *Wuliangshoujing youbotishe yuansheng ji*, and (J.) *Muryōjukyō ubadaisha ganshōge* 無量壽經優婆提舍願生偈. Hisao Inagaki, *T’an-luan’s Commentary on Vasubandhu’s Discourse on the Pure Land* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshodo, 1998), 32, renders this title into English as *Verses of Aspiration for Birth: A Treatise on the Amitāyus Sutra*. However, this work is more commonly known as the (Ch.) *Jintu lun*, (J.) *Jōdoron* 淨土論, the *Pure Land Treatise*, or (Ch.) *Wangsheng lun*, (J.) *Ōjōron* 往生論, *The Treatise on Birth*. The text can be found in *Shinshū seiten*, 135–145.
- 9 Although the title of this commentary repeats the full title of Vasubandhu’s work, it is usually referred to by its abbreviated titles, (Ch.) *Jintu lun zhu*, (J.) *Jōdoronchū* 淨土論註 or (Ch.) *Wangsheng lun zhu*, (J.) *Ōjōronchū* 往生論註. In *T’an-luan’s Commentary*, Inagaki includes the Chinese text and his translation of it.
- 10 See Jacqueline I. Stone, “By the Power of One’s Last Nenbutsu: Deathbed Practices in Early Medieval Japan,” in *Approaching the Land of Bliss*, ed. Payne and Tanaka, 77–119.
- 11 Perhaps one of the clearest statements of this point comes in the first of Shinran’s letters included in the *Lamp for the Latter Ages* (*Mattōshō* 末燈鈔). At the age of seventy-nine, he writes:
- The idea of Amida’s coming at the moment of death is for those who seek to gain birth in the Pure Land by doing various practices, for they are practitioners of self-power. The moment of death is of central concern to such people, for they have not attained true shinjin. . . . The practitioner of true shinjin, however, abides in the stage of the truly settled, for he or she has already been grasped, never to be abandoned. There is no need to wait in anticipation for the moment of death, no need to rely on Amida’s coming.
- Dennis Hirota, Hisao Inagaki, Michio Tokunaga, and Ryushin Uryuzu, eds., *The Collected Works of Shinran*, vol. 1 (Kyoto: Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-ha, 1997), 523. The original text can be found in *Shinshū seiten*, 600.
- 12 Honda Hiroyuki, *Shinran no shinnen to shisō ni ikiru—waga shi Yasuda Rijin* (Yotsukaidōshi: Sōkōsha, 1998), 240.
- 13 A sense of Yasuda’s interest in Western philosophy and theology can be gained from the bibliography of Yasuda’s collection of Western books now held at Ōtani University, the *Yasuda bunko yōsho mokuroku* (Kyoto: Ōtani daigaku toshokan, 1987). Pages 13–61 list books authored by theologians, among them Karl Barth, Rudolf Bultmann, and Paul Tillich; pages 60–357 cover modern German and Austrian philosophical works, with long sections

- on the writings of Martin Buber, Martin Heidegger, and Fredrick Nietzsche, to mention but a few.
- 14 Yasuda Rijin senshū hensan iinkai, ed., *Yasuda Rijin senshū* (hereafter, YRS), *Hokan* (Kyoto: Bun'eidō, 1994), 366.
 - 15 Kaneko Daiei, *Bukkyō gairon* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1919); also available in Kaneko Daiei, *Kaneko Daiei chosakushū*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Shunshūsha, 1980).
 - 16 Yasuda himself has said that he was not actually that interested in attending Ōtani but rather was looking for scholarly guidance. However, Kaneko urged him to enroll, saying that he wanted people just like him to enter. Yasuda Rijin, “Kaneko Sensei o tsuioku shite,” *Yasuda Rijin shū: Jō* (Kyoto: Higashi Honganji shuppan, 1983), 203.
 - 17 Cited in YRS, *Hokan*, 370.
 - 18 Yasuda, “Kaneko Sensei o tsuioku shite,” 221.
 - 19 Michiko Yusa, *Zen and Philosophy: An Intellectual Biography of Nishida Kitarō* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), 127. For a translation of Nishida's work, see Kitarō Nishida, *An Inquiry into the Good*, trans. Masao Abe and Christopher Ives (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990).
 - 20 Nishida, *An Inquiry into the Good*, 143.
 - 21 *Ibid.*, 136.
 - 22 *Ibid.*, 24.
 - 23 In a lecture given the year before his death, Yasuda mentions that he often heard Nishida lecture at Kyoto University; see Yasuda Rijin, *Wakaranakunataru, hajime ni kaeru* (Fukui: Nichigetsu bunko, 2013), 11.
 - 24 YRS, *Hokan*, 373.
 - 25 Accounts of these events can be found in Ōtani daigaku hyakunen shi iinkai, ed., *Ōtani daigaku hyakunen shi* (Kyoto: Ōtani daigaku, 2001), 338–357; and in Terakawa Shunshō, *Nenbutsu no sanga o motomete: kindai ni okeru Shinshū Ōtaniha no kyōdan to kyōgaku no ayumi* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2001), 151–155.
 - 26 Both of the first-mentioned texts are central in the Yogācāra tradition. The former consists of a commentary on Vasubandhu's *Thirty Verses on Consciousness-only* and has been translated by Francis Cook, *Three Texts on Consciousness Only* (Berkeley, CA: Numata Center for Buddhist Translations and Research, 1999); the latter is attributed to Asaṅga and has been translated by John P. Keenan, *The Summary of the Great Vehicle* (Berkeley, CA: Numata Center for Buddhist Translations and Research, 2003). A well-known translation into French of Asaṅga's work is Étienne Lamotte, ed., *La Somme du Grande Véhicule d' Asaṅga (Mahāyānasamgraha)*, 2 vols. (Louvain: Institute Orientaliste, Université Louvain, 1973).
 - 27 The line in Chinese can be found in Inagaki, *T'an-luan's Commentary*, 208. My translation differs from the one Inagaki offers on page 209.

- 28 Yasuda resigned his full-time position at the university for personal reasons in 1946, returned to the university as a part-time lecturer in 1961, and retired in 1966. YRS, *Hokan*, 383–384, 398–403.
- 29 For a brief sketch of Ōtani University during the war years, see Robert F. Rhodes, “Soga Ryōjin,” in *Cultivating Spirituality: A Modern Shin Buddhist Anthology*, ed. Mark L. Blum and Robert F. Rhodes (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2011), 105–106.
- 30 Ōkōchi Ryōgi, “Yasuda Sensei no shisaku,” *Yasuda Rijin senshū geppō*, no. 5 (1988), 1–3; and Kurube Teruo, “Yasuda Rijin Sensei to yōsho,” *Yasuda Rijin senshū geppō*, no. 5 (1988), 3–7.
- 31 Much attention has been given to the similarities between Heidegger’s philosophy and various types of Asian thought, especially in the 1970s and 1980s. For a short bibliography of works on this topic, see Michael E. Zimmerman, “Heidegger, Buddhism, and Deep Ecology,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, ed. Charles B. Guignon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 320–321. As D. S. Clark Jr., notes in his introduction to Nishitani Keiji’s *Nishida Kitarō*, Nishida’s comments on Heidegger increase in the 1920s, especially after the publication of Heidegger’s *Being and Time* in 1927. Clarke writes: “Increasingly the orientation of Nishida’s philosophy was to shift from psychological experiences unique to an individual to the perspective of a metaphysical system in which the individual is regarded as part of a comprehensive whole.” Nishitani Keiji, *Nishida Kitarō*, trans. Yamamoto Seisaku and James W. Heisig (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), ix. The latter position exhibits certain similarities to Heidegger’s view of the human existence as *Da-sein*, “being-in-the-world.” Heidegger figures more prominently in the thought of two other early members of the Kyoto school, Tanabe and Nishitani. Both encountered Heidegger’s philosophy while studying in Germany; Nishitani in particular studied with Heidegger for two years, from 1924 to 1926. One reads both appreciative and critical comments about Heidegger’s philosophy, for example, in Nishitani’s *Religion and Nothingness* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).
- 32 See, for example, David A. Dilworth’s comment in the Introduction to his translation of Nishida’s *Last Writings: Nothingness and the Religious Worldview* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1987): “[Nishida] does not merely represent the East when he enters into dialogue with Kierkegaard, Barth, Tillich, and the other Western theologians whom he cites. Nishida is as much a biblical or Christian theologian as he is a Buddhist theologian when he turns to the sacred texts of religion” (34). On Nishida and Buber, see Dilworth, *Last Writings*, 18, 43 (footnote 28). In Nishitani’s *Religion and Nothingness*, references to Barth and Brunner appear at several points in the text.
- 33 On Bultmann’s demythologizing of the Bible, see Josh Reeves, “Rudolf Bultmann and Demythologization,” *The Boston Collaborative Encyclopedia of Mod-*

ern *Western Theology*, posted in 2005, http://people.bu.edu/wwildman/bce/mwt_themes_760_bultmann.htm.

- 34 On Barth's impact on Yasuda's thinking about the Shin community, see Kigoshi Hiroshi, "Shinshū kyōdanron—Yasuda Rijin ni okeru kyōdanron no tenkai," *Shinran kyōgaku* 61 (1993): 55–71; and Michael Conway, "Seeking the Pure Land in the Modern World: Yasuda Rijin's Search for a Shin Buddhist Sangha," *The Pure Land*, New Series, no. 22 (December 26, 2006): 79–90.
- 35 Yasuda's words cited in Kigoshi, "Shinshū kyōdanron," 70.
- 36 Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, trans., *The Kyōgyōshinshō: The Collection of Passages Expounding the True Teaching, Living, Faith and Realization of the Pure Land* (Kyoto: Shinshū Ōtaniha, 1973). A newly edited version of the Suzuki translation was published under the same title by Oxford University Press in 2012. The new publication includes additional front matter and a new introduction by Mark L. Blum.
- 37 For a reminder of the close surveillance of the populace that the Japanese government established during the war years and of the dire consequences that might result from resistance to government directives, see Marius Jansen, *The Making of Modern Japan* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2000), 633–645, *passim*.
- 38 YRS, *Hokan*, 333–346.
- 39 *Ibid.*, 345.
- 40 *Ibid.*, 346.
- 41 Inagaki, *T'anluan's Commentary*, 38.
- 42 Students of the *Larger Sutra* have noted that different versions of the text give different numbers of vows, ranging, as Yoshifumi Ueda and Dennis Hirota have pointed out, "from twenty-four to forty-nine vows." But as they also note, "The version of forty-eight in the *Larger Sutra of Immeasurable Life* . . . has been canonical for most of the Chinese and Japanese tradition." Ueda and Hirota, *Shinran: An Introduction to His Thought with Selections from the Shin Buddhist Translation Series* (Kyoto: Hongwanji International Center, 1989), 187. In "Fundamental Vow, Fundamental Word," translated in part II of this volume, Yasuda explains the different numbers as reflecting the unfolding of the Primal Vow in human history. They reflect, he writes, "the spontaneous development of the single, fundamental Primal Vow. . . . The development of the forty-eight vows is the practice of contemplation of the mind of aspiration. It is the practice of reflection in which the Primal Vow internally contemplates itself." YRS, vol. 1, 455.
- 43 Hisao Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras* (Berkeley, CA: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2003), 16. Note that this work is different from Inagaki's longer study and translation of these sutras, published

- in 2000; occasionally there are significant differences between the two translations. For the original language, see *Shinshū seiten*, 18.
- 44 Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras* (2003), 36; *Shinshū seiten*, 46.
- 45 Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras* (2003), 78; *Shinshū seiten*, 93.
- 46 Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras* (2003), 78; *Shinshū seiten*, 94.
- 47 Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras* (2003), 104; *Shinshū seiten*, 128.
- 48 Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras* (2003), 105; *Shinshū seiten*, 129.
- 49 Ueda and Hirota, *Shinran*, 132. Ueda and Hirota take up Nāgārjuna on pages 129–131. Additional discussions of the contributions of Nāgārjuna and Vasubandhu to Pure Land Buddhism can be found in Inagaki, *T'an-luan's Commentary*, ix, 49–63; and Alfred Bloom, *Shinran's Gospel of Pure Grace* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1965), 7–8.
- 50 Robert Sharf, “On Pure Land Buddhism and Ch'an/Pure Land Syncretism in Medieval China,” *T'oung Pao* 88 (2002): 282–331.
- 51 See Sharf's discussion of the role of the Japanese Pure Land masters in this regard in “On Pure Land Buddhism,” 298–301.
- 52 Richard K. Payne, “The Five Contemplative Gates of Vasubandhu's *Rebirth Treatise* as a Ritualized Visualization Practice” in *The Pure Land Tradition*, ed. Foard et al., 234–266.
- 53 See, for example, Inagaki, *T'an-luan's Commentary*, 69; Roger J. Coreless, “T'an-luan: The First Systematizer of Pure Land Buddhism,” in *The Pure Land Tradition*, ed. Foard et al., 109; Bandō Shōjun, “Shinran's Indebtedness to T'an-luan,” in *Living in Amida's Universal Vow: Essays in Shin Buddhism*, ed. Alfred Bloom (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, Inc., 2004), 223.
- 54 Coreless notes that, in Tanluan's extant writings, “There are eighty-one references to the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-śāstra* alone, and twenty-one references to the Chinese Mādhyamika Master Seng-chao, none of them trivial or out of place.” Coreless, “T'an-luan,” 110. The first text mentioned is Nāgārjuna's *Treatise on the Great Perfection of Wisdom* ([J.] *Daichidōron* 大智度論).
- 55 Inagaki, *T'an-luan's Commentary*, 121.
- 56 *Ibid.*, 131–132, 244. See also comments by Coreless, “T'an-luan,” 117; and Bandō, “Shinran's Indebtedness,” 226.
- 57 On the five gates of mindfulness, see Coreless, “T'an-luan,” 112–114; and Inagaki, *T'an-luan's Commentary*, 59–60, 80–90, 205–216. The language of much of these discussions of the five gates is opaque.
- 58 Inagaki discusses the One Dharma Principle and its relationship to the qualities of the land and its inhabitants in *T'an-luan's Commentary*, 61–64, 314, 316–317. I have followed his translation of *ippokku* here.

- 59 See discussions of this point by Coreless, “T’an-luan,” 120–125; and Inagaki, *T’an-luan’s Commentary*, 90–93, 193–203.
- 60 Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras* (2003), 98–99.
- 61 *Ibid.*, 16.
- 62 Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras* (2003), 15; *Shinshū seiten*, 17.
- 63 Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras* (2003), 16; *Shinshū seiten*, 18–19.
- 64 Coreless, “T’an-luan,” 121.
- 65 Inagaki, *T’an-luan’s Commentary*, 127.
- 66 *Ibid.*, 290.
- 67 *Ibid.*, 80, 209.
- 68 *Ibid.*, 209. My translation here differs slightly from Inagaki’s.
- 69 Inagaki, *T’an-luan’s Commentary*, 97; Corless, “T’an-luan,” 107; Bandō, “Shinran’s Indebtedness,” 220.
- 70 Bandō, “Shinran’s Indebtedness,” 220.
- 71 In addition to the Suzuki translation of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* noted earlier, a second translation has been done by Dennis Hirota et al., *The True Teachings, Practice and Realization of the Pure Land Way*, in *The Collected Works of Shinran*, 2 vols. (Kyoto: Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-ha, 1997). When citing the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, I rely chiefly on this translation and hereafter refer to it as CWS.
- 72 *Ibid.*, vol. 1, 3; *Shinshū seiten*, 149.
- 73 For a translation of the *Tannishō*, which became particularly influential in the modern period, see Bandō Shōjun, in collaboration with Harold Stewart, *Tannishō: Passages Deploring Deviations of Faith* (Berkeley, CA: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 1996).
- 74 Philip Yampolsky, trans., *The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), 127.
- 75 John Blofeld, trans., *The Zen Teaching of Huang Po* (New York: Grove Press, 1958), 69. The six *pāramitās* refers to the six perfections of the bodhisattva described above on page 15.
- 76 For a useful account of the growth of Shin Buddhism, see James C. Dobbins, *Jōdo Shinshū: Shin Buddhism in Medieval Japan* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989; reprint University of Hawai’i Press, 2002), especially chapters 5, 6, 8, and 9. On Rennyo, see Minor L. Rogers and Ann T. Rogers, *Rennyo: The Second Founder of Shin Buddhism* (Berkeley, CA: Asian Humanities Press, 1991); and Mark L. Blum and Yasutomi Shinya, eds., *Rennyo and the Roots of Modern Japanese Buddhism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
- 77 George Elison, “The Cross and the Sword,” in *Warlords, Artists, and Commoners: Japan in the Sixteenth Century*, ed. Elison and Bardwell Smith (Honolulu:

- University of Hawai'i Press, 1981), 70. On the *jinaichō*, see Galen Dean Amstutz, "The Honganji Institution, 1500–1570: The Politics of Pure Land Buddhism in Late Medieval Japan" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1992), 54–61.
- 78 On the impact that this persecution had on Buddhism, see Allan G. Grapard, "Japan's Ignored Cultural Revolution: The Separation of Shinto and Buddhist Divinities in Meiji ("Shinbutsu bunri") and a Case Study: Tonomine," *History of Religions* 23, no. 3 (1984): 240–265.
- 79 This position was first expressed by the early Shin leader Kakunyo 覚如 (1270–1351), but it was given the status of Shin orthodoxy by Rennyo. Minor and Ann Rogers write: "Even as Rennyo stressed the primacy of faith, he simultaneously emphasized the observance of the laws of the state, equated with the five ethical principles of Confucianism." See Rogers and Rogers, *Rennyo*, 314. The five ethical principles of Confucianism are benevolence, righteousness, decorum, wisdom, and trust.
- 80 On the state of the Shin order in the early Meiji period, see Terakawa Shunshō, *Nenbutsu no sanga o motomete: kindai ni okeru Shinshū Ōtaniha no kyōdan to kyōgaku no ayumi* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2001), 38–78. See also Blum, "Shin Buddhism in the Meiji Period" in *Cultivating Spirituality*, ed. Blum and Rhodes, 34–35. Blum writes: "With the founding in the 17th century of the official seminaries known as *gakuryō* or *gakurin*, the infrastructure of both branches of the Honganji shifted to a pattern where these intellectual training grounds served as official vehicles for dispensing the views of sectarian leadership. This allowed for unprecedented political control of what was and was not to be considered orthodox doctrine . . ."
- 81 On Kiyozawa, see Honda Hiroyuki, *Shinran kyōgaku: Soga Ryōjin kara Yasuda Rijin e* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1998), 10–19; Gilbert Johnson and Wakimoto Tsuneya, "Kiyozawa Manshi's 'Spiritualism,'" in *Buddhist Spirituality: Later China, Korea, Japan and the Modern World*, ed. Takeuchi Yoshinori (New York: Herder and Herder, 1999), 359–366; Terakawa Shunshō, *Kiyozawa Manshi ron* (Kyoto: Bun'eidō, 1973); Terakawa Shunshō, *Nenbutsu no sanga o motomete* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2001), 22–25, 91–125; Mark Blum, "Kiyozawa Manshi: Life and Thought" in *Cultivating Spirituality*, ed. Blum and Rhodes, 55–108.
- 82 Republished in Ōtani Daigaku, ed., *Kiyozawa Manshi zenshū*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2002).
- 83 Johnson and Wakimoto, "Kiyozawa Manshi's 'Spiritualism,'" 363.
- 84 Ugo Dessi, *Ethics and Society in Contemporary Shin Buddhism*, Studies in Modern Asian Religions (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2007), 67.
- 85 Rhodes, "Soga Ryōjin," in *Cultivating Spirituality*, ed. Blum and Rhodes, 101.
- 86 Quoted by Blum, "Shin Buddhism in the Meiji Period," in *Cultivating Spirituality*, ed. Blum and Rhodes, 45.
- 87 Johnson and Wakimoto, "Kiyozawa Manshi's 'Spiritualism,'" 363.

- 88 On Kaneko, see Bandō Shōjun, Itō Emyō, and Hataya Akira, *Jōdo Bukkyō no shisō*, vol. 15 (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1993), 263–288; Robert F. Rhodes, “Kaneko Daiei: Life and Thought”; Robert F. Rhodes, trans., “Prolegomena to Shin Buddhist Studies” in *Cultivating Spirituality*, ed. Blum and Rhodes, 159–171, 173–213, respectively; Terakawa, *Nenbutsu no sanga o motomete*, 27–28, 140–164.
- 89 Hataya Akira, *Jōdo Bukkyō no shisō*, 273.
- 90 Included in Kaneko Daiei, *Kaneko Daiei chosakushū*, Bekkan 3.
- 91 Terakawa, *Nenbutsu no sanga o motomete*, 140.
- 92 These works, as well as the *Shinran Shōnin no shūkyō*, are not included in Kaneko’s *Chosakushū*.
- 93 Robert F. Rhodes, “Kaneko Daiei,” in *Cultivating Spirituality*, ed. Blum and Rhodes, 162–163.
- 94 *Ibid.*, 161.
- 95 Yasuda, *Wakaranakunattara, hajime ni kaeru*, 50.
- 96 Hataya, *Jōdo Bukkyō no shisō*, 293.
- 97 On Soga, see Itō Emyō, *Jōdo Bukkyō no shisō*, 129–237; Honda, *Shinran kyōgaku*, 10–44; Robert F. Rhodes, “Soga Ryōjin: Life and Thought,” in *Cultivating Spirituality*, ed. Blum and Rhodes, 101–106; as well as translations of Soga’s work by Jan Van Bragt in this same volume, 119–156; Terakawa, *Nenbutsu no sanga o motomete*, 25–26, 128–164; Yasuda Rijin, “Jikaku no kyōgaku,” in *YRS*, vol. 1, 521–526.
- 98 Itō, *Jōdo Bukkyō no shisō*, 141.
- 99 Honda discusses Soga’s reservations about Kiyozawa’s teachings in *Shinran kyōgaku*, 12–18 *passim*. See also Itō Emyō, *Jōdo Bukkyō no shisō*, 46–48.
- 100 Terakawa, *Nenbutsu no sanga o motomete*, 140–141. See also Jan Van Bragt, trans., “A Savior on Earth: The Meaning of Dharmākara Bodhisattva’s Advent,” in *Cultivating Spirituality*, ed. Blum and Rhodes, 107–118, for a translation of this piece.
- 101 Van Bragt, “A Savior on Earth,” 107.
- 102 *Ibid.*, 112.
- 103 Jan Van Bragt, “Lectures on the Tannishō,” in *Cultivating Spirituality*, ed. Blum and Rhodes, 139–156, esp. 152.
- 104 *YRS*, vol. 1, 131.
- 105 *Ibid.*, 392.
- 106 *Ibid.*, 325.
- 107 *Ibid.*, 334–335.
- 108 *Ibid.*, 347.
- 109 *Ibid.*

110 Ibid., 129.

111 Ibid., 159.

112 Ibid., 329–330.

113 Ibid., 342–343.

114 “When *Namu Amida Butsu* becomes a magical incantation, the name no longer fulfills its religious function. It obstructs its religious function.” YRS, vol. 1, 327.

115 YRS, vol. 1, 344.

116 Ibid., 328.

117 Ibid., 348.

118 Ibid., 356.

Writings from the Kōbō Years

- 1 This movement was led first by Tokyo University scholars such as Nanjō Bunyū (1849–1927), a Higashi Honganji priest who studied Sanskrit and Indian philosophy in Europe; Takakusu Junjirō (1866–1945), who studied Sanskrit at Oxford; and Anesaki Masaharu (1873–1949), a scholar of religion and Buddhism, who studied in India as well as Europe.
- 2 Jan Van Bragt, trans., “Shinran’s View of Buddhist History,” in *Cultivating Spirituality: A Modern Shin Buddhist Anthology*, ed. Mark L. Blum and Robert F. Rhodes (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2011), 121.
- 3 Yasuda Rijin senshū hensan iinkai, ed., *Yasuda Rijin senshū* (hereafter YRS), vol. 1, (Kyoto: Bun’eidō, 1994), 131.
- 4 Ibid., 125.
- 5 Kitarō Nishida, *An Inquiry into the Good*, trans. Masao Abe and Christopher Ives (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 38.
- 6 Ibid., 63.
- 7 Ibid., 76.
- 8 YRS, vol. 1, 129.
- 9 Ibid., 130.
- 10 Nishida, *An Inquiry into the Good*, 79.
- 11 Ibid., 82.
- 12 The phrase “the demands that arise in conjunction with the unification and systemization of the actual self” is translated from *genjitsuteki jiko no tōitsu-soshiki no yōkyū* 現実的自己の統一・組織の要求. The term *unification* (*tōitsu*) is used, in various contexts, by Nishida in his *An Inquiry into the Good*. He writes, for example, of the unified consciousness (*tōitsu ishiki* 統一意識) and consciousness’ unifying function (*tōitsu no sayō* 統一の作用) in explaining his concept of pure experience (*junsui keiken* 純粹経験). For this and other us-

- ages of the term, see the annotated edition of Nishida’s work by Kunitsugu Kosaka, *Nishida Kitarō: Zen no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2006), 30–56, *passim*.
- 13 Yasuda uses the word *worldview*, or *sekaikan* 世界観, here as a technical term to indicate a unified understanding of the world as a whole.
 - 14 The word “sublation” is translated from the Japanese *shiyō* 止揚, which is a translation of the German *aufheben*. As used by Hegel, the term indicates the negation but also the preservation in an altered form of an element in a dialectic process. On this term, see the discussion of *aufheben* within the article on *benshōhō* 弁証法 in *Iwanami tetsugaku shisō jiten* (hereafter *ITSJ*), Wataru Hiromatsu, Koyasu Nobuyuki, and Mishima Kenichi, eds. (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1998).
 - 15 The expression “Dharma-body” is translated from *hosshin* 法身, which refers to the Mahayana understanding of ultimate reality as the ever-changing totality of empty, interdependent forms. Dharma-realm, or *hokkai* 法界, also refers to this same reality.
 - 16 The “view that accords with reality” is translated from *nyojitsukan* 如実観, a key term in this essay and elsewhere in Yasuda’s lectures and writings. It refers to the view that accords with the empty nature of reality or the reality of thussness.
 - 17 Here and elsewhere in his lectures and writings, Yasuda occasionally draws on the meaning of *Nyorai* 如来 or Tathāgata as “One Who Has Come from Thusness,” that is, one who embodies the true nature of reality. Shinran refers to this understanding of the Tathāgata Amida at the outset of Chapter IV of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*. See *The Collected Works of Shinran*, vol. 1 (Kyoto: Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-ha, 1997), 153. For the original text, see Shinshū seiten hensan iinkai, ed., *Shinshū seiten* (Kyoto: Higashi Honganji shuppanbu, 1978), 280.
 - 18 These words translate the phrases *zen’ichi naru mono*, *ichihokkai to iwaruru mono* 全一なるもの、一法界といはるゝもの. Yasuda further explains these terms at various points in this essay.
 - 19 The five constituent elements of experience are form and matter, sensations, perceptions, psychic constructions, and consciousness. Dharma, as used here, can be understood as “phenomena.”
 - 20 This quotation and the one immediately following it are from *Foxing lun* ([J.] *Busshōron* 仏性論), which is attributed to Vasubandhu, *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* (hereafter *T*), ed. Takakusu Junjirō, Watanabe Kaigyoku, and Ono Genmyō, 100 vols. (Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1924–1934), at T1610, 31.796a11–13.

“A Name but Not a Name Alone” (1960)

- 1 Yasuda Rijin senshū hensan iinkai, ed., *Yasuda Rijin senshū* (hereafter *YRS*), vol. 1, (Kyoto: Bun’eidō, 1994), 482–512.
- 2 *Ibid.*, 489.

- 3 Ibid., 497.
- 4 Ibid., 500.
- 5 Ibid., 504–507.
- 6 Ibid., 507.
- 7 Ibid., 329.
- 8 Ibid., 323.
- 9 Ibid., 322.
- 10 Kitarō Nishida, *An Inquiry into the Good*, trans. Masao Abe and Christopher Ives (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 152.
- 11 Ibid., 149.
- 12 YRS, vol. 1, 319.
- 13 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 231. When referring to page numbers in this book, I refer to the numbers at the top of the page, not the numbers located in the margins that reflect the page numbers of Heidegger’s original work.
- 14 Ibid., 233.
- 15 Tetsuaki Kotoh, “Language and Silence: Self-Inquiry in Heidegger and Zen,” in *Heidegger and Asian Thought*, ed. Graham Parkes (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1987), 208.
- 16 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 211–219.
- 17 Michael Wheeler, “Martin Heidegger,” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, posted in 2014, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/heidegger/>.
- 18 Cited in Kotoh, “Language and Silence,” 209.
- 19 Ibid., 210–211.
- 20 YRS, vol. 1, 341.
- 21 Martin Buber, *Ich und Du* (1923), translated into English by Ronald Gregor Smith as *I and Thou* (New York: Scribner, 1958).
- 22 Ibid., 11.
- 23 YRS, vol. 1, 343.
- 24 That is, the name of the Tathāgata Amitābha, or Amida.
- 25 The passage cited here appears at the beginning of the second “Chapter on Practice.” See *The Collected Works of Shinran* (hereafter CWS), vol. 1 (Kyoto: Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-ha, 1997), 13; and Shinshū seiten hensan iinkai, ed., *Shinshū seiten* (Kyoto: Higashi Honganji shuppanbu, 1978), 157.
- 26 The term *senjaku hongan* 選擇本願, or selected Primal Vow, was used by Hōnen to signify the special effectiveness of the *nenbutsu* as indicated in Dharmākara’s eighteenth vow.

- 27 CWS, vol. 1, 18; *Shinshū seiten*, 161.
- 28 See, for example, Hisao Inagaki, *T'an-luan's Commentary on Vasubandhu's Discourse on the Pure Land* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshodo, 1998), 208–209, 212–213.
- 29 Inagaki, *T'an-luan's Commentary*, 136, 182, respectively.
- 30 This line is a rendering of the Japanese translation of Heidegger's term, *In-der-Welt-sein*; the Japanese term is *sekainai sonzai* 世界内存在. See the entry for this term in Hiromatsu Wataru et al., eds., *Iwanami tetsugaku shisō jiten* (hereafter *ITSJ*) (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1998).
- 31 The *Konpon chūron* 根本中論 or *Mādhyamaka-kārikā*, a basic text of the Emptiness school. There are a number of translations and commentaries on this work, including Frederick J. Streng, *Emptiness: A Study in Religious Meaning* (Nashville, TN: Abington Press, 1967); and Kenneth K. Inada, *Nagarjuna: A Translation of His Mūlamadhyamakakārikā with an Introductory Essay* (Tokyo: Hokusei Press, 1970).
- 32 The reference is to Zhiyi's 智顓 (538–597) interpretation of Madhyamika teachings; Zhiyi was the third patriarch of the Chinese Tiantai (J. Tendai) school. Nāgārjuna is associated with the well-known formula of the two levels of truth, which was introduced as a clarification of the emptiness teaching. According to this formula, on the relative level, all things have a functional or pragmatic reality, but on the absolute level, all things are empty. Zhiyi sought to stress the affirmative nature of the emptiness teaching by adding to the relative (or provisional) and absolute (or empty) levels of truth, a third truth, “the truth of the middle,” in which the other two levels are simultaneously embraced.
- 33 The text is known in Sanskrit as the *Trimsīkā-vijñapti-mātra-śāstra*, in Chinese as the *Weishì sanshi lun song*, and in Japanese as the *Yuishiki sanjūronju* 唯識三十論頌. The line Yasuda cites appears in the *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* (hereafter *T*), ed. Takakusu Junjirō, Watanabe Kaigyoku, and Ono Genmyō, 100 vols. (Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1924–1934), at T1586, 31.60a27. The extant translations from the Sanskrit and the Chinese do not reflect the language that Yasuda uses here. For a translation from Sanskrit, see Stefan Anacker, *Seven Works of Vasubandhu: Buddhist Psychological Doctor* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1984), 181–190; for a translation from Chinese, see Francis H. Cook, *Three Texts in Consciousness Only* (Berkeley, CA: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 1999), 371–383.
- 34 Yasuda's precise reference is unclear. However, the phrase appears in the *Shōdajōron* 撰大乘論 and the *Shōdajōronshaku* 撰大乘論釈 at several points; for the former, see T1593, 124a05–124a08; in the latter, see T1595, 31.202c and twice at 210c. The original work is Asaṅga's *Summary of the Great Vehicle*; the latter, a commentary by Vasubandhu.

- 35 The terms “esoteric” (*mikkyō* 密教) and “exoteric” (*kengyō* 顯教) are used in the Japanese Tantric tradition, represented by the Shingon sect, in particular, but also the Tendai sect. The tradition describes itself as esoteric, that is, secret, claiming a special transmission of the Dharma directly from Dainichi Nyorai 大日如来 or Mahāvairocana Tathāgata, which they interpret as the Dharma-body itself. The transmission from master to disciple in the esoteric tradition is also secret or private. The *shingon* 真言 or Sanskrit verses used in their meditational practices are understood as the speech of Dainichi; hence they are “true words.” Exoteric Buddhism refers to all other forms of Buddhism, whose teachings are characterized as publicly accessible. Yasuda’s claim is that, in the realm of exoteric Buddhism, the name of the Primal Vow, like a *shingon*, also provides direct access to the Dharma-body or the true nature of reality.
- 36 Yasuda refers to Asaṅga’s *Summary of the Great Vehicle*, the *Shōdaijōron*; the passage in question occurs at T1593, 31.123a12–b14.
- 37 *Self* here is a translation from the Japanese *jiko* 自己.
- 38 That is, the *Perfection of Wisdom Sutras*, which began to appear around the first century BCE and which are usually regarded as marking the rise of Mahayana Buddhism.
- 39 The “mind at ease,” *anjin* 安心, is a central concept of Shin Buddhism and naturally occurs frequently in Yasuda’s lectures and writings.
- 40 Shinran refers to these words of Tanluan in the chapter on Realization; see CWS, vol. 1, 172; and *Shinshū seiten*, 296. My translation differs slightly from the one in CWS.
- 41 Yasuda introduces terms coined by Edmund Husserl (1859–1938), commonly regarded as the founder of the philosophical movement known as phenomenology, and Heidegger’s mentor and predecessor at the University of Freiburg. There is much debate about the exact meaning of these terms, but *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* offers the following guidance: “The intentional process of consciousness is called *noesis*, while its ideal content is called *noema*. The noema of an act of consciousness Husserl characterized both as an ideal meaning and as “the object as intended.” David Woodruff Smith, “Phenomenology,” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (Winter 2013), <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2013/entries/phenomenology>.
- 42 Established truth, *anryūtai* 安立諦, refers to the truth as expressed in the relative world of human concepts; nonestablished truth, *hianryūtai* 非安立諦, refers to truth in the absolute sense, truth as it exists beyond the relative realm of human expression.
- 43 That is, they are objects of consciousness.

- 44 Regarding the “ten names,” see T1593, 31.123b15–16.
- 45 No source for the language Yasuda uses here could be found.
- 46 The “One Dharma Principle” is a translation from the Japanese *ippokku* 一法句. This is a difficult term to translate meaningfully into English. The literal translation would perhaps be “One Dharma phrase,” which as English does not read naturally in the present context. Hirota et al. translate it as “phrase one-dharma” in *CWS*, vol. 2, 301. As noted in part I of this book, endnote 58, I have followed Inagaki’s freer rendering of the term, although this rendering too is not without its problems. For the original Chinese, see Inagaki, *T’an-luan’s Commentary*, 264–266.
- 47 For the Chinese text and Inagaki’s translation, which differs from mine, see Inagaki, *T’an-luan’s Commentary*, 240.
- 48 Yasuda refers here to the *Daijō kishinron* 大乘起信論, or *The Mahayana Treatise on the Awakening of Trust*, traditionally attributed to the second-century Indian scholar *Asvaghosa*, but now generally believed to be a later work composed in China. Translations into English include Hakeda Yoshihito, trans., *The Awakening of Faith* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967); and Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, trans. *Asvaghosa’s Discourse on the Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna* (Chicago: Open Court Publishing Co, 1900).
- 49 *Hōben hosshin* 方便法身; the term refers to the means by which the true nature of reality or the Dharma-body is communicated.
- 50 The reference is to Buber, *Ich und Du* (1923).
- 51 Heidegger has written about what he describes as “the call” of conscience—the call that stems from an awareness that *Dasein* has been lost in inauthenticity—in language similar to that of Yasuda’s. He writes: “What does the call of conscience call to him to whom it appeals? Taken strictly, nothing. The call asserts nothing, gives no information about world-events, has nothing to tell. Least of all does it try to set going a ‘soliloquy’ in the Self to which it has appealed. ‘Nothing’ gets called to [zu-gerufen] this Self, but it has been summoned [aufgerufen] to itself—that is, to its ownmost potentiality-for Being. The tendency of the call is not such as to put up for ‘trial’ the Self to which the appeal is made; but it calls *Dasein* forth (and forward) into its ownmost possibilities, as a summons to its ownmost potentiality-for-Being-its-Self.” Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 318.

“Humans as Bodhisattvas” (1962)

- 1 Yasuda Rijin senshū hensan iinkai, ed., *Yasuda Rijin senshū* (hereafter YRS), vol. 1, (Kyoto: Bun’eidō, 1994), 356.
- 2 See page 153n17 on Yasuda’s references to the Tathāgatha as “One Who Has Come from Thusness.” Here, Yasuda uses the phrase *jūnyoraishō* 従如来生

- “born from thusness” in commenting on the term Tathāgata 如来 in order to stress that the word “born” refers to sentient beings, who are Amida’s living expression.
- 3 The term “actual existence” is a translation of *jitsuzon* 実存, which in turn is a translation of the German *existenz*, meaning “concrete, actual, or subjective existence.” See the entry for this term in Hiromatsu Wataru et al., eds., *Iwanami tetsugaku shisō jiten* (hereafter *ITSJ*) (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1998).
 - 4 Yasuda borrows the ideas of being lost in everydayness (*nichijōsei* 日常性) and spiritually leveled (*heikinka sareru* 平均化される) from Heidegger. See *nichijōsei* in *ITSJ*.
 - 5 The passage comes from the *Daihōkō butsu kegon kyō* 大方廣佛華嚴經, commonly known as the *Flower Garland Sutra* in English; see Takakusu Junjirō, Watanabe Kaigyoku, and Ono Genmyō, eds., *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* (hereafter *T*), 100 vols. (Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1924–1934), at T279: 10.194c12–18.
 - 6 The term *unmeiai* 運命愛 in Japanese, translated here as “the love of destiny,” is a concept in Nietzsche’s thought indicating the positive embracing and affirming of one’s condition. See *unmeiai* in *ITSJ*.
 - 7 That is, it causes existence in general, “sein,” to become a particular existence, “Da-sein.”
 - 8 The passages in quotation marks occur in English in the original text.
 - 9 In Sanskrit, this text is called the *Karma-Siddhi-Prakarana*, which Stefan Anacker renders as *A Discussion for the Demonstration of Action*; see his translation in Stefan Anacker, *Seven Works of Vasubandhu: Buddhist Psychological Doctor* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1984), 83–156. The English title given here is a translation from the Japanese title that Yasuda uses, the *Daijō jōgōron* 大乘成業論.
 - 10 The German word whose basic meaning is “to think.”
 - 11 The concept of “the consciousness of the differently maturing effects of karma” is translated from the Japanese *ijukushiki* 異熟識. Yasuda explains the concept here and in the following paragraph.
 - 12 Italics here and elsewhere in this essay indicate Yasuda’s emphases in the original text.
 - 13 This English expression occurs in the original text.
 - 14 Yasuda refers to two schools of Hinayana or Theravada Buddhism. These schools are usually distinguished by saying that, while the Sarvāstivāda school argued for the existence of the *dharmas*, the constituent elements of experience, the Sautrāntika school embraced the concept of the storehouse consciousness and viewed all *dharmas* as constructions of the mind. Here, Yasuda explores this difference in regard to views of karma or action, noting that the Sautrāntika school stresses the importance of intention.

- 15 “Perfuming,” or *kunjū* 薰習, can be understood to mean “reinforcing.” Action based on karma is seen as reinforcing karmic habits stored in the storehouse consciousness.
- 16 On these terms, see *tōki* 投企 (*Entwurf*) in *ITSJ*.
- 17 Blaise Pascal’s (1623–1662) wager appears in his *Pensées*. Given that there are no fully convincing arguments for the existence of the Christian god, Pascal urged his readers to wager their lives on god’s existence and on the benefits that wager could bring, as opposed to wagering on god’s nonexistence.
- 18 In this and the following paragraph, Yasuda contrasts two types of transmigration, “the birth and death in different forms,” or *bundan shōji*, which is transmigration as experienced by the ordinary person, and “the birth and death of transformation,” or *hennyaku shōji*, which is transmigration as willingly embraced by bodhisattvas.

“The Homeland of Existence” (1964)

- 1 These two phrases appear in the *Larger Sutra*, the former at the opening of the fulfillment section of the sutra (see Hisao Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras* [Berkeley, CA: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2003], 35) and the latter in vow eighteen of the earlier causal section (see Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, 16). See also Shinshū seiten hensan iinkai, ed., *Shinshū seiten* (Kyoto: Higashi Honganji shuppanbu, 1978), 44, 18, respectively.
- 2 Yasuda Rijin senshū hensan iinkai, ed., *Yasuda Rijin senshū* (hereafter *YRS*), vol. 1, (Kyoto: Bun’eidō, 1994), 383.
- 3 *Ibid.*, 394.
- 4 *Kika anza* 帰家安座. A Zen expression used by Dōgen in his *Shōbōgenzō* 正法眼藏 or *Treasury of the True Dharma Eye*.
- 5 Yasuda uses the German words for “homeland” and “home,” respectively, the first of many German expressions used in this essay.
- 6 The phrase “self-aware actual existences” is translated from the Japanese *jikakuteki jitsuzon* 自覚の実存.
- 7 *Reden* is the German verb “to speak.”
- 8 The term *zwischen* is translated in Japanese as *aida* 間, or *ma*, literally meaning “between.” In philosophy, it has been understood to refer to the distinction between various dualisms, for example, between self and other, existence and nonexistence, and so on. It is a concept that has been used by philosophers who have argued against the ultimate nature of such dualisms and who conversely have stressed the interrelatedness of things. The term *Zwischenmenschlichkeit* has been translated into Japanese as *kan’ningensei* 人間性, which might be rendered in English as “the nature of human beings

- as in-between or interrelated [existences].” On *zwischen* and *Zwischenmenschlichkeit*, see *aida* in Hiromatsu Wataru et al., eds., *Iwanami tetsugaku shisō jiten* (hereafter *ITSJ*) (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1998).
- 9 As Yasuda explains in the following passage, the three kinds of virtues relate to the virtues of the Pure Land, Amida Buddha, and the bodhisattvas who dwell in the Pure Land. On the two pure worlds, see Hisao Inagaki, *T’an-luan’s Commentary on Vasubandhu’s Discourse on the Pure Land* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshodo, 1998), 266–267. The two pure worlds are the “purity of the land as receptacle” and the “purity of its inhabitants.”
 - 10 “Situated in time and space” is translated from the Japanese *ni oite aru mono* に於いてあるもの, a term used by the Kyoto school philosopher Nishida Kitarō.
 - 11 Yasuda includes here the German form of this originally Greek concept. Although used in a variety of ways in Western philosophy, Yasuda seems to use the concept in line with Vasubandhu’s understanding of the mind as the single interpreter or generator of the realm in which one lives.
 - 12 The line comes from Vasubandhu’s *Pure Land Treatise*; see Inagaki, *Tanluan’s Commentary*, 234–235.
 - 13 That is, an actual existence who, “as a person of the world” (*das Man*), has lost his “real or actual I” (*das eigentliche Ich*) in the world. This language is borrowed from Heidegger; see *kyōsonzai* 共存在 (*mitsein*) in *ITSJ* for a brief treatment of *das Man*.
 - 14 See Inagaki, *T’an-luan’s Commentary*, 236–237. The translation here differs from Inagaki’s.
 - 15 *Ibid.*, 182, 191, respectively. My translations differ slightly from Inagaki’s.
 - 16 That has lost its “real or authentic self.”
 - 17 The quotation comes from the *Jōyūiskikiron* 成唯識論 or *The Demonstration of Consciousness Only*; see Francis Cook, *Three Texts on Consciousness Only* (Berkeley, CA: Numata Center for Buddhist Translations and Research, 1999), 263; for the original, see *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* (hereafter *T*), ed. Takakusu Junjirō, Watanabe Kaigyoku, and Ono Genmyō, 100 vols. (Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1924–1934), T1586, 31.43a11.
 - 18 In writing about the call to conscience, the call that “summons Dasein’s self from its lostness in the ‘they,’” Heidegger notes: “Indeed, the call is precisely something which *we ourselves* have neither planned nor prepared for nor voluntarily performed, nor have we ever done so. ‘It’ calls, against our expectations and even against our will. On the other hand, the call undoubtedly does not come from someone else who is with me in the world. The call comes *from me* and yet *from beyond me and over me*.” Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 320. This last thought is suggestive of Yasuda’s own view of the call.

- 19 “Birthless birth” (*mushō no shō* 無生の生) is a term that Tanluan used; see Inagaki, *T’an-luan’s Commentary*, 239–240.
- 20 The term “three realms,” or *sangai* 三界, refers to the realms of transmigration, traditionally defined as the realm of desire, the realm of form, and the formless realm. Yasuda’s point here is that the realms of transmigration themselves become the pure world.

“Fundamental Vow, Fundamental Word” (1972)

- 1 Yasuda Rijin senshū hensan iinkai, ed., *Yasuda Rijin senshū* (hereafter YRS), vol. 1, (Kyoto: Bun’eidō, 1994), 453.
- 2 *Ibid.*, 442.
- 3 *Ibid.*, 445–446.
- 4 I have followed the translation of the titles of the vows as given in *The Collected Works of Shinran* (hereafter CWS), vol. 1 (Kyoto: Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-ha, 1997). The listing of the title of each vow can be found, in the order presented here, on the unnumbered page before pages 13, 79, 153, 178, and 207. Vow twenty-two is discussed on page 158ff.
- 5 YRS, vol. 1, 458.
- 6 As translated in CWS, vol. 1, 13. For the original, see Shinshū seiten hensan iinkai, ed., *Shinshū seiten* (hereafter *Shinshū seiten*) (Kyoto: Higashi Honganji shuppanbu, 1978), 157.
- 7 CWS, vol. 1, 13; *Shinshū seiten*, 157.
- 8 CWS, vol. 1, 177; *Shinshū seiten*, 300. Both *nayuta* and *koti* are terms indicating extraordinarily high numbers in the range of millions and millions.
- 9 CWS, vol. 1, 177; *Shinshū seiten*, 300. A *kalpa* is an aeon, a cosmic age.
- 10 CWS, vol. 1, 177; *Shinshū seiten*, 300.
- 11 YRS, vol. 1, 448.
- 12 *Ibid.*, 443.
- 13 CWS, vol. 1, 208; *Shinshū seiten*, 327.
- 14 CWS, vol. 1, 229; *Shinshū seiten*, 347.
- 15 Hisao Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras: A Study and Translation*, rev. ed. (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshodo, 2000), 196.
- 16 YRS, vol. 1, 458.
- 17 *Ibid.*
- 18 CWS, vol. 1, 153; *Shinshū seiten*, 281.
- 19 Hisao Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras* (Berkeley, CA: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2003), 16.

- 20 YRS, vol. 1, 459.
- 21 Ibid.
- 22 *Jikō* 事行, a translation of the German *Tathandlung*, a term created by Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814) to refer to the activity of pure consciousness. Nishida Kitaro also employed this concept. See Kunitsugu Kosaka, *Nishida Kitarō: Zen no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2006), 23, 25.
- 23 “Dharmākara of the casual stage” indicates that they were made by the Bodhisattva Dharmākara before he became the Buddha Amida.
- 24 See CWS, vol. 1, 177–204, where Shinran discusses the vows of light and life. See also *Shinshū seiten*, 300–325.
- 25 “Desires” is translated from the Japanese *iyoku* 意欲.
- 26 “Will” is translated from the Japanese *ishi* 意志.
- 27 German for “spirit” or “soul.”
- 28 Another title for the *Pure Land Treatise*, which Yasuda so often references. See Hisao Inagaki, *T’an-luan’s Commentary on Vasubandhu’s Discourse on the Pure Land* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshodo, 1998), 221, for language close to that used by Yasuda here; the Chinese text is reproduced on page 222 of Inagaki’s book.
- 29 CWS, vol. 1, 57; *Shinshū seiten*, 193. Here Shinran is citing *T’an-luan’s Commentary on the Pure Land Treatise*.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 “Actual activity” (*gengyō* 現行) is a term from Yogācāra philosophy meaning “the manifestation of the seeds of consciousness.”
- 32 See Inagaki, *T’an-luan’s Commentary*, 238, for the Chinese version. See page 239 for Inagaki’s English translation. *Shinshū seiten*, 140. My translation here differs from Inagaki’s.
- 33 The three types of adornments refer to those related to the Buddha, his land, and its inhabitants.
- 34 See Inagaki, *T’an-luan’s Commentary*, 250, for the Chinese text and page 251 for Inagaki’s translation. The translation given here differs from Inagaki’s. See also *Shinshū seiten*, 141.
- 35 This passage appears at the beginning of the “Chapter on Practice” in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*. See CWS, vol. 1, 13; *Shinshū seiten*, 157. The translation here differs from CWS.
- 36 This German word is usually translated as *genjitsu* 現実 (reality, actuality) in Japanese.
- 37 The German *Ursprung* has the meaning of “source” or “origin.”
- 38 Yasuda uses the phrase *shūkyō no hishūkyōka* 宗教の非宗教化.
- 39 Yasuda uses the English word “tradition” here.

- 40 The fundamental consciousness or *konponshiki* 根本識 is another name for the storehouse consciousness.
- 41 In the Yogācāra analysis of mind, the revolving consciousnesses, *tenshiki* 轉識 or *pravritti-vijñāna*, refer to all consciousnesses except the eighth storehouse consciousness.
- 42 This passages occurs twice in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, once at CWS, vol. 1, 7 and once in “Passages on the Pure Land Way” (*Jōdo monrui jushō* 淨土文類聚鈔), CWS, vol. 1, 296. See *Shinshū seiten*, 152, 403, respectively.
- 43 Yasuda includes the English “Name” here. The German *Wer* literally means “who.”
- 44 Yasuda uses *Namu* as a verb, *Namu suru* 南無する, in several places in the following section.
- 45 That is, incarnation.
- 46 CWS, vol. 1, 38; *Shinshū seiten*, 177.
- 47 Idea.
- 48 CWS, vol. 1, 13; *Shinshū seiten*, 157. The translation here differs slightly from CWS.
- 49 That is, a new being.
- 50 Yasuda draws on Heidegger’s conception of the human being as *in-der-Welt-sein* (*sekainai sonzai*), one who exists in a concrete and humanly constructed world of meaning, but Yasuda applies it to the Pure Land view of the human being as existing within the Tathāgata (*Nyorainai sonzai* 如来内存在).
- 51 For occurrences of these terms, see Inagaki, *T’an-luan’s Commentary*, 251 (願力), 263 (願心); *Shinshū seiten*, 141, 142. The translations here differ from Inagaki’s.
- 52 The German for “power” and “act,” respectively.
- 53 See Inagaki, *T’an-luan’s Commentary*, page 236 for the Chinese and page 237 for Inagaki’s translation; see also *Shinshū seiten*, 140.
- 54 Yasuda uses the German here to distinguish between history that is simply “historical” (*historisch*) and history in which the human being is existentially embedded (*geschichtlich*).
- 55 Yasuda uses the German for “truth” and “reality,” respectively.
- 56 “Clear” and “open.”
- 57 Yasuda inserts the English word “Name” in this sentence.
- 58 See CWS, vol. 1, 452; *Shinshū seiten*, 547.
- 59 For occurrences of this language, see *Shinshū seiten*, 510 (“Hymns of the Dharma Ages,” Shōzōmatsu wasan 正像末和讃), 602 (“The Lamp for Latter Ages,” Mattōshō 末燈鈔). See CWS, vol. 1, 427, for an English translation of the former passage.

- 60 As “the truth itself.”
- 61 “The three categories” (*sanrui* 三類) refers to the three types of objects of consciousness, and in English literature on the Consciousness Only school, the three categories are often discussed as “the three natures.” Cook describes them as (1) “the falsely imagined nature . . . which is the false, illusory nature that things have of appearing as if they were real things existing outside of consciousness”; (2) the nature of phenomena as being dependent on others, “which is the state of existing only in dependence on other things”; and (3) the perfected nature, “which is the true state, perceived without the obscurations of delusion and craving.” The true nature of any object of consciousness is said to be “the dependent nature minus the imagined nature.” Francis Cook, *Three Texts on Consciousness Only* (Berkeley, CA: Numata Center for Buddhist Translations and Research, 1999), 420. “The eight kinds” of consciousness refers to the eight layers of consciousness in Consciousness Only thought, that is the five sense consciousness; *vijñāna* (a consciousness that coordinates the senses and discriminates among phenomena); *manas* (the ego consciousness that takes the eighth consciousness as its object); and the *ālaya-vijñāna* or storehouse consciousness, which stores the seeds resulting from past perception.
- 62 Yasuda refers to a doctrinal controversy associated with the eighth-century Hossō 法相 sect, first developed in China as the Fa-hsiang sect. The controversy, as Yasuda suggests, arose from the sect’s assertion that Dharma had a special status beyond the realm of mind-mediated realities.
- 63 From the *Larger Sutra*; see Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras* (2003), 40; *Shinshū seiten*, 50. My translation differs from Inagaki’s.
- 64 A classic formulation in Yogācāra thought expressing the manner in which perception is reinforced or perfumed by its own projection.
- 65 *Grundwollen* in German means “fundamental desire” and *Grundwort* means “fundamental word.”
- 66 The term Yasuda uses here is the *sanki sanōjō* 三機三往生, which refers to the three types of capacities of sentient beings and the type of birth associated with each. The three capacities are (1) the capacity of the falsely settled, associated with the nineteenth vow; (2) the capacity of the unsettled, associated with the twentieth vow; and (3) the capacity of the truly settled, associated with the eighteenth vow. Each of these is associated with a type of “birth”: (1) the capacity of the unsettled attains a birth “(like Śākyamuni) under the śāla trees”; (2) the capacity of the unsettled attains the “birth that is non-comprehensible”; and (3) the capacity of the truly settled attains the “birth that is inconceivable.” The relation between the differing types of capacities and births is summarized in a chart in *CWS*, vol. 2, 66. Shinran refers to the connection between the capacities of individuals and their respective births in the *hyōko* before the chapter on “Transformed Buddha-

Bodies and Lands” regarding the falsely settled and the unsettled, and regarding the capacity of the truly settled, in the *hyōko* before the chapters on “True Shinjin” and “Realization.” See CWS, vol. 1, unnumbered page before 207, unnumbered pages before pages 79 and 153.

- 67 The relevant passage begins: “*Question*: In the Primal Vow, the Vow of ‘sincere mind, entrusting, and aspiration for birth’ has been established. Why does Vasubandhu, the author of the *Treatise*, speak of ‘the mind that is single’? *Answer*: In order to make the matter easily comprehensible for ignorant and foolish beings. Although Amida Tathagata discloses the three minds, the true cause for attaining nirvana is *shinjin* alone; it appears to be for this reason that Vasubandhu takes the three together as one.” This section continues for a number of pages. See CWS, vol. 1, 93–114; *Shinshū seiten*, 223–242.
- 68 CWS, vol. 1, 212–225; *Shinshū seiten*, 331–344.
- 69 *Niekō shihō* 二回向四法; a formula that summarizes Shin teachings. The two transferences of merit enable one to go to the Pure Land and to return to the world of sentient beings. In Shin Buddhism, both are understood to stem from Amida. The four teachings refer to the true teachings, practice, entrusting, and realization as taught in Shin Buddhism.
- 70 CWS, vol. 1, 228; *Shinshū seiten*, 346. The original uses the character 教, “teachings,” instead of 法, “Dharma,” which Yasuda uses.
- 71 The two deep minds mentioned here are taken up in Chapter 3 of the *Kyōgyōshinsho*; see CWS, vol. 1, 85; *Shinshū seiten*, 215–16. Hirota describes the two aspects of the deep mind in CWS, vol. 2, 176. “Deep mind is none other than profound entrusting which has two aspects: the awareness of *ki*, the finite and limited self steeped in blind passions (object of Amida’s Vow), and the awareness of *hō*, the working of Amida’s Vow directed to the foolish self (dharma that functions solely for the sake of such a being).”
- 72 From “Passages on the Pure Land Way,” CWS, vol. 1, 311; *Shinshū seiten*, 415.
- 73 For a translation of this verse, which is part of the *Kyōgyōshinsho*, see CWS, vol. 1, 69–74; *Shinshū seiten*, 204–208.
- 74 CWS, vol. 1, 13; *Shinshū seiten*, 157.
- 75 CWS, vol. 1, 54; *Shinshū seiten*, 190.
- 76 The eminent monks referred to here are the seven masters of the Shin lineage: Nagarjuna, Vasubandhu, Tanluan, Daochuo, Shan-tao, Genshin, and Hōnen.
- 77 This is the concluding line of the “Verse on True Entrusting.” See CWS, vol. 1, 74; *Shinshū seiten*, 208.

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About the Author

Paul B. Watt is professor at the Center for International Education, Waseda University, and adviser to Waseda's International Division. In the United States, he has taught at Grinnell College and Columbia University, and he is professor emeritus of Asian studies at DePauw University. His main field of teaching and research is Japanese religious history. His commentaries and translations have appeared in *Japanese Philosophy: A Sourcebook*, *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, and *Religions of Japan in Practice*, among many other publications.

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