

“Know that we are not good persons”:

Pure Land Buddhism and the ethics of exile.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the notion of the Pure Land (Jōdo 浄土) as an immanent utopia in both classical Buddhist sources and modern Japanese thought. The first half of the dissertation presents the argument that the idea of a Pure Land existing in this world was in wide circulation before the modern period, and that the orthodoxy of a strictly-transcendent Pure Land is a modern invention. The second half of the dissertation explores how modern thinkers respond to this orthodoxy by once again positing an immanent Pure Land. It focuses particularly on how notions introduced by the modern Buddhist thinkers Kiyozawa Manshi and Soga Ryōjin are taken up and interpreted by the Kyoto School philosophers Miki Kiyoshi and Tanabe Hajime. It concludes that the ethical and political significance of the modern Pure Land lies in its identification of the utopian space of the Pure Land with the space of exile or homelessness.

RÉSUMÉ

La présente thèse examine la notion de terre pure (Jōdo 浄土) vue en tant qu'utopie dans le bouddhisme classique ainsi que dans la pensée japonaise moderne. La première partie défend la thèse selon laquelle l'idée d'une terre pure existant dans ce monde était commune avant la période moderne, et que la notion selon laquelle seule une terre pure conçue comme étant strictement transcendante est orthodoxe est une invention moderne. La seconde partie de la thèse décrit la façon dont les penseurs modernes répondent à cette nouvelle orthodoxie en avançant de nouveau une terre pure immanente, et se penche en particulier sur la façon dont des notions introduites par les penseurs bouddhistes modernes Kiyozawa Manshi et Soga Ryōjin sont reprises et interprétées par les philosophes de l'école de Kyoto Miki Kiyoshi et Tanabe Hajime. La thèse conclut que l'importance éthique et politique de la terre pure moderne repose sur le fait qu'elle identifie l'espace utopique de la terre pure avec l'espace d'exil ou d'absence de demeure.

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NOTE ON TRANSLATIONS AND ROMANIZATION

Translations of the Larger and Smaller sūtras are from Luis Gómez, as indicated.

Translations of the material from the rest of the Shinshū Seiten are taken from the Ōtani translation series. Translations of Tanabe's *Zangedō toshite tetsugaku* are from Takeuchi Yoshinori's *Philosophy as Metanoetics*. Where an available and felicitous translation of other materials exists, I have tried to use it. Translations of Kiyozawa and Miki are for the most part my own. My translation of Miki Kiyoshi's essay on Shinran in particular benefited tremendously from the input of Victor Sōgen Hori, and Iwamoto Akemi; whatever errors or infelicities remains are entirely my fault.

Romanization has not been provided for Japanese phrases more than four characters long, except in the case of proper nouns, and in those instances where the expression is referred to more than once in the text. Romanization follows the revised Hepburn system, with the syllabic n (ん) always written as *n*, even before labial consonants (so *nenbutsu* rather than *nembutsu*). When quoting from authors using the traditional Hepburn system, I have taken the liberty of changing the romanization to revised Hepburn, except where such a change would make it difficult to locate the reference, as when the word in question appears in the title. Similarly, diacritical marks have been inserted even where they did not appear in the text being quoted, with the exception of those words that have entered the common English lexicon. Any errors on this score are again my responsibility.

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And this man that is born and dies, who knows whence he came and whither he goes?
And who knows also why with so much labour he builds his house, or how such
things can give him pleasure? Like the dew on the morning glory are man and his house,
who knows which will survive the other?
—Kamo no Chōmei¹

The exile knows that in a secular and contingent world, homes are always provisional.
Borders and barriers, which enclose us within the safety of familiar territory,
can also become prisons, and are often defended beyond reason or necessity.
Exiles cross borders, break barriers of thought and experience.
—Edward Said, “Reflections on exile”²

The working men have no country. We cannot take from them what they have not got.
—Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, “Proletarians and Communists”³

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is about utopia and exile. Specifically, it is about the utopia of Pure Land Buddhism—Amida Buddha’s Sukhāvatī, the realm of bliss, or the *gokuraku jōdo* 極樂淨土, the Western paradise—how that utopia gets reinscribed as a space of exile in the Jōdo Shinshū 淨土真宗 imaginary following the real exile of the founder, Shinran 親鸞, and most of all the uses to which the image of the Pure Land is put in the twentieth century. It argues that until the modern period, the Pure Land was open to being understood as a heterotopia—an enacted utopia, or an immanent space of difference, neither strictly transcendent nor strictly immanent. It is only in the modern period that

¹ Kamo no Chōmei, “Hōjōki,” in *The Ten Foot Square Hut, and Tales of the Heike; Being Two Thirteenth-Century Japanese Classics* (Rutland: C.E. Tuttle, 1972), 1.

² Edward Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 185.

³ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (Charleston: BiblioBazaar, 2007), 31.

visions of the Pure Land as strictly transcendent and counter-visions of the Pure Land as strictly immanent spring up almost simultaneously. These counter-visions make the Pure Land interesting to Japanese philosophers looking for a utopian image that they can set in opposition to the existing state, at a moment of danger. Because this particular utopian image comes bound together with a sense that exile is the only situation from within which it is possible to enact that utopia—because, in other words, it comes with a prescription for exile—these philosophers are drawn into thinking about the space of exile too.

Let's start with the understanding that the space of exile is best imagined as a gap, or dislocation. This gap is opened up in order to ensure the hegemony of a given regime by expelling those persons who represent the heterogeneous, and so within the terms of that regime, the space of exile is nowhere at all—it is an *ou-topos*, a non-place. At the same time, the gap opened up in the interests of hegemony exposes the limits of hegemony: it is a heterogeneous space within which it remains possible to imagine a counter-regime, or total difference. This is an opening to the other side of utopia: *eu-topos*, the good place: “Whatever utopia is, whatever can be imagined as utopia, this is the transformation of the totality.... [A]ll humans deep down, whether they admit this or not, know that it would be possible or it could be different. Not only could they live without hunger and probably without anxiety, but they could also live as free human beings.”⁴ The space of exile thus represents for us four contradictory things: as a space opened up by a regime, it represents the coercive power of that regime; as a space that, in the terms of that regime, is nowhere and inhabited by nobody—invisible, unthinkable—it

⁴ Theodore W. Adorno, “Something’s Missing: A Discussion between Ernst Bloch and Theodore W. Adorno on the Contradictions of Utopian Longing,” in Ernst Bloch, *The Utopian Function of Art and Literature: Selected Essays*, trans. Jack Zipes and Frank Mecklenburg (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989), 3-4.

represents the success of the regime at achieving hegemony; as a space that is by necessity outside of the reach of the regime, it represents the failure of the regime to achieve hegemony; as a space of difference, it represents the possibility of difference, change, transformation.⁵ This gap then is the space in which it is possible to preserve the wish for a transformation of the totality; such a wish, oriented toward the future in such a way as to maintain its contingent character as promise or potential, is the genuine utopian impulse.

Theodore Adorno holds that one of the characteristics of utopia is that, because it represents the human hope for what is possible as against what is actual, it must always be incomplete or only partially achieved (this, I think, makes it possible to resist totalitarianism even as one wishes for a transformation of the totality). The utopia imagined by the regimes of modernity is not a genuine utopia because what it promises is only “a repetition of the continually same ‘today’.”⁶ The relationship between hope and utopia is a point of contention in contemporary philosophy. Darren Webb offers an exceptionally clear survey of the possibilities, including a careful explanation of the distinction between “patient hope” which, as understood by Gabriel Marcel and Bernard Dauenhauer, “is to take one's time, to face the future with courageous patience, to stand firm and abide, securely confident that a solution to life's trials will, through the agency of some trusted Other, be found” and “critical hope” which, following Ernst Bloch, “is born of the sense that ‘something's missing’ and is experienced as a restless longing for

⁵ Zygmunt Bauman points to the contradiction inherent in the space of exile: “To be in exile means to be out of place; also, needing to be rather elsewhere; also, not having that ‘elsewhere’ where one would rather be. Thus, exile is a place of compulsory confinement, but also an unreal place, a place that is itself out of place in the order of things. Anything may happen here, but nothing can be done here”; see “Assimilation into Exile: the Jew as a Polish Writer,” in *Exile and Creativity: Signposts, Travellers, Outsiders, Backward Glances*, ed. Susan Rubin Suleiman (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 321.

⁶ See Adorno, “Something's Missing,” 2.

fulfilment”—this hope is critical in that it “grounds an ongoing and ever-open process of criticising present negatives in light of their future negation,” such that the utopian image can demand “goal-directed social praxis.”⁷ Adorno’s utopia should be understood as corresponding to a critical mode of hoping.⁸

Because of the huge population of exiles produced out of the movements of modern nation-states and global capital during the twentieth century, and the catastrophic consequences of the fascist appeal to homeland, and the appropriation of the utopian promise by totalitarian regimes, both utopia and exile must be important concerns for contemporary philosophers in the West. Some have privileged the situation of exile, folding it into nomadism—we might think here of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari and their call for a nomadology, “the opposite of a history,” written against the sedentary histories produced “in the name of a unitary State apparatus”⁹; of their dreamy account of the urban nomad, who “makes the city disgorge a patchwork, differentials of speed, delays and accelerations, changes in orientation, continuous variations”¹⁰; or of Brian Massumi’s dreamier-still description of nomad thought in his introduction to *A Thousand Plateaus*: “It does not immure itself in the edifice of an ordered interiority; it moves

⁷ See Darren Webb, “Exploring the Relationship between Hope and Utopia: Towards a Conceptual Framework,” *Politics* 28.3 (2008): 199-200.

⁸ In this sense, it may be said to point toward both of the aspects of utopia that Ruth Levitas discusses in a beautiful piece of published correspondence, in which she explains her concern with the limits of critical utopia: “I think there is a weakening involved in the almost total shift to heuristic or critical utopia, as what is lost is the drive to change and the assertion of its possibility. Utopia [now] may still express desire, but it does not articulate hope. Critical utopias are to be commended because they disrupt the ideological closure of the present. But for Utopia to be transformative, it must also disrupt the structural closure of the present. . . . It is very difficult to identify either mechanisms or agents capable of effecting a real transformation of the global social and economic system. Without this, the conditions for a serious envisioning of committed alternatives simply don’t exist—and Utopia will continue to be confined to the function of critique rather than transformation.” See Ruth Levitas and Lucy Sargisson, “Utopia in Dark Times: Optimism/Pessimism and Utopia/Dystopia,” in *Dark Horizons: Science Fiction and the Dystopian Imagination*, ed. Tom Moylan and Raffaella Baccolini (New York: Routledge, 2003), 15-16.

⁹ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2004), 23.

¹⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 532.

freely in an element of exteriority. It does not repose on identity; it rides on difference.... It synthesizes a multiplicity of elements without effacing their heterogeneity or hindering their potential for future rearranging (to the contrary).”¹¹

Other thinkers have pointed more directly to the ways that this “free movement” is something *suffered* by the exile, and so position the dislocation of exile as a moral burden; in other words, they prescribe exile without privileging it. Here of course we should think of Adorno’s injunction in *Minima Moralia*: “The house is past...it is part of morality not to be at home in one’s home.”¹² Edward Said takes this seriously, asserting that it is the exile’s “intellectual mission” to refuse narratives of triumphant return to the homeland, while still allowing that to live with this refusal is “virtually unbearable and virtually impossible in today’s world.”¹³

There is something terrible about prescribing this kind of suffering. I think on this point it is important to distinguish between those thinkers who take nomadism as a telos, as itself the wished-for utopia, and those who take the space of exile as a site upon which utopia can be enacted. The essayist Bruce Chatwin, for example, claims that “Evolution intended us to be travellers,”¹⁴ and scholar and activist Robbie McVeigh warns that “as the state gears up to systematically repress nomads”—in this case, Britain’s “New Travellers”—“...the attendant erosion of liberties and paramilitarisation of policing will have consequences for every community in resistance.”¹⁵ It seems to me that this kind of reading, resting on a dichotomy of nomadism and what McVeigh terms state-sponsored

¹¹ Massumi, *A Thousand Plateaus*, xii-xiii.

¹² Theodore Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, trans. E.F.N. Jephcott (London: Verso, 1978), 39.

¹³ Said, *Reflections on Exile*, 177.

¹⁴ Bruce Chatwin, *Anatomy of Restlessness: Selected Writings 1969–1989* (London: Penguin Books, 1997), 102.

¹⁵ Robbie McVeigh, “Theorising Sedentarism: The Roots of Anti-Nomadism,” in *Gypsy Politics and Traveller Identity*, ed. Thomas Alan Acton (Hertfordshire: University of Hertfordshire Press, 1997), 8.

“sedentarism,” does not sufficiently interrogate how capital makes this kind of “elective nomadic” life possible (and is in turn served by it)¹⁶ and the liberal nation-state that inculcates the values of autonomy, independence, and civil liberty which make this kind of self-selected nomadism desirable.¹⁷ This in turn might indicate that such elective nomadism does not in fact represent resistance to the complex regime of nation-state-capital. We see the limits of this appeal to utopian nomadism, I think, when it is brought face to face with a situation of coerced nomadism—Fred Dallmayr comments wryly that “it is always an embarrassing matter to preach poverty to the poor or homelessness to the homeless.”¹⁸ And indeed it should be embarrassing to say that the homeless and the poor are fine where they are because to say this requires that one abandon not only the big utopian aspiration—a transformation of the totality—but also even the small utopian aspiration of a life without hunger and anxiety.¹⁹ Another way of saying this might be that nomadology has such a rich image of *ou-topia* that it allows that *ou-topia* to substitute for *eu-topia*.

¹⁶ See Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), especially Part 1, “Global Flows,” 27-85.

¹⁷ Rebecca Barnes, Timothy Auburn, and Susan Lea use the term “elective nomadic people” in their discussion of the new travellers, “Citizenship in Practice,” *British Journal of Social Psychology* 43 (2004): 192. Laurence Cox points to a way of distinguishing between the experience of the elective nomad and the experience of the exile, I think, in commenting that the former “are not privileged in the usual sense of the word, but their lives are experiences of deprivation and conflict with authority rather than of the more normal forms of exploitation and direct domination”; see “Towards a Sociology of Counter Cultures?” <http://eprints.nuim.ie/441/> (last accessed April 16, 2009).

¹⁸ Fred Dallmayr, “The Politics of Nonidentity: Adorno, Postmodernism—and Edward Said,” *Political Theory* 25.1 (1997): 51. In this essay, Dallmayr is sharply critical of Deleuze and Guattari’s romantic treatment of nomadism; he is more patient with Said, allowing that “his endorsement of nomadism is at least occasionally muted, especially when it comes to the problem of real-life homelessness.”

¹⁹ As a non-trivial example of this, we might consider moves to manage homelessness by using public zoning laws to establish spaces in which homeless people will be tolerated, as though their situation is in a full sense freely chosen. Don Mitchell critiques this approach, which he refers to as “zoning heterotopia”: “Prison or the asylum might be a radical heterotopia of resistance, but it is hardly a substitute for a decent social housing program”; see “Postmodern Geographical Praxis? The Postmodern Impulse and the War against Homeless People in the ‘Post-Justice’ City,” in *Postmodern Geography: Theory and Praxis*, ed. Claudio Minca (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 72-80 and 64.

Adorno, by contrast, understands exile positively not as a goal in itself but as a space for a particular kind of dialectical encounter. In the Hegelian dialectic, self and other encounter each other in a relationship of dominance, as master and slave, such that the master's identity as subject, her self-ownership, is mediated and affirmed by the slave's identity as non-subject. The problem here is that in fact the master's status as subject depends totally on the slave, making the slave in some sense the owner of the master—neither one is actually self-identical. Adorno's negative dialectic moves to bring this problem to the surface by emphasizing non-identity, making the non-identical nowhere of exile (*ou-topia*) the space on which it is possible to encounter the other without dominating the other, such that self and other meet as free human beings (*eu-topia*)—here *ou-topia* is related to but not elided with *eu-topia*: Adorno's image is not one of flight from the social-historical-material real but critical engagement with the real—intervention rather than transcendence. Trinh Minh-ha, who also seeks an intervention in the master-slave dialectic, describes a similar movement of encounter in a non-space: “Not quite the same, not quite the other, she stands in that undetermined threshold place where she constantly drifts in and out,” with every gesture “activating the to and fro movement of life.”²⁰ This image of drifting back and forth across a threshold recalls Said's image of the exile as a border-crosser, possessed of the secret knowledge that everything the existing regime promises will prove eternal is actually contingent and provisional; Trinh suggests that the exile, or more broadly conceived, the subaltern, is charged with exposing this secret by refusing identity, “refusing to naturalize the I.”²¹

²⁰ Trinh T. Minh-ha, “Not You/Like You: Post-Colonial Women and the Interlocking Questions of Identity and Difference,” *Inscriptions* 3-4 (1988), http://humanities.ucsc.edu/CultStudies/PUBS/Inscriptions/vol_3-4/v3-4top.html (last accessed April 23, 2009).

²¹ Trinh, “Not You/Like You.”

These non-identical persons, however, are subject to the most coercive expressions of state power, so that the liminal spaces Trinh talks about here are, in concrete terms, state-sponsored sites of domination: “Those running around yelling X is not X and X can be Y, usually land in a hospital, a rehabilitation center, a concentration camp, or a reservation.”²² It seems to me that Adorno and Said’s enjoining of exile has moral seriousness because they acknowledge the way that freedom and coercion are entangled with each other, that is that one becomes free only by giving up a claim to an autonomous or independent subjectivity. I think any reader familiar with Buddhism will be able to suggest a language for this state of being drawn from within the Buddhist tradition.²³ I want to stick to continental philosophy for one more moment, and suggest that we conceive of this state of being as one of abjection.

Julia Kristeva characterizes abjection as a movement of expulsion that attempts to define a border; the abject itself is that which “lies outside, beyond the set, and does not seem to agree to the...rules of the game. And yet, from its place of banishment, the abject does not cease challenging its master.”²⁴ Kristeva understands the abject as charged with the imperial task of making borders—the exile, or deject, “never stops demarcating his universe.... A tireless builder, the deject is in short a *stray*”—but against the intentions and desires of the imperium, he moves in a space that is “never *one*, nor *homogeneous*,

²² Trinh, “Not You/Like You.”

²³ Buddhism is an important source for Trinh, who identifies it as one of her critical tools; she is interested, she has said, in “how I can read French theory in light of Zen Buddhism or Taoism; and how to a certain extent, I can reread Zen Buddhism and Taoism in light of contemporary critical continental philosophy. The process of cultural and theoretical hybridity gives rise to an ‘elsewhere within here’”—I think it is easy to see how Trinh is using this critical praxis to produce a space for thinking that is like the space of exile we have been considering; see her *Cinema Interval* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 63.

²⁴ Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 2.

nor *totalizable*, but essentially divisible, foldable, and catastrophic.”²⁵ The exile, in a state of abjection, is “on a journey, during the night, the end of which keeps receding...the more he strays, the more he is saved.”²⁶

What I propose to do in this dissertation is to reread Pure Land Buddhism in light of this understanding of utopia as a wish for not only happiness but freedom; of exile as a state of abjection; and of the spaces of exile and utopia as imbricated. Here’s another way of saying this: typically, both the fact that Jōdo Shinshū identifies its ideal practitioner as abject (that’s exile) and the fact that its orientation is toward the Western paradise (that’s utopia) are taken as evidence that it is so caught up in self-abnegation and longing for transcendence that it is not ethically interesting. If we take note of the imbrication of exile and utopia, we will see that in fact it is ethically interesting.

So it seems to me that there is nothing unusual about reading Pure Land Buddhism as utopian, but what this usually means is reading it as the expression of a desire for transcendent purity. Although this reading will not be my reading, it does seem to me consistent with the understanding of utopia that I take to exert the most influence in the field of religious studies. Let me briefly review that understanding and from there explain how my reading will be different.

The most influential account of utopia for scholars of religion is surely Jonathan Z. Smith’s conception of the dichotomy between utopian and locative visions of the world.²⁷ Smith loves the idea of utopia. The locative vision, he suggests, “emphasizes place”:

²⁵ Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 8.

²⁶ Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 8.

²⁷ Jonathan Z. Smith, *Map Is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions* (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 100 and 308-309. John D. Barbour applies a version of Smith’s framework taken from Thomas Tweed to Said’s exile in “Edward Said and the Space of Exile,” *Literature and Theology* 21.3 (2007): 296-297; see also Thomas A. Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006).

understanding the world as a centripetal, closed system, it affirms the notion that within the cosmos there is an already-established place for everything and so seeks “congruity and conformity.”²⁸ The utopian vision, by contrast, is centrifugal and open; it refuses the established order and valorizes rebellion, inversion, and freedom.²⁹ Smith positions the utopian against the locative by using the word utopia in what he calls “its strict sense: the value of being in no place.”³⁰ Smith’s view of utopia resonates strongly, I think, with the vision of nomadism we considered above.

In his study of the Chinese spatial imaginary, Bernard Faure takes up Smith’s categories, but not Smith’s love of utopia. He keeps Smith’s narrow definition of utopia, calling it “a nonspace or *non-lieu*,”³¹ while arguing that the utopian vision (here represented by Chan Buddhism) represents the established order and the locative vision (represented by popular religion) the rebellious other. In some ways I think Faure’s critique of utopia resonates with Georges Perec’s suggestion that the real desire of utopia is precisely a taxonomic desire for everything to have an already-established place: “All utopias are depressing because they leave no room for chance, for difference, for the ‘miscellaneous.’ Everything has been set in order and order reigns. Behind every utopia there is always some great taxonomic design: a place for each thing and each thing in its place.”³² On this understanding, the homogeneity of utopia as a non-space serves the

²⁸ Smith, *Map Is Not Territory*, 100-101, 134-137, 169, and 292.

²⁹ Smith, *Map Is Not Territory*, 101 and 170.

³⁰ Smith, *Map Is Not Territory*, 101.

³¹ Bernard Faure, “Space and Place in Chinese Religious Traditions,” *History of Religions* 26.4 (1987): 346.

³² Georges Perec, *Species of Space and Other Pieces*, trans. John Sturrock (London: Penguin Books, 1997), 191. This discussion of utopia might be thought about in connection to Perec’s discussion of the port at Ellis Island as “the ultimate place of exile, the place where place is absent, the non-place, the nowhere”; see Peter Wagstaff, “The Dark Side of Utopia: Word, Image, and Memory in Georges Perec’s *Récits d’Ellis Island: histoires d’errance et d’espoir*,” in *The Seeing Century: Film, Vision and Identity*, ed. Wendy Everett (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000), 43.

interests of hegemony, and the abstract ideal of utopia becomes—as Faure puts it, drawing on Michel Serres—“an imperialism.”³³

I think that Faure’s critique of Smith helpfully points us toward a possible critique of Deleuze and Guattari’s nomadism, but that both Faure and Smith rest their arguments on literal understandings of utopia that are actually not literal enough—they both give us *ou-topia* without *eu-topia*. So while Faure contends that the utopian must be subverted by the locative if it is to survive,³⁴ it seems to me that the utopian image in fact always contains within itself the promise of a situation. On the one hand, if space is cancelled out by *ou-topia*, it is ushered back in by *eu-topia*, which cannot be nowhere; on the other hand, if *eu-topia* requires that utopia be given some location, *ou-topia* insists that it is not here, not yet. Utopia is an image of a situation different from the present situation. Utopia is thus charged with a critical function, and because it is imagined not just as a space but as a shared space, this critical function is specifically one of social critique. This makes it a mistake, I think, to interpret the longing for utopia as a longing for absolute transcendence. Smith valorizes just such a movement, following Mircea Eliade’s interpretation of the image of the broken roof as indicating that “one has now abolished every ‘situation’ and has chosen not installation in the world but the absolute freedom which implies...the annihilation of every conditioned world,”³⁵ while Faure derides it as an imperialist assertion of hegemony, citing the epistemic violence of Pozao Duo’s

³³ Faure, “Space and Place,” 347.

³⁴ Faure, “Space and Place,” 355-356

³⁵ Mircea Eliade, “Structures and Changes in the History of Religion,” in *City Invincible: A Symposium on Urbanization and Cultural Development in the Ancient Near East*, ed. Carl H. Kraeling and Robert M. Adams (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 365ff.; cited in Smith, *Map Is Not Territory*, 170 and see also 90. Breaking the roof appears as a metaphor for attaining *nirvāna* in the Dhammapada: “House-builder, you are seen. / You will not build a house again. / All your rafters are broken, / your ridge pole shattered, / gone to the Unformed, the mind / has come to the end of craving” (XI.154; translation from www.accesstosight.org).

smashing of the shamaness's stove,³⁶ but neither one, to my mind, registers the sociocritical function of the utopian image. Because utopia serves this function, to dream of utopia is not to dream of absolute freedom in boundless transcendent nothingness, but precisely to choose situatedness, twice over—as an image of a good place shared with others, it is an expression of desire *for* a world, and as an assertion that the good place is not this place here and now, it resituates the dreamer in the given world as a critic. Utopia then, taken literally, contains within itself an injunction to break or smash and a concomitant injunction to build or enact. That is to say, I think the utopian should be understood as a complex variant of the locative, rather than as its opposite.

Michel Foucault has coined the term “heterotopia” to describe sites where the utopian injunction to enact is taken up. He suggests that the heterotopia exists in a complex relationship with the real as a place in which “all the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted.”³⁷ Because the heterotopia exists in this complex relationship to the real, it is not always easy to recognize, but the presence of heterotopias within the real tells us something important about the nature of the utopian imagination within that real, namely that it has not yet lost its critical function. In his study of the utopian imagination in Tokugawa Japan, Maeda Ai has suggested that one potential genealogy of a particular kind of Japanese heterotopia might begin with the Tokugawa prisonhouse and go backward to the *muenjo* 無縁所, the “‘autonomous places,’ which guaranteed an inverted

³⁶ This Chan narrative is discussed by Faure in “Space and Place” (343) and again in *The Rhetoric of Immediacy: A Cultural Critique of Chan Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); *The Will to Orthodoxy: A Critical Genealogy of Northern Chan Buddhism*, trans. Phyllis Brooks (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997); and *Visions of Power: Imagining Medieval Japanese Buddhism*, trans. Phyllis Brooks (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000). Pozao Duo is said to have smashed the stove used by a shamaness to make sacrifices, and thereby liberated the deity dwelling within.

³⁷ See “Of Other Spaces,” trans. Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics* 16.1 (1986), 24.

freedom in the medieval period.”³⁸ Here Maeda is drawing on the work of historian Amino Yoshihiko, and his study of medieval spaces, *Muen, Kugai, Raku* 無縁・公界・楽. Each of these spaces too has a genealogy, at once Buddhist and Japanese.³⁹ The last among these—*raku* 楽—brings us into the constellation of ideas that are the real focus of this study.

Knowing that the medieval Japanese enacted utopia using Buddhist language allows us to think about Buddhism as contributing an image of utopia to the Japanese spatial imaginary that is something other than the prototypical extrawordly nirvanic image of the broken roof.⁴⁰ It seems to me that the image of the Western Pure Land—the *gokuraku jōdo*—is one such image of utopia, best understood not as an image of transcendent bliss but as the representation of a wish for the transformation of the totality, which enjoins intervention. It is, in other words, both critical and hopeful.

This wish gets tied up with the idea of exile in a very specific way in the context of Jōdo Shinshū, or True Pure Land Buddhism, because Jōdo Shinshū begins with an exile. Shinran 親鸞 (1173–1263), the founder of Shinshū, develops his reading of the Pure Land teachings while living in exile, which exile he takes as evidence that the world has entered the period of decline during which the path of sages is no longer open⁴¹; as an

³⁸ See Maeda Ai, “Utopia of the Prisonhouse: A Reading of *In Darkest Tokyo*,” trans. Seiji M. Lippit and James A. Fujii, in *Text and the City: Essays on Japanese Modernity*, ed. James A. Fujii (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 22. By inverted freedom, Maeda seems to mean the freedom obtained through the inversion of the values and hierarchies of the secular order (34).

³⁹ See “Medieval Japanese Constructions of Peace and Liberty: *Muen, kugai*, and *raku*,” trans. William Johnston, *International Journal of Asian Studies* 4.1 (2007), 10-12 for discussions of the Buddhist origins of each term.

⁴⁰ For nirvāna itself imagined as a place, see Charles Hallisey, “The Sutta on Nibbāna as a Great City,” in *Buddhist Essays: In Honour of Hammalawa Saddhātissa*, ed. Pollamure Sorata et al. (London: Sri Saddhatissa International Buddhist Centre, 1992): 38-67; as a utopia, see Steven Collins, *Nirvana and Other Buddhist Felicities: Utopias of the Pali Imaginaire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

⁴¹ *Kyōgyōshinshō* VI.117 (SS 471).

exile, he comes to identify himself as Gutoku Shinran 愚禿親鸞, the addle-brained baldpate, *hisō hizoku* 非僧非俗, neither monk nor layman, an abjectly ordinary person.⁴² It is for his sake alone that the Buddha Amida has established the Pure Land⁴³; his birth is absolutely assured.⁴⁴ Still, returning to the terms set out above, his mode is not one of patient hoping. Shinran's affect is one of doubt, lack of confidence, confusion; this affect expresses his understanding of himself as abject exile, and also points us to his mode as one of critical hoping, which entails a goal-directed social praxis. There is no indication that Shinran intended to found a school, but when his followers take him to be their patriarch, they take on board the way that the experience of exile shapes Shinran's thought and identity, and try to reproduce that experience for themselves, building it into the structure of the Jōdo Shinshū institution and carrying it forward into the modern period as an essential element in their social praxis. In other words, Jōdo Shinshū, it seems to me, prescribes exile too.

This turns out to matter quite a lot. In the second half of the nineteenth century, and the first half of the twentieth century, as the Japanese people suffer a series of catastrophes⁴⁵ Jōdo Shinshū becomes an important intellectual resource and the Pure Land serves as an important image of utopia. I will contend that intellectuals both inside and outside the Shinshū institution draw on an image of the Pure Land particular to Shinshū in an attempt to open an imaginative space outside of the current regime from within which it becomes possible to conceive of a kind of freedom different from that

⁴² I will use this phrase to try to get at the interlocking identities of *bonbu* 凡夫 (ordinary person), *akunin* 悪人 (evil person), and exile.

⁴³ As expressed in the phrase “For I myself alone,” or *Shinran hitori ga tame* 親鸞一人がため; see the postscript to the *Tannishō* (SS 853).

⁴⁴ *Kyōgyōshinshō* VI.68 (SS 413).

⁴⁵ In the literal sense of overturnings and revolutions, as well as losses and devastations.

promised by the modern capitalist nation-state. This means that for Japanese thinkers as for their western counterparts, the spaces of exile and utopia are imbricated, so that, as we will see, Adorno's insistence that the house is past resonates in surprising and complicated ways with the thought of his contemporaries in Japan. Taking note of this will lead us to a much better understanding of the meaning of the modern decision to seize upon Shinran at a moment of danger, that is at a moment when there is a possibility of historical rupture or transformation.⁴⁶

The modern thinkers with whom I am concerned are often described—and indeed sometimes describe themselves—as “demythologizing” Pure Land, breaking with tradition by imagining the Pure Land as immanent and concerning themselves with social ethics. In the first chapter, I will try to show that the Pure Land was traditionally understood as either potentially or actually immanent, irrupting within the real as a heterogeneous space, and, for this reason, the image of the Pure Land has often had something to say about social ethics. In the second chapter, I will contend that this tradition is sustained by Hōnen 法然 (1133–1212), Shinran, and Rennyo 蓮如 (1415–1499), through the catastrophes that attended the end of the Heian 平安 (794–1185) and the onset of the Sengoku Jidai 戦国時代 (ca. 1467–1568), with the spaces of exile and utopia coming to constitute a kind of circuit through which Japanese Pure Land generates its power. And in the first part of the third chapter, I will make an intervention, arguing that the “traditional” transcendent Pure Land is a modern myth, which emerges as part of the production of Japan as a liberal nation-state. This means that when sectarian and non-

⁴⁶ This phrase is borrowed from Walter Benjamin's “On the Concept of History”: “To articulate what is past does not mean to recognize it ‘the way it really was.’ It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger”; see *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (London: Fontana, 1992), 247.

sectarian thinkers responding to modernity move to demythologize the tradition, they become entangled in a complicated imaginative operation that is at once modern and counter-modern.

The second part of the third chapter deals with the work of the sectarian thinkers Kiyozawa Manshi 清沢満之 (1863–1903) and Soga Ryōjin 曾我量深 (1875–1971), who both make efforts to reimagine the Pure Land against the interests of their institution, and those of the imperial nation-state. It seems to me that Kiyozawa and Soga are best understood as moderns rather than as modernizers—that is, I think that both of them are working within (and against) an already-modernized tradition and nation-state. In this sense the comparison of a thinker like Soga and a thinker like Adorno is not artificial⁴⁷: they were both reading Hegel, they were both contending with the competing claims of Marxism and the liberal nation-state, they were both caught up in translocal flows of capital and ideas. So my interest in this part of the chapter is not so much in whether or not Kiyozawa and Soga succeeded somehow at modernizing their tradition, or in whether they overcame or were overcome by modernity, but whether or not, as modern thinkers, Kiyozawa and Soga were able to think their way past their own modernity by drawing on the spatial imaginary inherited from their tradition.

The fourth and fifth chapters treat two thinkers outside of the Shinshū institution: Miki Kiyoshi 三木清 (1897–1945) and Tanabe Hajime 田辺元 (1885–1962). Miki and Tanabe, using Kiyozawa and Soga's work as a key, both reread Shinshū in light of western philosophy, and western philosophy in light of Shinshū. Both have been charged with misunderstanding or misrepresenting their source material, but it seems to me that

⁴⁷ See Marina Grzinic, "Shifting the Borders of the Other: An Interview with Trinh T. Minh-ha," *Telepolis*, <http://www.heise.de/tp/r4/artikel/3/3265/1.html> (last accessed April 23, 2009).

this charge itself misunderstands the philosophical project in which Miki and Tanabe were engaged, which was, like Trinh's, one designed to give rise "to an 'elsewhere within here'." In these final chapters then, I will not ask what Miki and Tanabe got right about Shinshū and what they got wrong, but rather what image of the Pure Land each produced, and how that Pure Land functions within their work as an imaginary space of immanent difference. I understand this positioning of the Pure Land as an elsewhere within here—or a heterotopia—to be perfectly traditional.

This second half of the dissertation, following on the intervention of the third chapter, is very narrowly focused, dealing with just four thinkers, and centering particularly on work that appeared between 1944 and 1946. Soga continues to be an active scholar long after the end of the war, as does Tanabe. There are also many other thinkers active throughout the twentieth century who engage the Pure Land imaginary in ways similar to Soga, Miki, and Tanabe, namely in order to create a standpoint from which it is possible to challenge the hegemony of nation, state, and capital. There are many subaltern groups who engage in similarly challenging projects without necessarily producing philosophical texts. And there are also many ways in which the Pure Land imaginary is activated during and after the war that are inimical to this kind of interrogation of the real. This dissertation should not be read as an exhaustive account of all of the uses to which the image of the Pure Land as utopia has been put; for this reason, it cannot be read as an exhaustive account of all of the ethical possibilities that inhere within that image. Rather, it is an effort to read some Japanese images of utopia that emerged at moments of catastrophe—including one moment in which the West is inextricably implicated—in light of a western image of utopia that emerged at that same

shared moment in order to open a space in which the complicated and demanding ethic of Pure Land Buddhism can reveal itself more plainly than it has before.

CHAPTER ONE: THE LAND IN PURE LAND

In a screed critiquing developments within the contemporary Shinshū Ōtani-ha 真宗大谷派, David A. Suzuki writes that “the whole emphasis within the church has shifted from belief in the Jōdo (Pure Realm) after death to attainment of a this-world socialistic utopia.” He goes on to ask, “Can such a religion continue to be called Jōdo Shinshū?”⁴⁸ I want to develop an answer to Suzuki’s question in this chapter, in anticipation of engaging more fully with the conception of the Western Paradise as a “this-world socialistic utopia” in the chapters that follow. My answer in brief: yes, it can.

The Polemics of Transcendence

One of the chief assumptions informing Suzuki’s critique is that Pure Land belief, before the crisis of modernity, was other-worldly in its orientation. This is a point of contention in contemporary sectarian studies,⁴⁹ but in western scholarship, the understanding that

⁴⁸ David A. Suzuki, *Crisis in Japanese Buddhism: The Case of the Otani Sect* (Los Angeles: Buddhist Books International, 1985), 62.

⁴⁹ See for example Takeda Ryūsei’s comment on the interpretation of *sokutoku ōjō* 即得往生 (immediate attainment of birth) as a point of controversy within Shinshū studies during the 1980s in Yagi Seiichi’s report on the second Tōzai Shūkyō Kōryū Gakkai 東西宗教交流学会 (Japan Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies) conference, in *Buddhist Christian Studies* 9 (1989): 116ff., and Takeda’s own effort to reinterpret *ōjō* for the modern world, in “The Theoretical Structure of ‘Birth in the Pure Land’: Based on the Meaning of T’an-luan’s ‘Birth through Causal Conditions’,” trans. David Matsumoto, *Pacific World* 3.2 (2000): 31-60; or Takeuchi Yoshinori’s suggestion that the transcendent Pure Land must be conceived as a transcendence “found in the midst of present reality” through *heizei gōjō* 平生業成 (everyday practice), insisting that he says this as “a Pure Land believer of extremely conservative markings,” in “Shinran and Contemporary Thought,” *Eastern Buddhist* 13 (1980) 38 and 32; or Akira Ōmine’s suggestion that birth

Pure Land thought—at least sectarian Japanese Pure Land thought—conceives of the Western Paradise as a transcendent world of the dead has informed a number of different scholarly efforts to organize the intellectual history of Pure Land thought, and Buddhist thought more generally, under the categories of immanence and transcendence. One consequence of this, or so it seems to me, has been to create the impression that the normative sectarian view is that the Western Paradise is indeed transcendent, making those thinkers who describe Amida’s Pure Land as this-worldly look like either magisterial innovators or terrible heretics. In the first part of this chapter, we will review some of the interpretations of Pure Land thought produced using the categories of immanence and transcendence, and I will argue that these readings are shaped by polemical concerns not made explicit in the readings themselves.

The first interpretation we might consider suggests that sectarian Pure Land conceives of a transcendent Western Paradise while other Mahāyāna schools conceive instead of an immanent Pure Land (*gense jōdo* 現世浄土). Allan Grapard, for example, suggests that Mahāyāna Buddhism produces first a philosophy of immanence and, later, a philosophy of transcendence; the conflict between these two philosophies, he argues, resulted in two views. First, the notion that a Pure Land is of such an inconceivable nature that it is a transcendental realm situated in a metaphysical space; that is the case of the Western Pure Land of Amida. Second, systems of immanence, such as the doctrinal lineages of Esoteric Buddhism, propose that the Pure Land is here and

must be conceived as a return to “the very midst of the ocean of samsaric existence, thereby seeking to work exhaustively to the ends of that ocean of birth-and-death,” in “The Idea of *Tamashii* in Buddhism: Who Is the ‘Self’?” trans. David Matsumoto, *Pacific World* 3.1 (1999): 52.

now, and the only question is whether proper perception and practice are needed or not.⁵⁰

Elsewhere Grapard notes that the concept of the this-worldly Pure Land is “proposed indirectly by Kūkai [空海, 774–835] in the ninth century and directly by Kakuban [覚鑊, 1095–1143] in the eleventh century”⁵¹; this is consistent with an understanding of esoteric Buddhism as having developed an understanding of the Pure Land as immanent, over against sectarian transcendentalism. James Sanford pursues a similar line of thought in his study of Kakuban, asserting that while on the esoteric understanding, Amida’s land is conceived of as “in fact located in the human heart, mind, or body,” its true nature “not transcendent but immanent,”⁵² for the “Shinshū mainstream,” the Pure Land is “virtually transcendent,” “functionally transcendent,” a “distant pocket universe.”⁵³ Sanford acknowledges the circulation of the image of an immanent Pure Land in Ippen’s 一編 (1234–1289) Jishū 時宗, in the *kakure nenbutsu* 隠れ念仏 (hidden *nenbutsu*) strain of Jōdo Shinshū,⁵⁴ and in the work of Zen thinkers Ikkyū 一休 (1394–1481) and Hakuin 白

⁵⁰ Allan G. Grapard, *The Protocol of the Gods: A Study of the Kasuga Cult in Japanese History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 208. Grapard proposes that this pattern plays out repeatedly as Mahāyāna spreads from India, through China, to Japan. He also allows, however, that both systems “combined with indigenous views of sacred areas” such that, in the case of the image of the Pure Land, the sacred area “came to be envisioned as a replica in this world of the Pure Land of the buddhas or bodhisattvas with which the indigenous kami were associated. Indeed, if a shrine and the area in which it was located were conceived of as the residence of the kami, and if those kami were thought to be hypostases of buddhas and bodhisattvas enshrined in the adjacent temples, then those areas came to be seen as the abodes of those buddhas and bodhisattvas, as Pure Lands in this World (*gense jōdo*)” (208-209) which would seem to complicate the dichotomy of the two systems considerably.

⁵¹ Allan G. Grapard, “The Textualized Mountain–Enmountained Text: The *Lotus Sutra* in Kunisaki,” in *The Lotus Sutra in Japanese Culture*, ed. Willa Jane Tanabe (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1989), 185.

⁵² James H. Sanford, “Amida’s Secret Life: Kakuban’s *Amida hishaku*,” in *Approaching the Land of Bliss: Religious Praxis in the Cult of Amitābha*, ed. Richard K. Payne and Kenneth K. Tanaka (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2003), 121 and 134 n9. This essay includes a complete translation of Kakuban’s *Amida hishaku* 阿弥陀秘釈.

⁵³ Sanford, “Amida’s Secret Life,” 134 n9, 120, 121, and 125.

⁵⁴ For thoughtful studies of contemporary “secretive” *nenbutsu*, see Clark Chilson, “Buddhists under Cover: Why a Secretive Shinshū Society Remains Hidden Today,” *Nanzan Bulletin* 23 (1999): 18-28 and

隱 (1686–1769), but characterizes these interpretations as “Shingon-esque ideas about Amida”⁵⁵—the implication here, I think, is that if it suggests a philosophy of immanence, it must somehow be *mikkyō* 密教.

A second interpretation proposes that Amidist thought in Japan, sectarian or not, may begin as world-rejecting but at some point becomes world-affirming. William Lafleur, for example, suggests that there are four ways of negotiating release from the six realms of birth-and-death—infiltration, transcendence, copenetration, and ludization. He holds that Amida’s Pure Land fundamentally represents an image of transcendence, whereas the other three strategies all engage a logic of immanence.⁵⁶ The end of the Heian, however, sees the development of a different understanding of the Pure Land among the imperial family and the Fujiwara 藤原 elite:

Retired Emperor Goshirakawa [後白河, 1127–1192] composed the poems that became the *Ryōjin-hi-shō* [梁塵秘抄]; many of these equate the most beautiful things of this world with those in the Pure Land. In these poems there seems to be an awareness that a polarization of nirvana and samsara is in conflict with the deeper principles of Mahāyāna philosophy. Fujiwara Shunzei [藤原俊成] (1114–1204) sought to transcend the very notion that the Pure Land is transcendent and forged a new literary aesthetic, *yūgen* [幽玄], out of this realization. Those who

“Religion Concealed and Revealed: The Uses of History by a Secretive Shinshū Leader,” *Japanese Religions* 27 (2002): 195–206.

⁵⁵ Sanford, “Amida’s Secret Life,” 121 and 134 n9.

⁵⁶ William Lafleur, *The Karma of Words: Buddhism and the Literary Arts in Medieval Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 51.

pursued the logic of the Mahāyāna realized there could be no nirvana apart from samsara; as Amidists, they applied this to the Pure Land as well.⁵⁷

Here we see what I take to be a critique of the other-worldly orientation of Pure Land, inasmuch as it is characterized as conflicting with the “deeper principles of Mahāyāna”; the shift to a this-worldly orientation is read in this light as the result of Mahāyāna’s correcting influence.

By way of contrast, a third interpretation proposes that it is Pure Land thought which pushes Japanese Buddhism in an other-worldly direction. Whalen Lai suggests that Hōnen “indirectly instigated the secularization of politics when he denounced this world as corrupt....In striving for the Pure Land beyond and throwing himself entirely on the grace of Amida, Hōnen rejected all this-worldly authority.”⁵⁸ Allan Andrews tells us that in sectarian Pure Land, Japan achieved “a Buddhism that was both authentic and broadly inclusive of all social classes, the folk as well as the elites. What do we mean by ‘authentic’ Buddhism? We mean, first and foremost, world rejecting.”⁵⁹ Andrews holds that this turn toward an authentic, world-rejecting Buddhism begins in the eleventh century, with the *Genji monogatari* 源氏物語, in which we begin to see “a turning away by the aristocracy from youthful world affirmation toward a world rejection growing out of an authentic Buddhist experience”⁶⁰; the turn toward world rejection is completed in Hōnen, who “helped purify the popular Pure Land of its world accepting, theurgic

⁵⁷ Lafleur, *The Karma of Words*, 52.

⁵⁸ Whalen Lai, “After the Reformation: Post-Kamakura Buddhism,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 5 (1978): 262.

⁵⁹ Allan A. Andrews, “World Rejection and Pure Land Buddhism in Japan,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 4 (1977): 251.

⁶⁰ Andrews, “World rejection,” 259.

characteristics.”⁶¹ Andrews continues to pursue this argument in his later work—in a study of lay and monastic Pure Land, he suggests that while lay Pure Land takes as its goal “conveyance to a transcendent and beatific domain free of the deficiencies of this world through the agency of a soter,” monastic Pure Land “can be described as an immanent, earned and elitist soteriology.”⁶² Again, Hōnen is identified as having “thoroughly rejected the monastic style of contemplative buddha-reflection in favor of a total commitment to the lay oriented practice of invoking the name.”⁶³

Obviously, these interpretations are at odds with each other in various ways: even where there is agreement that at some point a dramatic reversal took place in conceptions of the Pure Land, there is no agreement as to who exactly initiated this reversal, or to what end: Lafleur and Andrews, taking up the same group of elite actors during the same time period, seem nonetheless to understand those actors as moving in quite different directions. And while Grapard and Andrews concur that Amida’s Pure Land is conceived of as a transcendent realm, they differ sharply on the question of whether this transcendence is the mark of an authentically Buddhist understanding. These kinds of disagreements make it apparent that the language of immanence and transcendence is not straightforwardly descriptive—it is caught up in a set of arguments around what constitutes a normative Mahāyāna understanding of transcendence, and so serves a polemical purpose. We see these polemics at work in Lafleur’s contention that a genuinely transcendental understanding of the Pure Land conflicts with the deeper truths

⁶¹ Andrews, “World Rejection,” 263.

⁶² Allan A. Andrews, “Lay and Monastic Forms of Pure Land Devotionalism: Typology and History,” *Numen* 40 (1993): 19. Andrews refers to the Tiantai master Zhiyi (Chigi 智顗 538–597) as introducing the monastic form of Pure Land, which is taken up by teachers in the Sanlun (Sanron 三論), Chan, and Huayan (Kegon 華嚴) lineages (18 and 25).

⁶³ Andrews, “Lay and Monastic Forms of Pure Land Devotionalism,” 30.

of Mahāyāna, and in Sanford's subsuming of all immanent understandings of the Pure Land under the header of Shingon, and most dramatically in Andrews' insistence that there is no authentic Buddhism in Japan before Hōnen. This polemic has a long history, although it is not acknowledged by these western scholars.

As early as the fifth century, we see in China the development of theories of pure lands as recompense lands (*yingtu*, *ōdo* 応土) into which Buddhas “merely enter” for the sake of sentient beings; these lands are only apparitions of the true land (*zhentu*, *shindo* 真土), which is the *dharmadhātu* (*zhenfajie*, *shinhokkai* 真法界).⁶⁴ These theories form the basis for a critique of the so-called Pure Land of the Western direction (*xifang jingtu*, *saihō jōdo* 西方淨土) as mistakenly making a goal of the merely provisional or conventional; the correct orientation, on this understanding, must be toward the “Pure Land which the *tathāgata* cultivates,” which has ““no particular place,’ *wu-fang* [*muho* 無方], as its essence” or toward the Pure Land of mind-only (*weixin jingtu*, *yuishin jōdo* 唯心淨土).⁶⁵ This distinction between correct and incorrect understandings of where the Pure Land is really located is later taken up in Chan attacks on Pure Land devotionism—in the Platform Sūtra, for example, the patriarch declares:

The deluded person concentrates on Buddha and wishes to be reborn in the other land (*shōhi* 生彼); the awakened person makes pure his own mind. Therefore the Buddha said: “In accordance with the purity of the mind the Buddha land is pure....The deluded person wishes to be born in the East or West, [for the

⁶⁴ Mochizuki Shinkō, *Pure Land Buddhism in China: A Doctrinal History*, trans. Leo M. Pruden, serialized in *Pacific World*, 1999-2002; the discussion cited appears in volume 3 (2001): 265; David Chappell, “Chinese Buddhist Interpretations of the Pure Lands,” in *Buddhist and Taoist Studies I*, ed. Michael Saso and David Chappell (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1977), 25-35.

⁶⁵ Chappell, “Chinese Buddhist Interpretations of the Pure Lands,” 27.

enlightened person] any land is just the same. If only the mind has no impurity, the Western Land is not far. If the mind gives rise to impurities, even though you invoke the Buddha and seek to be reborn [in the West], it will be difficult to reach.⁶⁶

Mochizuki Shinkō proposes that these Chan attacks on the Pure Land teachings stimulated “the gradual formation of a separate sect of Pure Land teachings within China.”⁶⁷ The same critique of Pure Land resurfaces in Japanese Zen, with Hakuin defining *ōjō* 往生 (birth) as *kenshō* 見性 (realization) and proclaiming that “If you have not seen into your own nature it will not be easy for you to see this land. Yet nowadays those who practice the Pure Land teaching recite the name daily a thousand times, ten thousand times, a million times, but not one of them has determined the Great Matter of [*ōjō*].”⁶⁸ In both cases, the language of immanence versus transcendence is used as a way of deriding rather than describing Pure Land belief. I think this gives us good reason to be hesitant about asserting that Pure Land believers conceive of the Pure Land as a strictly transcendent realm, even if that assertion is intended to praise Pure Land belief, as is the case with Andrews’ reading of the material. Instead, it seems to me that this question of what Pure Land believers believe about the Pure Land needs to be examined more carefully.

For our purposes, the early Pure Land sources will consist of the three Pure Land sūtras, in their Chinese versions. These are the canonical texts of Hōnen’s Pure Land

⁶⁶ Philip B. Yampolsky, trans., *The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), 157; Yampolsky’s interpolations.

⁶⁷ Mochizuki Shinkō, *Pure Land Buddhism in China* (2001), 99.

⁶⁸ Hakuin, “Orategama zokushū,” in *The Zen Master Hakuin: Selected Writings*, trans. Philip B. Yampolsky (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 127; also cited in Paul O. Ingram, “The Zen Critique of Pure Land Buddhism,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 41 (1973): 191.

tradition, and consequently of Shinran's Pure Land tradition, but it is important to emphasize that they constitute an invented origin for the tradition, not a real origin. I will repeat this error later on in the chapter when we turn to the thought of the three Chinese patriarchs—again, these will be the patriarchs selected by Hōnen, arguably representing an invented lineage. I have organized this chapter around these inventions because the aim of this chapter is to develop a ground for our understanding of the materials taken up by Shinshū, but I have to acknowledge that in doing so, I run roughshod over both the Sanskrit and Chinese materials, and misrepresenting Pure Land history by, as Charles B. Jones puts it, “taking Kamakura-period Japanese Pure Land Buddhism as either the norm or the *telos* (or both) of *all* Pure Land Buddhism.”⁶⁹ With that in mind, let's start at this imaginary beginning.

*Spatial Imagination in the Pure Land Sūtras:
The Pure Land as Heterotopia*

In both the Larger Sūtra (Sukhāvātīvyūha Sūtra, Wuliangshoujing, Muryōjyūkyō 無量壽經) and the Smaller Sūtra (Amitābha Sūtra, Amituojing, Amidakyō 阿彌陀經), Sukhāvātī is said to be very far away: either one hundred thousand million or one hundred billion buddha fields to the west of where we are now.⁷⁰ Fujita Kōtatsu argues that this has to be understood as a metaphor:

The magnificent, pictorial representation of the Pure Land gives definite shape and form to that which is beyond any shape or form. This is the reason that the

⁶⁹ See Jones, “Foundations and Ethics of Practice in Chinese Pure Land Buddhism,” *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 10 (2003): 2. Kenneth Tanaka discusses the effort to identify sets of related texts in early Chinese Pure Land, without relying on the Japanese vision of the Chinese Pure Land lineage, in his *The Dawn of Chinese Pure Land Buddhism: Ching-ying Hui-yuan's Commentary on the Visualization Sūtra* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 61ff.

⁷⁰ *Larger Sūtra* 60 (SS 28); *Smaller Sūtra* 6 (SS 121); see Luis O. Gómez, trans., *Land of Bliss: The Paradise of the Buddha of Measureless Light* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1996).

Pure Land is also said to be in the Western quarter, but is located in an incomprehensibly distant place, billions and billions of universes away.

Transcending our common sense notion of space, it is beyond the range of conceptualization; that it is specified as the Western quarter provides a concrete direction for that which is beyond any specific direction.⁷¹

The common sense notion of space that Fujita has in mind is, I imagine, one that I and his other readers share with him. I would suggest, however, that this common sense is neither universal nor transhistorical; certainly there is evidence that it was not shared by the creators of either the Sanskrit or Chinese versions of the sūtras or by their audiences.⁷²

While “billions and billions of universes away” may baffle contemporary common sense then, suggesting transcendence, it is not obvious to me that we have enough imaginative access to the time and place in which the sūtras developed to assert that they locate Sukhāvātī billions and billions of universes away in order to produce this bafflement, and so signal that Sukhāvātī is outside of samsara, or that it is, as Roger Corless puts it, “not in fact within the samsaric world of measurability,”⁷³ even as they say that Sukhāvātī is located inside of samsara and measure its distance from here.

⁷¹ Fujita Kōtatsu, “Pure Land Buddhism in India,” in *The Pure Land Tradition: History and Development*, ed. James Foard, Michael Solomon, and Richard K. Payne, trans. Taitetsu Unno (Berkeley: Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, University of California at Berkeley and Institute of Buddhist Studies, 1996), 25. Harold Stewart makes the same claim in stronger terms: “The myths presented in the Mahāyāna sūtras are so hyperbolic in their imaginative scope that only the most naïve could believe in them literally, and it is obvious they were never intended to be taken *au pied de la lettre*”; see *By the Old Walls of Kyoto: A Year’s Cycle of Landscape Poems with Prose Commentaries* (New York, Weatherhill, 1981), 388.

⁷² For a discussion of some early Indian Buddhist notions about space as unstable, see Rupert Gethin’s “Cosmology and Meditation: From the Agañña-Sutta to the Mahāyāna,” *History of Religions* 36 (1997): 183-217. Gethin argues, following Peter Masefield, that Indian Buddhist understandings of spatial reality are bound up with an understanding that reality can be apprehended both externally and internally, and so tend to equivocate between what the contemporary reader would identify as cosmology and psychology (191-92).

⁷³ Roger J. Corless, “T’an-luan: The First Systematizer of Pure Land Buddhism,” in *The Pure Land Tradition: History and Development*, ed. James Foard, Michael Solomon, and Richard K. Payne (Berkeley:

If we set aside “common sense” and just look at the sūtras, we find that they position Amida and his land in relation to samsara and nirvana in a number of apparently contradictory ways. There are, on the one hand, indications that Sukhāvatī is not in samsara—the Buddha enjoins his listeners to “leap far and beyond this world (迷ひの世界), to be reborn in this Land of Peace and Nurturance (*an'yōkoku* 安養国)”⁷⁴—and that Sukhāvatī has the characteristics proper to nirvana rather than samsara—it is said to be “like nirvana,”⁷⁵ “pure and peaceful, blessed with the exquisite and rare joys found in the unconditioned Way of nirvana.”⁷⁶ There are, on the other hand, indications that Amida himself is not yet in nirvana: Ānanda asks the Buddha, has Dharmākara “already attained buddhahood and passed into liberation, or is he yet to attain buddhahood and experience liberation, or does he remain now?” to which the Buddha responds that he “has attained buddhahood and at present dwells in the western regions of the universe.”⁷⁷ This passage would seem to assert that even having attained nirvana, Amida has not passed into nirvana, but remains within space and time—dwelling somewhere at present. Sukhāvatī, as that somewhere, must also be located within space and time. One interpretive possibility both sūtras allow is that Sukhāvatī is *in* samsara but not *of* samsara, with all of the sense experience but none of the attendant suffering. On this understanding, Sukhāvatī appears as a pocket universe sitting primly on the western edge of the samsaric universe, functioning as a staging ground for the attainment of liberation. The problem with this interpretation is that there is much in the sūtras to suggest that this pocket

Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, University of California at Berkeley and Institute of Buddhist Studies, 1996), 119.

⁷⁴ *Larger Sūtra* 138 (SS 53-54); Gómez, *Land of Bliss*, 198.

⁷⁵ *Larger Sūtra* 36.8 (SS 13); Gómez, *Land of Bliss*, 164.

⁷⁶ *Larger Sūtra* 92 (SS 37); Gómez, *Land of Bliss*, 183.

⁷⁷ *Larger Sūtra* 60 (SS 27-28); Gómez, *Land of Bliss*, 175.

universe has trouble containing itself: the Pure Land, located a hundred thousand *koṭis* of lands away from here seems nonetheless to show up here all the time.

First, there are indications that the land itself defies spatial limits. Hard on the heels of the passage that locates Sukhāvatī billions of universes away, the Larger Sūtra suggests that the ground of Amida's buddha-field is "vast and extensive; it is impossible to define its limits."⁷⁸ Other images from the sūtra suggest a reading of Sukhāvatī as pervading or enfolding all other samsaric space: Dharmākara vows that his land will be "pure, reflecting completely all the innumerable, countless, inconceivable world systems of all the buddhas in the ten regions of the universe, just as one might see the reflection of one's own face in a clear mirror,"⁷⁹ that bodhisattvas in his land will be able "to see, as they so desire and when they so wish, the innumerable adorned and pure buddha-fields in the ten regions of the universe reflected in the jewel trees of my land, as one might see one's own image in a clear mirror,"⁸⁰ and that the fragrance of "all the myriad things" of Sukhāvatī will be such that it "spreads over all the world systems in the ten regions of the universe, and that all the bodhisattvas who hear of this cultivate the conduct of a buddha."⁸¹

Second, there are indications that those dwelling within the land defy spatial limits. We are told that Dharmākara vowed that human beings and gods living in Sukhāvatī would "be able to travel to hundreds of thousands of millions of trillions of other buddha-lands and beyond in the interval of one moment of thought,"⁸² while bodhisattvas living there would be able to travel "everywhere in all the innumerable,

⁷⁸ *Larger Sūtra* 62 (SS 28); Gómez, *Land of Bliss*, 176.

⁷⁹ *Larger Sūtra* 46.31 (SS 20); Gómez, *Land of Bliss*, 169.

⁸⁰ *Larger Sūtra* 46.40 (SS 22); Gómez, *Land of Bliss*, 171.

⁸¹ *Larger Sūtra* 46.32 (SS 21); Gómez, *Land of Bliss*, 169.

⁸² *Larger Sūtra* 46.9 (SS 17); Gómez, *Land of Bliss*, 167.

countless, millions of trillions of buddha-lands and return in time for their one morning meal”⁸³; this image recurs later in the sūtra when the Buddha tells Ānanda that the bodhisattvas of Sukhāvatī, “moved by the power of [Amita] Buddha’s august presence, go to innumerable world systems in the ten regions of the universe and return in time for their one meal.”⁸⁴

Third, there are indications that Amida defies spatial limits. The Smaller Sūtra tells us that “if good men or good women hear this explanation of the qualities of the Buddha Amita, and embrace his name, and keep it in mind single-mindedly and without distraction, be it for one day, or for two, for three, for four, for five, for six, or for seven days, then, when their lives come to an end, the Buddha Amita, together with his holy entourage will appear before them”⁸⁵; the Larger Sūtra tells us that when practitioners of the highest grade are on their deathbeds, “the Buddha of Measureless Life appears before them (その人の前に現れたまふ), accompanied by a great crowd of attendants,” adding that this is why “all the living beings who desire in the present life to see the Buddha of Measureless Life should resolve to attain unsurpassable awakening, should cultivate merits, and should resolve to be reborn in that land.”⁸⁶ Practitioners of the middle grade see Amida as well, but only a manifestation of his “illusory body” (*keshin* 化身), although “this body is, indeed, like that of the actual Buddha.”⁸⁷ Practitioners of the lower grade see Amida only in a dream.⁸⁸ The distinction between the grades thus rests on the degree of substantive or material reality accorded to Amida when he appears at the

⁸³ *Larger Sūtra* 46.23 (SS 19); Gómez, *Land of Bliss*, 168.

⁸⁴ *Larger Sūtra* 121 (SS 48-49); Gómez, *Land of Bliss*, 193.

⁸⁵ *Smaller Sūtra* 19 (SS 125); Gómez, *Land of Bliss*, 148.

⁸⁶ *Larger Sūtra* 109 (SS 41-42); Gómez, *Land of Bliss*, 187.

⁸⁷ *Larger Sūtra* 111 (SS 42); Gómez, *Land of Bliss*, 188.

⁸⁸ *Larger Sūtra* 113 (SS 43); Gómez, *Land of Bliss*, 188.

deathbed, suggesting that on some occasions, Amida and his entourage really do cut a swath across the universe to present themselves in the here and now. There are also suggestions that Amida is continually and pervasively present in the here and now. The Smaller Sūtra says that his measureless light “shines without obstruction into buddha-fields in the ten directions”⁸⁹; the Larger Sūtra tells us that Dharmākara vowed that his light would shine everywhere and pervade all lands, though they be countless and innumerable⁹⁰; that it would be unlimited⁹¹; that sentient beings in the ten quarters touched by this light would “feel their body and mind become soft and pliant to a degree surpassing anything in the human or celestial realms”⁹²; and that it now “shines in all the buddha-lands in the ten regions of the universe,” such that nobody “is deprived of hearing and knowing about it,” and that when sentient beings are touched by it, they “become full of joy and enthusiasm and good thoughts arise in them”⁹³; and finally that when Amida showed himself to Ānanda,

It was as it will be when the great flood coming at the end of the cosmic age will fill all the world systems, and the ten thousand things in all of them will be submerged and will disappear, so that one will be able to see only a great ocean—an overflowing flood, a vast expanse of water. This is exactly the way it was then with this Buddha’s light: the circles of light that normally emanate from disciples and bodhisattvas disappeared completely, and one could only see the light of this Buddha’s halo, blazing and shining by itself. At that moment, Ānanda saw the Buddha of Measureless Life, as majestic and sublime as Sumeru, King of

⁸⁹ *Smaller Sūtra* 14 (SS 123-124); Gómez, *Land of Bliss*, 147.

⁹⁰ *Larger Sūtra* 36.7 and 47.5 (SS 13 and 25); Gómez, *Land of Bliss*, 163 and 172-173.

⁹¹ *Larger Sūtra* 46.12 (SS 17); Gómez, *Land of Bliss*, 167.

⁹² *Larger Sūtra* 46.33 (SS 21); Gómez, *Land of Bliss*, 170.

⁹³ *Larger Sūtra* 68 and 67 (SS 29-30); Gómez, *Land of Bliss*, 177.

Mountains, standing high above all the world systems. His major marks and minor signs all shone with clear light, and there was nothing that it did not illuminate.⁹⁴

Given that coming into contact with this light has the same wholesome, and ultimately liberating, effects as coming face-to-face with Amida; given that there is a pan-South-Asian notion of a liberated being's force, virtue, or consciousness having the substance of dazzling light or fiery radiance⁹⁵; and given that Amida's name is in the Larger Sūtra rendered as "Infinite Light," it seems reasonable to interpret that light as a metonym for Amida himself, and on this basis conclude that Amida extends himself far beyond the boundaries of the western quarter.

Because there is also reason to suggest that in the early Buddhist imagination, buddha and land were not very well distinguished, the pervasiveness of Amida's body should complicate our understanding of the limits of his land. Grapard explains that buddha lands, and later pure lands, were sometimes "conceived of as having been created by the buddhas or as metamorphic manifestations of their bodies"⁹⁶; Sukhāvātī is evidently imagined as having been created by Amida, and I would argue that the sūtras leave open the possibility that it is also metamorphically manifested by him—like the

⁹⁴ *Larger Sūtra* 208-209 (SS 75); Gómez, *Land of Bliss*, 216.

⁹⁵ For discussions of this imagery, see for example Jarrod L. Whitaker's review of the notion of *tejas* in "Divine Weapons and *Tejas* in the Two Indian Epics," *Indo-Iranian Journal* 43 (2000): 89-90; Stanley Tambiah's discussion of Buddhist amulets conceived as containers of *tejas* in his *Buddhist Saints of the Forest and the Cult of Amulets: A Study of Charisma, Hagiography, Sectarianism, and Millennial Buddhism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 204ff.; and Matthew Kapstein's edited volume *The Presence of Light: Divine Radiance and Transformative Vision* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

⁹⁶ Grapard, *The Protocol of the Gods*, 206. On the effort to "define the relationship between the physical universe and the body of the Buddha" in Indian Buddhist cosmology, see also Randy Kloetzli, *Buddhist Cosmology: From Single World System to Pure Land: Science and Theology in the Images of Motion and Light* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1983), 69-70.

birds described in the Smaller Sūtra⁹⁷—out of his merit. Sukhāvatī is after all characterized by bliss, the elimination of defilements, and emancipation at death, but all of these effects are achieved by coming into contact with Amida’s radiant light in this world as well.⁹⁸ Approaching this interpretation from another angle, we might also note that the Larger Sūtra includes within the space of Sukhāvatī the heterogeneous space of the border land (*henchi* 辺地)⁹⁹ or womb palace of doubt,¹⁰⁰ in which the beneficial effects of birth do not obtain; this other, ineffective space of *duhkha* within *sukha* is characterized as a space in which there is no contact with Amida.¹⁰¹ So Sukhāvatī is effectively established through and in some sense *as* the presence of Amida. It is a challenge to read Amida as having anything other than a nirvanic body, but equally a challenge to read that nirvanic body as strictly extra-samsaric, given that it is repeatedly described as emplaced within samsara; if we extend these challenges to Sukhāvatī itself, it is possible to conclude that it is a space like nirvana but emplaced within samsara—that is, an immanent space of transcendence: a heterotopia. Against the earlier suggestions that the Pure Land be understood as either identical to nirvana, or as an unimaginably distant pocket universe, here we have an image of the Pure Land as existing both within and against—that is representing and contesting—the ordinary space of samsara.

⁹⁷ *Smaller Sūtra* 12 (SS 123); Gómez, *Land of Bliss*, 147.

⁹⁸ *Larger Sūtra* 67 (SS 30); Gómez, *Land of Bliss*, 177.

⁹⁹ *Larger Sūtra* 158 (SS 61); Gómez, *Land of Bliss*, 204.

¹⁰⁰ *Larger Sūtra* 214 (SS 76); Gómez, *Land of Bliss*, 217.

¹⁰¹ *Larger Sūtra* 215-221 (SS 76-77); Gómez, *Land of Bliss*, 217-219.

*Social Imagination in the Pure Land Sūtras:
The Pure Land as Counter-Order*

The social imagination of the sūtras is equally complicated. Both reflect early Buddhist socioethical norms insofar as they affirm the law of karma by identifying Sukhāvatī as a space in which and through which that law is enforced.¹⁰² The Smaller Sūtra suggests that two things are required for birth: the concentrated practice of calling the name and sufficient personal merit.¹⁰³ The Larger Sūtra is more expansive in its description of the karmic economy at work between this world and Sukhāvatī, making explicit some of the ways the promise of birth there might shore up existing hierarchies here. As we have seen, the sūtra identifies three ranks of birth; these ranks correspond to social positions in this world—those born at the highest rank are monks; those born at the middle rank are laypeople of sufficient means to have built stūpas, donated statues, given alms, and so on; and those born at the lowest rank are laypeople who have been unable to accrue much merit but have at a minimum refrained from committing any of the five grave offenses (*ānantarya karma*, *gogyakuzai* 五逆罪)—that is to say, they have not slandered the dharma or disrupted the sangha.¹⁰⁴ In a very plain way then the Larger Sūtra affirms the ideal social hierarchy of early Buddhism by reinscribing it on the space of Sukhāvatī.

It also affirms extant social hierarchies through Ānanda's account of the operations of karma:

¹⁰² Gananath Obeyesekere discusses what he calls the Buddhist “ethicization” of karma—that is, “the processes whereby a morally right or wrong action becomes a religiously right or wrong action that in turn affects a person’s destiny after death” (75)—in his *Imagining Karma: Ethical Transformation in Amerindian, Buddhist, and Greek Rebirth* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 72-189.

¹⁰³ *Smaller Sūtra* 18 (SS 124); Gómez, *Land of Bliss*, 148: “one cannot be reborn in that buddha-field, if one depends on the merit of only a few roots of goodness (少善根福德の因縁).”

¹⁰⁴ Jonathan Silk notes that of the five grave offenses, creating a schism within the sangha is agreed to be “the most serious,” an agreement which is, he says, “no doubt motivated by the fact that this is the one crime which directly challenges the Buddhist monastic institution itself” (255); Silk discusses the place of the five grave offenses in his “Good and Evil in Indian Buddhism: The Five Sins of Immediate Retribution,” *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 35.3 (2007): 253-286.

[a] destitute beggar is in an extremely lowly and miserable condition: his clothing barely covers his body, his food is the nourishment of famine, and he spends his life in cold, fatigue, and suffering. This man finds himself in a situation so miserable because, during all of his previous lives, he did not cultivate the roots of virtue.... Without good actions what could he rely on? Without merit where could he place his trust? This is why, when he died, this beggar fell into the unfortunate rebirths, where he experienced the long torments of those rebirths. Finally, he has managed to be reborn as this person, so low and stupid that he barely seems a human being. On the other hand, in this world, a sovereign emperor is the one most revered by human beings. If he has reached this condition it is because of the merits he has accumulated during all his past lives.... If he has come to such a condition, it is only because of the merits he has accumulated in the past.¹⁰⁵

According to the sūtra, karma is, as the net of Heaven, inescapable—“its major and minor laws catch all, high and low, according to their just deserts”¹⁰⁶; absolutely individual—“Each person must answer for himself; no one else can take one’s place. The reckoning of good and evil is but a natural arithmetic; retribution corresponds exactly to what one has done”¹⁰⁷; and produces a just social order that can only become more just over time, with the Buddha insisting that “the spirits of Heaven and Earth keep an accurate record—not a single transgression is forgiven.”¹⁰⁸ Finally the sūtra adds a last incentive to follow the precepts: “It is better to purify yourselves by observing for one day and one night the precepts of the fortnightly retreat than it is to practice the good for a hundred years in the

¹⁰⁵ *Larger Sūtra* 94-97 (SS 37-38); Gómez, *Land of Bliss*, 184-185; see also *Larger Sūtra* 162; Gómez, *Land of Bliss*, 205.

¹⁰⁶ *Larger Sūtra* 195 (SS 72); Gómez, *Land of Bliss*, 213.

¹⁰⁷ *Larger Sūtra* 189 (SS 70); Gómez, *Land of Bliss*, 212.

¹⁰⁸ *Larger Sūtra* 162 (SS 63); Gómez, *Land of Bliss*, 205.

country of the Buddha of Measureless Life.”¹⁰⁹ This all suggests that birth in Sukhāvatī depends upon one’s behaviour in this world, and affirms more broadly that karma operates in a predictable, rational, ethical way across both spaces.

This injunction to do good might not be particularly compelling, however, to an audience that has been paying attention to the other things the Larger Sūtra says about Sukhāvatī. The image of Sukhāvatī is utopian in a very minimal sense, in that it is an image of a happy land. It is also utopian in a more nuanced sense, in that it is an image of a happy land set against the real, which is understood to be unhappy, and so to operate at least in some respects according to a different set of rules. The disciplinary function of karma—which governs the real and as we have just seen is said to govern Sukhāvatī as well—is undermined by the fact that birth in Sukhāvatī makes it possible to go directly from this life to the stage of non-retrogression without accumulating a vast store of personal merit over the course of lifetimes. Sukhāvatī—the ground of karmic reward—thus becomes a site where one receives karmic benefits one has not earned, and conversely, a site where one escapes the karmic punishments that one *has* earned. This can be explained through the mechanism of merit transfer, but that mechanism itself undercuts the notion that one’s karma “must be borne by oneself alone”¹¹⁰; in fact it would appear that one can both share in the karma properly belonging to another and evade one’s own karma. Sukhāvatī appears in this light as the image of a space where the law of karma does not rule, or an antinomian space.

¹⁰⁹ *Larger Sūtra* 199 (SS 73); Gómez, *Land of Bliss*, 214.

¹¹⁰ Luis Gómez has pointed out that the notion of merit transfer is paradoxical—he says beautifully and powerfully so—in that “the greatest of all merits derives from abandoning merit”; see “Buddhism as a Religion of Hope—Observations on the ‘Logic’ of a Doctrine and Its Foundational Myth,” *Eastern Buddhist* 32 (2000): 11. Pure Land engages this paradox, he suggests, in its image of the practitioner sharing in Amida’s infinite, measureless, primordial store of merit (12ff.).

We should also take note of an additional complication introduced by the Larger Sūtra: the possibility of a hierarchy based not on karma but on faith. In addition to the three ranks of birth, the sūtra also tells us that there are two *kinds* of birth: birth by transformation and birth in the embryonic state, or a womb-palace. These kinds of birth are determined by faith rather than by merit:

Some living beings cultivate all virtues with the intention of being reborn in this land, but harbor doubts in their mind....with regard to [the] five kinds of knowledge of buddhas they harbor doubts, they have no faith in them. But they believe in sin and merit, so they cultivate the roots of good with the intention of being reborn in this land. These living beings will be reborn in one of these palaces, and will spend in it five hundred years of their life span without seeing the Buddha, without hearing the teaching of the sūtras, without seeing the holy assemblies of bodhisattvas and disciples. This is why we speak about rebirth in a womb in that country...¹¹¹

This represents a challenge to the primacy of karma inasmuch as it suggests that a belief in the operations of karma and the accumulation of merit do not in themselves lead to birth—that is, where the Smaller Sūtra puts faith and merit side by side, in this section at least the Larger Sūtra seems to privilege faith. While in other ways the sūtra clearly moves to identify belief in the sūtra as of a piece with belief in the dharma of the historical Buddha (we might consider here not only its treatment of the law of karma and affirmation of the normative socioethical hierarchies of early Buddhism, but also the careful explanations that Śākyamuni Buddha's light is as bright and pervasive as Amida's), in distinguishing between the two kinds of birth, the sūtra opens up the

¹¹¹ *Larger Sūtra* 216 (SS 76-77); Gómez, *Land of Bliss*, 217.

interpretive possibility of taking faith in Amida as truly primary, not only in terms of deciding birth but also, more immediately, in terms of assessing the virtue of other people, so that the doubting king might even come to be characterized as less good than the faithful beggar. This would represent not an ethicization, as Gananath Obeyesekere puts it, but a counter-ethicization; such a counter-ethicization invests the Pure Land imaginary with critical potential.

So, as an image of *sukha* positioned against the real world of *dukkha*, Amida's Pure Land meets the minimal utopian requirement of being an image of life without hunger and anxiety. More than this though, as an image of a space where the law of karma—that is to say, the law that governs the real world—does not obtain, it also meets the more serious requirement of being an image of life as a free sentient being. The image of Sukhāvātī can thus be fairly characterized, it seems to me, as an image of hope. If the space of Amida's Pure Land is understood as strictly transcendent, or self-contained, and so impossible to realize in this world, that hope would have to be understood as a patient hope—the Pure Land imaginary, on this understanding, would amount to a promise that through the agency of Amida, one will be brought after death to a better world and so this world need only be patiently endured. But if the space of Amida's Pure Land is understood as irrupting within this world or pervasively present within this world, then that hope becomes critical hope—the Pure Land imaginary, on this understanding, inculcates in the believer a restless longing for the Sukhāvātī which should be available here and now, and a deep sense of dissatisfaction with the world as it is. This very literal reading of the spatial imaginary—Stewart's “naïve” reading—brings to the surface the

genuinely utopian character of the image of the Pure Land. This utopian character is amplified in the Contemplation Sūtra.

The Extremes of the Contemplation Sūtra

The Contemplation Sūtra (Guanwuliangshoujing, Kanmuryōjukyō 觀無量壽經) reflects a set of concerns slightly different from those of the Larger and Smaller Sūtras.¹¹² It does not concentrate on cosmology—there is no discussion of where Sukhāvātī is located, other than an indication that it is a Western pure land¹¹³; instead it is focused on practical techniques for visualizing Sukhāvātī, and for this reason contributes enormously to the development of a Pure Land spatial imaginary. In some ways, the imagery of the Contemplation Sūtra intensifies or elaborates upon the imagery of the earlier sūtras: the trees, ponds, and nets of Sukhāvātī are all described in detail, as are Amida’s attending bodhisattvas, from the jewelled vase on the head of Mahāsthāmaprāpta to the thousand-spoke dharma wheels on the soles of Avalokiteśvara’s feet.¹¹⁴ Amida’s dimensions are described for the first time: he is now “in height as many *yojanas* as six hundred thousand *koṭis* of *nayutas* of Gangā River sand,” with an *uṣṇīṣa* “like five Sumeru mountains,” and an aureole “as large as a hundred *koṭis* of the three-thousand-great-thousand worlds.”¹¹⁵ This appeal to the enormity or incalculability of Amida is attended, however, by an assertion of its comprehensibility: “the physical measurements of the Buddha of

Immeasurable Life have no bounds and are beyond the grasp of ordinary minds. But

through the power of the Tathāgata’s vows fulfilled in a previous life, those who keep the

¹¹² For a discussion of the provenance of the Contemplation Sūtra, see Julian Pas, *Visions of Sukhāvātī: Shan-tao’s Commentary on the Kuan Wu-liang shou-do ching* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 35-52.

¹¹³ *Contemplation Sūtra* 7 (SS 92).

¹¹⁴ *Contemplation Sūtra* 18 and 19 (SS 103-106).

¹¹⁵ *Contemplation Sūtra* 17 (SS 101-103); KMK 58-59.

Buddha in mind will, without fail, be able [to perceive his body].”¹¹⁶ In the Contemplation Sūtra then, even if we take boundlessness to be a metaphor for nirvana, it is clear that the realm of the buddhas is in some sense accessible within the limits of samsara.

Where then is Sukhāvatī? The Buddha’s chief interlocutor in the sūtra, Queen Vaidehi, is told why she is not able to see the land: “You are but an ordinary person (*bonbu* 凡夫), and your mental faculties are weak and inferior. Since you have yet to acquire divine sight, you cannot see very far (*tōku* 遠く),”¹¹⁷ which suggests that the land is located far away from here, but the Buddha also tells Vaidehi that in fact “Amida Buddha abides not far from here (*tōkarazu* 遠からず).”¹¹⁸ There are three obvious ways of managing this contradiction. One is to hold that the land is in fact far away, while the Buddha is near. This seems to me to be unsatisfactory, both because of the precedents for eliding buddha and land and because the Contemplation Sūtra itself seems to revolve around a careful imaginative construction of buddha and land as inseparable.¹¹⁹ A second might be to conclude that ordinary sentient beings and buddhas must have different experiences of space as well as differing powers of perception. This seems to me to be more satisfactory—the sūtra does note that Amida can appear anywhere in the ten quarters and, despite his actual immensity, at any size.¹²⁰ And a third might be to bracket the usual distinction between external and internal space, or what Rupert Gethin refers to

¹¹⁶ *Contemplation Sūtra* 21 (SS 107); KMK 75, translator’s interpolation.

¹¹⁷ *Contemplation Sūtra* 8 (SS 93); KMK 25.

¹¹⁸ *Contemplation Sūtra* 7 (SS 91); KMK 21.

¹¹⁹ *Contemplation Sūtra* 16 (SS 100-101).

¹²⁰ *Contemplation Sūtra* 21 (SS 107).

as cosmology and psychology.¹²¹ This elision of external space and internal space seems to me to be what is explored in the contemplative technique described by the sūtra.

The section of the sūtra outlining the thirteen objects of contemplation¹²² begins with a spatial reorientation—“single-mindedly concentrate your thoughts in one place and perceive the western quarter”¹²³—but the movement taking place in contemplation is not one of crossing distance so much as one of collapsing distance by collapsing the distinction between the subject of contemplation and the object of contemplation. In some ways the practice described in the Contemplation Sūtra takes ordinary vision as its starting point: it begins by affirming that “[a]ll sentient beings, if not born blind, possess the visual faculty and can see the setting sun. Focusing their attention and sitting properly, they should face west and clearly perceive the setting sun.”¹²⁴ This contemplative gaze however, ultimately produces a different kind of vision—in the description of the contemplation of Amida, the practitioner is told that the Tathāgata “pervades the mind of all sentient beings. Therefore, when you perceive a buddha in your mind...your mind becomes a buddha; your mind is a buddha; and the wisdom of the buddhas—true, universal, and ocean-like—arises from this mind.”¹²⁵ In this contemplation the practitioner is displaced as the Buddha is doubled—the contemplation of the image of Amida succeeds at the moment it becomes Amida contemplating Amida, or buddha contemplating buddha, collapsing subject of vision and object of vision. We see the same collapse in the contemplation of the aspirants. Here the practitioner is told to

¹²¹ Gethin, “Cosmology and Meditation,” 189.

¹²² The objects are the setting sun, the water, the ground, the trees, the ponds, various objects, the lotus throne, the image of Amida, Amida himself, Avalokiteśvara, Mahāsthāmaprāpta, the aspirants, and the triad of Amida and the two bodhisattvas.

¹²³ *Contemplation Sūtra* 9 (SS 93); KMK 27.

¹²⁴ *Contemplation Sūtra* 9 (SS 93); KMK 27.

¹²⁵ *Contemplation Sūtra* 16 (SS 100); KMK 51.

visualize herself “born in the World of Utmost Bliss in the western quarter, sitting with legs crossed inside a lotus flower....Then form the perception in which your eyes open; you will see the buddhas and bodhisattvas filling the sky, and you will hear the sounds of waters and trees, the notes of birds, and the voices of buddhas.”¹²⁶ In this contemplation the practitioner herself is doubled—the contemplation succeeds at the moment the contemplated self “opens her eyes” to see as contemplated self what the contemplating self has produced through contemplation.

This collapsing of subject and object can also be understood as a collapsing of the space that extends between the practitioner and the Pure Land—through contemplation, the space of the Pure Land is established as the practitioner’s actual environment. The practice of contemplation described in the sūtra thus seems to me to make two guarantees.

On the one hand, it promises the practitioner that through the contemplative method, vast amounts of karma will be swiftly resolved, although the mechanism by which this takes place is not explained—the sūtra simply asserts that visualizing the ground takes care of eight *koṭis* of *kalpas* of evil karma¹²⁷; visualizing the lotus throne takes care of five hundred *koṭis* of *kalpas*¹²⁸; visualizing the objects takes care of incalculable (*muryō okukō* 無量億劫) *kalpas* worth, as does visualizing the image of Amida, Avalokiteśvara, or Mahāsthāmaprāpta,¹²⁹ and visualizing the triad produces immeasurable merit (*muryō no fuku* 無量の福).¹³⁰ The sūtra seems to imply that there is a connection between the elimination of karma and birth in Amida’s Pure Land, saying

¹²⁶ *Contemplation Sūtra* 20 (SS 106-107); KMK 74-75.

¹²⁷ *Contemplation Sūtra* 11 (SS 95).

¹²⁸ *Contemplation Sūtra* 15 (SS 99).

¹²⁹ *Contemplation Sūtra* 14, 16, 18, 19 (SS 97, 101, 104, and 106).

¹³⁰ *Contemplation Sūtra* 21 (SS 107).

repeatedly that for those who practice contemplation correctly “the evil karma binding them to birth-and-death for five hundred *koṭis* of *kalpas* is eliminated, and they most assuredly will be born in the World of Utmost Bliss”¹³¹; in this sense, we can understand contemplative practice as leading to future birth in the Pure Land, framed by Vaidehi’s request that the Tathāgata show her “a place where there are neither sorrows nor afflictions, and where I should be born.”¹³²

On the other hand, the benefits of contemplative practice seem to go beyond that of future birth—contemplation of the image of Amida, done correctly, guarantees that the practitioner will attain the *nenbutsu samādhi* (*nenbutsu zanmai* 念仏三昧), and so “hear the flowing waters, the rays of light, the jeweled trees, and the ducks and geese all proclaim the exquisite teachings; and whether you are in or out of meditation, you will always hear these exquisite teachings.”¹³³ Contemplation of Amida himself guarantees the practitioner a prediction of future Buddhahood.¹³⁴ Contemplation of the bodhisattvas guarantees no future misfortune, freedom from the bonds of karma, no rebirth, and the ability to travel freely to other buddha lands.¹³⁵ And contemplation of the assembly guarantees that the practitioner will always be in the presence of the “countless miraculously created bodies of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life (無量寿仏の化身無数).”¹³⁶ These kinds of guarantees go beyond promising future birth in Amida’s Pure Land—they promise the benefits that attend birth to the contemplative practitioner in this life. In other words, they indicate that correct contemplative practice causes a change in

¹³¹ *Contemplation Sūtra* 14 (SS 97); KMK 49; see also *Contemplation Sūtra* 11 and 15 (SS 95 and 99).

¹³² *Contemplation Sūtra* 5 (SS 90); KMK 17.

¹³³ *Contemplation Sūtra* 16 (SS 101); KMK 55.

¹³⁴ *Contemplation Sūtra* 17 (SS 103).

¹³⁵ *Contemplation Sūtra* 18 and 19 (SS 103-106).

¹³⁶ *Contemplation Sūtra* 20 (SS 107).

the character of the practitioner's world, so that the present world of suffering takes on the features of Sukhāvatī, whether the practitioner is engaged in contemplative meditation or not.

This suggests that the ultimate effect of contemplative practice is to turn the present world into the Pure Land. Contemplation might thus be understood as a practice of actively working to establish the utopian space of the Pure Land in the here and now, rather than waiting for birth in the next life. I would suggest then that the Contemplation Sūtra builds upon a heterotopian possibility already present in the Larger Sūtra particularly.

Similarly, it builds upon an ethical possibility already present in the Larger Sūtras. The Contemplation Sūtra too makes an appeal to normative Buddhist ethics—the Buddha opens by telling Vaidehi that whoever wishes to be reborn in Sukhāvatī should practice three acts of merit:

First, they should attend dutifully to their parents, serve their elders and teachers faithfully, possess the mind of compassion and refrain from killing, and undertake the ten virtuous acts. Second, they should uphold the three refuges, keep the various precepts, and not break the rules of deportment. Third, they should awaken the mind aspiring for enlightenment, believe deeply in the principle of cause and effect, recite the Mahāyāna sūtras, and encourage those who practice the way.¹³⁷

There are some differences of emphasis here—for example, filial piety now comes before anything else, the relative virtues of monks and laypeople are not a focus of attention, and the various devotional offerings described in the Larger Sūtra are reduced to chanting the

¹³⁷ *Contemplation Sūtra* 7 (SS 92); KMK 23.

sūtras. But believing deeply in karma remains on the table, as do keeping the precepts and taking refuge in the three treasures. Where the Larger Sūtra gives us a system in which kings and beggars receive rewards and punishments appropriate to their deeds, however, the Contemplation Sūtra gives us a king unjustly imprisoned by his own son, Prince Ajātaśatru, and Vaidehi asking the Buddha, “World Honored One, what evil *karma* have I committed in a previous life that I should bear such an evil son? World Honored One, what conditions caused you also to become a relative of Devadatta?”¹³⁸ Karma is at an aporia here ¹³⁹—if it still had the force of law, one might begin to suspect the law were unjust.

Actually the Contemplation Sūtra goes on to challenge the rule of karma in two ways. First, it expands upon the Larger Sūtra’s grades of birth, describing nine ranks. In these ranks we again see an affirmation of normative Buddhist ethics—observing the precepts, propagating the teachings, and believing deeply in the law of karma are all said to lead to birth among the highest grades—but we also see a continuing shift toward the cultivation of faith rather than the cultivation of merit, with those guaranteed birth in the highest grade now not necessarily monks or good Buddhists, but also those who have awakened the three kinds of faith.¹⁴⁰ The Contemplation Sūtra thus says explicitly that while it is possible to attain the highest grade of birth through the transfer of merit, it is also certain that those who have awakened faith will attain the same grade of birth. Second, it includes within the nine ranks even those excluded in the Larger Sūtra, opening the Pure Land to those “who commit such evil acts as the five grave offenses and

¹³⁸ *Contemplation Sūtra* 4 (SS 89); KMK 17.

¹³⁹ Obeyesekere, *Imagining Karma*, 131ff.

¹⁴⁰ *Contemplation Sūtra* 22 (SS 108).

the ten transgressions and are burdened with various kinds of evil.”¹⁴¹ These kinds of practitioners attain birth at the lowest of the nine ranks, but that they are allowed in at all robs karma of its disciplinary function entirely—it now holds sway over nobody. If we follow an indication from Gómez¹⁴² and think of karmic merit as a currency, we have here a situation in which the karmic economy is destabilized three times over: first, by the incalculably vast quantities said to be earned through the contemplative method; second, by the introduction of an alternative currency of faith; and third, by the promise that there is no karmic debt deep enough that it will not be assumed by Amida.

The Contemplation Sūtra thus seems to me to pursue to their limits two possibilities introduced in the Larger and Smaller Sūtras: first, that the space of Sukhāvatī is neither strictly identical with this world nor strictly different from it, but makes itself immanently available to the *nenbutsu* practitioner. And second, that the space of Sukhāvatī is one in which the law of karma is subverted, and moreover a space through which the law of karma that obtains in this world can be positioned as unjust. It seems to me reasonable to conclude at this point that for a reader not already convinced that common sense demands that Sukhāvatī be understood as a transcendent realm, its location would appear to be indeterminate or ambiguous. This indeterminacy gives Sukhāvatī its critical weight as a utopian image, by making it possible to suppose that the good place could through practice be established in the here and now, so that as a utopia it conceals a veiled critique of the here and now—the regime of karmic merit—by being an image of not (yet) here, rather than simply nowhere.

¹⁴¹ *Contemplation Sūtra* 30 (SS 115); KMK 107.

¹⁴² Gómez, “Buddhism as a religion of hope,” 14 n.15.

The Chinese exegesis of this material adds further layers of complexity. The interpretive work of the three Chinese patriarchs—Tanluan (Donran 曇鸞, trad. 476–542), Daochuo (Dōshaku 道綽, 562–645), and Shandao (Zendō 善導 613–681)—complicates the image of the Western Paradise in several ways: as a spatial image, a temporal image, and a social image. Some of these complications seem to arise out of a need to respond to critiques of Pure Land thought and practice, and align it more closely to the larger Mahāyāna tradition; others seem to arise out of a dogged pursuit of Mahāyāna logic that ultimately produces a socio-spatial image that poses a significant challenge to the normative ethics and hierarchies of the Mahāyāna.

*Spatial Imagination in Chinese Pure Land Thought:
The Pure Land as Reward Land*

The application of the term “pure land” to Sukhāvātī comes from Chinese thinkers,¹⁴³ but the nature of this land is a point of contention. We noted above that as early as the fifth century, Sukhāvātī was being identified as a recompense land or response land; this argument was based on the assertion that because the real body of a buddha must be beyond all forms (*xiang, shiki* 色), it could not have a dwelling place, and so could not have a pure land. On this understanding, the pure land was understood as parallel to the response body (*nirmāṇakāya, yingshen, ōjin* 応身) or recompense body (*nirmāṇakāya, huashen, keshin* 化身), as distinct from the truth body (*dharmakāya, fashen, hosshin* 法身). Against this understanding, Tanluan takes up the notion that there are two kinds of truth body: a truth body of inherent nature (*faxing fashen, hosshō hosshin* 法性法身) and

¹⁴³ See Tanaka, *The Dawn of Chinese Pure Land*, 2.

a truth body of skillful means (*fangbian fashen, hōben hosshin* 方便法身).¹⁴⁴ The recompense body is in reality this second truth body, the truth body of skillful means; thus on Tanluan's view, although the recompense body is different from the *dharmakāya*, it is nonetheless not false or merely provisional. Tanluan he proposes that the two kinds of truth body are formally different but of the same nature: "while different they are indivisible."¹⁴⁵ The difference between the two is explained in terms of condensation (*lüe, ryaku* 略) and expansion (*guang, kō* 広), so that condensed, the truth body presents as the *hosshō hosshin*, and expanded, as the *hōben hosshin*; these two bodies arise together—or as Yamada Yukio puts it, in a "horizontal relationship" (*heng, ō* 横), without either one taking priority—and interpenetrate each other (*kōryaku sōnyū* 広略相入).¹⁴⁶

Chappell suggests that Tanluan was uninterested in the question of the character of Sukhāvātī, commenting that "he did not live when the classification of the Pure Lands was an important issue" and thus "offered no scheme," beyond stating that it was "beyond the Three Realms,"¹⁴⁷ but knowing that the bodies have cognate lands, we can extend Tanluan's approach and argue that the highly ornamented space of the Western Paradise might be understood as the expanded presentation of formlessness.¹⁴⁸ This would allow us to understand Tanluan's assertion that birth in the Western Paradise is

¹⁴⁴ Yamada Yukio, "T'an-luan's Theory of Two Kinds of Dharma-Body as Found in Shinran's *Wago* Writings," *Pacific World* 3.2 (2000): 101; Roger J. Corless, "The Enduring Significance of T'an-luan," *Pacific World* 3.2 (2000): 4.

¹⁴⁵ Cited in Bruce C. Williams. "Seeing through Images: Reconstructing Buddhist Meditative Visualization Practice in Sixth-Century Northeastern China," *Pacific World* 7 (2005): 58.

¹⁴⁶ Yamada, "T'an-luan's Theory," 101; Williams, "Seeing through images," 58-59.

¹⁴⁷ Chappell, "Chinese Buddhist Interpretations of the Pure Lands," 36. Roger Corless disagrees here, contending that the "subtle existence of a realm outside the triple world is a key point in T'an-luan's thought"; see "T'an-luan's Commentary on the Pure Land Discourse: An Annotated Translation and Soteriological Analysis of the Wang-sheng-lun chu (T. 1819)" (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1973), 140-41; also cited in Carl B. Becker, *Breaking the Circle: Death and the Afterlife in Buddhism* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1993), 59.

¹⁴⁸ See Yamada, "T'an-luan's Theory," 101.

birth into locationlessness—Tanluan identifies Sukhāvatī as a realm of non-arising (*wusheng, mushō* 無生), and so contends that birth in that realm must actually be the arising of non-arising, such that although in this world the practitioner’s orientation is toward birth in the west, what is actually attained at death is, as Corless describes it, the loss of “all notions of coming and going, of leaving this world of suffering and arriving in the Pure Land.”¹⁴⁹ It is because birth in the Pure Land is actually the realization of locationless-ness that beings within that land are able to defy ordinary spatial logic—what is described in the Larger Sūtra as a kind of supernatural power is actually, as Corless puts it, the “omnilocation” that comes with dropping off dualistic distinctions between coming and going or leaving and arriving: “he manifests anywhere and everywhere as needed, without, however, moving from Sukhāvatī or having notions of going and returning, just as the sun manifests in hundreds of rivers but does not leave the sky.”¹⁵⁰

Daochuo, building on Tanluan, posits two Pure Lands, one of form (*xiang*) and one of no-form (*wuxiang, mushiki* 無色), which are—like Tanluan’s condensed and expanded—nondual.¹⁵¹ Daochuo grounds his understanding of the Pure Land on his reading of the Vimalakīrti Sūtra, which he takes as enjoining bodhisattvas to build buddha lands not despite their realization of the wisdom of emptiness, but as the compassionate manifestation of that realization—that is, as insisting on conventional

¹⁴⁹ Roger J. Corless, “The Enduring Significance of T’an-luan,” 5.

¹⁵⁰ Roger J. Corless, “Tanluan: Taoist Sage and Buddhist Bodhisattva,” in *Buddhist and Taoist Practice in Medieval Chinese Society: Buddhist and Taoist Studies II*, ed. David W. Chappell (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1987), 41.

¹⁵¹ Chappell, “Chinese Buddhist Interpretations of the Pure Lands,” 40.

truth as meaningfully true.¹⁵² This shift to taking both of the two truths seriously was not particular to Daochuo—Chappell suggests that it is part of a pattern of thinking that had been developing in Chinese Mahāyāna since the fourth century, which sought a third term to express the interdependence of the two truths. This pattern, says Chappell, “involved an increased preoccupation with the second body of the Buddha, the reward body, *sambhogakāya* [*baoshen*, *hōshin* 報身], because it bridged the gap between ordinary illusory existence and the Ultimate Truth.”¹⁵³ Daochuo asserts that the Amida who dwells in the Western Paradise should properly be understood not as a response body or recompense body but as a reward body, and the Western Paradise itself not as a response land or recompense land but as a reward land (*baotu*, *hōdo* 報土). In that “reward” is identified as a third term expressing the interpenetration of the two truths, this move secures some credibility for devotional practice directed toward the Western Pure Land as having a properly Mahāyāna epistemological orientation; in that “reward” is understood not as a provisional manifestation cast off when the truth is realized but as an efflorescing of the truth, both buddha and land acquire a new sheen in being identified this way. Shandao follows Daochuo in asserting that Amida in his place in the Western Paradise is properly understood as a reward body and Amida’s land as a reward land. And then Shandao goes back and reappropriates the term *yingshen*, arguing that *yingshen* should be understood as actually meaning *baoshen*. As Julian Pas explains it, for Shandao, “the *ying* body means ‘responsive’ body, in the sense that an action will certainly have a result, or a response. This response, *ying*, in the present case of agelong Bodhisattva training, is a

¹⁵² Carl Becker characterizes Daochuo’s approach as an “inversion of the Two Truths theory”; see *Breaking the Circle*, 60.

¹⁵³ Chappell, “Chinese Buddhist Interpretations of the Pure Lands,” 46-47.

reward response. Therefore Amita's body is called a *pao-shen* (reward body) and also a *ying-shen* (responsive body)."¹⁵⁴ Finally then the lesser body of immanence, and by extension the lesser land of immanence, is elevated by being identified as in reality a transcendence-in-immanence.

This understanding of Amida's Pure Land as mediating *samsara* and *nirvana* works against the received understanding of "Western-direction Pure Land" as a system of transcendence—first, the Western Paradise is emphatically not understood here as simply a metaphor for transcendent *nirvana*; second, it is likewise not understood as a distant pocket universe having no necessary relationship to either *samsara* or *nirvana*; and third, it seems from the outset to engage the question of immanence. Rather than understanding the Chinese Pure Land exegetes as taking a normatively immanental set of Mahāyāna texts and transforming them into a system of transcendence then, I would suggest we might better understand them as responding to external critiques by reiterating the ambiguity or indeterminacy of the Pure Land as a spatial image.

*Social Imagination in Chinese Pure Land Thought:
The Pure Land as Heterochrony*

Heterochrony is Foucault's term for a temporal heterotopia, that is, a different order of time.¹⁵⁵ The heterotopia, he suggests, often functions as a heterochrony, in that it is understood partly as a space in which time unfolds at a different pace or in a different sequence. Daochuo adds a temporal element to the utopian image of the Pure Land by tying the Pure Land teachings to the theory of the dharma ages, and so introducing into

¹⁵⁴ See Pas, *Visions of Sukhavati*, 155.

¹⁵⁵ Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," 26.

Pure Land thought a special concern for historical time.¹⁵⁶ By Daochuo's calculation, the world had, by his lifetime, entered the fourth of five five-hundred-year periods following the *parinirvana* of Śākyamuni Buddha; according to the Candragarbha Sūtra (*Dajiyuezangjing*, *Daishūgetsuzōkyō* 大集月藏經), this fourth period was one in which understanding, meditation, and reading the sūtras would all have grown degenerate and only the building of stūpas would remain firm.¹⁵⁷ It was to be followed by a final five-hundred year period of total degeneration of the dharma (*mofa*, *mappō* 末法). Jamie Hubbard notes that Daochuo makes two amendments to the material from the Candragarbha Sūtra: to the firm practices of the fourth period he adds “meritorious confession,” which he then interprets as “none other than the calling of the Buddha's name”¹⁵⁸; to the final five hundred years he adds that, despite the degeneracy of the age, “the good teaching will faintly exist.”¹⁵⁹ Hubbard suggests that this second amendment reflects an effort to synthesize the theory of decline with the kinds of promises made in the sūtras that certain teachings—that is whichever teachings those particular sūtras have to offer—will endure even after the dharma has disappeared, as in the Buddha's closing vow in the Larger Sūtra that although “[i]n the days to come, the ways of the sutras will die out....I specially arrange that this sutra should remain for a hundred years.”¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁶ This is fun: the theory of historical decline is bound up in the Chinese Buddhist imagination with a complementary theory of cosmological decline produced by a contraction of space, understood to result in the five corruptions (*wuzhuo*, *gojoku* 五濁), so the temporal image also has a spatial dimension. These five corruptions are mentioned in the Smaller Sūtra, and the characterization of the present period as one marked by the five corruptions are “a stock item in the Pure Land tradition of East Asia”; see David W. Chappell, “Early Forebodings of the Death of Buddhism,” *Numen* 27.1 (1980): 143.

¹⁵⁷ See Jamie Hubbard, *Absolute Delusion, Perfect Buddhahood: The Rise and Fall of a Chinese Heresy* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), 72 n.52.

¹⁵⁸ Hubbard, *Absolute Delusion*, 73.

¹⁵⁹ Hubbard, *Absolute Delusion*, 73.

¹⁶⁰ *Larger Sūtra* 226; Gómez, *Land of Bliss*, 221. See also Hubbard, *Absolute Delusion*, 73.

The suggestions that calling the name will remain a fruitful practice even at the end of the age of counterfeit dharma, and that the Pure Land teachings will endure, albeit faintly, even beyond the age of final dharma, are both recognizable as reflecting a strategy common across the Mahāyāna tradition of using the theory of decline to identify a given teaching as the superior teaching based on its persistence in the face of such decline; this strategy also allows the theory of decline to sit comfortably alongside the theory that the teachings revealed later in Buddhist history are superior to those revealed earlier. But Hubbard suggests that Daochuo's interpretation differs slightly in its understanding of the implications of this persistence: rather than arguing that it is the superiority of the teaching that guarantees its persistence, making persistence a sign of superiority, for Daochuo, the decline of the dharma confers on the Pure Land teaching its superiority, making the superiority contingent upon the decline—the Pure Land teaching is not, in itself, possessed of a greater degree of truth, only a greater degree of appropriateness to the age. It is this appropriateness, rather than any special feature of the teaching itself, that makes it “easy”: “if the teaching is appropriate to the time and capacity the practice is easy and understanding is easy. If the capacity, teaching, and time are opposed then practice is difficult and entrance is difficult.”¹⁶¹ Shandao follows Daochuo in holding that the Pure Land path as the easy practice is effective even for ordinary people (*prthagjana* or *bāla*, *fanfu*, *bonbu*),¹⁶² and extends Daochuo's argument by holding that those born in the period of *mofo* are all, without exception, ordinary

¹⁶¹ Cited in Hubbard, *Absolute Delusion*, 74.

¹⁶² For a thorough treatment of the figure of the *fanfu*, and the elision between the *fanfu* and the *yichanti* — 闍提 (*icchāntika*, *issendai*), see Nobuo Haneda, “The Development of ‘Prthagjana’ Culminating in Shantao's Pure Land Thought: The Pure Land Theory of Salvation of the Inferior” (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1979).

people, making the easy path not just the most appropriate teaching but the only appropriate teaching for an age without sages.

This soldering together of the theory of historical decline and Pure Land belief makes the belief dependent on the theory for its meaning, so that the propagation of the belief relies upon the enforcing of the theory. Pure Land belief is thus grounded in a consensus that the age is degenerate and inculcates a consciousness of the practitioner herself as a being born into a particular historical moment. At the same time, Pure Land practice is counter-historical in its promise that even during the age of final dharma, “the good teaching will faintly exist,” making available the fruit which by definition is not available to those born into final dharma. It is here, I think, that the image of the Pure Land as a space of difference comes into view as a heterochrony. It relies on the logic of the dharma ages for its authority as the only teaching appropriate for the age, and so represents that logic, but it also plainly contests the logic of the dharma ages by insisting that liberation is available to those of the final age through the Pure Land path. In becoming tied up with the theory of the decline of the dharma then, the image of the Pure Land does double duty both affirming and negating the gravity of final dharma as a historical moment.

Daochuo and Shandao also make a momentous decision about the fate of those evil persons who have committed the five grave offenses or slandered the dharma. Tanluan had earlier observed the contradiction between the Larger Sūtra and the Contemplation Sūtra on the question of whether or not anyone was excluded from Sukhāvatī, and concluded that those who had slandered the dharma were excluded, while those who had committed the five grave offenses were not. His interpretation was based

on the fact that the Larger Sūtra lumps together those who commit the five grave offenses and those who slander the dharma, excluding all, while the Contemplation Sūtra indicates that those who commit the five grave offenses can attain birth but does not mention those who slander the dharma.¹⁶³ Both Daochuo and Shandao, however, interpret the Contemplation Sūtra as holding that absolutely anyone, even the lowest of the low, can attain birth in Amida's land; they reject the Larger Sūtra's exclusion clause entirely. Hubbard suggests that this is a reaction to Xinxing's 信行 (540–594) Sanjie 三階 (Three Levels) School—Xinxing argued that those born during his time period were almost all born at the third level, that is “universally and entirely *icchāntika*,” and made those *icchāntikas* the special focus of his teaching¹⁶⁴; the intimation here is that Daochuo and Shandao imitated Xinxing in emphasizing their own practice's universality and capacity to save the otherwise irredeemable. Charles Jones tells us that this notion of the Pure Land path of other-power as able to save “*even the most evil person that Buddhism can imagine*” becomes a throughline for the Chinese tradition as it develops from the early patriarchs.¹⁶⁵

This decision to resolve the contradiction between the Larger Sūtra and the Contemplation Sūtra on the matter of the evil person in favour of the Contemplation Sūtra means that Chinese Pure Land thought commits itself in some sense to a destabilizing of the karmic economy. This will make it difficult for the Chinese Pure Land tradition to appeal consistently or coherently to a normative Buddhist ethics grounded in the law of karma. In this sense, the Chinese Pure Land tradition contains the

¹⁶³ Tanaka, *The Dawn of Chinese Pure Land Doctrine*, 62; *Larger Sūtra* 105; Gómez, *Land of Bliss*, 187; *Contemplation Sūtra* 30 (SS 115-116).

¹⁶⁴ Hubbard, *Absolute Delusion*, 87.

¹⁶⁵ Jones, “Foundations of Ethics and Practice”; author's emphasis.

seeds of a serious antinomianism, buried inside its image of the Pure Land as a different spatial and historical regime.

When the Japanese take delivery of Chinese Pure Land then, they do not get an anodyne image of a blissful afterlife. On the contrary, they get an image of spatial, historical, and social destabilization. The final section of this chapter will take up some of the ways this image is enacted in Japan before the rupture of the Kamakura 鎌倉 (1192–1333).

Locating the Pure Land in Heian Japan

The Heian understanding of the Pure Land is sometimes summed up with a slogan associated with the Japanese patriarch Genshin 源信 (942–1017): *onri edo, gongu jōdo* 厭離穢土欣求淨土 (despise this defiled world and long for the Pure Land).¹⁶⁶ This is suggestive of a strict distinction being drawn between this world and the Pure Land, and may be taken as evidence that the Heian devotee conceived of the Pure Land as a transcendent space. Understanding the Heian imagination as oriented around a transcendent Pure Land makes it difficult, however, to make sense of the many imaginative efforts—including Genshin’s own—to locate the space of the Pure Land in the here and now. It does seem clear that on the Heian understanding, Amida’s Pure Land is identified as a world of the dead¹⁶⁷; it also seems clear though that this world or the

¹⁶⁶ See for example Kuroda Toshio, “The Development of the *Kenmitsu* System as Japan’s Medieval Orthodoxy,” trans. James Dobbins, *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 23.3-4 (1996): 255; Sonoda Minoru, “Secularity and Profanation in Japanese Religion,” in *Cultural Identity and Modernization in Asian Countries*, Proceedings of Kokugakuin University Centennial Symposium, 1983; Haruo Shirane, *The Bridge of Dreams: A Poetics of the Tale of Genji* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987): 190.

¹⁶⁷ Despite this, death was not a requirement for residence—Christoph Kleine points out that in Miyoshi no Tameyasu’s 三善為康 (1049–1139) twelfth-century *Shūi ōjōden* 拾遺往生伝, Tameyasu claims two of the immortals mentioned in Ōe no Masafusa’s 大江匡房 (1041–1111) *Honchō shinsenden* 本朝神仙伝 for the

present world (*konoyo* この世, *gense* 現世) and the other world or the world to come (*anoyo* あの世, *raise* 来世) are not sharply distinguished. We know from the *hensōzu* 変相図 (literally, transformation paintings; representations of visions of the other world) of the period that the borders between this world and the Western paradise were considered permeable—the Western paradise could be perceived by inhabitants of this world in visions and dreams, and inhabitants of the Western paradise could communicate with this world through visions and dreams. It is also the case, I would suggest, that alongside an injunction to despise this world, the late-Heian period sees the development of a diverse set of strategies for erasing the border between this world and the Pure Land through imaginative productions of the Western Paradise as a heterotopia.

By the end of the Heian, the Western Paradise had been mapped onto a number of real locations. The western gate of Shitennōji, Shōtoku Taishi's 聖徳太子(574–627) temple in Naniwa, was said to be the eastern gate of the Pure Land¹⁶⁸; the summit of Mount Fuji was also understood as a gate to the Pure Land.¹⁶⁹ The Hongū shrine complex on Mount Kumano was identified as Amida's realm; the presiding *kami* of Mount Tateyama, Tateyama gongen, was identified as the manifest trace of Amida and

Pure Land side, arguing that they were not in fact immortals at all, but *genjin no ōjō hito* 現身の往生人, people who had attained birth in the present body and simply flown off into the west; see Christoph Kleine, “Rebirth and immortality, paradise and hell—conflicting views of the afterlife in ancient Japan,” in *Practicing the Afterlife: Perspectives from Japan*, ed. Susanne Formanek and William R. LaFleur (Wien: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften), 86.

¹⁶⁸ See Jacqueline Stone, “By the Power of One's Last *Nenbutsu*,” in *Approaching the Land of Bliss: Religious Praxis in the Cult of Amitābha*, ed. Richard K. Payne and Kenneth K. Tanaka (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003), 102.

¹⁶⁹ Martin Collcutt dates this belief to the late Heian and notes that in “the late sixteenth century, Kakugyō, the founder of the Fujikō, sang that Fuji is ‘the Pure Land of Amida Buddha’”; see “Mt. Fuji as the Realm of Miroku: the Transformation of Maitreya in the Cult of Mt. Fuji in Early Modern Japan,” in *Maitreya, The Future Buddha*, ed. Alan Sponberg and Helen Hardacre (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 252.

Tateyama as the Western Paradise itself.¹⁷⁰ An understanding of the Western Paradise as located somewhere in the mountains is consistent with the flourishing of mountain cults during the Heian,¹⁷¹ but Yamaori Tetsuo argues that these mountain Pure Lands reflect a development particular to popular Pure Land belief, namely the increasing currency of the image of a *sanchū jōdo* 山中浄土, or the Pure Land within the mountains—Yamaori holds that during the Heian, mountain ranges came to be understood as natural boundaries separating the ordinary world from Amida’s land, which was nonetheless identified as a space within the local landscape; he asserts that it was only the elite who conceived of the Western paradise as somewhere in the distant west.¹⁷² Fusae Kanda draws on Yamaori’s argument in developing her interpretation of a style of *raigōzu* 来迎図 (paintings of Amida’s welcoming descent) unique to Japan which closely integrates the image of Amida and his retinue with a depiction of an indigenous mountain landscape.¹⁷³ This interest in the mountains, she suggests, partly reflects a general conviction that “[e]nthusiastic devotees who sought the Pure Land could realize the setting of the earthly Pure Land in the mountains of their region.”¹⁷⁴

The Heian also sees the development of local Pure Lands that are more obviously constructed. One example of this is the *jōdoteien* 浄土庭園, or paradise garden, which is

¹⁷⁰ D. Max Moerman, *Localizing Paradise: Kumano Pilgrimage and the Religious Landscape of Premodern Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 356.

¹⁷¹ Paul L. Swanson, “Shugendō and the Yoshino-Kumano Pilgrimage: An Example of Mountain Pilgrimage,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 36.1 (1981): 57.

¹⁷² Yamaori Tetsuo 山折哲雄, *Nihon shūkyōbunka no kōzō to sokei* 日本宗教文化の構造と祖型 (Tokyo: Seidosha, 1995). The same argument appears in the essay “Imaging the Pure Land of Shinran”: “ordinary Japanese of the [Heian] period could not conceive of the existence of such a Pure Land lying at a bewildering distance beyond millions of other lands. The Japanese of the time did not think of the Pure Land as existing in such a place; rather, they conceived of it as lying in the mountains”; see *Wandering Spirits and Temporary Corpses: Studies in the History of Japanese Religious Tradition*, ed. and trans. Dennis Hirota (Kyoto: International Research Center for Japanese Studies, 2004), 433.

¹⁷³ Fusae C. Kanda, “The Development of Amida Raigō Painting: Style, Concept, and Landscape” (PhD diss., Yale University, 2002), 95ff.

¹⁷⁴ Fusae C. Kanda, “The Development of Amida Raigō Painting,” 317-318.

the representative garden style of the later Heian period.¹⁷⁵ Andreas Hamacher and Hikoe Shirai argue that the paradise garden is informed by both doctrinal and political concerns. Fujiwara no Yorimichi's 藤原頼通 (990–1074) garden at Byōdōin 平等院, for example, is designed following the depiction of the Western paradise in *jigokugokurakuzu* 地獄極楽図 (paintings of hells and paradise), and has no bridge running from the border of the pond to the Amida Hall at the garden's centre; Fujiwara no Hidehira's 藤原秀衡 (1122–1187) garden at Muryōkōin 無量光院, on the other hand, was designed following *nigabyakudōzu* 二河白道図 (literally, paintings of the two rivers and the white path; paintings depicting Shandao's parable of the white path), and so does have such a bridge, suggesting that the devotee can make her own way to the centre of the Western paradise. Here the two gardens draw on different sources and so produce different kinds of Pure Lands. At the same time, the massive Amida Hall at the Muryōkōin is also an attempt on Hidehira's part to outstrip Yorimichi's hall at the Byōdōin, and the Byōdōin is Yorimichi's attempt to affirm the power of the Fujiwara regency (*sekkanke* 摂関家).¹⁷⁶

Because the garden expresses both the patron's religious devotion and his political ambition, he assumes a complex position within the space of the garden.

Grapard notes that the aristocracy of the late Heian made a practice of devoting their final

¹⁷⁵ Andreas Hamacher and Hikoe Shirai, "Forschung über die Entwicklung des Jōdo-Gartens in der Heian-Zeit—Anmerkungen zur Stellung des Tempelgartens Muryōkōin," *Technical Bulletin of Faculty of Horticulture, Chiba University* 千葉大学園芸学部学術報告 52 (1998): 67. Graham Parkes identifies the paradise garden as the garden style that "derived the most from the contribution of Buddhism"; see "The Role of Rock in the Japanese Dry Landscape Garden: A Philosophical Essay," in *Reading Zen in the Rocks: The Japanese Dry Landscape Garden*, ed. François Berthier (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 17.

¹⁷⁶ Mimi Yiengpruksawan, "In My Image: The Ichiji Kinrin Statue at Chūsonji," *Monumenta Nipponica* 46.3 (1991): 342.

years to “organizing sumptuous replicas of the Pure Land”¹⁷⁷; the garden can be understood as a large-scale replica, or enactment. In this capacity, as a heterotopia it mediates a shift from the world of the living to the world of the dead and an attendant shift in status from ruler to supplicant—we see this vividly in Yorimichi’s transformation of his villa into a temple. But we might also observe that in acting as patron for the construction of a paradise garden, the devotee in question effectively aligns himself with Amida, the architect of the Western paradise and the figure at the centre of that paradise. In this sense, the construction of a paradise garden is the activity proper to a buddha, and so does not reposition the ruler as a supplicant but rather affirms his status as a ruler. The paradise garden might thus come into view for us in the context of the spread of *mappō* thought and the collapse of the *ritsuryō* 律令 system as a heterotopia of compensation: as a site that affirms the authority and civility of the Fujiwara line, it becomes a place where the aristocrat can retreat from the failure of the real sociopolitical order and enjoy instead a perfected iteration of that same sociopolitical order.

Another kind of constructed Pure Land, which emerges out of a non-elite context and does not lay claim to permanence, is the dancing *nenbutsu* (*odori nenbutsu* 踊念仏), the creation of which is often popularly attributed to a *hijiri* 聖 like Kūya 空也 (903–972) or Ippen,¹⁷⁸ but which likely derives from local dance practices, or, as Herbert Plutschow puts it, “the popular orgiastic dances of the marketplace.”¹⁷⁹ The question of what function dancing *nenbutsu* serves is somewhat fraught, with some scholarly scorn

¹⁷⁷ Grapard, *The Protocol of the Gods*, 215.

¹⁷⁸ Ashikaga Enshō notes that in the north, dancing *nenbutsu* is sometimes said to have been brought to the area by Ren'nyō; see “The Festival for the Spirits of the Dead in Japan,” *Western Folklore* 9 (1950): 227.

¹⁷⁹ Herbert E. Plutschow, *Matsuri: The Festivals of Japan* (Surrey: Japan Library, 1996), 194.

directed against its use as a way of managing the displaced spirits of *goryō* 御霊,¹⁸⁰ in contrast to what is positioned as a normatively Buddhist use of dance to “exonerate sins and purify people’s hearts.”¹⁸¹ I think if we look outside the field of Japanese studies, we find another, fruitful way of approaching this question. In her reading of Tibetan Buddhist dance, Mona Schrempf argues that the dance functions as a “‘spatialisation’ of recited rituals”¹⁸²; following Schrempf, Zeff Bjerken suggests that the “*maṇḍala*-based dance becomes a form of magical manipulation, transforming the Tibetan landscape into a pure place.”¹⁸³ This transformation is not abstract. The danced *maṇḍala* purifies the landscape of malevolent—read, as yet unconverted—local power, by subordinating them to the dharma and so converting them to guardians; Bjerken writes that the *maṇḍala* thus “became a site for sacred places wrested away from native powers and replaced by a Buddhist hierarch presiding at the center, where indigenous deities were relegated to the periphery, as guardians of this rectangular grid of civilization.”¹⁸⁴

Although the pattern of conversion of local powers that we see in Japanese Buddhism does not strictly parallel the pattern of conversion that we see in Tibetan Buddhism, the dancing *nenbutsu* seems to me to be similarly concrete in its concerns. The problem with the *goryō* is a problem of emplacement: the dead person, who should

¹⁸⁰ The practice seems to discomfit some Western scholars: Elisabeth Moriarty notes that “On occasions, during plagues and other disasters in Kyoto, it became ‘Nenbutsu madness,’ so popular was it and so frenzied did the crowds become”; she glosses “Nenbutsu madness” as “a shamanistic atmosphere” and notes further that, left to its own devices, “Nenbutsu Odori degenerated into magic in the villages.” See “Nembutsu odori,” *Asian Folklore Studies* 35.1 (1976): 11 and 11 n.20. Plutschow suggests that “[t]he intensity of the collective participation” in the dance “can lead to mass hysteria, especially in villages,” although in extreme circumstances, this hysteria takes hold “even in Kyōto”; see *Matsuri*, 70.

¹⁸¹ Plutschow, *Matsuri*, 70.

¹⁸² Mona Schrempf, “Tibetan ritual dances and the transformation of space,” *The Tibet Journal* 19.2 (1994): 97.

¹⁸³ Zeff Bjerken, “On Mandalas, Monarchs, and Mortuary Magic: Siting the Sarvadurgatipariśodhana Tantra in Tibet,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 73.3 (2005): 837.

¹⁸⁴ Bjerken, “On Mandalas, Monarchs, and Mortuary Magic,” 836.

be safely situated in the world of dead instead remains in the world of the living. Dancing *nenbutsu* works by manipulating space such that through the dance the Western paradise—the world of the dead—is opened up inside the world of the living, so that the *goryō* can be correctly situated, resolving all the problems that they produced and affirming them as benignant forces. This is a gentle subordination but a subordination nonetheless.¹⁸⁵ The function of dancing *nenbutsu* then might be understood as the relocation of a local power through the construction of a (temporary) *gense jōdo*.

A second type of performed Pure Land is also produced during the late Heian, through the dramatic performance of the *mukaekō* 迎え講 (literally, a welcoming association) a performance ritual in which the welcoming descent of Amida and assembly to the deathbed is acted out, said to have originated with Genshin: Jacqueline Stone suggests that the first performances may have taken place in Yokawa 横川, the area of Mount Hiei 比叡 in which Genshin was active¹⁸⁶; Kanda posits that the *mukaekō* began as a private performance at the meetings of Genshin's Nijūgo zanmai-e 二十五三昧会 (Society of Twenty-Five Samādhis).¹⁸⁷ The audience for the *mukaekō* was apparently a diverse one—Stone writes that they were attended “by people of a range of social classes”—although the performers playing the roles of the bodhisattvas in the retinue, at least during this period, were monks or novices (the role of Amida, Kanda comments,

¹⁸⁵ It may be worth noting here that two of the characteristics Mark Blum has identified as common to a wide range of local forms of dancing *nenbutsu* are the reenactment of narratives in which Jizō Bodhisattva 地藏菩薩 subdues some demon or demons, and the incorporation of martial elements into the dance form; Blum, “Think Buddha, Say Buddha: A History of *Nenbutsu* Practice,” public lecture given at McGill University, March 25 2008.

¹⁸⁶ Stone, “By the Power of One’s Last *Nenbutsu*,” 82.

¹⁸⁷ Kanda, “The Development of Amida *Raigō* Painting,” 143.

“was played by either a painting or a sculpture”).¹⁸⁸ The popularity of the *mukaekō* seems to hinge at least partly on the sense that witnessing a performance would lead to birth in the Western paradise—Kanda cites Ōe no Sukekuni’s 大江佑国 (c. eleventh century) account of the annual *mukaekō* in Yokawa, in which he reports that “[e]very devotee, be they monk or laity, rich or poor, attended believing to be immediately born in the Western Pure Land”¹⁸⁹; one of her conclusions is that the performance of Amida’s descent and the real descent “were recognized as interchangeable events among enthusiastic devotees,” so that “the *mukaekō* was not disregarded as a repeated and artificial theatrical drama, but rather was appreciated as the more accessible and controllable means of experiencing the auspicious moment of *raigō*.”¹⁹⁰ So *mukaekō*, like dancing *nenbutsu*, works on a logic that the performance itself instantiates or manifests the paradisaical space in which Amida is present.

What Genshin is best known for, of course, is the articulation of a set of rules for organizing the deathbed in order to produce the same descent that is enacted in the *mukaekō*. Despite Genshin’s reputation for tending toward a transcendental understanding of the Western paradise, a final example of a discursively constructed local Pure Land might be the deathbed itself, which becomes a site of intense focus during the late Heian. Grapard provides an evocative description of Heian aristocrats lying down to die in the sumptuous replicas they had fashioned for this very purpose:

¹⁸⁸ Stone, “By the Power of One’s Last *Nenbutsu*,” 82; Kanda, “The Development of Amida *Raigō* Painting,” 141. See Michael Marra, *Representations of Power: The Literary Politics of Medieval Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i, 1993), 67 for a discussion of the development of *mukaekō* during the medieval period, its use of *hinin* 非人 performers, and its connection to medieval theatre forms.

¹⁸⁹ Kanda, “The Development of Amida *Raigō* Painting,” 142.

¹⁹⁰ Kanda, “The Development of Amida *Raigō* Painting,” 152-153.

The voices of youngsters chanting the scriptures (especially those dedicated to Jizō) transported those aristocrats to higher spheres of the cosmos at the time of their death when, facing west, they held in their hand colored threads made from lotus fiber that issued from the hands of painted representations of Amida in his Pure Land. Buddhas and bodhisattvas then descended on clouds from the Pure Land to fetch the dying aristocrats amidst heavenly music played by the bodhisattvas.¹⁹¹

Genshin, meanwhile, takes his instructions for designing the deathbed from Daoxuan (Dōsen 道宣, 596–667)—in the *Ōjōyōshū* 往生要集, Genshin records Daoxuan’s description of the Jetavana Vihāra:

in the direction where the sun sets...the Cloister of Impermanence (Mujō-in 無常院) was built. People who became ill were placed there....A standing statue (of the Buddha), facing west and covered with gold leaf, was placed within the hall. (The statue’s) right hand was raised, and its left hand held a five-colored streamer which hung down until its end touched the ground. The patient was placed behind the statue. Grasping the end of the streamer in his left hand, he concentrated his mind on going to the Buddha’s Pure Land in the company of the Buddha. The nursing attendants burned incense, scattered flowers and adorned the patient. And so on up to, if there was excrement, urine, vomit or spit, it was immediately removed.¹⁹²

¹⁹¹ Grapard, *Protocol of the Gods*, 215.

¹⁹² Translated in Robert F. Rhodes, “Seeking the Pure Land in Heian Japan: The Practices of the Monks of the Nijugo zammai-e,” *Eastern Buddhist* 33.1 (2001): 59. See also Koichi Shinohara, “The Moment of Death in Daoxuan’s Vinaya Commentary,” in *The Buddhist Dead: Practices, Discourses, Representations*, ed. Bryan J. Cuevas and Jacqueline I. Stone (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2007): 105–133.

Robert Rhodes explains that Genshin forms the Nijūgo zanmai-e “to put into practice [this] deathbed *nenbutsu*” described by Daoxuan.¹⁹³ These visions of the deathbed have something important in common: they both function to stage death as an encounter between the dying person and Amida, relying on an understanding that the representation of the encounter will become the real encounter, a logic we observed above in Kanda’s discussion of the *mukaekō*. Here the music produced by the human musicians gathered at the deathbed turns into the music produced by Amida’s retinue; the building set up in the western-most part of the monastery grounds becomes the Western paradise; the strings which bind the dying person to the image of Amida become the real karmic tie; and ultimately the image of Amida installed at the deathbed becomes the real Amida. Through deathbed *nenbutsu* (*rinjū nenbutsu* 臨終念仏) the real event of death, when figured as a performance or tableau of *raigō*, becomes controllable and so makes the desired descent accessible.

This makes the deathbed itself the site of an instantiation or localization of the Western paradise. Unlike the garden however, the deathbed makes the most sense not as a heterotopia of compensation but as a heterotopia of illusion: if we take the real to be samsara, then the Mujōin—the impermanence hall—represents a kind of concentrated samsara; at the same time, insofar as it is the site where the practitioner escapes that reality, it exposes the limits of the real. In both representing and contesting the reality of impermanence, it serves the function—useful from a Buddhist point of view—of exposing every other real space as ultimately illusory. This effort to imaginatively produce the deathbed as a utopian space of difference has important ethical consequences.

¹⁹³ Rhodes, “Seeking the Pure Land in Heian Japan,” 60.

Local Pure Lands and the Manipulation of History

Deathbed *nenbutsu* is a ritual of temporal manipulation as well as spatial manipulation, that is to say, it establishes a heterochrony as well as a heterotopia. This heterochrony permits the manipulation of history. Grapard explains that in the temples of the Heian period, “one could manipulate time, if not eradicate it, through the performance of rites of penance leading to the purification of the sense organs”; he concludes that “[t]he function of ritual”—in the temple as well as in the shrine—“was to stop time and deny history.”¹⁹⁴ Deathbed *nenbutsu* too works to stop time and deny history, on the more modest scale of one’s own personal karma. The death register of the Nijūgo zanmai-e, for example, records the experience of the monk Jōkyū 貞久, who, on his deathbed, “asked the other monks around him to rise and stand on the ground,” telling them:

“The ground on which I lie is filled with violent flames burning my body. Is it the same with you?” When the people answered no, Jōkyū continued, “If so, I shall be reborn in another life; I have already fallen into hell.” In tears, the assembled people recited the *nenbutsu* several times. Soon Jōkyū ceased reciting, but after a while, he spoke again and related “(I had a vision in which) someone chased me until I finally fell into a flaming hole. Thanks to the *nenbutsu*, the flames have abated.”¹⁹⁵

In this narrative, we see the piling up of both space and time: Jōkyū is both in this world, with an assembly of monks gathered around him, and in a hell realm; he is both in this life and already in the next life. Because both of these spaces and both of these times are in some sense perceptually available to him, he is able to provide an unusually clear

¹⁹⁴ Grapard, *The Protocol of the Gods*, 222.

¹⁹⁵ Rhodes, “Seeking the Pure Land in Heian Japan,” 73.

report on the efficacy of *nenbutsu* as a tool for denying karma: although he is destined to be reborn in a hell realm—as Rhodes explains, Jōkyū’s behavior during his final days was not exactly exemplary¹⁹⁶—he is instead delivered into the Pure Land through the power of the *nenbutsu*. Rhodes suggests that the point here “is that it is possible to be born into the Pure Land even if one is somewhat negligent in the *nenbutsu*, as long as one practices it with resolve in one’s final moments”¹⁹⁷; Stone remarks that the Nijūgo zanmai-e’s focus on the deathbed springs from a conviction that “practice during one’s last hours held a special place, as the potential of this liminal moment was deemed to set it apart from ordinary time and offer a unique opportunity for securing birth in the Pure Land.”¹⁹⁸ The account of Jōkyū’s death is mild in its implications—Jōkyū is, after all, a monk and a devout practitioner of *nenbutsu* who by his own account only falters in his practice in the days before his death because of physical pain¹⁹⁹—but as a narrative in which karmic just deserts are avoided by accessing the special potential of the deathbed, it resonates with other narratives from the period that are significantly more antinomian—*akunin ōjōden* 悪人往生伝, or accounts of the birth of evil people.

Stone holds that “[b]y including such cases, *ōjōden* reinforce the notion of life’s final moment as a realm of unique liberative potential, radically discontinuous with society’s values, ordinary moral codes, and even the efficacy of everyday practice.”²⁰⁰ She is cautious about ascribing too much sociopolitical significance to the narrative motif of *akunin ōjō*, but does allow that it may suggest “an implicit questioning of a direct

¹⁹⁶ Rhodes, “Seeking the Pure Land in Heian Japan,” 72-73.

¹⁹⁷ Rhodes, “Seeking the Pure Land in Heian Japan,” 73.

¹⁹⁸ Stone, “By the Power of One’s Last *Nenbutsu*,” 79.

¹⁹⁹ Rhodes, “Seeking the Pure Land in Heian Japan,” 72.

²⁰⁰ Stone, “By the Power of One’s Last *Nenbutsu*,” 94-95.

causal relation between morality or merit-accumulation and salvation.”²⁰¹ Michael Bathgate counters that “the emphasis on the causal efficacy of practice...remains central to these texts. Indeed, by advocating specific rituals as having the power to overcome a lifetime of impiety or immorality, the theme of *akunin ōjō* appears to exemplify, rather than reject, that causal logic,”²⁰² but I think this misrepresents Stone’s position: she does not assert that there is no causal logic in the *akunin ōjō* narratives, only that they imply no necessary causal relation between piety or morality and the attainment of birth.

Bathgate’s observation that in an *akunin ōjō* narrative, the ritual recitation of *nenbutsu* at death cancels out a lifetime of impiety speaks to exactly this point—there is a causal logic here, but it is not at all a moral logic. Bathgate warns against “anachronistically interpreting the imagery of *akunin ōjō* primarily as a precursor to later developments”²⁰³—that is to the development of the doctrine of *akunin shōki* 悪人正機, the evil person as the true object of Amida’s vow; this warning, I think, is well taken, and the same concern is reflected in Stone’s hesitation around interpreting the late-Heian *akunin ōjōden* as signalling some “nascent religious egalitarianism.”²⁰⁴ It nonetheless seems to be the case that we find in the theme of *akunin ōjō* an uncoupling of morality and birth, which we will plainly see again in Hōnen and Shinran.

What might we make of these narratives recounting the salvation of evil people? I would suggest that they are open to at least two kinds of readings: one which understands *akunin ōjō* denotatively and one which understands *akunin ōjō* connotatively. In a study of the Mahāyoga Tantras—another outcropping of Mahāyāna antinomianism—Christian

²⁰¹ Stone, “By the Power of One’s Last *Nenbutsu*,” 97.

²⁰² Michael Bathgate, “Exemplary Lives: Form and Function in Pure Land Sacred Biography,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 34.2 (2007): 279 n.13.

²⁰³ Bathgate, “Exemplary Lives,” 279 n.13.

²⁰⁴ Stone, “By the Power of One’s Last *Nenbutsu*,” 94.

Wedemeyer uses this terminology, borrowed from Roland Barthes, to argue for a new way of reading the tantras.²⁰⁵ Wedemeyer suggests that the tantras have heretofore been read by scholars as though they were written in denotative or natural language, that is language that points directly to the thing in question, whether literal or figurative: taking as his example the “five meats” and “five ambrosias,” he observes that these have been understood as either pointing directly to eating grossly impure foods²⁰⁶ or as pointing figuratively to some other substance for which terms like five meats and five ambrosias are breakable codes.²⁰⁷ He argues that instead references to the motifs of the five meats and five ambrosias should be read as connotative or mythic language, that is, as written in a language that “allows communication to be guided by an ulterior intention...and yet for that intention to be occluded.”²⁰⁸ To speak here of connotative meaning is different from speaking of hidden meaning or deep meaning in contrast to surface meaning, in that connotative meaning actually depends on the first-order denotative meaning and so cannot dispense with it. The connotative meaning is public, in the sense that is *understood by everybody*, but occluded in that it is never spoken aloud. So on Wedemeyer’s understanding, in denotative language, eating the five meats would signify eating grossly impure foods, but in connotative language, “eating the five meats” as part of a ritual of purification points to the nonduality of purity and impurity—that is the

²⁰⁵ The distinction between denotation and connotation is described at length by Roland Barthes in *Elements of Semiology*, trans. Annette Lavers and Colin Smith (London: Cape, 1967). The usefulness of this distinction hinges upon our understanding that denotation and connotation are not simply different levels of meaning, much less opposed meanings, but rather that the connotative meaning uses the denotative sign as its own signifier. Christian Wedemeyer, “Beef, Dog, and Other Mythologies: Connotative Semiotics in Mahāyoga Tantra Ritual and Scripture,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 75.2 (2007): 383-417.

²⁰⁶ Wedemeyer gives us Eugène Burnouf, Rajendralal Mitra, Benoyotosh Bhattacharyya, David Snellgrove, and Ronald Davidson as examples of scholars who propose a literal reading.

²⁰⁷ Wedemeyer gives us A.K. Warder as his example of a scholar who proposes a figurative reading; it seems to me broadly true that the understanding of twilight language as a code which the initiate learns to break has considerable traction in contemporary treatments of the tantras.

²⁰⁸ Wedemeyer, “Beef, Dog, and Other Mythologies,” 406.

ulterior intention—while occluding the actual, and irrational, claim that purity and impurity are nondual. In eating the five meats then, the nonduality of purity and impurity appears as incontestable, already-established fact, which cannot be disputed precisely because it is never explicitly asserted.²⁰⁹ This use of the motif of the five meats does *not* contest the brāhmanic understanding of those foods as grossly impure; on the contrary, it relies on and reinscribes that understanding. This distinction between denotative and connotative language may also illuminate something in the *akunin ōjōden*.

One way to read the narratives of *akunin ōjō* is as simply denotative—they just point to the fact that by the power of *nenbutsu*, even evil persons for whom birth should be impossible have escaped the hell realms and been born instead in the Western paradise. The suggestion that Masafusa, the compiler of the first set of *ōjōden* to include narratives of *akunin ōjō*, was conscious of himself “as a sinner,” and so derived some “personal comfort” from such narratives follows this kind of denotative reading.²¹⁰ On this reading, the inclusion of accounts of *akunin ōjō* in the *ōjōden* has as its motivation some wish to ease the anxieties of those who understand themselves as evil persons, and says explicitly to them that through devotion to Amida, they can evade the consequences of karma and achieve an impossible *ōjō*. But there is a strange kind of tension in this reading. On the Heian understanding, *akunin* was used not only to identify some internal characteristic of insincerity or foolishness, but also to identify particular social ranks and occupations that were particularly bloody—thus Yoshishige no Yasutane’s 慶滋保胤 (c.933–997) comment at the beginning of his *ōjōden* compilation that even such irredeemably evil persons as butchers and poultry sellers can hope to attain birth in the

²⁰⁹ Wedemeyer, “Beef, Dog, and Other Mythologies,” 404.

²¹⁰ This understanding is advanced by Marian Ury in “The Ōe Conversations,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 48.3 (1993): 364.

Pure Land.²¹¹ These ranks and occupations were identified as themselves the consequences of karma, so the whole notion of the *akunin* is bound up with normative understandings of karmic causality. A denotative reading of the *akunin ōjōden* would have to both affirm conventional karmic morality, insofar as it affirms that these evil persons are irredeemably evil, and at the same time deny conventional karmic morality, insofar as it affirms that these evil persons are not irredeemably evil. That is the tension that in fact drives the connotative reading. That is, on a connotative reading, the motif of “the birth of the evil person” would not point to the actual birth of an actual evil person, but would announce the absolute, universal efficacy of *nenbutsu*—here the ulterior intention—while occluding the antinomian and irrational claim that *nenbutsu* is indeed absolutely, universally effective. Read in this way, the narratives of *akunin ōjō* do not deny the evilness of evil persons; on the contrary, they rely on and reinscribe the karmic order within which those persons are identified as evil. If they are taken connotatively then, the *akunin ōjōden* are not antinomian at all—they do not constitute a challenge to the existing sociomoral order, but affirm the correctness of that order.

It seems to me, however, that even where a connotative reading is intended, a denotative reading is always possible. This is probably of only limited historical interest when the readers in question are a relatively small group of *akunin*—let’s say, for instance, the tiny community of venal, thieving provincial warlords. It is, I would submit, of significant historical interest when the readers in question are a large group of persons

²¹¹ Bathgate, “Exemplary Lives,” 279. This reflects an elision of the *issendai* and the *sendara* (Sk. *candāla*). *Sendara* carries the meaning of butcher 施陀羅, evil person 施荼羅, and neuter person 扇提羅. As we will see later, this elision gets wrapped up in the elision mentioned earlier of *bonbu* (or *fanfu*) and *issendai*, so that—because *bonbu* equals *issendai* and *issendai* equals *akunin*, *bonbu* and *akunin* too become elided. For a brilliant discussion of the neuter person, or sexually indeterminate person, as *icchāntika*, see Janet Gyatso, “One Plus One Makes Three: Buddhist Gender, Monasticism, and the Law of the Non-Excluded Middle,” *History of Religions* 43.2 (2003): 89-115.

for whom birth is supposed to be impossible: butchers, for example, or hunters and fishermen, or perhaps the single largest group of *icchāntika*—women. When the motif of *akunin ōjō* is read denotatively, one possible outcome is the conclusion that, whatever the law of karma, within the space of the Western paradise, that law does not hold. Where the law of the karma is understood as intimately related to social rank and status, and so to the sociopolitical order, the Western paradise must then appear as an antinomian space, and this really matters in a context in which it is understood that the practitioner can in some way enact that space in this world. The tension that drives the connotative reading becomes amplified in the independent movements of the Kamakura period, when some thinkers—including, I think, Hōnen and Shinran—move to develop the denotative reading more explicitly.

Before the rise of the Kamakura schools then, we find Japanese Pure Land believers working with some fervour to produce the transcendent Western paradise as an immanent space of difference, from within which it becomes possible to manipulate time, history, karma, and social relationships. There are instances of this imaginative construction being undertaken both by elite and non-elite actors, as well as in settings that bring together elite and non-elite actors. It makes sense that these immanent paradises keep emerging during the Heian, first because the notion of a this-worldly Pure Land resonates with existing Japanese understandings of the permeability of the border between this world and other worlds; second because Chinese exegetes have already done the work of imbricating the Pure Land spatial imaginary with Mahāyāna notions of the interpenetration of lands; and third because the space described in the Pure Land sūtras is from the outset unstable. For all of these reasons, while it is polemically useful to contrast

Pure Land transcendentalism with a properly immanent orientation, such an account requires that we shelve a considerable amount of compelling evidence suggesting that early Pure Land thinkers—whether of the elite variety or otherwise—have consistently understood the Western paradise as something other than strictly, unambiguously transcendent. This makes the image of the Western paradise available as a critical utopia. We have only the barest intimation of exile though, in the tying together of Pure Land practice and the abjectly ordinary person, estranged from the Buddhist path. In the next chapter, I will take up the thought of Hōnen, Shinran, and Rennyo, and argue that the development of sectarian Pure Land is not marked by the development of an image of the Pure Land as transcendent, but by a reimagining of the utopian space of the Pure Land and the abject space of exile as common ground, following upon the real exile of Hōnen and his disciples.

CHAPTER TWO: IMAGINARY UTOPIAS AND REAL EXILES

Hōnen and Shinran, patriarchs of the first and second sectarian Pure Land movements to develop in Japan were caught up in the seismic shifts that attended the transition from the Heian to the Kamakura, the beginning of Japan's medieval period. Rennyo, the second founder (*chūkō* 中興) of Shinran's tradition, was caught up in, and in important ways actually responsible for, the seismic shifts that attended the end of the medieval period and the beginning of the Warring States period, which marked the beginning of the long development of modern Japan. This chapter will attempt to show how Hōnen and Shinran enact the Pure Land utopia in the turmoil of the early Kamakura, and how the fact of Shinran's exile is both bound up in and occluded by Rennyo's effort to build a Shinshū institution. With Shinran, we get the imbrication of the spaces of exile and utopia; with Rennyo, we get that imbrication made to serve as the site on which to establish a community. This possibility—the Western paradise understood as a community of exiles—is the one modern thinkers will return to when they are in the midst of their own upheavals.

Locating the Pure Land in Kamakura Japan: Hōnen

In 1198, at the behest of the regent Kujō Kanezane 九条兼実 (1149–1207), Hōnen sets down in writing his *Senchaku hongan nenbutsu shū* 選択本願念仏集 (Assembled

passages on the selection of *nenbutsu* in the original vow)²¹², in which he makes the case for vocal *nenbutsu* as an exclusive practice and Pure Land as an independent school. The argument for vocal *nenbutsu* as an exclusive practice hinges upon Hōnen's reading of the eighteenth vow, in which Dharmākara affirms that those who call the name just ten times will attain birth; Hōnen comments that "reciting the name is the practice specified in the original vow of the Buddha. Therefore, one who dedicates oneself to this practice is carried forward by the power of the Buddha's vow and will certainly attain birth in the Pure Land."²¹³ In this section, we will examine Hōnen's spatial imagination and some of the sociopolitical consequences of the way he positions Amida's land in relation this world.

I have to acknowledge first that some scholars would insist that Hōnen does not have a spatial imagination—his selection of vocal *nenbutsu* is often understood as attended by a thorough rejection of contemplative *nenbutsu*. And because he characterizes vocal *nenbutsu* as the practice "by which a hundred out of a hundred attain birth," as against the miscellaneous practices (including contemplation) "by which not even one out of a thousand attain birth,"²¹⁴ this rejection of contemplative *nenbutsu* is sometimes understood as tightly bound up with an understanding of his practice school as universalist, inclusive, or anti-elitist—a rejection of contemplation is here also a rejection of the hierarchical structure of elite monastic Buddhism. Hōnen's refusal to imagine the space of the Pure Land is thus understood to have real ethical significance. However, this

²¹² Original vow (*hongan* 本願) refers to the vows undertaken by a bodhisattva; it may be taken broadly to indicate the forty-eight fold vow of Dharmākara, or, in the context of sectarian Japanese Pure Land, to the eighteenth vow specifically.

²¹³ *Hōnen's Senchakushū: Passages on the Selection of the Nembutsu in the Original Vow*, trans. and ed. Senchakushū English Translation Project (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998), 65.

²¹⁴ *Senchakushū*, 71.

view of Hōnen is complicated by the possibility that Hōnen himself may have been deeply engaged in contemplative practice, as attested by the *Sanmai hottokki* 三昧発得記 (Record of *samādhi* attainments). Sometimes this complication is resolved by identifying the diary as apocryphal. Tamura Enchō characterizes the diary as so unlike Hōnen (*hihōnenteki* 非法然的) that it can only be a fraud.²¹⁵ In a conference paper delivered in 1995, Andrews asserts that Hōnen’s “rejection of meditation, that is, contemplations of the Pure Land and its beings (*kanzatsu* 觀察, *kanbutsu* 観仏) was total and definitive for the Pure Land tradition that followed him,” suggesting in a footnote that the question of “Hōnen’s alleged personal participation in contemplative exercises must be treated separately from his teachings on this issue”²¹⁶; the following year, Andrews continues to reserve judgment on the authenticity of the *Sanmai hottokki*, commenting that the question is “still unsettled,” but noting that if indeed he “participated in contemplative exercises, Hōnen’s behavior would be inconsistent with the most fundamental of his own teachings.”²¹⁷

Mark Blum, however, contends that “the difficulty scholars have had with this material stems more from a faulty model of interpretation than from the content of the

²¹⁵ Cited in Mark L. Blum, “Samādhi in Hōnen’s Hermeneutic of Practice and Faith: Assessing the *Sammai hottokki*,” in *Wisdom, Compassion, and the Search for Understanding: The Buddhist Studies Legacy of Gadjin M. Nagao*, ed. Jonathan A. Silk (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2000): 72. Bandō Shōjun, on the other hand—writing during a time in which the accepted view was that the diary was a fake—comments that it is “well known that Hōnen thought very highly of the virtue of *samādhi* in a religious personality,” and confesses that he thinks it would have been quite in keeping with Hōnen’s character to produce such a diary; see Bandō Shōjun, “Myōe’s Criticism of Hōnen’s Doctrine,” *Eastern Buddhist* 7.1 (1974): 41-42. Bandō, however, interprets the diary as a record of dreams, like the *Yume no ki* 夢の記 of Hōnen’s contemporary Myōe 明恵 (1173–1232) (41).

²¹⁶ Allan A. Andrews, “Hōnen on Attaining Pure Land Rebirth: The Selected *Nenbutsu* of the Original Vow,” *Pacific World* 6 (2004): 101 and 107 n.54; this paper, published posthumously, was first presented at a symposium at the Institute of Buddhist Studies in 1995.

²¹⁷ Allan A. Andrews, “An Overview of Major Issues for Contemporary Hōnen Studies,” Jōdoshū Research Institute, <http://www.jsri.jp/English/Jodoshu/conferences/AAS/andrews.html> (last accessed April 12, 2009); these remarks are from a 1996 symposium co-sponsored by the Jōdoshū Research Institute and the Association for Asian Studies, “The Life, Thought, and Legacy of Hōnen-bō Genkū.”

material itself,” arguing that for Hōnen, vocal *nenbutsu* was not in fact opposed to contemplative practice.²¹⁸ Andrews contrasts the simple practice of “uttering the invocation,” which leads to birth in the Western paradise, with the difficult practice of contemplation, which leads to the production of a “‘buddhophany,’ a manifestation or appearance of the actual Buddha” (*kenbutsu* 見仏).²¹⁹ Blum proposes that the vocal *nenbutsu* was interesting to Hōnen not as a recitative practice separate from the production of a state of *samādhi*, but “as a means to the attainment of *samādhi*”—Hōnen’s privileging of vocal *nenbutsu* over *kanbutsu* is understood by Blum as resting on Hōnen’s sense that vocal *nenbutsu* would produce the very result sought after by practitioners of *kanbutsu*: a vision of the Buddha.²²⁰ Machida Sōhō makes much of Hōnen’s contemplative practice in his assessment of Hōnen’s *nenbutsu* as a “hierophantic voice,” asserting that “the utterance of *namu Amida butsu* effects a modulation from one existential mode (*edo*) to another (*jōdo*).”²²¹ I think we can be more circumspect than Machida and still make an argument for Hōnen having conceived of vocal *nenbutsu* as effecting a shift in the character of the world for the practitioner.

Hōnen says in the *Senchakushū* that those who take up the practice selected in the original vow “are brought into exceedingly close intimacy with Amida Buddha” and become “very close to Amida Buddha,” while those who do not do so remain estranged from him and far away from him.²²² These dichotomies of intimate versus estranged and near versus far are borrowed from Shandao’s commentary on the Contemplation Sūtra;

²¹⁸ Blum, “Samādhi in Hōnen’s Hermeneutic of Practice and Faith,” 62.

²¹⁹ Andrews, “Lay and Monastic Forms of Pure Land Devotionalism: Typology and History,” 19.

²²⁰ Blum, “Samādhi in Hōnen’s Hermeneutic of Practice and Faith,” 63 and 87-88.

²²¹ Machida Sōho, *Renegade Monk: Hōnen and Japanese Pure Land Buddhism*, trans. Ioannis Mentzas (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 98 and 100.

²²² *Senchakushū*, 67.

Hōnen notes that because Shandao distinguishes between the two, he has faithfully repeated them despite the fact that “[t]he meanings of ‘intimate’ and ‘near’ seem to be identical.”²²³ Actually the distinction allows Hōnen to describe two different ways of positioning the practitioner in relation to a pure land: “[a]lthough the Tuṣita Heaven is near, our karmic relationship to it is shallow. But, although the Land of Sukhāvātī is far away, our affinity for it is deep.”²²⁴ This deep affinity, realized through the practice of vocal *nenbutsu*, also obtains between the practitioner and Amida: they relate to each other like the moon and water, distant but mutually interpenetrating; the two bodhisattvas “like a shadow following an object, will never separate themselves” from the *nenbutsu* practitioner; and if in this world “you hold a rosary, the Buddha will see it. If you recite the *nenbutsu* in your mind, the Buddha will, in his mind, think of you.”²²⁵

This all follows Shandao’s explanation of what it means for intimacy to be established between sentient being and Buddha:

When sentient beings arouse themselves to practice and always recite with their lips the name of the Buddha, the Buddha will hear them. When they constantly and reverently bow down to the Buddha with their bodies, the Buddha will see them. When they constantly think of the Buddha in their hearts, the Buddha will know them. When sentient beings remember the Buddha, the Buddha, also, remembers them. In these three acts, the Buddha and sentient beings are not separate from each other. Hence, they are called the intimate karmic relations.²²⁶

²²³ *Senchakushū*, 68.

²²⁴ *Senchakushū*, 94.

²²⁵ *Senchakushū*, 29.

²²⁶ See *Senchakushū*, 67.

Hōnen echoes this formula, telling his audience that when sentient beings do not call the Buddha,

the Buddha does not hear them. When they do not offer prostrations before the Buddha, the Buddha does not see them. When they do not think of the Buddha in their hearts, the Buddha does not know them. When they do not remember the Buddha, the Buddha does not remember them. In these three acts, the Buddha and sentient beings are not separate from each other.²²⁷

The three sites of contact here—body, speech, and mind—are the three sites of action through which karma is produced. But notice that while Shandao and Hōnen both refer to “three acts,” they actually list four apparently discrete acts, ending with the act of remembering—*nenbutsu*. It seems to me that this suggests an understanding of *namuamidabutsu* as a single activity that engages all three karmic acts—prostration (*namu* Amida), calling (vocal *nenbutsu*), and thinking of the Buddha in their hearts (contemplative *nenbutsu*). The fruit of Hōnen’s *nenbutsu* then is to establish the same situation of nonseparation between sentient being and Amida described by Shandao. Given that the sentient being is properly located in this world, and Amida in his pure land, it seems to me incorrect to suggest that Hōnen’s attitude is one of absolute world rejection. Instead I think it is possible to understand Hōnen as holding the view that in this intimacy the two realms mutually interpenetrate, which interpenetration is actualized without delay in the practice of *nenbutsu*. This would make Hōnen’s vision of the Pure Land one of transcendence in immanence, rather than one of sheer transcendence.

Given that Hōnen begins with the understanding that the age of final dharma—is understood precisely as a situation of estrangement from the realm of the Buddhas—is

²²⁷ *Senchakushū*, 67.

upon him, this vision of transcendence in immanence functions as an image of utopia. As a utopia, it should have a critical function. I want to follow Andrews in arguing that Hōnen's thought has sociopolitical ramifications, while rejecting Andrews' suggestion that these ramifications derive from a refusal of "buddhophany" (which on my reading would have the sense of heterotopia). I would propose instead that they derive from his denotative reading of material that was usually read connotatively.

Hōnen knows how to produce a connotative reading.²²⁸ We might take as an example the fact that although Hōnen, like Shandao, understands his age as one in which everyone is an abjectly ordinary person, with no meaningful distinction to be made between monks and laypeople and no possibility of successfully keeping the precepts, he himself—again, like Shandao—continues to live as a monk and keep the precepts. This is sometimes read as a contradiction—Galen Amstutz, for instance, comments with respect to Shandao's decision to remain a monk, that like "the more conservative Jōdoshū Pure Land schools (but not the more logically coherent Jōdoshinshū school) would do in Japan

²²⁸ His chosen mode is *kanjin shaku* 観心釈, which the editors of the English version of the *Senchakushū* gloss as "an interpretation of scripture grounded not in the letter of the text but in personal religious insight" (*Senchakushū*, 46), and which Paul Groner characterizes, in a different context, as an approach that permits the interpreter to position "his own views as the ultimate authority"; see "A Medieval Japanese Reading of the *Mo-ho chih-kuan*: Placing the *Kankō ruijū* in Historical Context," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 22.1-2 (1995): 62. As is customary in *kanjin* interpretation, Hōnen takes some passages out of context and modifies others to support his argument for vocal *nenbutsu* as an exclusive practice; this suggests that he does not as a rule take the denotative meaning of the text to be of primary importance. Jacqueline Stone notes that we should distinguish between *kanjin shaku*—which is not supposed to be done in isolation, but to follow after the three other modes of interpretation posited by Zhiyi (*innen shaku* 因縁釈, *yakkyō shaku* 約教釈, and *honjaku shaku* 本迹釈)—from what she calls a *kanjin*-style reading. In a *kanjin*-style reading, it is a "prior insight or position, and not the text itself, that forms the basis of the interpretation"; *kanjin shaku*, on the other hand, is a mode in which "the meaning of the text is taken into oneself and personally appropriated." Thus, while a *kanjin*-style reading may be understood as eisegesis, *kanjin shaku* should be understood as a reading that purports to expose a level of meaning internal to the text itself. See *Original Enlightenment and the Transformation of Medieval Japanese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 158.

later, Shan-tao's teaching gestured in several directions simultaneously."²²⁹ Bracketing the question of Shinshū's putative liberalism, I would suggest that there is no necessary incoherence in Hōnen's double identification as a monk and an abjectly ordinary person. Read denotatively, Shandao's assertion—as a monk—that there are no monks makes no sense. Read connotatively, however, it does make sense. As a connotative assertion, “there are no monks; everyone is abjectly ordinary” denotes the fact of *mappō* and connotes the message that the Pure Land path—the path that brings the abjectly ordinary to Buddhahood—is the only path. The denotative and connotative meanings here contradict each other—“there are no monks; everyone is abjectly ordinary” denotes nobody becoming a Buddha, and connotes absolutely everybody becoming a Buddha. That contradiction is useful in that it allows the denotative meaning to more effectively obscure the connotative meaning, which flies in the face of common sense. And this allows “there are no monks; everyone is abjectly ordinary” to communicate its connotative meaning, which is the speaker's real intention, without making that connotation available to interrogation. It seems to me that Hōnen understands the connotative meaning perfectly well, and so is free not to take the denotative meaning literally, much like Shandao himself.

The eighteenth vow as a promise of birth for even the evil person too makes sense read connotatively, and not much sense read denotatively, as I have tried to show in the previous chapter. Nonetheless, Hōnen reads the eighteenth vow denotatively, and seems baffled by the difficulty others have had in simply taking it at face value:

²²⁹ Galen Amstutz, “The Politics of Independent Pure Land in China,” *Journal of Chinese Religions* 26 (1998): 28.

The following is...my own opinion; I believe that anyone who reads these words ought to cast aside the miscellaneous and take up the exclusive practice. Why should anyone cast aside the exclusive and right practice, by which a hundred out of a hundred attain birth, and stubbornly cling to the miscellaneous practices, by which not even one out of a thousand attain birth? Practitioners ought to seriously ponder this...²³⁰

Resuming this thread some time later, he continues,

from the first vow that there should exist none of the three evil realms to the last vow that one would attain the three kinds of intellectual receptivity of Dharma, each and every one of the vows has been fulfilled. Then is there any reason the eighteenth vow concerning birth through the *nenbutsu* should be the only one that has not been fulfilled? It follows then that all who practice *nenbutsu* will be born.²³¹

Hōnen's reading relies on an appeal to context—if you accept the other forty-seven vows as true, you should accept the forty-eighth—but he treats the content of the vow itself without the context in which it connotes a particular meaning. On Hōnen's interpretation, the eighteenth vow means exactly what it says without implying anything else about inferior practices or inferior practitioners. This allows Hōnen to assert the absolute efficacy of the eighteenth vow:

If the *nenbutsu samādhi* destroys even grievous sins, how much more will it destroy minor sins?...It extinguishes both the minor and the serious and cures everything completely. It is, for example, like the Agada medicine which cures all

²³⁰ *Senchakushū*, 71.

²³¹ *Senchakushū*, 79.

illnesses of any kind whatever. For this reason, the *nenbutsu* is the king of *samādhi*.²³²

[I]f this teaching is good for the period following the complete extinction of the Dharma, then it is even more appropriate for the age of the final Dharma. And, if it holds true for that age, then how much more so for the previous ages of the right Dharma and the semblance of the Dharma.²³³

These passages follow a logic very different from that of the Chinese patriarchs, concluding that whatever works for the worst situation must be appropriate to every situation. Unlike a connotative reading of the eighteenth vow then—which reinscribes the distinction between superior and inferior—Hōnen’s denotative reading brings to the surface the tension in the connotative reading (to wit, that vocal *nenbutsu* is the superior practice because it works even for inferior practitioners), and in bringing it to the surface, opens the possibility of resolving that tension by inverting the hierarchy of superior and inferior as it pertains to practitioners.

This potential for inversion informs Hōnen’s treatment of normative sociopolitical categories like wise and foolish, good and bad, and pure and impure, which treatment I would characterize as inconsistent. I think we can identify four different tacks taken by Hōnen:

- 1 Preserving the normative hierarchy, as when he suggests that if even the evil person can attain birth through the practice of vocal *nenbutsu*, how much more so can the good person rest assured that birth will be attained,²³⁴ or that

²³² *Senchakushū*, 123.

²³³ *Senchakushū*, 136.

²³⁴ See for example Harper Havelock Coates and Ishizuka Ryugaku, trans., *Hōnen, the Buddhist Saint; His Life and Teaching* (Kyoto: Chionin, 1925), 403.

one “is in harmony with the mind of Buddha who practises it by giving up his wickedness and becoming good”²³⁵;

- 2 Suggesting that the normative hierarchy obtains in this world but not in the Pure Land, as when he comments that “Amida does not hate a man, however deeply stained with sin he may be... Even though we be indeed unclean, we need not doubt the possibility of attaining *ōjō*”²³⁶;
- 3 Inverting the normative hierarchy, as when he characterizes the pursuit of the Pure Land path as “returning to ignorance” or counsels his disciples that “[i]f one becomes a learned man, there is danger of his losing the disposition to practise the *nenbutsu*”²³⁷;
- 4 Substituting his own hierarchy for the normative hierarchy, as when he proposes that one “ought surely to know that [reciting the *nenbutsu*] more than thirty thousand times belongs to the highest level of the superior class; fewer than thirty thousand times is practice ranking below the superior class,” making it “clear that classes and levels [of people] are distinguished in accord with the quantity of their *nenbutsu*,”²³⁸ or when he asserts that although in the Contemplation Sūtra, “when it speaks of the lowest rank of the middle class, it says nothing about Amida’s coming forth in welcome... the fact is that His coming in welcome applies to all the nine classes, and the mention of it is merely abbreviated.”²³⁹

²³⁵ Coates and Ishizuka, *Hōnen*, 397.

²³⁶ Coates and Ishizuka, *Hōnen*, 402.

²³⁷ Coates and Ishizuka, *Hōnen*, 397; see also *Senchakushū* 161 n.86.

²³⁸ *Senchakushū*, 90; translator’s interpolation.

²³⁹ Coates and Ishizuka, *Hōnen*, 452.

All but the first of these constitutes a critique of normative sociopolitical hierarchies and positions Amida's Pure Land as a space of difference, which permits practitioners of vocal *nenbutsu* to safely ignore or invert the hierarchies that sustain this world.

Some of the sociopolitical consequences of exclusive *nenbutsu* are explicitly articulated by Hōnen. He asserts that religious specialists are not required for reading the *sūtras* or presiding over the deathbed.²⁴⁰ He denies the worth of merit-making activities like building temples and *stūpas* or making donations to the Buddhist *sangha*, based on his understanding that if these activities decided one's birth, *ōjō* would be available only to the wealthy.²⁴¹ He claims that questions of purity and impurity should be of no concern to Buddhists, that the smell of meat on one's breath will not interfere with the practice of *nenbutsu*, and that it is fine to go along with the custom of drinking *sake*.²⁴² All of this constitutes a straightforward rejection of the extant sociopolitical structure, based on Hōnen's own sense that the utopia of the Pure Land has a stronger claim on reality than this world does—that is, he elects to accord with the laws that govern the imagined utopia rather than the laws that govern the state. The social space of Hōnen's practice school thus comes to represent a heterotopia. In 1204, the representatives of monastic Buddhism start to take notice of this heterotopia.²⁴³ And in 1205, the Hossō 法相 monk Jōkei 貞慶 (1155–1213) submits a petition to the court on behalf of the eight

²⁴⁰ See Coates and Ishizuka, *Hōnen*, 425.

²⁴¹ See *Senchakushū*, 77.

²⁴² See Coates and Ishizuka, *Hōnen*, 423 and 425.

²⁴³ In 1204, Enryakuji 延暦寺 submits a petition calling for a ban on exclusive *nenbutsu*, an event remembered by the Jōdoshū as the Genkyū Persecution (Genkyū no hōnan 元久の法難). Hōnen responds with the Seven-Article Pledge (Shichikajō kishōmon 七箇条起請文), which seems to represent an effort on Hōnen's part to rein in his followers and in so doing reconsolidate his school. The details of the pledge are provided in the English translation of the *Senchakushū*, 120–125.

established schools, calling for the disbanding of Hōnen's school and the banning of exclusive *nenbutsu*.²⁴⁴

Jōkei takes care to point out the specific ways in which exclusive *nenbutsu* is escaping the reach of the state and its centre of power in the capital: he notes in article one that even if Hōnen were “a man of ability and virtue”—comparable to Kūkai and Saichō 最澄 (767–822), and so fit to establish a new school—“it is only proper that he address the court and wait for the imperial permission to preach”²⁴⁵ and in article eight that Hōnen's movement “is popular in the capital and in nearby provinces; and it is said that as far as Hokuriku and the various provinces along the Eastern Sea (Tōkai) and other circuits, monks and nuns of the Single-practice movement successfully propagate these notions”²⁴⁶; in article nine he develops the capping argument that because exclusive *nenbutsu* is threatening the stability and harmony of the eight established schools, it will necessarily also prove to be a threat to the state:

The Buddha's Law and the Imperial Law are as body and mind: each should see to their mutual well-being, and then the welfare of the state will be assured. In these times the Pure Land movement has begun to arise and the activities of the Single-practice to flourish. But can we also say that these are times when the Imperial Power has been restored? Moreover, the three Teachings are about to be

²⁴⁴ This is referred to as the Kōfukuji petition (Kōfukuji sōjō 興福寺奏状). For more on Jōkei's relationship with Hōnen, in addition to the valuable essay by Robert Morrell, which includes a complete translation of the petition (“Jōkei and the Kōfukuji petition,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 10.1 (1983): 6-38), see James L. Ford, *Jōkei and Buddhist Devotion in Early Medieval Japan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), especially 159-184.

²⁴⁵ Morrell, “Jōkei and the Kōfukuji petition,” 22.

²⁴⁶ Morrell, “Jōkei and the Kōfukuji petition,” 33.

abandoned and the Eight Sects are declining. Time and again how the government of society is in disarray!²⁴⁷

Jōkei's yoking together of *buppō* 仏法 (Buddha's law) and *ōbō* 王法 (imperial law) in a relationship of mutual protection is typical of the period.²⁴⁸ What is striking is his invocation of *mappō*: that the Pure Land movement is flourishing without bringing about an attendant flourishing of *ōbō* is proof that it is not *buppō* but one of the false teachings of the degenerate age; in moving against this false teaching, the court will protect *buppō* and restore its own power. "The wish of the community of the World Honored One," Jōkei concludes with a flourish, "is that the waters of the Dharma gradually harmonize with the waves of the Sea of Emptiness, and that the subjugating power of the Kings of Wisdom (Myō-ō) may forever clear away the clouds of evil in the winds of the High Mountain (Yao)."²⁴⁹ Robert Morrell identifies Jōkei's use of *myō-ō* 明王 as "[p]robably an oblique reference to the Japanese monarch"²⁵⁰ and points to the images of the high mountain (*gyōshan* 堯山) and the sea of emptiness (*shunkai* 舜海) as meant to recall the Chinese rulers Yao—in Japanese, Gyō 堯—and Shun 舜,²⁵¹ such that the Japanese monarch is here invested with the power to reverse the degeneracy of the dharma and return the state to a golden age, functioning as both a wheel-turning monarch and a sage king. All of this, Jōkei hopes, can be accomplished with a ban on exclusive *nenbutsu*, and while he acknowledges that "such a policy would have the defect of [calling attention to

²⁴⁷ Morrell, "Jōkei and the Kōfukuji petition," 33-34.

²⁴⁸ Neil McMullin, *Buddhism and the State in Sixteenth-Century Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 23.

²⁴⁹ Morrell, "Jōkei and the Kōfukuji petition," 34-35.

²⁵⁰ Morrell, "Jōkei and the Kōfukuji petition," 35 n.69.

²⁵¹ Morrell, "Jōkei and the Kōfukuji petition," 34-35 n.68 and n.70.

the Single-practice] *nenbutsu*,” he concludes that “when the pros and cons of the matter are weighed, is an Imperial Proclamation not called for?”²⁵²

Jōkei is right to worry. In 1206, Hōnen’s practice school is disbanded, and exclusive *nenbutsu* is banned; four of Hōnen’s disciples are sentenced to death and seven others are exiled.²⁵³ Hōnen too is given a secular name and exiled to Tosa (present-day Kōchi), although through Kanezane’s intercession he is permitted to go instead to Sanuki (present-day Kagawa). He is released from exile at the end of 1207, and given permission to return to the capital in 1211; he dies in Kyōto in January of the following year. The exile has the effect of weakening Hōnen’s movement insofar as it isolates him from certain of his charismatic disciples who, separated from their teacher, further develop their own distinctive interpretations of his teachings, thus contributing to the fragmenting of the Jōdoshū 浄土宗. However, the exile also scatters Hōnen and these charismatic disciples across Honshū 本州 and down into Shikoku 四国. This has the effect—or defect—of spreading exclusive *nenbutsu* rather than suppressing it. According to some hagiographical accounts, Hōnen received his exile as a gift: he is said to have declared, “I have long wished to get away into the country to preach to those on field and plain, but the time never came for the fulfilment of my wish. Now, however, by the august favour of His Majesty, circumstances have combined to enable me to do so.”²⁵⁴ Whether this is apocryphal or not, it accurately describes one of the most significant results of the state’s intervention against exclusive *nenbutsu*, which was the creation of the conditions under which exclusive *nenbutsu* movements would expand in opposition to the state. The

²⁵² Morrell, “Jōkei and the Kōfukuji petition,” 30; translator’s interpolation.

²⁵³ These events are remembered as the Ken’ei Persecution (Ken’ei no hōnan 建永の法難).

²⁵⁴ Coates and Ishizuka, *Hōnen*, 601.

school that comes to thrive most vigorously under these conditions, and that ultimately comes to pose the most direct threat to the imperial state, is Shinran's Jōdo Shinshū.

Locating the Pure Land in Kamakura Japan: Shinran

Shinran is exiled to Echigo 越後 (in present-day Niigata 新潟), along the coast of the Japan Sea. Some accounts of his response to the exile suggest that, like the saintly Hōnen, Shinran too received his exile as a gift.²⁵⁵ Shinran's own description of the circumstances surrounding the exile do not seem to bear this out. In the postscript to his *Kyōgyōshinshō* 教行信証, he describes his exile as the result of "[t]he emperor and his ministers, acting against the dharma and violating human rectitude, [becoming] enraged and embittered."²⁵⁶ Nonetheless, the fact of his exile is bound up in two of the most significant aspects of Shinran's thought: his identification of himself as neither monk nor layperson and his assertion that the evil person is the true object of the vow.²⁵⁷ These two developments taken together speak to Shinran's consciousness of himself as the singular focus of Amida's vow, and will eventually come to serve as the foundation for the heterotopia of the fellowship of practitioners (*dōbōdōgyō* 同朋同行). In this section, we will consider the ways that Shinran's self-consciousness is shaped by the event of exile,

²⁵⁵ Kiyozawa Manshi, for example, writes that "Shinran Shōnin courageously went into exile with a feeling of gratitude, believing that exile was a favor granted him by his master's teaching"; see "Peace beyond ethics," trans. Esben Andreasen, in *Popular Buddhism in Japan: Shin Buddhist Religion and Culture* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998), 43.

²⁵⁶ *Kyōgyōshinshō* VI.117 (SS 471).

²⁵⁷ Galen Amstutz identifies "three conceptual clusters" in Shinran's thought: "enlightenment as *ekō* ('turning of merit'), the idea of Buddhist practice as *akunin shōki* (the ignorant person is the object) awareness, and the institutional transcendence of the lay-monk polarity in the *hisō hizoku* (neither monk nor lay) principle"; see Galen Amstutz, *Interpreting Amida: History and Orientalism in the Study of Pure Land Buddhism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 10. Amstutz describes the importance of the exile in terms of its causing Shinran to be exposed "to the rising energies of the provinces, and turn[ing] his attention completely away from the social and political network of conventional Buddhism around the capital" (9).

as we make our way back to Maeda's discussion of what it means to be liberated from the values of the centre.

Hisō Hizoku

For the purposes of exile, Shinran is given the secular name Fujii Yoshizane 藤井善信, but he does not use it: in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, he comments that he was among those followers of Hōnen “dispossessed of their monkhood, given [secular] names, and consigned to distant banishment....Hence I am now neither a monk nor one in worldly life (僧にあらず俗にあらず). For this reason, I have taken the term Toku as my name.”²⁵⁸ We find the same account in the postscript to the *Tannishō* 歎異抄—“Shinran was deprived of his status as a priest and given a secular name. Hence he was neither monk nor layman. Because of this, he took as his own surname the word Toku....After his exile, he signed his name Gutoku Shinran.”²⁵⁹ The choice of Toku 禿, or bald, as a name suggests that Shinran is a monk—*tokunin* 禿人, *tokukoji* 禿居士, and *tokunu* 禿奴 are all used to refer to monastics—but has a pejorative tone²⁶⁰; this is amplified by the addition of Gu 愚, foolish or ignorant. So the name Gutoku is a refusal of lay status, inasmuch as it is a refusal of the secular name and an assertion of Shinran's monastic identity, but it also proclaims that Shinran is a *bad* monk. Shinran seems to link his selection of the name Gutoku to his status as *hisō hizoku*. How are these related to each other?

²⁵⁸ *Kyōgyōshinshō* VI.117 (SS 472).

²⁵⁹ *Tannishō* (SS 856).

²⁶⁰ See eg. Soothill: 一禿乘, “A bald-pated ‘vehicle’—an unproductive monk or disciple”; 禿人, 禿居士, 禿奴, “A monk; a nun, sometimes used as a term of abuse.”

The meaning of Shinran's having declared himself *hisō hizoku* can be understood in a number of ways. In one sense, *hisō hizoku* just describes the political and legal realities of Shinran's situation. The state had stripped Shinran of his status as a monk, so he really was *hisō*; at the same time, continuing to wear his robes and shave his head, and without an occupation, he really was *hizoku*. Usually though, *hisō hizoku* is taken to indicate some additional layer of doctrinal meaning. Some interpreters suggest that it points to Shinran's marriage. Kenneth Doo Young Lee, making a case for Shinran having married not long after leaving the capital, comments that "the phrase 'I am therefore neither monk nor layman' ... written about the fact of his exile, has the feeling of having been composed by a married person."²⁶¹ James Dobbins suggests that, along with the adoption of the name of Gutoku, Shinran's characterization of himself reflects "his repudiation of the lay-clergy division," specifically with respect to its prohibition of clerical marriage.²⁶² Shinran had "the religious aspirations of a priest," Dobbins writes, "but at the same time lived amid the passions and desires of a layman. In short, he saw the two as compatible rather than at odds. If there was a new message in this for Japanese Buddhism, it was that family attachments are not an impediment to highest realization, as Śākyamuni's celibacy would indicate; on the contrary, they nurture and promote such a realization."²⁶³ Richard Jaffe also interprets *hisō hizoku* as referring to Shinran's "renouncing his monastic vows" and marrying Eshinni, but his reading differs slightly from Dobbins'—Jaffe follows Hirata Atsushi's understanding of *hisō hizoku* not as an

²⁶¹ Kenneth Doo Young Lee, *The Prince and the Monk: Shōtoku Worship in Shinran's Buddhism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007), 166 n.30.

²⁶² James Dobbins, *Jōdo Shinshū: Shin Buddhism in Medieval Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), 52.

²⁶³ James Dobbins, *Letters of the Nun Eshinni: Images of Pure Land Buddhism in Medieval Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), 90.

expression of the compatibility of priestly aspirations and married life, but as an expression of the failure of Shinran's priestly aspirations: "Shinran's marriage and abandonment of his vows was a profound acknowledgement of his frailty and inability to practice."²⁶⁴

Other interpreters understand *hisō hizoku* as expressing a rejection of the dichotomy of monk and lay meant to function as a critique of the monastic establishment, and by extension of institutional Buddhism. Amstutz argues that in identifying himself as *hisō hizoku*, Shinran is rejecting the "semantic field" of the monastic institution—asceticism on the one hand and guru-disciple relationships on the other—and "the use of Buddhism as an instrument of political control over the people."²⁶⁵ This has the effect, he intimates, of producing a further rejection of magic, thaumaturgy, and distinctions between purity and pollution that lead to the oppression of women and those identified as *eta* 穢多.²⁶⁶ In "The borderline between Buddhism and psychotherapy," Mark Unno also reads *hisō hizoku* as expressing Shinran's willful abandonment of the centres of state and monastic power: "he proclaimed himself 'neither monk nor layman,' a renegade priest who openly married, refused to take up residence in a temple, renounced personal ambition in both the lay and ecclesiastical realms, and lived outside the usual boundaries of society"²⁶⁷; Unno characterizes this attitude as undergirding a "spiritual

²⁶⁴ Richard M. Jaffe, *Neither Monk Nor Layman: Clerical Marriage in Modern Japanese Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 51.

²⁶⁵ Amstutz, *Interpreting Amida*, 12.

²⁶⁶ Amstutz, *Interpreting Amida*, 12.

²⁶⁷ Mark Unno, "The Borderline between Buddhism and Psychotherapy," in *Buddhism and Psychotherapy Across Cultures: Essays on Theories and Practices*, ed. Mark Unno (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2006), 147-148. See also "The Nembutsu of No-Meaning and the Problem of Genres in Writings and Statements of Gutoku Shinran," in which Unno refers to the choice of the name Gutoku as on one level a "declaration of independence from the strictures of convention"; <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~munno/OregonCourses/REL444S05/IASBS6B.htm> (last accessed April 29, 2009).

egalitarianism” within the Shinshū community.²⁶⁸ As we will see, an understanding of *hisō hizoku* as expressing a disavowal of hierarchy, and a concomitant concern for those at the bottom of existing hierarchies, has considerable currency in sectarian thought as well.

Still another approach draws back from statements about political or social structures and interprets *hisō hizoku* as a statement about the two truths (*shinzoku nitai* 真俗二諦). Here *sō* represents the ultimate truth; to be neither *sō* nor *zoku* means, on this reading, to have realized the nonduality of ultimate and conventional. As Minor Rogers and Ann Rogers put it, “Shinran’s declaration that he is ‘neither a monk nor one in worldly life’ symbolizes his experience of self-negation that brings about, naturally, a realization of the underlying unity of the transcendent and the mundane, unbifurcated.”²⁶⁹ Dake Mitsuya offers another iteration of this reading—*hisō hizoku* “arises from the reality of living thoroughly within the ultimate world, while being in the very midst of the secular world. Thus being ‘neither a monk nor one in worldly life’ is to live a life in which the ultimate and the secular arise in tension, within the midst of the actual world.”²⁷⁰ Yoshifumi Ueda and Dennis Hirota suggest that *hisō hizoku* describes seclusion within the world, drawing on the indication in Kakunyo’s 覚如 (1270–1351) *Gaijashō* 改邪抄 that in “the use of this name [Gutoku] is expressed the dimension of his being neither a monastic nor a layman, as was the case with Kyōshin Shami,”²⁷¹ to propose that Shinran might be viewed as, like Kyōshin 教信, one of a number of

²⁶⁸ Unno, “The Borderline between Buddhism and Psychotherapy,” 148.

²⁶⁹ Minor Rogers and Ann Rogers, *Rennyō: The Second Founder of Shin Buddhism* (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1991), 333.

²⁷⁰ Dake Mitsuya, “Shin Buddhist Studies and Secularization,” *Pacific World* 8 (1992): 38.

²⁷¹ Cited in Alfred Bloom and Ruben Habito, *The Essential Shinran: A Buddhist Path of True Entrusting*, trans. Wayne Yokoyama (Bloomington: World Wisdom, 2007), 31.

“virtuous monks who chose to abandon their status in the ecclesiastical centers and retire to lives of seclusion, ridding themselves of attachments by concealing their accomplishments.”²⁷² On this view, Shinran appears not so much as a social reformer as a Japanese Vimalakīrti: “In exile...stripped of his priestly status, he was brought even further to ‘return to the original body of his own naked self.’”²⁷³

Kondo Tesshō too describes Shinran in this way, saying that being neither monk nor layperson is a status “completely different from an indeterminate one of ‘half-monk and half-lay.’ It is a status of monk far more thoroughgoing than that of the ordinary monk, and at the same time it is thoroughly secular, living in the world but standing on the non-secular that runs through the depths of the secular.”²⁷⁴ This ability to be at once thoroughly a monk and thoroughly a layperson is proof, Kondo says, of Shinran’s “superior nature,” in contrast to a practitioner like Ippen, of “inferior nature,” who has to abandon everything²⁷⁵—in light of Shinran’s own emphasis on the evil person, of course, this looks more like a way to praise Ippen than to honour Shinran. Unno, on another occasion, has suggested a reading that seems more in keeping with the emotional register of Shinshū, interpreting *hisō hizoku* as Shinran’s confession that he is not good enough to be a monk, nor is he good enough to be a layperson.²⁷⁶ I want to pursue the implications

²⁷² Ueda Yoshifumi and Dennis Hirota, *Shinran: An Introduction to His Thought* (Kyoto: Hongwanji International Center, 1989), 31.

²⁷³ Ueda and Hirota, *Shinran*, 35; citing Nishida Kitarō, “Gutoku Shinran,” trans. Dennis Hirota, *Eastern Buddhist* 28.2 (1995): 243. The passage from Nishida reads: “Every person, no matter who he is, must return to the original body of his own naked self; he must once let go from the cliff’s ledge and come back to life after perishing, or he cannot know them. In other words, only the person who has been able to experience deeply what it is to be ‘foolish/stubble-haired’ can know wisdom and virtue. I wonder if Shinran’s Gutoku is not ‘foolish/ stubble-haired’ with this meaning.”

²⁷⁴ Kondo Tesshō, “The Religious Experience of Ippen,” trans. Dennis Hirota, *Eastern Buddhist* 12.2 (1979): 97-98.

²⁷⁵ Kondo, “The Religious Experience of Ippen,” 97.

²⁷⁶ Mark Unno, respondent, “Intellectual and Pedagogic Reflections on *The Collected Works of Shinran*,” American Academy of Religion, Boston, 1999. This resonates with what Unno refers to in “The Nembutsu

of Unno's interpretation here, taking it as pointing to a third term beyond the two possibilities of monk and lay.²⁷⁷

On the face of it, monk and lay constitute the sum total of possibilities available to members of the Buddhist community. But Buddhism does develop a third term to indicate persons who can be neither monks nor laypeople: the *bonbu*. Some of the interpretations of *hisō hizoku* discussed above touch on Shinran's identification of himself as *bonbu*—incapable of practice. I think this point can be fruitfully developed if we think about it in relation to his exile. Shinran draws one causal link between the emperor and his ministers acting against the dharma and his status as neither monk nor layperson, and then another causal link between that status and his selection of the name Toku. The fact that the emperor and his ministers are acting against the dharma points to the reality of *mappō*—so using the same conceptual scheme as Jōkei but arriving at a different conclusion, Shinran interprets the ban on exclusive *nenbutsu* and his own exile as a sign of disjunction between *ōbō* and *buppō*. As a result of that disjunction, Shinran himself ends up as neither monk nor layperson. But given that said disjunction attests to the reality of *mappō*, Shinran must already have been a *bonbu*, that is to say, already neither monk nor layperson. The selection of the name Gutoku expresses this situation—quite unlike Kyōshin (who looked like a layperson but was in fact like a monk), someone

of No-Meaning” as what the name Gutoku expresses at “the deepest level”: “his awareness of living in the embrace of great compassion just as he is, a foolish being with blind passion, a ‘bald-headed fool.’”

²⁷⁷ We might also frame this discussion spatially in terms of reclusion and non-reclusion. William Lafleur, following Richard Mather and James D. Whitehead, comments that the image of Vimalakīrti functions to “internalize” the act of leaving home, such that it is possible to stay home and go into reclusion; see Lafleur, *The Karma of Words*, 111. Michael Marra suggests that Shinran, following a path opened by Kamo no Chōmei, challenges “the very notion of reclusion by questioning its validity in a world where nothing, not even a secluded existence free of worldly attachments, could escape the law of change and impermanence”; see Michele Marra, *The Aesthetics of Discontent: Politics and Reclusion in Medieval Japanese Literature* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1991): 91-93. (Note that this is quite different from Lafleur's reading of Chōmei as having “returned to eremitic life...for very subtle reasons and with an understanding that is deeply grounded in the basic direction of Mahāyāna thought”; see Lafleur, *The Karma of Words*, 115.)

who is a *gutoku* only preserves the outward appearance of monasticism—he or she has the shaven head of a monastic but the heart of a fool. These are exactly the kinds of monks who appear during *mappō*: monks in name only (*samjñā bhikṣu*, *mingzi biqiu*, *myōji biku* 名字比丘). This disjunction between appearance and reality is a regular motif in Shinran’s writings²⁷⁸ where it appears as the distinctive feature of *mappō*. Rather than describing a situation in which one appears to be a monk but is truly a layperson, it seems to me we should understand this as describing a situation in which the false appearance of monastics points to the falsity of both monk and lay—everybody, without exception, must be abjectly ordinary. *Hisō hizoku* thus describes both the immediate historical situation—Shinran’s exile from the capital—and the larger historical situation, in which everyone is an exile, born outside of the path. So I would propose that we read Gutoku as pointing to Shinran’s status as abject.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁸ He confesses in the *Gutokushō* 愚禿抄 that “The *shinjin* of the wise is such that they are inwardly wise, outwardly foolish. The heart of Gutoku is such that I am inwardly foolish, outwardly wise” (*Gutokushō* 63 (SS 516)). In the *Shōzōmatsu wasan* 正像末和讃, he extends this criticism to everyone else: “Each of us, in outward bearing, / Makes a show of being wise, good, and dedicated; / But so great are our greed, anger, perversity, and deceit, / That we are filled with all forms of malice and cunning” (*Shōzōmatsu wasan* 95 (SS 617)), and, “All monks and laypeople of this age / Behave outwardly like followers of the Buddhist teaching, / But in their inner thoughts, believe in nonbuddhist paths” (*Shōzōmatsu wasan* 100 (SS 618))—and in the *Yuishinshō mon’i* 唯信抄文意: “[T]his world is called the defiled world of the corrupt dharma. All beings lack a true and sincere heart, mock teachers and elders, disrespect their parents, distrust their companions, and favor only evil; hence it is taught that everyone, both in the secular and religious worlds, is possessed of ‘Heart and tongue at odds,’ and ‘words and thoughts both insincere.’ . . . Hence, know that we are not good persons, nor persons of wisdom; that we have no diligence, but only indolence, and within, the heart is ever empty, deceptive, vainglorious, and flattering” (*Yuishinshō mon’i* 6 (SS 715)).

²⁷⁹ This strategy of self-identification is not unique to Shinran. Ryūichi Abé notes the Myōe too positioned himself as an outcast or *hinin*: “because Myōe was the *hinin* priest”—as a result of having disfigured himself by cutting off his ear—“and thus . . . simultaneously tainted and immune from pollutions, he was able to extend salvation to these beings”; see “Swords, Words, and Deformity,” in *Discourse and Ideology in Medieval Japanese Buddhism*, ed. Richard K. Payne and Taigen Dan Leighton (London: Routledge, 2006), 156.

Akunin Shōki

On this reading, *hisō hizoku* is a comment on Shinran's understanding of his age and of the religious capacities of persons living during that age. This allows us to tie together *hisō hizoku* and *akunin shōki*, two of Amstutz's conceptual clusters. The idea that the evil person is the true aim (*ki* 機) of the vow—or, understood from the standpoint of the evil person, that it is the evil person who really has the capacity (*ki* 機) to receive the working of the vow—is given its most concise expression in the famous passage from the *Tannishō* which declares that if even the good person can be born in the Pure Land, how much more so can the evil person anticipate such a birth. If we think of the status of *akunin* as pointing to the situation of *mappō*, we can take *akunin shōki* as pointing to what Blum calls the impossibility of living “with *mappō* as it is—its message of despair demands a creative response, an accommodation of one sort or another,” which is why, he argues, “those most impacted by the historical implications of *mappō* in the Kamakura period—Shinran and Nichiren—become ennobled by it.”²⁸⁰

Still, the meaning of *akunin shōki* is ambiguous. Sometimes the Shinran of the *Tannishō* seems to say that no distinctions obtain—“the Primal Vow of Amida makes no distinction between people young and old, good and evil; only *shinjin* 信心 is essential”²⁸¹—and that the Pure Land path is defined by nondiscrimination: “The *nenbutsu* is the single path free of hindrance (*muge* 無碍)...No evil act can bring about karmic results, nor can any good act equal the *nenbutsu*”²⁸²; “This is the way of easy

²⁸⁰ Mark L. Blum, “The Sangoku-Mappō Construct: Buddhism, Nationalism, and History in Medieval Japan,” in *Discourse and Ideology in Medieval Japanese Buddhism*, ed. Richard K. Payne and Taigen Dan Leighton (London: Routledge, 2006), 49.

²⁸¹ *Tannishō* 1 (SS 831).

²⁸² *Tannishō* 7 (SS 836).

practice...it is the teaching that makes no distinction between the good and the evil.”²⁸³

At other times, he seems to say that the evil person is the exclusive object of the vow—“it is the Vow to save the person whose karmic evil is deep and grave (*zaiaku shinjū* 罪惡深重) and whose blind passions abound (*bonnō shijō* 煩惱熾盛).”²⁸⁴ If the “essential intent” of the Vow “is the evil person’s attainment of Buddhahood,” making “evil persons who entrust themselves to Other Power...precisely the ones who possess the true cause of birth (往生の正因),”²⁸⁵ then the vow must in fact make a distinction between the good and the evil. And so too must Shinran, which indeed he is said to have done—“people who rely on doing good through their self-power fail to entrust themselves wholeheartedly to Other Power and therefore [are] not in accord with Amida’s Primal Vow.”²⁸⁶

There are three different moves we might make to manage this ambiguity. One would be to emphasize the equality of all practitioners, by taking *akunin shōki* as connoting nondiscrimination. This approach supports a quite conventional normative ethics. Another would be to emphasize the *akunin* as the exclusive focus of the vow, by taking nondiscrimination as connoting *akunin shōki*. This approach inverts the normative hierarchy, producing a situation of carnival; it has robust critical possibilities, as suggested by Fabio Rambelli, but may also be understood, from a normative point of view, as fomenting antinomianism or the heresy of licensed evil (*zōaku muge* 造惡無

²⁸³ *Tannishō* 15 (SS 847).

²⁸⁴ *Tannishō* 1 (SS 831).

²⁸⁵ *Tannishō* 3 (SS 834).

²⁸⁶ *Tannishō* 3 (SS 833).

碍).²⁸⁷ Shinran himself is remembered as warning against mistaking connotation for denotation, instructing his followers that they ought not “take a liking to poison just because there is an antidote.”²⁸⁸ And a third approach would be to understand the *aku* in *akunin shōki* as referring to something other than the relative evil of good and evil—this *aku* would be an absolute evil of which good and evil alike are guilty, making it a natural match for the absolute good of a vow that likewise does not discriminate between good and evil. This approach brings the evil person into focus as lacking the capacity to do either relative good or relative evil. The *akunin* of *akunin shōki* points to a third possibility, just as *hisō hizoku* points to a third possibility—*akunin* and *bonbu* are here parallel terms, indicating a position outside the normative duality of good and evil, monk and lay.²⁸⁹

It is from this position that Shinran conceives the Pure Land as a utopia, and arguably this position itself that becomes the Shinshū heterotopia. As an exile/*bonbu/akunin*, Shinran is in some sense—like Maeda’s prisoners and madmen—liberated from the values of the centre, from the established order, and from status

²⁸⁷ Rambelli’s superb essay “Just Behave As You Like” draws on the work of Satō Hirō in order to draw out the political significance of heresy. Rambelli writes, “Evil was by definition the refusal to accept the moral codes and social norms imposed by the *kenmitsu* institutions that formed the basis of their control of vast land holdings. As Satō Hiroo explains, the more one follows dominant moral precepts, the more one is subjugated by the system; the only way out is to refuse the system, and the easiest way to do it is to reverse and negate its principles in carnivalistic and grotesque terms”; see “‘Just Behave As You Like; Prohibitions and Impurities Are Not a Problem’: Radical Amida Cults and Popular Religiosity in Premodern Japan,” in *Approaching the Land of Bliss: Religious Praxis in the Cult of Amitābha*, ed. Richard K. Payne and Kenneth K. Tanaka (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2004), 77.

²⁸⁸ *Tannishō* 13 (SS 843).

²⁸⁹ Janet Gyatso argues that third terms have a paradoxical double function: the third term may arise inevitably out of a binary system which “calls out for a third rubric—to fill out the space in between the first two, a space that serves precisely to signal the danger of confusion and the need to patrol ever more vigilantly the borders,” but it also works “to subvert the very ‘order’ that created it, writing slippage itself eternally into the system”; see Gyatso, “One Plus One Makes Three,” 114. This seems to me to point directly to the third term as describing the identity of the abject. Gyatso also suggests that “it was the very creation of an other to that other other”—the Buddhist woman—“that allowed the original other in through the door of ordination at all” (114). She characterizes this as a scapegoating of the *pandaka*, but it seems to me possible to describe it also as the abjection that allows women to claim subjectivity, however tenuous.

consciousness. Out of this liberation comes Shinran's understanding of himself as chosen (*Shinran hitori ga tame*), but that joyful revelation is experienced not alongside the pain of abjection from the centre but *as* the pain of abjection from the centre:

I know truly how grievous it is that I, Gutoku Shinran, am sinking in an immense ocean of desires and attachments and am lost in vast mountains of fame and advantage, so that I rejoice not at all at entering the stage of the truly settled (*jōshu* 定聚), and feel no happiness at coming nearer the realization of true enlightenment. How ugly it is! How wretched!²⁹⁰

When I reflect deeply on it, by the very fact that I do not rejoice at what should fill me with such joy that I dance in the air and dance on the earth, I realize all the more that my birth is completely settled. What suppresses the heart that should rejoice and keeps one from rejoicing is the action of blind passions. Nevertheless, the Buddha, knowing this beforehand, called us “foolish beings possessed of blind passions” (煩惱具足の凡夫); thus, becoming aware that the compassionate Vow of Other Power is indeed for the sake of ourselves, who are such beings, we find it all the more trustworthy.²⁹¹

Shinran here transforms his defeat into what Maeda calls conviction of future victory²⁹²—*ōjō*—and that conviction allows him to articulate a counter-history or antiworld with respect to the present as well: “the heart of the person of *shinjin* already and always resides in the Pure Land. ‘Resides’ means that the heart of the person of *shinjin* constantly dwells there. This is to say that such a person is the same as Maitreya. Since being of the stage equal to enlightenment is being the same as Maitreya, the person

²⁹⁰ *Kyōgyōshinshō* III.113 (SS 264).

²⁹¹ *Tannishō* 9 (SS 836-837).

²⁹² Maeda, “Utopia of the Prisonhouse,” 30.

of *shinjin* is equal to the Tathāgatas.” In this way exile becomes a prescription for *shinjin*.²⁹³

The person of *shinjin* must, on Shinran’s understanding, understand himself or herself as *bonbu*, that is, absolutely incapable of bringing self-power to bear in order to effect his or her own salvation. The experience of *shinjin* is inextricably bound up with realization of oneself as the evil person totally reliant upon Other-power. If the person of *shinjin* is equal to the Tathāgata, this imbricates a fourth term into the set of identities we have already considered: exile/*bonbu*/*akunin*/Tathāgata.²⁹⁴ The evil person, selected for utopia, becomes at the moment of *shinjin*—like what Maeda calls “becoming self-aware of their borderline status”²⁹⁵—the site of a heterotopia, insofar as that person of *shinjin* must be thought to reside already and always in the future utopia. This is described as the joy of attaining the rank of the truly settled (*shōjōju* 正定聚) equal to all the Tathāgatas, no longer wandering “in the darkness of birth-and-death (*shōji no yami* 生死の闇),”²⁹⁶ “itself the land of Amida (*mida no kuni* 弥陀の国)” which is “un arisen...true reality.”²⁹⁷ In other words, this is the irruption of nirvana within samsara, or the transcendent within the immanent.

The goal of Shinran’s descendants is to realize the same *shinjin* as did Shinran. This means they inherit from Shinran several principles that would seem on the face of it to be antithetical to the organization of an institution: the rejection of the categories of

²⁹³ *Shinran Shōnin goshōsoku* 親鸞聖人御消息 11 (SS 759).

²⁹⁴ Gyatso notes a similar elision of pariah and bodhisattva occurring in the development of the figure of the *pandaka*, taken to be an exemplar of inclusiveness and so of nonduality—“the same third sex that was defined as the excluded one could be turned on its head to subvert the very notion of excludability altogether”; Gyatso, “One Plus One Makes Three,” 104.

²⁹⁵ Maeda, “Utopia of the Prisonhouse,” 30.

²⁹⁶ *Songō shinzō meimon* 尊号真像銘文 14 (SS 664).

²⁹⁷ *Kyōgyōshinshō* V.34 (SS 369); quoting Shandao’s *Fashizan* 法事讚.

monk and lay, which constitute the two poles of the Buddhist *sangha*; the deployment of a carnivalesque inversion that easily slips into heresy; and the founder's understanding of himself as singularly evil, or the sole recipient of the working of the vow. We can add to this set of complications Shinran's assertion that he has no disciples, and no interest in acquiring any. The task of building a community of followers around these principles is taken up by Rennyo, who enacts Shinran's Pure Land as the social space of the *dōbōdōgyō*.

Locating the Pure Land in the Sengoku Jidai: Rennyo's Fellowship of Practitioners

In his seminal study of the spaces of difference that sprang up during the Sengoku period, Amino Yoshihiko compiles a list of the distinctive features of such spaces, based on his reading of primary source documents that describe the social and material relations that were observed and enforced within them.²⁹⁸ If one society were to have all these features, he writes,

it would be an astonishingly ideal world, with rules forbidding secular authorities from intruding into one's space, an exemption from taxes and duties, the guarantee of free passage, and the freedom from private bondage and from obligations of borrowing and lending. There, people would live peacefully in a

²⁹⁸ He identifies three umbrella terms that circulated in reference to such spaces: *muen* 無縁, *kugai* 苦界, and *raku* 楽. Commenting on the Buddhist roots of each of these terms, Amino writes, that these "Buddhist terms, which seem to have welled up from the depths of the everyday lives of the Japanese, expressing a fundamental desire for the ideals of liberty, equality and peace, also show how Buddhism has become popularized in Japan and been made into something distinctly Japanese"; see Amino, "Medieval Japanese Constructions of Peace and Liberty," 12. For our purposes here of course the term *raku* is of special interest—by the seventeenth century, Amino suggests, it "was used widely and consciously to signify the realization of the ideal world [*risō seken* 理想世間] to which people aspired"; see Amino, MKR, 82; Johnston, "Medieval Japanese Constructions of Peace and Liberty," 11. For a review of Amino's historiography, see William Johnston, "From Feudal Fishing Villagers to an Archipelago's Peoples: The Historiographical Journey of Amino Yoshihiko," Harvard University, Edwin O. Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies, Occasional Papers in Japanese Studies, 2005-01.

state of mutual equality [相互に平等], outside the conflicts and wars of the secular world. This would indeed be a utopian community [*risōkyō* 理想郷].²⁹⁹

Amino does not argue that the medieval Japanese iterations of freedom, equality, and peace were identical to those of the contemporary world, or that they were somehow prototypes for or rudimentary versions of contemporary values. He does not, in other words, present contemporary values as unassailable universals that necessarily surface transhistorically and translocally, everywhere and always the same. On the contrary, he gives us a picture of values embedded in social structures that are contingent and mutable. Amino's genealogy of *muen*, *kugai*, and *raku* spaces reveals the heterogeneity of the social structures that developed in medieval Japan. It might also open up a new way of assessing Rennyo's project of restoring Shinran's lineage as one of these heterogeneous social structures. In this section, I will pursue an interpretation of Rennyo's *dōbōdōgyō* as defined by some of the features that characterize Amino's *muen*, *kugai*, and *raku*: mutual equality within the context of a society organized around principles of seniority (老若の組織),³⁰⁰ refusal of private ownership (*mushoyū* 無所有),³⁰¹ and the establishment of a peaceful territory (*heiwa ryōiki* 平和領域) or a peaceful community (「平和」な集団).³⁰²

Dōbōdōgyō is the subject of Rennyo's first pastoral letter (*ofumi* 御文), and the organizing principle of his community. *Dōbō* refers to a group of friends or fellows.

Dōgyō literally means "same practice"; Stanley Weinstein translates it as

²⁹⁹ Amino, MKR, 81-82; Johnston, "Medieval Japanese Constructions of Peace and Liberty," 10. Johnston cuts off the last part of this line, in which Amino comments that if we were to give this notion of utopia, or *risōkyō* a "Chinese flavour," we might call it Tōgenkyō 桃源郷, the peach-blossom spring.

³⁰⁰ Amino, MKR, 81; Johnston, "Medieval Japanese Constructions of Peace and Liberty," 9-10.

³⁰¹ Amino, MKR, 80; Johnston, "Medieval Japanese Constructions of Peace and Liberty," 7-8.

³⁰² Amino, MKR, 77; Johnston, "Medieval Japanese Constructions of Peace and Liberty," 6.

“companions.”³⁰³ Rennyo explains in his letter that Shinran’s school is properly understood as a group of followers (*monto* 門徒) rather than disciples (*deshi* 弟子): “we,” he writes, “are one another’s companions and fellow practitioners. Because of this, the master [Shinran] spoke respectfully of ‘companions and fellow practitioners’ (御同朋・御同行).”³⁰⁴ Shinran’s school was, during Rennyo’s time, referred to as the Ikkōshū 一向宗, the Single-Minded School. Rennyo himself preferred the term Montoshū 門徒宗. *Dōbōdōgyō* is Rennyo’s scheme for organizing the *monto* into a *shū* under the banner of *hisō hizoku*.

The letter revolves around two questions about authority: first, whether *monto* should properly be considered disciples of their local priests or of Shinran himself, and second, whether priests in a given area need to be made aware of the formation of small groups made up of ordinary *monto* from different places. The two possibilities looming behind these question are first that local priests will amass groups of loyal disciples and so develop regional power bases, and second that ordinary *monto* will develop translocal affiliations or attachments on the basis of shared religious belief. The first of these possibilities is a threat to Rennyo’s Honganji. And the second of these possibilities directly undercuts the first by creating networks of *monto* that cut across local and regional affiliations and take Honganji as an imaginal centre. Rennyo’s letter pushes against the priests identifying themselves as teachers and for the establishment of study groups by asserting that because Shinran did not view himself as a teacher with disciples, it would be inappropriate for any member of the Montoshū to identify as either a disciple

³⁰³ Stanley Weinstein, “Rennyo and the Shinshū Revival,” in *Japan in the Muromachi Age*, ed. John Whitney Hall and Toyoda Takeshi (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 352.

³⁰⁴ *Ofumi* (or *Gobunshō*) 御文章 I.1 (SS 1084); Rogers and Rogers, *Rennyo*,

or a teacher—ritual specialists and ordinary *monto* alike are simply enjoined to study the true meaning of Faith (信心の一理).³⁰⁵ When priests assert their authority and prevent ordinary *monto* from going “to places where faith is discussed,” Rennyo says, the dissension that results leads only to a situation in which “faith is not decisively settled either for them or for the disciples, and their lives then pass in vain (*jisonsonota* 自損損他).”³⁰⁶ This neatly undermines efforts to consolidate power at the local level, and supports the cultivation of a translocal, orthodox understanding of “the true meaning of Faith” under the auspices of Honganji. So we have to acknowledge that one of the results of this is to consolidate power within Honganji. The question is whether Honganji thus becomes a site on which the extant feudal hierarchy is just reinscribed.

For reasons that I think will become clear in the next chapter, Rennyo’s organizing efforts have been viewed with some suspicion by scholars both inside and outside the contemporary Shinshū institution. Pierre Souyri writes that Rennyo and his descendants “depended on the hierarchical structures that had transformed them into a new religious aristocracy,” that Rennyo realized as his community grew in size and strength that “he could become ‘pope’,” and that in his later years, “Rennyo behaved like a lord.”³⁰⁷ Alfred Bloom, although absolutely more sympathetic to Rennyo than Souyri, nonetheless pins on Rennyo the transformation of Honganji into “a firmly structured, virtually authoritarian movement which subordinated the individual to the group.”³⁰⁸

Ruben Habito too allows that in the process of interpreting Shinran’s thought in ways that

³⁰⁵ *Ofumi* I.1 (SS 1084); Rogers and Rogers, *Rennyo*, 143.

³⁰⁶ *Ofumi* I.1 (SS 1084); Rogers and Rogers, *Rennyo*, 143.

³⁰⁷ Pierre Souyri, *The World Turned Upside Down: Medieval Japanese Society*, trans. Käthe Roth (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 194.

³⁰⁸ Alfred Bloom, “Shin Buddhism in Modern Culture,” <http://www.shindharmanet.com/course/> (last accessed April 13, 2009).

would speak to the exigencies of the Sengoku period, Rennyo ended up “consolidating the Honganji community into a highly organized and hierarchical structure.”³⁰⁹ But looking at Rennyo’s Honganji in light of Amino’s observations of other Sengoku-period spaces may prompt a different understanding of Rennyo’s project.

While it is true that the appeal to *dōbōdōgyō* allows Rennyo to generate a powerful network of followers in the provinces without amassing any territorial holdings, and achieve his goal of repositioning Honganji as the real holder of Shinran’s lineage, it also speaks to a powerful religious logic.³¹⁰ Following Shinran, Rennyo holds that from the standpoint of faith “no distinction at all is made between male and female, old and young” within the company of those for whom the matter of faith is decisively settled (信心を決定せしむる).³¹¹ Having realized a settled faith (*anjin* 安心), one immediately joins Amida’s assembly, or the ranks of the truly settled (*shōjōju*) and no matter how lowly one’s occupation, participates in “the Tathāgata’s saving work (如来の御たすけにあづかるものなり).”³¹² These two characteristics of Amida’s land—gathering in assembly and nondiscrimination—seem to me to shape the social units of the Montoshū. Rennyo moves sharply against the reproduction of worldly hierarchies within these social units. In a letter from 1473, he castigates the leader of an assembly at Chōshōji 超勝寺,

³⁰⁹ Ruben L. F. Habito, “Primal Vow and Its Contextualization: Rennyo’s Legacy, and Some Tasks of Our Times,” in *Rennyo and the Roots of Modern Japanese Buddhism*, ed. Mark L. Blum and Yasutomi Shin’ya (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 219.

³¹⁰ In his dissertation, Amstutz cuts through the disciplinary debates around whether Rennyo is best understood as a political leader or a religious leader, writing decisively that the “only way to deal properly with Honganji, starting with the pivotal sixteenth century, is to address religion and politics simultaneously, for Honganji tradition was both one hundred percent Mahāyāna Buddhism and one hundred percent late medieval Japanese politics,” which I think is bracing and exciting advice. See Amstutz, “The Honganji Institution, 1500–1570: The Politics of Pure Land Buddhism in Late Medieval Japan” (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1992), 8.

³¹¹ Ofumi I.2 (SS 1085); Rogers and Rogers, *Rennyo*, 145.

³¹² Ofumi I.3 (SS 1087); Rogers and Rogers, *Rennyo*, 149.

writing that “[h]e thinks that to occupy the place of honor and drink before everyone else and to court the admiration of those seated around him, as well as that of others, is really the most important aspect of the Buddha-dharma,” but this, Rennyo continues, “is certainly of no use for birth in the land of utmost bliss (*ōjō gokuraku* 往生極樂); it appears to be just for worldly reputation”; such behaviour has caused the whole community of *monto* at Chōshōji to be “seriously at variance with the Buddha-dharma (*buppō*).”³¹³ In another letter from the same year, he heaps scorn on priests who “call followers from whom they receive donations ‘good disciples’ (*yoki deshi* よき弟子) and speak of them as ‘people of faith’” and disciples who “think that if they just bring an abundance of things to the priests, they will be saved by the priests’ power (坊主のちから), even if their own power is insufficient.”³¹⁴ Kusano Kenshi argues that Rennyo’s attacks on what would have been perfectly ordinary gestures indicating status within a village community are “in keeping with his refusal to designate a particular ‘leader of the assembly’ as based in his ideal of the equality of group members,” concluding that his “egalitarian ideal, at least for now, must be given proper recognition.”³¹⁵

There are also indications that Rennyo attempted to perform this ideal of equality in his own dealings with the *monto*. The *Goichidaiki kikigaki* 御一代記聞書 gives us a picture of Rennyo coming down from his seat to sit together (*dōza* 同座) with his visitors, declaring “[w]e are sitting together in equality (おのおのと同座する)...those possessing *shinjin* are all fraternally united (四海の信心の人はみな兄弟と仰せられ

³¹³ Ofumi I.12 (SS 1101-1102); Rogers and Rogers, *Rennyo*, 163.

³¹⁴ Ofumi I.11 (SS 1100-1101); Rogers and Rogers, *Rennyo*, 162.

³¹⁵ Kusano Kenshi, “The Kanshō Persecution: An Examination of Mount Hiei’s Destruction of Ōtani Honganji,” trans. Eisho Nasu, in *Rennyo and the Roots of Modern Japanese Buddhism*, ed. Mark L. Blum and Yasutomi Shin’ya (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 92.

た)”³¹⁶ and instructing his priests: “In our congregation when the dharma is praised it is rude (*heikai* 平懷) to refer to members of the assembly as ‘followers’ (*katagata* かたがた), they should be respectfully addressed as fellow-members (*okatagata* 御方々).”³¹⁷

Mark Blum points out that while Rennyo makes heavy use of inscribed scrolls and the conferral of dharma names in establishing ties between Honganji and local leaders, “in Rennyo’s scrolls, although his name [as *monshu* 門主] is the first thing one sees, it is positioned at the same height as that of the name of the ‘requesting party’ (*ganshu* 願主)”—this gesture is evidently powerful enough that Rennyo’s descendants are moved to abandon it, with Blum noting that in the centuries that follow, the name of the *monshu* “gradually moves higher relative to the *ganshu* to emphasize their status disparity.”³¹⁸

And Matsumara Naoko argues that Rennyo’s assertion that the vow does not discriminate between men and women is borne out in practice by the value he placed on the liberation of women, as demonstrated by his organizing *kō* for women only—Matsumara reads Rennyo as a kind of proto-feminist in this sense, with the *kō* providing a space in which “the socially weak could escape their own minority consciousness and seek to take back their original self.”³¹⁹

The effects of the creation of this social space have real-world consequences. As Yasutomi Shin’ya points out, the *kō* not only made it possible for members to refuse the services of ritual specialists—they “provided funeral rituals, occasions for group

³¹⁶ *Rennyo Shōnin Goichidaiki-kikigaki* 蓮如上人御一代記聞書 40 (SS 1245); Elson Snow, trans., “Goichidaiki-kikigaki: Sayings of Rennyo Shōnin,” *Pacific World* 10 (1994): 10.

³¹⁷ *Gochidaiki* 258 (SS 1316); Snow, “Sayings,” 46.

³¹⁸ Mark L. Blum, “Rennyo Shonin, Manipulator of Icons,” in *Rennyo and the Roots of Modern Japanese Buddhism*, ed. Mark L. Blum and Yasutomi Shin’ya (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 127.

³¹⁹ Matsumara Naoko, “Rennyo and the Salvation of Women,” in *Rennyo and the Roots of Modern Japanese Buddhism*, ed. Mark L. Blum and Yasutomi Shin’ya (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 69.

pilgrimages to spiritual sites, and a variety of recreational activities”—many also came to constitute alternative economies, developing into mutual financing associations (*tanomoshikō* 頼母子講).³²⁰ In some areas, members of the Montoshū stopped observing local customs of propriety and social hierarchy, and stopped paying their taxes, turning that wealth over to their own *dōjō* 道場 instead.³²¹ And in the provinces, the *dōjō* knit themselves together in *monto ikki* 門徒一揆 or *ikkō ikki* 一向一揆. Kuroda Toshio suggests that *ikki* “originally meant something to the effect of ‘uniting in an egalitarian community’,”³²² and Carol Tsang describes them as leagues that “drew their strength from a shared religious identity and perspective.”³²³ After an unpromising beginning,³²⁴ the *ikkō ikki* grew to the point where in 1488, a league numbering between 100,000 and 200,000 *monto* successfully defeated the governor (*shugo* 守護) in Kaga, inaugurating a century-long period during which the province existed as a country held by peasants (百姓持ちの国). By the sixteenth century, Tsang tells us, *ikki* has come to have two primary meanings: both a laterally-organized league and the actions instigated by that league, “often but not always violent”³²⁵; not only Kuroda but also Nagahara Keiji, Kasahara Kazuo, and Inoue Toshio tie this to the notion of horizontal community or equality of

³²⁰ Yasutomi Shin’ya, “The Life of Rennyo: A Struggle for the Transmission of Dharma,” in *Rennyo and the Roots of Modern Japanese Buddhism*, ed. Mark L. Blum and Yasutomi Shin’ya (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 28. For an interesting discussion of the continuing use of the *kō* structure to organize Shinshū communities in twentieth-century Japan, see Kiyomi Morioka, *Religion in Changing Japanese Society* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1975), 83.

³²¹ McMullin, *Buddhism and the State*, 37. Carol Richmond Tsang comments that “during his lifetime” Rennyo “repeatedly issued directives to members to obey the authorities and pay their rents and taxes (incidentally, a sure sign that they did not)”; see “The Development of Ikkō Ikki, 1500–1570” (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1995), 13.

³²² Kuroda Toshio, “Leaders in an Age of Transition,” trans. Thomas Kirchner, in *Rennyo and the Roots of Modern Japanese Buddhism*, ed. Mark L. Blum and Yasutomi Shin’ya (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 44.

³²³ Carol Richmond Tsang, *War and Faith: Ikkō Ikki in Late Muromachi Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2007): 4.

³²⁴ Tsang, *War and Faith*, 50–51.

³²⁵ Tsang, *War and Faith*, 3 and 38.

members inculcated in the members of the *monto*.³²⁶ So Rennyo's *dōbōdōgyō*, rather than being understood only as serving the instrumental function of bringing the *monto* under the thumb of Honganji, can also, I think, be understood as expressing—and indeed contributing to—the aspiration toward mutual equality that was also expressed in other Sengoku-period social structures.

Amino holds that the “*muen* and *kugai* qualities” of another set of leagues—the *tokusei ikki* 徳政一揆, or debt-abrogation leagues—are closely tied to the notion of debt-abrogation itself.³²⁷ He understands the debt-abrogation uprisings as expressing a theory of non-possession (*mushoyū* 無所有) or non-ownership (*mushu* 無主); such non-ownership and the consequent dictum that in *muen* and *kugai* places all debts were cancelled is tied to the principle of mutual equality and the elimination of master-slave and landlord-serf relationships. Again, I think that taking into account the significance of the principle of non-ownership during the Sengoku period sheds some light on certain features of Rennyo's Honganji.

There are a number of moments in the *Goichidaiki* that record Rennyo's attitude toward property:

Hōgen [Rennō] 法眼蓮応 of Tango 丹後, appearing before Rennyo and suitably well-dressed, was patted on the collar and told, “This is *namuamidabutsu*.”

Jitsunyo 実如 (1458–1525) also responded in the same way when he patted the tatami mat and said, “In this way I'm supported by the *namuamidabutsu*.” This is stated in accord with, “Embraced and enwrapped by *namuamidabutsu*.”³²⁸

³²⁶ McMullin, *Buddhism and the State*, 37.

³²⁷ Amino, MKR, 75-76; Johnston, “Medieval Japanese constructions of peace and liberty,” 9.

³²⁸ *Goichidaiki* 101 (SS 1263-1264); Snow, “Sayings,” 20.

Passing through a corridor Rennyo suddenly stopped, picked up a scrap of paper from the floor, and made a reverent gesture with folded palms and bowed head.

“This is wasting the Buddha’s gift (仏法領の物).” Common objects were always seen in this way. Rennyo was never careless in thought or deed.³²⁹

Rennyo often said, “Day and night we live by the gifts (*goyō* 御用) of Amida and Shinran, and this protective source (*myōga* 冥加) should be reflected upon.”³³⁰

This last comment stands in sharp contrast to a passage from Zonkaku’s 存覚 (1290–1351) *Haja kenshōshō* 破邪顯正抄: “practitioners of the *nenbutsu*,” Zonkaku writes, “...wherever they may live, when they drink even a single drop or receive even a single meal, believe that in general it is thanks to the favor of the nobles of the capital and the Kantō, and know that specifically it is due to the kindness of their local lords and estate stewards.”³³¹ The difference here speaks to something more than a simple repositioning of Amida and Shinran—and their worldly representative, Honganji—in the place of state and local authorities. The thing that distinguishes Rennyo’s Amida and Shinran from the nobles and local lords, it seems to me, is that although the relationship between peasant and Amida and peasant and landowner is in either case a transactional relationship,³³² it was well understood during the Sengoku that landowners were in a position to demand repayment for their kindness through taxation and corvée labour.³³³ But Rennyo,

³²⁹ *Goichidaiki* 308 (SS 1332); Snow, “Sayings,” 54. See also *Goichidaiki* 313 (SS 1333) and 314 (SS 1334).

³³⁰ *Goichidaiki* 78 (SS 1256-1257); Snow, “Sayings,” 16.

³³¹ Cited in Kuroda Toshio, “The Imperial Law and the Buddhist Law,” trans. Jacqueline I. Stone, *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 23.3-4 (1996): 283.

³³² This term is suggested by Luis Gómez’s discussion of merit-making and gift economies in relation to Pure Land belief; see Gómez, “Buddhism as a religion of hope,” 9-15.

³³³ On the redistribution of power during the Sengoku period, see Wakita Osamu, “The *Kokudaka* System: A Device for Unification,” *Journal of Japanese Studies* 1.2 (1975): 297-320; Ike Susumu 池享, “Sengoku daimyō no kenryoku kiban 戦国大名の権力基盤,” *Shigaku zasshi* 史学雑誌 91.4 (1982): 423-463; Grace

following Shinran, can position what is given by Amida as a gift, that is as transferred to the practitioner spontaneously without the practitioner having requested it: “When one believes in the Original Vow of the Tathāgata for one moment, he is assuredly caused to receive unsurpassed virtue without soliciting it.”³³⁴ The genuine character of the gift here prohibits the giver from making assessments about whether or not the recipient deserves the gift—“All sentient beings, just as they are (*sono mama* そのまま). There is no expectation of any transformation or alteration”³³⁵—and its infiniteness makes notions of earning the gift absurd. In the *Anjinketsujōshō* 安心決定抄, upon which Rennyo relies so heavily, self-power *nenbutsu* and Other-power *nenbutsu* are distinguished on the basis of whether or not the practitioner is making some attempt to deserve or to earn what is to be given: the self-power practitioner “is all the time in an unsettled state of mind as to how to court the favor of the Buddha, how to be reconciled to Him, how to win his loving consideration....As long as he keeps up this attitude of mind his rebirth in the Pure Land is indeed extremely uncertain.”³³⁶ It is this sense of birth as earned rather than freely received that I think Rennyo is rejecting when he criticizes those among the *monto* who attempt to win birth by bringing an abundance of things to their priests. And Rennyo also understands himself as the recipient rather than the bestower of gifts.³³⁷ This makes Honganji a space of non-ownership, and so a space of difference.

Kwon, *State Formation, Property Relations, and the Development of the Tokugawa Economy (1600–1868)* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 19–38.

³³⁴ As translated by Alfred Bloom, *Shinran's Gospel of Pure Grace* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1968), 51.

³³⁵ *Goichidaiki* 64 (SS 1252); Snow, “Sayings,” 14.

³³⁶ *Anjinketsujōshō* 7 (SS 1393); Alfred Bloom provides a translation of this passage in “Shinran’s Gospel of Pure Grace,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 32.4 (1964): 313. For comments on the place of the *Anjinketsujōshō* in Rennyo’s thought, see Minor L. Rogers, “Rennyo and Jōdo Shinshū Piety: The Yoshizaki Years,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 36.1 (1981): 31ff.; Yasutomi, “The Life of Rennyo,” 23.

³³⁷ Cf. Blum: an “important dimension of the Rennyo scrolls is that they were personalized in a way that inspired strong ties between Rennyo and the leaders of these communities. Inscriptions on the back of each

Finally, I want to propose that the dominant value of this space of difference is *an* 安—peace, tranquility, or quiet. Taking the *Anjinketsujōshō* as a key text, Rennyo reinscribes Shinran’s *shinjin* as *anjin*.³³⁸ Like *shinjin*, *anjin* as the guarantee of birth is understood by Rennyo as identical with birth; it has the this-worldly benefit of conferring upon the practitioner a mind of peace or serenity because the great matter of birth has been decisively settled. This is sometimes interpreted as evidence of an other-worldly orientation in Rennyo—Rogers for instance, drawing on Futaba Kenkō’s analysis, suggests that while Shinran balanced “on the one hand, attainment of birth in the Pure Land and realization of enlightenment (*ōsō* 往相), and on the other, a subsequent return to this defiled world to save others (*gensō* 還相),” Rennyo “appears to stress the former and to leave aside for the most part the latter”³³⁹; Bloom suggests that Rennyo had a keen awareness of “the impermanence, unpredictability, and violence in life,” which accounts for his understanding that “the afterlife is of the greatest importance (*goshō no ichidaiji* 後生の一大事), in contrast to Shinran’s stress on the reception of faith and assurance of rebirth in this life,” and as a result, “Rennyo draws a clear distinction between this world and the next, and it is the next that should be the object of our aspiration and the decisive settling of mind.”³⁴⁰ This would seem to suggest that Rennyo was strongly dualist in his thinking, but this seems to be an unsustainable claim given Rennyo’s interest in the strongly non-dualist *Anjinketsujōshō* and his championing of the doctrine of *kihō ittai* 機

scroll included Rennyo’s personal signature and also conferred a kind of baptismal or ‘Dharma’ name upon the receiver. This naming bolstered the status of the local leader within his community and confirmed his position within the lineage descending from Shinran, both of which naturally created a sense of obligation (*on* 恩) to Rennyo”; see “Rennyo Shōnin, Manipulator of Icons,” 123.

³³⁸ Minor L. Rogers, “The Shin Faith of Rennyo,” *Eastern Buddhist* 15.1 (1982): 57.

³³⁹ Rogers, “The Shin Faith of Rennyo,” 65.

³⁴⁰ Alfred Bloom, “Rennyo: His Historical Significance and Contemporary Relevance,” *Pacific World* 3.1 (1999): 14.

法一体, the unity of sentient beings with the Buddha. It seems to me that we might instead understand Rennyo as positing two iterations of “this world,” one characterized by an estrangement between sentient beings and the Buddha and one characterized by the unity of sentient beings and the Buddha,³⁴¹ or, one characterized by discord (*sen* 戦) and one by peace (*an*). And on this view, rather than understanding *goshō* 後生 as “the afterlife,” we might instead understand it, following Hayashi Tomoyasu, as life as it unfolds following *anjin*.³⁴² Because one of the effects of *anjin* is immediate entry into the ranks of the truly settled (一念發起住正定聚),³⁴³ persons of *anjin* necessarily enter a social space of difference. For Rennyo, that social space is represented in this world by Honganji, making Honganji a this-worldly *anraku*.

Ōbō Versus Buppō

Rennyo’s Honganji does actually function as a space of peace or refuge, in a pragmatic sense: Minor Rogers comments that “Honganji provided a secure refuge for the *monto* in a period of danger, serving both their spiritual and physical needs.”³⁴⁴ Kuroda argues that it is also understood by Rennyo, more loftily perhaps, as a separate domain: the *buppōryō*

³⁴¹ This understanding of nonduality is suggested in a legendary exchange said to have taken place between Rennyo and his contemporary, the Zen monk Ikkyū, in which Ikkyū criticizes Amida for his selectiveness—“Amida has no mercy since Amida only saves those who say his name.” Rennyo responds, “There is no heart far from Amida, but a bowl of water covered cannot reflect the moon”; see Hayashi Tomoyasu, “The Idea of Impermanence in Rennyo’s *Letters*,” trans. David Matsumoto, *Pacific World* 3.1 (1999): 31-46. For a discussion of Rennyo’s understanding of *kihō ittai*, see Fugen Kōju, “Rennyo’s Theory on Amida Buddha’s Name and Its Relationship to Shinran’s Thought, Part 2,” trans. Nasu Eisho, *Pacific World* 4 (2002): 223-228.

³⁴² Hayashi proposes that this “life to come should not be understood to be simply a substantialized world that exists after death. Rather, it is a realm of awakening to an eternal, universal reality, which pervades the three worlds of the past, present, and future. This is the sense behind the expression” *goshō no ichidaiji*; see “The Idea of Impermanence in Rennyo’s *Letters*,” 37.

³⁴³ *Ofumi* I.4 (SS 1088); Rogers and Rogers, *Rennyo*, 150.

³⁴⁴ See Rogers, “The Shin Faith of Rennyo,” 68. According to Stanley Weinstein, it was also perceived as a paradisaical space: “Contemporary accounts describe the Honganji, which covered six *chō*, in superlative terms, one source likening it to the Pure Land itself and another speaking of its ‘unsurpassed magnificence’”; see “Rennyo and the Shinshū Revival,” 357.

仏法領. The *buppōryō*, as described by Kuroda, “comprises the portion of the world regulated through the Buddha’s benevolence and punishment,”³⁴⁵ but we might say more directly that the *buppōryō* comprises the portion of the world regulated according to *buppō*. That portion of the world is, according to Rennyo, “our tradition.” He writes in a letter from 1475 that “[o]ur tradition is the *buppōryō*. How absurd it is to ignore the *buppō* even as, through the strength of the *buppō*, we live as we please according to the standards of the secular world.”³⁴⁶ Kuroda maintains that “our tradition” must refer to the Montoshū—they are “those for whom this world is the place in which one lives the life of faith, and this is why it is known as the Realm of Buddha Dharma.”³⁴⁷ Ultimately then the *buppōryō* was, for Rennyo, “nothing more and nothing less than that realm within the everyday world which centered on the Honganji organization and was guided by the Tathāgata and Shinran.”³⁴⁸ This realm was governed by *buppō*, enjoining the mutual equality and horizontal relationships codified by *dōbōdōgyō* and prohibiting the self-power attitude that sees *shinjin* as obtained through effort or entreaty. It is thus both a space oriented toward the alternative space of the *anraku* and a space itself defined by *an*. This *buppōryō* therefore points to an ideal parallel to that of the *heiwa ryōiki*, and set in opposition to the feudal domain and its positioning of the real state as already sanctified through the discourse of the sacred country (*shinkoku* 神国).³⁴⁹ In these ways, Rennyo’s

³⁴⁵ Kuroda, “Leaders in an Age of Transition,” 42.

³⁴⁶ Kuroda, “Leaders in an Age of Transition,” 41; citing *Rennyo Shōnin ibun*, ed. Inaba Masamaru, 236.

³⁴⁷ Kuroda, “Leaders in an Age of Transition,” 42.

³⁴⁸ Kuroda, “Leaders in an Age of Transition,” 42.

³⁴⁹ Cf. Kuroda’s earlier assessment of Rennyo’s *buppōryō* as duplicating a feudal structure; Kuroda Toshio, *Nihon chūsei no kokka to shūkyō* 日本中世の国家と宗教 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1975), 322. See also Fabio Rambelli, “Religion, Ideology of Domination, and Nationalism: Kuroda Toshio on the Discourse of *Shinkoku*,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 23.3-4 (1996): 401.

Honganji actively resists the extant feudal real world marked by hierarchy, economic pressure, and discord, and works to enact the space of the Pure Land.

Rennyo is now commonly understood, however, not as attempting to establish a separate domain governed by *buppō* but as insisting upon the primacy of *ōbō* (*ōbō ihon* 王法為本). Kuroda himself, in his earlier work, takes exactly this view, arguing that with Rennyo, “phrases used in the discourse of earlier times on *ōbō-buppō* mutual dependence were transformed into statements proclaiming that ‘followers of the *buppō*’ should submissively accept the domination of the *ōbō*.”³⁵⁰ When Kuroda develops a more sympathetic reading of Rennyo revolving around this notion of *buppōryō*, Kuroda reinterprets Rennyo’s view of *ōbō* based on a phrase from the *Gochidaiki*: “Affix the Imperial Law to your forehead (王法は額にあてよ), but deep in your inner heart maintain the Buddhist Law (仏法は内心にふかく蓄へよ).”³⁵¹ The phrase translated here as “inner heart” is *naishin* 内心. Kuroda explains that this means that for Rennyo “religion was a matter for the inner spirit of the individual, and thus distinct from political and secular pursuits”³⁵²; Yoshida Tomoko writes that Kuroda “repeatedly stressed that what Rennyo meant by *Buppōryō* was not an actual territory, but an inner world of faith.”³⁵³ This points to something that Kuroda takes to be positive in Rennyo—his willful separation of religion and politics³⁵⁴; by making this assertion, Kuroda is attempting to rehabilitate Rennyo’s reputation, or defend him against the charges levelled by scholars like Souyri, as mentioned at the beginning of this section. However, the

³⁵⁰ Kuroda, “The Imperial Law and the Buddhist Law,” 283.

³⁵¹ *Goichidaiki* 141 (SS 1276); cited in Kuroda, “Leaders in an Age of Transition,” 43.

³⁵² Kuroda, “Leaders in an Age of Transition,” 43.

³⁵³ Yoshida Tomoko, “Kuroda Toshio (1926–1993) on Jōdo Shinshū: Problems in Modern Historiography,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 33.2 (2006): 398.

³⁵⁴ Yoshida, “Kuroda Toshio on Jōdo Shinshū,” 398.

suggestion that for Rennyo *buppōryō* was not an actual territory flies in the face of Kuroda's actual evidence that for Rennyo, Honganji *was* a *buppōryō*. I want to argue that Kuroda is mistaken about Rennyo's understanding of what constitutes "the inner," and that by recognizing this mistake, we will be able to better observe the ambiguity of Rennyo's position with regard to the relationship of *ōbō* and *buppō*.

The notion of an "inner spirit" does not appear in either Rennyo's letters or in the *Goichidaiki*, nor would we expect it to. (We will note what I take to be the provenance of this business of religion as a matter for the inner spirit in the following chapter.) The phrase *naishin*, however, does appear in the letters a number of times. As noted above, in the *Goichidaiki*, *naishin* appears paired with *hitai* 額; here there is the obvious suggestion of a single body with an inner heart and an outer face, warranting the conclusion that what Rennyo means is to adhere to *buppō* at the level of spirit or feeling and to *ōbō* at the level of appearance or behaviour. However, *naishin* does not appear paired with *hitai* in the letters. Instead, it appears paired with *gesō ni* 外相に, *soto ni* 外に, and *hoka ni* ほか
に. This has the same sense of "inside" and "outside," but it is not obvious that this means feeling versus behaviour—certainly a phrase like *hoka ni ha ōbō wo motte* ほか
に
は王法をもつて would seem to mean something relatively straightforward like "maintain *ōbō* with others."

In reviewing the letters, it seems to me that the others with whom Rennyo is so concerned are, pragmatically enough, not the sum total of sentient beings, but specifically those sentient beings belonging to other schools and other groups; thus he instructs the *montō* "within yourself (*naishin* 内心), maintain the settled mind of our tradition (*tōryū* 当流); and, outwardly (*gesō ni* 外相に), conduct yourself in such a way that the

transmission of the dharma you have received *will not be evident to those of other sects and other schools* (*tashū take* 他宗他家).”³⁵⁵ Here cultivating *buppō* on the inside does not seem to indicate that it is a matter of spirit or feeling that is so deep that it is entirely private, governing no social relationships at all; rather it seems to indicate that *buppō* should not govern one’s actions outside the community of *monto*. We already know that *buppō* was supposed to govern one’s actions within the community of *monto*. The “inside” of *naishin* here then might reasonably be understood to indicate inside the community.³⁵⁶ This would be consistent with the sectarian Pure Land concern for secrecy, and for the Japanese Buddhist concern for secrecy more generally.³⁵⁷ (It does not, however, mandate that we contend that Rennyo and other people living during the Sengoku period and before had no feelings. They obviously had feelings. It is less obvious that they would have understood *buppō* as a feeling.)³⁵⁸

This understanding of *naishin* as within the community would at least allow us to resolve the glaring contradiction in Kuroda’s interpretation of Rennyo, namely his assertion that for Rennyo, *buppōryō* was not an actual territory but an inner realm of feeling, which flies in the face of his actual evidence that for Rennyo, Honganji was a *buppōryō*. Certainly it does not make sense to suggest that for Rennyo, *buppō* was to govern only inner feelings while *ōbō* governed all social interactions; it is clear that he understands the space of Honganji to be a domain supported by the Tathāgata and

³⁵⁵ *Ofumi* III.12 (SS 1159); Rogers and Rogers, *Rennyo*, 215; my emphasis.

³⁵⁶ The basic sense of *naishin* as secret is given in the second definition of *naishin* in Morohashi. This sense of *naishin* as meaning followers or secret followers is attested to by Fukaya Katsumi, “History of Early Modern Popular Movements,” in *Historical Studies in Japan (VII)* 1983-1987, 223.

³⁵⁷ See Bernhard Scheid and Mark Teeuwen, ed., *The Culture of Secrecy in Japanese Religion* (London: Routledge, 2006).

³⁵⁸ See Karatani Kōjin, “The Discovery of Landscape,” trans. Brett de Bary, in *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 40, on the appearance of the “inner self” during the Meiji.

governed by *buppō*. To maintain *buppō* within would thus mean to maintain it within the social space of Honganji, while to observe *ōbō* without would mean to observe it in the social space of the state. This is the sense of *naishin* that guides Michio Tokunaga's interpretation of Rennyo's thought:

Many expressions [regarding *ōbō* and *buppō*] in Rennyo's letters may be summarized in such a sentence as "Externally, the observance of the King's Law is essential, and internally, keeping the Buddha's Law is fundamental." So, in Rennyo, "Buddha's Law" and "King's Law" are completely bifurcated, separated. This kind of expression very frequently appears in Rennyo's letters to the followers. With this teaching, Rennyo seems to have divided the life of *nenbutsu* followers: life in the secular society outside the Shin community, and life in a religious circle within the community.³⁵⁹

Tokunaga is very critical of this bifurcation, but it seems to me that, in its historical context, it holds out a radical political promise.

Zonkaku, in the face of accusations that the Ikkōshū was "destroying the *ōbō* and disregarding the *buppō*" had drawn on the doctrine of *shinzoku nitai* in defense of his movement, arguing that the "*buppō* and the *ōbō* are a single law with two aspects, like the two wings of a bird or the two wheels of a cart."³⁶⁰ Rennyo's use of *shinzoku nitai* is quite different in that he seems to decouple the two truths. In the letters, *ōbō* and *buppō*

³⁵⁹ Michio Tokunaga, "Other Power and Social Ethics: The Bifurcation of Shinran's Teaching," 12, <http://www.jodoshinshu.pl/jodoe/dharma/The%20Bifurcation%20of%20Shinran%27s%20Teaching.pdf> (last accessed June 7, 2009).

³⁶⁰ Cited in Kuroda, "The Imperial Law and the Buddhist Law," 283. Zonkaku's broader vision of the realm of the Buddhas and the realm of the state as interpenetrating is confirmed by his development of a theory of *honji suijaku* 本地垂迹 according to which the imperial *kami* Amaterasu and Susano-o are read as manifestations of Kannon and Seishi; briefly discussed in J.S.A. Elisonas, "The Jesuits, the Devil, and Pollution in Japan: The Context of a Syllabus of Errors," *Bulletin of Portuguese / Japanese Studies* 1 (2000): 9.

may appear as complementary laws or “complementary categories,”³⁶¹ but they are not positioned as a single law. This opens the possibility of more clearly articulating which one is more important, or more fundamental (exactly the question earlier rhetoric of mutual dependence was designed to defer). Rennyo selects both options, sometimes affirming *ōbō ihon*, or imperial law as fundamental as in the passages considered above, and sometimes *shinjin ihon* 信心為本, faith as fundamental: “What is taught by Master [Shinran] and in his school,” he writes, “is that faith is fundamental (信心をもつて本とせられ候ふ)”³⁶² and suggests elsewhere that while “for the sake of establishing religion we accede to the ways of society and obey the law,” although “lately many have thought that secular law is more important than Buddhism,” this “is of course not so.”³⁶³ This contradiction produces an interpretive problem, which has been resolved in a number of ways.

As noted above, sometimes Rennyo’s view is reduced to that of *ōbō ihon*. These kinds of readings see Rennyo as subordinating Honganji to the state. Another reading suggests that Rennyo ultimately abandoned *ōbō ihon* in favour of *shinjin ihon*.³⁶⁴ Still other readings attempt to make sense of Rennyo’s apparently holding two contradictory views at the same time by positioning *ōbō ihon* as a tactic for making *shinjin ihon*—taken

³⁶¹ Weinstein, “Change and continuity,” 55.

³⁶² Rogers and Rogers, *Rennyo*, 249.

³⁶³ McMullin, *Buddhism and the State*, 39. See also *Goichidaiki* 134 (SS 1274); Snow, “Sayings,” 25: “One should not complicate matters even if there is an accord with doctrine, secular affairs are not to be intermingled. *Shinjin* must be our primary concern.”

³⁶⁴ Neil McMullin suggests that Rennyo actively rejected the view of *ōbō ihon* in favour of *shinjin ihon*: “the *monto* [on Rennyo’s instruction] abandoned the *ōbō ihon* principle and adopted the principle called “faith as fundamental” (*shinjin ihon*); they abandoned the policy of civil obedience and adopted a new policy of “defense of the [Buddhist] law” (*gohō*) that justified the use of force in defense of Shinshū.... Until Rennyo, the chief priests of the Honganji branch of Shinshū accepted the thesis of the mutual dependence of the *ōbō* and the *buppō*, the *ōbō-buppō sōi no ronri*; with Rennyo, however, this thesis was abandoned, and the *buppō* came to be considered superior to the *ōbō*”; see *Buddhism and the State*, 38-39. McMullin later proposes that this “discarding of the *ōbō-buppō* mutual dependence thesis...is the most significant development of the Sengoku period, certainly for the history of Buddhism in Japan” (258).

to be Rennyo's real aim—possible.³⁶⁵ I would suggest that by understanding Rennyo's *naishin*, following Tokunaga, as referring not to a realm of individual feeling but to the social space of the religious community, we might understand the two views of *ōbō ihon* and *shinjin ihon* as pointing to the possibility that these constitute two laws for two distinct realms, both of which, however, are this-worldly, social realms. While Tokunaga argues that Rennyo's bifurcation of *ōbō* and *buppō* has fostered passivity by offering a reading of *shinjin* that emphasizes the vertical relationship between the practitioner and Amida and neglects the horizontal relationships between practitioners,³⁶⁶ I will assert now (and try to show in the next chapter) that this is the result of interpretive decisions made long after Rennyo's time. Rennyo's notion that Honganji must be a realm ruled by *buppō*, within the limits of which *ōbō* does not have authority, necessarily locates that realm outside the limits of the state. In this sense—even if the state is willing to accommodate extraterritoriality and even if Honganji is exceedingly deferent in its dealings with the state—Honganji by its very existence makes a claim that is antagonistic to the state desire for hegemony and the imperial law's desire for authority,³⁶⁷ despite

³⁶⁵ Matsumara Naoko sees *ōbō ihon* in this light as an example of Rennyo's skill in means, arguing that his "emphasis on the laws of the state and the principles of humanity and justice as the basis of faith was an expedient to carry through *shinjin* as the basis of faith...we can see the rational, shrewd, and directed way in which Rennyo went about accomplishing both the acquisition of faith and the spread of Shinran's teachings"; see Matsumara, "Rennyo and the Salvation of Women," 69. Ruben Habito suggests that Rennyo's "central concern was to ensure that Shinshū followers would be able to live free from needless conflict with followers of other religious teachings as well as with political authorities, and could thereby devote themselves to their mundane tasks empowered by faith"; see Habito, "Primal Vow," 219.

³⁶⁶ Tokunaga, "Other Power and Social Ethics," 5ff.

³⁶⁷ Kusano Kenshi points to the same interpretive possibility in Rennyo's juxtaposition of *mugekō* 無碍光, or the infinite light of the Tathāgata, and *ninpō* 人法: "*Ninpō* has many possible meanings and therein lies the problem. As a Buddhist term translating *sattva* and *dharma*, *ninpō* can mean person and doctrine or teaching, sentient beings and the material substance of which sentient beings are made, or by extension the categories of sentient and insentient. As an ordinary Japanese word, however, the *ninpō* refers to 'human (*nin*) law (*hō*), or a way [of behaving] that [all] human beings must maintain.' People thus might interpret this passage to mean that the salvific light of *mugekō butsu* could not be hindered by any 'human law,' including not only moral and ethical rules of conduct but also the laws of government. Therefore, it is

Rennyō's own apparent desire to get along with the imperial state.³⁶⁸ Rennyō's construction of Honganji as a realm of *buppō* must thus be recognized as a political engagement.³⁶⁹

Shinran's consciousness of himself as an exile is reproduced in Rennyō's positioning of Honganji as a space ordered according to the demands of a different law and the Montoshū as a community organized according to a different set of principles—*dōbō dōgyō* is a way of conceiving a collective exile. It is because the notion of collectivity or community is exactly what exile prohibits that Rennyō's collective exile ends up turning into a kind of world-building. This means that the political promise of Rennyō's Honganji is not so much critical resistance as separatism.

That promise is nearly fulfilled. Rennyō's success at weaving these principles into the structure of the Shinshū institution contributes to Honganji's extraordinary success as a heterotopia, and ultimately allows Honganji to become sufficiently powerful that it can assert for itself another privilege of *muen/kugai/raku* spaces: extraterritoriality. The success of the Montoshū leads to the rapid growth of temple cities (*jinaichō* 寺内町) outside the gates of Honganji during the period of Rennyō's leadership. Citing the *Kyōto no rekishi*, Neil McMullin says that by 1499, Honganji has become "a competing world order."³⁷⁰ After the destruction of Yamashina Honganji 山科本願寺 in 1532, Shōnyō 証如 (1515–1554)—successor to Rennyō's immediate successor, Jitsunyo—flees to

possible that this interpretation could be turned into criticism against all sorts of regulations that constrained people at that time"; see "The Kanshō persecution," 89.

³⁶⁸ Yasutomi points out that Rennyō described Honganji "as a prayer-offering site (*chokugansho* [勅願所]) for the prosperity of the imperial family"; see "The Life of Rennyō," 33.

³⁶⁹ Cf. Kuroda, "Leaders in an age of transition," 44: "For Rennyō, religion was a matter for the inner spirit of the individual, and thus distinct from political and secular pursuits." The distinction Kuroda makes here seems to depend upon a separation of the religious and the secular which does not seem to have obtained before the Meiji, as Kuroda's own work has amply demonstrated.

³⁷⁰ McMullin, *Buddhism and the State*, 40.

Ishiyama 石山 (in present-day Ōsaka 大阪), the site to which Rennyo had retired in 1496, and establishes Ishiyama Honganji 石山本願寺. The *jinaichō* at Ishiyama becomes large enough to constitute a self-sustained world (*dokuritsu sekai* 独立世界) and claim the right of non-entry (*funyū no sekai* 不入の世界).³⁷¹ It comes to be seen as enough of a threat to the state that Oda Nobunaga 織田信長 (1534–1582) makes its destruction a priority, embarking on what turns out to be a ten-year campaign, remembered as the Ishiyama War, “the major conflict of the entire Sengoku period.”³⁷² Nobunaga’s victory devastates Honganji, and when it is brought back into the capital under the wing of Toyotomi Hideyoshi 豊臣秀吉 (1537–1598)—and then split in two under the wing of Tokugawa Ieyasu 徳川家康 (1543–1616)—it seems to have lost some of its utopian aspirations.³⁷³ Tokunaga offers this assessment of Tokugawa Buddhism: “It is during the Edo period that not only Honganji but all the other schools of Buddhism had their

³⁷¹ See McMullin, *Buddhism and the State*, 47; John Whitney Hall, Nagahara Keiji, and Kōzō Yamamura, *Japan Before Tokugawa: Political Consolidation and Economic Growth, 1500–1650* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981).

³⁷² McMullin, *Buddhism and the State*, 46.

³⁷³ The reconciliation of the aspirations of the Honganji and the aspirations of the *bakufu* leadership are described by Amstutz in basically positive terms as “pragmatic” but not accommodationist: “there is no indication that Honganji or the majority of its members ever really wished to fundamentally substitute for the warlords in establishing a governmental hegemony over Japan. Indeed what the Honganji movement represented was ultimately inseparable from the fundamental character of the Tokugawa domainal confederation (*bakuhan*) system anyway....Honganji learned to live with the new system as it had with the old”; see “Politics and the Honganji Institution,” 275. I think that Amstutz’s strong assertion that nothing important was lost with the absorption of Honganji into the state order is partly motivated by a desire to defend the institution against Marxist critiques, or the “disgust” of Marxist scholars (275 n.10); it nonetheless seems reasonable to me to suggest that if Amstutz is right when he says that Rennyo’s Honganji is both one hundred percent religious and one hundred percent political, it does not make sense to conclude that when, just decades later, the institution is brought under the thumb of the *daimyō* authority, it “did not object to central authority too much...because neither government nor revolution was really part of its basic interests” (274). As Amstutz notes, as Honganji was aligning itself with the centre, some provincial temples continued to pursue other aims; the (continuing) function of the provincial Shinshū temple as a site of resistance to the state is also suggested in Scott Schnell’s *The Rousing Drum: Ritual and Practice in a Japanese Community* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1999): 65.

backbone taken out by the government and were tamed, just like a dog. This lasted for about 260 years.”³⁷⁴

When twentieth-century Shinshū thinkers trace their own history, the genealogies they produce often seem to point to Rennyo’s thought as the source of an accomodationist tendency in Shinshū, and its reputation as “the do-nothing school.”³⁷⁵ It seems to me that this way of narrating the history of Shinshū has several defects. It does not account for the heterogeneity within the Shinshū community over the course of the Tokugawa. It views the ebb and flow of revolutionary or radical thought within Shinshū in isolation, without observing the ways in which the end of the Sengoku period and beginning of the Tokugawa more generally witness a loss of hope for utopia.³⁷⁶ And it attributes to Rennyo certain Shinshū “orthodoxies” that are not explicitly articulated until the nineteenth century.

In this chapter, I have tried to show that Hōnen, Shinran, and Rennyo all conceive of the Pure Land as a utopian space, and all hold out the possibility of that utopia irrupting within this world as a heterotopia. For Hōnen, the utopia of the Pure Land reveals the suffering of this world as illusory; relying on the fact of “a hundred out of a hundred,” he can refuse the hierarchies and regulations of this world as still more illusory. Shinran, in exile, interprets Hōnen’s “a hundred out of a hundred” as “I alone”; his consciousness of his own abjection—removal from the centre—become evidence of the crosswise working of the vow that takes the abject as its centre. Rennyo takes Shinran’s singularity and multiplies it in order to produce a community of people with the consciousness of exiles; this community is the site where the Pure Land is enacted in this

³⁷⁴ Tokunaga, “Other Power and Social Ethics,” 12.

³⁷⁵ Tokunaga, “Other Power and Social Ethics,” 14.

³⁷⁶ Amino, MKR, 84; Johnston, “Medieval Japanese Constructions of Peace and Liberty,” 12.

world, and a space that threatens the singularity of the extant world order. Neither Hōnen, nor Shinran, nor Rennyo can properly be described, then, as positing a strictly transcendent Pure Land, or as strictly other-worldly in his orientation. Nor can any one of them be described as a traditionalist. David Suzuki calls Honganji a “citadel of traditional values,”³⁷⁷ among them an understanding that the Pure Land is attained in the afterlife. We have gone back through Hōnen, Shinran, and Rennyo, and to my mind not yet found a patriarch who espoused these traditional values. When does the Honganji that Suzuki has in mind—the one we saw him mourning the collapse of at the beginning of chapter one—emerge?

³⁷⁷ Suzuki, *Crisis in Japanese Buddhism*, 4.

CHAPTER THREE: THE MODERN TRADITION

In this chapter, I will argue that the “traditional Shinshū” Suzuki wants to preserve comes into existence at the very same moment that Shinshū modernism comes into existence: in 1871, when the head of Nishi Honganji 西本願寺, Kōnyo 広如 (1798–1871), writes a pastoral letter offering guidance to the members of the Shinshū community, all of whom are facing the task of reinventing themselves as citizens of the new Japanese nation-state.³⁷⁸ The first part of the chapter will deal with this double-creation of traditional orthodoxy and modernism as an element in the formation of the modern nation-state. The second part will position Kōnyo against the Ōtani thinkers Kiyozawa Manshi and Soga Ryōjin, examining the ways in which they both participate in and contest Kōnyo’s modernist orthodoxy. It will look particularly at how Kiyozawa attempts to extend the meaning of Shinran’s exile as independence from the state, and so from the demands of citizenship, and at how Soga moves to articulate a social ethics based upon Kiyozawa’s radical interiority. My argument in this chapter is that Kōnyo’s orthodoxy is more

³⁷⁸ For a review of the reconstitution of Japanese identity during the early Meiji, see Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *Re-Inventing Japan: Time, Space, Nation* (London: M.E. Sharpe, 1998), 23-28; on liberalism in early Meiji, see Hane Mikiso, “Early Meiji Liberalism: An Assessment,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 24.4 (1969): 353-371. Kevin Doak explains that this ushering in of a new self-consciousness as citizens contributes to an unanticipated consequence of the Meiji restoration: it “inaugurated a destabilizing disjuncture” between the state and the people that “...remains a critical force in modern Japanese political discourse”; the evidence for this disjuncture is seen in nineteenth-century claims that “the realm belongs to the realm [and not solely to the emperor]” (天下は天下の天下なり). See “What Is a Nation and Who Belongs? National Narratives and the Ethnic Imagination in Twentieth-Century Japan,” *American Historical Review* 102.2 (1997): 287 and 287 n.16.

modern than it first appears, and Kiyozawa and Soga's reforms more resonant with the premodern Shinshū imaginary than they are usually taken to be.

The Modern Invention of Orthodoxy

James Dobbins introduces the term “Shin Buddhist modernism” in his *Letters of the Nun Eshinni*, describing the emergence of a “new articulation of Shinran's thought” in the wake of “the advent of scientific consciousness”³⁷⁹ and the crisis of the Meiji *haibutsu kishaku* 廃仏毀釈³⁸⁰; although Dobbins understands his own historical scholarship as working against the grain of this modernist reinvention,³⁸¹ he nonetheless credits the modernization as a “momentous and heroic achievement attained through the creative efforts of countless Buddhists in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.”³⁸² These creative efforts centre around a movement “back to Shinran” which understands its object to be not the miraculous Ōgen Shinran 応現親鸞 of the premoderns, but a human Shinran, Ningen Shinran 人間親鸞.³⁸³ Dobbins takes Kiyozawa—“a nonconformist visionary who inspired a generation of Buddhist scholars and reformers with his modern

³⁷⁹ Dobbins, *Letters of the Nun Eshinni*, 108.

³⁸⁰ Mark Blum has suggested that much of the Meiji period saw Buddhists buckling under the pressures brought to bear by the state, an experience from which Buddhist institutions have perhaps not yet recovered: “the *sangha* was expected to provide an ethic for the nation by upholding both the morality of the Imperial Rescript on Education and the materialistic optimism of modern capitalism. The psychological trauma experienced during the first 35 years of Meiji by the Buddhist world in Japan is an area deserving far greater study”; see “Kiyozawa Manshi and the Meaning of Buddhist Ethics,” *Eastern Buddhist* 21.1 (1988): 71. Jason Ānanda Josephson has recently asserted, however, that the real historical significance of the Meiji *haibutsu kishaku* may lie not so much in the facts of the movement itself but in the place the movement assumes in the imagination of Meiji Buddhists after the fact, and the way this contributes to Buddhist identity formation: “By internalizing the violence of the *haibutsu kishaku* movement, various Buddhists came to accept the charges of ecclesiastical decadence and intellectual backwardness without evidence.... As part of this process Buddhist leaders worked to distance Buddhism from charges that it was backward and an obstacle to modernity”; see “When Buddhism Became a ‘Religion’: Religion and Superstition in the Writings of Inoue Enryō,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 33.1 (2006): 149.

³⁸¹ Dobbins, *Letters*, 120.

³⁸² Dobbins, *Letters*, 108.

³⁸³ Dobbins, *Letters*, 111. *Ningen Shinran* 人間親鸞 is also the title of a 1921 novel by Ishimaru Gohei (Tokyo: Jinsei sozosha), part of the Shinran boom of the early 1920s.

religious vision and his fiercely ascetic example”—as the nearest thing Shin modernism has to a founder³⁸⁴; during his short life, Kiyozawa manages to gather around him “a band of young zealots who propagated his ideals across the twentieth century.”³⁸⁵ Foremost among these zealots are the students who cluster around Kiyozawa’s residence in Tokyo, the Kōkōdō 浩々洞, which becomes a kind of communal living space for young Buddhist scholars and the headquarters of Kiyozawa’s journal, *Seishinkai* 精神界. These disciples include Akegarasu Haya 暁烏敏 (1877–1954), founder of the Shinjinsha 真人社 (Association of True Persons), which is the precursor to the Dōbōkai 同朋会, the movement which David Suzuki identifies as precipitating the crisis in Honganji; the Shinshū theologian Kaneko Daiei 金子大栄 (1881–1976); and Soga himself, who takes over as editor of *Seishinkai* in 1916, and takes a teaching position at Ōtani in 1925. In 1930, his interpretation of the three minds of the Tathāgata is identified as heretical, and he resigns his position; he does not return to Ōtani until 1941.

I think that by “modernism,” Dobbins means something like responsive to the contemporary situation, and his characterization of Shin modernism is for that reason attractive to the late-modern reader—twentieth-century Shinshū thought here is the product of creative, heroic, nonconformist, impassioned and uncompromising thinkers. By bringing a more explicitly theorized reading of modernity to bear on Dobbins’ evocative phrase, I think we can arrive at a still richer understanding of the development of modern Shinshū thought and the complicated legacy of its leading thinker, Kiyozawa.

³⁸⁴ Dobbins, *Letters*, 112.

³⁸⁵ Dobbins, *Letters*, 112.

The definition of modernity I have in mind is sketched out by Bruno Latour in *We Have Never Been Modern*.³⁸⁶

I have chosen Latour's definition because I think it helps us find new purchase on the question of Japanese modernity. There are many other available understandings of modernity, but all of them strike me as sharing an abhorrence of hybridity, which follows from an evolutionary understanding of history. This means that where the symptoms of hybridity appear—unevenness or multiplicity or heterogeneity—they can only be accounted for in two ways: as either a sign of incompleteness (the place where it appears is not yet fully modernized, unlike whatever place it is being compared to) or a sign of sterility (the place where it appears is incapable of modernizing). But when it comes to Japan—because the evolutionary telos always emerges from somewhere in the West, whether in Marx's Europe or Weber's Protestant capitalism or Toynbee's Judeo-Christian time—modernity is always going to look like hybridity, which means it will always only gesture toward incompleteness or sterility.

Robert Bellah's thoughtful introduction to his recent *Imagining Japan* seems to me to reveal the hard limits of this evolutionary approach. On the one hand, Bellah says: "Even in the case of an allegedly homogeneous island country like Japan, it is impossible to understand history within the confines of a single nation-state," and "from its earliest history, Japan is only intelligible in dynamic relation to its neighbors and to powerful cultural influences, some of them originating from far away," and "the history of Japan and the history of the United States became indissolubly linked."³⁸⁷ All these comments

³⁸⁶ Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).

³⁸⁷ Robert N. Bellah, *Imagining Japan: The Japanese Tradition and Its Modern Interpretation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 49 and 50. Many thanks to Juhn Ahn for pointing me to this work.

are based on observable historical fact; it is true that the “island country” called Japan is not homogeneous, and moreover it is true that even the question of which islands constitute the country is always in the process of being answered through a series of historical accidents. It is true that the history of the places called Japan and the United States are bound up with each other, and moreover it is true that the history of the West is bound with the history of the non-West, so that it does not make sense to imagine that the West somehow exists upwind of the non-West, waiting for the non-West to complete its assigned task of modernizing. On the other hand, Bellah says: “The underlying premises of Japanese society, though they can be reformulated with great sophistication, cannot be challenged,” and “Japan has shown a remarkable capacity to absorb foreign culture on its own terms” and “Through all these enormous changes the basic premises of Japanese society, though drastically reformulated, have remained nonaxial. That is, the axial and subsequent differentiations between transcendent reality and the state, between state and society, and between society and self have not been completed.”³⁸⁸ These all seem to be comments based on a historiographical approach that needs to understand Japan (and the United States, I think) as homogeneous, discrete facts of nature. If Bellah really believes that what we call Japan is a dynamic relation with others, what does it mean to say that Japan (or the West) has “its own terms” and “underlying premises”? This seems to me incoherent. Furthermore, it grounds an understanding that whatever process Japan has not completed, the United States and other “advanced societies”³⁸⁹ have completed. That is to say, against all evidence that “axial” modernity is unevenly, inadequately, infirmly established in the United States, Bellah identifies America’s problems as arising out of a

³⁸⁸ Bellah, *Imagining Japan*, 7, 58, 59.

³⁸⁹ Bellah, *Imagining Japan*.

nationwide sense that it is “post-axial” (when in fact it is only axial). Bellah is a scrupulous, conscientious thinker; he is sensitive to possible charges of Orientalism and careful to extend his criticism to his own society. It seems to me nonetheless to be the case that, given an evolutionary framework, criticizing one putatively discrete nation for conceiving of itself as pre-axial and another for conceiving of itself as post-axial is to deliver two critiques that are parallel in form but not in significance. Taking as our starting point an understanding that modernity has already been completed in the West can only give rise to a limited set of possibilities in terms of understanding modernity in Japan.

Latour’s model does not address Asian modernity.³⁹⁰ Nonetheless, it opens up new possibilities for scholars of Asia, simply because it does not take for granted the claim that modernity has already been completed in the West. Latour holds that modernity is incomplete everywhere. Wherever it appears, it appears in ways that are uneven and infirm, and because of this, it causes more and more hybrids—the hybrids it abhors—to arise. So one thing that Latour allows us to do is change the terms of the argument, and ask a question other than: is Japan modern yet? Latour’s understanding of modernity is attractive to me in particular for a number of other reasons as well—the place it gives religion and its invoking of the categories of immanence and transcendence among them—and in testing it on the Japanese case, I think I will be able to show that it has real explanatory power.

³⁹⁰ In fact he refers to the field of the nonmodern as “the Middle Kingdom, as vast as China and as little known”; see Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, 48.

Like Benedict Anderson, Latour understands modernity as appearing when religion is cast into shadow³⁹¹; unlike Anderson, Latour understands the shadowy presence of religion as necessary to the project of modernity. As Latour explains it, modernity subjects religion to a double operation of purification, removing it both to the realm of an absolutely transcendent universal, and to a secret, invisible place within each individual's heart.³⁹² These two displacements make it possible, Latour says, for religion, in its transcendence, to disturb "neither the free play of nature nor that of society," while reserving the right of the modern "to appeal to that transcendence in case of conflict" between nature and society.³⁹³ Latour refers to this wholly transcendent, wholly internal authority as a crossed-out God; the crossed-out God, "relegated to the sidelines," allows the modern to be "both secular and pious at the same time."³⁹⁴ If we apply Latour's pattern to the Shinshū materials, we should expect to find Shinshū thinkers performing a double operation of purification on Amida, producing a crossed-out Buddha who can

³⁹¹ On Anderson's view, the "dawn of the age of nationalism" and "the dusk of religious modes of thought" are correlated; see *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1991), 11.

³⁹² Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, 32-35.

³⁹³ Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, 33. Takeuchi Yoshinori—without referencing Latour of course—has drawn on a similar observation from John Robinson in making an argument for the unsatisfactoriness of this pure transcendence: "To borrow one of Robinson's expressions, the God of modern man has become 'a Grandfather in heaven, a kindly Old Man who could be pushed into one corner while they got on with the business of life.' This certainly indicates a change in God's 'body' in a prayerless world. That the image of such a 'Daddy-God' is a blasphemy was pointed out with great perspicacity by Søren Kierkegaard"; what Robinson calls for instead is Bonhoeffer's "beyond in the midst of our life," which Takeuchi says corresponds to the Pure Land notion of *heizei gōjō*. See "Shinran and Contemporary Thought," 37-38. Cf. Soga's treatment of *heizei gōjō* as pointing to strict transcendence: "Phrases such as [*heizei gōjō*] and [*shinzoku nitai*] may well express the salvation Reality offers, but in truth they pay no more than lip service to it. Why is it, one wonders, that there are so many who, whilst singing paeans of praise to the Light as it might turn out in some future time, pass their lives in vain in this sea of life and death, only to vanish forever into its depths?"; see "The Significance of Dharmākara Bodhisattva as Earthly Savior," trans. Wayne S. Yokoyama and Hiroshi Suzuki, in *Living in Amida's Universal Vow: Essays in Shin Buddhism*, ed. Alfred Bloom (Bloomington: World Wisdom, 2004), 17.

³⁹⁴ Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, 13 and 34. The importance of this crossed-out God seems to me, incidentally, to help us explain the degree of state interest in controlling religion, not only during the Meiji but also when imperial nationalism reaches its peak in the 1940s, at which time, Sheldon Garon suggests, we see what he calls "an almost premodern obsession with heresy...that one does not usually associate with industrializing societies in the twentieth century"; see "State and Religion in Imperial Japan, 1912-1945," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 12.2 (1986): 272.

serve as guarantor of the modern nation-state. I have tried to show in the preceding chapters that, in contrast to the usual understanding, the notion of a strictly transcendent Pure Land does not in fact dominate the premodern Pure Land imagination. I will try to show now that the notion of a strictly transcendent Pure Land—the “traditional orthodoxy”—appears when Shinshū modernizes by crossing out Amida.

This is going to mean that Shinshū modernism does not begin with Kiyozawa or his zealous followers. Rather, it begins with and is pursued by a loose constellation of thinkers whom Dobbins does not discuss, and whom I think most contemporary scholars would be reluctant to identify as “heroic”: those representatives of the Honganji-ha 本願寺派 and Ōtani-ha who developed arguments “that served to align Japanese Buddhism with the main components of imperial ideology” in an effort Christopher Ives has called “the mobilization of doctrine.”³⁹⁵ Kōnyo is perhaps the first of these thinkers. He is followed by the members of his Honganji-ha who devise an orthodoxy (*anjin rondai* 安心論題) in response to the Nishi Honganji priest Nonomura Naotarō’s 野々村直太郎 (1871–1946) 1923 *Jōdokyō hihan* 浄土教批判 (A critique of the Pure Land teaching), in which Nonomura contends that Amida and the Western Paradise are mythic expressions intended to prompt a this-worldly experience of *shinjin*³⁹⁶; by participants representing both the Honganji-ha and the Ōtani-ha in the 1934 special issue of *Chūō bukkyō* 中央仏

³⁹⁵ Christopher Ives, “The Mobilization of Doctrine: Buddhist Contributions to Imperial Ideology in Modern Japan,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 26 (1999): 83–106.

³⁹⁶ Nonomura is purged from Ryūkyō in what is now remembered as the *ianjin* incident, or heresy incident (異安心事件). Ryan Ward offers a study of *Jōdokyō hihan* in his “Genzai to mirai—kingendai jōdoshinshū ni okeru shiseikan no mondai ni tsuite: Nonomura Naotaro no ianjin jiken wo chūshin ni 現在と未来: 近現代浄土真宗における死生観の問題について: 野々村直太郎の異安心事件を中心に,” *Shiseigaku kenkyū* 死生学研究 9 (2008): 145–175. Ward holds that Nonomura successfully made Shinshū “modern” (*kingendai* 近現代) by demythologizing it. In my discussion of Soga Ryōjin, I will try to suggest that we should maintain distinction between modernizing and demythologizing.

教 who draw on the logic of *ōbō ihon* and *hōon* 報恩 (repayment of blessing) to knit together Pure Land doctrine and imperial ideology, in response to a perceived threat of another *haibutsu kishaku*³⁹⁷; and by the publication of revised and redacted versions of Shinshū texts and textbooks between 1936 and 1940.³⁹⁸ On each of these occasions, the orthodoxy articulated by Kōnyo in his final letter is affirmed, and Honganji's position as "guardian of the state," per Rogers and Rogers, is renewed.³⁹⁹

In the letter, Kōnyo demonstrates a keen understanding of the rhetoric of Meiji nationalism. He writes:

Of all those born in this imperial land [*kōkoku* 皇国], there is no one who has not received the emperor's benevolence [*kōon* 皇恩]. These days especially, he labors from morning to night in his deliberations in administering the just government of the restoration, maintaining order [*hōan* 保安] among the many people within [the country] [*uchi okuchō* 内億兆], and standing firm against all foreign countries [*hoka bankoku* 外万国]. Is there anyone, priest or lay, who would not support the imperial reign and enhance its power? Moreover, as the spread of Buddha-dharma is wholly dependent on the patronage of the emperor and his ministers, how can those who trust in Buddha-dharma disregard the decrees of imperial law? Accordingly, it has been long established in our sect that one should "take imperial law as fundamental; take humanity and justice as foremost," revere the

³⁹⁷ Ives, "The Mobilization of Doctrine," 84.

³⁹⁸ These changes are detailed by Shigaraki Takamarō 信楽峻麿 in his "Shinshū ni okeru seiten sakujo mondai" 真宗における聖典削除問題, in *Senjika no bukyō* 戦時下の仏教 no. 6 (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1977) and discussed by Minor and Ann Rogers in "The Honganji: Guardian of the State," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 17 (1990): 15.

³⁹⁹ The letter, referred to as the One-Sheet Testament (*Goikun goshōsoku* 御遺訓御消息) is circulated in the months following Kōnyo's death. A complete translation is included in both Rogers and Rogers, "The Honganji: Guardian of the State," and their *Rennyo: The Second Founder of Shin Buddhism*.

kami, and uphold morality [王法を本とし仁義を先とし神明をうやまひ人倫を守る]. In other words, if, through the [Thirty-third] Vow's benefit of touching beings with light and making them gentle-hearted, a person becomes one who "reveres the virtues, cultivates compassion, and endeavors in courtesy and humility," then he will surely conform to the [Buddha's] golden words, "There is harmony everywhere, and the sun and moon are pure and bright," and return a small part of the emperor's benevolence. Hence our founding master taught that "we should desire peace in the world and the spread of Buddha-dharma" [世の中安穩なれ仏法ひろまれ]. Given that, it is deplorable that [some people] are confused and think that if they just believe in Buddhist teachings, they can let mundane teachings be as they may. [Rennyō], the restorer of the tradition taught in regard to this: "On your brow, wear imperial law (*ōbō*); within the depths of your heart, treasure Buddha-dharma (*buppō*)."...My hope is that our sect's priests and lay people will firmly grasp the correct meaning of what has been transmitted, as stated above; that they will not err in regard to the dharma-principle of the transcendent and the mundane as two truths (*shinzoku nitai*); that in this life [*genshō* 現生], they will be loyal subjects of the empire and reciprocate the unlimited imperial benevolence; and that in the life to come [*raise*], they will attain birth in the [Pure Land in the] West [西方の往生] and escape aeons of suffering.⁴⁰⁰

⁴⁰⁰ Rogers and Rogers, *Rennyō*, 320-322. English interpolations are Rogers and Rogers'; Japanese interpolations are mine.

We see Kōnyo working hard here to make a case for Shinshū as supportive of the modern nation state and its projects. He does this partly by proof-texting material from both Shinran and Rennyo in order to suggest that Shinshū has historically inculcated in its followers a sense of gratitude and indebtedness to the state—this is easily managed by aligning the figure of the emperor and his goal of order (*hōan*) with Shinran and his goal of peace in the world (*yononaka annon*)⁴⁰¹—and that it will readily support a separation of religious affairs and matters of state, undergirding that separation with the doctrine of the two truths (*shinzoku nitai*), which Kōnyo reads as pointing to a separation of *ōbō* and *buppō*.⁴⁰² However, there is more going on in the *Goikun* than a bald declaration of loyalty. Because Kōnyo is appealing to the idea that Honganji has long supported the imperial reign, it is easy to overlook the peculiar modernity of his vision of Shinshū, and project his orthodoxy back onto Rennyo. In fact, however, Kōnyo’s Shinshū, like the imperial land it supports, is a modern invention, the result of an important decision made by Kōnyo.⁴⁰³

⁴⁰¹ This particular phrase has more recently been used to argue that Shinshū has historically been a pacifist movement; see Ugo Dessì, “Why Be Engaged? Doctrinal Facets of Jōdo Shinshū Social Activism,” *The Pure Land* 22 (2006): 106. Yasutomi Shin’ya points out this parallel method in a paper which is, in part, a reflection on Dessì’s: “Shinshū activists have adopted fragmentary portions of Shinran’s statements such as, for example, the phrase *hyōga muyō* 兵戈無用 (uselessness of armed forces and weaponry) from the *Larger Sūtra* and *yo no naka an’non nare* 世の中安穩なれ (may there be peace in the world) as slogans for their movement. However, we know that, in the same way, during the war, the Shinshū authorities adopted slogans from Shinran’s words, such as *chōka no ontame* 朝家の恩ため (for the sake of the imperial court) and *kokumin no tame* 国民のため (for the sake of the Japanese people) in their cooperation with the war effort”; see “The Discovery of *Dōbō*: The Crisis of Modern Shinshū Organization and the Quest for ‘Creative Return’,” *The Pure Land* 22 (2006): 117.

⁴⁰² Mark Blum discussed the Japanese parallel between *shintai* 真諦 and *buppō*, and *zokutai* 俗諦 and *ōbō*, in a paper delivered at the 2008 International Association of Buddhist Studies meeting in Atlanta, focusing particularly on its development in a pre-Meiji text, *Fifteen Gates of the Two Truths* (*Shinzoku nitai jūgomon* 真俗二諦十五門).

⁴⁰³ I take this notion of decision from Ruth Marshall-Fratani, following her remarks at the Graduate Fellows’ Workshop on religion, education, and civic identities, held at the University of Toronto, April 2-3, 2009.

There are two innovative moves in Kōnyo's reading of the premodern materials. The first is his appeal to the then-brand-new conception of the emperor as hard at work on behalf of all Japanese people. This is the product of an early-Meiji effort to move the premodern, functionally transcendent emperor, dwelling "above the clouds" (*unjō* 雲上),⁴⁰⁴ down to earth. Making the emperor visible or immanent allowed for the establishment of a "direct relation between the emperor and the people"⁴⁰⁵; this bore fruit in the form of a sense of indebtedness to an emperor who had been labouring away for one's own personal benefit.⁴⁰⁶ Over the course of the Tokugawa period, as the Honganji institutions grew increasingly stratified, rituals of *hōon* had developed to express—but also to inculcate—a sense of indebtedness to Amida. Kōnyo activates the notion of *hōon* but changes its object⁴⁰⁷—we know that the Meiji emperor is not just a stand-in for Amida here because the debt to the Meiji emperor is properly (although only ever partially) repaid by adhering to *ōbō*, or being loyal to the empire (*kōkoku no chūryō* 皇国の忠良), not by adhering to *buppō*, or calling the name in gratitude (*shōmyō hōon* 称名の報恩).

The second is his reinterpretation of the categories of inside and outside. He uses these categories in two quite different ways. First, he defines the citizens of the modern Japanese nation-state as constituting the inside (*uchi okuchō* 内億兆), guarded by the

⁴⁰⁴ Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 73.

⁴⁰⁵ Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths*, 73 and 74-75.

⁴⁰⁶ Fujitani Takashi gives an account of the uneven patterns of awareness of the emperor as the head of the state before the Meiji, and the Meiji effort to produce a homogeneous imperial consciousness, in *Splendid Monarchy: Power and Pageantry in Modern Japan* (New York: University of California Press, 1996); also excerpted in Michael Weiner, ed., *Race, Ethnicity and Migration in Modern Japan* vol. 1 (London: Routledge, 2004), 72-102.

⁴⁰⁷ On the development of *hōon* as an expression of gratitude to the emperor, see Davis, "Buddhism and the Modernization of Japan," 310.

emperor, and set upon by a myriad of foreign outsiders (*hoka bankoku* 外万国). In Rennyo's thought, it is the community of *monto* who constitute the inside, and he enjoins them to govern themselves according to *buppō*, while observing *ōbō* in dealing with the outside, which in this context is the Japanese state. Kōnyo too appeals to the *monto* to conceive of themselves as a distinct community, but the boundaries of that community are redrawn so that what for Rennyo constituted the exterior—the secular state—is for Kōnyo the interior (*uchi okuchō*, as against *hoka bankoku*), and the *ōbō* that was for Rennyo the law of the exterior realm is for Kōnyo the law of this interior realm, or the state and its citizens. This shift is made possible by displacing *buppō* into the strictly transcendent realm of the afterlife. So while Rennyo, following Shinran, held that it was possible to be welcomed into the assembly in this life (現生正定聚), Kōnyo makes this life (*gensei* 現生) one exclusively governed by the emperor and the imperial law, and removes birth in Amida's Pure Land to the next life (*raise* 来世).⁴⁰⁸

Building on this, he argues that the meaning of *shinzoku nitai* is that one must attend to both laws—it is not permissible to just ignore the worldly teachings (世世教はさもあらばあれ); in other words, it is not permissible for a religious person to orient himself or herself entirely toward the transcendent in this life. On this matter, Kōnyo says, members of the Shinshū community should attend to the instructions Rennyo has left telling them to wear *ōbō* on their foreheads and maintain *buppō* in their hearts (*naishin* 内心). For Rennyo, as we have seen, this notion of *naishin* could connote

⁴⁰⁸ Here I disagree twice over with Ives's suggestion that those thinkers who sought to reconcile Buddhism and the state did so by "ignor[ing] transcendent or universalist elements of the tradition (such as compassion and the bodhisattva ideal)" (see "Mobilizing Doctrine," 101)—it seems to me first that Kōnyo and the *Chūō Bukkyō* writers who follow his lead some sixty years later in fact do emphasize the transcendent element of the tradition, and second that compassion and the bodhisattva ideal are properly understood as immanent tendencies within the tradition.

secrecy or concealment within a community of fellow practitioners—that is, they were meant to maintain *buppō* amongst themselves. For Kōnyo, it cannot carry this connotation, given that his intention here is to affirm that in this life the community of Shinshū followers is wholly absorbed into the larger community of citizens—the inside here is the inside of *uchi okuchō*. *Naishin* must then refer strictly and unambiguously to the individual self. This removal of *buppō* to the depths of the heart, as Kōnyo understands it, is not intended to allow members of the Shinshū community to function as loyal citizens of the secular state while in fact living a religious life governed by a *different* set of principles. On the contrary, cultivating *buppō* within the depths of the heart here automatically gives rise to the secular virtues of loyalty, obedience, and patriotism—inner religiosity here only guarantees the values of the state. In this context, it does seem to me uncomplicated to translate *naishin* as “within the depths of the heart,” at the level of feeling, because Kōnyo is relying on this notion of an interior field of existence as the space in which religious matters can be pursued without interfering with the totalizing grasp of the nation-state with respect to its citizens.

It makes sense that these two moves—removing Amida and the Pure Land to the transcendent realm of the afterlife and to the interior depths of the heart—are useful for making space for a modern emperor ruling a modern nation-state, because they are the movements Latour describes as producing the crossed-out God of modernity. In premodern Shinshū, neither Amida nor the Pure Land was strictly transcendent: the Buddha was continually descending and his land continually irrupting within the real. It is with Kōnyo’s modern Shinshū that we get Pure Land Buddhism itself imagining its object as a strictly transcendent Buddha in a strictly transcendent land. The crossed-out

Amida supports the production of members of the Shinshū community as citizens, secular and pious at the same time, who can be good citizens now because they adopt an attitude of merely patient hope for the Pure Land. Winston Davis writes that in Meiji Japan, “*shinzoku nitai* was understood as a call for an undivided obedience to established religious and political institutions,”⁴⁰⁹ but this seems to me to be imprecise—actually *shinzoku nitai* as it is rendered by Kōnyo makes obedience to the political institution of the nation-state possible by deferring the authority of the religious institution.⁴¹⁰ This rests on a decision to select from Rennyo only the doctrine of *ōbō ihon* and set aside the contradictory claim of *shinjin ihon*,⁴¹¹ and with it, critical hope. This is the beginning of Shinshū modernism.

Through Kōnyo’s authority, this modernism becomes orthodoxy, and so comes to be identified as the traditional view of Shinshū, with its strictly transcendent Pure Land in tow. Kiyozawa and Soga, who develop their interpretations of the Shinshū imaginary in the wake of this modernization should therefore, I would suggest, be understood as moderns responding to that modernization, and not as modernizers themselves. This way of conceiving their reform efforts will, I think, allow us to better understand the

⁴⁰⁹ Winston Davis, “Buddhism and the Modernization of Japan,” *History of Religions* 28 (1989): 309.

⁴¹⁰ This seems consistent with a more general rise in Buddhist nationalisms (*kokkashugi* 国家主義) which identify strongly with the nation as represented by the state, positioning Buddhism as a state religion (国家的仏教); see Kevin M. Doak, *A History of Nationalism in Modern Japan: Placing the People* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 164-165.

⁴¹¹ Because this decision is Kōnyo’s, it seems to me unfair to make Rennyo responsible for it, as I think Minor Rogers does, for instance, in identifying Rennyo’s reading of *ōbō* and *buppō* as “the seed for what was in the early Meiji period to be enunciated as a doctrine of *shinzoku nitai*”; see “Rennyo and Shinshū Piety: The Yoshizaki Tears,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 36.1 (1981): 29 n.21. One strange consequence of the general consensus that modern orthodoxy accurately reflects Rennyo is that when there is a backlash against the modern orthodoxy it is expressed as a critique of Rennyo, so that the twentieth-century *dōbōkai* movement is identified as passing over Rennyo and going back to Shinran; see Miura Setsuo 三浦節夫, “Shinshū Ōtaniha no dōbōkai undō to sono rekishi” 真宗大谷派の同朋会運動とその歴史, *Shinshū kenkyū* 宗教研究 80.4 (2007): 1149. This critique of Rennyo effectively reproduces Rennyo’s own claim that his notion of *dōbō* was a return to Shinran.

complexities of their interpretations. I want to turn now to a brief review of the various ways in which Kiyozawa's *seishinshugi* 精神主義, or spiritualism, has been read by contemporary scholars before taking up the ways in which Kiyozawa and Soga adopt the modern crossed-out Amida and Pure Land, and the ways in which they move against this crossing out in resituating the Pure Land as a space of difference—construed as ethical or moral difference—within the real.

Locating the Pure Land in Meiji Japan: Seishinshugi

Kiyozawa was born during the Meiji Ishin 明治維新, and as a young teacher, he twice attempted a reform of the Ōtani-ha.⁴¹² When these moments in his life are emphasized, Kiyozawa can sound like an enthusiastic modernizer—“Commanding an overall view of the faltering fortunes of his own Ōtani Order, loaded down as it was with the heavy burdens of a rigidly organized feudal society, Kiyozawa's inner aspirations for revitalizing Buddhism could not help but burst out in the form of an attempt to reform the order”⁴¹³—and perhaps even a radical: Funayama Shin'ichi characterizes Kiyozawa's thought as a kind of “religious socialism,”⁴¹⁴ and Stephen Large follows Funayama in

⁴¹² On the first occasion, Kiyozawa is censured and removed from his post. On the second occasion, he resigns following protests. For brief accounts of this part of Kiyozawa's life, see Mark L. Blum, “Kiyozawa Manshi and the Meaning of Buddhist Ethics,” *Eastern Buddhist* 22 (1988): 61-81 and Hashimoto Mineo, “Two Models of the Modernization of Japanese Buddhism: Kiyozawa Manshi and D.T. Suzuki,” *Eastern Buddhist* 35 (2003): 6-41.

⁴¹³ This comment appears in Bandō's introduction to Kiyozawa's “My Faith” (Waga shinnen 我信念), in *Living in Amida's Universal Vow: Essays in Shin Buddhism*, ed. Alfred Bloom (Bloomington: World Wisdom, 2004): 3.

⁴¹⁴ Funayama Shin'ichi 船山信一, “Meiji bukkyō to shakaishugi shisō” 明治仏教と社会主義思想, *Kōza: kindai bukkyō* 講座近代仏教 2: 112-130.

identifying Kiyozawa as a precursor to those thinkers who pressed for *kakushin* 革新 (reform) during the interwar period.⁴¹⁵

On the other hand, when Kiyozawa's reform movements failed, he underwent long periods of withdrawal that came to undergird his notion of *seishinshugi*. Yoshida Kyūichi suggests that Kiyozawa's *seishinshugi*, along with Sakaino Kōyō 境野黄洋 (1871–1933) and Takashima Beihō's 高嶋米峰 (1875–1949) Shin Bukkyō Dōshikai 新仏教同志会 (New Buddhism Fellowship), inaugurates twentieth-century Buddhism, identifying Kiyozawa as tapping into a modern faith by delving into the interior of the human spirit (人間精神の内面) while the New Buddhists tried to engage society (社会的なもの) actively (*sekkyokuteki* 積極的に).⁴¹⁶ This withdrawal into interiority is sometimes read as valorizing passivity and refusing the responsibility of critical engagement with society. Sen'ō Girō 妹尾義郎 (1889–1961), Kiyozawa's contemporary and founder of the activist Shinkō Bukkyō Seinen Dōmei 新興仏教青年同盟 (New Buddhist Youth League) charged Kiyozawa's *seishinshugi* with ignoring material realities.⁴¹⁷ Futaba Kenkō, writing from within Shinshū, makes a similar charge, writing that Kiyozawa, in his turn to the absolute of the spirit,

experienced complete satisfaction and overcame the notion of rebirth in the Pure

Land in the after-life. He said that so long as there was spiritual satisfaction, evil,

⁴¹⁵ Stephen S. Large, "Buddhism and Political Renovation in Prewar Japan: The Case of Akamatsu Katsumaro," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 9.1 (1983): 33-34.

⁴¹⁶ Yoshida Kyūichi 吉田久一, "Nihon kindai bukkyō shi kenkyū" 日本近代仏教史研究, in *Yoshida Kyūichi chosakushū* 吉田久一著作集 4 (Tokyo: Kawashima Shoten, 1992): 325. Hisaki Yukio 久木幸男 discusses the limits of the Shin Bukkyō critique, and the historical reasons for these limits, in "Meiji makki no kyōiku jiken to Shinbukkyō dōshikai" 明治末期の教育事件と新仏教同志会, *Yokohama Kokuritsu Daigaku kyōiku kiyō* 横浜国立大学教育紀要 12.1 (1972): 1-22.

⁴¹⁷ Whalen Lai, "Seno'o Giro and the Dilemma of Modern Buddhism: Leftist Prophet of the Lotus Sūtra," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 11 (1984): 37.

poverty and other social ills posed no problems. The problem with such a person who entrusted himself to an absolute unlimited power and lived solely in the peace that transcended this world was that he had nothing to contribute to human history.⁴¹⁸

Winston Davis, following Fukushima Hirokata, suggests that “Kiyozawa’s freedom seems to be an example of the absence of ‘autonomy’ (*shutaisei* [主体性]) in Japanese society that critical Japanese intellectuals constantly lament”⁴¹⁹ and so, under close scrutiny, it appears that “Kiyozawa was actually a *product* of institutional Buddhism’s strategy of accommodation.”⁴²⁰ Most recently, Sueki Fumihiko has suggested that Kiyozawa adds to an error made earlier by Shimaji Mokurai 島地黙雷 (1838–1911) in separating religion from the world,⁴²¹ so that because in Kiyozawa’s thought “there is a path of *ōsō* (*ōsō no michi* 往相の道) but no principle of *gensō* (還相の原理),”⁴²² once the self is abandoned to the absolute infinity (*zettai mugen* 絶対無限) of Amida,⁴²³ there is no impetus to uncover the principles that govern social ethics. For this reason, Sueki asserts, *seishinshugi* may be thought to passively affirm the reigning values of filial piety,

⁴¹⁸ Futaba Kenkō, “Shinran and Human Dignity: Opening an Historic Horizon,” trans. Kenryu T. Tsuji, *Pacific World* 4 (1988): 53. See also Ugo Dessì, *Ethics and Society in Contemporary Buddhism* (Berlin: LIT Verlag Berlin-Hamburg-Münster, 2008): 111ff. for a discussion of sectarian treatments of Kiyozawa.

⁴¹⁹ Davis, “Buddhism and the Modernization of Japan,” 317.

⁴²⁰ Davis, “Buddhism and the Modernization of Japan,” 318.

⁴²¹ Sueki Fumihiko 末本文美士, “Kindai nihon no bukkō to kokka” 近代日本の仏教と国家, *Shūkyō kenkyū* 宗教研究 79.2 (2005): 326.

⁴²² Sueki, “Kindai nihon no bukkō to kokka,” 328

⁴²³ This notion of infinity is characteristic of Kiyozawa’s religious philosophy; see for example, “Finitude and infinity” (*Yūgen mugen* 有限無限), in *A Skeleton of the Philosophy of Religion* (Shūkyō tetsugaku gaikotsu 宗教哲学骸骨), in KMZ vol.1, 8-12, or *Notes on Finitude and Infinity* (*Yūgen mugen roku* 有限無限録), in KMZ vol. 2, 101-150.

patriotism, and even war (孝行も愛国も戦争も).⁴²⁴ On this view, Kiyozawa is at best anti-modern, at worst conservative or even feudalistic.⁴²⁵

Some tentatively sympathetic interpreters propose that Kiyozawa's posture toward the state might at least be understood as half-critical. Whalen Lai calls *seishinshugi* "a direct, somewhat spartan, and indeed a passive kind of escape from immoral and materialistic society," and holds that Kiyozawa, "by example and skillful means...had more impact than many a higher critic. His philosophy provided for many an inner sanctuary, an oasis of sanity, in an increasingly desolate time."⁴²⁶ Gilbert Johnston and Wakimoto Tsuneya propose that Kiyozawa's vacillation between reform and accommodation is symptomatic of a problem that would have arisen for any Meiji-period Buddhist thinker trying to reconcile "the modern view of self—a self that was at least partly emancipated from the group structures and values of traditional society and at least somewhat aware of its individual capacities and option—with a faith that placed a high value on self-negation."⁴²⁷ Kiyozawa, they argue, "never fully resolved this conflict but rather held the two sides in tension by the force of his personality, stressing absolute Other-Power faith at one time and rational self-assertion at another."⁴²⁸

Other more markedly sympathetic interpreters argue that in fact Kiyozawa's *seishinshugi* is strongly critical. Ama Toshimarō frames Kiyozawa as absolutely rejecting the bifurcation of the two truths. On Ama's reading, Kiyozawa entertains the doctrine of *shinzoku nitai* only long enough to reveal that the abjectly ordinary person is incapable

⁴²⁴ Sueki, "Kindai nihon no bukyō to kokka," 328-329.

⁴²⁵ Davis, "Buddhism and the modernization of Japan," 315-16.

⁴²⁶ Whalen Lai, "After the Reformation," 277.

⁴²⁷ Gilbert Johnston and Tsuneya Wakimoto, "Kiyozawa Manshi's 'Spiritualism,'" in *Buddhist Spirituality II: Later China, Korea, Japan, and the Modern World*, ed. Takeuchi Yoshinori (New York: Crossroad, 1999), 365.

⁴²⁸ Johnston and Tsuneya, "Kiyozawa Manshi's 'Spiritualism,'" 365.

of obeying worldly law: “it is a great misperception to think worldly truth teaching exists in order to compel people to uphold standards of human behavior or by extension to benefit society and the nation... The essential point of the teaching is to show that one is unable to carry out [these duties].”⁴²⁹ With this, Ama says, “Kiyozawa politely consigned the orthodox Shin Buddhist doctrine of the Two Truths to oblivion.”⁴³⁰ The ethical consequence of this polite refusal is a turn from morality to faith; such an “abandonment of morality,” Ama argues, is a symptom of Kiyozawa’s “success in stating that religious values are absolute.”⁴³¹ Yasutomi Shin’ya suggests that the interiority of Kiyozawa’s *seishinshugi*—his tendency toward *naikanshugi* 内観主義—should be seen as a strategy for developing a self-searching intellect, or as properly speaking, as in fact *naikankaisetsushugi* 内観解説主義, interior-elucidation-ism. It is this attitude of self-searching that should prompt us to recognize Kiyozawa’s *seishinshugi* as sharing a common concern with contemporary engaged Buddhism, insofar as the fruit of the search is an awareness of the preciousness of human existence.⁴³² On this reading, Kiyozawa appears as an early humanist. Taking a different tack, Suzumura Yusuke has argued that Kiyozawa’s “unworldliness” (*hisezokusei* 非世俗性) engages the social world as that which it negates, so that rather than being a posture which, in abandoning the world,

⁴²⁹ Cited in Ama Toshimarō, “Towards a Shin Buddhist Social Ethics,” trans. James Mark Shields, *Eastern Buddhist* 33 (2001), 44.

⁴³⁰ Ama, “Towards a Shin Buddhist Social Ethics,” 44. See also Alfred Bloom, “Kiyozawa Manshi and the Renewal of Buddhism,” on Kiyozawa’s rejection of *shinzoku nitai*.

⁴³¹ Ama, “Towards a Shin Buddhist social ethics,” 43.

⁴³² Yasutomi Shin’ya 安富信哉, “Naikanshugi—seishinshugi no hōhō” 内観主義—精神主義の方法, in *Kiyozawa Manshi: Sono hito to shisō* 清沢満之その人と思想, ed. Fujita Masakatsu and Yasutomi Shin’ya (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2002), 227-238.

winds up affirming the world's reigning values, it should be understood as sustaining a relationship of negative tension between religion and society.⁴³³

This range of responses to Kiyozawa's *seishinshugi* rests, I would submit, on the question of whether his retreat into interiority constitutes a challenge to the state or an accommodation of the state. I think that we can develop a nuanced answer to this question by attending to the ways in which Kiyozawa's emphasis on interiority both is and is not consistent with a modernist crossing-out of Amida and the Pure Land.

The Treasure Mountain and the Pure Land

Within Kiyozawa's body of work, we can find instances where he seems to cross out Amida both by elevating the Tathāgata to a transcendent realm and by removing the Tathāgata to the depths of the heart. Sometimes Kiyozawa invokes the idea of two spatially and temporally disjunct realms, governed by two disjunct laws. He identifies this world, the here and now, as finite (*yūgen* 有限), or the world of finite discrimination (有限差別の世界) setting it against the realm of infinite equality (無限平等の境界) or the infinite world (*mugenkai* 無限界).⁴³⁴ Both imperial law and conventional morality are subsumed under the category of the law that obtains in this world, which rests on a distinction between good and evil.⁴³⁵ The infinite world looms over the world—"the absolute infinite continually surrounds me on all sides"⁴³⁶—and is engaged through obedience to worldly law. In a prescriptive vein, Kiyozawa writes that "avoiding evil and

⁴³³ Suzumura Yusuke 鈴村裕輔, "Kiyozawa Manshi ni okeru shūkyō to shakai ni tsuite no shiron" 清沢満之における宗教と社会についての試論, *Hōsei Daigaku daigakuin kiyō* 法政大学大学院紀要 60 (2008): 360.

⁴³⁴ KMZ vol. 2, 126. See also Togi Michiko, "Kiyozawa Manshi no shakaikan—'Mugen byōdō' no beshōhō" 清沢満之の社会観-「無限平等」の弁証法, 社会科学研究 40.1 (1994): 103-124.

⁴³⁵ KMZ vol. 2, 126.

⁴³⁶ KMZ vol. 2, 124.

pursuing good is the only means (*hō* 法) of making contact with the infinite realm within finite discrimination.”⁴³⁷ This suggests that the inaccessible infinite works to prop up the immanent without impinging upon it, and resonates strongly with the modernist notion of a transcendent God.

And sometimes Kiyozawa invokes the idea of external and internal realms, sharply distinguishing between the two: the inner world (内象の天地) of the spirit, he says, “is a treasure mountain, vast and infinite,” while the “outer world (外象の天地) is a steep mountain, vast and limitless.... Wise men must know it foolish to descend the from treasure mountain and scale this steep peak.”⁴³⁸ This inner world is where religion finds its anchorage: “Religion is a subjective reality. As a subjective reality, we can only seek the truth of it within our own hearts (私共の各自の内心).”⁴³⁹ This identification of religion as subjective grounds Kiyozawa’s scandalous assertion that, although wish to “fly over ten thousand billion lands to investigate the existence or non-existence of the Western paradise, or burrow down one thousand *yojanas* to ascertain the existence or non-existence of the hells,” in fact the things of religion have no objective existence,⁴⁴⁰ which leads to Kiyozawa’s famous reformulation of the relationship between relative beings and the absolute: “We do not believe (*shinsuru* 信する) in *kami* and buddhas because they exist. *Kami* and buddhas exist for us (私共に対して) because we believe in them. Again, we do not believe in the hells or the Western paradise because they exist. When we believe in them, the hells and the Western paradise exist for us,”⁴⁴¹ or, as he

⁴³⁷ KMZ vol. 2, 126.

⁴³⁸ KMZ vol. 2, 106.

⁴³⁹ KMZ vol. 6, 283.

⁴⁴⁰ KMZ vol. 6, 283.

⁴⁴¹ KMZ vol. 6, 284.

puts in the *Skeleton of a Philosophy of Religion*, “he is a true Buddhist who is himself Buddha (undistinguished).”⁴⁴² Kiyozawa comments elsewhere that with the event of *shinjin*, the hells and the Western paradise acquire real existence (*genzon* 現存) as clarity of mind (心中朗として)⁴⁴³; this is possible because “religion is a subjective reality, or spiritual experience (心霊的体験). To mistake this subjective reality for objective reality, and so become caught up in a “fever dream of heaven” (楽天の酔夢) is dangerous.”⁴⁴⁴

Soga reiterates this understanding with his assertion that the Tathāgata becomes the self (如来は我なり) and so is none other than the self (如来は即ち我がなり). This identity of Tathāgata and self is, on Soga’s view, the real meaning of doctrines like *kihō ittai* (here understood as the receptive practitioner and the Tathāgata) or *busshin bonshin ittai* 仏心凡心一体 (the identity of Buddha mind and ordinary mind).⁴⁴⁵ It is possible, Soga suggests, to describe this in both objective and subjective terms: “One might say the Tathagata operates in the first person and the second person at the same time. That is, the objective truth (*kyakutai* 客体) of our moment of awakening at the same time bears upon the subjective truth (*shutai* 主体) of [the] moment of awakening.”⁴⁴⁶ But Soga himself plainly understands this first-person register as primary—

Why...is it said that the awakening of faith in its truly subjective view—as the one moment (*ichinen*) of present reality that arises as the self draws closer and closer to Tathāgata—is brought to fulfilment by an objectively viewed Tathagata?

⁴⁴² KMZ vol. 1, 140. This translation is from an English version of the *Skeleton* prepared by Noguchi Zenshiro for the 1893 World Parliament of Religions, included in Kiyozawa Manshi Zenshū.

⁴⁴³ KMZ vol. 6, 103.

⁴⁴⁴ KMZ vol 6, 59.

⁴⁴⁵ Soga Ryōjin, “Chijō no kyūshū, part one,” trans. Wayne S. Yokoyama, <http://www.shindharmanet.com/writings/soga.htm> (last accessed June 22, 2009).

⁴⁴⁶ Soga Ryōjin, “Chijō no kyūshū, part two,” trans. Wayne S. Yokoyama, <http://www.shindharmanet.com/writings/soga2.htm> (last accessed June 22, 2009).

It would seem obvious that the awakening of faith as such should be understood as garnering that purely subjective perspective on our true mission in life (*shin seimei* 新生命). This and this alone cannot be brought to fulfilment by a Tathagata objectively viewed.⁴⁴⁷

The suggestion here—recalling more than anything else the early Chan critiques of Western-direction Pure Land—is clearly that the serious practitioner will understand Amida as a subjective reality, rather than as externally, objectively real. Tokunaga characterizes Soga’s work as an effort “to find Amida at the deepest depth of one’s existence, in which sense Amida cannot be objectified as something existing over-against us.”⁴⁴⁸

It is easy to understand why this looks like heterodoxy—the implication here is that Amida and the Pure Land are fancies, or delusions. The substantive difference between the modern heterodoxy and the modern orthodoxy, however, seems to me quite subtle: once we understand devotion to Amida as occupying a space deep within the heart, at the level of emotion, and given that the modern orthodoxy does not seem to entertain the possibility of a face-to-face encounter with an objectively real Buddha in this world—this would constitute an anti-secular fanaticism—it does not seem so unreasonable to suggest that Amida’s reality is basically a subjective reality. The problem with Kiyozawa and Soga, I submit, is not that they too radically interiorize Amida and the Pure Land, but that they do so without the complementary movement of elevation to a transcendent realm.

⁴⁴⁷ Soga Ryōjin, “Chijō no kyūshū, part two.”

⁴⁴⁸ Michio Tokunaga, “Mahāyāna Essence As Seen in the Concept of ‘Return to This World’,” *Pacific World* 9 (1993): 3.

Despite Kiyozawa's positing of an infinite world beneficently looming overhead, he is circumspect about the reality of a transcendent Pure Land yet to come: "The Tathāgata of my belief renders me great happiness (*kōfuku* 幸福) while in this world (*gense* 現世), even before the advent of an after-life (来世を待たず)...It is the happiness I acutely experience day and night. I shall not speak of happiness in the next life here, since I have not experienced it myself."⁴⁴⁹ This happiness is to be had now, not deferred to a transcendent afterlife, so Kiyozawa's *seishinshugi* does not inculcate patient waiting. Soga is even more explicit about his refusal to defer:

The six character name Na-mu A-mi-da Butsu is the principle for Birth in everyday life...and that is enough, for there is nothing lacking in it. In a once-and-for-all abandonment we dwell in a state of non-retrogression in the present life. One is greatly mistaken if he thinks that this non-retrogression is only half of the benefit of the Primal Vow, that the second half is still on deposit. What we now have would then be half, but the lesser and worthless half. It would only be precious because of that second half, the future unsurpassable cessation.⁴⁵⁰

This gradual movement might be appropriate for the path of sages (!), Soga suggests, but not for the path of Other-power, which is immediate and all-embracing. In the introduction to his "The Saviour on Earth," Soga indicates that he feels compelled not to challenge the image of the transcendent Western paradise—"I am...at a loss with what to do with the concept of the Land of Bliss, that realm which [lies] tens of thousands of millions of Buddha-lands to the west. But, as I cannot imagine this world of present

⁴⁴⁹ KMZ vol. 6, 162-163; Bandō, "My Faith," 9.

⁴⁵⁰ Soga Ryōjin, "The Core of Shinshū," trans. Jan Van Bragt, *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 11.2-3 (1984): 235.

reality to be the Land of Bliss, then whether I like it or not I have to capitulate to the Land of Bliss in the west”⁴⁵¹—but by the conclusion, he has plainly settled this problem in favour of a transcendence-in-immanence: “Dharmakara Bodhisattva does not establish the Pure Land after the eternal kalpas of practice; he establishes the Pure Land anew with each moment of vow-practice, with each new self. . . . here and now we have the Vow ship of the present. As long as we have this ship, as distant as the Pure Land of peace and joy may be, it is at the same time rather close at hand.”⁴⁵² The line of thought which leads Kiyozawa to identify the religious person as one for whom the subjective self and the Buddha are indistinguishable is, through Soga’s interpretation, extended into a claim that the Pure Land too must be identical to the “new self” established through *nenbutsu*. Both Kiyozawa and Soga then can be seen as demythologizers, in that they effectively deny not only the image of Amida and his Pure Land as externally, objectively real, separate from the practitioner, but also even the value of this image as myth. I would suggest that there is some irony in the fact that the myth they are reacting against is a modern one,⁴⁵³ but this does not make their demythologizing less interesting.

I want to argue though that it does lead in turn to a construal of the Pure Land that is not wholly modern—the demythologized Pure Land is going to be an immanent Pure Land that is not, however, strictly internal. As noted above, Kiyozawa’s critics charge that his *seishinshugi* fosters disengagement or disinterest in the world. I don’t think this charge is sustainable. Alfred Bloom suggests that Kiyozawa “distinguishes sharply

⁴⁵¹ Soga, “Chijō no kyūshū, part one.”

⁴⁵² Soga, “Chijō no kyūshū, part two.”

⁴⁵³ Perhaps without realizing that this is so: Soga comments, “up to the present day, the doctrine of Shin Buddhism invariably focuses on one thing, namely, future birth in the Pure Land. There is indeed talk of non-retrogression in the present life and Birth in the midst of everyday life, but, all in all, we simply continue a tradition that does not get free from the expectation of the saving appearance of Amida at the moment of death”; see “The Core of Shinshū,” 221.

between the Infinite and the finite,”⁴⁵⁴ but when we look at the text to which Bloom is referring—the *Skeleton*—we find that this is not the end of things. Kiyozawa draws the distinction between the infinite and the finite as part of a grander project of unifying them: “At first, the Infinite is outside (so to say) of the finite and the finite outside of the Infinite. Then the Infinite enters into the finite or the finite has the Infinite. Finally the Infinite becomes or is one with the finite or the finite becomes or is one with the Infinite. Such is religion and its stages.”⁴⁵⁵ In other words, the person who realizes, subjectively, the unity of self and Buddha also realizes the unity of finity and infinity. But because finity is identified not with the infinite realm of interiority but with the external world of difference, this has to mean that for the realized person, the truth of the infinite—identified with the Tathāgata—is omnipresent (*henzai* 遍在) in all ten thousand things (*banbutsu* 万物),⁴⁵⁶ and this in turn draws that realized person out of a strict interiority and back into relations with that noumenal (*hontai* 本体) world.⁴⁵⁷

We have seen Kiyozawa assert that happiness is granted to him in this world through contact with the Tathāgata; if the Tathāgata becomes pervasively present in the external world through the realized person’s subjective unification of the infinite and the finite, it follows that contact with that external world produces happiness. So, Kiyozawa says, “spiritualism increases the joy (*kōraku* 幸樂) of the self and others through relationships with other people and external things.”⁴⁵⁸ For the person of *seishinshugi* in fact there is no asking whether the absolute infinite exists within (*nai*) or without (*soto*),

⁴⁵⁴ Alfred Bloom, “Kiyozawa Manshi and the Revitalization of Buddhism,” 3.

⁴⁵⁵ KMZ vol. 1, 141.

⁴⁵⁶ KMZ vol. 6, 43.

⁴⁵⁷ KMZ vol. 6, 162; Bandō, “My Faith,” 7.

⁴⁵⁸ KMZ vol. 6, 4.

because the absolute infinite makes contact wherever the person seeks it⁴⁵⁹; the form of this absolute “does not exist at a distance, removed from the things of the finite,” and can only be seen by seeing “the difference into which it dissolves.”⁴⁶⁰ The pinnacle of this happiness comes when the fact of the pervasiveness of the absolute is realized as an extension of the status of the absolute to everything—“Once you are touched by the compassionate light of the Tathāgata, there will be nothing you should find disagreeable, nothing you should find detestable; everything is lovable, deserving of respect, and all the things of this world beam with light. Heaven (*rakuten*), so to speak, is this situation.”⁴⁶¹ This is the space of the Pure Land refigured as an immanent utopia or heterotopia.

Just so, for Soga, practice is aimed at realizing the unity of practitioner and Tathāgata, or the Pure Land established in each thought-moment and the distant *kōmyōdo* 光明土 (radiant land) of the eternal Tathāgata.⁴⁶² The symbol of this unity is Dharmākara Bodhisattva, who on the one hand is described as appearing where the radiance of the Tathāgata mingles with the dust of the world in order to bridge the gap between Tathāgata and practitioner,⁴⁶³ and on the other hand as “born by appearing directly in the hearts and thoughts of we members of humankind.”⁴⁶⁴ In other words, there is in Soga as in Kiyozawa a kind of tension between two possibilities: the Pure Land, understood as a space established through the unity or mingling of the Tathāgata and the practitioner, can be construed both as established secretly within the depths of the heart or as established

⁴⁵⁹ KMZ vol. 6, 3.

⁴⁶⁰ KMZ vol. 6, 28. This language seems meant to recall the doctrine of *wakō dōjin* 和光同塵, dimming the radiance and mingling with the dust, one of the two theories syncretizing Buddhas and *kami* that informs the medieval *kenmitsu taisei* 顕密体制. Ives comments on the use of these theories by imperialist authors (see “The Mobilization of Doctrine,” 98), but it seems to me that in the context of the Meiji policy of *shinbutsu bunri* 神仏分離, they may also be thought to possess some latent critical potential.

⁴⁶¹ KMZ vol. 6, 78.

⁴⁶² Soga, “Chijō no kyūshū, part two,” 7.

⁴⁶³ Soga, “Chijō no kyūshū, part one,” 3.

⁴⁶⁴ Soga, “Chijō no kyūshū, part one” 4.

externally in the world. Tokunaga elides these two possibilities when he identifies Soga as one among a group of thinkers who “equate Amida and Pure Land with our inmost self and this actual world in which we are living”⁴⁶⁵; it seems to me, however, that the critical potential of Kiyozawa and Soga’s thought lies in this second possibility, which takes the image of the happy land and makes it utopian by indicating that this land is to be shared with other people. This Pure Land utopia is set against the interests and values of the really existing state.

Kiyozawa’s Public Servant

To make sense of this, I think we have to pay attention to Kiyozawa’s notion of nonsupplication, which can be misread as simply passive acceptance. As a man of his time, Kiyozawa is interested in the liberal values of not only happiness but also individual sovereignty and equality. At some moments in fact he seems in thrall to the promises of liberalism, identifying *seishinshugi* as encouraging “cooperation and concord,” through which to foster “the welfare (*fukushi* 福祉) of society and the state. Spiritualism is complete liberalism (*jiyūshugi* 自由主義).”⁴⁶⁶ The model of this cooperation and concord is the “united group action of the Diet,” which action ought to consist of “the receptivity of the many toward the active motion of one.”⁴⁶⁷ Here Kiyozawa gets caught up in two contradictions entailed by what I understand to be his liberalism. The first is that the state, which is the guarantor of each citizen’s individual sovereignty, is granted coercive authority in the name of extending sovereignty to all

⁴⁶⁵ Tokunaga, “Mahāyāna Essence,” 5.

⁴⁶⁶ KMZ vol. 6, 4.

⁴⁶⁷ KMZ vol. 6, 99.

citizens. This coercive authority is suggested in Kiyozawa's account of how cooperative participation in state projects follows from *seishinshugi*:

Although another's body and another's fortune are his own, if I approach him about following me in some project for the sake of the world or the state, or for the sake of a perfectly moral friendship, he should certainly offer his body and his fortune to aid me in this. It is not at all that I take the body and fortune of another for my own use—rather that I too should be used by him as well. If we are able to use these bodies and these fortunes mutually, I become a master of the realm (*hokkai no shu* 法界の主) and he too becomes a master of the realm.⁴⁶⁸

It is possible to imagine how a passage like this could be used to mobilize Kiyozawa's thought on behalf of a project of imperialist expansion. The second seems to me to follow from Kiyozawa's decision to assign equality to the realm of the transcendent. As a liberal, he has to insist that equality obtains in the real world as well, and sometimes posits an equality-in-difference, or what Davis wryly refers to as "orderly (i.e., unequal) equality"⁴⁶⁹: "In this world of difference, grasp the concept of equality. The result of this would be that those who are higher (上にある) lead the lower (下), those who are lower follow the higher, and there would be peaceful accord of higher and lower (上下輯穆).⁴⁷⁰ Again, it is easy to imagine how a passage like this could be used to mobilize Kiyozawa's thought on behalf of a project of imperialist colonization. Given these limits, we cannot argue that Kiyozawa's *seishinshugi* is a thoroughgoing critique of the extant modern nation-state. However, the kind of independent person imagined by *seishinshugi* is

⁴⁶⁸ KMZ vol. 2, 146.

⁴⁶⁹ Davis, "Buddhism and the Modernization of Japan," 328.

⁴⁷⁰ KMZ vol. 2, 127.

antithetical to the state's good citizen, and for this reason, we cannot argue that *seishinshugi* is simply accommodationist—it shows some signs of resistance.

The liberal state and Kiyozawa's Pure Land utopia differ in that, although independence or individual sovereignty is the telos of both, where in the liberal state, the state itself guarantees the sovereignty of the citizen, in Kiyozawa's utopia, the individual secures sovereignty by going "beyond fears of the problem of life-and-death... Banishment is welcome. Imprisonment is bearable. How should we be concerned with censures, rejections, or humiliations? Rather let us enjoy above all else what has been accorded to us by the absolute and the infinite."⁴⁷¹ Welcoming banishment or exile here represents an affirmation of independence that is not at all congenial to the nation-state's conception of citizenship. What is the mechanism by which this independence is secured, and why, moreover, does it ensure happiness?

The independence acquired through *seishinshugi* is gained through insight into the fact that "nothing lies within the domain of our own will" but it is actualized as feeling no lack [*fusoku* 不足], "no matter what is given to you."⁴⁷² On Kiyozawa's understanding then, we can say that dependence—"running after external things, following others"⁴⁷³—is what produces a feeling of lack, or need. This need (or in more classically Buddhist terms, this craving) is expressed as demand. And because what one demands is always more than what one needs (or because one's craving goes perpetually unsatisfied), the transformation of need into demand gives rise to an excess, felt as desire.⁴⁷⁴ Kiyozawa

⁴⁷¹ KMZ vol. 6, 110; Bandō, "The Great Path," 5.

⁴⁷² KMZ vol. 6, 111-112; Bandō, "The Great Path," 6 and 7.

⁴⁷³ KMZ vol. 6, 112; Bandō, "The Great Path," 6.

⁴⁷⁴ Here I am following Slavoj Žižek's formulation—"Desire is what in demand is irreducible to need: if we subtract need from demand, we get desire"—of Lacan's triad of need-demand-desire. Lacan writes that desire "is neither the appetite for satisfaction, nor the demand for love, but the difference that results from

moves to solve the problem of desire by addressing the gap between need and demand:

“Do not supplicate. Do not demand. What is lacking in you? If you feel any lack, does it not testify to your unbelief? Has the Tathāgata not given you all that is necessary for you? Even if what has been given is not sufficient, is it not true that there could be nothing else truly satisfying to you?”⁴⁷⁵ Notice that here Kiyozawa does not claim that there are no needs, or even that every need is met. Instead, he insists that need not turn into demand. This is, in one sense, a kind of passivity, in that the person of *seishinshugi* on this understanding necessarily makes no expressive demands. But it seems to me more significant that, for Kiyozawa, this refusal of expressive demand prevents the arising of lack, and consequently, forestalls the generation of desire. The person of *seishinshugi*, making no demands, is freed from the desire that produces subject and objects—“content in oneself, not demanding anything, not quarrelling.”⁴⁷⁶ This dynamic underlies the apparent contradiction in Kiyozawa’s suggestion that absolute dependence on other power allows one to “manifest a great cause of independence and freedom.”⁴⁷⁷ Absolute dependence means a dependence so thoroughgoing that one does not make demands, or have expectations of others—this, Kiyozawa says, “would be mean and low...an insult to the Tathāgata’s great command (如来の大命).”⁴⁷⁸ Because the person of *seishinshugi*

the subtraction of the first from the second, the phenomenon of their splitting”; see Žižek, *Tarrying with the Negative* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 121 and Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Tavistock, 1977), 287.

⁴⁷⁵ KMZ vol. 6, 111; Bandō, “The Great Path,” 6.

⁴⁷⁶ KMZ vol. 6, 112; Bandō, “The Great Path,” 7.

⁴⁷⁷ KMZ vol. 6, 112; Bandō, “The Great Path,” 7.

⁴⁷⁸ KMZ vol. 6, 111; Bandō, “The Great Path,” 6. In the context of Shinshū, this is crystallized in Shinran’s declaration that “I have no idea whether the *nenbutsu* is truly the seed for my being born in the Pure Land or whether it is the karmic act for which I must fall into hell. Should I have been deceived by Master Hōnen and, saying the *nenbutsu*, were to fall into hell, even then I would have no regrets. The reason is, if I could attain Buddhahood by endeavoring in other practices, but said the *nenbutsu* and so fell into hell, then I would feel regret at having been deceived. But I am incapable of any other practice, so hell is decidedly my abode whatever I do”; see *Tannishō* 2 (SS 832-833).

does not make demands, she does not position the other as the source of satisfaction; she is thus free of the other as an object of desire and can act independently. This freedom from desire is real happiness—“freedom of spirit (精神の自由), liberation (*tokudatsu* 得脱), satisfaction (*manzoku* 満足).”⁴⁷⁹ In fact Kiyozawa implies that the only difference between other Pure Land believers and himself is that they are content to defer that happiness to “the hereafter (*shōrai* 将来)” while he experiences it in the present.⁴⁸⁰

This independence, not granted by the state, works against the interests of the state. The person of *seishinshugi*, not making any demands herself, is not subject to the demands of the other—she is not called upon to respond.⁴⁸¹ Kiyozawa talks about this nonresponsiveness as a freedom from responsibility—the Tathāgata “deigns to assume entire responsibility for all my acts” and so “[t]here is no need for me to discriminate between good and evil, just and unjust. Whether they are errors or crimes, I do not worry at all over my actions...I am able to rest in continual peace (平安に住する) by simply putting my faith in this Tathāgata.”⁴⁸² We know already that the dichotomy of good and evil drives both imperial law and conventional morality; here Kiyozawa is saying not only that the person of *seishinshugi* is not bound by everyday morality but also that she is not obligated to uphold the imperial law. This freedom from obligation coupled with nonsupplication ensures that the person of *seishinshugi* is not subject to coercion; even

⁴⁷⁹ KMZ 6, 26.

⁴⁸⁰ “They keep wishing vaguely for the distant future, and do not try to have it now. They keep looking forward to the sublime bliss of the Pure Land (*kōfuku myōgaku* 幸福妙樂) yet to be received, outside the mind (心霊上に), in a faint, far away hereafter, and do not try to have it here and now (*tadaima* 唯今). This is a very bad way of thinking, for *we are not, now, in the hereafter but in the present*”; see KMZ vol. 6, 26; Kiyozawa’s emphasis.

⁴⁸¹ We can usefully contrast this to the exemplary Pure Land citizens of the Meiji, who asserted that “hard work was identical to believing in the Sacred Vow of Amida”; see Davis, “Buddhism and the modernization of Japan,” 325.

⁴⁸² KMZ vol. 6, 164; Bandō, “My Faith,” 10.

the state's most total forms of punishment—banishment, or exile, and death—are welcomed. So this aspect of *seishinshugi* works against the coercive authority of the state by positioning the person of *seishinshugi* in a heterotopian space, not subject to state authority. This refusal of the normative morality of the state is itself a counter-morality—that is to say, it is itself a way of renegotiating the terms of one's engagement in the public sphere, which is demonstrated, I think, by Kiyozawa's suggestion that from this standpoint of independence, it becomes possible to genuinely enter into public service.

When he takes up the theme of public service, Kiyozawa shifts momentarily to a Confucian register, identifying the public with Heaven (公の天なり), before suggesting that the public is an agent of great compassion (*daijihisha* 大慈悲者), and therefore, “to act for the sake of the public is to take part in that great compassion.”⁴⁸³ The ideal public servant has the virtues of the world-renouncer: “Genuine public mindedness is to throw oneself wholly into the public and to be able to recognize the self only in terms of the public. One's self must be *forgotten entirely*.”⁴⁸⁴ This is the kind of rhetoric of sacrifice that will be pressed into service for the imperial state in the twentieth century. But in Kiyozawa, the ideal of homelessness complicates the rhetoric. The motto of the public servant, Kiyozawa writes, must be “no dwelling place—give rise to this mind” (応無所往而生其心)⁴⁸⁵; they must be those who have “forgotten themselves and become no-self

⁴⁸³ KMZ vol. 2, 128.

⁴⁸⁴ KMZ vol. 2, 130.

⁴⁸⁵ KMZ vol. 2, 133; this phrase from the Diamond Sūtra is indicated in some versions of the Platform Sūtra as having prompted Huineng's awakening—see Yampolsky, *The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch*, 94 n.18.

(*muga* 無我); their minds without any fixed place to dwell.”⁴⁸⁶ From this standpoint of non-abiding, they “move (*undō* 運動) in society, filled with vitality.”⁴⁸⁷

The broader context of Japanese Buddhism gives us at least two ways to understand “no dwelling place.” We might understand it as referring to world-renunciation or reclusion, drawing on the imagery of the *hijri*’s homelessness⁴⁸⁸ or Kamo no Chōmei’s (1155–1216) retreat from the world of the capital into his ten-foot-square hut.⁴⁸⁹ Or we might understand it as referring to the activity of the bodhisattva immersed in the world of suffering, or what Gadjin Nagao describes as “dependently co-arising reengagement with the world through the non-abiding cessation of the bodhisattva.”⁴⁹⁰ The first reading may be more intuitive, and more in keeping with the standard view of *seishinshugi* as passive retreat, but I think the second reading is correct: the person of *seishinshugi*, from a singular standpoint outside society, acts in society as a bodhisattva. This kind of person has the appearance of a layperson, but the heart of a monk (*gaizoku naisō* 外俗内僧).⁴⁹¹

Kiyozawa posits a parallel between the manner in which one is active in serving the public and the manner in which Amida is active in the world. As Tathāgata, Amida’s

⁴⁸⁶ KMZ vol. 2, 133.

⁴⁸⁷ KMZ vol. 2, 133.

⁴⁸⁸ As in Kūya’s proclamation, “Since there’s nothing fixed upon in the mind, with sunset I cease my travel. Since there’s no settled abode for the body, with daybreak I depart. The robe of forbearance is ample; no stick or tile or stone causes pain. The room of compassion is spacious; no abuse or slander is heard”; cited in Dennis Hirota, *No Abode: The Record of Ippen* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1997), 118.

⁴⁸⁹ Chōmei writes, on the subject of houses, “It is the way of people when they build houses not to build them for themselves, but for their wives and family and relations, and to entertain their friends, or it may be their patrons or teachers, or to accommodate their valuables or horses or oxen. But I have built mine for my own needs and not for other people. And for the good that reason that I have neither companion nor dependant, so that if I built it larger who would there be to occupy it”; see “Hōjōki,” 18. Chōmei’s hermitage is thus marked by solitude.

⁴⁹⁰ Gadjin Nagao, *The Foundational Standpoint of Mādhyamika Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 54.

⁴⁹¹ See Blum, “Kiyozawa Manshi and the Meaning of Buddhist Ethics,” 73; notice the striking difference between this and Shinran’s own characterization of himself as having the appearance of a monk and the heart of a fool.

“potentiality (*nōryoku* 能力),” Kiyozawa says, “comprehends the ten directions and acts freely and unrestrictedly (自由自在無障無礙).”⁴⁹² The person of *seishinshugi*, altruistically minded (*ritashin* 利他心)⁴⁹³ operates in the same way. From this unrestricted standpoint free from demands and responsibility, it is possible to encounter others in their activities “at the same time and in the same place, without any conflict or difference. This is the realm (*kyōgai* 境界) of ‘perfect, unobstructed interpenetration’ (*en’yū muge* 円融無礙).”⁴⁹⁴ The possibility of free and unrestricted activity in the world is realized then when one acts on behalf of the Tathāgata. This free and unrestricted activity is morally good activity, because its source is the Tathāgata or the absolute, and the mind (*i’nen* 意念) of the absolute consists in the cessation of evil and doing of good⁴⁹⁵—the categorical imperative (*mujō meihō* 无上命令) is thus given to us, as finite beings, from the absolute infinite.⁴⁹⁶ But it is not possible to fulfill the categorical imperative, or act in a morally good way, unless one has already secured the independence—or peace of mind⁴⁹⁷—that comes along with the homelessness of *seishinshugi*. This means that the ordinary citizen actually cannot be expected to fulfill the demands of the categorical imperative. Only the person who is irresponsible to authority can fulfill these demands. It is from the standpoint of exile then, that one enters into public service.

Kiyozawa’s ideal society is one composed exclusively of these kinds of sovereign individuals—it is a society “where the progress of morality has reached its height, where

⁴⁹² KMZ vol. 2, 164; Bandō, “My faith,” 10.

⁴⁹³ KMZ vol. 2, 128.

⁴⁹⁴ KMZ vol. 2, 146.

⁴⁹⁵ KMZ vol. 2, 136.

⁴⁹⁶ KMZ vol. 2, 138.

⁴⁹⁷ See Johnston and Tsuneya, “Kiyozawa Manshi’s ‘Spiritualism,’” 364.

men's self-consciousness of their independence is full, and the best of modesty and decency is achieved humbly and without materialistic desire, through the mutual help of millions of people whose inclinations are different from one another."⁴⁹⁸ This utopian image problematizes the actually-existing state and its use of coercive moral authority for the sake of preserving and expanding its own sovereignty. So I think we can find in Kiyozawa the seed for an image of a community not identical to the contemporary liberal nation-state. As an educator, Kiyozawa seems to me to have tried to produce sovereign individuals in order to give rise to this ideal society— Alfred Bloom suggests that Kiyozawa's ideal was that an education at Shinshū Daigaku would "enrich human life and build self-confidence and self-reliance through the study of Buddhism"; the purpose of such an education was "to prepare students to participate effectively in the modern world."⁴⁹⁹ I think Bloom is right, but that the words he chooses here need careful consideration. Kiyozawa himself says that the aim of religious education is faith. As we know, on his understanding faith attained when the person of *seishinshugi* finds the absolute—this resituates the person of faith in an impregnable position from within which it is possible to venture forth as a master of the realm.⁵⁰⁰ In making faith the aim of education then, Kiyozawa necessarily makes education a process whereby one becomes absolutely independent; the function of the educator is to lead students toward independence. "Self-confidence and self-reliance" then should not be understood in a weak sense, as a readiness to assume the adult responsibilities of pitching in on state projects, but in the strongest possible sense, as the self-containment that makes it possible

⁴⁹⁸ This translation is from Tajima Kunji and Floyd Shacklock's translation of Kiyozawa's December Fan diary, included in *Selected Essays of Manshi Kiyozawa* (Kyoto: Bukkyō Bunka Society, 1936), 180.

⁴⁹⁹ Alfred Bloom, "Kiyozawa Manshi and the Path to the Revitalization of Buddhism," 23.

⁵⁰⁰ KMZ vol. 2, 146.

to welcome banishment or bear imprisonment. It thus strikes me that the student who achieves this is prepared to participate effectively in the modern world in a very particular sense—it's true that, on Kiyozawa's understanding, public service is both predicated upon and the natural outcome of this kind of independence, but nonetheless, this is not the sort of participation prescribed by the state. However naturally the person of *seishinshugi* may abide by *ōbō*, she is not a reliable citizen: first, because she cannot be induced to feel responsible for her actions, whether good or bad; second, because she cannot be coerced to behave in one way or another; and third, because in refusing the separation of the immanent and the transcendent into separate realms, she refuses the crossing out that allows Amida to serve as impotent guarantor—she is not secular, and neither is her Buddha, however demythologized he may be. Kiyozawa's program thus, it seems to me, does not prepare students to go along with modernity so much as it prepares them to assume a critical posture with respect to extant social and religious formations and press for reform—this is how they would “participate in the modern world.”

Gensō as the Return to the Pure Land

Soga too, it seems to me, points toward the possibility that the Pure Land is established on earth through the bodhisattva-like activity of human beings. On Soga's understanding, however, this bodhisattva is understood specifically as Dharmākara Bodhisattva. This follows from the position that it is Dharmākara who represents the activity of undertaking and pursuing the original vow on behalf of all sentient beings, and Amida who represents the fulfillment or fruition of the vow, such that Dharmākara and Amida stand in inextricable relation to each other as child and parent. Wherever the vow is active then, that activity is the activity of Dharmākara Bodhisattva. This means that when the self

participates in the activity of the vow, the self's activity is the activity of Dharmākara Bodhisattva: "Dharmākara Bodhisattva is I."⁵⁰¹ The self only participates in the activity of the vow, however, once having been grasped by Other-power and attained the stage of non-retrogression⁵⁰²; in other words, it is not until one is born into the Pure Land in the midst of everyday life—the moment when Amida becomes the self—that it becomes possible to realize the self as Dharmākara Bodhisattva. This has a couple of surprising implications.

The first is the introduction of a new heterochrony. Already because of the understanding that Amida's life is limitless, it is strange to suggest that at some moment in time there was only Dharmākara, not yet become Amida. For this reason though, to the best of my knowledge it is standard for premodern Pure Land thinkers to identify Dharmākara as only an emanation in history of Amida—Amida is the totality, and Dharmākara a brief, time-limited expression of that totality which however has in the present come to an end. Soga, however, has Dharmākara actively existing in both the past and the present, or better, in time but eternally. Because Dharmākara represents both time (and so finite sentient beings) and eternity (and so the infinite absolute Tathāgata), it is now Dharmākara, and not Amida, who represents the totality.⁵⁰³ This means that when, as the self, one attains the stage of non-retrogression—that is, on Soga's terms, when the Pure Land is achieved and nothing is left on deposit—one then is the agent working in the present to establish the land in which one is already settled. In terms of sequence then we seem to have a heterochrony in which future fruit (attainment of birth) and past activity (establishment of the land) occur simultaneously in the present moment.

⁵⁰¹ Soga, "The Core of Shinshū," 241; repeated on 242.

⁵⁰² Soga, "The Core of Shinshū," 241.

⁵⁰³ Soga, "Chijō no kyūshū, part two."

This combines with Soga's strong refusal of a Pure Land realized outside of this world and comes to bear on the notion of *ōsō* and *gensō*. In chapter 2, we came across Minor Rogers' suggestion that Rennyo concentrated heavily on *ōsō*, or "attainment of birth in the Pure Land and realization of enlightenment" and not very much on *gensō*, "a subsequent return to this defiled world to save others." I suspect that the terms of this critique are actually informed by developments in the tradition that follow upon Soga's intervention—more on this later—but if we take seriously the assertion that the Pure Land is fully attained in this world through non-retrogression, it is not clear that we can translate *ōsō* and *gensō* as going to the Pure Land and returning to this world, since that spatial movement does not appear to take place. Moreover, the *gensō* activity of returning to the world as a bodhisattva (called Dharmākara) is in Soga's interpretation made simultaneous with the *ōsō* activity of striving for the Pure Land (itself first undertaken by a bodhisattva called Dharmākara). This can be resolved by eliding *ōsō* and *gensō*, such that the Pure Land comes into view not as a stable space but as the movement of going forth and returning. There is a seed for this, I think, in Kiyozawa's discussion of the finite and the infinite as caught up in a drawn-out dialogical movement between *ruten* 流転 and *genmetsu* 還滅. *Ruten* can be understood as samsara, but it also has the more literal meaning of flux; *genmetsu* is the cutting off of samsara that attends nirvana. *Ruten* and *genmetsu* are intuitively conceived as two different possibilities, or two gates, one leading to ongoing rebirth and one leading to escape from rebirth (*rutenmon* 流転門). On Kiyozawa's view, however, *ruten* and *genmetsu* condition each other: *ruten* "is our way

of thinking of the finite, as proceeding from the infinite, and [*genmetsu*] is the return of the finite into the infinite.”⁵⁰⁴

In Soga’s thought, this activity of plying back and forth is imaged as the heterotopia of the vow ship, which is itself a symbol of Dharmākara, and so of the absolute unity of practitioner and Tathāgata. The vow ship is, on the one hand, a space of peace and happiness set apart from the ordinary world: “When we step aboard the great Vow ship of compassion, our ideals at last match with our realities for the first time, and the sea of human life with its suffering of conflicting realities as such becomes a vast sea of Light radiating in fullness and in all its unimpeded glory.”⁵⁰⁵ And yet the significance of the vow ship, Soga asserts, is that it does not depart from the sea of suffering—to be aboard the vow ship or to be the vow ship means not to be floating in air, to be in contact with “the great sea of conflicting realities.”⁵⁰⁶ Foucault refers to the boat as “a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea....the heterotopia *par excellence*.”⁵⁰⁷ Without pushing this point of contact too far, I want to suggest that the image of the vow ship has a deep critical potential—if it is an image of attainment of the Pure Land, it is also an image of that attainment established as a necessary remaining in the world, actively engaged in the conflicting realities of the world. *Gensō* then—the participation in the saving activity of the vow—is here identical with *ōsō*, establishment in the Pure Land. *Gensō* is not a returning movement from the Pure Land, but a returning movement as the Pure Land.

⁵⁰⁴ Tajima and Shacklock, trans, *Selected Essays*, 145.

⁵⁰⁵ Soga, “Chijō no kyūshū, part one.”

⁵⁰⁶ Soga, “Chijō no kyūshū, part one.”

⁵⁰⁷ Foucault, “Of Other Spaces.”

Thinkers in the generations following Soga have worked to centre *gensō* in Pure Land thought; the sense that this is the properly Shinshū view of things is, I think, what gives rise to Rogers' critical analysis of Rennyo. Tokunaga asserts that “*shinjin* or *nenbutsu* as revealed by Shinran is nothing but the Mahāyāna Bodhisattva path, and... it is the concept of ‘return to this world’ (*gensō-ekō*) which fulfills the actual significance of the Mahāyāna Bodhisattva path to its utmost.”⁵⁰⁸ Taitetsu Unno—responding to Tachikawa Musashi's suggestion that the world “was on the whole disregarded as a problem in Amidist faith”⁵⁰⁹—comments that “[f]or Shinran, the Pure Land is a mere way station from which one returns to this world of pain. This ‘aspect of return’ (*gensō-ekō*) awaits to be fully developed by Shin Buddhists concerned with questions of time and history.”⁵¹⁰ Alfred Bloom calls *gensō* “the goal of religion.”⁵¹¹ If the contemporary institution has not been an activist one, it is not because the ethical resources are not already there in Shinran, this line of argument goes; rather, it is because of “the chasm that exists between the actual teachings of Shinran and the socially passive stance of contemporary institutions.”⁵¹²

A contrarian view of *gensō* is also suggested by at least one contemporary Shinshū thinker. John Paraskevopoulos affirms the instrumental value of the notion of *gensō*—“It helps us to cultivate the correct attitude to our fellow creatures in conformity

⁵⁰⁸ Tokunaga, “Mahāyāna Essence,” 2.

⁵⁰⁹ Tachikawa Musashi, “The World and Amida Buddha,” in *Toward a Contemporary Understanding of Pure Land Buddhism: Creating a Shin Buddhist Theology in a Religiously Plural World*, ed. Dennis Hirota (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000): 232.

⁵¹⁰ Taitetsu Unno, Review of *Toward a Contemporary Understanding of Pure Land Buddhism: Creating a Shin Buddhist Theology in a Religiously Plural World*, ed. Dennis Hirota, *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 22 (2002): 213-214.

⁵¹¹ Bloom and Habito, *The Essential Shinran*, 221.

⁵¹² Kenneth K. Tanaka, “Concern for Others in Pure Land Soteriological and Ethical Considerations: The Case of *Jōgyō-daihi* in Jōdo-Shinshū Buddhism,” in *Buddhist Theology: Critical Reflections by Contemporary Buddhist Scholars*, ed. John J. Makransky and Roger Jackson (New York: Routledge, 2000), 347.

with the spirit of compassion, as well as acting as a salutary corrective to individualistic and narrow-minded tendencies in our spiritual aspirations. It is, indeed, a very vivid and moving way of reminding us of our profound spiritual link with all beings”⁵¹³—but refuses *gensō* as the goal of religion writing that nirvana “is, unarguably, the final goal of all beings: not this endless process of returning. *Gensō-ekō* is surely not an end in itself.”⁵¹⁴ Paraskevopoulos’s rejection of *gensō* as an end in itself brings to the surface a complication which seems to me to be significant, namely that in making return to the world of birth and death for the sake of liberating others from that very world the “goal of religion,” one would seem to become caught up in an endless, purposeless series of returns. Another way of framing this problem is to suggest that in so strongly refusing a strictly transcendent Pure Land, Kiyozawa and Soga may leave themselves open to the charge that they are positing a strictly immanent Pure Land, that is, a Pure Land which is reducible to this world and so difficult to preserve as a space of critical difference. Fujita Masakatsu points to this as a potential problem in Kiyozawa’s thought, commenting that “to me, there is one problem in looking at things in such a way, which is, we risk falling into an affirmation of the finite as it is, or, in other words, absolutizing the finite.”⁵¹⁵ In other words, Kiyozawa and Soga move away from patient hope, and reintroduce the Pure Land as heterotopia, but may not deliver critical hope—which makes perfect sense, I think, given their shared conviction that nothing is lacking, so nothing can be missing. In the thinkers we will consider in the next chapters, I believe we will see how a sense of something missing drives a still stronger critique of the present reality.

⁵¹³ John Paraskevopoulos, “Reflections on *gensō-ekō*,” <http://www.nembutsu.info/gensoeko2.htm> (last accessed June 9, 2009).

⁵¹⁴ Paraskevopoulos, “Reflections on *gensō-ekō*.”

⁵¹⁵ Fujita Masakatsu, “Kiyozawa Manshi and Nishida Kitarō,” *Eastern Buddhist* 35.1-2 (2003): 47.

At the beginning of this chapter, I suggested that the traditional orthodoxy of a strictly transcendent Pure Land to be reached only after death originates as an element of an effort to modernize Shinshū. The great modernizers of the tradition should thus be understood not as modernizers after all, but rather as moderns, that is, as thinkers working in a milieu in which the facts of modernity have already been established, if imperfectly and unevenly. Kiyozawa and Soga, as moderns, interpret the Pure Land imaginary in an effort to address peculiarly modern problems. One of their most remarkable interventions consists in the effort to make the space of the Pure Land immanent. The Pure Land heterotopia they imagine, in the context of modernity, is surely different from the premodern heterotopias we considered earlier, but nonetheless, I think we can see in Kiyozawa and Soga some continuity with a longer tradition of construing the Pure Land as a critical utopia. Given the long history of both elite and popular enactments of the Western paradise as a heterotopia, it seems to me a fascinating irony of intellectual history that this modern conception of the Pure Land is sometimes identified as somehow too abstract for ordinary people to understand.⁵¹⁶

In fact, Kiyozawa and Soga's ideas are taken up with great intellectual excitement within the Ōtani-ha. They are also taken up outside the precincts of the Honganji institution—sometimes without much attribution—by thinkers associated with the Kyoto School, like Miki and Tanabe. I think that Kiyozawa and Soga's interpretive work makes the image of the Pure Land available to Miki and Tanabe in a way it would not otherwise

⁵¹⁶ Viz. Suzuki's assertion that the *dōbō* ideal—"to strip priests of all authority...and reduce all to absolute social, political, and spiritual equality" is bound to produce serious problems: "How qualified," he asks rhetorically, "is the Japanese laity to assume the burden of their own spiritual leadership?"; see Suzuki, *Crisis in Japanese Buddhism*, 134-135; or Whalen Lai on Soga's "psychological introjection of Pure Land twentieth-century style": "It is doubtful that his thesis, appreciated by pious Buddhologists, would be known or read by the masses of the faith. Even if it had been publicized in time, I doubt it changed men's feelings about the Pure Land either way"; Lai, "The Search for the Historical Śākyamuni in Light of the Historical Jesus," *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 2 (1982): 89.

have been, charging it with a certain kind of critical power if you will. But I would also contend that Miki and Tanabe, bringing the image of the Pure Land into dialogue with other intellectual traditions, produce interpretations that can stand in their own right, and that anticipate some historical and ethical questions around exile, utopia, and the state not necessarily anticipated by Kiyozawa and Soga. The final chapters of this dissertation will deal with Miki and Tanabe in turn, looking first at Miki's Pure Land, styled after Marx, and then at Tanabe's Pure Land, styled after Hegel.

CHAPTER FOUR: MIKI KIYOSHI

In 1932, the young Marxist thinker Tosaka Jun (1900–1945) pegged his equally young colleague Miki Kiyoshi (1897–1945) as “the brightest star on the horizon” of Nishida philosophy.⁵¹⁷ Tosaka died in prison on August 9, 1945, less than a week before Japan’s surrender. Miki died in prison on September 26, 1945, barely a week before the Supreme Command of the Allied Powers issued the directive to release all prisoners being held under the terms of the Peace Preservation Act (治安維持法). The timing and circumstances of Miki’s death seem to lend it a particular kind of weight—novelist Toyoshima Yoshio writes in a remembrance that Miki died just as the age was on the verge of “a great revolutionary conversion (*tenkan* 転換)”: times were ripe for change, Miki’s thought ripe for use, and then, suddenly, he was gone.⁵¹⁸

An unfinished essay on the Jōdo Shinshū patriarch Shinran was found amongst Miki’s belongings; it was assembled for publication in 1946 and received some public and critical attention in the postwar milieu, invested perhaps with surplus meaning as a posthumous work. The Shinran essay continues to circulate today. It has been reprinted as one half of the volume *Pascal, Shinran* (*Pasukaru, Shinran* パスカル・親鸞), part of

⁵¹⁷ Cited in James W. Heisig, *Philosophers of Nothingness: An Essay on the Kyoto School* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2001), 3.

⁵¹⁸ Toyoshima Yoshio 豊島与志雄, “Miki Kiyoshi o obou” 三木清を憶う, in *Toyoshima Yoshio chosakushū*, vol. 6, www.aozora.gr.jp/cards/000906/files/42580_22907.html (last accessed November 19, 2007).

Tōeisha's series on Japanese philosophy.⁵¹⁹ It also appears in a recent reader on twentieth-century Shinshū thought, alongside work from sectarian thinkers like Kiyozawa, Soga, and Kaneko, as well as the Kyōto School's founding father, Nishida Kitarō, and Marxist economist Kawakami Hajime.⁵²⁰ These two volumes point to some of the modes of thought that intersect in Miki's Shinran essay: religious humanism, historical materialism, and Pure Land sectarianism. In this chapter, I will try to illuminate two aspects of the Shinran essay as instances of this kind of intersection, looking at Miki's dialectical reading of *hisō hizoku*, *mappō*, and the dharma ages—this is what we might call Miki's critique of history—and at his reading of the *dōbōdōgyō* against the pairing of *ōbō* and *buppō*—his critique of society. I want to show that Miki understands historical consciousness as a realization of oneself as *hisō hizoku*, and so existing under the terms of a new law. This historical consciousness drives the creation of an egalitarian society of sovereign individuals—the *dōbōdōgyō* here is the social space of utopia. First though, I think it will prove worthwhile to briefly review both the uncertain position the Shinran essay occupies in Miki's larger body of work and Miki's own messy intellectual legacy.

⁵¹⁹ *Pasukaru, Shinran* パスカル・親鸞, ed. Akira Ōmine 大峯顯 (Kyoto: Tōeisha, 1999). This pairing may reflect a conception of Miki's career as tracing an arc from one to the other. In an essay published in 1942, Miki himself writes that although Zen is in fashion, he himself is attached to workaday Jōdo Shinshū (平民的な浄土真宗), and that after writing his book on Pascal, he could not rid himself of the notion that he might try to write about Shinran's religion using the same method; see "Waga seishun" わが青春, <http://www.aozora.gr.jp/cards/000218/card46222.html> (last accessed June 22, 2009). Yasutomi Shin'ya also advances a comparison of Shinran and Pascal in his *Shinran: shin no kōzō* 親鸞・信の構造 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2004), 183-202.

⁵²⁰ *Gendai Shinran kyōgaku no senkakushatachi* 現代親鸞教学の先覚者たち, ed. and commentary Nishiyama Kunihiko 西山 邦彦 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2005).

Miki's Marginality

Miki is sometimes casually identified as one of the principal representatives of the Kyoto School's left wing, along with Tosaka himself.⁵²¹ In fact, however, Miki's relationships to both the Kyoto School and the Japanese left are somewhat bedeviled.

Tosaka coined the term "Kyoto School" as a way of referring to the bourgeois idealist (ブルジョア観念哲学) strain in the philosophy of Nishida and his successor, Tanabe⁵²²; this would seem to suggest that there is no room for a left-wing within the Kyoto School, and certainly Tosaka did not understand himself as a member, nor does he seem to have understood Miki as a member. Tosaka's turn of phrase comes to be applied, of course, much more broadly, but in two distinct ways. One approach defines the Kyoto School as a philosophical lineage tied to the person of Nishida and the place of Kyoto University,⁵²³ treating the Kyoto School as a kind of umbrella term for a loosely affiliated—and sometimes antagonistic—set of thinkers; it is amenable to the notion of

⁵²¹ See for example Gino K. Piovesana, *Recent Japanese Philosophical Thought, 1862–1996: A Survey* (Richmond: Japan Library, 1997); David A. Dilworth and Valdo H. Viglielmo, ed. with Agustín Jacinto Zavala, *Sourcebook for Modern Japanese Philosophy* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1998), 292—Viglielmo adds Takakura Teru to the Kyoto School's left wing.

⁵²² See James W. Heisig, "The Religious Philosophy of the Kyoto School," in *The Religious Philosophy of Tanabe Hajime*, ed. Taitetsu Unno and James W. Heisig (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1990), 13; Fujita Masakatsu 藤田正勝, "Nihon ni okeru kenkyūshi no genjō" 日本における研究史の現状, in *Nishida tetsugaku: shin shiryō to kenkyū e no tebiki* 西田哲学：新資料と研究への手引き, ed. Kayano Yoshio 茅野良男 and Ōhashi Ryōsuke 大橋良介 (Kyoto: Mineruva Shobō, 1987), 118.

⁵²³ See for example Fujita Masakatsu, ed., *Kyōtōgakuha no tetsugaku* 京都学派の哲学 (Kyoto: Shōwadō, 2001). Kevin Lam suggests that the conception of the Kyoto School as an intellectual network only defers editorial decisions about who is included in the volumes devoted to the school and who is left out; see Lam Wing Keung, "Subjectivity, *rinrigaku*, and moral metaphysics: Watsuji Tetsurō and Mou Zongsan," in *Frontiers of Japanese Philosophy 2: Neglected Themes and Hidden Variations*, ed. Victor Sōgen Hori and Melissa Anne-Marie Curley (Nagoya: Nanzan Press, 2008), 130–31. John C. Maraldo identifies six broad criteria that have been used to assess membership in the Kyōto School; these six taken together, he argues, produce the school as an ambiguous set (*aimaina shūgō* 曖昧な集合); see "Ōbei ni okeru kenkyū no shoten kara mita Kyōto gakuha no aidentiti to sore o meguru shomondai" 欧米における研究の視点からみた京都学派のアイデンティティとそれをめぐる問題, in *Kyōto gakuha no tetsugaku*, 311. Bret Davis provides an exhaustive overview of the debate around defining the limits of the school in his entry on the Kyōto School in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy; he also introduces a nuanced language of affiliation, distinguishing between "members," "associate members," and "influenced thinkers."

the Kyoto School having a left wing, and admits Miki as a member. A second approach defines the Kyoto School as a philosophical project oriented around a particular idea or set of ideas, and may define membership more narrowly or more idiosyncratically—we might think here of Ōhashi Ryōsuke’s suggestion that the Kyoto School be defined as revolving around an interrogation of themes like that of absolute nothingness (*zettai mu* 絶対無), excluding Miki from the school given his forays into historical materialism.⁵²⁴ There are two possibilities here then: Miki is either included in the Kyoto School as one of its Marxist members, or excluded from it because of his Marxism. Either way, as far as the Kyoto School is concerned, Miki is a Marxist.

It is not at all clear, however, that Miki was a Marxist as far as other Japanese Marxists were concerned. Miki’s interest in Marxist thought is, to my eye, apparent throughout his career, but his relationship with actual Marxists was an uneasy one⁵²⁵—in 1930, the same year he was arrested and jailed for having violated the Peace Preservation Act by making a donation to the Japanese Communist Party, he was ousted from the Proletariat Science Research Institute (Puroretaria kagaku kenkyūsho プロレタリア科学研究所) after being denounced by Hattori Shisō 服部之総 (1901–1956) as “a bourgeois social democrat.”⁵²⁶ In 1938, he became a member of crown prince Konoe Fumimaro’s 近衛文麿 (1891–1945) Shōwa Research Association (Shōwa kenkyūkai 昭和研究会),

⁵²⁴ See Ōhashi Ryōsuke 大橋良介, “Naze, ima ‘Kyōtogakuha’ na no ka” なぜ、いま「京都学派」なのか, in his edited volume, *Kyōto gakuha no shisō: shuju no zō to shisō no potensharu* 京都学派の思想：種々の像と思想のポテンシャル (Kyoto: Jinbun shoin, 2004), 5ff.

⁵²⁵ The throngs of Western theoreticians equally fascinated with Marxism and equally ill-at-ease with politically-committed Marxist organizers and activists have given rise to the useful word “Marxian,” which describes thinkers who engage Marxist theory and method proper in ways different from and at times in opposition to “official” interpretations. It seems to me that Miki is better described as Marxian than as Marxist.

⁵²⁶ Kevin M. Doak, “Under the Banner of the New Science: History, Science, and the Problem of Particularity in Early Twentieth-Century Japan,” *Philosophy East and West* 48.2 (1998): 248.

and is thought to have been the main author of the association's 1939 "Principles of thought for a new Japan" (*Shin nihon no shisō genri* 新日本の思想原理)⁵²⁷; in 1942, he went to the Philippines as part of the Japanese army's propaganda wing, the Pen Corps (*pen butai* ペン部隊). As we will see, this period of involvement with the state comes to be viewed by some as a *tenkō* 転向 (conversion or apostasy).⁵²⁸ And because he was then jailed yet again for violating the Peace Preservation Act—this time for conspiring to conceal the whereabouts of Takakura Teru, who was actively involved with the then-illegal Japanese Communist Party—Miki is sometimes understood as having reversed this earlier *tenkō*.⁵²⁹ We can add to this set of complications the additional fact that, like Tosaka, one of Miki's chief concerns was the question of subjectivism (*shutaisei* 主体

⁵²⁷ The politics of the Shōwa Research Association are understood differently by different scholars. One of the principal arguments of Miles Fletcher's "Intellectuals and Fascism in early Shōwa Japan" is that it was "a fascist movement in several respects"; see *Journal of Asian Studies* 39.1 (1979): 41. Michiko Yusa, on the other hand, describes the group as having "attracted liberal thinkers from various walks of life, all of them eager to cooperate in the stance against the fascist military powers-that-be"; see "Nishida and Totalitarianism: A Philosopher's Resistance," in *Rude Awakenings: Zen, the Kyoto School*, ed. James W. Heisig and John C. Maraldo (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1995), 119. For a study of Konoe himself, see Yagami Kazuo, *Konoe Fumimaro and the Failure of Peace in Japan, 1937–1941: A Critical Appraisal of the Three-Time Prime Minister* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 2006).

⁵²⁸ It is not clear that Miki in fact renounced interest in Marxist thought during this period. Lydia Yu-Jose, in a study of the Japanese presence in the Philippines, writes of Miki that his "exposure to Marxism lent a little ideological color to his criticism of Philippine democracy. He repeated the trite observation that Filipinos were democratic only in the sense that they loved to talk. In reality, he said, Philippine society was not democratic but feudal" but also notes that before leaving he reported to the Philippine Research Commission that the cotton farmers in the capital were concerned that the army would seize their crops, that there was "widespread unemployment" and also a widespread "aspiration for independence, not only among the intelligentsia, but also among the general populace"; see Lydia N. Yu-Jose, *Japan Views the Philippines, 1900–1944* (Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1999), 167. In order not to give the false impression that Miki's time in the Philippines was entirely spent advocating for cotton farmers and Filipino nationalism, I should also mention that Miki approved of "the Filipinos' habit of looking out the window and staring at emptiness" and their neatness—"like the Japanese"—but disapproved of their climate, their sunsets, their art, their clothes, and their lack of philosophy (166). For the record, back at home—according to Kiyosawa Kiyoshi's wartime diary—Miki attributed the worsening state of Japan to "the low level of popular intelligence" and complained of Japan's writers ("awful") and novelists ("ignorant"); see *A Diary of Darkness: The Wartime Diary of Kiyosawa Kiyoshi*, ed. Eugene Soviak, trans. Eugene Soviak and Kamiyama Tamie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 77, 16, and 96.

⁵²⁹ It is true that when Miki returned from the Philippines at the end of 1942, he engaged once again with proletarian intellectual movements—Kiyosawa writes in his entry for January 13, 1943, that "After a long time Miki Kiyoshi has shown his face at a regular meeting of the People's Scholarly Arts Academy"; see Kiyosawa, *A Diary of Darkness*, 12.

性)⁵³⁰; in the postwar period, this came to be seen as an unorthodox area of interest, with the Japanese Communist Party officially denouncing subjectivism in 1948 and leading party intellectuals sharply critiquing efforts to read Marx through Nishida.⁵³¹ As the Kyōto School and Marxist camps become increasingly polarized following the end of the war then, Miki assumes a doubly marginal position—if he was too interested in Marx to warrant posthumous inclusion in the Kyōto School proper, he was too involved with the Kyōto School to be readily embraced by postwar Marxists.

The details of Miki's biography then, do not seem to cohere. He is a scholar, a journalist, a propagandist, and dissident; he is arrested not once but twice for crimes—or misdemeanours—against the imperial state, but he is also put in charge of articulating the state's vision of the future; he is a supporter of the Communists and a bourgeois social democrat; he is an apostate and a reverse apostate. The contemporary western scholars of Japanese intellectual history and philosophy who are most sympathetic to Miki tend to focus their attention on his early career and the circumstances of his death. Sue Townsend, for example, writes that “After his death as a political prisoner on 26 September 1945 Miki was hailed as one of those rare individuals who, according to historian John Dower, ‘embodied qualities of independent thought and personal autonomy [that] appeared [rare and] admirable in a country where most people had caved in completely, in many cases enthusiastically, to the authoritarian state’.”⁵³² Similar characterizations of Miki as a political prisoner are also found in Lothar Knauth's essay

⁵³⁰ J. Victor Koschmann, “The Debate on Subjectivity in Postwar Japan: Foundations of Modernism as a Political Critique,” *Pacific Affairs* 54.4 (1981): 615.

⁵³¹ Koschmann, “The Debate on Subjectivity,” 623.

⁵³² Susan C. Townsend, “Lost in a World of Books: Reading and Identity in Pre-War Japan,” *Literature Compass* 4.4 (2007): 1185. The passage quoted from Dower here appears slightly different from the passage as found in John Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1999), 190-191. Interpolations here reflect Dower's original.

“Life is Tragic,” in which he refers to Miki as a disciple of Nishida’s “who had moved in a Marxist direction” and “died in jail as a political prisoner in 1945”⁵³³ and in Gino Piovesana’s *Recent Japanese Philosophical Thought*, which tells us that Miki spoke “against the militaristic fascism which was already gaining control of Japan. He had to pay for his courage with prison, where he died at the early age of 45,” following a life during which “the police were always after him.”⁵³⁴

Those scholars who focus their attention instead on Miki’s later career tend to be more critical. Miles Fletcher, for example, concentrates on the period during which Miki was working for the Shōwa Research Association. Fletcher identifies the association’s New Order Movement (Shintaisei Undō 新体制運動) as fascist, and follows Takeyama Michio in identifying Miki as having thrown his support behind the Japanese imperialist project⁵³⁵; he sees in Miki’s work under the auspices of the Shōwa Research Association a setting aside of earlier concerns about the irrationality of fascism in favour of a cooperativism that would merge the rational with the irrational, and suggests that during this period Miki becomes enthralled by European fascism and “indulges” his own nationalist sentiments, although the reasons for this change of heart remain obscure.⁵³⁶ Fletcher’s analysis seems to me to have influenced Harry Harootunian’s discussion of Miki in *Overcome By Modernity*—about which, more later—as well as the work of Andrew Barshay and Christopher Goto-Jones.

Barshay and Goto-Jones both consider the full arc of Miki’s career. Barshay affirms both the view of Miki as a fascist and the view of Miki as a martyr, writing that

⁵³³ Lothar Knauth, “Life Is Tragic: The Diary of Nishida Kitarō,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 20.3-4 (1965): 347.

⁵³⁴ Piovesana, *Recent Japanese Philosophical Thought*, 190.

⁵³⁵ Fletcher, “Intellectuals and Fascism,” 41-42.

⁵³⁶ Fletcher, “Intellectuals and Fascism,” 50-51.

he “broke with the New Order in 1942 and rejoined his former colleagues on the left. Arrested in March 1945 for harboring a suspected communist, Miki died in prison at the end of September. In a sense Miki represents both prewar Marxism and prewar social science, *in extremis*.”⁵³⁷ Goto-Jones’s work also seems to allow a reading that positions Miki as both an apostate and an autonomous intellectual: in one piece published in 2005, he attributes Miki’s *tenkō* to the weakness of both of his philosophical commitments—“He never fully embraced Marxism and his will was broken by government pressure. Unlike the other members of the Kyoto School, who generally demonstrate impressive continuity throughout their careers, Miki underwent an abrupt *tenkō* in the late 1930s”⁵³⁸—but in another piece published the same year, Goto-Jones proposes a more sympathetic reading of Miki’s intellectual career, suggesting that his involvement with the Shōwa Research Association was not mere submission but an attempt—even if a failed attempt—to engage state power, noting that Miki continued to “identify himself with the ‘Left’” even after his “apparent *tenkō*” and arguing that in fact Miki never made “a significant intellectual reversal or *tenkō*.”⁵³⁹ Valdo H. Viglielmo characterizes Miki’s *tenkō* as “forced,” although he does not indicate by what forces; he suggests that work from late in Miki’s career reveals a thinker “profoundly involved with Marxism,” and intimates that Miki was working steadily toward a synthesis of Marx and Nishida that ultimately produced “a kind of existentialistic Marxism.”⁵⁴⁰ Naoki Sakai, too, suggests that Miki’s career has a kind of consistency, but argues that this consistency comes out of

⁵³⁷ Andrew E. Barshay, “Imagining Democracy in Postwar Japan: Reflections on Maruyama Masao and Modernism,” *Journal of Japanese Studies* 18.2 (1992): 377.

⁵³⁸ Christopher S. Goto-Jones, *Political Philosophy in Japan: Nishida, the Kyoto School, and Co-Prosperity*, (London: Routledge, 2005): 105.

⁵³⁹ Christopher S. Goto-Jones, “The Left Hand of Darkness: Forging a Political Left in Interwar Japan,” in *The Left in the Shaping of Japanese Democracy: Essays in Honour of J.A.A. Stockwin*, ed. Rikki Kersten and David Williams (London: Routledge, 2005), 5 and 16.

⁵⁴⁰ Dilworth and Viglielmo, *Sourcebook for Modern Japanese Philosophy*, 295 and 294.

the pursuit of a single idea and not a single approach: “Miki Kiyoshi continued to ask the question of the human being, first in the context of Marxism, in his attempt to synthesize hermeneutics and Marxism, and, second, after the collapse of Marxism in the mid-thirties, in his exploration of the historical being.”⁵⁴¹

Michiko Yusa and Massimiliano Tomasi flatly reject the characterization of Miki as a martyr: “Miki was not a political prisoner,” they insist, “but was arrested because he helped a convicted friend escape; the action that led to Miki’s arrest was sheer carelessness on his part, and was far from being based on a grand philosophical or ideological principle.”⁵⁴² Certainly Piovesana’s suggestion that Miki spent his life running from the police and was finally jailed for speaking against a fascist regime is a fantasy. The function of this fantasy is worth interrogating. Townsend contrasts what she calls “Dower’s view” of Miki against those of Fletcher and Harootunian,⁵⁴³ but in fact Dower’s view of Miki is quite critical—he comments that Miki served as a “sophisticated apologist for Japan’s ‘pan-Asian’ mission,” notes his work for the imperial army, and suggests that the events leading up to his imprisonment were motivated by personal friendship and not political ideology.⁵⁴⁴ The postwar positioning of Miki as Townsend’s political prisoner and autonomous intellectual is, Dower says, indeed informed partly by some of Miki’s very fine personal qualities⁵⁴⁵ but also and perhaps more importantly by the need for “exemplary new native sons” in the aftermath of the surrender.⁵⁴⁶ This production of dissenting intellectuals immediately following the war is complicated by a

⁵⁴¹ Naoki Sakai, “Return to the West/Return to the East: Watsuji Tetsuro’s Anthropology and Discussions of Authenticity,” *boundary 2* 18.3 (1991): 158.

⁵⁴² Michiko Yusa and Massimiliano Tomasi, “Review of *L’lo e Il Tu*, by Nishida Kitarō, trans. Renato Andolfato,” *Philosophy East and West* 48.4 (1998): 655.

⁵⁴³ Townsend, “Lost in a World of Books,” 1185.

⁵⁴⁴ Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 192.

⁵⁴⁵ Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 192.

⁵⁴⁶ Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 190.

counter-project that begins a decade or so later of identifying and interrogating the complicity of Japanese intellectuals with the state during the war, which we see taken up rigorously and unflinchingly in the projects of transwar thinkers like Maruyama Masao. Both projects continue apace in contemporary Western scholarship, and in ways that cause both to proliferate despite their antagonism toward each other—I think Townsend’s comment that “The debates about Japanese fascism...have detracted from Miki’s fundamental importance”⁵⁴⁷ reflects the frustration of a scholar who wants the project of distinguishing the fascists from the dissenters to be done with already, but her own positioning of Miki as a political prisoner reflects her adoption of precisely the terms of this debate. At the same time, Dower’s examination of the postwar production of dissenting heroes should also illuminate the limits of the other approaches that would have us understand Miki not as the emblematic martyr but the emblematic apostate, or the emblematic martyr and the emblematic apostate—these too, I would suggest, have a slightly mythic quality.

Placing the Shinran Essay in Context

Contemporary Japanese scholars have approached the corpus of Miki’s work somewhat differently, organizing it not through a narrative account of his life, but thematically: Karaki Junzō suggests three broad categories (personal writings; hermeneutic philosophy influenced by Pascal; and existential philosophy influenced by Marx); Mineshima Hideo—dealing exclusively with the questions of ethics and religion in Miki’s work—suggests four (Shinran; humanism; history; and imagination); and Miyagawa Tōru suggests seven (writings on humanism; neo-humanism; Kant and Heidegger; Marx; Asia;

⁵⁴⁷ Townsend, “Lost in a World of Books,” 1185.

imagination; and finally Shinran). This thematic approach has the benefit of easily allowing the possibility that Miki might at some periods in his life have entertained different ideas or ideologies at the same time. This, I think, will prove to be a useful possibility to consider in reading the Shinran essay. Moreover, the Shinran essay seems to me to demand that we set aside the biographical narrative approach, simply because it is so difficult to date.

Because the Shinran essay is one of the last of Miki's texts to be published, it is tempting, of course, to read it also as Miki's last words, as though it was intended as a summation of his thought. Shigenori Nagatomo seems to suggest that indeed we should read it this way, finding in what he calls "Miki's last, though unfinished, writing" the "culmination" of Miki's religious dimension, that element of his thought dealing with "the concept of the ego developing into religious awareness."⁵⁴⁸ Harry Harootunian too calls the essay Miki's "last work"⁵⁴⁹; suggesting that it was written in a state of exhaustion, he characterizes it as a record of Miki's attempt "to return to the tradition of religious thinking and action of Shinran"—that is to return to some native home—although "he never quite got there."⁵⁵⁰ In a different essay co-authored with Tetsuo Najita, Harootunian again identifies the Shinran essay as expressing a desire for return, although with a slightly different aim—"Before his death in prison, Miki wrote his last work on Shinran and seemingly returned to the point at which he had begun his intellectual odyssey as a young student and which initially had attracted him to Nishida

⁵⁴⁸ Shigenori Nagatomo, *A Philosophical Foundation of Miki Kiyoshi's Concept of Humanism* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1995): 2 n.2.

⁵⁴⁹ Harry D. Harootunian, *Overcome By Modernity: History, Culture, and Community in Interwar Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 358.

⁵⁵⁰ Harootunian, *Overcome By Modernity*, 358.

Kitarō.”⁵⁵¹ If we understand the Shinran essay as a final work, it makes sense to read it as somehow illuminating a reversal of an earlier *tenkō*, written during a period when, as Najita and Harootunian put it, Miki had been “imprisoned by the very government he had earlier tried to serve.”⁵⁵² This encourages a picture of Miki’s intellectual career as one in which he attempts a movement from Japan into the West, fails, and at the end of his life beats a weary retreat back to some native religion, or one in which he attempts a movement from Kyōto School philosophy into Marxism, fails, and at the end of his life beats a weary retreat back to his teacher Nishida.

The problem with this is that it is not clear that the bulk of the Shinran essay was written during the period of Miki’s imprisonment, or even during the period after he returned to Japan from the Philippines. Karaki Junzō, having done a close examination of the manuscript, identifies the essay as belonging to an earlier period, possibly as early as the late 1930s; and in any case decidedly not Miki’s last work⁵⁵³; Kunō Osamu echoes this view in his introduction to a 1966 collection of Miki’s writings.⁵⁵⁴ If we follow Karaki, most of the essay is written precisely during the period when Miki is becoming involved with the Shōwa Research Association and generating his principles for a new Japan; it cannot be understood then as a reaction to the failure of that project, *per* Najita and Harootunian, or as his culminating work, *per* Nagatomo. This should complicate both our picture of Miki’s intellectual life and our understanding of the lines of thought traced in the essay itself.

⁵⁵¹ Tetsuo Najita and Harry D. Harootunian, “Japanese Revolt Against the West: Political and Cultural Criticism in the Twentieth Century,” in *The Cambridge History of Japan*, vol 6., ed. Peter Duus (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 741.

⁵⁵² Najita and Harootunian, “Japanese Revolt,” 741.

⁵⁵³ Karaki Junzō 唐木順三, *Miki Kiyoshi, Mujō* 三木清・無常 (Kyoto: Tōeisha, 2002), 80.

⁵⁵⁴ Kunō Osamu 久野収, Editor’s note on “Shinran,” in *Miki Kiyoshi* 三木清 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1966), 385.

However, Karaki seems to agree with Nagatomo that the Shinran essay represents a turn away from Marx. Nagatomo holds that Miki's political philosophy is well served by a Marxist reading but his religious dimension is something else—it “cannot be covered by this orientation.”⁵⁵⁵ Karaki suggests that we see in Miki's consideration of Shinran not so much the efflorescence of a religious dimension but an expression of the eternalist side of Miki stricken by a fear of the consequences of the humanism to which he was rationally committed, or a fear of the nothingness that must on the materialist view follow death.⁵⁵⁶ Both then seem to me to share the view that the Shinran essay is not Marxian in its concerns, and cannot be read through a Marxian lens, except perhaps negatively.

Incidentally, this is also an opinion which is voiced at the time of the essay's publication. Remember that in 1930, Hattori Shisō had had Miki thrown out of the Proletariat Science Research Institute. Hattori was a historian associated with the Kōzaha 講座派 faction of the Japanese Communist Party; he was also a Shinshū temple son, and in 1948 he published a response to Miki's Shinran essay, his own *Shinran nōto* 親鸞ノ一ト (Notes on Shinran).⁵⁵⁷ Hattori's aim was to “take Shinran out of the temple, and deliver him too from the confines of Japanese ‘philosophy,’ which is like a Western-style temple, and set him free amidst the peasants, in the place where Shinran really lived.”⁵⁵⁸ The temple Hattori is referring to is Honganji, the power centre of institutionalized Shinshū; the Japanese philosopher he has in mind seems to have been Miki, whose

⁵⁵⁵ Nagatomo, *A Philosophical Foundation*, 2 n.2.

⁵⁵⁶ Karaki Junzō, *Miki Kiyoshi*, 83-84.

⁵⁵⁷ Hattori Shisō, *Shinran nōto* 親鸞ノ一ト (Tokyo: Kokudoshā, 1948).

⁵⁵⁸ Hattori, *Shinran nōto*, 13. This passage is translated somewhat differently in Yoshida's excellent “Kuroda Toshio on Jōdo Shinshū,” 386.

Shinran essay is discussed at considerable length, with Hattori asserting that Miki's interpretation of Shinran was distorted by a desire to serve the interests of the state. Although some of the details of Hattori's interpretation are later called into question⁵⁵⁹ and the issue of just which segments of the peasantry Shinran worked with becomes a matter of debate for social historians, the idea that what Shinran gained through the experience of exile was a new sense of class consciousness and that his tradition was rooted in solidarity with the underclass proves to have considerable appeal. Yoshida Tomoko suggests that Hattori's vision of Shinran as a social reformer exerts an influence on both Ienaga Saburō and Kuroda Toshio in terms of their assessments of the historical significance of Jōdo Shinshū.⁵⁶⁰ It seems to me that the image of Shinran we find in *Shinran nōto* also has a certain currency in later sectarian studies, with Hirose Takashi, for example, arguing that Shinran's notions of equality derive from his experience of social exile among the peasant farmers.⁵⁶¹ Hattori's Marxist Shinran thus forms an important element for postwar Marxian interpretations of the place of Shinshū in Japanese history and Shinran's own relationship to the Shinshū institution.

Miki is not writing a social history of the feudal period, and so his Shinran is not immediately recognizable as the doctrinaire Marxist Shinran. But more than that, the doctrinaire Marxist Shinran is in some sense called into being precisely as a critique of Miki's Shinran—it is not only that the usual Marxist version of Shinran does not happen to resemble Miki's version: it *specifically* does not resemble Miki's version, and is

⁵⁵⁹ See Yoshida, "Kuroda Toshio," 387.

⁵⁶⁰ See Yoshida, "Kuroda Toshio"; see also Alfred Bloom's discussion of Hattori in *The Life of Shinran Shonin: The Journey to Self Acceptance* (Leiden: Brill, 1968); for an example of the influence of Hattori on later sectarian thought, see Futaba, "Shinran and Human Dignity," 51-59.

⁵⁶¹ Hirose Takashi, *Lectures on Shin Buddhism*, trans. Haneda Nobuo, Thomas Kirchner, and Wayne Yokoyama (Kyoto: Shinshū Ōtani-ha Shūmusho, 1980), 45-48.

produced partly in order to discredit that version. The context for the reception of Miki's essay over the course of the latter half of the twentieth century is one in which there is a sense that Kyōto School thought and Marxist thought are antagonistic; one in which it is understood by most that Miki's relationship with Marxism during at least the last years of his career was one of considerable struggle; and one in which there is an influential image of the Marxist Shinran that is pointedly not Miki's Shinran. All of this, I think, may encourage a setting aside of Marxian categories of analysis when reading the Shinran essay.

If, however, we go back to Nagatomo's assertion as to what the Shinran essay is really about—"the concept of the ego developing into religious awareness"—we find something worth looking at more closely. It is true that Miki has much to say about realization (*jikaku* 自覚)⁵⁶² in the Shinran essay, but he qualifies this as historical realization, writing that for Shinran, "the realization of one's humanness is intimately bound up with the realization of history"⁵⁶³ and that Shinran "realized himself in the age, and the age in himself."⁵⁶⁴ Elsewhere, Miki is critical of Japanese philosophy's lack of interest in the temporal, characterizing Japanese thought as featuring:

a pattern of thinking which is expressed by the term *soku* [即]... in which I see an essence of this [so-called Eastern] naturalism... insofar as it is *soku*, it is not of process and temporal in its meaning, and consequently it is not historical. Even in Nishida's philosophy, which is the very first philosophy to infuse humanism into

⁵⁶² I am translating *jikaku* as "realization" here in order to preserve what I take to be the Buddhist ring Miki intends the word to have in the particular context of the Shinran essay, and because it is easy to render both as a verb and as a noun. See Naoki Sakai, "Return to the West/Return to the East," 162 n.6, though, for a discussion of the complications of translating *jikaku*; and James Heisig's discussion of the meaning of *jikaku* in Nishida philosophy in "The Religious Philosophy of the Kyoto School," 18-21.

⁵⁶³ Miki, "Shinran," 173.

⁵⁶⁴ Miki, "Shinran," 181.

Eastern philosophy, what is still lacking is the process, and temporal, historical perspective.⁵⁶⁵

In Jōdo Shinshū, Miki finds a variety of Buddhist thought that he can position as exquisitely temporal and historical in its concerns. I will assert that the Shinran Miki is after in the essay is a Shinran whose historical consciousness was sufficiently raised, and that the significance of this historical consciousness is that it serves as the trigger for a utopian rearrangement of the social order. It seems to me then that in the Shinran essay, Miki is in fact writing through and about Marx, and he finds exactly the Marxian Shinran he is after.

Shinran and History

The Shinran essay is divided into two sections. The first, under the heading “Human Being—the Heart of Gutoku,” gives us Miki’s appreciation of Shinran and his analysis of the notion of *ki* 機. The second, much longer section, is given the heading “The Development of Religious Consciousness: Realization of Human Nature and Religion,” and divided into five subsections: “Realization of Human Nature,” “Realization of History,” “Turning through the Three Vows,” “Religious Truth,” and “Social Life.” “Realization of History” is by far the longest of these five subsections—the essay as a whole runs some sixty-five pages; Miki’s first attempt at “Realization of History” is just under twenty-five pages, and a second attempt, included in the Tōeisha edition, adds another two pages. Much of “Realization of History” is given over to exhaustive accounts of exactly which features characterize each of the five-hundred year periods through which the Buddhist teachings fall into decline. The line of thought most clearly

⁵⁶⁵ Trans. in Nagatomo, *A Philosophical Foundation*, 19; translator’s interpolation.

developed in the essay as a whole is neither anthropological nor theological, but historiographical, and although in some ways what is most interesting about the essay is found in its other, more tentative sections, “Realization of History” and its explanation of the dharma ages, provides a foundation for this other material. In this part of the chapter, I will argue that Miki’s reading of the dharma ages depends upon an aligning of Buddhist historiography and a Marxian historical dialectic, making Shinran’s *shinjin* into a Marxian historical consciousness.

Early in the essay, Miki proposes that what sets Shinran apart from other Buddhist thinkers is his apparent lack of interest in any theory of impermanence.⁵⁶⁶ The impermanence of all things (*shogyō mujō* 諸行無常) is, Miki says, both the real fact of existence and the starting point of Buddhism—the historical Buddha’s impetus for renouncing the world was his experience of impermanence.⁵⁶⁷ Impermanence is time grasped existentially as birth, old age, sickness, and death, and that would seem to make Buddhism very temporal in its concerns: Buddhist wisdom, as Miki characterizes it, is attained by moving from a natural sense of time passing to a full realization that all things are subject to time. If Shinran does not concern himself with temporality, surely he cannot have much promise as a historical thinker. But Miki holds that in fact Shinran passes through the notion of impermanence on his way to arriving at a sense of his own loathsomeness (*zaiakukan* 罪惡感)—for Shinran, “the self is not simply impermanent: it is the *bonbu* suffering no lack of affliction; the evil person committing every conceivable sin.”⁵⁶⁸ It is typical of Buddhism, and particularly of Heian-period Buddhism, Miki says,

⁵⁶⁶ Miki, “Shinran,” 159.

⁵⁶⁷ Miki, “Shinran,” 160.

⁵⁶⁸ Miki, “Shinran,” 161.

to stop at impermanence, and in so doing become bound up in unworldly aesthetic contemplation.⁵⁶⁹ Shinran was no aesthete, and his Jōdo Shinshū was not contemplative or meditative, but pragmatic.⁵⁷⁰ This distinction rests, I think, on Miki's understanding that the transcendent, universal truth and the concrete particular of personal experience must interpenetrate⁵⁷¹—in stopping at the universal, the aesthetic or literary Buddhism of which he is so critical loses its claim to truth. In Shinran, by contrast, we do see an interpenetration of the transcendent universal and the concrete particular—we must be seeing it, because we have already discovered the “immense and profound ‘interiority’ (*naimensei* 内面性) of his religion” and that interiority appears only where “the transcendent is immanent, and the immanent transcendent.”⁵⁷² What we're seeing in Shinran then is a movement from an abstract awareness that all things exist within a temporal regime to a concrete realization that the self exists within a temporal regime—another way of putting this might be to say that we're seeing a movement from a sense of temporality to a sense of history. Miki describes the effect of this movement in the emotional language characteristic of Shinshū—a sense of impermanence transformed into a sense of loathsomeness—but it seems to me that these notions of sin and evil are going to be revealed over the course of the essay as signifying the historical rather than the moral character of the human being. Let's begin unpacking this.

Miki says that to become conscious of one's own loathsomeness is to realize *ki*. *Ki* is often translated, in the Shinshū context, as “sentient beings” or “people.”⁵⁷³ Miki

⁵⁶⁹ Miki, “Shinran,” 161.

⁵⁷⁰ Miki, “Shinran,” 161.

⁵⁷¹ Miki, “Shinran,” 159.

⁵⁷² Miki, “Shinran,” 156.

⁵⁷³ See for example *A Glossary of Shin Buddhist Terms*, ed. Hisao Inagaki et al (Kyoto: Institute of Buddhist Cultural Studies, 1995), 62, which suggests “people” as the translation for *ki*.

does not understand *ki* in this way. He bases his understanding on the analysis laid out in Zhiyi's *Hokkegengi* 法華玄義 (Ch. Fahuaxuanyi), which attaches three meanings to the term *ki*: *ki* as subtle working (*bi* 微); *ki* as connection (*kan* 關); and *ki* as fit (*gi* 宜).⁵⁷⁴ *Ki* as subtle working carries the sense of an inner potential inside of the sentient being. *Ki* as connection carries the sense of joining sentient being and Buddha, so that the inner potential inside of the sentient being becomes the object of the Buddha's salvific activity. And *ki* as fit carries the sense of a precisely calibrated relationship between sentient being and Buddha, such that the inner potential of the sentient being is exactly the right match for the Buddha's salvific activity. That salvific activity is given expression in the teachings—*kyō* 教—and that means that *ki* and *kyō* must correspond, or fit exactly, in order for sentient being and Buddha to join and the inner potential of the sentient being to be realized. Because the inner potential of sentient beings changes with the degeneration of the dharma ages, the teachings too change in order to correspond to that inner potential, and this introduces a third element that mediates the relationship between *ki* and *kyō*: time (*ji* 時). *Ki* and *kyō* come together, Miki says, in a dynamic, historical relationship—if the *kyō* in question does not correspond to the *ki* of the time, the opportunity (*jiki* 時機) for salvation is lost.⁵⁷⁵

At this point, the essay breaks off, and we have only a set of quoted passages on the notions of *jiki sōō* 時機相応 and *akunin shōki* 惡人正機. These passages, I think, point toward the direction Miki had in mind, so if on this basis I can be permitted to

⁵⁷⁴ Miki makes a case for these meanings based on the use of *ki* in compounds with each of these characters: *kibi* 機微, *kan* 機関, and *kigi* 機宜. This is somewhat different from the approach of Zhiyi himself as it is described by Shen Haiyan in "Chih-i's system of sign interpretation," *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 15 (2002): 505.

⁵⁷⁵ Miki, "Shinran," 164.

extend Miki's argument here somewhat, it seems to me that a consequence of tying together *ki*, *kyō*, and *ji* in the way Miki does is to imbricate an understanding of time in the sense of loathsomeness that arises when one realizes one's inner potential, that is when one realizes how "withered" one's inner potential actually is.⁵⁷⁶ Because *ki* and *kyō* are bound together here, to realize one's own inner potential must be immediately to realize the absolute other-power teaching that is the true teaching for sentient beings of the final age of dharma—this, I think, is what Miki is driving at when he describes *ki* as "the sign that should let loose the dharma in the hearts of sentient beings."⁵⁷⁷ But because *kyō* and *ji* are bound together, in realizing one's own inner potential, one must also grasp oneself as a being born into a given age, which age has determined one's inner potential. In other words, in realizing one's inner potential, one does not just rouse a sense of one's loathsomeness as a human being; rather one rouses a sense of one's loathsomeness as a historically-determined human being.

Miki implies that this sense of loathsomeness is reflected in Shinran's selection of the name Gutoku,⁵⁷⁸ and he asserts that if Gutoku describes Shinran's actual historical situation, it also discloses "a deep realization of human nature."⁵⁷⁹ Miki reads the *gu* of Gutoku as fool—"as in ignorant fool (*guchi* 愚痴)"—and the *toku* as "having the meaning of having broken the precepts"; in choosing the name Gutoku, Shinran identifies

⁵⁷⁶ Miki, "Shinran," 165.

⁵⁷⁷ Miki, "Shinran," 163. This seems similar to Nagatomo's account of Miki's "dual transcendence": "one is an interior transcendence that moves beyond the ego-consciousness toward its interior, and the other is an exterior transcendence that moves beyond the interior transcendence toward its exterior, toward the world of matter"; see Nagatomo, *A Philosophical Foundation*, 29.

⁵⁷⁸ Miki, "Shinran," 162.

⁵⁷⁹ Miki, "Shinran," 162.

himself as “not monk, not layperson, precept-breaker.”⁵⁸⁰ But in what sense does “precept-breaker” (破戒 *hakkai*) disclose a deep realization of human nature?

Well, I’m not sure it does. Later in the essay, Miki will revisit the question of Shinran’s relationship to the precepts and change his characterization slightly, identifying Shinran not as a precept-breaker but rather as something worse: someone without precepts (無戒 *mukai*). Miki writes:

being without precepts is lowlier than breaking the precepts. Those who break the precepts know of the existence of the precepts, and even know that the Buddhist precepts should be revered. Thus at times they will also repent. Those without precepts, however, are not even conscious of the existence of the precepts. They go about their lives of shameless cruelty as calm as can be. Those without precepts are those without realization. Shinran, who called himself *hisō hizoku*, saw in himself a priest in name only. And so Shinran, neither monk nor layman, took on the name Gutoku. He felt a profound resonance with the words of Dengyō Daishi: “The most foolish of the foolish, the maddest of the mad, a baldheaded but impure sentient being, Saichō the lowest of the low.” Being without precepts is lowlier than breaking the precepts.⁵⁸¹

There seems to be something strange afoot here—surely Shinran, who had after all come down from Mount Hiei as an apostate, was conscious of the precepts and knew that he was breaking them; Miki himself has told us that breaking the precepts is the meaning of *toku*. But here he positions Shinran as a preceptless priest in name only (無戒名字の比丘). As we noted in the first chapter, the priest in name only is a figure who appears

⁵⁸⁰ Miki, “Shinran,” 162.

⁵⁸¹ Miki, “Shinran,” 182-183.

during the age of final dharma; according to the sources cited in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, he will take tonsure and wear priestly robes and still eat meat, drink wine, take a wife, and have children⁵⁸² (this perhaps is not a bad description of Shinran as he is remembered by the tradition). The priest in name only must be distinguished from a priest who breaks the precepts—because the priest in name only appears during the age of final dharma, it is not possible for him to break the precepts: “In the last dharma age, only the verbal teaching remains; there is no practice or realization. If there were precepts, then there would be the breaking of precepts. But already there are no precepts; by the violation of what precept can the precepts be said to be broken?”⁵⁸³ For Shinran to understand himself as a precept breaker then would, under these circumstances, be a false consciousness predicated on a mistaken understanding of the age in which he was living. Shinran understanding himself as without precepts, by contrast, reflects a perfect understanding of the age—priest in name only here is a shorthand for the nature of beings born in the age of final dharma, which means that it does disclose something about human nature.

If we go back and read *hisō hizoku* in light of this shift from *hakkai* to *mukai* toward which Miki seems to have been groping his way, I think it will come into focus as a way of talking about time. Miki has identified a sense of impermanence as the spur for the historical Buddha’s renunciation of the world⁵⁸⁴; we know that Miki sees this world renunciation as, in itself, insufficient, and that he understands it as the basis for an unworldly—or monkish (*shusseteki* 出世的)—anti-realism. Electing to keep the precepts during the age of final dharma is a display of such monkish anti-realism; it constitutes a

⁵⁸² See *Kyōgyōshinshō* VI. 80 (SS 421-428).

⁵⁸³ Cited in *Kyōgyōshinshō* VI.80 (SS 422); Miki, “Shinran,” 182.

⁵⁸⁴ Miki, “Shinran,” 160.

refusal of the conditions of the present age and an effort to return to the past. The path of sages makes the error of taking the historical Buddha as an ideal; followers of this path “exert themselves trying to realize for themselves the dharma that was realized by Śākyamuni,” and so can only oscillate between keeping the precepts and breaking the precepts, without accomplishing a conversion from self-power to other-power⁵⁸⁵—this means that the followers of the path of sages, for all that they attend to the traditional Buddhist teachings (従来の教法)⁵⁸⁶, do not correctly grasp the meaning of tradition.⁵⁸⁷

If Shinran does not stop at a sense of impermanence, neither does he stop at monkish anti-realism—this is why Miki characterizes Shinran as a realist unsatisfied by monastic Buddhism⁵⁸⁸; he moves on instead to what Miki calls *zaike bukkyō* 在家仏教. *Zaike* here seems to me to carry several meanings. It must be taken as lay in contrast to monastic, and of course Shinshū is indeed in a sense a lay Buddhist movement. But it must equally be taken as indicating that reimmersion in the concrete world that builds upon the transcendent universal of impermanence, and as indicating a realist, historical Buddhism—the easy path of other power—as against the anti-realist, ahistorical path of sages. Keeping in mind that Miki complicates the binary pair of keeping the precepts and breaking the precepts by introducing “without precepts” as a third term, it seems to me that he is not interested in Shinran’s *zaike bukkyō* as a complement or opposite number

⁵⁸⁵ Miki, “Shinran,” 208 and 184.

⁵⁸⁶ Miki, “Shinran,” 184.

⁵⁸⁷ Miki’s critique of the path of sages may be usefully compared to some of his other writings on tradition, in which he points up a distinction drawn by Ernst Bernheim between tradition and vestige: “a tradition differs from a mere vestige in that the former refers to something that is still living in the present. When we say that something from the past is still living in the present, we indicate that it continues to be ‘permeated by human apprehension’ and to ‘enter human expression’”; see Miki, “On tradition,” trans. Valdo H. Viglielmo, *Sourcebook for Modern Japanese Philosophy: Selected Documents*, ed. David A. Dilworth and Valdo H. Viglielmo (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1998), 316. We might suggest then that Miki’s point here is that the dharma of the path of sages is properly understood as a vestige, while the dharma of the easy path of other power constitutes a tradition.

⁵⁸⁸ Miki, “Shinran,” 161.

for *shusse bukkō*, but rather as a third term: if the age of final dharma is an age without precepts, it is an age without monks, and without monks, there is no way to identify laypeople, making the age without precepts is an age without either monks or laypeople,⁵⁸⁹ properly speaking. In light of this, I would argue that *hisō hizoku* functions to indicate a negation of both the category of monk and the category of lay, and an indirect affirmation of conversion to a third category, captured in the name Gutoku or the status *bonbu*. In other words, for Miki *hisō hizoku* describes the situation of being born in an age without precepts.

This is obviously different from an assessment of *hisō hizoku* as indicating that Shinran reconciled the two roles of monk and layperson, or that he was at once a perfect monk and a perfect layperson. It resonates, I think, with an understanding of *hisō hizoku* as expressing Shinran's sense of his own incapacity—for Miki, *hisō hizoku* describes Shinran's sense of loathsomeness, and his sense of loathsomeness speaks to his having realized his own capacity in terms of the age. But it also resonates with an understanding of *hisō hizoku* as expressing some realization of “the underlying unity of the transcendent and the mundane, unbifurcated”⁵⁹⁰ with one critical difference—the examples of this kind of understanding that I presented in the second chapter all seem to me to rely on a classical Mahāyāna understanding of the relationship between the two truths, to wit that there are two truths and the third truth is the non-duality of the two truths; this formulation can be used to organize any two binary (Buddhist) terms and produce a third. On the one hand, when Miki asserts that “Where the transcendent is immanent, and the

⁵⁸⁹ Miki, “Shinran,” 212.

⁵⁹⁰ Rogers and Rogers, *Rennyō*, 333.

immanent transcendent, there is true interiority,”⁵⁹¹ he also seems to rely on this logic. On the other hand, when he invokes the notion of *tenkan*—as he does when he talks about both the appearance in history of the path of other power⁵⁹² and Shinran’s own realization of absolute other power⁵⁹³—he introduces a different way of organizing the relationship between the three terms: as a progressive historical dialectic. This is where, I would contend, we see a Marxian approach to history wending its way through the Shinran essay.

When Shinran realizes his own incapacity, Miki says, he grasps the age of final dharma as an internal reality: “Shinran did not discover a simply objective critique of the age in the doctrine of final dharma. He was in no sense a simple theoretician, or observer. The idea of final dharma was, for him, grasped thoroughly subjectively” and for this reason, the theory of the dharma ages was received by him as “more than anything else, an unsparing critique of he himself.”⁵⁹⁴ If, however, that realization of one’s own capacity is understood only as a realization of the present moment (or the reality of final dharma)⁵⁹⁵ and not as a realization of the present age as contingent upon past ages, then that realization would still fail to be historical. If, in other words, the age of final dharma is conceived of as a way of talking about just being in time or just being in samsara, in

⁵⁹¹ Miki, “Shinran,” 157.

⁵⁹² Miki, “Shinran,” 184.

⁵⁹³ Miki, “Shinran,” 210.

⁵⁹⁴ Miki, “Shinran,” 181. Cf. Miki’s understanding of Pascal’s “just man”: he “sees, without concealing anything, the true state of himself and of others and, moreover, can speak of it. Just as he does not fear to talk about his own ignorance, deficiencies, and misery, he does not hesitate to tell others about theirs. He is one who examines human existence correctly, and conveys honestly what he sees. To act in this way is also nothing other than embodying the concept of ‘the mode of existence’ of existence, particularly human existence”; see Miki, “An Analysis of Man,” trans. Valdo H. Viglielmo, *Sourcebook for Modern Japanese Philosophy: Selected Documents*, ed. David A. Dilworth and Valdo H. Viglielmo (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1998), 307. Cf. Tanabe’s positioning of Pascal as a sage; see Hatano Kazuyo 波田野 和代, “Tanabe Hajime ni okeru Shinran no “Sangan tennyū” kan” 田辺元における親鸞の「三願転入」観, *Nihon Daigaku daigakuin sōgō shakai jōho kenkyūka kiyō* 日本大学大学院総合社会情報研究科紀要 7 (2007): 453.

⁵⁹⁵ Miki, “Shinran,” 175.

contrast to Amida's being outside of time or outside of samsara, then there really is no age other than the age of final dharma, and the meaning of the dharma ages—*shozōmatsu*—as a theory of history would have to be set aside. In fact, as Michael Marra points out, the equation of *mappō* with samsara is usually taken to be one of the chief innovations of Shinran's thought.⁵⁹⁶ Miki, however, holds that realizing final dharma leads to an understanding of all of the dharma ages:

When the present moment comes into question, then it follows that we attempt to understand past history. Moreover, when the present moment truly comes into question, we wonder what we ought to do, and therefore the *future* comes into question. Realization of the present moment is realization that the present moment is *mappō*. Just as a realization of death in the present moment—a realization of how one ought to cope with it—grants the possibility of realizing the whole of human existence, the realization that the present moment is *mappō* grants the possibility of realizing the whole of history.⁵⁹⁷

In order to maintain that the three dharma ages are discrete, and that they are subjectively grasped as such by Shinran, Miki develops a complicated and unorthodox interpretation of Shinran's experience of turning through the three vows (*sangan tennyū* 三願転入).

The process of turning through the three vows is described in the final chapter of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*: "I, Gutoku Shinran...departed everlastingly from the temporary gate of the myriad practices and various good acts and left forever the birth attained under the twin *sāla* trees. Turning about [*kainyū* 回入], I entered the 'true' gate of the root of good

⁵⁹⁶ Michael F. Marra, "The development of *mappō* thought in Japan (II)," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 15 (1988): 292.

⁵⁹⁷ Miki, "Shinran," 176.

and the root of virtue....Nevertheless, I have now decisively departed from the ‘true’ gate of provisional means and, [my self-power] overturned [*tennyū* 転入], have entered the ocean of the selected Vow.”⁵⁹⁸ The three gates here correspond to vows nineteen, twenty, and eighteen of Amida’s forty-eight-fold vow, and to the path of sages, the path of self-power *nenbutsu*, and the path of other-power *nenbutsu*. Shigematsu Akihisa writes of this process,

in asserting the superiority of the eighteenth vow over the nineteenth and twentieth (the so-called *sangan tennyū*), Shinran concedes that he himself had earlier dwelled at the intermediate stages of the nineteenth and twentieth vows: looking back on his life, Shinran recalls that during his days on Mt. Hiei, he was guided by the nineteenth vow; as Hōnen’s disciple, he came to follow the twentieth vow.⁵⁹⁹

This kind of interpretation suggests that the course of Shinran’s institutional life is the course traced in his reflection upon the three vows, and further that the moments at which Shinran turned from the nineteenth vow to the twentieth, and from the twentieth to the eighteenth, can be identified as moments in his social life as a practitioner, so to speak. This reading requires some exercise of imagination, however—Shinran does not himself refer to either his time on Mount Hiei or his years in Yoshimizu with Hōnen in his account of the turning through the three vows, and later in the *Kyōgyōshinshō* affirms (as any good disciple would) that he took refuge in the original vow (本願に帰す) when he

⁵⁹⁸ *Kyōgyōshinshō* VI.68 (SS 412-413); “my self-power” is the translator’s interpolation.

⁵⁹⁹ Shigematsu Akihisa, “An Overview of Japanese Pure Land,” in *The Pure Land Tradition: History and Development*, ed. James Foard, Michael Solomon, and Richard K. Payne, trans. Michael Solomon (Berkeley: Regents of the University of California, 1997), 305.

became Hōnen's student in 1201.⁶⁰⁰ As Miki points out, given the absence of calendrical detail in Shinran's own account, one of the principal questions of interest arising from this interpretive approach thus becomes that of when exactly this last conversion took place: Was it when he entered Yoshimizu? After? Before?⁶⁰¹ But Miki vigorously criticizes this question as betraying a confusion of the chronological and the historical: "Attempting to precisely establish the sequence of years in a confession like this—in an account of his own interior life—is meaningless, if not impossible.... The chronological (*nendaiteki* 年代的) and the historical (*rekishiteki* 歴史的) are not the same."⁶⁰²

Against this chronological approach, Miki proposes his own "thoroughly historical" reading,⁶⁰³ which takes the account of the turning through the three vows as a description of the course of Shinran's interior life. The turning through the three vows must therefore take place in the hidden depths of Shinran's interiority, and—if we follow this line of thinking—Shinran himself must in some sense be both that which is turning through or overturning and that which is turned through or overturned. Furthermore, Miki says, it is a mistake to think of turning through the three vows as simply an assertion of the superiority of the eighteenth vow. It is true, he allows, that the nineteenth and twentieth vows are subject to criticism from the standpoint of the eighteenth vow: Shinran's account of turning through the three vows—what Miki calls his historical recollection (*kaiko* 回顧)—is "a reflection from the highest standpoint of faith on the

⁶⁰⁰ *Kyōgyōshinshō* VI.118 (SS 472). We might also note that the scheme set up in this formulation is one in which Tendai represents the path of sages, Hōnen's Jōdoshū the mistaken path of self-power *nenbutsu*, and Shinran's Jōdo Shinshū the true path of other-power *nenbutsu*. It would be out of character for the Shinran of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* to critique Hōnen in this way, and would display an amazing prescience on his part as far as later sectarian contests between the Jōdoshū and the Jōdo Shinshū.

⁶⁰¹ Miki, "Shinran," 200.

⁶⁰² Miki, "Shinran," 202.

⁶⁰³ Miki, "Shinran," 202.

lower standpoints, and therefore at the same time a *critique* of them.”⁶⁰⁴ But this critique is not a simple negation (*hitei* 否定)—at the same time that it negates, it appropriates (*sesshu* 摂取).⁶⁰⁵

We have seen this expression *sesshu* before. Miki has earlier cited the first verse of the *Shōzōmatsu Wasan*, said by Shinran to have come to him in a dream:

Entrust yourself to Amida’s original vow.

Through the benefit of being grasped (*sesshu* 摂取), never to be abandoned (*fusha* 不捨),

All who entrust themselves to the original vow

Attain supreme awakening (*mujōkaku* 無上覺).⁶⁰⁶

The four-character phrase *sesshu fusha* 摂取不捨 describes the state of the practitioner who, calling the name through other-power, enters immediately into the stage of non-retrogression; we have earlier considered this state in terms of the intimacy between Amida and the practitioner imagined by Hōnen and Rennyo’s settled mind as the immediate attainment of birth. *Sesshu*, in this context, implies contact between the ordinary person and Amida, or a seizing of the former by the latter through which the former is incorporated into the latter—and illuminated by that incorporation—without losing its own character, that is with all of the ordinary person’s evil karma remaining just as it is. Miki’s own use of *sesshu* is, I want to suggest, intended to recall this image, prompting us to understand the eighteenth vow as the sublation of the affirmation-

⁶⁰⁴ Miki, “Shinran,” 202; Miki’s emphasis.

⁶⁰⁵ Miki, “Shinran,” 203.

⁶⁰⁶ *Shōzōmatsu wasan* 1 (SS 600); Miki, “Shinran,” 188.

negation of the nineteenth and twentieth vows. The process of turning through the three vows, properly understood, is dialectical.

This understanding of the turning through the three vows as a dialectic ramifies in some unexpected ways. Miki understands the nineteenth vow as corresponding to the age of true dharma; the twentieth vow as corresponding to the age counterfeit dharma; and the eighteenth vow as corresponding to the age of final dharma.⁶⁰⁷ As we have seen, Miki has already tried to establish that the historical moment of *mappō* is discovered by Shinran in the very depths of his interiority. By reading the account of turning through the three vows as the “confession of the course of a life of faith,”⁶⁰⁸ Miki tries to establish that the three dharma ages too are discovered there—“Turning through the three vows is not just a pattern. This pattern’s being discovered deep within one’s own reality is what the passage is about. Thus transcendent truth is discovered as internalized (*naimenka* 内面化).”⁶⁰⁹ In arriving at an understanding of his historical situation then, because as historical moment it is the sublation of what has come before, Shinran comes to realize not just the age of final dharma but each of the three dharma ages as subjective personal experience, making his awareness of his own historical situation one that grants and is granted by an awareness of the totality of the historical process.

Moreover, if the three vows unfold dialectically, and the three vows are pinned to the three dharma ages, then the three dharma ages themselves can be understood as unfolding dialectically, with the age of true dharma negated by the age of counterfeit

⁶⁰⁷ This set of correspondences is not set out explicitly in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, but Shinran does take up the question of the unfolding of the dharma ages immediately after describing his own experience of turning through the three vows, so there is some reason to suppose that Shinran himself understood there to be a connection between the three vows and the three ages.

⁶⁰⁸ Miki, “Shinran,” 200.

⁶⁰⁹ Miki, “Shinran,” 201.

dharma and sublated in the age of final dharma. This is an innovation,⁶¹⁰ but it builds on an ambiguity in the theory of *shōzōmatsu* as it is deployed in sectarian Pure Land. On the one hand, the theory of the dharma ages as a theory of history posits a steady and unrelenting decline or degeneration, and the understanding of the present age as degenerate informs the practitioner's necessary assessment of himself or herself as an abjectly ordinary person, for whom the only option is absolute reliance on the easy path other-power. On the other hand, once Hōnen breaks with the Chinese understanding of the easy path as the path selected *only* for the age of final dharma—that is, once he positions the practice intended for the lowest of the low as the exclusive and highest practice—the historical movement from the path of sages to the path of other-power starts to look more like progress than degeneration: the Buddha's highest teaching unveils itself as such only in the glorious age of ultimate dharma. Miki rejects notions of either historical progress or historical degeneration—whether tied to religious belief or not—as the effects of an effort to understand history objectively, the former reflecting “a simple optimism” and the latter “a simple pessimism.”⁶¹¹ A properly subjective understanding of the three dharma ages goes past one-sided notions of progress and degeneration in grasping the revelation of the teaching of other-power in the age of final dharma as produced dialectically out of the ages of true dharma and counterfeit dharma, which allows one to hold (1) that the age of final dharma is separate from the age of true dharma insofar as it exists on the other side of an epistemic rupture produced by the negation effected by the age of counterfeit dharma; (2) that the age of final dharma is tied to the age of true dharma insofar as it arises out of the sublation of the ages of true dharma and

⁶¹⁰ Although, as we will see in the next chapter, not unique to Miki.

⁶¹¹ Miki, “Shinran,” 193.

counterfeit dharma; and (3) the age of final dharma is *prior* to the age of true dharma insofar as the dialectical movement through the three ages is the self-movement of the original vow corresponding to the age of final dharma.⁶¹²

This dialectical movement, or revelation as progression-degeneration, is given subjective expression, Miki claims, as exaltation-lamentation, which are the two emotional registers of *nenbutsu*. In this way, Miki seems to me to pack each *nenbutsu* with historical significance: every instance of calling the name functions to name the practitioner's historical situation as *mappō*, to name the entirety of the historical movement of *shōzōmatsu*, to name the process of degeneration that produces the practitioner as abjectly ordinary, and to name the progressive revelation of the Pure Land teaching in history. When we take into account the two nuances of *nen* 念—the “call” of *nenbutsu* but also thought-moment (*kṣaṇa*)—it starts to look like all of history, or the whole linear extension of time (*pratikṣaṇa*, *nennen* 念々) is folded up in a single call. In a fragment that appears near the middle of “Realization of History,” Miki seems to press this point:

history itself is already the subject of a single *nenbutsu*; in the patriarchs of Pure Land, coming and going is truly apprehended as a constant *nenbutsu*, *nen* after *nen* (age after age), *ekstatically* (*datsujiteki* 脱自的). Therefore that the great practice of *nenbutsu*, which is the interpenetration of once-calling and many-

⁶¹² Miki finds some textual support for this in Shinran's identification of the teaching of other-power as the historical Buddha's “original purpose for appearing in the world” (*shusse hongai* 出世本懷); see *Kyōgyōshinshō* I.3 (SS 135); *Jōdō wasan* 浄土和讃 54 (SS 566); Miki, “Shinran,” 189.

calling in a single reality, can be practiced within me is in fact by means of my arising within a historical tradition.⁶¹³

James Ketelaar chooses a line from this fragment to capture the way Miki uses Shinran to read history,⁶¹⁴ but we might also say that it captures the way Miki uses Shinran to read Hegel, and Marx to read Shinran. Having developed a reading of *shōzōmatsu* as the dialectical process through which the original vow uncovers itself, Miki allows that in one respect, the historical understanding here “is analogous to the development of the Concept (*gainen* 概念, *Begriff*) in Hegel.”⁶¹⁵ Where for Hegel, however, the question at hand is the question of the Concept and human beings are only instruments of the Concept, for Shinran, human beings themselves are the question.⁶¹⁶ This is the difference, Miki says, between religion and mere philosophy—only religion takes the concrete existence of human beings as its question.⁶¹⁷ It seems to me that Miki wants to draw a parallel between the Hegelian Concept and the notion of *ri* 理, which we have seen above as pattern but which appears elsewhere in the Shinran essay in its more

⁶¹³ Miki, “Shinran,” 193.

⁶¹⁴ James Ketelaar, *Of Heretics and Martyrs in Meiji Japan: Buddhism and Its Persecution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 219.

⁶¹⁵ Miki, “Shinran,” 194.

⁶¹⁶ Miki, “Shinran,” 195. Miki’s understanding of the dharma ages as unfolding dialectically in order to produce the human being Shinran is helpfully contrasted to Takeuchi Yoshinori’s Hegelian reading of the dharma ages: “According to Shinran, the three periods of eschatological history—the rise and fall of the sūtras as spiritual forces—correspond to the transformations of the spirit that religious individuals must each pass through in their own inner experience. Furthermore, these three transformations of the spirit are intimately linked by Shinran to three vows that Amida Buddha, out of his great and merciful compassion, made on behalf of sinful humans in order to lead them into the Pure Land. The triad that this sets up of the threefold vow, the threefold movement of eschatology, and the threefold transformation of the religious individual represents a central relationship that we may, without exaggeration, liken to the Hegelian triad of the absolute spirit, the objective spirit, and the subjective spirit”; see “Centering and the World Beyond,” ed. and trans. James W. Heisig, in *Living in Amida’s Universal Vow: Essays in Shin Buddhism*, ed. Alfred Bloom (Bloomington: World Wisdom, 2004), 53.

⁶¹⁷ Miki, “Shinran,” 195. This resonates strongly with Miki’s distinction between the human being as understood conceptually in the terms of logic and epistemology and the human being as understood by Pascal: “the man whom Pascal is investigating is an absolutely concrete actuality”; see Miki, “An Analysis of Man,” 298.

familiar sense as principle. Hegel's understanding of history, subjected to critique using terms taken from Shinran, does not go beyond philosophy because it concerns itself only with principle primarily and phenomena only secondarily. Shinran is here presented as properly religious in that he realizes the interpenetration of principle and phenomena from the standpoint of his own concrete existence; this produces of itself a situation in which he both affirms the concrete historical reality by which he is given as a subject—what Miki refers to as his historical tradition—and constitutes a revolutionary overturning of that same historical tradition: by means of his realization, “he drew out something new from within his tradition's own being, and became the starting point of a new tradition, as himself the founder of a sect.”⁶¹⁸

It is hard to imagine it having escaped Miki's notice that there was another thinker who was, like Hegel, concerned with the development of history through the dialectic, but for whom the question at hand was not the question of the development of the idea but rather the question of concrete human existence. Miki does not use Marxist language in the Shinran essay, but it seems to me nonetheless that what he is doing is interpreting Shinran's question as a Marxian question and concluding that Shinran's answer is a Marxian answer. That is to say, the essential event in Shinran's life—the event of calling the name in reliance on other-power—is understood by Miki as Shinran's realization of himself as an abjectly ordinary person, that is as an individual historical subject located inextricably at the heart of a universal historical process, such that said-universal process is realized in Shinran *not* as an abstract universal but as “more than anything else, an unsparing critique of Shinran alone.”⁶¹⁹ In this apprehension of the self as an historically-

⁶¹⁸ Miki, “Shinran,” 195.

⁶¹⁹ Miki, “Shinran,” 182.

given subject at the centre of history, the liberating function of history—Amida’s original vow—is likewise realized “as striking at the core of his own self,” and so “entirely for the sake of himself alone.”⁶²⁰ So in realizing the self as a human subject thoroughly and primordially enmeshed in the dialectical unfolding of socio-historical time, Shinran achieves absolute freedom as a singular human being. This is Shinran as Marx’s *Gattungswesen*, or genus-being, who even in absolute isolation—*Shinran hitori ga tame*⁶²¹—is the “totality of human manifestation of life,”⁶²² the sentient beings in the ten directions or the genus (*rui* 類).⁶²³

At the same time, if Shinran’s realization is historical, it is also historic—it opens up the evental moment in which Shinran, as the founder of the Jōdo Shinshū, becomes “a new point of departure.”⁶²⁴ Against his initial implication that Miki’s turn to Shinran represents a weary flight out of the twentieth century back to some imagined home, I think Harootunian is right when he says elsewhere that in fact the same notion that circulates in Miki’s writings on historical materialism—that “what characterized history as actuality was its capacity ‘to realize the self in history as an oppositional one’”⁶²⁵—is what drives his interest in Shinran. For Miki, Harootunian suggests, “Shinran’s greatness stemmed from this conception of an oppositional self.”⁶²⁶ What Shinran uncovers in the

⁶²⁰ Miki, “Shinran,” 210.

⁶²¹ Miki, “Shinran,” 210.

⁶²² Karl Marx, “Private Property and Communism,” in *Karl Marx, Frederick Engels: Collected Works*, vol. 3, trans. Richard Dixon et al (New York: International Publishers, 1975), 299. *Gattungswesen* is typically translated as “species-being,” but because Hegel used *Gattung* to refer to the genus and *Arten* to refer to the species, and because Miki himself will later bring up the notion of the genus (*rui* 類), and most of all in order to prevent confusion when we turn in the next chapter to Tanabe’s *shu no ronri*, which is a logic of the *Arten* and not the *Gattung*, and which is also typically translated as “logic of species,” I will here use the rather awkward “genus-being.”

⁶²³ Miki, “Shinran,” 210.

⁶²⁴ Miki, “Shinran,” 195.

⁶²⁵ Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity*, 374.

⁶²⁶ Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity*, 374.

depths of his interior subjectivity is socio-historical reality; what he produces out of this realization is the opening of a counter-socio-historical-reality. This counter-reality takes shape as the *dōbōdōgyō*.

Shinran and Society

In “Social Life,” Miki asserts that “*dōbōdōgyō*-ism is the essential characteristic of Jōdo Shinshū.”⁶²⁷ The *dōbōdōgyō* as Miki understands it has some characteristics with which we are already familiar: in the *dōbōdōgyō*, there is no discrimination between rich and poor, wise and foolish, old and young, men and women, so all are equal⁶²⁸; there are no teachers and no students, only fellow practitioners⁶²⁹; and through this equality and fraternity, the Buddha realm (*bukkoku* 仏国) “comes to be built upon the earth” (地上に建設されてゆく).⁶³⁰ But Miki’s notion of the *dōbōdōgyō* also departs in important ways from the premodern and modern Shinshū iterations we have already considered.

In developing an understanding of just what the *dōbōdōgyō* is for Miki, I think it is helpful to return to Marx’s notion of the *Gattungswesen*. According to Marx, the human being is a genus-being.⁶³¹ This has two nuances: first, it means that the human being exists as a being in community with other human beings, others of his or her genus. Second, it means that there is a mode of being that is particular to the human being as a genus. This mode, Marx says, is labour.⁶³² Like much of the Shinran essay, the section

⁶²⁷ Miki, “Shinran,” 213.

⁶²⁸ Miki, “Shinran,” 213.

⁶²⁹ Miki, “Shinran,” 213-214.

⁶³⁰ Miki, “Shinran,” 211.

⁶³¹ Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, trans. Richard Dixon et al (Charlottesville: Intelix, 2001), 275.

⁶³² Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, 277. These nuances are explained by Thomas E. Wartenberg in his essay “‘Species-Being’ and ‘Human Nature’ in Marx,” *Human Studies* 5.2 (1982): 79. As is well known, the consequence of Marx’s understanding the genus-being of human beings as labour is

devoted to *dōbōdōgyō* is not fully developed, and its most compelling passages are fragmentary, but if I could be permitted to extend Miki's reasoning, I would point out that these two nuances—the ambiguity between which, Giorgio Agamben argues, is one of the pivots on which Marx's theorizing turns⁶³³—are transparently present in the four-character phrase *dōbōdōgyō* read literally as same-companion same-activity, and I think that Miki's account of the *dōbōdōgyō* engages both.

A Buddha realm is built upon the earth through *dōbōdōgyō* when “the universality of sentient beings in the ten quarters is made real,” that is, when “sentient beings in the ten quarters is no longer the abstract universal of the genus (*ruigainen* 類概念; *Gattung*), but a concrete universal, encompassing particularity.”⁶³⁴ Miki here explicitly points us to Hegel's notion of the genus, set against the living individual. Following Hegel, Miki understands the genus and the living individual to be in dialectical relation, but where Hegel holds that “the genus frees itself from individuality by death,”⁶³⁵ Miki holds that the dialectic culminates with a *tenkan* that returns the living individual to the world, as a representative of the genus. He gives us two ways of understanding the genus, or in Buddhist terms, “sentient beings in the ten quarters”—as an abstract universal and as a concrete universal. The transformation from the abstract to the concrete is effected by “sharing faith with other people...causing them to believe”⁶³⁶—in other words, by refiguring sentient beings in the ten quarters as the community of believers, the *dōbōdōgyō*. Moreover, Miki takes up Shinran's assertion that any encounter with the

his conclusion that the commodification of labour must alienate human beings not only from the objects of labour but also from their own essential nature, and so works to dehumanize them.

⁶³³ Giorgio Agamben, *The Man Without Content*, trans. Georgia Albert (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 79.

⁶³⁴ Miki, “Shinran,” 211.

⁶³⁵ See M.J. Inwood, *Hegel* (London: Taylor and Francis, 1983), 170.

⁶³⁶ Miki, “Shinran,” 211.

working of the vow is given by karma—“If you should come to realize this practice and *shinjin* (行信), rejoice at the conditions from the distant past that have brought it about”⁶³⁷—and interprets this as indicating the primordially of the *dōbōdōgyō*: the fraternity of the *dōbōdōgyō* is “deepened through the consciousness of practitioners of *nenbutsu* being bound by the same karma.... By chance having attained the heart of faith, we should delight in our fate—practitioners of *nenbutsu*, as ones tied together in such a fate, deepen our realization of *dōbō*.”⁶³⁸ The upshot of this is that Miki’s living individual—the person of *nenbutsu*—is someone who understands herself or himself as held now, and having been held always, in a network of relationships with sentient beings in the ten quarters, that is with the species. In Marxian terms then, *dōbōdōgyō* is an expression of each member’s realization of her or his human-being as being shared with other human beings—this is *Gattungswesen* as “a principle that causes men not to be foreign to one another but to be, indeed, *human*.”⁶³⁹

That this *dōbōdōgyō* is the concrete universal of living individuals and not the abstract universal of the species requires that we conceive of the *dōbōdōgyō* as constituted not just on the basis of a shared principle, but on the basis of shared activity in the world of living individuals, and of course from the sectarian point of view, this is exactly what *dōgyō* is: shared activity. Miki interprets this following another Buddhist notion of activity—he tells us that *nenbutsu* “is one and the same for everyone...all *nenbutsu* are *nenbutsu* of Amida’s returning movement (*ekō* 廻向).”⁶⁴⁰ It is only because all *nenbutsu* are *ekō* that the *dōbōdōgyō* exists at all: “If *nenbutsu* were a *nenbutsu* of self

⁶³⁷ *Kyōgyōshinshō* preface (SS 132); Miki, “Shinran,” 213.

⁶³⁸ Miki, “Shinran,” 213.

⁶³⁹ Agamben, *The Man Without Content*, 81.

⁶⁴⁰ Miki, “Shinran,” 213.

power, then in the individual *nenbutsu* there would be superior and inferior—they would not be equal.... *Dōbōdōgyō*-ism has its transcendental foundation in the *nenbutsu* being Amida’s returning movement. There is no me there, and no my-disciples—there is only the teaching of the dharma that makes people sanctified, mutually honoured as ‘the honourable *dōbōdōgyō*’.”⁶⁴¹ It is through the activity of the vow then that human beings are given as practicing-beings. The *dōbōdōgyō*, as praxis, is *Gattungswesen* as the praxis through which human beings are realized existentially.⁶⁴² Because Miki tells us that this *dōbōdōgyō* is a Buddha realm built upon the earth, this has some important ramifications in terms of just how we should imagine the space of the Pure Land if we are to follow Miki’s understanding.

As we noted in the previous chapter, modern Shinshū orthodoxy insists on a double removal of the space of Amida’s Pure Land to the transcendence of the afterlife and to an internal realm deep within the heart of the practitioner, permitting a refiguring of the space of the nation-state as guaranteed but not interfered with by Amida and his Pure Land. Because Miki uses the modernist vocabulary of transcendence, immanence, and interiority, it seems to me that it would be easy to mistake his reading as following the modern orthodoxy—Hattori Shisō actually makes exactly this mistake, I think, when he suggests that Miki’s interpretation of Shinran was subservient to the state—but I want to argue that in fact Miki breaks with that orthodoxy quite sharply, in at least three ways.

First, Miki is uninterested in the notion of a strictly transcendent Pure Land. Miki does emphasize the transcendental character of the Pure Land teachings: “The original vow of Amida Tathāgata and the name of Amida Tathāgata transcend Śākyamuni. The

⁶⁴¹ Miki, “Shinran,” 213-214.

⁶⁴² Miki, “Shinran,” 210; cf. Agamben, *The Man Without Content*, 81.

word, as the truly transcendental, is not the word of Śākyamuni but the name. The name is the purest word, the word of words, so to speak. This word itself is what is truly transcendental,”⁶⁴³ but “this transcendent truth cannot be a teaching of the real truth if it is limited to the merely transcendent. The truth is truth insofar as it really and truly labours within reality.”⁶⁴⁴ In other words, as we saw him claim earlier, the truth is truth only insofar as there exists a mediation between the transcendent and the immanent. When Miki returns to the question of the relationship between the transcendent and the immanent in “Religious Truth,” it is in anticipation of his discussion of the *dōbōdōgyō*, and if we follow the general movement of the essay—from questions of personal experience (*taiken* 体験) to questions of social life—it seems to me that this second invocation of truth as necessarily a mediation of the transcendent and the immanent points us to the conclusion that the *dōbōdōgyō* as a Buddha realm built upon the earth is what appears when practitioners realize themselves as human beings in relation to other human beings. A truly transcendent Pure Land would be a realm of spirit or a realm of ideas; Miki wants to suggest, I think, that the Pure Land of Shinshū is necessarily *not* this kind of space.

Second, in picking up the notion of the *dōbōdōgyō* from Rennyo, Miki also picks up something else: the notion that *nenbutsu* is a matter for each individual (念仏は名人のしのぎ).⁶⁴⁵ He draws on a passage from the *Goichidaiki*—“birth falls upon us one by

⁶⁴³ Miki, “Shinran,” 207.

⁶⁴⁴ Miki, “Shinran,” 209.

⁶⁴⁵ *Goichidaiki* 171 (SS 1284); Miki, “Shinran,” 185. The passage from Rennyo actually reads: “Birth falls upon one person. One by one, we have faith in *buppō* and are saved in the next life. Imagining that it is someone else’s affair is not understanding that it is one’s own life” (往生は一人のしのぎなり。一人一人仏法を信じて後生をたすかることなり。よそごとのやうに思ふことは、かつはわが身をしらぬことなり). Snow translates this as, “Favorable rebirth is the concern of each individual alone, and no one

one” 往生は一人一人のしのぎなり—in developing a distinction between religious equality and social equality—religious equality is an equality that does not reduce human beings to “the masses” (*gunshu* 郡衆).⁶⁴⁶ Miki says that “social discrimination, and of course moral discrimination too, lose their meaning in the face of the absolute character of religion”⁶⁴⁷; the argument here, as I understand it, is not that social discrimination loses its sting when one is buoyed by religious faith, or that social discrimination is meaningless from the standpoint of the truly religious—the *exemplum primum* of socio-moral discrimination for Miki, as for Shinshū generally perhaps, is the distinction between monks and laypeople, and that distinction has been firmly rejected by Miki. Rather, I take Miki to be arguing that when the transcendent is realized immanently, the meaning of social distinctions disappear both internally, as that vast interiority in which one stands as the sole recipient of the vow’s activity opens up, and externally, as all of one’s social relations are reordered under the banner of the *dōbōdōgyō*. When he says social discrimination loses its meaning then, I understand him to mean that it ceases to operate as an organizing principle in social relationships. This kind of equality is different from the social equality on offer from the nation, and from Marxist movements, insofar as it does not rest on a notion of equality that levels all difference, allowing any member of the group to act as representative of the group, such that individuals appear only as interchangeable representatives of the masses. His religious equality, by contrast, seems to me to be predicated on a historical realization that, like Shinran’s, comes to grasp the self as uniquely positioned at the centre of history—Rennyō’s “one by one” serves, I

else. In the buddhadharma faith will determine one’s future life. Rennyō said that those who think this is a principle for others to follow have gained no insight into themselves” (31).

⁶⁴⁶ Miki, “Shinran,” 185.

⁶⁴⁷ Miki, “Shinran,” 185.

would posit, as a way of thinking through how Shinran's "for the sake of myself alone" can hold true for more than one person. Again, going beyond Miki's argument somewhat, I would propose that in Miki's notion of religious equality, we move toward a conception of the *dōbōdōgyō* as a network binding individuals into a fellowship in such a way that each individual within the fellowship occupies a unique position in relation to every other member of the fellowship. This conception of equality is antagonistic to the purposes of the nation-state. Moreover, it runs counter to the modernist orthodoxy insofar as it suggests that internal religious experience reorders the terms of one's social relationships and precludes one from acting on behalf of or in the stead of another—here what happens deep in the practitioner's heart troubles the social order and operates against the interests of the nation-state.

Third, Miki openly rejects the notion of *ōbō ihon*. This is probably the most contentious claim I will make in this chapter, so I want to spend several pages fleshing out. First, let me acknowledge that in the Shinran essay, Miki repeats a passage from Shinran that was made heavy use of in efforts to position Shinshū as supportive of the state: "it would be splendid if all people who say the *nenbutsu*, not just yourself, do so not with thoughts of themselves, but for the sake of the imperial court and for the sake of the people of the country."⁶⁴⁸ Hattori Shisō's critique of Miki revolves in part around his assessment of Miki's use of this passage. Yoshida echoes Hattori's assessment, writing that the Honganji used this phrase from Shinran "as evidence that he was indeed a loyal supporter of the imperial house" and "[e]ven the philosopher Miki Kiyoshi, who was sympathetic to Marxism, accepted this official Honganji interpretation before he died in

⁶⁴⁸ Miki, "Shinran," 216.

prison in 1945.”⁶⁴⁹ As far as I can surmise, the Shinran essay is the only source Yoshida has to draw on in making this claim, and it seems to me that it does not provide sufficient evidence on which to assert that Miki’s reading of this passage simply followed the official Honganji line. Unlike Hattori, Miki does not interrogate the passage, or propose an alternate reading of the word translated above as “splendid” (*medetō* めでたう).⁶⁵⁰ Miki does, however, present the passage in the context of an argument around the relationship between *ōbō* and *buppō* that is at odds with the official line, and this has to be taken into account in trying to get at what he might take the passage to mean.

In the opening paragraph of “Social Life,” Miki notes that in Jōdo Shinshū, the doctrine of the two truths is given many different interpretations, but—if we look to Shinran’s writings—we find a correspondence between the two truths and the two laws: “ultimate truth is the *Buddhist law* and conventional truth is the *sovereign’s law*—the sovereign’s law is mundane (*sehō* 世法), and therefore again the laws of the world (*seken no hō* 世間の法) are conventional truth, and the supramundane law (出世間の法) is the ultimate truth.”⁶⁵¹ So the two truths, and the two laws, are distinct but they fit together (*sōō* 相応); they are interdependent (真諦俗諦相依).⁶⁵² However, Miki uses the same language of fit or correspondence here that he has used earlier to describe the relationship between *kyō* and *ki*, and he introduces into the relationship between the two truths and the two laws the same third element he has earlier introduced into the relationship of *kyō* and *ki*: time. Miki holds that Shinran’s use in the *Kyōgyōshinshō* of a passage from the

⁶⁴⁹ See Yoshida, “Kuroda Toshio,” 386-387.

⁶⁵⁰ See *Goshōsoku* 25 (SS 784). Hattori reads this as “foolish” or “naïve,” making the passage a critique of the modernist effort to support the nationalist project; Yoshida notes that his re-reading, although attractive to some Marxist historians, was quickly dismissed by others (387).

⁶⁵¹ Miki, “Shinran,” 212.

⁶⁵² Miki, “Shinran,” 212.

Mappōtōmyōki to describe the relationship between the two truths and the two laws⁶⁵³ must indicate that *mappō* somehow impacts the two truths and the two laws: they should be understood historically.⁶⁵⁴ The age of final dharma is, as Miki puts it, an age without precepts; because it is an age without precepts it is an age without distinctions between monks and laypeople, good and evil, rich and poor; and because it is an age without these distinctions, it is naturally the age of *nenbutsu*—on this point Miki cites the Tannishō: “Know that the Primal Vow of Amida makes no distinction between people young and old, good and evil; only *shinjin* is essential.”⁶⁵⁵ So, Miki concludes, in the age of final dharma, “the ultimate truth, the Buddhist law, the supramundane law is *shinjin ihon*.”⁶⁵⁶

After a discussion of the *dōbōdōgyō*, Miki returns to the question of the two truths and the two laws, noting that “according to sectarian scholars of *Jōdo Shinshū*, the mundane law, or conventional truth, holds that the sovereign’s law is the foundation (*ōbō ihon*), as against faith being the foundation (*shinjin ihon*).”⁶⁵⁷ He rounds up four passages given in support of the *ōbō ihon* view, all from Rennyo,⁶⁵⁸ and then avers that in Shinran, “such formulas”—that is, formulas affirming the need to cultivate *ōbō* outwardly and *buppō* inwardly—“are not to be found.”⁶⁵⁹ Only then does he give us the passage from Shinran about practicing *nenbutsu* for the sake of the imperial court, which on the face of things would seem to be an endorsement of the *ōbō ihon* position: “These words,” Miki

⁶⁵³ “He is a dharma-king (法王) that, basing himself on oneness, sets flowing the cultivation of beings. He is a benevolent king (仁王) that, widely reigning over the four seas, sends down the winds of virtue. The benevolent king and the dharma-king, in mutual correspondence, give guidance to beings. The supramundane truth and the mundane truth, depending on each other, cause the teaching to spread”; see *Kyōgyōshinshō* VI.80 (SS 417-418).

⁶⁵⁴ Miki, “Shinran,” 212.

⁶⁵⁵ *Tannishō* 1 (SS 831); Miki, “Shinran,” 213.

⁶⁵⁶ Miki, “Shinran,” 213.

⁶⁵⁷ Miki, “Shinran,” 214; my emphasis.

⁶⁵⁸ *Ofumi* III.12 (SS 1159), II.6 (SS 1118), and II.10 (SS 1125); and *Goichidaiki* 141 (SS 1276).

⁶⁵⁹ Miki, “Shinran,” 216.

says, “can be seen as an expression of the idea of *ōbō ihon*, which is how they have generally been interpreted.”⁶⁶⁰ But this is emphatically not how they are interpreted by Miki.

As Miki understands it, the sectarian Shinshū view is that the sovereign’s law is the basis and benevolence and righteousness are primary⁶⁶¹; this actually means, he says, that Shinran held that in matters of mundane law, one should act according to the principles of benevolence and righteousness, by following the *Analects*⁶⁶²—Shinran’s esteem for “Confucian humanism” is well known.⁶⁶³ But Miki points to Shinran’s critique of Daoism to argue that Shinran also held that Buddhism must not be conflated with other teachings, so that “[e]ven if Confucianism is quite right in its doctrine, it is nothing more than ‘only mundane good.’ Buddhism is absolute. Against this absolute truth, all other teachings are heterodox.”⁶⁶⁴ Knowing this, we should realize also that “the truth of the other teachings does not go beyond having relative value. Moreover, relative truth—even if it is somehow elevated in terms of its relative value, even if one augments it, attaching everything to it—cannot become absolute truth.”⁶⁶⁵ This is an argument for the relative merits of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism, with Buddhism here the absolute truth set apart from both the relative truth of Confucianism and relative untruth of Daoism. But because Miki identifies *ōbō* with Confucianism, it is also a way of talking

⁶⁶⁰ Miki, “Shinran,” 216.

⁶⁶¹ Miki, “Shinran,” 216.

⁶⁶² Miki, “Shinran,” 216. Miki points out that although the *Analects* is the only non-Buddhist text Shinran quotes in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, he changes the reading of the passage in order to transform it into “a pointed critique toward the Buddhism of the time” (216–217). Nasu Eisho has also commented on this passage as an example of Shinran’s use of a *kanjin shaku* style of reading; see “‘Rely on the Meaning, Not on the Words’: Shinran’s Methodology and Strategy for Reading Scriptures and Writing the *Kyōgyōshinshō*,” in *Discourse and Ideology in Medieval Japanese Buddhism*, ed. Richard K. Payne and Taigen Dan Leighton (London: Routledge, 2006), 246.

⁶⁶³ Miki, “Shinran,” 219.

⁶⁶⁴ *Kyōgyōshinshō* VI.116 (SS 471); Miki, “Shinran,” 219.

⁶⁶⁵ Miki, “Shinran,” 219.

about the relative merits of the *ōbō ihon* and *shinjin ihon* views. The argument that worldly law is the basis—the argument Miki has pinned to sectarian Shinshū—is on his view an argument for making Confucianism the basis. But making Confucianism the basis must be heretical, from the Buddhist point of view, because the *Nirvana Sūtra* tells us that “there are ninety-eight paths, but only the Buddhist path is the true path—the other ninety-seven paths are all heretical paths”⁶⁶⁶ and Shandao tells us that there are ninety-six paths, ninety-five of which “defile the world; the single way of the Buddha alone is pure and tranquil.”⁶⁶⁷ The truly orthodox view must be then that *buppō* is the basis, and in the age of final dharma, *buppō* is *shinjin*, so Miki is asserting here that the properly Buddhist view is that of *shinjin ihon*, and the sectarian orthodoxy of *ōbō ihon* is in fact heterodox.

He also begins to develop a philosophical argument for *shinjin ihon*—or *buppō ihon*—based on the pairing of the two truths and the two laws. If *buppō* is identified with the ultimate truth, it must be absolute or supramundane; if *ōbō* is identified with the conventional truth, it must be relative or mundane. The relationship between the absolute and the relative, Miki argues, is one of interdependence but not a symmetrical interdependence: the movement from relative truth to absolute truth is non-sequential (*hirenzokuteki* 非連続的)—it requires a transcendent leap—while the movement from absolute truth to relative truth is sequential (*renzokuteki* 連続的). It is impossible to progress from the standpoint of the relative to the standpoint of the absolute; the absolute can only be grasped “by means of transcendence” and *shin* 信, Miki says, refers to this

⁶⁶⁶ Miki, “Shinran,” 219.

⁶⁶⁷ *Kyōgyōshinshō* III.112 (SS 265); Miki, “Shinran,” 217.

kind of transcendence.⁶⁶⁸ This means that *ōbō* cannot be the basis for anything other than more *ōbō*—as relative truth, it cannot serve as the basis for *shinjin*. It is possible, however, to progress from the standpoint of the absolute to the standpoint of the relative, and in so doing obtain the from path of the Buddha the Confucian virtues of benevolence, goodness, filial piety, wisdom, and belief.⁶⁶⁹ *Buppō*, or *shinjin*, as absolute truth, can serve as the basis for *ōbō*, while *ōbō* cannot serve as the basis for *buppō*, which makes *buppō ihon* the only correct view.

If we return now to the passage of the essay where Miki cites the passages from Rennyo and the passage from Shinran, we might begin to speculate as to just where he imagines they diverge. The formulas he finds in Rennyo are formulas that suggest that *ōbō* and *buppō* are complementary, so that it possible to cultivate one externally and the other internally, at the same time. The passage from Shinran, on the other hand, may have suggested to Miki that it is through *buppō* that one derives *ōbō*, or that it is the activity of *nenbutsu*, or the cultivation of *shinjin*, that directs the practitioner's relationships with the imperial state and the people of the country.

There are two important consequences that would follow from this way of reading the passage from Shinran. First, Miki has told us that the relative proceeds from the absolute only once the absolute has been grasped in a moment of transcendence—"what is necessary, more than anything, is first to grasp the absolute truth."⁶⁷⁰ This means that the practitioner of *nenbutsu* becomes a good citizen through an experience of transcendental abandon, or stepping outside of the discursive regime of *ōbō*; it is only through this transcendence that one is restored to the state as a citizen through the

⁶⁶⁸ Miki, "Shinran," 219.

⁶⁶⁹ Miki, "Shinran," 219.

⁶⁷⁰ Miki, "Shinran," 219.

practice of *nenbutsu*, but that transcendence itself is a problem for the imperial state (or the imperialist nation-state) insofar as it constitutes the citizen as an independent individual. In this I think we may discern some trace of Kiyozawa's influence on Miki's way of thinking. Second, Miki has told us that through *shinjin*, the structure of one's relationships with other beings—all other beings—is rearranged under the banner of the *dōbōdōgyō*, the Buddha realm built upon the earth. This rearrangement too is a problem for the imperialist nation-state, insofar as it constitutes a refusal of secularism, of the nation's promise of social equality, and of the limited sovereignty and limited fraternity of the nation. So while Miki's treatment of *ōbō* and *buppō* draws on some of the same passages we see used in the modernist Shin orthodoxy and on the same logic of *shinzoku nitai*, we have just seen that in the section on "Social Life," he uses these passages and this logic to quite different ends, in support of what I understand to be a larger, unfinished project, of mining Shinshū thought for a description of a different social order.

In his reading of this social order, Miki overlays the triad Amida, *dōbōdōgyō*, and *akunin* upon the triad of world, society/state/species, and individual. Just as society or state or species functions to mediate the relationship between world and individual, *dōbōdōgyō* in some way functions to mediate the relationship between Amida and *akunin*—it is the place where the two encounter each other, and the place where the *akunin* can function as a creative agent of history, here understood as the working of the vow. Realizing that one cannot act freely, for oneself, is realizing that one is bound up in history—this is the meaning of being *akunin* or *bonbu*; *zange* is the expression of that realization. At the same time, in realizing that one is bound up in history, one realizes oneself as the object of the movement of history—this is the meaning of being *shōki*, of

hitori ga tame, of one by one. This discloses the historically self-conscious human being as not independent with respect to Amida but independent with respect to other human beings, that is to say, independent with respect to society or the state or the species. Miki has elsewhere identified this independence as the starting point for the “creativity of society”; it is in the coming together of individual actors in creative production that we see the coalescence of “a self-forming society.”⁶⁷¹ It would be, on this understanding, a mistake to suppose either that one ought to wait out the present situation and look forward to joining Amida’s assembly after death or that society just as it is constitutes the *dōbōdōgyō*. The *dōbōdōgyō*, as a historical social formation, requires constant re-creation—it is in this sense critically utopian. But because that constant recreation requires the collaborative participation of sovereign individuals, the *dōbōdōgyō* also demands that the individual understand himself or herself as standing apart from the very self-forming society in which her or she is a creative member—it is in this sense predicated on estrangement or exile. Miki’s *dōbōdōgyō* thus constitutes both a critique of the extant modern social order—insofar as it refuses “mere social equality,” refuses the law of the sovereign as foundational, refuses a secular state, refuses a strict boundary between the interior world of the individual and the external social world, and refuses a deferral of the transcendent—and a critique of any social order that will not give itself over to constant re-creation.

⁶⁷¹ Miki, “On tradition,” 320.

CHAPTER FIVE: TANABE HAJIME

While Miki is developing a reading of Shinran that starts with Marx, Tanabe is developing one that starts with Hegel. For a number of reasons, it seems to me that Tanabe's conception of the Pure Land as utopia is less optimistic than Miki's. For one thing, Tanabe does not share with Miki a Marxian view of history as necessarily moving in the direction of an egalitarian society. For another, Tanabe is writing at the very end of the Fifteen-Year War, which is a time when the promise of utopia seems necessarily imaginatively paired with a sense of impending catastrophe. Moreover, while Miki's turn to interiority produces a consciousness of the self as evil in a largely abstract, historical sense, Tanabe's turn to interiority produces a consciousness of the self as evil in a much more plainly personal, existential sense. It seems to me possible, however, to read Tanabe's metanoesis as pointing to a recognition of that "something is missing." In this respect, I think we will find that of all the modern thinkers we have considered, Tanabe comes closest to construing the Pure Land in such a way as to foster critical hope.

Placing Philosophy as Metanoetics in Context

On May 19th, 1943, Tanabe delivers a lecture to the students at Kyōdai entitled "Death and Life" (*Shi sei* 死生), in which he enjoins each of them to inculcate within

himself a “duty to die” (*kesshi no gimu* 決死の義務).⁶⁷² On May 21st, the Japanese public learns that Yamamoto Isoroku 山本五十六, commander-in-chief of Japan’s armed forces, had been killed the month before. On May 29th, Japanese troops stationed on Attu Island are ordered to make a final charge on the Americans at Massacre Bay, in an operation referred to thereafter as the Attu Gyokusai アツツ島玉砕, or the Attu suicide mission⁶⁷³; only twenty-eight Japanese soldiers survive the mission. In the months that follow, the Japanese are forced into retreat across the Pacific, and incidents of *gyokusai* increase.⁶⁷⁴ In October 1943, the law exempting university students from conscription is overturned, and all students not majoring in science or education become subject to the draft. In February 1944, Japan’s prime minister, Tōjō Hideki, takes command of the imperial army and issues a call for *ichioku gyokusai* 一億玉砕, “a hundred-million self-sacrifices,” a collective self-sacrifice in support of Japan’s victory in the war. Japan’s losses continue, and Tōjō resigns his post in June 1944. In October 1944, Japan begins a last-ditch effort to combat the Allied Forces through the use of *tokubetsu kōgekitai* 特別

⁶⁷² THZ 8. The translation of this phrase was suggested by Victor Hori.

⁶⁷³ John Dower describes the impulse that lead to the coining of the phrase Attu gyokusai: “the Japanese leadership reached into the Chinese classics for an expression that would convey the transcendent moral quality of such sacrifice. What they came up with was a stunning phrase, *Attu gyokusai*—*gyokusai* being a word composed of two ideographs that literally meant ‘jewel smashed.’ The expression derived from a line in the sixth-century Chinese history *Chronicle of Northern Ch’i*, where it was stated that on matters of principle, the man of moral superiority would break his precious jade rather than compromise to save the roof tiles of his home”; see “The Pure Self,” in *Race, Ethnicity, and Migration in Modern Japan*, vol. 1, ed. Michael Weiner (London: Routledge, 2004), 65.

⁶⁷⁴ The most devastating of these was the Battle of Okinawa, which began in March 1945 and ended in June; the mass death of Okinawan civilians was described as a *gyokusai*—implying that it was in some sense voluntary—although in fact these were compulsory suicides (*shudan jiketsu* 手段自決); see Gregory Smits, “Epilogue and Conclusions to *Visions of Ryukyu*,” in *Race, Ethnicity, and Migration in Modern Japan*, vol. 3, ed. Michael Weiner (London: Routledge, 2004), 237-238; and Aniya Masaaki, Okinawasen no “shūdanjisatsuketsu” (kyōsei shūdanshi): 沖縄戦の「集団自決」(強制集団死), <http://japanfocus.org/data/aniya.%20j.pdf> (last accessed June 13, 2009); also translated by Kyoko Selden, “Compulsory mass suicide, the Battle of Okinawa, and Japan’s textbook controversy,” *Japan Focus*, <http://japanfocus.org/-Aniya-Masaaki/2629> (last accessed April 17, 2009).

攻撃隊 or *tokkōtai*, the special attack units better known in the West as the *kamikaze* 神風.

Given the developments that follow hard on the heels of Tanabe's May 19th lecture, it is easy to imagine him as an apparatchik at this point in his career, giving voice to a policy of *gyokusai* as a mouthpiece for the imperial state. Many intellectual historians have suggested that Tanabe is to some degree implicated in the actions of the state. Andrew Feenberg writes that Tanabe, like other philosophers of the day, "defended Japanese imperialism."⁶⁷⁵ John S. Brownlee writes that Tanabe—along with Nishida and Nishitani—"fully supported Japan's militarism and imperialism," although they "expressed themselves in profundities so obscure that some later interpreters think that they can detect covert opposition to militarism and imperialism."⁶⁷⁶ Himi Kiyoshi holds that Tanabe, under "the spell of the dominating ideology of modern Japan" ultimately "sacrificed his rationalist thought to the affirmation and praise of the Japanese state."⁶⁷⁷ Sven Saaler writes that Tanabe (along with Miki and others) were "co-opted into government efforts to strengthen the ideological foundations of a 'New Order' in East Asia."⁶⁷⁸ Andrew Barshay tells us that when it came to Tanabe's work on the logic of the species (*shu no ronri* 種の論理), "the question was not one of cooptation so much as

⁶⁷⁵ Andrew Feenberg, *Alternative Modernity: The Technical Turn in Philosophy and Social Theory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 169; Feenberg's sense that this was a moral error is apparent in his suggestion that, while philosophers like Tanabe, Kuki Shūzō 九鬼周造, and Watsuji Tetsurō 和辻哲郎 defended the state, there were "a few honorable exceptions."

⁶⁷⁶ John S. Brownlee, *Japanese Historians and the National Myths, 1600–1945* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1999), 10.

⁶⁷⁷ Himi Kiyoshi 氷見潔, *Tanabe tetsugaku kenkyū* 田辺哲学研究 (Tokyo: Hokuju, 1980), 126; cited in Jan Van Bragt, "Kyoto Philosophy—Intrinsically Nationalistic?" in *Rude Awakenings: Zen, the Kyoto School*, ed. James W. Heisig and John C. Maraldo (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1995), 240.

⁶⁷⁸ Sven Saaler, "Pan-Asianism in Modern Japanese History: Overcoming the Nation, Creating a Region, Forging an Empire," in *Pan-Asianism in Modern Japanese History: Colonialism, Regionalism and Borders*, ed. Sven Saaler and J. Victor Koschmann (London: Routledge, 2007), 12.

virtual, albeit unintended, prostitution”⁶⁷⁹; elsewhere, Barshay is sharply critical of Tanabe’s “contributionism,” which he characterizes as “the willing provision by the intelligentsia of ideological resources to the state.”⁶⁸⁰ And Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney writes that “Among the Japanese authors, he was most extensively read by the [*tokkōtai*] pilots,” including him among a list of “historical agents” of the period: “Tanabe Hajime was a liberal and a devout Christian, but he sent young men to their deaths by promoting the importance of an individual’s engagement with the state.”⁶⁸¹

Sometimes, following this understanding, his *Philosophy as Metanoetics* (*Zangedō toshite no tetsugaku* 懺悔道としての哲学)—based on lectures delivered in 1944 and published in 1946—is read as confession of collaboration. Barshay, for instance, asks us: “Witness, in recognition”—of his earlier intellectual complicity—“the title of Tanabe’s first postwar work, *Zangedō toshite no tetsugaku* (literally, Philosophy, path of confession, 1946), the manuscript of which, significantly, was already complete by the summer of 1944.”⁶⁸² Barshay links Tanabe’s *zange* to the wave of calls for collective repentance—*ichioku sōzange* 一億総懺悔—that issued from the state at the end of the war, beginning with Prime Minister Higashikuni Naruhiko’s 東久迩稔彦 August 30th declaration that “the armed forces, government officials, and the population as a whole

⁶⁷⁹ Andrew Barshay, *State and Intellectual in Imperial Japan: The Public Man in Crisis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 30.

⁶⁸⁰ Andrew Barshay, “Postwar Social and Political Thought, 1945–90,” in *Modern Japanese Thought*, ed. Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 276.

⁶⁸¹ Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, *Kamikaze, Cherry Blossoms, and Nationalisms: The Militarization of Aesthetics in Japanese History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 5 and 18. It is not clear to me what Ohnuki-Tierney means by “liberal” here, or indeed what liberal might have meant in the context of 1940s Japan. Tanabe is not typically casually identified as a liberal however—see eg. Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 322; Yumiko Iida, “Constituting Aesthetic/Moral National Space: The Kyoto School and the Place of Nation,” in *Re-Politicising the Kyoto School as Philosophy*, ed. Christopher S. Goto-Jones (London: Routledge, 2008), 83. Nor is it clear to me why Ohnuki-Tierney identifies Tanabe as a devout Christian.

⁶⁸² Barshay, *State and Intellectual*, 30.

must search their hearts thoroughly, and repent”⁶⁸³; so does John Dower: “One could hardly imagine a sharper contrast than that between Tanabe’s densely reasoned disquisition on *zange*, or repentance, and the government’s bromides on the same issue—with the exception of the fact that Tanabe’s “repentance,” too, was intensely nationalistic.... For many thoughtful and tormented patriots, here was a sophisticated philosophy of contrition that snatched a kind of moral victory from the jaws of defeat.”⁶⁸⁴ Dower suggests that there is something decadent about Tanabe’s *zange*, characterizing the introduction to *Metanoetics* as “a paroxysm of self-denigration”⁶⁸⁵ and commenting later on Tanabe’s “masochistic moments of shame and sin.”⁶⁸⁶ This suspicion that there is something self-serving in all this *zange* makes sense, I think, if we take it as indeed part and parcel of the post-war insistence on collective repentance—and by implication, the shouldering of collective responsibility⁶⁸⁷—or an example of late-war reverse *tenkō* 転向.

⁶⁸³ Barshay, “Postwar Social and Political Thought,” 273-74.

⁶⁸⁴ Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 497.

⁶⁸⁵ Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 498.

⁶⁸⁶ Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 683 n.26.

⁶⁸⁷ This notion of collective responsibility is subject to both critique and satire. Ishikawa Jun has his protagonist, protesting his innocence, challenge the call to *zange* in his 1946 “The legend of gold”: “...irrespective of any serious discussion of guilt or innocence, the presumption is that everyone has something to hide—that, for having been party to the fray, one carries a secret scar beneath one’s breeches, whether a heinous blot on one’s record or a mere knick on the shins. No, no exceptions will be tolerated, and no one permitted to speak to the contrary. However blameless and free of marks upon one’s person, no one shall be allowed to emerge as clean and unscathed”; see *The Legend of Gold and Other Stories*, trans. William J. Tyler (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1998): 63. Tyler comments that to “speak out on this issue, to be vociferous in the defense of his own innocence, and to insist that he was not and will not be party to the mindset of the hundred million is to break the mold of thinking en masse and to promote a much-needed diversity of opinion” (208). *Ichoku sōzange* is also challenged by the grassroots counter-claim of *shidōsha sekinin ron* 指導者責任論, literally the leaders-responsibility argument. But Madoka Futamura suggests that the claim that the leaders were responsible also served the interests of the Allied Occupation, which needed to force a rift between the imperial state and the people; he sees the Tokyo Tribunal at which Japan’s military leaders were tried for war crimes as unsuccessfully negotiating a complicated dynamic between individual and collective responsibility: “The Tokyo Tribunal could neither successfully individualize the responsibilities of the wartime generation nor prevent collective guilt from being passed on to future generations. In other words, the trials did not attain complete ‘closure’”;

But Takeuchi Yoshinori—Tanabe’s student and a kind of native informant from the world of Shinshū for Tanabe—insists that Tanabe’s call for *zange* is different, complaining that the significance of *Metanoetics* is lost once it is “absorbed into the general atmosphere of mass appeals for national repentance being generated by opportunistic politicians.”⁶⁸⁸ Other critics more sympathetic to Tanabe have also been hesitant to read Tanabe’s *zange* as *tenkō*. Jan van Bragt writes,

Once the war was over, Tanabe began to talk openly and at length of the need for metanoia, and in that sense seemed to have acknowledged guilt both personal and collective. I say “seemed to,” because in all honesty I cannot pin down for myself just what those ideas meant in the concrete. Was his metanoetics basically anything more than an expression of the shock brought about by direct encounter with the fallibility and gullibility of human reason? I have a difficult time reading much more into even his clearest admission of “guilt.”⁶⁸⁹

In his introduction to *Metanoetics*, James Heisig calls it “altogether wrongheaded to suppose, as some Japanese historians were to do from post-war bandwagons, that Tanabe had composed his *Philosophy as Metanoetics* in order to dissociate himself from nationalist views he had once espoused...he never [held] such views”⁶⁹⁰; in his contribution to *Rude Awakenings*, Heisig writes that “the *Metanoetics* is a supremely nonpolitical book. Even when it tilts toward the concrete in ‘despising the shamelessness of the leaders primarily responsible for the defeat who are now urging the entire nation to

“Individual and Collective Guilt: Post-War Japan and the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal,” *European Review* 14.4 (2006): 477.

⁶⁸⁸ Takeuchi, “Translator’s Introduction” to *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, xxxvi. In an interesting essay on Tanabe’s logic of species, Ibaragi Daisuke also raises the question of the relationship between Tanabe’s *zange* and postwar *ichioku sōzange*, but to my knowledge has not yet investigated it. See Ibaragi Daisuke 伊原本大祐, “種的社会の展開: 田辺元とフランス社会思想,” 宗教学研究紀要 4 (2007): 9.

⁶⁸⁹ Van Bragt, “Kyoto Philosophy,” 241.

⁶⁹⁰ Heisig, “Foreword” to *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, xvii.

repentance' and expressing a belief in 'the collective responsibility of the nation,' its call is for a religious change of heart, not for a reform of social institutions."⁶⁹¹ Even Naoki Sakai, who delivers a rigorous critique of the effects of the "Death and life" lecture, resists the portrait of Tanabe as a collaborator who simply delivered his logic of species to the state on command:

Tanabe started publishing articles on the logic of species much earlier than the inauguration in 1940 by the Japanese government of the idea of the Greater East Asian Coprosperity Sphere. So neither can one argue that Tanabe conceived of Logic of Species particularly for the large-scale regional transnational polity, nor that the policies of the Greater East Asian Coprosperity Sphere were formulated according to the theoretical design found in Logic of Species. In this case, too, the relationship between philosophy and politics is over-determined and far from direct.⁶⁹²

⁶⁹¹ James W. Heisig, "Tanabe's Logic of the Specific and the Spirit of Nationalism," in *Rude Awakenings: Zen, the Kyoto School, and the Question of Nationalism*, ed. James W. Heisig and John C. Maraldo (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1995), 272.

⁶⁹² Naoki Sakai, "Subject and substratum: on Japanese imperial nationalism," *Cultural Studies* 14.3 (2000): 467. Sakai concludes nonetheless that in his logic of species, "Tanabe provided the most sophisticated explication for an imperial nationalism and the recipe for its subject formation" (513). John Namjun Kim, following Sakai I think, and addressing Tanabe and Miki particularly, argues fiercely against taking the indirectness of the relation between intellectual production and state ideology as a reason to let philosophers off the hook: "If imperialism is principally an ideologically driven phenomenon, then even those who are far removed from its 'actual' practice stand in a relation of responsibility to its effects. The maintenance of any rigorous distinction between 'practitioners' and mere 'theoreticians' becomes impossible when the question of responsibility is posed within the modern system of producing and multiplying intellectual power through the instruments of the state. In this sense, the figure of the philosopher stands in an ethically precarious position in respect to imperialism. While arguing for the concept of human freedom, he might contribute to the matrix of ideas animating the imperialist project of his state. The intellectual labor of a philosopher is as much subject to imperial mobilization as the common citizen is subject to military conscription. Put more polemically, the philosophers of imperial Japan would not even need to leave the comforts of Kyōto in order to participate in the exertion of force over subjects in regions as far flung as Manchuria or Indonesia. His acts of thinking, writing and teaching alone ensure his participation. The work of the intellectual is never too abstract or too far-removed from the life of this world as to be irrelevant or not to exert power over it"; see "The temporality of empire: the imperial cosmopolitanism of Miki Kiyoshi and Tanabe Hajime," in *Pan-Asianism in Modern Japanese History: Colonialism, Regionalism and Borders*, ed. Sven Saaler and J. Victor Koschmann (London: Routledge,

Nonetheless, the political critiques of Tanabe seem to me to be having some impact on how he is received by Pure Land thinkers. While his interest in Pure Land thought is regularly noted by scholars of the Kyoto School, as a way of setting him in opposition to Nishida,⁶⁹³ he has not been wholly embraced by sectarian scholars. Tanabe is not included among the “pioneers” of the *Gendai Shinran kyōgaku* collection, and in the section of *The Religious Philosophy of Tanabe Hajime* dealing with Shinshū thought, he is gently criticized by Taitetsu Unno and scathingly criticized by Ueda.⁶⁹⁴ Galen Amstutz comments that Tanabe’s “real basis was nineteenth-century European thought rather than traditional Buddhism, his appropriation of Shinran was doubtfully accurate, and the existence of the Honganji as an independent religious institution for religious fellowship played no role for him”⁶⁹⁵; as a consequence, Tanabe’s thought “must be sharply distinguished from classical Shinshū, and it is puzzling why those who propose to

2007), 151-152. I take Kim’s point about the weakness of a distinction between practitioner and theoretician to heart, but it seems to me that the “question of responsibility” is a tendentious one when, as Kim allows, the philosopher arguing for freedom *might* contribute to imperialism—in other words, is the theoretician responsible for every possible reading of her work, and if we agree that this must be so, how is that responsibility to be borne?

⁶⁹³ For example: “Nishida’s mature thought centered around the concept of the ‘*topos* of Nothingness’ in which he developed an early concept of ‘pure experience’ into a generalized Zen metaphysics. Tanabe’s thought was characterized by an interpretation of ‘absolute Nothingness’ in terms of Pure Land Buddhism,” David Dilworth and Taira Satō, trans., “The Logic of the Species as Dialectics,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 24.3 (1969): 273 n.1; “Whereas Nishida was primarily interested in Zen, and only later in his life in Pure Land, Tanabe was from the start a Pure Land believer. In some ways, Tanabe and Nishida seem to replay in highly philosophical terms the old Zen/Pure Land controversy between “self-power” (*jiriki*) and “other-power” (*tariki*),” Bernard Faure, “The Kyoto School and Reverse Orientalism,” in *Japan in Traditional and Postmodern Perspectives*, ed. Charles Wei-hsun Fu and Steven Heine (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 251; “Keeping in mind that all the Kyoto School thinkers drew inspiration from multiple religious traditions, it is in fact possible to see the School’s generations of chair holders at Kyoto University as loosely alternating between primarily Zen Buddhism (Z) oriented thinkers and primarily Shin Buddhism (S) oriented thinkers: Nishida (Z); Tanabe (S); Hisamatsu Shinichi and Nishitani Keiji (Z); Takeuchi Yoshinori (S); Tsujimura Kōichi and Ueda Shizuteru (Z); Hase Shōtō and now Keta Masako (S),” Bret W. Davis, “The Kyoto School,” n.2.

⁶⁹⁴ See Taitetsu Unno, “Shin Buddhism and metanoetics,” in *The Religious Philosophy of Tanabe Hajime*, ed. Taitetsu Unno and James W. Heisig (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1990), 117-133 and Ueda Yoshifumi, “Tanabe’s metanoetics and Shinran’s thought,” trans. Taitetsu Unno, in *The Religious Philosophy of Tanabe Hajime: The Metanoetic Imperative*, ed. Taitetsu Unno and James W. Heisig (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1990), 134-149.

⁶⁹⁵ Amstutz, *Interpreting Amida*, 92.

build bridges between Shin and Western thought would see Tanabe as the best place to start.”⁶⁹⁶ Amstutz’s objection to Tanabe is, I think, partly defensive—following Barshay, he understands Tanabe as politically vexed: “The absorption of Shin thought into prewar Japanese fascism reached its zenith in the rhetoric of Tanabe Hajime, a member of the Kyoto school of modern Japanese philosophy who was putatively most influenced by Shinran’s thought.”⁶⁹⁷ It seems to me then that the political critiques levelled at Tanabe may partly inform a reluctance on the part of those immersed in Shinshū thought to closely engage Tanabe’s reading.

I have to acknowledge also that Tanabe himself demonstrates a remarkable antipathy toward the Shinshū institution and actual Shinshū practitioners in *Metanoetics*. He suggests that the “so-called believers” of the present day “lack the very ethical, rational element of metanoesis essential to the mediation of religious salvation,” contributing to “the degeneration of Pure Land Shin doctrine away from what Shinran taught”—metanoesis, naturally—and “a failure to preserve the sincerity of the founder’s spirit.”⁶⁹⁸ He has this to say about the contemporary institution:

The *tariki* teaching of Shinran came to birth as a religion centered entirely on the common people (*shomin* 庶民). But nowadays, as a look around makes plain to see, it has degenerated into a sect that covets prestige and prosperity above all else, a lifeless corpse from which the spirit has departed. I once incurred the wrath of the Zen sect by suggesting that Zen Buddhism should be emancipated from its bondage to particular sects and schools. It seems to me that a similar

⁶⁹⁶ Amstutz, *Interpreting Amida*, 186 n.64.

⁶⁹⁷ Amstutz, *Interpreting Amida*, 35.

⁶⁹⁸ Tanabe, *Zangedō toshite tetsugaku, Shi no tetsugaku* 懺悔道として哲学・死の哲学, ed. Hase Shōtō 長谷正當 (Kyoto: Tōeisha, 2000), 21; translated by Takeuchi Yoshinori, with Valdo H. Viglielmo and James W. Heisig, *Philosophy as Metanoetics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 17.

emancipation from narrow sectarianism is called for in present-day Pure Land Buddhism, where charges of heresy have erected barriers impeding free research into its doctrine. Shinran's valuable thought goes largely unexplored and undeveloped, when it should be investigated thoroughly in a spirit free of the bonds of sectarianism.⁶⁹⁹

This criticism of sectarian studies contains what I take to be a veiled reference to the 1928 excommunication of Soga and Kaneko, who had by this point been welcomed back into the institution, and whose reform movement was to come into ascendancy within the institution. Tanabe here thus doubly undercuts any sectarian critique of Tanabe's appropriation of Pure Land thought by on the one hand aligning himself with sectarian scholarship's own leading lights, and on the other hand asserting that sectarian scholarship is incompetent. This seems to me to be a perfectly good reason for contemporary Pure Land thinkers to wonder how serious Tanabe is in his engagement with their tradition, and how fruitful it would be to engage Tanabe's work themselves.

Despite this, I think Tanabe has several things that recommend him as a Pure Land thinker. Tanabe does engage Soga's work, thanking Soga in his introduction and acknowledging his reading of the doctrine of the three minds as an important source; he is in this respect engaged with and interested in the intellectual currents that shape the Ōtani institution. Further, at least two of the scandalous aspects of Tanabe's approach to the classical Shinshū materials plainly resonate with movements within the contemporary institution: demythologization and the return to Shinran. Tanabe does a lot of harrumphing about Pure Land's mythological scheme in *Metanoetics*, commenting that given "my high regard for science, I can find no basis for belief in either the Pure Land

⁶⁹⁹ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 239-240; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 225.

(*jōdo* 浄土) or the Kingdom of Heaven (*tenkoku* 天国), nor can I believe in the continuation of a disembodied soul after death”⁷⁰⁰ and that to resist a philosophical reading of the Pure Land imaginary leads one “inevitably to fall into the error of converting Pure Land Buddhism into a kind of theism (*yūshinron* 有神論) akin to Christianity, and thus to get trapped in the mythological (*shinwa* 神話) scheme.”⁷⁰¹ This is of a piece with Kiyozawa’s refusal to speak of the afterlife “since I have not experienced it myself” and his suggestion that the absolute infinite does not take form beyond this world of difference⁷⁰²; it is likewise of a piece with Soga’s demythologizing. Tanabe understands this demythologizing as necessary in order to return to the *tariki* of Shinran, centered on the common people. He thus takes his task to be one through which Shinran is returned:

I firmly believe that Shinran has returned to the world—performed *gensō* (還相)—to teach me this truth.... I have to speak of Shinran as returning to the world as my teacher to guide me on the path of metanoetics, for there is no doubt that absolute Other-power, in the attempt to lead me to metanoetics, makes use of Shinran as its mediator and representative. The fact that metanoesis makes the *Kyōgyōshinshō* understandable to me awakens me in turn to the fact that Shinran is continually teaching me and guiding me, and has returned to the world for that purpose.⁷⁰³

This too is of a piece with the return to Shinran movement of Shinshū modernism. Even the implication that Tanabe has to remove Shinran from the institution built up around

⁷⁰⁰ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 169; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 157.

⁷⁰¹ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 228; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 213.

⁷⁰² KMZ vol. 6, 162-163; Bandō, “My faith,” 9; and KMZ vol. 6, 28.

⁷⁰³ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 34-35; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 29-30.

him in order to rediscover the original religion, centered on the common people, resonates with calls issuing from within—we might think here of temple son Hattori Shisō’s assertion in his *Shinran nōto* that he intends to take Shinran out of the temple and return him to the peasants, where he lives. If we protest that Kiyozawa, Soga, Hattori and other Shinshū modernists have the right to make these kinds of interventions because they are in some sense insiders within the institution, while Tanabe, as an outsider, does not, then we fall back on exactly the institutional authority that the modernists are challenging. It seems to me that taking the work of the sectarian modernists seriously as an iteration of Pure Land thought requires that we attend to questions of sources and method, rather than accuracy—which I think can only be assessed in terms of orthodoxy—and authority. While I agree with Amstutz that Tanabe’s thought must—like Kiyozawa’s and Soga’s—be sharply distinguished from classical Shinshū, in his sources and his method, Tanabe seems to me to have a meaningful place within the constellation of Shinshū modernists, if a marginal one.

In the last chapter, I read Miki not as a Marxist but a Marxian. In this chapter, I want to read Tanabe as a Shinran-ian. On the one hand, I feel emboldened by Heisig’s assertion that *Metanoetics* is a religious book, in that it calls for “a religious change of heart” (and of course also by Tanabe’s own understanding of his metanoetics as “pav[ing] the way for a philosophy of history that is also a philosophy of religion”⁷⁰⁴). On the other hand, what I would like to consider here is Tanabe’s iteration of the Pure Land as a sociopolitical utopia, like Soga’s great vow ship or Miki’s *dōbōdōgyō*. Heisig and Van Bragt, however, seem to me to concur that *Metanoetics* can be defended against charges of complicity with the imperial nation-state because it is *not* oriented toward a

⁷⁰⁴ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 101; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 93.

reimagining of the social—as we’ve seen, Heisig suggests that it is a non-political book; Van Bragt insists that Tanabe’s “primary concerns were far from sociopolitical.”⁷⁰⁵ Even David Williams—who staunchly insists on Tanabe’s importance as a kind of post-colonial political thinker—treats *Metanoetics* as an exception, telling us that *zange* is Tanabe’s focus only for a short period during which he “swerved from his commitment to secular political change into a relatively brief but intensely felt absorption in the idea of metanoetics.”⁷⁰⁶ It strikes to me that this distinction between religious conversion and social reform is useful in that it opens up a space in which to consider Tanabe’s *zange* apart from post-war political apologies. It seems to bar us, however, from fully treating the final chapter of *Metanoetics*, “Metanoetics as a religious view of society.” With that in mind I will plow ahead with a discussion of the relationship Tanabe posits between the Pure Land and the state as social formations. There are three questions I want to address: As an honorary Pure Land thinker, what praxis does Tanabe have in mind? What kind of Pure Land is this praxis understood to produce? And what is this Pure Land’s relationship to the real?

Nenbutsu, Zange, and the Apology Effect

So obviously the praxis presented in *Metanoetics* is metanoesis, or *zange*. Tanabe understands this *zange* in ways plainly resonant with the language of *seishinshugi*, opening the book with the comment that *zange* “unexpectedly threw me back on my own

⁷⁰⁵ Van Bragt, “Kyoto Philosophy,” 244.

⁷⁰⁶ David Williams, *Defending Japan’s Pacific War: The Kyoto School Philosophers and Post-White Power* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), 99. This book has been the subject of two very thoughtful and incisive reviews, one by John C. Maraldo (“The war over the Kyoto School,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 61.3 (2006): 375-406) and the other by James W. Heisig (in the *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 32.1 (2005): 163-166).

interiority and away from things external.”⁷⁰⁷ For Tanabe, as for Kiyozawa I think, this retreat into interiority itself prompts a renewed engagement with society, and in Tanabe’s case at least it cannot be said that he offers no principle of *gensō*. Tanabe attaches to his notion of *zange*—which he identifies with the trinity (*san’ichiteki tōitsu* 三一の統一) of *gyō-shin-shō* 行信証⁷⁰⁸—a necessary *gensō*, claiming that “the truth of *zange* is realized” as *gensō*.⁷⁰⁹ Moreover, Tanabe gives us not one but two iterations of *gensō*: relative *gensō*, which arises out of a dialectical opposition to *ōsō*, and absolute *gensō*, which from the side of the absolute Tathāgata is the dialectic of coming and going unfolding limitlessly within itself and which from the side of the relative being is the skillful working of the vow,⁷¹⁰ which can also be given the name Dharmākara.⁷¹¹

We noted in our discussion of Soga that an emphasis on *gensō* can raise the question of whether or not return is to be taken as an end in itself, and so endlessly repeated. Tanabe’s *zange* is also repetitive. This repetition itself has been taken as proof that Tanabe’s *zange* 懺悔 is a misappropriation of Shinran’s *zangi* 慚愧, which makes the egregious error of introducing self-power—in the form of penitence—into the properly Shinshū sense of shame.⁷¹² In this section of the chapter, I will first explain why the fact that Tanabe’s *zange* is repetitive may also indicate a political problem shared with state *zange*, then argue that it is his understanding of *zange* as preserving the self that should lead us to understand his *zange* as meaningfully different from state *zange*—where state

⁷⁰⁷ Tanabe, *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 1.

⁷⁰⁸ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 11; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 6.

⁷⁰⁹ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 12; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 7. Takeuchi typically translates *gensō* as “return from the Pure Land,” but this is not explicitly indicated in the text; here for instance, Tanabe just writes, “Here the *shō* of *zange* is established as *gensō*” ここに懺悔の証が還相として成り立つ.

⁷¹⁰ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 231-232; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 215-216. Here Tanabe makes a point of the double sense of Tathāgata as both “the thus-come one” and “the thus-gone one.”

⁷¹¹ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 250; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 235.

⁷¹² Ueda, “Tanabe’s Metanoetics,” 113.

zange produces citizens, Tanabe's *zange* produces exiles—and finally claim that Tanabe's preservation of the self solves a doctrinal problem rather than creating one, to wit, the problem of the absolutizing of the finite.

First, the political problem: the memory of the events of the Fifteen-Year War has proved to be unreliable, and post-war national discourse has been troubled by revenants.⁷¹³ The post-war period has thus been marked by a cycle of apologies, denials, and protests. Ken Kawashima describes the apology as “a leading form of postwar Japan's foreign diplomacy,” and argues that this cyclical movement of apology-denial-protest or apology-retraction-mobilization produces what he calls “the apology effect.”⁷¹⁴ The apology effect makes gestures of mobilization and apology—which are experienced as demands for truth or transparency and transparent confessions, respectively—actually conceal two facts: first, that the events for which the state is apologizing were not isolated but on the contrary have a long history predating even the wartime period; and second, that at present, the elite classes within the nations engaged in this cycle are cooperating partners in multinational business interests. So the apology, which has the apparent function of bringing to light actually functions to occlude historical conflict and contemporary class conflict through a pattern of repeated “ideological mystification.”⁷¹⁵ The gesture of apology, located in this kind of cycle, is useful precisely because it prompts its own repetition—“it creates conditions for future acts of bowing in

⁷¹³ See for example the essays by Gavan McCormack, Nozaki Yoshiko and Inokuchi Hiromitsu, and Kimijima Kazuhiko in *Censoring History: Citizenship and Memory in Japan, Germany, and the United States*, ed. Laura Elizabeth Hein and Mark Selden (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2000); C. Sarah Soh, “Japan's Responsibility Toward Comfort Women Survivors,” Japan Policy Research Institute (May 2001), <http://www.jpri.org/publications/workingpapers/wp77.html> (last accessed April 19, 2009); Yoshida Takashi, *The Making of the “Rape of Nanking”* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), and James E. Auer, ed., *From Marco Polo Bridge to Pearl Harbor: Who Was Responsible?* (Tokyo: Yomiuri Shimbun, 2006).

⁷¹⁴ Ken C. Kawashima, “The Apology Effect: The Mystification of Class Exploitation in Japan and China,” *Relay* 21 (2008): 34-36.

⁷¹⁵ Kawashima, “The Apology Effect,” 34-36.

apology.”⁷¹⁶ Kawashima’s observation of the way that state apology is caught up in a dialectical movement giving rise to Adorno’s “repetition of the continually same ‘today’” should prompt us to look seriously at the possibility that Tanabe’s repetitive *zange* too produces this kind of ideological mystification.

I think that there are two meaningful ways in which Tanabe’s *zange* is different from state *zange*. In order to understand how this is so, it might be useful to examine the two iterations of state apology. The first, as described by Kawashima, is a cycle of apology-retraction-mobilization that takes place between two (or more) nation-states (see Appendix A, *fig.1*). Because this cycle centres around Japan’s actions during the war, it is easy to miss the disjunction between this cycle of apology and the wave of *zange* that arose immediately following the end of the war. In fact, however, state *zange* in the immediate aftermath of the war was not a ritual of apology to other nation-states; it was a ritual of apology to the emperor—as Rikki Kersten points out, Higashikuni’s call for *ichioku zange* was for an apology directed by the people “towards the emperor, in whose name they had fought the lost war”⁷¹⁷; this apology would be “the first step to reconstruction.”⁷¹⁸ This was a reiteration of the August 15 apology made by prime minister Suzuki Kantarō—“the nation sincerely apologizes to His Majesty... our role as subjects is to assist the imperial destiny which is as eternal as heaven and earth. Only this absolute loyalty can protect our national polity”⁷¹⁹—that followed the emperor’s announcement of surrender, which itself contained an apology, and was in its entirety a

⁷¹⁶ Kawashima, “The Apology Effect,” 34.

⁷¹⁷ Rikki Kersten, “Defeat and the Intellectual Culture of Postwar Japan,” *European Review* 12.4 (2004): 499.

⁷¹⁸ Trans. in Herbert P. Bix, “The Showa Emperor’s ‘Monologue’ and the Problem of War Responsibility,” *Journal of Japanese Studies* 18.2 (1992): 303.

⁷¹⁹ Trans. in Bix, “The Showa Emperor’s ‘Monologue’,” 302.

kind of performance of self-negation.⁷²⁰ This version of state *zange* then begins with the negation of the emperor, a metonym for the absolute, eternal state; the negation of the state is negated through the self-negation of the people; and that self-negation of the people, it is promised, will lead to a reaffirmation of the state (see Appendix A, *fig.2*). The partners in this dialectical movement are not two autonomous nation-states, but an eternal absolute and a contingent relative. Like the cycle of apology Kawashima describes, this second *zange* also serves to generate ideological mystification, as is made evident in Herbert Bix's discussion of the postwar casting of the Showa emperor as an agent of democracy and peace,⁷²¹ but not to the same end.

Those who are suspicious of Tanabe's *zange*, it seems to me, understand it as doing the work of the post-surrender *zange*, and so of reiterating imperialist nationalism—the intuition that this *zange* really serves as ideological mystification is suggested by claims that Tanabe's *zange* is somehow insincere. Those who see some socioethical potential in Tanabe's *zange* seem to me to understand it instead as having the capacity to do what apology would do if the cycle of apology were to be productive, that is to say, as a tool for bringing different collectives into dialogue (with, of course, an expectation that this will produce real awareness and not ideological mystification)—Steven Heine, for example, suggests that those working to address social discrimination and hierarchy “can learn from Tanabe's postwar *Zangedō*, which in contrast to the *Platform Sūtra* stresses the inseparability of form and principle repentance. According to

⁷²⁰ Viz., the Imperial Rescript of August 14, 1945: “We cannot but express the deepest sense of regret to our Allied nations of East Asia, who have consistently cooperated with the Empire towards the emancipation of East Asia. The thought of those officers and men as well as others who have fallen in the fields of battle, those who died at their posts of duty, or those who met with untimely death and all their bereaved families, pains Our heart night and day.”

⁷²¹ See Bix, “The Showa Emperor's ‘Monologue’,” 349ff.

Tanabe's call, genuine repentance covering both these realms may not only liberate Buddhism but it will enable Buddhism to liberate society through a genuine moral call to action...."⁷²² But the elements of Tanabe's *zange* are different from both these forms of state *zange*.

Tanabe's *zange* begins with the negation of the relative self by the absolute—this is the Great Nay,⁷²³ or the Great Action through which “the self, driven to absolute disruption in metanoesis, breaks asunder and dies to ordinary life.”⁷²⁴ Through this encounter, the absolute—which is nothingness—realizes itself, but because it is nothingness, it cannot affirm itself directly; instead it must by necessity realize itself in the affirmation of the other: “by affirming relative beings, negating the immediacy of its own absolute power vis-à-vis relative beings in order to give them life.”⁷²⁵ This is the conversion of the Great Nay (*daihi* 大非) into the Great Compassion (*daihi* 大悲),⁷²⁶ or birth—thus, Tanabe claims, “love or compassion that annihilates the self provides the unitive aspect of the dialectic. To submit oneself to one's own death without reserve is, dialectically, to live.”⁷²⁷ The relative self, born out of death, is through this negation of negation thrown back into the world of relative beings—and so into “the inclination to evil, the permanent disposition to isolate oneself from the totality of the absolute”⁷²⁸—but, now “conscious of its nature as a nothingness,” this evil self “is restored to the unity

⁷²² Steven Heine, “The Role of Repentance—or Lack of It—in Zen Monasticism,” 19, <http://www.thezensite.com/ZenEssays/CriticalZen/role%20of%20repentance%20in%20zen.pdf> (last accessed May 17, 2009).

⁷²³ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 13; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 10.

⁷²⁴ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 96; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 88.

⁷²⁵ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 170; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 158.

⁷²⁶ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 13; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 8.

⁷²⁷ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 144; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 133.

⁷²⁸ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 166-167; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 154.

of solidarity with others (*kōgo rentai no tōitsu* 交互連帯の統一),”⁷²⁹ which is the actualization of Great Compassion as a “world of brotherhood” (*kyōdai sekai* 兄弟世界)⁷³⁰; this world of brotherhood is a deepening of Tanabe’s notion of *shu* 種 (species). Tanabe calls this resurrection (*fukatsu* 復活) (see Appendix A, *fig.3*).⁷³¹

As we can see, both iterations of state *zange* begin and end with the state, but Tanabe’s *zange* begins with a singular individual or self confronting and confronted by absolute nothingness, symbolized by the Tathāgata.⁷³² A society emerges out of this reciprocal negation. This society—which may or may not take the form of a state—can be minimally defined as a collective of individuals bound together in transindividual, horizontal social relationships⁷³³; this, I suggest, is how we should understand *sō* 総. And although it is not developed explicitly, Tanabe also has a theory of *sōzange*, which we can extract from *Metanoetics*.⁷³⁴

In *sōzange*, society is negated by the individual who, in her relationship with absolute nothingness, transcends society; this transcendence, which rends society asunder, is the death of the society. Through this negation, society itself becomes subject to nothingness—this is the birth or “salvation” of the society. And once born, the society is resurrected into fellowship with other societies, encountering them as representatives of the absolute. This is the emergence of a universal or a world, which gives the individual

⁷²⁹ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 166; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 154.

⁷³⁰ Tanabe, *Zangedō* 309; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 292.

⁷³¹ THZ vol. 9, 5; Tanabe, *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, li.

⁷³² Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 289; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 273.

⁷³³ THZ vol. 9, 10; Tanabe, *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, lvii.

⁷³⁴ Tanabe actually calls for *sōzange* in the introduction to *Metanoetics*: “Since I am one of those who believe in the collective responsibility of a nation, I am convinced that all of us should engage in collective metanoesis (*sō-zange*)” (lx).

who negates her own society a refuge, or a place on which to stand, as a human being (see Appendix A, *fig.4*). So:

To the extent that specific societies (*shuteki shakai* 種的社会) can thus be transformed into subjects of nothingness and become mediators of salvation, they can communicate with one another and find communality in their mediation of nothingness, even as they remain delimited by the particularity of their being. The unity of the absolute resulting from this practical transformation of the species may be termed the universal (*rui* 類). The notion of the human race (or genus) (*jinrui* 人類) has its origins here.⁷³⁵

These differing elements mean that the implications of Tanabe's *zange* and *sōzange* are in at least five ways different from the implications of the versions of state *zange* considered above, despite the fact all of them repeat. Let's run through these differences, in order of abstraction.

First, Tanabe's *zange* is not directed toward the emperor. In this minimal sense, it does not participate in the postwar effort to repeat the ideology of the emperor system. Second, it does not posit the state as itself an eternal absolute. On Tanabe's understanding, the state is contingent and historical. This means that Tanabe's *zange* can work to expose the (long) history of the state which both forms of state *zange* function to obscure. Third, it does not efface the individual by grasping the individual only as a representative of the state collective, or *sō*, as both versions of state *zange* do. State *zange* does the work of nationalism by making it impossible to think the individual—or for the individual to think herself—outside the limits of the state; this may be one reason why it works so well

⁷³⁵ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 303; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 286.

at obscuring the transnational movement of capital. Tanabe's *zange*, by contrast, requires that the individual conceive herself in isolation, as an individual, set against both the absolute and the collective, as society or state or *shu*. So fourth, it positions the individual citizen in an agonistic relationship to the state as *shu*, inasmuch as the individual is called into a relationship of reciprocal negation with the *shu*, just as she is called into a relationship of reciprocal negation with the absolute. In more concrete terms, this means that the citizen's duty toward the state is one of negating herself—which the state can easily accommodate and in fact invites—but also and equally one of negating the state, which negation the state cannot accommodate. Thus while state *zange* solidifies a sense of responsibility to the state by inculcating in the citizen an understanding of herself as belonging to the state or at home in the state, Tanabe's *zange* seeks to generate a sense of responsibility by inculcating in the citizen an understanding of herself as estranged from the state. And therefore, fifth, Tanabe's *zange*, inasmuch as it produces this singular estranged subject who is charged with the responsibility of pushing the contingent, historical state into estrangement from itself, is open to imagining a different kind of state, exactly the kind of image that state *zange* forestalls.

Now Tanabe's *zange*, as a repetitive reciprocal negation among individual, absolute, and species, necessarily both negates and restores the individual, so in this sense it may be thought to affirm the self, or self-power. Further, despite his understanding of *zange* as an activity “issuing from Other-power,”⁷³⁶ Tanabe holds that self-power is the necessary mediator of that Other-power. In one sense, this comes close to Soga's dialectical understanding of the three minds, or, especially, to Miki's dialectical understanding of *sangan tennyū*; for Tanabe too, the twentieth vow of self-power

⁷³⁶ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 151; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 140.

nenbutsu serves as a ground for the eighteenth vow of absolute Other-power, by virtue of its counterfeit or contradictory nature. It is when the twentieth vow is negated by the eighteenth that we have “conversion to the authentic faith of the eighteenth vow, thus completing the cycle of the *sangantennyū*.”⁷³⁷ However, unlike Miki, Tanabe also seems to suggest that this cycle is never completed, either for the individual or historically, so that when absolute Other-power arises, it arises in a relation of reciprocal mediation with self-power. Where we would expect to see Other-power negate self-power then, Tanabe’s Other-power both negates and affirms it. This means that instead of abandoning self-power, self-power is preserved, “transformed into mediating elements in the philosophy of *tariki*,”⁷³⁸ in a structure of *tariki-qua-jiriki*.⁷³⁹

Politically, this aspect of repetitive affirmation of the individual self seems to me to be a major strength of Tanabe’s *zange*: it requires that the individuals be understood as “transcend[ing] the limits of the specific society, even though they belong to it.”⁷⁴⁰ In the 1946 essay “Logic of the species as dialectics,” Tanabe elaborates upon this, explaining that as an individual I oppose the society to which I belong, such that “the society of the nation, as an opponent of the individual, is an existence which forcibly opposes my existence.”⁷⁴¹ This means that the individual is responsible to society in an agonistic way, and this could be the basis for a strong cosmopolitan reading of Tanabe’s *zange*, as I’ll try to show in the conclusion. But doctrinally speaking, is this affirmation of self-power—which so infuriates Ueda—a scandal?

⁷³⁷ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 221; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 204.

⁷³⁸ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 274; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 260.

⁷³⁹ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 112; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 103.

⁷⁴⁰ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 303; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 286.

⁷⁴¹ Tanabe, “Logic of the species as dialectics,” trans. David A. Dilworth and Satō Taira, *Monumenta Nipponica* 24.3 (1969): 277.

It is possible to explain this paradoxical preserving of the self through absolute Other-power in terms drawn from Pure Land—this is how Tanabe accounts for Pure Land’s “distinctive profession of participation in nirvana (涅槃の分) without extinguishing our evil passions.”⁷⁴² It is also possible to explain the repetition of *zange* by appealing to the classical tradition—Tanabe himself seems to understand his repetition of *zange* as modeled after Shinran, or perhaps as actually a repetition of Shinran’s repetition:

The sincerity and self-torment of Shinran’s confession pours out of the pages of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*.... the whole of the work is grounded in and sustained by *zange*. Unless one undergoes the same kind of sincere repentance that Shinran had, one will never achieve a profound understanding of the work. At the age of eighty-six—more than thirty years after having established his own faith as expounded in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*—Shinran felt compelled by inner necessity to write another hymn filled with the same spirit of repentance...⁷⁴³

But it seems to me that the most interesting approach to this is to consider the way in which Tanabe’s affirmation of self-power arises from a point on which he is, if anything, more orthodox than the Shinshū modernists.

The reason that Shinshū can posit a saving relationship between Amida and the sentient being, on Tanabe’s understanding, is that it understands the two as existing in apposition or confrontation. This confrontation is imaged as a face-to-face encounter, or an I-Thou relationship. And the existence of such a relationship is what distinguishes

⁷⁴² Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 242; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 227.

⁷⁴³ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 25; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 21; this is a reference to a hymn from the *Shōzōmatsu wasan*: “Although I take refuge in the true Pure Land way, / It is hard to have a true and sincere mind. / This self is false and insincere; / I completely lack a pure mind” (*Shōzōmatsu wasan* 94 (SS 617)).

Pure Land from a self-power school like Zen: in Zen, because “the Buddha is seen to be the self’s ‘own original countenance,’ there can be no question of the sort of personal relationship we find in the Shin Buddhist notion of Amida Nyorai Buddha. It does not *confront* the self because it already *is* the self.”⁷⁴⁴ Pure Land gets its ethical seriousness from this notion of personal relationship—it is because the relative self and the absolute other encounter each other as reciprocally negating opposites, that there is resurrection and gratitude. But Tanabe also tells us that this personal relationship, imagined as possible, is in point of fact not possible at all: “Between Tathāgata and sentient beings there exists a gap (*chōetsu kakuzetsu* 超越隔絶) that no ‘interpersonal relationship’ (*jinkakuteki kankei* 人格的關係) can bridge. It is impossible to understand the relationship between the absolute and the relative in terms of the ‘I-Thou’ relationship (*nanji to ware to iu gotoki kankei* 汝と我という如き関係) of theism. Between being and nothingness there can be no such relative relationship (*sōtaiteki kankei* 相対的關係).”⁷⁴⁵ This gap is crucial: if it were somehow to be overcome, “relative beings would vanish into nondifferentiation, and their significance as mediators for the manifestation of nothingness would also be negated.”⁷⁴⁶

Soga, as we know, takes quite the opposite view, holding that it is the theistic imagination, or what he refers to as the religions of light, that cannot conceive of an I-Thou relationship between the relative and the absolute—“between the Father of eternal

⁷⁴⁴ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 183; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 169.

⁷⁴⁵ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 249; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 234.

⁷⁴⁶ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 166; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 154. This is not only Tanabe’s way of critiquing Zen, or the Path of Sages; it is also his way of critiquing Nishida, by opening up what Takehana Yōsuke calls “an unresolved problem in Nishida’s philosophy”—if “absolute nothingness not only points to the original reality of human existence but also serves as a kind of philosophical principle, we are driven to the following question: How can human beings, as finite beings, relate to such an absolute principle?” See Takehana Yōsuke, “Absolute Nothingness and Metanoetics: The Logic of Conversion in Tanabe Hajime,” in *Frontiers of Japanese Philosophy*, ed. James W. Heisig (Nagoya: Nanzan, 2006), 247.

light and we humans who have fallen into the sea of life and death, there is a gap as great as that between heaven and earth”—and that Shinshū is distinguished precisely by its capacity to realize just such a relationship of identity, whether as *kihō ittai*, *busshin bonshin ittai*, or *muge ittai*. For Soga, Dharmākara represents this unity or this nondual subjectivity, which he describes from the standpoint of the Tathāgata as “operat[ing] in the first person and the second person at the same time” and from the standpoint of the self as the surprising discovery that the form (*sugata*) of Dharmākara is at once the form of the “mysterious Tathāgata of eternal light” and the form of “this mysterious self of mine.”⁷⁴⁷

For Tanabe, by contrast, Dharmākara represents the Tathāgata’s estrangement from himself—if the appearance of the bodhisattva is the necessary precondition for the arising of the buddha, the appearance of the bodhisattva is equally the self-negation of the buddha. From the standpoint of the absolute, this self-estrangement must be apprehended as occurring within the limits of the self, but from the standpoint of the relative, it can only be apprehended as estrangement from the other, which estrangement is itself proof of relationship. Thus while for Soga, Dharmākara is a way of talking about identity only, for Tanabe, Dharmākara is a way of talking about both identity and difference.

For both Soga and Tanabe, one thing figured by the relationship between Tathāgata and sentient beings is the relationship between eternity and history, and Dharmākara, as the name of the Tathāgata (eternity) in the causal stage (history), represents that relationship. The difference between Soga’s understanding of Dharmākara and Tanabe’s understanding of Dharmākara thus plays out in their differing

⁷⁴⁷ Soga Ryōjin, “Chijō no kyūshū, part two,” trans. Wayne S. Yokoyama, <http://www.shindharmanet.com/writings/soga2.htm> (last accessed June 22, 2009).

understandings of the relationship between eternity and history. For Soga, eternity and history simply form a unity in the one thought-moment (*ichinen*): “It is the one moment of *ji*, or historical event, and at the same time it is the one moment of *ri*, or eternal truth. In other words, it is the one moment of *ri-ji muge*, the unimpeded dimension of eternity and history.”⁷⁴⁸ In the same way that Soga affirms that the Pure Land is both distant and close at hand, he affirms that the eternal Tathāgata is both removed from history and active in history, “throwing [him]self”—as Dharmākara—“into the saha sea of conflicting realities.”⁷⁴⁹ History here is the repetition of the one thought-moment: “Dharmākara Bodhisattva does not establish the Pure Land after the eternal kalpas of practice; he establishes the Pure Land anew with each moment of vow-practice, with each new [revealed] self.”⁷⁵⁰ It is clear what drives this repetition—it is the will of “the eternal Tathāgata who will not rest as long as there are those who are not born”⁷⁵¹—but because that birth is always already guaranteed by the very existence of the eternal Tathāgata, it is not clear that there is the possibility of change or transformation within this regime of repetition. In a way, it seems to me as though in absolutely rejecting the notion of the Pure Land as in the future or “still on deposit,” Soga closes off the possibility of imagining the Pure Land as anything other than repetition of the continually same today. This means that his thought allows us to make a strong appeal to *gensō* as the centre of a this-worldly Pure Land ethics, but may not provide a very satisfactory answer to Paraskevopoulos’s challenge that *gensō* is not sufficient as an end in itself.

⁷⁴⁸ Soga Ryōjin, “Chijō no kyūshū, part two,” trans. Wayne S. Yokoyama, <http://www.shindharmanet.com/writings/soga2.htm> (last accessed June 22, 2009).

⁷⁴⁹ Soga Ryōjin, “Chijō no kyūshū, part two,” trans. Wayne S. Yokoyama, <http://www.shindharmanet.com/writings/soga2.htm> (last accessed June 22, 2009).

⁷⁵⁰ Soga Ryōjin, “Chijō no kyūshū, part two,” trans. Wayne S. Yokoyama, <http://www.shindharmanet.com/writings/soga2.htm> (last accessed June 22, 2009).

⁷⁵¹ Soga Ryōjin, “Chijō no kyūshū, part two,” trans. Wayne S. Yokoyama, <http://www.shindharmanet.com/writings/soga2.htm> (last accessed June 22, 2009).

For Tanabe though, eternity and history must in some sense impede each other or obstruct each other, in order to enter into a relationship of reciprocal negation. This means that we have to think of eternity and history as, like Tathāgata and sentient beings, separated by an insurmountable gap, so that the Tathāgata dwells in the eternal now and sentient beings dwell in historical time, which is constituted out of the reciprocal negation of past and future, and which—because it involves the negation of the past by the future, which is not negation if it is only repetition—necessarily has freedom (自由) as its principle.⁷⁵² I think we can say then that following Tanabe, for sentient beings in the flux of historical time, the encounter with the Tathāgata is happening in the eternal now but, because as sentient beings we actually live not in the present but in the past and the future, it is not experienced except as absence. Thus the encounter is transcendent by virtue of its very immanence. For sentient beings living in the past and the future, the reward of the Pure Land is on deposit *in the present*. This is how we can make sense of *zange*—which is activity of the relative and the absolute encountering each other in reciprocal negation—as preserving a “permanent wish” (願望).⁷⁵³

Despite all his criticism of popular Pure Land then, Tanabe can actually more readily accommodate something that Soga cannot, namely the not-yetness of nirvana, which Tanabe understands as pointing to the necessary gap between the relative and the absolute: “the idea that as long as one lives in this world, nirvana (往生涅槃) cannot be fully attained but only promised in a form predetermined by Amida Buddha is based on a deep insight into the interim quality (中間存在性) of human existence.”⁷⁵⁴ This allows

⁷⁵² Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 73; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 67.

⁷⁵³ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 10; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 5.

⁷⁵⁴ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 169; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 157.

us to use his reading to address Paraskevopoulos's challenge to an ethics based on *gensō*: *gensō* here understood as absolute *gensō* is indeed not an end in itself; it takes as its end nirvana or the absolute or the eternal now, but because this eternal now must take *gensō* as *its* end, *gensō* arises endlessly. However, this endless arising—because it is historical and history is free⁷⁵⁵—is not the endless return of some self-same Dharmākara to some self-same world. Instead, from the standpoint of the absolute, the return here is a return to identity, while from the standpoint of the relative, the return here is a proliferation of difference. This, I think, is why Tanabe can insist that repetition “cannot be a mere repetition (*jidō hanpuku* 自同反復) without negation and change. In the life of the spirit (*seishin*), ‘repetition’ must mean self-transcendence; ‘resurrection’ must mean regeneration to a new life.”⁷⁵⁶ In this way, Tanabe imagines a transformation of the totality, and skirts the problem of repetition of a continually same today.

Tanabe's Republican Pure Land

If Tanabe's utopia is absolute nothingness, his heterotopia—the site where absolute nothingness is indirectly enacted by relative beings—is the Pure Land. Hase Shōtō suggests that the notion of a Pure Land is not developed in *Metanoetics*: “It is only later that Tanabe came to the insight that participation in Absolute Nothingness cannot reach clarity and thoroughness if solely mediated by the act of metanoia of the individual; that existential mutual communication and community must be contained within that act,”⁷⁵⁷ but proposes that “the seeds for such a treatment are there.” James Fredericks understands

⁷⁵⁵ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 73; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 67.

⁷⁵⁶ THZ, vol.9, 5; Tanabe, *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, li.

⁷⁵⁷ Hase Shōtō, “The Structure of Faith: Nothingness-*Qua*-Love,” trans. Jan Van Bragt, in *The Religious Philosophy of Tanabe Hajime*, ed. Taitetsu Unno and James W. Heisig (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1990), 114.

Hase as drawing from *Metanoetics* the notion that absolute nothingness is itself the Pure Land, which view he roundly affirms, writing that he “could not be more in agreement with this soteriological reading of absolute nothingness.”⁷⁵⁸ I think Hase is mistaken about the absence of a notion of the Pure Land in *Metanoetics*, and Fredericks about the viability of understanding absolute nothingness as the Pure Land. These assertions neglect the extent to which the notion of a sacred community in the form of the *dōbōdōgyō* is developed in *Metanoetics*.⁷⁵⁹ In this section, I will try to bring to the surface the way in which Tanabe evokes the image of the Pure Land in *Metanoetics* as a symbol of praxis in the world.

Given that Tanabe posits an insurmountable gap between relative beings and the absolute, if we elide the Pure Land and nirvana, understanding both as representing absolute nothingness, then I think we would have to conclude that the image of the Pure Land has no real potency for Tanabe—it is just another way of talking about a situation that the relative being cannot arrive at. But Takehana suggests that Tanabe insists on a nothingness that “is always *mediated* through the finiteness of human beings who exist in the historical world.”⁷⁶⁰ So while he says in his introduction that “the transformation through vertical mediation between the absolute and the self (Thou and I) must *also* be realized in horizontal (*aitai* 相對) social relationships between my self and other selves (I and thou),”⁷⁶¹ knowing that such a vertical relationship is impossible, I think we have to conclude that the vertical mediation of Thou and I is *only* realized in horizontal social

⁷⁵⁸ James L. Fredericks, “International Conference on Metanoetics,” *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 10 (1990): 224.

⁷⁵⁹ Cf. Heisig’s suggestion that the vision of the community of the saints developed later in Tanabe’s later work is the chief image of praxis in the world in *Metanoetics*, although it is, along with the idea of death-and-resurrection, not fully developed, “like half-filled vessels.” See Heisig, *Philosophers of Nothingness*, 176.

⁷⁶⁰ Takehana, “Absolute nothingness,” 247.

⁷⁶¹ THZ, vol. 9, 10; Tanabe, *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, lvii; my emphasis.

relationships between I and thou: “absolute nothingness can actualize its function as nothingness only through a self-negation of relative beings in the form of a reciprocal negation between beings,”⁷⁶² which takes place in history. I think that we will find on close inspection that, rather than identifying the Pure Land with absolute nothingness (and so duplicating Nishida), Tanabe in fact identifies it with these historical, horizontal social relationships. This ties Tanabe’s Pure Land quite clearly to sectarian images of the Pure Land as an immanent transcendence.

This image pops up in a number of different ways in *Metanoetics*. Tanabe comments that Nietzsche’s atheism “sets up a radical transformation in the form of *edo-soku-jōdō* (‘this corrupt world’-*qua*-‘the Pure Land’ or *mundus sensibilis-qua-mundus intelligibilis*).”⁷⁶³ He also brings it up in his discussion of Augustine’s City of God as the Kingdom of God (*Civitas Dei*, *kami no kuni* 神の国) built on earth. Tanabe is interested in the way that Augustine positions the building of the Kingdom of God as the task of history:

As is well known, Augustine contrasted the City of God (神の国) with the earthly city (地上の国) and considered the meaning of history to lie in establishing the City of God in this world, a city in which love would be the pivotal mediator of unity and whose aim would be the peaceful coexistence (共存平和) of those who are justified by God’s grace (恩寵). The fundamental principle of Christianity, that God is love (神を愛とする), is a social principle. If God’s love is not

⁷⁶² Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 170; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 158.

⁷⁶³ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 120; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 110. The Japanese original reads: 徹底的なる穢土即浄土の転換を成立せしめる; I take it that “*mundus sensibilis-qua-mundus intelligibilis* is a gloss provided by Takeuchi.

mediated by love of neighbor (隣人の愛), and if it is not actualized in interhuman relationships (人間相互の間に), the existence of God has no witness (証) on earth.⁷⁶⁴

This, Tanabe says, is the basis for the idea “that God is society (神即社会)”⁷⁶⁵; it is precisely parallel to the problem we have considered above, wherein absolute nothingness—here God-*qua*-love—cannot be thought except as love of neighbour, realized in history as the City of God. This means that later, when Tanabe talks about the Kingdom of God as “religious ideal” or the “absolute unity of the universal,”⁷⁶⁶ he will be interested in how it is built upon the earth in a way that preserves the “radicality of evil.”⁷⁶⁷ At the end of *Metanoetics*, Tanabe explicitly aligns this building of the Kingdom of God with rebirth in the Pure Land, indicating again that his interest is in the Pure Land conceived of as a *gense jōdo* or *edo-soku-jōdo*: “Nothingness is love, and action-witness of this fact is itself the building of the Kingdom of God and the fulfillment of faith in rebirth into the Pure Land (浄土への往生決定).”⁷⁶⁸ We see here the way that Tanabe moves between the Christian language of witness and the Shinshū language of *shō* 証: the action of *zange* is absolute *gensō*, return to the world in community with others, which is the only possible witness for the existence of the absolute.⁷⁶⁹ If we go back to the beginning of *Metanoetics*, we find that this is described as “absolute *tariki* manifest[ing]

⁷⁶⁴ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 281; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 266.

⁷⁶⁵ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 282; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 267.

⁷⁶⁶ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 284; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 269.

⁷⁶⁷ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 284; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 269.

⁷⁶⁸ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 309; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 292.

⁷⁶⁹ Cf. “There was a man sent from God, and his name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness to the light, so that all men should believe through him. He was not the light, but he had to bear witness to the light. The true light was that which illuminates every man coming into the world” (7 John 1, 6ff.), cited in Augustine’s *Concerning the City of God Against the Pagans*, trans. Henry Bettenson (London: Penguin Classics, 2003), 374.

itself in horizontal relationships (交互関係) between relative beings,” such that “the witness and evidence (*shō*) for the truth of *zange* is realized as a ‘return to’ the world (*gensō*).”⁷⁷⁰ Here Takeuchi’s translation of this final phrase as “a ‘return to’ the world from the Pure Land (*gensō*)” seems to me to occlude the critical point, which is that the Pure Land is actually a way of describing the building of horizontal relationships of solidarity between relative beings that witness to existence of the absolute other of the Tathāgata. *Gensō* then must not be thought of as return from the Kingdom of God, or from the Pure Land, but return *as* the building of the Kingdom of God on earth or *as a gense jōdo*.

Tanabe points in the same direction when he links together, without eliding, absolute nothingness and absolute peace. As noted above, Tanabe is interested in Augustine’s suggestion that the purpose of the City of God would be “peaceful coexistence”; he also seems to wonder whether Shinran’s *tariki* teaching might be “capable of bringing peace of soul (*anjin* 安心) to a people driven to war and self-sacrifice for the interests of the privileged classes, almost to the point of forfeiting their livelihood”⁷⁷¹—it would be easy to take this as a kind of pragmatic concern for peace as opposed to conflict, but again it seems to me that Tanabe has something both more abstract and more specifically inspired by Shinshū in mind. He comments in his introduction that “the true meaning of humanity” is found “when people enter into absolute peace with one another, helping one another in a spirit of reconciliation and cooperation, seeking mutual emancipation and salvation in the conversion of the self-affirming ego into no-self through the mediatory activity of absolute nothingness,”

⁷⁷⁰ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 12; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 7.

⁷⁷¹ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 239; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 225.

concluding that “it is the self-affirming ego that is the cause of all conflict among people, while in the life of absolute peace (*zettai heiwa* 絶対平和) all contribute their best efforts to deepen the joy of fraternal love (*kyōdaiai* 兄弟愛).”⁷⁷² The movement he describes here—of absolute nothingness mediating relationships between people such that they can seek mutual emancipation in absolute peace—is the same movement he describes at the end of *Metanoetics* in terms of the Kingdom of God or the Pure Land established in this world: “It is a world of brotherhood (兄弟の世界) founded upon human cooperation and reconciliation, providing meaning to human existence for those who rejoice in building it up and inhabiting it,” into which we are brought by the “absolute of nothingness.”⁷⁷³ Absolute nothingness then is not itself the Pure Land; rather, the society (or world) in which absolute nothingness actualizes itself indirectly is the Pure Land.

This society, as Tanabe conceives it, has by my tally five chief characteristics: peace, joy, freedom, equality, and brotherhood. Let’s try to define these terms. Peace, for Tanabe, means non-opposition. This can be thought of in the Shinshū language of being born with evil karma intact, which Tanabe explains as following from the nature of absolute nothingness as love or compassion: “it is not that the evil and the sin cease to be what they are, but only that they lose their force of opposition (対立性)....In love, as in compassion, there is no opposing and no negating; things are left just as they are.”⁷⁷⁴ If the opposition we are describing is that which obtains between the absolute and the relative, non-opposition is represented by Tathāgata grasping the evil person just as she is, that is as a non-opposition between absolute and relative that allows the absolute and the

⁷⁷² THZ, vol. 9, 14; Tanabe, *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, lxii.

⁷⁷³ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 309; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 292.

⁷⁷⁴ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 143; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 133.

relative to continue opposing each other. Non-opposition then sustains opposition, but peaceful opposition. If the opposition we are describing is that which obtains between the relative and the (other) relative, the same has to hold true—non-opposition between the I and the thou is constituted by a relationship in which I embrace the other, allowing the other to oppose me, peacefully, so that we can engage in the task of reciprocal negation: “Only by giving life to those who exist as others (対立者), by seeking coexistence despite the tension of opposition, and by collaborating for the sake of mutual enhancement (対互) can the self find life in its fullness.”⁷⁷⁵ So a society in which absolute peace is actualized is then a society in which the self enters into relationships with the other in which the other’s opposing the self is met without opposition, and vice versa.

Joy follows as a result of this non-opposition in opposition. Tanabe suggests that joy is, with gratitude, “the very witness (*shō*)” of absolute other-power, such that joy would seem to be the necessary consequence of entering into a relationship of reciprocal negation with the absolute other. Because this relationship is always only actualized in relationships of reciprocal negation with the relative other, joy must be a feature of these relationships as well, and Tanabe asserts that indeed this is so: what gives meaning to human existence, he insists, is “only the joy (悦) of a transindividual unity (人と人の社会的媒介) of mutual reconciliation and instruction at work within the community of individuals mediating individuals.”⁷⁷⁶ It seems to me then that when those “in the life of absolute peace all contribute their best efforts to deepen the joy of fraternal love,” what this actually means, fundamentally, is encountering the other in a relationship of

⁷⁷⁵ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 308; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 290-291.

⁷⁷⁶ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 279; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 264.

reciprocal negation such that to the I, the other is the agent of absolute other-power, negating me absolutely, while to the other, I am the agent of absolute other-power, negating the other absolutely. In this way both I and the other are lost to themselves,⁷⁷⁷ and so experience a joy which is the indirect actualization of the bliss of nirvana (涅槃の淨福).⁷⁷⁸ A society of absolute peace is thus necessarily characterized by joy or happiness.

To these notions of absolute peace and joy, which have a distinctly Buddhist resonance, Tanabe adds the republican triad of freedom, equality, and brotherhood, or *liberté, égalité, fraternité* (自由, 平等, 友愛). Given that he is provided with three concepts to work with here, it is not surprising that Tanabe arranges them in a dialectic. The social relationships through which peace and joy are actualized are defined by Tanabe as fraternal relationships in which the idea of fraternity has been “restored to its original meaning,”⁷⁷⁹ that is, as stressing not only equality but also priority (so as he says not really *yūai* 友愛 but *kyōdai* 兄弟). Such fraternity mediates “the conflict between freedom (*jiyū* 自由) and equality (平等),” allowing each to be negated by the other. Tanabe takes the “original meaning” of fraternity to be “an ideal of equality within the social order which at the same time recognizes the ranks of elder and younger in the religious sense.”⁷⁸⁰ This is familiar to us already from the model of the *dōbōdōgyō* and other forms of Sengoku collectives, which refused the hierarchy of master and disciple, or master and servant, while organizing themselves in relationships of elder and younger. Tanabe draws on the same proof from Shinran to explain his conception of equality,

⁷⁷⁷ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 249; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 235.

⁷⁷⁸ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 12; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 7.

⁷⁷⁹ THZ vol. 9, 8; Tanabe, *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, lv.

⁷⁸⁰ THZ vol. 9, 8; Tanabe, *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, lv.

commenting that Shinran “consistently rejected the master-disciple relationship, treating the faithful as fellow pilgrims (*dōgyō*)”⁷⁸¹; his own understanding of equality, however, seems to go beyond an assessment of the other as one’s fellow in a shared movement toward the absolute. Instead, Tanabe’s assertion is that the fact of mutual equality is based on each individual’s conversion to nothingness, such that each individual, through the working of the Tathāgata, given “a mediatory role” in relation to every other.⁷⁸² The equality of all relative beings is thus conferred upon them by their relation to the absolute of nothingness; it is this nothingness that allows any relative being to function as an “axis of absolute nothingness”—this is the expression of “the equality (平等) that pervades all sentient beings in their reciprocity.”⁷⁸³ In this equality, each relative being takes a turn at being “the temporary axis of the transformative rotation that we call conversion by the absolute”⁷⁸⁴; by introducing this language of “becoming in turn,” I think, that Tanabe can accommodate ranks of elder and younger in his notion of equality—when later Tanabe talks about “harmonious cooperation in an ‘ordered equality’ (秩序の平等),”⁷⁸⁵ we might generously read this “ordered equality” as pointing not to the orderly equality described in chapter three, but to a dynamic priority (先後)⁷⁸⁶ or “becoming in turn.”

He also interprets freedom using language borrowed from Shinshū, defining freedom as the spontaneity (*jinen*) conferred upon the relative by the absolute when through absolute mediation, the relative is made “the axis around which the absolute

⁷⁸¹ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 296; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 279-280.

⁷⁸² Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 250; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 236.

⁷⁸³ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 250; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 236.

⁷⁸⁴ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 13; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 10.

⁷⁸⁵ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 307; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 290.

⁷⁸⁶ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 295; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 278. By dynamic priority, I mean a relationship in which priority is not permanently assigned to either side; see *Zangedō*, 288; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 272: “In mediation, priority is accorded neither side; rather, each is transformed into the other and penetrates the other.”

itself rotates, serving and assisting in the independent mediatory role of absolute transformation.”⁷⁸⁷ This is “the independence (自立) of *upāya*” or “provisional independence as an *upāya* of the absolute nothingness.”⁷⁸⁸ Because this independence is actualized in the mediating activity that is for others, it is an independence-*qua*-dependence, or “a self-reliance that is at the same time a reliance on others,”⁷⁸⁹ but because reliance on others affirms self-reliance, the possibility of domination is foreclosed upon: “Mediation,” writes Tanabe, “is not a relationship in which one party is subordinated to the other, but one in which both enjoy and maintain an independence made possible by the other. There is no question here of a causal connection that would make one party subordinate to the other. Mediation is always and only a matter of a reciprocal relationship of independent participation.”⁷⁹⁰ Fraternity describes a collective in which every member is charged with the same activity of mediation and is in this sense equal (so, *dōbōdōgyō*) but within which the independence or singularity of each member is affirmed (so, *hitori ga tame*). When this republic characterized by absolute peace, joy, freedom, equality, and brotherhood is actualized in this world, then rebirth in the Pure Land is realized in the history. Tanabe’s Pure Land is thus historical—so immanent—but not simply identical with the real—so a critical utopia. *Zange*, as the praxis that realizes

⁷⁸⁷ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 13; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 10.

⁷⁸⁸ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 250; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 236.

⁷⁸⁹ Tanabe, *Zangedō* 235; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 220.

⁷⁹⁰ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 288; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 273. This is helpful in allowing us to distinguish between Tanabe’s model and what Wayne Yokoyama refers to as a “manifestation model” in which “all great men who appear in history are expressions of the eternal buddha body... History thus becomes the stage on which the eternal dances... The downside to this model is, in final analysis it actually is a form of totalitarianism. This allowed Kakunyo and Renryo to claim a mandate for their actions, with their mystique of spiritual power. Under its sway people felt compelled to act as a body to follow the national agenda without question”; see “History and Eternity,” <http://www.shindharmanet.com/writings/eternity.htm> (last accessed April 28, 2009).

the Pure Land in the world may thus be thought of as an enacting of this utopia, the praxis through which it becomes a heterotopia.

The Pure Land and the Real State

The fact that Tanabe's Pure Land can function as the image of a critical utopia cannot settle the question of the politics of *Metanoetics*, however, because his Pure Land may be thought to both contest and represent the real nation-state. Tanabe suggests that the state "can represent a particular determination of the Kingdom of God on earth: in mediating the absolute, it can enjoy the absoluteness of mediating the absolute and take on the quality of the 'sacred' (神聖)." ⁷⁹¹ In this final section, I want to look more closely at the implications and limitations of Tanabe's vision of the state as an immanent transcendence, or a this-worldly Pure Land.

One implication of Tanabe's vision—namely that the state is not itself absolute but mediates the absolute—does seem to me to undermine the *tennōsei* 天皇制 appeal to the state as absolute in itself, that is eternal and sacred. ⁷⁹² On Tanabe's understanding, the state only acquires sanctity by virtue of its function as a mediator between absolute nothingness and the individual, and, consequently, loses that quality as soon as it sets itself up as an eternal absolute. This forces a shift in the claims the state can make about its sacredness vis-à-vis its citizens, such that the state is not in a position to command obedience as itself an eternal absolute: "as a mediator of the independence and spontaneity (自立自発性) of the individuals that make it up, this sacredness is a thoroughly mediatory mode of being that arises in action, and not something whose

⁷⁹¹ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 301; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 284.

⁷⁹² As suggested by the Meiji Constitution's assertion of an unbroken imperial line (万世一系の天皇).

existence is a natural given (自然に与えられた存在).”⁷⁹³ Moreover, if the state functions as the representative of the species, it cannot legitimately claim to represent a naturally-given collective, given that the species too is historical and contingent. Tanabe’s vision of the state as immanent transcendence is in this sense at odds with a broadly-conceived nationalist understanding of the state as an eternal absolute, and specifically at odds with the Japanese imperialist vision of Japan as an eternal absolute. Despite his consistent positioning of the Japanese emperor, in his role a synecdoche of the state, as a representative of “the absolute,” then, because Tanabe’s absolute is not the state but absolute nothingness, his understanding of the emperor is actually not particularly congenial to an imperialist or nationalist project, despite appearances to the contrary. In fact, given Tanabe’s understanding that the absolute represents itself through self-estrangement, his understanding of the emperor as a representative of absolute nothingness—which is eternal and absolute—would seem to assert that the emperor is properly understood as a historical man like other historical, contingent, relative individuals. And indeed Tanabe says clearly in *Metanoetics* that every individual is equally invested with the capacity to serve as representative of absolute nothingness by taking on the task of negation.

A second implication of Tanabe’s vision of the state as having the function of mediation is worked out in Tanabe’s discussion of really-existing sociopolitical possibilities available to states. I noted above that he reads the republican triad of *liberté*, *égalité*, and *fraternité* in terms of the *dōbōdōgyō*, positioning brotherhood as that which mediates the reciprocal negation of freedom and equality. He also reads freedom and

⁷⁹³ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 301; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 284.

equality as values proper to two different political systems, identifying freedom with “capitalistic society” or “democracy” or “liberal idealism”⁷⁹⁴ and equality with “the socialistic state.”⁷⁹⁵ Fraternity is thus charged with mediating the movements of democracy and socialism. Tanabe does not, however, identify fraternity with an as-yet really-existing political system. Instead he holds that fraternity—which constitutes “the ethics of the masses”—will, in mediating democracy and socialism, bring about a “Dharma Gate of Brotherhood” (兄弟法門)⁷⁹⁶; here it seems to me as though the politics Tanabe is prescribing in response to the antinomy of democracy and socialism—which “has already entered the phase of political struggle”⁷⁹⁷—is *dōbōdōgyō*-ism.⁷⁹⁸ The practicalities of this are not described at all, and in this sense there is nothing pragmatic about Tanabe’s reading of liberalism and socialism. Nonetheless he is making a political claim about not only the very particular situation Japan is in following the war, as it is transformed into a staging ground for the contest between liberal capitalism and socialism, but also the wider complications that arise out of efforts to export either liberalism or socialism as carriers of the universal values of freedom and equality.⁷⁹⁹ In Tanabe’s image of the Pure Land as a community of fellows then we have not only a picture of how individuals might live together in a non-oppositional way, but also a picture of how

⁷⁹⁴ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 296, 276; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 279, 262.

⁷⁹⁵ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 296; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 279.

⁷⁹⁶ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 296; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 279.

⁷⁹⁷ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 276; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 262.

⁷⁹⁸ In a postwar essay, “Seiji tetsugaku no kyūmu” 政治哲学の急務, Tanabe reformulates this, suggesting that liberalism must be mediated by socialism in order to give rise to a “philosophy of social-democracy,” through which “democracy as liberalism, and communism as the most thorough form of socialism, [will] both be negated and at once resurrected as moments in a concrete, comprehensive standpoint as the philosophy for a new age”; translation from J. Victor Koschmann’s discussion of Tanabe’s postwar dialectics in *Revolution and Subjectivity in Postwar Japan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 89-95.

⁷⁹⁹ Yoko Arisaka points out this problem in her critique of Nishida Kitarō; see “Beyond ‘East and West’: Nishida’s Universalism and Postcolonial Critique,” *The Review of Politics* 59.3 (1997): 541-560. Viz., Tanabe’s assertion that a “liberalism imposed from the outside is both nonsensical and contradictory” (*Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 296).

states might coexist in a non-oppositional way, forming a world. If we take *zange* as oriented toward this construction of a world, we may understand it as expressive of a cosmopolitan impulse in Tanabe's metanoesis. Heisig has in fact suggested that Tanabe's later work does indicate a shift toward cosmopolitanism, "when the nationalistic edge to his logic [had] worn smooth... Tanabe recognized how the critique of the specific, in essence, meant assuming the standpoint of 'a citizen of the great city of the world'."⁸⁰⁰ But Sakai holds that in Tanabe's early work we find a "complicity between universalistic nationalism and cosmopolitan individualism"⁸⁰¹ and that Tanabe "remained a devoted nationalist throughout the war period and even afterwards."⁸⁰² Kim echoes Sakai in arguing that Tanabe's very cosmopolitanism—and Miki's too—was really "imperial cosmopolitanism."⁸⁰³

One thing that complicates any effort to read Tanabe as a cosmopolitan thinker is his ongoing philosophical investment in the species. On the one hand, Tanabe's thought as it is developed in *Metanoetics* seems open to the possibility that the species may be represented by some collectivity other than the state; in this minimal sense, it does not understand the state formation as absolutely necessary. On the other hand, Tanabe does not—as far as I can discern—discuss any actually-existing representative of the species other than the state. This seems to me to inform two moments in *Metanoetics* where the limits of Tanabe's *zange* as a critical praxis become apparent.

The first of these is tied to his (understandable) identification of the liberal capitalism with the United States and socialism with the Soviet Union. Of course Tanabe

⁸⁰⁰ Heisig, "Tanabe's Logic of the Specific and the Critique of the Global Village," 22, <http://www.nanzan-u.ac.jp/~heisig/pdf/Tanabe-global.pdf> (last accessed June 13, 2009).

⁸⁰¹ Sakai, "Subject and Substratum," 491.

⁸⁰² Sakai, "Subject and Substratum," 514.

⁸⁰³ Kim, "The Temporality of Empire," 152.

is not wrong to suggest, at the moment that he is writing the conclusion to *Metanoetics*, that the United States and the Soviet Union are actually engaged in a political struggle; it seems to me to follow from the structure of his dialectic that this species-level encounter between two states should (ideally) result in a reciprocal negation which brings into existence a world. But Tanabe instead sees this encounter as giving rise to a third *state*—Japan (我が国), whose “historical mission” is here understood as overcoming “the dichotomy of conflicting principles.”⁸⁰⁴

The second is an ambiguity that he seems to me to introduce at the very end of the chapter on “Metanoetics as a religious view of society.” The second-last sentence of the chapter, and the volume, reads as follows: “History demands (要求) that all peoples (諸国民) practice *zange*, and through it, move toward the establishing (建設) of *kyōdaisei no shakai* (兄弟性の社会).”⁸⁰⁵ In the Takeuchi translation, this phrase is given as “societies of fellowship.” This makes good sense given Tanabe’s suggestion that it is to be pursued by various *kokumin*. It also seems possible, however, to read *kyōdaisei no shakai* in the singular, so that various *kokumin* are, through the self-negation of *zange*, moving toward the establishing of a single society of fellowship, or a world of fellowship. This would make sense given Tanabe’s understanding that the individual enters into fellowship with other individuals to form a world through estrangement from the species, so that where the species is represented by the state, the negation of states must occur simultaneously with establishing of a world. It would also follow from Tanabe’s understanding of the world to be established as taking the form of Augustine’s *Civitas Dei* or *gense jōdo*. But here again the Japanese rendering of *civitas* as *kuni* introduces an

⁸⁰⁴ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 276; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 261.

⁸⁰⁵ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 314; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 296.

ambiguity, namely whether we should understand this *civitas* as one in which every human being can claim citizenship or instead as a country or city which by its nature includes some and excludes others.⁸⁰⁶ I think these ambiguities—world or country, society of fellowship or societies of fellowship—conceal an essential indecision on Tanabe’s part.

Tanabe repeatedly returns to the state formation even when trying to think about the world. Despite the fact that in *Metanoetics* he imagines the genus as having its origin in what he calls a “practical transformation of the species,”⁸⁰⁷ his structure of reciprocal negation requires that the species reassert itself, and because he understands the state as representative of the species, the state keeps reemerging at the level of the genus, in his notion of the “nation of humanity” (*jinruiteki kokka* 人類的国家), as described in earlier work on the logic of species, and in his later suggestion that “the religious concepts of the City of God or the Land of the Buddha analogically preserve the political structure of the state.”⁸⁰⁸ But the consequence of this seems to go beyond analogical preservation to political preservation: “The religious relationships of society of *gensō*, in which individuals edify and redeem each other, would be impossible without the mediation of the political organization of nation and society which is formed originally in the communities of human life.”⁸⁰⁹

Ultimately then I think that the critical indecision at the end of *Metanoetics* points to the limits of Tanabe’s *zange* as a critique of the state, despite his sense that in *zange* he

⁸⁰⁶ “Let men note that by ‘Kuni’ Tanabe referred to the Augustinian notion of *civitas* in *Civitas Dei* or the City of God which is usually translated as *Kami no Kuni* in Japanese. Particularly in view of Tanabe’s logic of species according to which the state is referred to as the register of the genus, I believe that his notion of *kuni* must be rendered either city or country. But essentially Tanabe means *civitas* in the Augustinian sense by *kuni*”; Sakai, “Subject and Substratum,” 518 n.7.

⁸⁰⁷ Tanabe, *Zangedō*, 303; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 286.

⁸⁰⁸ Tanabe, “Logic of the Species as Dialectics,” 287.

⁸⁰⁹ Tanabe, “Logic of the Species as Dialectics,” 287.

had found a way to get past the problem of an “irrational policy of actualism.”⁸¹⁰ It does seem to me that in his notion of the City of God or the *gense jōdo*, Tanabe has a model for how the genus—the totality of humanity—could, in Sakai’s words, take on an “institutional form.”⁸¹¹ Tanabe nonetheless takes us back to the state as the representative institutional form, because of his elision of absolute nothingness, universal, genus, and world, which category he sometimes refers to as “God.”⁸¹² This is not a necessary elision—it should be possible, using the language of Shinshū, to think the institutional form of the Tathāgata in terms of the *dōbōdōgyō* or the assembly, or Miki’s sentient beings in the ten quarters, and furthermore to think of that institutional form as mediating the relationship between the individual (I alone) and the Tathāgata. By abandoning this elision, we might effectively move toward a more thoroughly cosmopolitan ethics of *zange*. But Tanabe’s *zange* seems to me to be a praxis through which the already-existing state⁸¹³ is necessarily affirmed. In this sense, I think it can only be acknowledged as a limited cosmopolitanism.

Both Miki and Tanabe apply a dialectical structure to the Pure Land materials they are engaging, and arrive at an understanding of Shinshū as enjoining a critical utopian ethics oriented toward the unfolding of the *dōbōdōgyō* in history. For both of them it is clear that the image of the Pure Land functions as a way of thinking about a community formation different from the existing state formation, that is to say, both of them invoke the Pure Land as a heterotopia. Tanabe’s interpretation offers a useful challenge to contemporary Shinshū thought in its insistence on positing a gap between

⁸¹⁰ Tanabe, “Logic of the Species as Dialectics,” 273 n.2.

⁸¹¹ Sakai, “Subject and Substratum,” 488.

⁸¹² Tanabe, “Logic of the Species as Dialectics,” 287; see also Sakai, “Subject and Substratum,” 488.

⁸¹³ Tanabe, “Logic of the Species as Dialectics,” 287.

Amida and the practitioner; if one were to follow him in this, it might lead to a new way of integrating the *u-topian* element of the image of the Pure Land into the modern imaginary as ethically meaningful, rather than ethically inert. At the same time, Tanabe's critique seems limited by the way he enfolds the existing state into his dialectic and returns again to the category of the species. Miki, on the other hand, shows us what a Shinshū dialectic would look like if one were to dispense with the abstractions of species (or masses) and genus, and deal only with the dialogical encounter of individual and universal. In this sense, Miki's vision of *dōbōdōgyō* seems to be more radically cosmopolitan than even his wartime theory of cooperativism as a "mediation of nations,"⁸¹⁴ resonating with a Marxist dissolving of the state formation (which is abstract) through the achievement of a concrete universal community.⁸¹⁵ But while Tanabe offers *zange* as a way to realize *dōbōdōgyō*, Miki seems to me to posit history as of itself giving rise to the heterotopia of the *dōbōdōgyō*, which only makes sense if we tie the theory of the dharma ages to a Marxist historical dialectic, treating both as historical inevitabilities. While Miki shakes off the state formation and the species, and so one of the critical weaknesses of Tanabe's interpretation, his reading would seem also to lack one of the critical strengths of Tanabe's interpretation, namely his understanding of *zange* as ethical praxis in the world. In the conclusion to this dissertation, I would like to take the liberty of suggesting what a Shinshū ethics of exile based on an appeal to cosmopolitanism might look like.

⁸¹⁴ See Kim, "The Temporality of Empire," 159 for a critique of Miki's theory of cooperativism. Koschmann notes Rōyama Masamichi's suggestion that Miki's theory of cooperativism imagined an East Asia in which the universal and the particular would mediate each other in a way that would "ultimately transcend the region of East Asia itself"; see "Constructing Destiny: Rōyama Masamichi and Asian Regionalism in Wartime Japan," in *Pan-Asianism in Modern Japanese History: Colonialism, Regionalism and Borders*, ed. Sven Saaler and J. Victor Koschmann (London: Routledge, 2007), 191.

⁸¹⁵ See Richard Nordahl, "Marx and Utopia: A Critique of the 'Orthodox' View," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 4 (1987): 764.

Becoming a citizen of the world is often a lonely business. It is, in effect, as Diogenes said, a kind of exile—from the comfort of local truths, from the warm nestling feeling of patriotism, from the absorbing drama of pride in oneself and one's own.
(Martha Nussbaum, "Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism," 6)

CONCLUSION: THE CITY OF BLISS

We have seen that the Shinshū response to modernism revolves around a retreat from participation in the existing social order into an interior subjectivity, a movement *dōbōkai* thinkers describe as going “from a religion of the *ie* 家 to a religion of individual *jikaku*.”⁸¹⁶ This is a very modern kind of religion, inasmuch as it is doubly centred on individual feeling and transcendent universals. But it also grounds a utopian critique of the real state or the real society, inasmuch as it preserves the image of the Pure Land as a space of difference in which all those individuals enter into unlimited community. In other words, the effort to guard the sovereignty of the state by relegating religion to the realm of the universal opens the door to religion staking a new claim on the world. The retreat from participation in the existing social order may thus be conceived not as a simple refusal of responsibility, but as opening into a reconsideration of the limits of one's responsibility, so that where the state seeks to produce citizens, modern Shinshū might instead be understood as seeking to produce cosmopolitans.

In many of the European sources important to the Japanese thinkers we have considered, some version of cosmopolitanism is emphasized. Kant proposes a limited

⁸¹⁶ Miura, “Shinshū Ōtaniha no dōbōkai undō,” 1149.

cosmopolitanism, in which a third sphere of law, cosmopolitan law, would supplement state law and international law. Cosmopolitan law would allow the individual to address the state directly, as a world citizen. Marx proposes a strong cosmopolitanism, in which the state formation is absolutely overcome when the workers of the world—who are, on his understanding, stateless—unite to establish a workers’ utopia. Many contemporary Western philosophers also appeal to cosmopolitanism as the ethical ground for social justice and education movements that will counter-act the ill effects of nationalism and balkanization. Martha Nussbaum is perhaps the staunchest proponent of a Kantian world citizenship. Richard Falk shoots past liberal cosmopolitanism in formulating a vision of an activist global citizen, which in its ideal form is realized in community with others as “[g]lobalization-from-below...an expression of the spirit of ‘democracy without frontiers,’ mounting a challenge to the homogenizing tendencies of globalization-from-above.”⁸¹⁷

Falk makes a strong hortatory claim that the contest between globalization-from-above and globalization-from-below has not yet been decided: “It is not clear yet,” he writes, whether the global citizenry “is largely a globalized identity of elites arising from the integration of capital, or whether it represents a growth of human solidarity arising from an extension of democratic principles as a result of the exertions of peoples and their voluntary associations.”⁸¹⁸ It is somewhat less apparent that the movements of what

⁸¹⁷ Richard Falk, “The Making of Global Citizenship,” in *Global Visions: Beyond the New World Order*, ed. Jeremy Brecher, John Brown Childs, and Jill Cutler (Boston: South End Press, 1993), 40.

⁸¹⁸ Falk, “The Making of Global Citizenship,” 40. On closer inspection, it seems to me apparent that the two kinds of globalization may in important respects share a single rhetoric. Motani Yoko points out this irony in her observation that the goal of neo-liberal and neo-conservative leaders in Japan—“producing a new type of elite business person, who has practical English skills, is aware of global issues and is able to lead the profitable industries of the next generation”—is framed in the same language of individualism, creativity, and global leadership that is used by progressive educators, so that the same principles are supported by “neo-liberal/neo-conservative educational reform advocates as well as progressive educators”;

he calls globalization-from-above are actually producing huge populations of persons who might claim global citizenship not in opposition to state citizenship, but in the absence of state citizenship. These kinds of global citizens—exiles, refugees, illegal aliens—are by definition excluded from membership in the community of the nation-state. But we also find, surprisingly, that they are largely invisible in cosmopolitan appeals to world citizenship or global citizenship. Linda Bosniak has argued that this invisibility is built into the structure of citizenship theory, which starts from the foundation that citizenship is universal. Bosniak notes Iris Marion Young’s assertion that “In the late twentieth century...citizenship rights have been formally extended to *all groups* in liberal capitalist society,” and comments: “In other words, citizenship theorists—including theorists on the Left—usually assume that the question of who citizenship’s formal subjects are has by now been resolved. But, of course, if you assume that the ‘who’ question has been resolved, you end up reading noncitizens out of citizenship theory altogether.”⁸¹⁹

A vivid example of this might be Bhikhu Parekh’s recent suggestion that we should position ourselves not as Nussbaum’s world citizens but as “globally oriented citizens”:

A global or cosmopolitan citizen, one who claims to belong to the whole world, has no political home and is in a state of what Martha Nussbaum calls “voluntary exile.” By contrast a globally oriented citizen has a valued home of his own, from which he reaches out to and forms different kinds of alliances with others having

see “Hopes and Challenges for Progressive Educators in Japan: Assessment of the ‘Progressive Turn’ in the 2002 Educational Reform,” in *Comparative Education* 41.3 (2005): 313 and 321.

⁸¹⁹ Linda Bosniak, “The Citizenship of Aliens,” *Social Text* 56 (1998): 31, citing Iris Marion Young, “Polity and Group Difference: A Critique of the Ideal of Universal Citizenship,” *Ethics* 99 (1989): 250 (Bosniak’s emphasis).

homes of their own. Globally oriented citizenship recognises both the reality and the value of political communities, not necessarily in their current form but at least in some suitably revised form, and calls not for cosmopolitanism but internationalism.⁸²⁰

I think Parekh's inattention to all those persons who are not ensconced in valued national homes of their own is egregious and embarrassing. But it also seems to me to be prompted in part by Nussbaum's own appeal to an imaginary exile that can exist without tension alongside what she calls "particular loves"—"we need not give up our special affections and identifications, whether ethnic or gender-based or religious."⁸²¹ In other words, Nussbaum herself is interested in a cosmopolitanism that grows analogically out of the experience of home; there is no space in her argument for a cosmopolitanism based in the decentred experience of the abject.

In the postwar period, Hannah Arendt argued that because the true "citizen of the world" is invisible to the nation and the comity of nations, cosmopolitanism must be rejected, and the right to citizenship in a state guaranteed as the only truly human right: "Transcending the rights of the citizen—being the right of man to citizenship—this right is the only one that can and can only be guaranteed by the comity of nations."⁸²² If we follow Arendt, then we would have to support the exile, the refugee, and the alien in their petitions for full membership in a nation-state. It is hard to imagine doing otherwise. Nonetheless, Adorno and Said both insist that we must do otherwise. Their ethical prescription rests, I think, on an understanding that citizenship actually requires the

⁸²⁰ Bhikhu Parekh, "Cosmopolitanism and Global Citizenship," *Review of International Studies* 29.1 (2003): 12.

⁸²¹ Martha Nussbaum, "Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism," *Boston Review* 19.5 (1994).

⁸²² Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1951), 437.

exclusion of the abject or the alien, so that as a universal it will always produce an invisible non-part. Bosniak pursues the same logic when she suggests that citizenship, “despite the term’s apparent inclusiveness and universality...actually betrays those ideals and conveys a deeply exclusionary and parochial message.”⁸²³ Bosniak advances two possibilities for coming to terms with this problem. We might choose to “think about giving up on citizenship as an aspirational project altogether—unless and until the concept is freed from its nationalist moorings.”⁸²⁴ The wrinkle here, it seems to me, is that the concept is most unlikely to be freed from its nationalist moorings in the absence of critical thinkers thinking about it. Or, we might “seize the term for our own use and...begin to advocate what we might call ‘the citizenship of aliens’”; this strategy, Bosniak suggests, would be an instance of Judith Butler’s “performative contradiction,” a claim that works by “exposing the contradictory character of previous conventional formulations of the universal.”⁸²⁵ We can take both Arendt’s critique of cosmopolitanism and Adorno and Said’s embrace of cosmopolitanism seriously, it seems to me, by advocating the citizenship of aliens.

⁸²³ Bosniak, “The Citizenship of Aliens,” 33. Bret Davis elegantly notes a similar parochialism in the notion of the global village: “The America-centric global village is not so much cosmopolitan as, literally, *uni-versal*, a world in which all are ‘turned towards one’ and ultimately perhaps even ‘turned into one’”; see “Toward a World of Words: Nishida, the Kyoto School, and the Place of Cross-Cultural Dialogue,” in *Frontiers of Japanese Philosophy*, ed. James W. Heisig (Nagoya: Nanzan, 2006), 210.

⁸²⁴ Bosniak, “The Citizenship of Aliens,” 33.

⁸²⁵ Bosniak, “The Citizenship of Aliens,” 33. Bosniak actually refers to this as “performative paradox,” but in the work by Judith Butler she is citing, Butler uses the phrase “performative contradiction.” See Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 89. Butler is interested particularly in the ways that explicit censorship laws constitute performative contradiction: “The regulation that *states what it does not want stated* thwarts its own desire, conducting a performative contradiction that throws into question that regulation’s capacity to mean and do what it says, that is, its sovereign pretension. Such regulations introduce the censored speech into public discourse, thereby establishing it as a site of contestation, that is, as the scene of public utterance that it sought to preempt” (30).

Slavoj Žižek refers to this kind of advocacy as the pathetic statement of solidarity.⁸²⁶ Žižek suggests that multiculturalism constitutes global capitalism's "ideal form of ideology," the perfect supplement to capital's "colonization without the colonizing nation-state metropolis."⁸²⁷ Against multiculturalism, he suggests, the leftist may seek to open a new critical political space by questioning "the concrete existing universal order on behalf of its symptom, of the part which, although inherent to the existing universal order, has no 'proper place' within it (say, illegal immigrants or the homeless in our societies)."⁸²⁸ This questioning takes the form of "*identifying universality with the point of exclusion*—in our case, of saying 'we are all immigrant workers'."⁸²⁹ This is the pathetic statement of solidarity: "we are all them." It represents an opening to an asymmetrical statement from the excluded part: in this case, "we are the real citizens of the state."⁸³⁰ Because the point of exclusion is determined structurally rather than given naturally, it is possible, Žižek says, to take up the position of the excluded part by "assuming a certain *subjective stance*...which, in principle, can be adopted by *any* individual—to put it in religious terms, irrespective of his (good) works, any individual can be 'touched by Grace' and interpellated as a proletarian subject."⁸³¹ Christianity, he suggests, is built upon an appeal to identification with the abject cosmopolitan Christ—"on the identification with the poor figure of the suffering Christ dying in pain between the two thieves"; it becomes the kingly law by combining "this radical excremental identification with full endorsement of the existing hierarchical social

⁸²⁶ Slavoj Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology* (London: Verso, 1999).

⁸²⁷ Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject*, 216. Also see James W. Heisig, "Tanabe's Logic of the Specific."

⁸²⁸ Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject*, 224.

⁸²⁹ Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject*, 224.

⁸³⁰ Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject*, 231.

⁸³¹ Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject*, 227.

order.”⁸³² This is familiar to us as a shift from a denotative reading to a connotative reading. Any pathetic statement of solidarity has the potential to do the same thing, that is to “induce a hasty claim that our own predicament is in fact the same as as that of the true victims, that is, a false metaphoric universalization of the fate of the excluded.”⁸³³ So, the pathetic statement of solidarity can destabilize the existing structure or it can shore up the existing structure. Where it does the former, that is where it is sociopolitically effective, Žižek suggests⁸³⁴, we should see an “eruption of abstract negativity,” which eruption has variously been called “Adam’s Fall, through Socrates and Christ’s crucifixion, to the French Revolution—in all these cases, a negative gesture corrosive of the given (social) substantial order grounded a higher, more rational order.”⁸³⁵

By bringing Žižek into contact with Shinshū,⁸³⁶ I think we can open up a new elsewhere within the here of Buddhist ethics. In a number of ways, the Shinshū tradition seems to me especially well-qualified to teach us how to advocate for the excluded part. If I were to rewrite Žižek’s programme in Shinshū language, it would sound like this: the concrete existing universal order, which we call the nonduality of the ultimate and the worldly or the Buddhist law and the kingly law, has a symptom—inherent to it but without a proper place within it—which we call the abjectly ordinary person. The injunction delivered by the tradition is to identify with that point of exclusion: we are all abjectly ordinary persons, or, know that we are not good persons. In this identification,

⁸³² Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject*, 229.

⁸³³ Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject*, 229.

⁸³⁴ Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject*, 230.

⁸³⁵ Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject*, 239.

⁸³⁶ Which he might refuse, if he had any say: Žižek characterizes Buddhism as “the perfect ideological supplement of today’s virtual capitalism: it allows us to participate in it with an inner distance—with our fingers crossed, as it were.” See *The Parallax View* (Boston: MIT Press, 2006), 384. Žižek identifies Buddhism as having nothing comparable to the Christian act, which act is at the heart of his utopian ethics of solidarity. He should read the *Kyōgyōshinshō* though.

we open up the reciprocal but asymmetrical counter: the abjectly ordinary person is the true object of the vow. This subjective stance of identification with the excluded part can be taken up by anyone, regardless of her (good) works—thus, if even the good person, how much more so the evil person. Where this identification is effective, we should see an eruption of abstract negativity—crosswise transcendence, or, *sokutoku ōjō*. This grounds a return to a transformed world—*gensō* as the enacting of a Pure Land heterotopia, which is, however, never complete, so that it preserves its utopian character as promise or wish.

Žižek’s caution that the pathetic statement of solidarity can easily slip into a “false metaphoric universalization of the excluded” is well taken in the context of Shinshū thought, I think. As I have tried to show, the possibility of affirming the existing social order is available in the earliest Pure Land texts through to the most modern Shinshū interpretations. At the same time, the opposite possibility is also always available, embedded in the promise of the birth of the evil person. The exploration of this promise should not be taken as a rejection of ethics. It should instead, I will assert, be taken as an endorsement of an ethics focused on the point of exclusion, figured in the religious language of grace.

On this understanding, a Shinshū social ethics would involve interrogation of the existing order in order to locate the excluded part, identification with the excluded part, advocacy for the excluded part as the universal singular, and caution around those actions that would seem to endorse the existing order. It would insist on the possibility of improving the existing order by moving toward greater equality and greater freedom, but it would harbour suspicion toward any claim that these universals have been

accomplished. In this way it would inculcate an attitude of critical hope for a world. It would be a utopian ethics that understood the point of exclusion—the cosmopolitan space of abjection—as its heterotopia. This would be a thoughtful, responsible cosmopolitanism, that would understand Shinran’s exile as having a soteriological significance bound together with its political significance.

In the first part of this dissertation, I tried to show that the evidence does not support the commonly held understanding that “traditional”—that is, premodern—Pure Land Buddhism conceived of the Western Paradise as a strictly transcendent utopia. Although this way of presenting Pure Land thought has considerable value both as a way of setting it in opposition to other schools and so organizing the vast and unwieldy Mahāyāna imagination, and as an element in a polemical or apologetic argument, it has obscured the real complexity of the image of the Pure Land utopia. On the understanding that the utopian impulse to enact the space of the Pure Land was deeply felt by Japanese Buddhists, whether elite or non-elite, I approached Hōnen, Shinran, and Rennyo as each in his own way pursuing the question of what it would mean to realize the Western Paradise not as identical with this world but as a space of difference in this world.

At the end of the first part of the dissertation, I suggested that the traditional understanding of the Pure Land as a strictly transcendent space is first unambiguously asserted in the nineteenth century. Like the emergence of the emperor at the centre of the Japanese tradition,⁸³⁷ the transcendent Pure Land should be understood as a modern myth.

⁸³⁷ Basil Hall Chamberlain famously observed of this new religion, “Not only is it new, it is not yet completed; it is still in process of being consciously or semi-consciously put together by the official class, in order to serve the interests of that class, and, incidentally, the interests of the nation at large”; see “Invention of a New Religion,” in *Japanese Things: Being Notes on Various Subjects Connected with Japan, For the Use of Travelers and Others*, uniform title, *Things Japanese* (Rutland: Tuttle, 1971) (1912), 532.

Following on this observation, I have opened the second part of the dissertation by arguing that the demythologizers, including Kiyozawa and Soga, are better understood as moderns than modernizers; that is, that they are responding to the tradition as it is conceived in modern terms, using the same modern idiom of interiority and subjective experience. Nonetheless, their interventions move sharply against the notion of a strictly transcendent Pure Land, and so work to suture together premodern images of the Pure Land as utopia and modern images of the same.

This sectarian recovery of the image of the Pure Land as utopia makes an important contribution to modern Japanese philosophy. In my chapter on Miki's Shinran essay, I have tried to show that rather than turning to Shinshū as part of a weary retreat from engagement with world philosophy, Miki reads Shinran and Marx together. The result of this combinatory reading is the reimagining of the Pure Land as a utopian social order. In my chapter on Tanabe's *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, I have tried to show that Tanabe too takes from Shinshū the promise of a utopian social order and a praxis for realizing that social order, which in important—if limited—ways is understood as an order that undoes the specificity of the nation-state. Both Miki's and Tanabe's appropriations of the Pure Land materials are limited in important ways, but they demonstrate the richness and complexity of the image of the Pure Land as utopia.

My interest in this material is spurred in part by my sense that an interrogation of the relationship between exile and utopia should be at the centre of contemporary ethics. Throughout this dissertation, I have been circling the question of what it means to make abjection the goal of religious praxis. Taking my cue from James Heisig particularly, I have concluded by suggesting that we may fruitfully draw on Pure Land thought to

challenge the rhetoric of the global village, and articulate a non-imperialist cosmopolitanism by inculcating within ourselves a critical identification with socially and politically abject persons. Beyond my broad assertion that the conception of the Pure Land as this-worldly utopia is perhaps the most traditional thing about the modern reimaginings of Shinshū, I think there are two important conclusions to be drawn from this material. First, when modern Japanese thinkers, confronted with the cosmopolitan philosophers of the West, turn to old Japanese sources, we may find on close inspection that this has the effect not of reasserting the comforts of home but on the contrary of opening up an elsewhere within here that destabilizes the very notion of home. And second, that by understanding the refusal of home and the identification with the abject as important ethical and political gestures, we can see more clearly the ways in which Shinshū soteriology—which rests on identifying the self with the abject and excluded—may itself constitute a cosmopolitan Shinshū ethics of exile.

APPENDIX

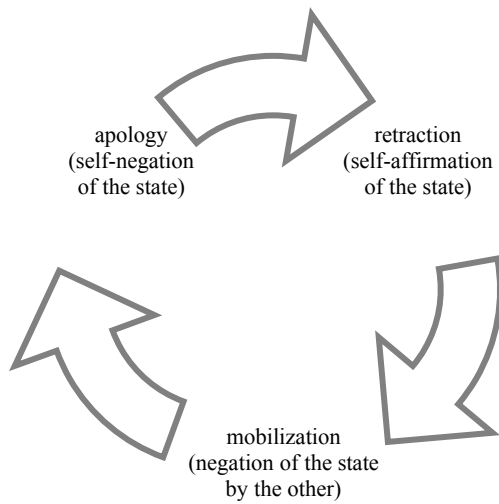


fig.1 — Cycle of Apology

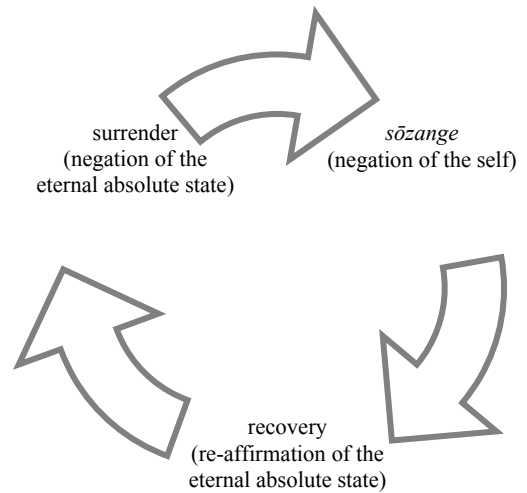


fig.2 — Post-Surrender *Zange*

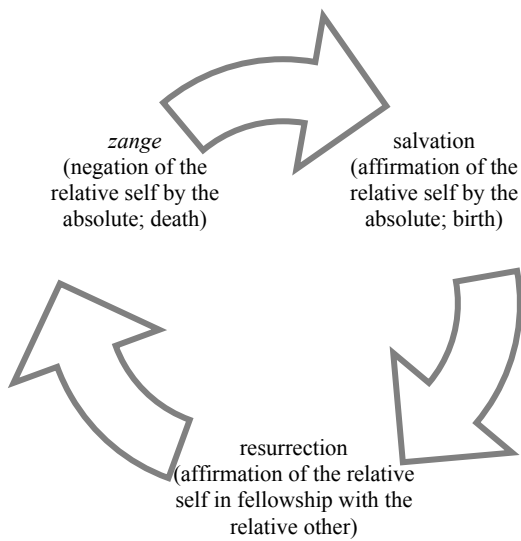


fig.3 — Tanabe's *Zange*

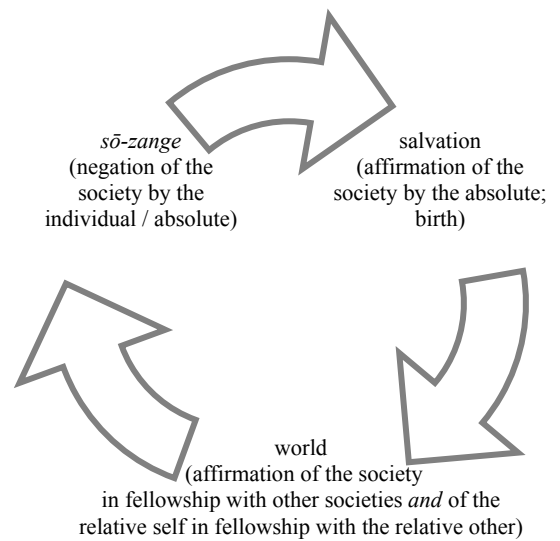


fig.4 — Tanabe's *Sōzange*

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ABBREVIATIONS

- SS Jōdo Shinshū Seiten 浄土真宗聖典.
 KMZ *Kiyozawa Manshi zenshū* 清沢満之全集, ed. Ōtani Daigaku. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2002.
 MKR Amino Yoshihiko 網野善彦, *Muen, kugai, raku* 無縁・公界・楽. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2007.
 THZ *Tanabe Hajime zenshū* 田辺元全集. Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1964.

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