

LETTER 11

FROM ZUIKIN SENSEI TO JACK AUSTIN



Shin Buddhist Fellowship UK

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We should discriminate between 'Pure Faith' and impure faith, and we should abide in the 'Pure Other Power Faith'. Frankly speaking, a man who has acquired 'Pure Faith' in Shin Buddhism is he who has put in years of effort and continual diligence to hear the purport of the Primal Vow. However hard it might be to acquire 'Pure Faith', we should hear diligently, without doubt, His 'Vow and Name' and understand the meaning of His Sacred Name and repose in His Vow.

Any person who chants the Sacred Name and worships the Buddha or Buddhas cannot be saved; only those who have acquired 'Pure Faith' are saved. Therefore, the Faith of Shin Buddhism is called the 'Hardest Faith'. Almost all Shin adherents in Japan are unable to be liberated through 'Self-Power Mind'. They wish to be born in the Pure Land, and hear sermons for tens of years, but they cannot acquire 'Pure Faith', being hindered by 'Self Power Mind'. They wish to acquire something by doing something. Indeed, in human society, a man cannot get anything by doing nothing. Without paying money, for example, nothing can be had. Without doing good deeds, no one can be praised. Without studying hard, no student can enter the best university. Without working faithfully and honestly, no firms or banks will pay a salary to anyone. Salary is paid to the man who works. This is the rule of human society.

In the moral world also, a good man will be rewarded with happiness. Likewise in religion, God will bless a good man, and he will have a fortunate life. Therefore, Christianity demands people: (1) be pious; (2) to pray to God for one's daily food; and (3) to do good works for having been saved. Piety, Prayer and Goodness; these three are the conditions for salvation. Therefore, Christianity is called a 'moral religion'.

It goes without saying - all religions teach us to do good and the 'Law of Causation' is true, strict and inexorable. Morality and religion cannot be separated. These concepts of thought are universal.

The devotees of Shin Buddhism are tainted or imbued by these conceptions and cannot acquire 'Pure Faith'. Even earnest Shin Buddhists cannot be liberated from the conceptions. I should say that these are the root of the 'Self-Power-Mind. So, generally, they stick to following wrong thoughts.

1. I wish to acquire Faith'.
2. I think I shall be born in the Pure Land because I have already acquired Faith.
3. I wish by chanting Sacred Name.
4. I think I shall be saved because I am chanting His Name many times every day.
5. I am rejoicing that I have already believed my rejoicing will save me.
6. I wish for peace of mind: If I have such peace and rejoicing wells up within myself, I shall be saved.
7. I know the doctrine of Shin Buddhism; therefore, I think I shall be saved.
8. I observe moral rules and the Buddha's precepts, and do not commit grave sins; I have undertaken many good works for the welfare of mankind; therefore, I think Amida will save

me.

9. I keep my heart pure and righteous, therefore, I think I shall be saved.

10. I think I shall be saved; thus, my thought will convey me to the Pure Land.

11. I believe in Amida and His Name; I rely on my faith; therefore I think I shall be born in the Pure Land.

12. I wish I could acquire Faith, but I cannot yet do so; therefore, I shall not be saved.

13. Other people are rejoicing but I cannot do so; therefore, I shall not be saved if I do not rejoice as much as other people do.

14. I think I have the power to believe in Amida; therefore, I think I shall acquire Faith through my striving.

15. I have been striving for years to acquire Faith, but have not succeeded; therefore, I think I shall have no hope of doing so.

16. I have committed many deadly sins; therefore I shall never be saved by Amida. [Amida's Vow]

17 Some years ago I spoke ill of Buddhism and Buddhist sages; therefore, I think I shall never be saved by any means.

... And so on.

These notions all stem from the 'Self-Power-Mind'. They are wrong thoughts, 'Diseases of Faith', which are harboured by many Shin Buddhists.

The salvation of Shin Buddhism is unconditional. Amida vowed that He would save all people unconditionally and that he would do so only through His Vow-Power (or through the virtue of His Enlightenment or Sacred Name). Accordingly, 'Pure Faith' transcends all human conceptions and conduct, good or evil.

Next ZI to JA Zoom study session - Letter 12: 13th November 2024