

LETTER 12

FROM ZUIKIN SENSEI TO JACK AUSTIN



Shin Buddhist Fellowship UK

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The Tannisho says: 'All people are saved into the Pure Land only through the power of Amida Buddha's inconceivable Vow.' Shinran Shonin says: 'I don't know what is good, what is evil. I do not wish to appear righteous or fear evils. In the *Kyo-Gyo-Shin-Shu*, he says: 'The Great Sea of Faith of Faith is inconceivable. It destroys the poisons of both good and evil, wise and foolish'.

Buddhist can be classified as follows:

1. 'Self-power Buddhism, to which such Buddhists schools of Kegon, that is, moral discipline, meditation and transcendent or true wisdom. By observing these three disciplines, they wish to attain enlightenment (*maha-nirvana*). Of these three learnings, Zen puts special emphasis on meditation.
2. Other-Power Buddhism, which is divided into:
 - a. 'Pure Other-Power Buddhism and:
 - b. 'Impure' Other-Power Buddhism.

The pure Other-Power Buddhism teaches that all beings can be born in the Pure Land, simply and solely by Amida's Vow Power. The impure Other-Power teaching is subdivided into a. Those wishing to be born through chanting Amida's Nam with a self-power mind: and b. those wishing to enter the Pure Land by observing the discipline of self-power Buddhism with a self-power mind.

In other words, salvation through Amida's Vow-Power is pure. Such faith is 'pure faith'. When such faith is defiled (or mixed) with a self-power mind and self-power practices, it becomes impure. The Pure Faith of Shin Buddhism is the only pure religion. Pure Faith can generate spontaneous good deeds, but morality has nothing to do with entering into the Pure Land. To pray to God or gods for anything is superstition. Shin Buddhists never makes light of morality or meditation but who can perfectly practice moral laws and meditation?

Shinran Shonin confessed: 'I believe Shin Buddhism but, alas, can scarcely find it within myself – neither do I have a pure mind. My body and mind are filled with ignorance and delusions, like dust in the air or sand in a river: love and hatred along with agreeable and disagreeable feelings are like high peaks or huge mountains.

Pure Faith is to hear and obey Amida's gracious call (the substance of his Wisdom-Compassion), which is the purport of his Vow, and to be so moved by Amida's Compassion as to forget ourselves, i.e. to stand aloof from our sinfulness and wickedness, firmly believing in his Vow of Joyous Serene Faith (the 18th Vow).

Pure Faith, which makes followers forget themselves, is by nature, in unity with Amida's call and his Wisdom-Compassion. If Pure Faith arises within us, even for a moment, we can abruptly (at a jump, most quickly), attain the great Nirvana (*maha-nirvana*) the Buddha's Supreme Enlightenment, even though we do not destroy our passions, nor accumulate merits, nor perform religious disciplines or practice Samadi (meditation), which is taught in other schools of the difficult way. This is the essence Shin Buddhism (*Jodo Shinshu*) which was founded by Shinran Shonin.