

LETTER 14

FROM ZUIKIN SENSEI TO JACK AUSTIN



Shin Buddhist Fellowship UK

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(On 'Pure Faith': Continued from Letter 13)

In order to explain 'Pure Faith' he [Shinran] composed the *Kyo-Gyo-Shin-Shu*. Therefore, this text is the standard of 'Pure Faith'. (It is very hard to understand the true sense of this book. I began to read this book when I was twenty years of age. Since then, 66 years have already passed away and I still find it difficult to understand perfectly the abstruse sense of the book.) 'Pure Faith' is the Faith that takes refuge in Amida's Vow Power, and at the same time, believes in the excellent power of the 'Sacred Name' as it is. In such 'Pure Faith' there is no impure element of Self Power, nor such selfish prayer as "O Buddha, please save me!" Jodo-Shinshu is the only religion that has no prayer to Buddha or Buddhas, nor to God or gods. (Those who pray to God or gods merely project their own delusions or selfish imagination and cannot be called wise: they are superstitious.)

Buddha Amitabha, our Father, Most Compassionate, calls on us saying, "Come at once, Come to me; Come! In your present state of mind, sinful and wicked; I will never forsake you". And therefore, we never pray to Buddha Amitabha for our salvation or for happiness in this present life; nay' there is no room for selfish prayer. I should say; "Even though you pray to God (or gods), your prayer will not be answered, because your mind that prays to God is not sincere or truthful" – no answer from God is the answer.

A certain Japanese scholar says: If your mind be pure and sincere, all gods will certainly guard and protect you, even though you do not pray to them." Ikkyu-Zenji (a Japanese Zen Master) says: "If my heart be pure and sincere, I do not care for whether there is protection by the gods or not.! The fortune and misfortune of a man are the fruits of the seed that he has sowed It is the Law of Causation. God is not the governor of man's happiness or unhappiness. Shin adherents do not believe in God's Providence. What followers of of Shin Buddhism must do is simply to obey Amida's Call or to believe in the 'Sacred Name': in other words, hearing the purport of His Vow.