

KIKYOSHIKI

Shin Buddhist Confirmation
DHARMA ARCHIVE ENTRY #12

In this Shin Buddhist Ceremony, performed before the alter of Amida Buddha and Shinran Shonin, one takes the important step of affirming one's reverence for the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, and one's determination to tread the path to Buddhahood.

The teachings of Sakyamuni Buddha are so extensive they are said to number 84,000. It is therefore of no surprise that after the Buddha's death, various schools based upon different aspects of his teachings developed.

Shin Buddhism (Jodo Shinshu/Pure Land) is the Buddhist path of great compassion clarified by Shinran Shonin. Shinran Shonin teaches that Sakyamuni appeared in this world in order to reveal the Vow of Amida Buddha to save all beings; it is the salvation of all people by Amida Buddha that is Sakyamuni's fundamental teaching.

The Confirmation Ceremony in Shin Buddhism, therefore, shares a common meaning with the precept of the three refuges administered in the time of Sakyamuni Buddha, but it also has a special meaning. In the Confirmation Ceremony, the Buddha of the three refuges is not simply Sakyamuni, but refers especially to Amida Buddha who is at the heart of Sakyamuni's teachings.

Sakyamuni came into the world to teach the Vow of Amida Buddha, and our salvation is brought about by Amida. Thus, "Dharma" is the teaching of Amida's compassionate working to save all beings, and "Sangha" refers to the people that have entrusted themselves to Amida.

Since there are no precepts in Shin Buddhism, instead of receiving the precepts of the three treasures, one participates in the Confirmation Ceremony.

Candidates for Kikyoshiki do not shave their heads, however they do undergo a ritual and symbolic cutting which has the similar meaning.

On participating in the Confirmation Ceremony, one receives a Buddhist name (homyo). These names are in the form of "Shaku" which means "disciple of Sakyamuni", and this is followed by a name/homyo made up of two syllables which are normally taken from a Jodo Shinshu sutra or chant. The Kikyoshiki Ceremony 'confirms' that the individual has joined the followers of the teaching of Sakyamuni Buddha, a community that transcends race and nationality.

As a Shin Buddhist, one endeavours to hear the teaching of Amida's Primal Vow and transmit it to others. Furthermore, one should clearly grasp the principle of cause and effect that is basic to Buddhist teaching, and does not rely on superstitions and practices that contradict it.