

# What is Shinjin?

(浄土真宗の信心)

IBA English Dharma Talk for the month of December 2020

By Daien T. Haseo, Touzenji Buddhist Temple

## 1. Shinjin as Buddha's Mind

- ✧ Shinjin, according to Shinran, means the true, real, and sincere mind and heart, and it refers to the mind and heart of Tathagata or Amida Buddha.
- ✧ Sentient beings possess only a defiled mind which is tainted with the blind passion as represented by a so-called 'three poisons', i.e., greed, anger/hatred, and ignorance.
- ✧ The contents of shinjin are the great wisdom of Buddha, which is to see things as they really are, and the boundless compassion of Buddha, which saves all sentient beings, unconditionally.

## 2. Amida Buddha

- ✧ Amida, which is derived from two Sanskrit words 'amitabha' and 'amitayus', means the immeasurable light which symbolizes the wisdom of Buddha, and the immeasurable life which symbolizes the compassion of Buddha, respectively.
- ✧ Amida Buddha is not a historical Buddha but a personified form of the working of wisdom and compassion in the ultimate reality that historical Buddha Shakyamuni awakened to in his enlightenment.
- ✧ The ultimate reality on the life and universe in the awakening of the Buddha is as follows:
  - 1) Impermanence; all beings and phenomena are constantly changing and nothing remains unchanged even for a single moment.

- 2) Interdependence; all beings are interconnected with each other, inter-related to each other, and interdependent on each other, and nothing can exist independently of others.

### 3. Shinjin as Entrusting Heart

- ✧ The working of the wisdom and compassion of Buddha to save all sentient beings is described as the Primal Vow of Amida Buddha in the Sutra of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life, specifically.
- ✧ Shinjin is the characteristic of the mind and heart of a person who entrusts himself or herself to the Primal Vow of Amida. It is not something which is cultivated nor developed because shinjin is given by Amida Buddha to us as a gift.
- ✧ When shinjin is thus received free of doubt, the defiled mind of foolish being and the pure mind of Buddha become one. Even if the two completely opposite minds become one, however, our defiled mind, filled with blind passion, does not disappear, completely.

### 4. Realizing Shinjin

- ✧ Leaving the defiled mind of foolish being as it is, the great wisdom of Buddha transforms such defiled mind into the good mind of Buddha. Shinran explains such an experience as 'like rivers entering into the vast ocean, they become one taste with the ocean water of wisdom'.
- ✧ The great wisdom of Amida Buddha enables us to have deep insight into the true nature of ourselves and find that we are nothing but evil, and at the same time, such evil beings are grasped never abandoned by the boundless compassion of Amida Buddha to save all sentient beings.
- ✧ Upon realizing the shinjin of Other Power, i.e., working of the Primal Vow of Amida, we can live positively in this world, being embraced by the great compassion of Amida, with a simultaneous experience of shamefulfulness and gratitude. This is the core of shinjin in Jodo Shinshu.