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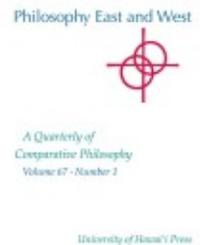
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Kyoto School Philosopher Keta Masako

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## TRANSLATION

### The Self-Awareness of Evil in Pure Land Buddhism: A Translation of Contemporary Kyoto School Philosopher Keta Masako

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#### *Translators' Introduction*

Membership in the Kyoto School of philosophy is defined by both formal and conceptual criteria. Keta Masako 氣多雅子 is a member in good standing in both senses. Formally speaking, she currently occupies the Chair in Religious Studies at Kyoto University.<sup>1</sup> This chair, together with the Chair in Philosophy, constitutes the formal nexus of the Kyoto School.<sup>2</sup> Keta is the first woman to hold the chair, constellating her in a network that radiates “from the rather substantial circle of students and professors that had formed around Nishida [Kitarō] during his final years at Kyoto and that had continued with Tanabe [Hajime].”<sup>3</sup> Conceptually speaking, the Kyoto School is defined by a critical reflection on Asian and European traditions of thought that draws freely upon the religious and philosophical aspects of these traditions. Jan Van Bragt describes Keta as carrying this “dual engagement” into the present period, “bringing into the greatest possible proximity the realms of religion and philosophy.”<sup>4</sup> In Keta’s case this takes the form of a creative engagement with Pure Land Buddhism, particularly with Shinran 親鸞 (1173–1263), the founder of Shin Buddhism, whose work she positions alongside the work of European philosophers. To be clear, what Keta provides in the essay translated here is not a retrospective of Kyoto School philosophy, but an original work of Kyoto School philosophy.

Keta’s path to the chair was not the typical one of completing one’s graduate studies at Kyoto University and then serving as an assistant professor to the current chair before finally assuming the chair oneself. Although she graduated with a Bachelor of Letters from Kyoto University, Keta did not resolve to continue the study of philosophy and religion at the graduate level until after she had already stepped out into the working world. In a short autobiographical piece, Keta recalls that as an intern in a psychology lab, her supervisor once asked what her studies in philosophy

and religion could offer.<sup>5</sup> Until then, Keta had studied wanting to know the truth for herself alone. Unable to remember her response, she still recalls the disappointment and disdain on the faces of those around her. Undaunted, the young Keta took this experience as a lesson in the nature of academic knowledge: it must be shared with others. Soon after, she resigned her position at the lab and began graduate studies. In another short piece, Keta recounts that as a woman in the academic world of thirty years ago, she had never had any expectation of being able to work at a university.<sup>6</sup> After an initial period of struggling to find a post (during which period she was explicitly told that “women won’t be hired”), Keta worked at several institutions, including a stint from 1982 to 1984 as a junior research fellow at the Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture. During the 1990s, she published two groundbreaking works, the award-winning volume of collected essays, *Philosophy of Religious Experience: An Elucidation of the Pure Land Buddhist World* (1992a), and the monograph based on her dissertation (1998), *Reflections on Nihilism* (1999). In 2000, she assumed the chair.

James Heisig writes that “if there is one notion that seems to run like a golden thread throughout the entire, rich tapestry that Kyoto philosophers have woven, it is that of *jikaku* 自覚 or self-awareness.”<sup>7</sup> In the essay translated here, Keta carries this thread forward through her intensive focus on the awareness of one’s own evil (*aku no jikaku* 悪の自覚). She takes up the story of Ajātaśatru, whose vengeful murder of his own father offers one of the defining examples of evil behavior in the Buddhist imagination (1992b). Keta describes Ajātaśatru as caught in a hopeless position—facing a future rebirth in hell, but unable to change his past evil act. Ajātaśatru’s miserable present is defined by Keta as a ‘being-toward-hell.’ She makes his fear and remorse a figure for an affective awareness of evil at the ground of all forms of life. The essay sketches a process whereby remorse deepens from moral awareness of evil to religious awareness of evil, and extends from the individual to the historical. Done with true rigor, interrogating one’s own evil nature is of a piece with more widely discussed Buddhist investigations into impermanence and emptiness.

The Kyoto School has been criticized for reducing Buddhism to an understanding of emptiness that provides no basis for “spiritual renewal.”<sup>8</sup> Keta pulls the rug out from under this critique by positing that renewal is itself dependent upon a religious awareness of the self as evil, which is none other than the dawning awareness of emptiness. In this way, Keta gives new relevance to the Buddhist concepts of impermanence and interrelatedness by developing Shinran’s understanding of the experience of becoming aware of the self as evil through a close analysis of Ajātaśatru’s remorse, and sets this analysis against the limitations of certain concepts of temporality and relationality in the European philosophical tradition.

Specifically, Keta defines and delineates Shinran’s interpretation of the remorse that afflicts Ajātaśatru in comparison to the notions of remorse at work in the philosophies of Immanuel Kant, Max Scheler, and Søren Kierkegaard. In each case, it is shown that the individual thinker’s notion of remorse is illustrative of what he takes morality to be. The crux of the contrast between Kant, Scheler, and Kierkegaard on the one hand, and Shinran on the other, is that Shinran relies on a different form of

temporality, namely impermanence, which links the problem of evil inextricably with the problem of suffering. The main points of discussion are as follows.

1. Like all of Keta's engagements with European philosophers in this essay, her critique of Kant is twofold. Negatively, she criticizes how Kant's search for something holy under the aegis of morality results in his "thoroughgoing exclusion of any empirical element from the moral law." By contrast, there is no such exclusion in the Buddhist tradition, which explicitly links morality to karmic consequences for the sensible self. Positively, Keta praises Kant's recognition that repentance (*Reue*) cannot undo what has already been done. This recognition will later prove key for Keta's description of how remorse can become the site of religious conversion.

2. The need for such a recognition is carried over into Keta's critique of Scheler. Positively, in viewing the essence of remorse as being its temporal character, Keta appreciates Scheler's phenomenological description of the affect of remorse as constitutive of our temporal sense of identity. Negatively, she criticizes his distinction between objective natural time and experienced time. This distinction allows Scheler to ignore the impossibility of changing the fact of what one has done and exclude the fear of suffering consequences from the essence of remorse. Keta points to the Nietzschean demonic will as the extreme of such disregard for the resistance of fact to a change in value. By contrast again, the Buddhist story of Ajātaśatru is no depiction of a morally cultivated person's remorse, but instead shows fear to be a factor in deepening remorse to a wholehearted anguish that abandons morality.

3. Positively, Kierkegaard's understanding of remorse differs from both of the above insofar as he takes remorse to reveal the limitations of a merely moral way of being. The negative side of Keta's critique here grows out of the concern that Kierkegaard himself expresses about how the absolute nature of Christian morality might be taken to obviate the need for faith. Keta regards this as a consequence of locating the limitation of a moral way of being not in morality itself but rather in the finitude of the being that can never measure up to the absolute standard of God-given morality. In Shin Buddhism, by contrast, morality is always only relative, or, in Buddhist terms, impermanent, such that morality and salvation need not be unified.

4. Shinran abandons morality as unknowable, not merely in an epistemological sense, but as the evil condition of life in samsara from which one must be saved: one is born in samsara suffering the consequences of acts committed by past selves—acts that are wholly unknowable and so impossible to take responsibility for. Here Shinran goes further than many other Buddhist thinkers in viewing even present good and evil acts as the results of past karma. Rather than catching us in Kant's bind between determinism and free will, however, Keta develops Shinran's understanding of remorse by drawing on Heidegger's notion of being-toward-death, such that in remorse the facticity of an evil act is taken to temporalize from out of the future. In remorse deepened by fear of hell, one's awareness of evil is an awareness that whatever suffering one might have experienced already, a greater suffering is inevitably still to come. The belief that hell is inevitable, as a being-toward-hell, imbricates the problem of evil with the problem of suffering as an existential problem.

Because of the interdisciplinary nature of Keta's work, her essay should prove to be of interest to scholars working across a number of fields. With this in mind, in this introduction we briefly review key concepts from Buddhist and European thought that Keta deploys to discuss the awareness of evil. We begin with short primers on the ethical thought of Immanuel Kant and Max Scheler, who are Keta's main interlocutors in this essay, attending to their ideas of sin and repentance. We then outline Buddhist views of karmic action and time, and give some background on the story of Ajātaśatru, which is the touchstone for Keta's argument. Finally, we indicate some avenues of exploration that the essay opens up for readers who are interested (variously) in Kyoto School philosophy, Buddhist ethics, and modern Japanese Buddhism, and end with a few notes on translation.

### *European Philosophical Sources*

For Keta, as for many others, Kant is the paradigmatic deontological ethicist in that he considers moral value in strict separation from any consideration of precedent, actualization, or consequence. This separation relies on Kant's division of the noumenal world of pure rational laws from the phenomenal world of sensible experience. In his ethics, Kant recognizes that human beings are often motivated by a principle of self-love and can set their own personal happiness above even the moral law. He thus seeks to rigorously exclude any pursuit of happiness from morality, such that happiness might be tied synthetically, but never analytically, to the good by way of worthiness. Since it is a feeling, and so belongs to the sensible world of experience, Kant places little value on repentance (*Reue*) in his *Religion within the Limits of Bare Reason* ([1793] 1966). Kant's decision to do away with the natural limits of morality by excluding any consideration of the sensible self restricts the value of repentance to a merely instrumental one. It stands to reason for Kant that if rational faith demands only that after having committed evil one try to live a new life that conforms to duty, then repentance, as a painful feeling, might be useful in this regard, insofar as the pain of repentance can discourage one from committing evil acts in the future. An instrumental value does not, however, change the fact that remorse in itself is empty and absurd in any practical sense: no matter how badly one feels, one cannot undo what has already been done.

Scheler developed his material value ethics in response to what he viewed as the formalism of Kantian ethics. He sought to recover a place for non-formal, phenomenal experience as a source of moral knowledge, and a place for the heart—the locus of the basic moral feelings of love and hate—as the site of moral judgment. Keta positions Scheler against Kant drawing particularly on the discussion of repentance found in Scheler's *On the Eternal in Man* ([1921] 1954). Scheler holds that acting in accord with the good is inseparable from individuation: the more I respond to the good not simply as that which should be done but as that which *I* should do, the more I grasp my own unique, autonomous personhood. Acting in opposition to the good damages personhood; repentance is a process of healing this damage, or, in Christian terms, "the natural function with which God endowed the soul, in order that the soul might return to him whenever it strayed."<sup>9</sup> In repenting, one remembers

one's "past lives":<sup>10</sup> all those responsible acts that taken together constitute one's personhood. Before the constituent past self is recalled and repented, it inheres within one's total person, directing it with a "covert power" (*dunkeln Gewalt*);<sup>11</sup> repentance produces a rupture that allows the constituent self to be "cast down and thrust out of the totality of the personal self."<sup>12</sup> In this movement, the meaning and value of the past act are transformed—what had been a moment in which the constituent self strayed from the good becomes an occasion in which the total person responds to the good. Scheler holds that by acting on the past in this way, repentance strips the past of its determining power<sup>13</sup> and makes it possible for one to exert one's individual will toward the good, acting on the basis of love of the other.

### *Buddhist Sources*

Keta talks about 'Buddhism' in three senses: (1) Buddhism broadly construed, (2) Pure Land Buddhism, and (3) the Pure Land Buddhism espoused by Shinran. Her analysis revolves around a story about the ruling family of Magadha that is found in multiple Buddhist texts.<sup>14</sup> During Śākyamuni Buddha's lifetime, two kings ruled: the good king, Bimbisāra, and his son Ajātaśatru, the evil king. King Bimbisāra and Queen Vaidehī received a prophecy that their son would murder his father. To prevent this from happening, they tried to kill the infant prince, but failed. When Ajātaśatru reached adulthood, the Buddha's evil cousin Devadatta told him of this attempt on his life and incited him to murder his father. After his act of patricide, Ajātaśatru experienced overwhelming remorse and went to the Buddha in desperation. The Buddha's preaching brought about a change of heart, and Ajātaśatru became a prominent follower and generous patron for the remainder of his life.

For Buddhism as a whole, this is an iconic narrative that illustrates the nature of karmic causality in terms of the mechanics of moral action and its results. Karma refers to a process beginning with volitional acts of body, speech, or mind that are either morally good or morally evil, and ending with the influence of these acts on one's life. Karma means that the agent becomes the patient of her own action, enjoying pleasure or suffering pain. Importantly for Keta's argument, thoughts, attitudes, and affects, too, can be volitional acts, such that karmically good volitional acts like remorse and shame will also produce results in the future. Moreover, karma is the force that propels a beginningless, cyclic time in which the agent is reborn and dies, over and over again (*samsara*). As the agent passes through lives, actions from the past influence the present, and actions in the present influence the future. In this view, Ajātaśatru's evil karmic act of patricide is the cause that will result in his rebirth in hell. The only way to escape karmic causality is to be liberated from *samsara* and attain nirvana.

However, there are those for whom this escape is impossible. As the good doctor Jīvaka explains to Ajātaśatru, those beings who do not believe in karmic causality, commit evil without remorse or shame, and do not seek guidance from a teacher of dharma 'lack the seeds' (*icchāntika*) for attaining nirvana. Not even Śākyamuni Buddha can save them. The category of *icchāntika* also includes beings who commit specific evil acts: 'heinous sins' that will cause them to be immediately reborn in

Avīci, the hell of ceaseless torment. Patricide is one such heinous sin. Ajātaśatru is thus an ambiguous figure: he committed the heinous sin of killing his father, and yet feels remorse.

With the emergence of Pure Land Buddhism we see an interpretation of the teachings that is focused on universal salvation—including even the impossible-to-save *icchantika*. For Pure Land Buddhists, then, the story of Ajātaśatru is about an *icchantika* who is saved despite his heinous sin. Understanding the story in this way requires reading beyond the frame of the narrative itself. Ajātaśatru is saved not by Śākyamuni Buddha but by Amida Buddha, who has made this salvation possible by establishing a pure land. In Amida's Pure Land, the conditions for attaining nirvana are perfect and there is no painful rebirth in hell. As a devotional form of Buddhism, Pure Land became popular across Asia and, during Japan's medieval period, inspired a number of distinctive interpretations of karma and salvation.

Shinran, the thinker upon whom so much of Keta's essay is focused, offers one such distinctive interpretation.<sup>15</sup> For Shinran, the story of Ajātaśatru offers decisive proof of Śākyamuni Buddha's specific desire to benefit the evil person by revealing the path to salvation offered by Amida Buddha. Shinran understood the world as having entered the age of degenerate dharma: the point at which the salvific influence of Śākyamuni Buddha has faded to such an extent that nirvana is impossible to attain through one's own actions or understanding. Everyone is thus, effectively, *icchantika*. Born into this age, the abjectly ordinary person can only seek salvation through birth in the Pure Land, which is possible even for the evil person. What is distinctive about Shinran's interpretation of Pure Land thought is his teaching that birth in the Pure Land is not merely available to the evil person but *most* available to such a person: "Even the good person is born in the Pure Land, so without question is the person who is evil."<sup>16</sup> This preference for the evil person has immediate significance for Shinran, who understands himself to be such a person, no different from Ajātaśatru. Beyond this, it has sociopolitical significance for those whose livelihood is considered evil and, in Shinran's view, existential significance for all beings. For Shinran, the moment when one realizes that one is an evil person bound for rebirth in hell is also the moment when one is assured that one's birth in the Pure Land is settled. Lamentation over one's evil nature and joy over one's salvation are interfacing.

#### *Implications and Avenues for Further Exploration*

One way in which Keta's article is a clear contribution to the existing Kyoto School literature is her thematic treatment of evil, which has from the beginning been a driving concern of the school. In the first major work of the Kyoto School tradition, *An Inquiry into the Good*, Nishida Kitarō maintained that any explanation of reality without value is incomplete and further suggested a specifically religious meaning for sin as well as for repentance/remorse.<sup>17</sup> The philosophical approach of Tanabe Hajime came into its own as a philosophy of repentance, as presented in *Philosophy as Metanoetics* (Takeuchi et al. 1986). And already in the publication of his dissertation, "Prolegomena to a Philosophy of Religion" ([1941] 1995), Nishitani Keiji took

an awareness of evil to be ineluctable to religion and reiterated the significance of specifically religious notions of evil throughout his intellectual career.

For Nishitani, Kant exemplifies the need for philosophy to recognize a specifically religious awareness of evil. On the one hand, in his dissertation, Nishitani criticizes Kant for having failed to respect the distinction between morality and religion by making morality into “something that defines the limits of religion.”<sup>18</sup> On the other hand, in his magnum opus, *Religion and Nothingness* (1961; see Van Bragt 1982), Nishitani opens his discussion of the difference between morality and a specifically religious awareness of evil with reference to Kant, noting that “Kant, who had considered evil in his moral philosophy as simply the inclination toward ‘self love’ immanent in man, could not avoid the concept of ‘radical evil’ when he came to his philosophy of religion.”<sup>19</sup> Here Nishitani is praising Kant for adding a notion of radical evil to his system of ethics (as found in *The Critique of Practical Reason* [1788] 1967) when he published *Religion within the Limits of Bare Reason* ([1793] 1966).

Keta’s discussion of remorse builds on Nishitani’s critique, but approaches the problem from another angle. Like Nishitani, Keta attacks Kant’s lack of respect for any meaningful distinction between religion and morality. However, Keta carries out her attack from the side of morality: morality itself must be limited by the phenomenal world if the awareness of evil in remorse is to keep its power of conversion. Thus, even radical evil is insufficient for Keta because it is abstracted from the phenomenal world. It is this resistance to any abstraction of morality that allows Keta to imbricate the problem of evil with the problem of suffering, such that her response to the question of why there is evil in the world is that “evil itself can be termed a question and salvation from evil is hidden within the very asking of that question.” Without the experience of suffering, and the awareness of evil as a promise of even greater suffering to come, the question of salvation is existentially meaningless.

Keta’s exploration of evil will also be of interest to scholars in Buddhist ethics and philosophy of religion. Using the hybrid language of Kyoto School philosophy, Keta takes up interpretations of evil as ‘inevitable’ from several sources, including Shinran’s Pure Land thought. The ‘problem of evil’ occupies a central place in the philosophy of religion. In Christianity, this problem is framed in terms of the clash between God’s goodness and God’s omnipotence that arises when one encounters the undeserved suffering of good people. In Mahāyāna Buddhism it is framed instead in terms of the clash between the impersonal moral order of karma and the undeserved pain experienced by good people. Some suggest that karma in fact solves this problem: the pain that might appear to be undeserved is, in truth, morally just punishment for evil acts committed in past lives. Buddhists have sought to escape karmic punishment by affirming a path of practice in which one either performs good karmic acts or receives the compassionate transfer of karmic merit from others. In both cases, good karma cancels out or interrupts evil karma, and so, although evil exists, it is neither unjust nor permanent. In Keta’s account, however, evil is intractable: doing evil is inevitable and the suffering that it causes is itself an existential evil that endlessly produces further suffering. Keta’s exploration reveals that evil is not

overcome—indeed, cannot be overcome—by the accumulation of good moral acts. Put simply, an awareness of evil is about facing what we have done in the past, rather than trying to do better in the future.

For Keta, facing what we have done means experiencing evil as a radically individual problem. This is similar to what scholar of Chinese Buddhism Peter Gregory describes as an “acute awareness of the gap between [one’s] own state of sin and suffering and the possibility of an ideal state in which sin is redeemed or suffering extinguished.”<sup>20</sup> For Gregory, the problem of evil in Buddhism is resolved “through a radical transformation in the structure of consciousness”<sup>21</sup> that transcends dualistic modes of thinking, rendering the contrast between sin and redemption irrelevant. In his account of Mahāyāna thought, the acute awareness of the gap between one’s own state and the ideal state motivates the practice that transforms consciousness. In Keta’s account of Shinran’s thought, by contrast, this gap cannot be closed because the “self is *absolutely* evil in relation to an *unattainable* nirvana.”<sup>22</sup> It is the remorseful reflection on one’s evil act that compels a new mode of being and not a change of consciousness through practice. This means that for Keta, evil is always relevant, even while its nature is transformed.

Her view that such a transformation is possible has repercussions for the question of whether Buddhist ethics are consequentialist or otherwise. Keta describes the transformation in good and evil as a ‘qualitative conversion’: their intrinsic relation to pleasure and pain becomes an intrinsic relation oriented to the future that encourages or inhibits liberation. This conversion happens when one is confronted by the ‘facticity’ of past evil acts through the affect of remorse. The relation of evil to pain is ‘originary’ such that it is the nature of an evil act to give rise to pain and to the conviction that one cannot attain liberation. This defines evil in a way that looks forward in time and should be distinguished from a consequentialist ethic, which looks backward in time in defining an act as evil because it results in pain. Keta thus provides an important contribution to the heated debate over the nature of Buddhist ethics by suggesting a non-consequentialist position on moral value that still takes pain and pleasure seriously.<sup>23</sup>

Readers interested in modern Shin Buddhism might pay particular attention to Keta’s remark on the meaning of hell in the modern period: even if “hell in its raw givenness has been emptied out, this emptying itself could well give shape to a new reality for hell.” Keta reads the fear of hell as having become, for the modern, something like Kierkegaard’s “free-floating anxiety.” This might inspire a new line of interpretation connecting Shinran’s and Kierkegaard’s views of time. Kierkegaard tells us that “freedom’s possibility announces itself in anxiety”:<sup>24</sup> on the one hand, in the present instant (*Øjeblikket*), I have dizzying freedom of choice; on the other hand, I will bear the burden of responsibility for that choice ever after, my past choices ramifying in the future in ways I cannot anticipate. Thus, the present instant represents the intersection of time and eternity. In Shinran, too, salvation occurs in a single thought-moment in which the ordinary person, hopelessly trapped in the cycle of samsaric time, is grasped by the eternal and infinite Amida Buddha. The dread of knowing oneself to be bound by one’s own karma interfaces with the dizzying joy

of liberation in the instant. Against the usual caricature of Shin Buddhism as focused solely on future birth in the Pure Land, Keta's discussion of hell opens up new readings of Shinran's view of time. And if hell can acquire a new reality that is philosophically interesting, so, too, might some of the other elements of the Shin Buddhist imaginary that modern reformers have demythologized, Amida and the Pure Land foremost among them.

Keta's rehabilitation of the meaning of hell is accompanied by a revaluing of fear. This, too, might be of interest to those concerned with the notion of affect in religion more generally. Modern philosophical readings of Buddhism have sometimes identified the tradition as oriented toward pacifying or transcending emotion. Consider, for example, Scheler's account: Buddhists, he claims, reject pleasure not "because it is pleasure, but because it is as much an *affect* as suffering and pain";<sup>25</sup> the Buddha overcame all such "thirst" in arriving at a "holy *indifference* to the world."<sup>26</sup> Shin Buddhism, however, has cultivated a richly affective language of gratitude and indebtedness. It has thus sometimes been dismissed as philosophically uninteresting.<sup>27</sup> But Keta shows us that fear can have "positive meaning" within the structure of Buddhist liberation. We might take her lead and pursue a fresh interpretation of all the affective experiences that shape the life of the Shin Buddhist believer. Or we might trace a lineage backward, connecting Keta's work here with her predecessors in the Kyoto School who identify Shinran's thought as distinctive in part due to his depth of inner feeling.<sup>28</sup>

#### *Notes on the Translation*

The essay translated here appears in chapter 5 of *Philosophy of Religious Experience* under the title "On the Story of Ajātaśatru." It was first published in a slightly longer form in the June 1984 issue of the journal *Shūkyō kenkyū* under the title "The Problem of Evil in Pure Land Buddhism"; we have included the concluding paragraphs of the article version in this translation.

Our sense that affect is significant to Keta is connected to one of the decisions we have made in preparing this translation that bears noting. The German term that Keta renders as *kaikon* 悔恨 is *Reue*. *Reue* is typically translated as repentance, which is one possible translation for *kaikon*. However, except when it appears within a quotation from a German source, we have consistently translated *kaikon* as remorse, and *zange* 懺悔 as repentance. This is intended to maintain the distinction Keta draws between repentance, which is a practice of expiation, and remorse, which 'cannot become a practice' but should be understood instead as something affective: 'lamenting' or 'wholehearted anguish.' By preserving this distinction, we hope also to allow the interested reader to observe the difference between Tanabe's philosophy as meta-noetics (*zangedō* 懺悔道) with its dual aspects of repentance and conversion and Keta's treatment of remorse.

Two of the many Buddhist technical terms used by Keta in this essay require a brief note of explanation when translated into English. The Buddhist term *ku* 苦 has a broad meaning, ranging from physical pain to existential dissatisfaction to ontological transience. When *ku* appears as part of a dyad with *raku* 楽, physical and mental

forms of pleasure, we have translated *ku* as pain and *raku* as pleasure. When *ku* appears on its own, however, we use the more common translation for *ku*: suffering. Buddhism contains many terms that gesture toward the morally reprehensible and the soteriologically disadvantageous, including the terms *tsumi* 罪 and *aku* 悪. We have translated *tsumi* as sin and *aku* as evil. In our view, sin and evil reflect the intensity of the original terms. Keta's careful effort to compare and contrast Buddhist ideas of sin and evil with both European philosophical and Christian notions addresses any concerns about a superficial conflation of Buddhist and Christian ideas.

Turning our attention to terms specific to the Kyoto School, two of our choices likewise require some explanation. Since Nishida's *Inquiry into the Good*, reality has been a central topic in the school. In this essay, Keta uses both the conventional Japanese word for reality, *genjitsu* 現実, and the transliteration of the English word 'reality,' *riariti*. The former signifies the manifestly real, whereas the latter signifies the unity of the manifestly and the intelligibly real. Due to lexical constraints, however, we have translated both with the single term 'reality'; where the original is the transliteration *riariti*, or the related *riaru*, we have italicized the English rendering: *reality* and *real*. The quality of something that is both manifestly and intelligibly real is also signaled in this essay with the term 'elemental' (*kongenteki* 根源的).<sup>29</sup> The original Japanese term, composed of characters for 'root' and 'source,' has a strong connection with the adjectives used in German philosophy to describe something 'primordial' (*ursprünglich*, *genshiteki* 原始的) or 'radical' (*radikal*, *kongenteki* 根元的). Arguably, the choice of elemental covers over some of these connections. Nonetheless, bearing all of these factors in mind, we chose to translate *kongenteki* 根源的 as 'elemental' because it captures the term's nuance of existential vividness while leaving room to translate the more specifically religious term *honraiteki* 本来的 as 'originary.'

## On the Story of Ajātaśatru



Keta Masako

### *I. Morality and the Evil of Ajātaśatru*

The *Contemplation Sūtra*,<sup>30</sup> the *Sūtra of the Immeasurable Pure Enlightenment of Equality* (an alternate version of the *Larger Sūtra*<sup>31</sup>), and the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*<sup>32</sup> all tell the story of Prince Ajātaśatru with King Bimbisāra, Queen Vaidehī, and Devadatta in Rājagṛha; the story is also quoted in Shinran's *Kyōgyōshinshō*, *Jōdo monrui jushō*, and *Jōdo wasan*.<sup>33</sup> The story centering on Ajātaśatru found in the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* is quoted in the part of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*'s chapter on faith that takes up the problem of the salvation of the most evil person (who before then had no way to be saved), and so one can surmise that for Shinran the problem of the awareness of evil is expressed through the story of Ajātaśatru. Given, too, that the exegesis following this long quotation is brief to the point of being perfunctory, one can deduce that Shinran intended to resolve the difficult problem of the salvation of the most evil person by way of the story itself. Ajātaśatru is here the epitome of the evil person; his patricide is the epitome of sin. Shinran's study of this evil points to the goal of Pure Land Buddhism as a religion for the abjectly ordinary person: the salvation of the evil person.

It was said that before Ajātaśatru came into the world, all the ministers (diviners) had predicted that this child would surely kill his father, and for that reason, at the moment he was born he was cast by his mother from the top of a tower. Ajātaśatru, hearing this story from Devadatta, followed Devadatta's provocations, and put his father to death. Afterward, regret (*kōkai* 後悔) arose in him and he agonized deeply, and at last he went to Śākyamuni and attained salvation.

In this story, the problem of evil is continually linked to the idea of karmic retribution (*inga ōhō* 因果応報). (In Buddhism, the concept of causality [*inga* 因果] has a general meaning and is used to refer to both natural phenomena and human acts, as well as to talk about the relation between practice and enlightenment. In this paper, however, I discuss the relevance of karmic retribution vis-à-vis human moral action, and use the term causality only in this sense.<sup>34</sup> Even so, the problem of karmic causality is not taken up when Ajātaśatru commits the act of murdering his father, King Bimbisāra. Rather, it becomes a problem after Ajātaśatru completes the deed, in the scene in which he reflects upon the meaning of his own act. This placement indicates the appropriate locus (*ichi* 位置) for the idea of karmic causality. Given this, one must consider whether the moral import of the act of killing is to be investigated in terms of the scene in which Ajātaśatru kills his father. That act is something he chooses of

his own will, and responsibility for it must redound wholly upon him. But the structure of the story makes it clear that this is not a story about moral self-realization—it is about religious salvation. And yet, far from making the story unsuitable as a resource for considering Buddhism and the problem of moral evil, this suggests rather the essential place of morality in Buddhism. Before undertaking a concrete investigation of this story, I will first provide an outline of the character of Buddhist morality.

For example, the distinctiveness of Buddhist morality becomes clear when we look to Kant's moral theory for a model of moral disposition. The thing that most distinguishes Kant's moral thought is his thoroughgoing exclusion of any empirical element from the moral law. This exclusion of any empirical element becomes a problem in concrete terms especially when it comes to the exclusion of the principle of happiness from the moral law. In the "Analytic of Pure Practical Reason,"<sup>35</sup> this principle of happiness, which has experiential meaning, and the principle of morality, which is pure consciousness, are strictly separated, such that when it is a matter of duty, happiness must never enter into consideration.<sup>36</sup> The good that is done seeking happiness is "good not absolutely but only in reference to our sensibility with regard to its feeling of pleasure and displeasure."<sup>37</sup> Here, Kant insists upon the *amorality* of doing good acts motivated by a search for happiness. The nature of morality is thereby clarified in terms of its purely noumenal form. The exclusion of any empirical element from the imperatives of pure practical reason is derived from and driven by a methodological necessity in Kant's critical philosophy. Even so, that does not change the fact that this exclusion led him to understand morality in the purest way possible. Accordingly, morality becomes a moment (*keiki* 契機) for sublimation in which one overcomes the existence of the sensible self, an infinite drawing near in which the finite being oriented toward its archetype (*Urbild, genkei* 原型) is perceived as possible within morality. The moral law does not include any empirical ground for determination and is thereby deemed to have a ground in the practical part of pure reason, which in turn grounds morality in the eternal. Moral law comes to be called truly 'holy' (*heilig, seinaru* 聖なる) where it is itself established as divine command within a finite, rational being. One might say that Kant is inquiring after something holy under the label of morality.<sup>38</sup>

However, in Buddhism, this [Kantian notion] of strict ethical reflection (in contrast to an ordinary reflection in which 'abandoning evil and cultivating goodness' is rooted in the pursuit of happiness) is nowhere to be found. First, Buddhist morality is essentially tied to the idea of karmic retribution; second, the concepts of pleasure (*raku* 楽) and pain (*ku* 苦), when connected with good (*zen* 善) and evil (*aku* 悪), have a meaning that differs from the concepts of happiness and unhappiness in Kant. According to Kant, happiness is the satisfaction of "all our inclinations together,"<sup>39</sup> the name given to "a rational being's consciousness of the agreeableness of life as uninterruptedly accompanying his whole existence."<sup>40</sup> However, in Buddhism pleasure and pain (*kuraku* 苦楽) are metaphysical concepts that possess a more elemental (*kongenteki* 根源的) meaning than good and evil. This makes it natural to view good and evil from the vantage point of understanding existence in terms of pain and pleasure.<sup>41</sup>

In Kant, even if happiness is tied to the good synthetically by way of *Würdigkeit* [worthiness] (and in this way his concept of happiness could allow for a new development), it is not contained within the concept of the good analytically. However, in the case of Buddhist morality, the concepts of good and evil include within themselves a relation to pleasure and pain. In other words, we can say that 'good' is of 'a nature that works to bring about happiness (pleasure),' and that 'evil' is of 'a nature that works to bring about unhappiness (pain).' As the phrase 'good as a cause (*in* 因) leads to pleasure as a result (*ka* 果); evil as a cause leads to pain as a result' indicates, the fact that cause and result cannot arise apart from their interdependence (*sōkansei* 相关性) is likewise true of the relation between good and pleasure and of the relation between evil and pain. These relations are not at all ones in which the moral value of an act is determined by the consequence of that act. Rather, to look at an act in terms of the relation to its consequence is always to look at that act in the midst of the futural unfolding of that relation.

We should note here that the connection between the concepts of good and evil and the idea of karmic retribution was widely established in ancient India, and found not only in Buddhism. This connection acquires a truly Buddhist character when the mode of being (*arikata* あり方) in which good and evil are seen in terms of an interdependence with their consequences is extended to an interdependence with Buddhism's *ultimate consequence*—that is, when good and evil are made to relate to liberation in the Buddhist sense. Good then comes to include the sense of 'a nature that works to encourage birth in the Pure Land and becoming a buddha'; evil then comes to include the sense of 'a nature that works to inhibit birth in the Pure Land and becoming a buddha.'

Nonetheless, this extension to the originary (*honraiteki* 本来的) relation between good and evil and birth in the Pure Land and becoming a buddha does not *come about* as an extension of the relation between good and evil and pleasure and pain. Just as birth in the Pure Land and becoming a buddha transcend the world of birth and death to which pleasure and pain belong, the good and evil that encourage or inhibit birth in the Pure Land and becoming a buddha only come about through a qualitative conversion (*tenkan* 転換) in the good and evil that bring about pleasure and pain. In this conversion, good and evil clearly become matters involved solely with the religious event of liberation, and through this attain a new dimension. One must also understand the concepts of good and evil as Shinran uses them on the basis of this view.

In contrast, since Kantian morality subsumes within itself the heights of religion, so to speak, it does not allow for this kind of qualitative conversion in the concepts of good and evil. To use Kantian terms, a Buddhist understanding of morality places the moral will within the realm of experience, which is then the basis for the qualitative change in the concepts of good and evil. If one were to accept from Kantian morality a model of pure moral nature, then one would say that Buddhist morality, because it includes morally impure elements, has an essential limitation. Among the various forms of Buddhism, Pure Land Buddhism is particularly conscious of this limitation.

## II. Remorse (Kaikon 悔恨)

What makes the strongest impression in the story of Ajātaśatru is the depth of his torment. “Because he killed his father, a fever of remorse (*kainetsu* 悔熱) arose in his heart. . . . Because of this fever of remorse in his heart, sores began to cover his entire body. These sores emitted a foul stench and filth oozed, such that none could go near him. Then he reflected, ‘Already I am receiving in this present body the flowering of karma (*kehō* 華報). Hell, the fruition of karma (*kahō* 果報), is surely not far off and is approaching.’”<sup>42</sup> Faced with the anguished Ajātaśatru, six ministers attempted to console him by presenting the teachings of renowned spiritual leaders of the day, one after another. Even though the theories of the so-called six heretical teachers were enumerated, none could move the heart of the king. At last, from Jivaka, came the advice to go to Śākyamuni.<sup>43</sup> Then, from the sky, the voice of his father King Bimbisāra rang out, telling him to follow Jivaka’s advice. And so, finally, Ajātaśatru went to Śākyamuni.

However much and in whatever ways the theories of the six heretical teachers treat the problem of karmic causality, they all consider Ajātaśatru’s regret (*kōkai* 後悔) as mere self-indulgence in emotion. They deem regret to be meaningless torment. In each of these approaches, the idea of karmic causality—whether denied (*hitei* 否定) or resulting in determinism—becomes the ground for this meaninglessness. In contrast, Jivaka praises Ajātaśatru’s heart of remorse (*kaikon* 悔恨) and shame (*zanki* 慚愧), deeming shame to be the human heart’s (*kokoro* 心) essential mode of being. If one were to abstract the content of Śākyamuni’s sermon to Ajātaśatru, it would appear that much of it is sophistry. What decisively separates the teachings of Śākyamuni from the theories of the six heretical teachers is the value that the former places on remorse and shame. Ajātaśatru is afflicted by a thoroughgoing remorse, and step-by-step overcomes the hesitation caused by his hopelessness, so that, in fact, by the time he reaches Śākyamuni, the greater part of this teaching has already been taught.

The fever of remorse that assails Ajātaśatru, his pain in mind and body, his misery, shame, and so on can be captured in a single word: remorse (*Reue*), in the sense of reflecting on an act one has done and judging it to be evil, being ashamed of it before oneself and others, and the working of the suffering heart. Note, then, that how one conceives of remorse is deeply connected with what kind of thing one considers morality to be. Although many philosophers and theologians have offered explanations of the essence of remorse, its key defining feature is a temporal relation in which one feels after an act has been done that it should not have been done.

However, Kant does not assign importance to this temporal relation. In Kant’s inquiry into the moral meaning of remorse, it is defined as “a painful feeling that,” like other feelings, “is brought about by a moral attitude.”<sup>44</sup> Because the moral law is a noumenal law, it is beyond time; it follows that the *moral* link between the event that is my act and the agony that I feel must itself be understood to be atemporal. The temporal facet of remorse can only be a detraction, both morally and practically. Remorse is empty in a practical sense and furthermore absurd, because it cannot

cause that which has happened not to have happened. At best, it is useful in its salutary effect of causing one not to repeat the evil act in the future. In *Religion within the Limits of Bare Reason*, Kant argues for a relation between what a human being “cannot do himself, namely undo legally (before a divine judge) the actions he has done,” and “what he can and ought to do, namely live in a new life that conforms to his duty,” by clarifying the relation between historical faith as faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ and rational faith as moral faith.<sup>45</sup> A theoretical concept of salvation necessitates that a divine judge deem that which was done not to have been done, but it is leading a life in adherence to duty that makes salvation possible in practice. For this reason, historical faith should be used only to strengthen and perfect rational faith. In Kant’s argument, there is no room for the psychological activity of remorse since it is absurd, and empty in a practical sense.

In contrast, Max Scheler identifies the very activity of remorse to consist in both causing an act that was done not to have been done and turning toward improved conduct. And at the same time the essence of remorse lies in its temporal character: precisely because it turns toward the past, remorse is an activity that has fundamental meaning for human beings. He explains remorse in terms of “the internal structure of our spiritual life.”<sup>46</sup> That is, unlike the objective time of nature, which is a monotonous continuity without differentiation between present, past, and future, each experience or moment in our temporal lives has within itself the three extensions of the experienced present, the experienced past, and the future. And the givenness of each of these is constituted in terms, respectively, of awareness, immediate memory, and immediate expectation. At each point in our lives, the meaning and value of the whole of our lives is present, and thus we can freely change them. One can grasp the meaning and value of each and every part of our lives as they unfold in the concept of personhood (*jinkakusei* 人格性); personhood is the concrete core of our spiritual activity, extending widely and deeply within this temporal unfolding. Grasping everything in our lives in terms of its whole meaning, its whole value, and its whole activity is only complete when life is over; it is always incomplete along the way. Therefore, because our past experiences are but one part of our lives, even if all of those components of experience that belong to natural reality are impossible to change, the meaning and value of these experiences are possible to change. If we abandon ourselves to the flow of life, the pressure of the past that directs future life by means of a covert [*dunkeln*] power only increases, but our spirit includes faculties that can render inactive one or another part in the sequence of past experiences; memory is one such faculty. To bring Scheler into dialogue with the ideas outlined above, he understands remorse as a phenomenon that includes memory. Remorse is taken as an activity that breaks into the realm of the past and operates upon it: “Repentance (*Reue*) genuinely extinguishes the element of moral detraction, the quality of ‘wickedness’; of the conduct in question, it genuinely relieves the pressure of the guilt that spreads in all directions from that wickedness, and at the same time deprives evil of that power of reproduction by which it must always bring forth more evil.”<sup>47</sup>

Further, Scheler distinguishes between two kinds of remorse depending on the type of memory each includes. Remorse based on phenomenal memory recalls and repudiates isolated situations and incidents of the past, but remorse based on functional memory recalls and repudiates a constituent ego (*jiga* 自我) within our whole person—the ego that was the source (*kongen* 根源) of the actions and intentions of that time. The former kind of remorse is called *Tatreue*, the latter *Seinsreue*.<sup>48</sup> It is especially the latter that Scheler considers the higher activity of remorse, because it can be the condition for the reformation of emotion (*shinjō henkaku* 心情変革) already described above. This latter understanding of remorse arises when the activity of remorse causes the focal level of our whole inner existence to freely and actively change.<sup>49</sup> Kant discussed the problem that appears here in terms of the relation between what the human being “cannot do himself, namely undo legally (before a divine judge) the actions he has done” and “what he can and ought to do, namely live in a new life that conforms to his duty.”<sup>50</sup> Scheler considers these to be two vantage points for a single, continuous, dynamic process of remorse. As the ego ascends to its highest potential ideal essence, it simultaneously looks down upon the old ego and rejects it. Here remorse is elevated to an activity that has the power to banish sin from the person and restore freedom toward the good at the base of the person. Scheler’s explanation of remorse takes it to be this entire movement: deepening from *Tatreue* to *Seinsreue*, attaining a ‘shattering of the heart,’ and from there, finally, beginning a new ‘rebirth.’<sup>51</sup>

What this explanation highlights is that each act is always to be seen in the form of time, and further, that no act can be understood when excised from the flow of life. Thus, the meaning of an act is not settled until the end of life. Understood in this way, remorse comes to have great significance for the first time. Kant was unable to distinguish remorse from the general morass of feelings of agony that follow from the moral evaluation of an act, because he insisted on viewing the moral nature of an act as determined independently and atemporally in all cases. This is because for Kant things belonging to the noumenal world are independent, in contrast to the mode of being of the phenomenal world, which is natural and necessitated.

In Buddhism, action is called ‘karma’ (*gō* 業). In karma, the very essence of action is interdependent relationality (*sōitekina kankeisei* 相依的な関係性)—relationality with all other actions, experiences, and so on; in this sense, it is close to Scheler’s way of thinking. Better, let us say that actions remain unresolved even beyond death. While Scheler understands remorse to be “the mighty power of self-regeneration of the moral world,”<sup>52</sup> as we will see below, in Pure Land Buddhism, remorse is the moral world’s thoroughgoing power of self-destruction.

Remorse is an activity that involves elements of intense feeling in the present pertaining to past acts and past selves, and therefore the mode of remorse’s activity will be determined by how the temporal structure of present and past takes form. Undeniably, this temporal structure differs in the world of Christianity and the world of Buddhism. Given this structural difference, a difference in the content of remorse is to be expected.

Now of course Kant's formalist ethics and Scheler's material value ethics are constructed as universal ethics based on reason, but the influence of Christianity on both is apparent. Insofar as one looks at Kant and Scheler in relation to religion, the two seem to gesture toward different aspects of Christian morality, but this problem cannot be discussed further here.

### III. Ajātaśatru's Remorse

Ajātaśatru's remorse grows out of the context of the idea of karmic causality, or karma. Ajātaśatru says,

Why should my body and mind not ache now? I am foolish and blind; I have no eyes of wisdom. I associated with wicked friends, taking them as good friends, and following the advice of the evil Devadatta, I viciously committed a grave crime upon the person of the king, who was devoted to the right dharma. Long ago, I heard a wise person teach in verse:

If, against father or mother,  
Buddha or his disciples,  
You harbor ill thoughts  
And commit evil acts,  
The recompense (*kahō*) will be  
Abode in Avici hell.

*Because of this*, I tremble in my heart and am greatly afflicted. And there is no treatment, even by a good physician.<sup>53</sup>

One can consider all of this to be Ajātaśatru's remorse in its broad sense. Three moments are included here: first, the certainty that the act he committed was a terrible evil; second, the conviction that he will surely fall into Avici hell as a consequence; third, the anguish and fear that result. Note that this way of thinking about falling into hell is what gives Ajātaśatru's remorse its special character. The idea that 'evil as a cause leads to pain as the result' is given to Ajātaśatru as a teaching of the wise, so his recognition that his own act was evil need not be regarded as something natural to him internally. Indeed, such recognition of evil does require urging from something external—as Paul says, "for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law."<sup>54</sup> Should one not then say that the process of the heart in which Ajātaśatru's evil becomes plain is *catalyzed* by the idea of karmic retribution?

However, one might question this way of understanding Ajātaśatru's remorse. What is it that torments Ajātaśatru? Is it consciousness of having done evil (active remorse [*Tatreue*])? Is it consciousness of being an evil person (existential remorse [*Seinsreue*])? Or is it nothing more than fear of punishment for sin (*tsumi no mukui* 罪の報い)? Certainly his shame is not the working of a morally cultivated heart. Scheler suggests that remorse and fear can be distinguished as activities of the heart, *prima facie*. In Ajātaśatru's case, fear constitutes the larger portion of what

we have referred to as his remorse in a broad sense. Ajātaśatru's remorse is not pure remorse as such. Nevertheless, a *prima facie* distinction between fear and remorse by no means negates the organic relation of influence between the two. Furthermore, even when remorse becomes more profound, fear is by no means eliminated.

But here, we should pause to consider the following objection: fear is something that channels the whole of the subject's attention and interest toward the object of fear, and therefore the activity of fear obstructs the thorough development of the activity of remorse.<sup>55</sup> This objection can be countered from two angles: the uniqueness of the object of fear in this case and the distinctive character of the activity of remorse.

The object of Ajātaśatru's fear is falling into hell as punishment (*mukui* 報い) for his sin. Although hell is one of the six realms, here it is a mythological representation that points to a world full to the brim with anguish, projected as the self's destination in the next life (*raise* 来世). For Ajātaśatru, just as guilt (*zaiaku* 罪悪) cannot be divorced from punishment, consciousness of guilt cannot be divorced from fear of punishment. The fear of going to hell is for him the very *reality* of sin—without it, the sin of killing his father becomes nothing more than an abstract evil floating in the ether. The evil perpetrated by oneself and no one else is first confirmed as *real* when this self or this life is decisively influenced by having committed that evil. In this confirmation, evil appears in its elemental form. 'Falling into hell' means sensing this influence on the self as a reality that burgeons into a concrete representation.

There is a primordial vitality in the fear that if one does something evil one will fall into hell. This energy is of the same kind as the naive but surprisingly deep-rooted wish that a person who does something good will flourish. When this energy shapes the reality of sin, there is no doubt that the consciousness of sin—even if it is morally uncultivated—will become so intense as to shake the subject to its foundations. For the average, everyday person, hell is one of the most vivid Buddhist teachings. However, insofar as this is a Buddhist idea of hell, just as aspectival *nenbutsu* must overcome its perceptible representations and turn into non-aspectival *nenbutsu*, the sensible moment of hell from which this idea of hell draws its power must be sublated.<sup>56</sup> The *reality* of sin is not yet an awareness of the self's sinfulness. Hell, the object of fear, is a representation endowed with profound depth that, by going beyond sensible representation, can open a field in which one's very mode of being—being a self that will fall into hell, or being a self that fears hell—becomes a problem for the self. Nonetheless, the representation of hell only includes this depth as a possibility. The Pure Land teachings of the Heian era propagated a version of hell that did not develop this possibility. Moreover, although in our own time hell can no longer possess the *reality* it once did, one need not jump to the conclusion that the representation of hell has become meaningless. Even if, in a modern scientific culture, hell in its raw givenness has been emptied out, this emptying out itself could well give shape to a new *reality* for hell within the self-consciousness of the modern ego. Or perhaps having lost the focal point of a 'hell' that used to generate the feeling of fear,

what could once have been called a fear of hell has become a free-floating anxiety. Whichever the case may be, the fear of hell should be distinguished from the fear of other inner-worldly things and events.

Further, the claim that fear obstructs remorse is based on regarding remorse as an essentially moral activity. Remorse or repentance (*zange* 懺悔) is generally understood as meaning 'to regret and reform' (*kuiaratame* 悔い改め), but repentance in Christianity has a strong character of moral contrition (*kaishun* 改悛), and so, too, under that influence, does regret. Not only is this clearly apparent in Scheler's theory of remorse, but Kant, too, completely reduces the meaning of remorse to the practical reformation of action itself. Repentance is taken to be an important religious concern in Christianity because it is seen as a process that opens one's eyes to the self as incapable of being moral and delivers that self over to God. This is not to say, of course, that salvation itself exists within the purview of remorse; rather, what exists therein is a reorientation toward God. This reorientation has a moral character. The strictly moral activity of the heart called 'contrition' arises through the illumination of a lucid rational judgment; even if this heart faces the feeling of fear, it is not propelled by fear.

In Buddhism, too, repentance (*sange* 懺悔)<sup>57</sup> has the character of 'reform' (*arata-me* 改め), but one cannot call it moral contrition in a pure sense. In Buddhism, repentance is generally thought of as doing the work of expiation (*metsuzai* 滅罪). Repentance is taken to mean regretting the sins of the self and confessing them before the buddhas and bodhisattvas; sinful karma (*zaigō* 罪業) is extinguished by means of this meritorious deed (*kudoku* 功德), and one can become pure. Over the course of time this is formalized, becoming a religious practice. The sinful karma that accumulates upon the subject is cleared away, so to speak, in the way that one erases scribbles marring a piece of paper. Fear cannot obstruct this kind of repentance. Instead, the energy of fear gives power to remorse.

But again, Shinran's view of remorse seems to differ from the general Buddhist view. He does not quote all of Jivaka's words as they appear in the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*. The part that Shinran leaves out includes Jivaka's spirited description of the effect of repentance as expiation:

First, one does evil, but later one thoroughly confesses it and repents, and does not repeat it. This is as in the case of muddy water, in which, if the 'Bright-Moon' *mani* [jewel] is placed there, the water becomes clear, due to the wonderful power of the gem. Or it is as when the clouds disperse and the moon reveals itself in its brightness. It is also the same with the repentance of evil acts that one has done.<sup>58</sup>

This is not a simple abbreviation: it seems to be an intentional omission on Shinran's part. As depicted by the partial quotation in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*'s chapter on faith, there is no working of expiation in Ajātaśatru's remorse, and for that reason there is no moment of 'reform.' Consequently, remorse cannot become a practice. The *Kyōgyōshinshō*'s chapter on the transformed land quotes the "Three Kinds of Repentance" passage from Shandao's *Ōjōraisan*, which mentions expiation as an effect,<sup>59</sup> but, for Shinran, repentance turns immediately into a lamentation for "this self with-

out shame or self-reproach" (*muzan mugī* 無慚無愧).<sup>60</sup> Shinran does not see us as capable of a remorse that includes expiation. Indeed, in Buddhism, the activity of remorse did not originally include the function of expiation; expiation was no more than a benefit to be hoped for out of the anguish of remorse. In order to make the moment of reform essential to regret, that which is regretted must possess a certain character; namely, it must be revealed as sin in light of something transcendent. Contrariwise, one might say that Shinran captured in Ajātaśatru the pure form of remorse found at the roots of Buddhism. Remorse without the moment of reform becomes wholehearted anguish. There is no obstacle here preventing fear from having a positive meaning.

Thinking carefully about the character of this kind of remorse suggests an objection to Scheler's phenomenological interpretation: according to Scheler, when an act becomes the object of remorse, remorse can change the meaning and value of that act, but there is a fixed limit to this, and he pays no attention to the importance of this limit for remorse. The activity of memory that is included in remorse revives the facts of the past psychologically, but does not have the power to shape these facts. Even if Ajātaśatru deeply regrets his own act and can fundamentally convert its mode of existence, the fact that he put his father, the king, to death remains irrevocable. For memory to utterly change the meaning of an act and so go beyond this kind of facticity, it would also have to have the ability to exert a creative will, with the power to shape fact, upon past acts and situations. This is the kind of will that Nietzsche describes in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*:

To redeem what is past in mankind and to recreate all "It was" until the will speaks: "But I wanted it so! I shall want it so—" This I told them was redemption, this alone I taught them to call redemption.<sup>61</sup>

Such a will cannot exist except as a total affirmation of the past, and so it becomes a demonic activity in which one affirmatively wills the evil acts of the past.<sup>62</sup> Insofar, then, as one defines remorse as a change in meaning and value, the ethical and religious activity of remorse, taken to its extreme, cannot but fall into this kind of demonic activity.

Here, Kant's view of remorse as vacuous in a practical sense (given that it cannot cause one not to have done the act one did) takes on extraordinary importance: remorse can be described as an experience in which whole meaning, whole value, and whole activity break down, such that wholeness itself becomes impossible to preserve. Ajātaśatru's remorse is thwarted by the barrier of an unyielding facticity, and he can do nothing but fixate on the absolute determinateness of past acts. This fixation continuously attests to the futility of the activity of remorse. Remorse becomes a self-negating activity. And yet the nature of the self-negation is essentially incomplete. It is impossible, within this structure, for the self to lament the entire existence of the self: when one laments the mode of being of the past evil self that committed the evil act, remorse conceals in the background an affirmation of the present self doing the lamenting. Remorse always stops short of being thoroughgoing. Here a mode of being comes to the fore in which the self is burdened with an

immutably determined past and is, moreover, unable even to feel thoroughgoing remorse.<sup>63</sup>

Now one should add that the content of the teachings presented by Śākyamuni are a thoroughgoing reversal of the fixation on abyssal facticity that remorse involves. Śākyamuni negated facticity itself. Nonetheless, my task in this paper is to think through the problem of evil entirely from the side of the awareness of evil itself. Since I will not approach this problem from the side of salvation, I must refrain from discussing here the relation between the two.

It has become clear in the [presentation] above that it is possible for remorse and fear to mutually relate and deepen together. However, there is no moment in the activities of fear or remorse that makes such a mutual relation necessary. What brings about the relation between the two is the karmic causal relation between evil as the object of remorse and suffering (*ku* 苦) as the object of fear. Remorse is something oriented toward the past, and fear of hell is oriented toward the future; a relation of karmic retribution, in which an evil cause leads to a painful result, is strung between the two.

What we can see in our reading of Ajātaśatru's remorse is a process in which (1) spurred on by the fear of hell, his poring over the impossibility of changing his act becomes thoroughgoing, (2) his recognition of that impossibility turns into a recognition of the determinateness of his very existence, and (3) his conviction that "hell is inevitable" is made to crystallize. To believe this is to believe in the proof of the self's evil. Here we find a disavowal or abandonment of morality.

#### *IV. Good, Evil, and Impermanence*

To abandon morality in light of one's belief that hell is inevitable has a different quality than to be frustrated in one's efforts 'to be moral' in light of one's awareness of sin before God. I mentioned the limitation of morality in Pure Land Buddhism earlier, but in Christianity, too, the human being existing in its moral mode will experience a limitation. The subject that would be moral cannot but despair when it becomes aware that it cannot be moral, no matter what it does. Nonetheless, what is finite in this case is the human subject, not morality itself; since morality itself includes something infinite, it is in facing it that human finitude becomes apparent. The words of Paul lament this: "For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing."<sup>64</sup> In spite of this kind of morality having its ground in a steadfast knowledge of good and evil being granted by God through the commandments, the Christian thinker Kierkegaard senses a danger in such a morality: that faith might be, as it were, completely consumed. Because Christian ethics can be extreme in this way, they are imperiled by the possibility of being so self-sufficient that faith is not required. Hence, one might say that Kierkegaard's overcoming of the ethical unfolds a more profound self-negation in Christianity. He allows remorse a dual nature: it is "an expression for reconciliation [with past evil]" and at the same time "an absolutely irreconcilable expression."<sup>65</sup> This dual nature points to the

self-contradiction of the ethical realm, so that one can discern there the necessity of a turn toward religious existence. In other words, for Kierkegaard, remorse can be thought of as a process that begins anew when the self-contradictory nature of ethics itself triggers a dialectical movement. One can thus read in Kierkegaard a dynamic movement that unifies religion and ethics within the essence of Christian thinking.

The Buddhist precepts, by contrast, never have the unconditional character of commandments. In the consciousness of degenerate dharma, moreover, all precepts are completely disavowed. During the age of degenerate dharma, this is not considered 'breaking the precepts'; it is considered 'being without precepts.'<sup>66</sup> Being without precepts in no way implies ethical relativism. For Shinran, being without precepts comes to have a positive meaning as a declaration of not knowing morality:

I know nothing at all of good or evil. For if I could know thoroughly, as Amida Tathāgata knows, that an act was good, then I would know good. If I could know thoroughly, as the Tathāgata knows, that an act was evil, then I would know evil. But with a foolish being full of blind passions, in this fleeting world—this burning house—all matters without exception are empty and false, totally without truth and sincerity. The nenbutsu alone is true and real.<sup>67</sup>

The limitation of the self that judges between good and evil is the limitation of morality itself, and thus in Pure Land Buddhism morality is abandoned.

What one should pay attention to in this passage of the *Tannishō* is that the problem of good and evil is imbricated with the problem of 'impermanence.' Good and evil are concepts that are interdependent with pleasure and pain, such that as pleasure and pain and weal and woe (*kuraku kafuku* 苦樂禍福) fluctuate over the course of time, good and evil fluctuate correspondingly. The imbrication of good and evil with impermanence follows naturally from this correlation. Good and evil in a Buddhist sense essentially take the form of impermanence. Morality is embedded in the world of birth and death (*shōji* 生死) together with the ideas of karmic retribution, karmic action, and rebirth. In Ajātaśatru's story, this aspect of impermanence appears in Śākyamuni's sermon. Awakening to this impermanence then becomes the basis for *abandoning* morality. Further, this abandonment of morality is a positive decision, and for that reason it is not a moment to be reintegrated into the nature of morality itself.

It has already become clear that what makes the awareness of evil in Pure Land Buddhism unique is the idea of karmic causality, but notice, too, that Shinran's ideas of past karma (*shukugō* 宿業) as described in the *Tannishō* differ somewhat from Buddhist ideas of karma and karmic causality in general.<sup>68</sup> For example, Ajātaśatru's remorseful gaze fixes upon his past evil act of patricide, and although he fears the karmic fruition his evil act will bring about in the future, his gaze never turns back toward the past events that led up to that evil act. In terms of the general Buddhist idea of karma in which 'causes are good or evil; results are indeterminate,' this is natural enough. Karma is of three kinds: good, evil, and indeterminate (*mugi* 無記).

Among these, only good and evil karma are causes producing results. Situations of pleasure and pain, because they are results, are indeterminate; one cannot say whether they are good or evil. To borrow an expression from Abhidharma, the causal relations (*inga kankei* 因果關係) that apply to moral action are relations of ‘ripening causes to ripened results.’<sup>69</sup>

Even so, in the *Tannishō* it is explained that the good and evil acts we do in the present are effects of past karma. One might criticize this as a kind of fatalism that contradicts Buddhism’s original idea of karma.<sup>70</sup> However, if one looks carefully at the content of the thirteenth section of the *Tannishō*, the author states that “Good thoughts arise in us through the prompting of good karma from the past (*shukuzen* 宿善), and evil comes to be thought and performed through the working of evil karma (*akugō* 悪業).”<sup>71</sup> He understands results, in addition to causes, as acts that are either good or evil and thus as having a moral character. In explaining present good and evil conduct, Shinran truly places his emphasis on good and evil in relation to one’s mode of occupation, with reference to “those who make their living drawing nets or fishing in the seas and rivers,” “those who sustain their lives hunting beasts or taking fowl in the fields and mountains,” and “those who pass their lives conducting trade or cultivating fields and paddies.”<sup>72</sup> In a medieval Japan poor in productive power, there was a strong trend toward hereditary occupation and, for people of the lower ranks of society in particular, very little freedom to choose one’s occupation. Livelihood in terms of one’s occupation, then, bears the strong sense of a ‘lot in life.’ That is, one’s lot in life decides in advance the evils one will do. This is no longer a problem of moral action. Inquiring into the evil that is indivisibly connected to every one of these livelihoods forces one to gaze upon the evil that lurks at the root of living itself. Of course, Shinran is not rejecting moral good and evil, but moral good and evil are always seen in terms of the evil that is the mode of being of life itself. It is here that the idea of karmic recompense (*ōhō* 応報), according to which ‘like causes yield like effects’ (‘good as a cause leads to good as a result, evil as a cause leads to evil as a result’), is applied.<sup>73</sup> Shinran’s concept of good and evil can thus more rigorously incorporate the concepts of desirable lots in life (pleasure) and undesirable lots in life (pain). Good and evil do not simply designate one or another extreme of their interdependent relation with pain and pleasure; they come to designate that relation in its entirety. As such, good and evil are expanded beyond morality into concepts that can capture every form of human existence.

Let us return to the story of Ajātaśatru and consider this idea of karmic causality once more. Although it is true that Ajātaśatru is tormented by his own evil karma and fears its karmic fruition, in Śākyamuni’s sermon to Ajātaśatru, another instance of karmic act-and-consequence (*gōhō* 業報) is put forward: his father King Bimbisāra’s own karmic act-and-consequence. Being murdered by his son is an event of pain and karmic fruition, and thus the cause that led to this result is sought in Bimbisāra’s prior evil karmic act, namely that Bimbisāra, on the way home from a hunt, killed a mountain ascetic. That is, the event of Ajātaśatru’s murder of Bimbisāra is seen as a cause from Ajātaśatru’s side, and as a result from Bimbisāra’s side; accordingly, this

event both unfolds into the future and reaches back into the past. This event forms a juncture between links in the chain of karmic causality—the moral law of karmic causality is established by looking at a single link of this chain. However, when Śākyamuni informs Ajātaśatru of Bimbisāra’s karmic act-and-consequence and the chain of karmic causality is illuminated, the idea of karmic retribution comes to have new significance for the way he understands the true form of those living in this world. Shinran’s idea of karmic causality in the *Tannishō* can be understood as something that adopts the perspective of this chain.

It cannot be denied that Shinran’s idea of karmic causality appears completely deterministic. However, determinism should only be criticized when it is taken to be a metaphysical tenet placed in opposition to freedom within the structure of an antinomy.<sup>74</sup> This criticism is meaningless in the case of a religious decision to abandon morality. In Shinran’s determinism, the gaze is cast upon one’s own past lives (*kakose* 過去世), which course back without end or interruption. The acts committed by the self in these past lives are wholly unknowable. They are the dark part [of the self] that controls the self with fearsome power, despite the self’s inability to fully take responsibility for them. One might think of Kant’s idea of ‘radical evil’ as having taken up this problem in terms of morality, with the Christian idea of original sin as its background.<sup>75</sup> But in *samsara* (*rinne* 輪廻), past lives take the form of a primordial chaos without beginning. Past lives, rather than being a place where one finds the temporal source (*kongen*) of the self’s evil, are an unsurveyable time into which the self projects its possibility of being good or being evil. However, if there is no destination for the self other than hell, then ultimately only the possibility of being evil exists. Shinran’s determinism stares hard at the evil that is the self’s possibility and both confirms that the self’s existence is already determined and accepts that this determined existence is none other than the self. What makes his determinism unique is that it is directly and seamlessly connected to the insight that good and evil are impermanent. When Shinran says “We are filled with all manner of greed, anger, perversity, deceit, wickedness, and cunning, and it is difficult to put an end to our evil nature. In this we are like poisonous snakes or scorpions,”<sup>76</sup> it is clear that he is addressing the same problem that Buddhists have discussed since the time of Śākyamuni: the state of human life is suffering (*ku*).

Note, however, that when ideas of past karma and karmic chains are put forth as *social* ideas, they take on an exceedingly dangerous character. Misinterpretations related to these ideas foster this danger. It might then be necessary to carry out an even more thoroughgoing investigation of the contents of the thirteenth section of the *Tannishō*.<sup>77</sup>

#### V. Being-toward-hell

In Buddhism, the problem of evil is a problem of the interdependent relation of evil and suffering. Knowing that the problem of good and evil is imbricated with the problem of impermanence, it is clear that Pure Land Buddhism inquires into the fun-

damental Buddhist problem of escape from birth and death through the lens of the causal relation between evil and suffering.

When the awareness of evil is deepened within the mutual working of remorse and fear, the problem of suffering manifests as hell, but the suffering of hell has a particular character. That is, hell is the world of the greatest suffering imaginable, and in this sense the suffering that the self is experiencing now as a consequence of evil is always as yet insufficient. Fear is the feeling connected with hell because the character of karmic fruition, which constitutes the suffering of hell, is that it has not yet been experienced and must exceed the suffering that has been experienced thus far. Within the awareness of evil, this kind of hell is anticipated as future suffering. Further, in the ultimate awareness of evil—"hell is inevitable"—hell is not merely an indication of what one's mode of life will be in the next life; rather, it exists in opposition to the Pure Land, birth within which is itself the immediate attainment of buddhahood. In other words, the belief that hell is inevitable signifies a conviction that attaining nirvana—the ultimate goal of Buddhism—is absolutely impossible. The self is absolutely evil in relation to an unattainable nirvana. And in Pure Land Buddhism the only thing that can be called truly good in relation to nirvana is the *nenbutsu*.

Following from this, when belief that hell is inevitable arises, the concepts of good and evil undergo a qualitative conversion from being seen in terms of an interdependence with pain and pleasure to being seen in terms of an interdependence with birth in the Pure Land. This accompanies a qualitative conversion in the awareness of evil itself as well as a qualitative conversion in the representation of hell; this last conversion simultaneously mediates the other two. Put differently, hell changes from something that symbolizes the agony and woe of the next life into something that symbolizes the absolute impossibility of birth in the Pure Land and becoming a buddha. The futurity of hell at this point is not the futurity of the next life or the world after death; it qualitatively changes into a futurity constituted in terms of the relationality that is the present itself, when the present is one in which going to hell is inevitable. This is the futurity elementally concealed within the evil present. Consequently, "hell is inevitable" is not something that can be divided into "hell" and "inevitable"; it indicates, rather, the seamless relationality between 'toward' and 'hell.'

When the relation toward hell becomes ultimate in this way, hell bears down upon us in the form of the present. Nonetheless, this presentness is in every sense the full flowering of suffering anticipated within the awareness of evil. If hell were made present in a total sense, it would no longer be hell and suffering would lose its relation to evil. Therein lies the reason that the *temporal* relation between evil and suffering must be held open within the awareness of evil. One might say that a defining feature of Pure Land Buddhism is how a time that has been restricted—stretched taut between the two poles of evil and hell—is carved out as its temporal mode of religious existence. Perhaps, following Heidegger's 'being-toward-death,'<sup>78</sup> which is a temporality that temporalizes (*zeitigen*) from the future, one might even call this temporal mode 'being-toward-hell.' Death as understood in terms of the Buddhist

idea of samsara does not fully disclose the elemental mode of human existence (which Heidegger grasped in terms of 'being-toward-death'). It is disclosed, rather, by a hell with regard to which "there is no condition (*en* 縁) that would lead to emancipation."<sup>79</sup> Nevertheless, one must add that the restricted nature of time in this relation to hell is still established within the cyclical time of samsara and, moreover, that 'being-toward-hell' possesses a different character than 'being-toward-death' in that the former is established as religious belief.

This temporal mode of being then becomes a structural foundation for disclosing the problem of history in a religious manner.<sup>80</sup> The awareness of evil in Pure Land Buddhism includes religious historicity within itself in a primordial way. As described above, remorse exists in collision with a facticity that is absolutely impossible to change: amid all the various events of existence that flow past into extinction in sam-saric time, evil can become a fixed point that itself does not flow past. And yet, this fixed point essentially contains a relationality toward the future. With this point as a fulcrum, it becomes possible, when pressured by past acts and events, to question the meaning of the self's existence in the present. The work of questioning the meaning of the self's existence reaches an extreme when it is done in such a way that it foresees the end of all experience, because then this question can for the first time be fully asked. In such a mode [wherein one fully questions the meaning of the self's existence], the past does not exist as something that awaits interpretation or that is questioned as to its meaning; it manifests as something that compels interpretation or that forces the question of the meaning of my existence. Evil itself can be termed a question, and salvation from evil is hidden within the very asking of that question. In Buddhism, this salvation is none other than the encounter with the truth that the Buddha taught.

This way of connecting with the past takes the concrete form of understanding history in terms of the three dharma ages. It is thought that the idea of the three ages of true, counterfeit, and degenerate dharma originally grew out of a prediction of the decline of the dharma. In China, over the course of the Southern and Northern dynasties and the Sui dynasty, this idea expanded into a view of history that took Śākyamuni's death as its starting point. The persecution of Buddhism by Emperor Taiwu of the Northern Wei and Emperor Wu of the Northern Zhou and the corruption of the Buddhist community at that time are said to have awakened an acute consciousness of the arrival of the age of degenerate dharma among Chinese Buddhists, who knew of the ages of true and counterfeit dharma from the *Mahāmāya Sūtra* and the *Candragarbha Sūtra*.<sup>81</sup> What allowed this historicity to first blossom was an idea of the three dharma ages revolving around the historical awareness that the now in which the self lives is the age of degenerate dharma. Awareness of degenerate dharma is awareness of historical evil. To put this in other words, the dharma ages view of history is itself an explanation of evil. In short, this view of history explains evil as estrangement from the dharma, and explains this estrangement from the dharma in terms of temporal distance from the historical buddha, Śākyamuni. The problem of evil here comes to reveal itself as having a socio-historical level.

## Notes

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Abbreviations are used in the Notes as follows, with full citations in the References:

*CWS* Hirota et al. 1997. *The Collected Works of Shinran*.

*Seiten* Shinshū Seiten Hensen linkai 真宗聖典編纂委員会. 1978. *Shinshū seiten* 真宗聖典.

*SSZ* Shinshū Shōgyō Zensho Hensanjo 真宗聖教全書編纂所. 1969–1970. *Shinshū shōgyō zensho* 真宗聖教全書.

*T* *Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經 (Taishō new revised Tripitaka [Taishō Canon]). 1924–1932.

1 – Originally established in 1907, the official list of holders of the Chair in Religious Studies (Shūkyōgaku Kōza 宗教学講座) is given as follows: Matsumoto Bunzaburō 松本文三郎, 1907–1913; Nishida Kitarō 西田幾多郎, 1913–1914; Matsumoto Bunzaburō, 1914–1917; Hatano Seiichi 波多野精一, 1917–1937; Nishitani Keiji 西谷啓治, 1943–1958; Takeuchi Yoshinori 武内義範, 1959–1976; Ueda Shizuteru 上田閑照, 1977–1989; Hase Shōtō 長谷正當, 1989–2000; Keta Masako, 2000–present.

2 – In 1914, Nishida Kitarō moved from the Chair in Religious Studies to the Chair in Philosophy (Tetsugaku Kōza 哲学講座) where he stayed until 1928. He was succeeded by Tanabe Hajime 田辺元, who held the post until 1945.

3 – Heisig 2001, p. 4.

4 – Van Bragt 1993, p. 253.

5 – See Keta 2006.

6 – She writes that she had learned early on to think of pursuing her research and earning a living as two separate things. She locates a kind of self-respect in earning one's living, which, she argues, cannot be damaged by even the most humiliating of occupations—and this, she is careful to add, also applies to the university workplace (Keta 2010).

7 – Heisig 1990, p. 57.

8 – Jan Van Bragt, summarized in Horo 1992, p. 18.

9 – Noble 1960, p. 39.

10 – *Ibid.*, p. 35.

11 – *Ibid.*, p. 41.

12 – *Ibid.*, p. 46.

- 13 – Ibid., pp. 41–42.
- 14 – Especially important is the version found in the *Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* (*Dainehangyō* 大涅槃經, T. 374). See the English translation by Yamamoto and Page 2007, chap. 24.
- 15 – Keta draws on both Shinran’s masterwork, the *Kyōgyōshinshō* 教行信証, in which he expounds his own teaching using carefully edited quotations from the Buddhist canon, and his more widely read *Tannishō* 歎異抄, a collection of aphorisms recorded by his disciple, Yuien-bō.
- 16 – *Tannishō*, CWS 1, p. 663; *Seiten*, p. 627.
- 17 – See Abe and Ives 1990, pp. 100 ff. In his chapter on God in the same book, Nishida states that “Regret is not merely moral, but a cutting regret at having harmed one’s parents and acted against a benefactor” (Abe and Ives 1990, p. 165; translation modified).
- 18 – Nishitani [1941] 1995, pp. 64–65.
- 19 – Van Bragt 1982, p. 24. Note that this notion of evil in Kant is ‘radical’ because it is an autonomous determination of the noumenal will or the transtemporal ground of the subject; for this reason, radical evil is a propensity toward evil and not an inclination. There is, then, in Kant an atemporal origin of evil that is no more determined by the phenomenal world than the choice of good, such that the choice of evil can likewise be a purely formal and autonomous one.
- 20 – Gregory 1986, p. 65.
- 21 – Ibid., p. 76.
- 22 – Keta 1992b, p. 180; emphasis added.
- 23 – For the most recent summary of, and contribution to, this ongoing debate, see Goodman 2009.
- 24 – Thomte 2013, p. 74.
- 25 – Bershadly 1992, p. 103.
- 26 – Ibid., pp. 104–105; for more on the philosophical presentation of Buddhism as essentially quietistic see Dumoulin 1981, pp. 466 ff.
- 27 – The major work examining the ways in which Shin Buddhism has been neglected by the modern academy is Amstutz 1997.
- 28 – Tanabe Hajime (Tanabe [1946] 2010) and Miki Kiyoshi (Miki 1999) both emphasize this aspect of Shinran’s experience of *nenbutsu*.
- 29 – This choice follows that of Jan Van Bragt in his 1982 translation of Nishitani’s *Religion and Nothingness*.
- 30 – *Sūtra on the Contemplation of Immeasurable Life* (*Kanmuryōjukyō* 觀無量壽經) (T. 365). —Trans.

- 31 – *Muryōshōjōbyōdōkakukyō* 無量清淨平等覺經 (T. 361). This is one of several iterations of the Sanskrit *Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra*. The version commonly referred to as the *Larger Sūtra* is the *Sūtra of Immeasurable Life* (*Muryōjukyō* 無量壽經) (T. 362); it is one of the three core texts of Japanese Pure Land Buddhism. —Trans.
- 32 – *Nehangyō* 涅槃經, also referred to as the *Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* 大般涅槃經 (T. 374, 375). —Trans.
- 33 – *Collection of Passages Revealing the True Teaching, Practice, and Realization of the Pure Land Way* (*Ken Jōdo shinjitsu kyōgyōshō monrui* 顯淨土真実教行証文類) (CWS 1, pp. 3–292; *Seiten*, pp. 149–401); *Passages on the Pure Land Way* (*Jōdo monrui jushō* 淨土文類聚鈔) (CWS 1, pp. 293–317; *Seiten*, pp. 402–22); *Hymns of the Pure Land* (*Jōdo wasan* 淨土和讚) (CWS 1, 319–58; *Seiten*, pp. 478–89). —Trans.
- 34 – To capture this nuance, *inga* will hereafter be translated as karmic causality. —Trans.
- 35 – This is the title of the first book of Kant’s *Critique of Practical Reason* (*Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*), first published in 1797. —Trans.
- 36 – Kant writes:
- The principle of happiness can indeed yield maxims, but never maxims that would be suitable for laws of the will, even if one made universal (*allgemein*) happiness one’s object. For since cognition of this [happiness] rests on none but experiential data, because each judgment about it depends very much on each person’s opinion, which is even itself very changeable, the principle of happiness can indeed give general (*generell*) but never universal (*universal*) rules; i.e., it can give rules that on the average are most often correct but not rules that must be valid always and necessarily, and hence one cannot base on it any practical laws. (Pluhar 2002, p. 53) —Trans.
- 37 – Kant [1788] 1967, 110; Hatano and Miyamoto [1918] 1970, p. 95 [Pluhar 2002, p. 84. For clarity, we cite these works using the name of the translator rather than the author. —Trans.].
- 38 – Kant was thinking of Christ when he said that the archetype of “the moral attitude in its entire perfection” was personified (Kant [1793] 1966, p. 63; Iijima et al. 1975, pp. 89 ff.) [Pluhar 2002, p. 96. —Trans.].
- 39 – Pluhar 2002, p. 96. —Trans.
- 40 – *Ibid.*, p. 34. —Trans.
- 41 – From there, one can draw a distinction between philosophy, which inquires into the possibilities of reason through ethics, and religion, which shoulders the weight of a human reality that is inevitably one of weal and woe.
- 42 – Shinran’s chapter on faith from the *Kyōgyōshinshō* (SSZ 2, p. 81) [CWS 1, p. 126; translation slightly modified. —Trans.].

- 43 – The Japanese here refers to Śākyamuni by his personal name, Siddhārtha (Shid-datta 悉達多). —Trans.
- 44 – Kant [1788] 1967, p. 118; Hatano and Miyamoto [1918] 1970, p. 142 [Pluhar 2002, p. 125; translation slightly modified. —Trans.].
- 45 – Kant [1793] 1966, pp. 127 ff.; Iijima et al. 1975, pp. 163 ff. [Pluhar 2002, p. 128. —Trans.].
- 46 – Scheler [1921] 1954; Ogura 1977 [Noble 1960, p. 39. —Trans.].
- 47 – Scheler [1921] 1954, p. 37; Ogura 1977, p. 57 [Noble 1960, p. 44. —Trans.].
- 48 – *Tatreue* indicates remorse at having committed a morally bad act; *Seinsreue* indicates remorse at having been the kind of person who would commit a morally bad act; see Noble 1960, pp. 45 ff. —Trans.
- 49 – Scheler explains focal level in the following way:
- The manner in which we reflexively experience ourselves has definite *levels* of concentration and self-appraisal, and the change from one level to another is not unreservedly determined by the overall psychic causality which determines psychic processes within any one level. Relatively to the causal pattern which governs the empirical contents on each level, a radical alteration of the very level, or range of levels, whereon the personality currently dwells is a *free act* of our total personal Self. (Noble 1960, p. 46) —Trans.
- 50 – Pluhar 2002, p. 125. —Trans.
- 51 – Keta is referring here to a passage in which Scheler describes a “hearty contrition” through “which an indwelling force of regeneration builds up a ‘new man’ and a ‘new heart’” (Noble 1960, p. 48). The German term *Zerknirschung des Herzens* as well as the concreteness of the Japanese image of ‘shattering the heart’ capture some of the etymological sense of contrition as being crushed or ground to pieces. —Trans.
- 52 – Noble 1960, p. 55. —Trans.
- 53 – *SSZ* 2, p. 82; author’s emphasis [CWS 1, p. 127; —Trans.].
- 54 – Romans 5:13 [ESV. —Trans.].
- 55 – Scheler [1921] 1954, pp. 43 ff.; Iijima et al. 1975, pp. 67 ff. [Scheler holds that fear and repentance (*Reue*) are diametrically opposed: “it is . . . fear which normally prevents us from reaching that mental level of unflinching self-‘possession’ in which true Repentance becomes possible” (Noble 1960, pp. 50–51) —Trans.].
- 56 – Aspectival *nenbutsu* (*usōgō nenbutsu* 有相業念仏) refers to the meditative practice of visualizing the phenomenal forms of Amida Buddha and the Pure Land; non-aspectival *nenbutsu* (*musōgō nenbutsu* 無相業念仏) refers to meditating on formlessness itself, understood as a more advanced form of practice. —Trans.

- 57 – This term is now usually read as *zange* 懺悔, which has a wide range of meanings: repentance, confession in a religious sense, and confessional writing in a literary sense; the Kyoto School philosopher Tanabe Hajime uses *zange* to refer to metanoia. Here Keta specifically indicates the Buddhist reading *sange* 懺悔, pointing to a traditional ritual practice of requesting that transgressions be forgiven. —Trans.
- 58 – *Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra (Dainehangyō 大涅槃經)*, chapter on “Pure Actions” (*Bongyōbon* 梵行品) (T. 374.12.0477c04–08) [Yamamoto and Page 2007, chap. 24. —Trans.].
- 59 – Regarding the expiatory effect of repentance, Shandao states: “But if people in this life revere the teaching, pay homage to monks, do not cherish their lives, and repent even small transgressions, this will penetrate to their hearts’ core, and if they repent in this way, their heavy obstructions, whether accumulated over a long or short time, will all swiftly be eradicated” (CWS 1, pp. 218–219; *Seiten*, p. 337). —Trans.
- 60 – Shinran uses this phrase in *Hymns of the Dharma Ages (Shōzōmatsu wasan 正像末和讚)*:
- Although I am without shame and self-reproach  
And lack a mind of truth and sincerity,  
Because the Name is directed by Amida,  
Its virtues fill the ten quarters. (CWS 1, 421; *Seiten*, p. 509). —Trans.
- 61 – Nietzsche [1883–1885] 1980, p. 249; Yoshizawa 1971, p. 209; Del Caro and Pippin 2006, p. 158.
- 62 – Nevertheless, Kant overcomes facticity, so to speak, by means of a substitute for remorse: reformation of action toward respect for duty. In other words, Kant thinks that if a human being with an evil moral attitude carries out the moral revolution that turns him into a human being with a good moral attitude, then insofar as these are two [distinct] noumenal beings, they appear before the divine judge as two different persons in a moral sense (Kant [1793] 1966, S. 80; Iijima et al. 1974, p. 108). This way of thinking follows from regarding moral action atemporally.
- 63 – We are reminded here of the story of Aṅgulimāla, with which we can suppose that Shinran, too, was familiar. I explain this story in more detail elsewhere, but in brief, Aṅgulimāla had been told by a *brahmin* priest that if he killed a thousand people and made a garland out of their fingers, he could be born in heaven. Following this teaching, Aṅgulimāla carried out murder upon murder, until, encountering Śākyamuni, he came to know the error of his ways and became a monk (*shamon* 沙門). One day, having donned his robe and picked up his bowl, he went begging for food in the city of Śrāvastī, and the people who had suffered as a result of the carnage he had wrought threw stones and shards

of tile at him and advanced upon him, slashing at him with swords. Aṅgulimāla returned to Śākyamuni covered in wounds. Then Śākyamuni explained, “You endure this now—else for your sin you would have had to bear it eternally.” It is understood that this was the moment in which Aṅgulimāla truly attained the level of the *arhat*. In order for Aṅgulimāla to become an *arhat*, it was necessary for the facticity of the evil acts he had done to manifest itself with a weight that overwhelmed him (*Zōichi agon kyō* 增壹阿含經, T. 125.02.0719b20–0722c22).

64 – Romans 7:19 [ESV. —Trans.].

65 – Kierkegaard [1843] 1987, p. 187 [Hong and Hong 1987, p. 175. —Trans.].

66 – Shinran’s *Kyōgyōshinshō*, chapter on the transformed land, *SSZ 2*, p. 170. [Here Shinran clarifies the three dharma ages with respect to observing or breaking the precepts (*CWS 1*, 244–253; *Seiten*, pp. 360–367). —Trans.].

67 – *Tannishō*, *SSZ 2*:783 [*CWS 1*, p. 679. —Trans.].

68 – For example, see Ueda 1957.

69 – *Ijuku in, ijuku ka* 異熟因·異熟果—the idea that moral, volitional actions of body, speech, and mind have the potential to ripen at some later time, and that their ripened results manifest as morally neutral pleasure or pain (Buswell and Lopez 2013, p. 977). —Trans.

70 – In stories about Śākyamuni Buddha, this rejection plays out in the debate between Śākyamuni and the Ājīvika philosopher, Makkhali Gosāla, who professed a doctrine of determinism in which present action is entirely determined by past action. Śākyamuni rejected this, arguing that despite past karma, human beings have agency with respect to present action (Harvey 1990, p. 13). —Trans.

71 – *Tannishō*, *SSZ 2*, p. 782.

72 – *Tannishō*, *SSZ 2*, p. 784. [*CWS 1*, pp. 670–672. —Trans.].

73 – *Dōrui in, tōru ka* 同類因·等流果, and *zen’in zenka akuin akuka* 善因善果·惡因惡果, respectively. —Trans.

74 – Readers may recall Kant’s antinomy of pure speculative reason in which there is a “conflict between natural necessity and freedom in the causality of events in the world” (Pluhar 2002, p. 145). —Trans.

75 – Kant explains the radicality of evil in the following way:

Now, if a propensity to this [gathering of one’s inclinations under the principle of happiness and making this the supreme condition for compliance with the moral law] lies in human nature, then there is in the human being a natural propensity to evil; and this propensity itself, because it must in the end indeed be sought in a free power of choice and hence must be capable of being imputed, is morally evil. This evil is radical, because it *corrupts* the basis of all maxims. At the same time, as a natural propensity, it

also cannot be *extirpated* through human powers, because this could be done only through good maxims; yet if the supreme subjective basis of all maxims is presupposed as corrupted, this cannot occur. But it must nonetheless be possible to *outweigh* this propensity, because it is found in the human being as a freely acting being. (Pluhar 2009, p. 40–41). —Trans.].

76 – Shinran’s *Kyōgyōshinshō*, chapter on faith, *SSZ2*, p. 51 [*CWS1*, p. 84. —Trans.].

77 – Keta pursues this line of investigation in the second half of the fifth chapter of *Philosophy of Religious Experience*, “Concerning the Thirteenth Section of the *Tannishō*.” —Trans.

78 – Heidegger 1927; Tsujimura 1967. [As Keta’s brief description makes clear, being-toward-death is not a waiting for my death to arrive, but rather a description of an existential structure of existence. For comparison’s sake, it can be noted that Heidegger describes authentic being-toward-death as follows:

The ownmost, nonrelational possibility [of my death] is *insuperable*. Being toward this possibility lets Dasein understand that the most extreme possibility of existence, that of giving itself up, is imminent. But anticipation does not evade the impossibility of bypassing death, as does inauthentic being-toward-death, but *frees* itself *for* it. Becoming free *for* one’s own death in anticipation liberates one from one’s lostness in chance possibilities urging themselves upon us, so that the factual possibilities lying before the insuperable possibility can first be authentically understood and chosen. Anticipation discloses to existence that its extreme possibility lies in giving itself up, and thus it shatters all one’s clinging to whatever existence one has reached. (Stambaugh 2010, p. 253). —Trans.]

79 – *Tannishō*, *CWS1*, p. 679; *Seiten*, p. 640. —Trans.

80 – The final two paragraphs translated here appear in the version of this essay published as an article but were not included in the version included as a chapter in her 1992 book. See Keta 1984, pp. 46–47. —Trans.

81 – Kamata 1978, p. 164 [The *Mahāmāyakyō* 摩訶摩耶經 (T. 383) and *Daishū getsuzō kyō* 大集月藏經 (T. 397), respectively. —Trans.].

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