

# **Human insufficiency in Shinran and Kierkegaard**

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ABSTRACT Shinran (1173-1263), the founder of the Jodoshinshu of Japanese Pure Land Buddhism, and Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855), the Danish father of Christian existentialism, belong to very different eras, cultures, and religious traditions. Yet there are striking similarities between their religious philosophies, especially in how both offer theistic views emphasising faith and grace that see the person as radically insufficient to attain complete self-transformation. Both claim that the human person is so radically insufficient that no one can attain Buddhist enlightenment or Christian salvation through his or her own power, but only through divine power. I will argue against some commentators that although the Deity accepts and transforms this insufficiency, even the power of the Deity does not eradicate human insufficiency in this life for the person of faith. I will also argue that Shinran and Kierkegaard differ significantly about the role of human freedom in faith, and that this difference expresses the central difference between Mahayana Buddhism and Christianity regarding the relationship between the person and the Deity.

Japanese Pure Land Buddhism before Shinran was an 'easy path' that believed that the nembutsu or recitation of the name of Amida Buddha (Namu-amida-butsu) was the basis for enlightenment. [1] Pure Land before Shinran had rejected the difficult, aristocratic, and often esoteric paths to enlightenment offered by the Buddhist schools of Tendai, Shingon and Zen in order to develop a path open to every person in the degenerate age known as mappo. [2] The Pure Land path was especially appealing during the social upheavals of the Kamakura period. [3] But Pure Land before Shinran was ambiguous about the extent to which the nembutsu involved self-power (jiriki) and Other-power (tariki), and it seems to have combined both self-power and Other-power. [4] Shinran saw that although reciting Amida's name relied on the compassionate Other-power of Amida, nembutsu practice still retained vestiges of self-power. Even when it avoided rote repetition with little regard for one's inner quality of mind, mindful reciting of Amida's name was still a practice done by the aspirant to merit birth into the Pure Land. Shinran sought to remove these vestiges of self-power in order to rely completely on Amida's Other-power. Self-power (jiriki) must be completely replaced by Other-power (tariki). Even mindful recitation of Amida's name could not bring enlightenment.

Shinran drew out the logical implications of the earlier Pure Land emphasis on the egoistic passions in each person, as well as his own experience of his futile efforts during 20 years of practice in the Tendai sect to overcome his passions to attain enlightenment. [5] Profound existential self-reflection is crucial to realise the futility of one's efforts. [6] Shinran says:

From the beginning sentient beings, who are filled with blind passions, lack a mind true and real, a heart of purity, for they are possessed of defilements, evil, and wrong views. [7]

Thus grace and shinjin (true entrusting or 'faith'), [8] rather than the 'good works' of some spiritual practice, is the basis for enlightenment. In Buddhism generally, and perhaps even in earlier Pure Land sects, faith was essential, but was a choice or act of will. [9] For Shinran, however, shinjin is not a human act of will but is completely the activity of Amida. The radical difference between human self-power and Buddha's Other-power, between blind passions and enlightenment, between samsara and nirvana, cannot be bridged by humans but only by Amida Buddha. Shinran is quite explicit: 'The nembutsu is not a self-power practice performed by foolish beings or sages,' [10] and it is Amida, not the devotee, who directs or transfers merit. A person's recitation of Amida's name is not a practice through human self-power to attain enlightenment for oneself, but a practice performed by Amida that is directed to and heard by all beings. [11]

. . . the name of Amida is no longer the merely vocal element in the practice of recitation, but it is the mysterious activity of Amida Buddha within the minds of men. [12]

Shinran retains human recitation of Amida's name not as a means to enlightenment but as an expression of gratitude to Amida [13] : 'Only by constantly reciting the Tathagata's name/ Can we repay the grace of the Vow of great compassion.' [14] We mysteriously say Amida's name when given shinjin, [15] and recitation is a natural manifestation of shinjin. [16]

In this life, one does not attain enlightenment when shinjin is conferred but one does attain 'entrance into the company of the truly assured' and 'non-retrogression'. [17] When Amida confers shinjin, are our evil passions eradicated in this life before we attain the Pure Land at death? Daigan and Alicia Matsunaga claim our insufficiency is eradicated:

The individual who has received the benefits of the Other-power and the three qualities of mind equivalent to the mind of Amida, henceforth acts in a wholly natural or spontaneous (jinen) manner, completely free from egotistical self-awareness and in complete accord with Dharma. All his actions are aimed at leading others to share his realization, or to assist them in listening to the voice of Amida. [18]

Sometimes Shinran himself seems to suggest that blind passions are completely eradicated in this life:

. . . virtues quickly and rapidly become perfectly full in the heart of one who entrusts oneself to them . . . the vast treasure of virtues completely fills them. . . . [19]

Shinjin does, indeed, transform people's lives, Shinran says:

In people who have long heard the Buddha's Name and the nembutsu, surely there are signs of rejecting the evil in themselves . . . once the true and real mind is made to arise in us, how can we remain as we were? [20]

Yet Shinran is quite explicit that blind passions are not eradicated in this life:

Our desires are countless, and anger, wrath, jealousy, and envy are overwhelming, arising without pause; to the very last moment of life [emphasis added] they do not cease, or disappear, or exhaust themselves. [21]

What happens to our blind passions after shinjin but before death is a difficult and ultimately paradoxical point in Shinran. After shinjin occurs we still possess blind passions, [22] and are still bound by karma, though this karma is transformed. [23] In perhaps his most explicit statement about this, Shinran says:

. . . without the practitioner's calculating in any way whatsoever, all his past, present, and future evil karma is transformed into good. To be transformed means that evil karma, without being nullified or eradicated [emphasis added], is made into good. [24]

The Matsunagas seem wrong to emphasise so strongly a person's egolessness and altruism after shinjin. Whatever Shinran means by karmic passions being 'transformed into good', he also clearly holds that they are not eradicated in this life but continue until one is born in the Pure Land at death. Indeed, Shinran's central claim, however paradoxical, is that when Amida confers shinjin, we are assured of enlightenment even as our blind passions remain, although they are somehow transformed into good:

When such shackled foolish beings . . . wholly entrust themselves to the Name . . . then while burdened as they are with blind passions [emphasis added], they attain the supreme nirvana. [25]

In my opinion, Yoshifuma Ueda offers the best interpretation of Shinran's paradoxical view. He takes Shinran to be offering his version of the basic Mahayana paradox that samsara and nirvana are both different and not different. A person, as constituted by blind passions, remains subject to samsaric ignorance until death and as such is starkly different from enlightenment and Amida's wisdom-compassion. In this sense, blind passions are never completely 'nullified or eradicated' in this life. On the other hand, in shinjin Amida transfers his qualities of mind to us; [26] when we are pervaded by Amida's wisdom-compassion, our blind passions are 'transformed into good' without being eradicated. Since we still possess passions, we are not yet enlightened, but our eventual enlightenment is settled. [27] So blind passion and enlightenment, the human person and Amida Buddha, samsara and nirvana stand in stark opposition and at the same time are one. [28] While this remains paradoxical in Shinran's thought, it is the mystery that is at the core of all Mahayana thought.

Jinen, perhaps Shinran's most important idea after shinjin, brings out this idea of our non-duality with Amida in shinjin and leads to the idea of sunyata. Jinen means what happens of itself, naturally, spontaneously:

'Dharmicness' . . . indicates the nature of jinen. Dharmicness expresses the natural working (jinen) in the life of the person who realizes shinjin and says the Name once. [29]

Although conceived personally, Amida is also conceived impersonally as Infinite Life (symbolized as Amitayus) and Infinite Light (symbolized as Amitabha), or compassion and wisdom, the active and passive causes, respectively, for the arising of shinjin. [30] Amida's Light illumines all reality equally and without preference:

Wisdom's light is infinite  
Of all finite beings, there are none  
That light have not received  
Let us take refuge in the True Light. [31]

Amida as Light is formless sunyata (emptiness or suchness), Shinran says:

Thus appearing in the form of light called 'Tathagata of unhindered light filling the ten quarters', [Amida] is without color and without form, that is, identical with the dharma-body as suchness. . . . [32]

This explains why Amida's granting of shinjin does not seem to include either judgement or forgiveness. [33] As Infinite Light, Amida's compassionate activity is more like an impersonal force that radiates to every corner of the universe rather than being personally directed towards an individual person. It is more like the sun shining than a person giving a gift. [34]

Ironically, with Shinran's deepening of Pure Land's awareness of human insufficiency, Shinran transformed Pure Land from an 'easy path' to the most difficult of paths, in light of our egoistic tendency to engage in self-power. Indeed, enlightenment becomes so difficult that there is no recourse other than Amida's saving power, and even shinjin is Amida's work, not ours. Shinran developed Pure Land thought in a subtle way to draw out the Mahayana implications of the quest to overcome ego and realise enlightenment. If all of our practice is tainted by egoistic passion, how can we overcome ego by our own efforts? For Shinran, this paradox of self-transformation can only be resolved by replacing all forms of self-power, including nembutsu, with the Other-power of Amida's compassionate activity. Amida confers the shinjin that assures us birth in the Pure Land and in this life transforms our blind passions without eradicating them. Amida confers shinjin, and we cannot reject it because only Amida's Other-power and no human activity is involved in shinjin. [35] So for Shinran, 'no selfworking is true working.' [36]

Kierkegaard's Lutheran Protestantism also emphasises salvation through faith and grace rather than 'good works'. Kierkegaard's view of the process of becoming an authentic self unifies his diverse authorship and its bewildering array of personae who speak with subtle variations of voice. [37] In drawing attention to what it means to be a Christian, Kierkegaard is primarily concerned with the structure, transformation, and transcendence of the self. His three spheres of existence--the aesthetic, the ethical, and the religious--portray self-transformation in terms of an underlying ontological structure of selfhood which culminates in Christian faith. Kierkegaard describes the self in terms of relations, not in terms of substance. The self is not a permanent, enduring substance which

underlies changing attributes and provides self-continuity and self-identity. Rather, the self is a relational structure, and it is a multi-dimensional, self-relational structure. [38] Despair and faith are the two basic modes of self-relational activity. [39] Despair is not simply a mood or state of mind, but is a disrelation in the self-relational structure.

The task of becoming a self is the task of relating to oneself so as to overcome despair or inward disrelation. Stated most simply, the task is to become oneself before God. In aesthetic existence, the self does not take up or avow this task of relating to itself properly. It does not accept responsibility for becoming who it really is, so aesthetic existence is despair. In ethical existence, the self does accept the task of willing itself. In ethical existence, self-relational activity seeks to choose itself authentically through concrete choices and commitments concerning marriage, vocation, and life style. [40] However, ethical existence does not appropriate its insufficiency to achieve its task of overcoming despair. [41]

In religious existence, self-relational activity begins to avow its insufficiency to overcome despair, and Kierkegaard describes two kinds of religious existence. Religiousness A, or immanent religiousness, develops the deepest appropriation of human insufficiency that is possible by the self's activity alone. [42] In succeeding movements of resignation, suffering, dying away from self, and the consciousness of guilt, the self experiences itself as insufficient to accomplish this task. The transformation from Religiousness A to Religiousness B or the paradoxical religiousness of Christianity, is the transformation from guilt-consciousness to sin-consciousness. [43] Consciousness that one's insufficiency is sin can occur only in response to God's revelation in Jesus Christ. The self is even unable to become conscious of the depth of its own insufficiency by itself. Sin is a more-than-human conception of human insufficiency. The vicious circle of self-relational activity must be broken by a disclosure that comes from outside. In sin-consciousness, human insufficiency exists before God.

Consciousness of sin is a response to God's revelation and so is the initial movement of faith. Consciousness of the forgiveness of sin is the culminating movement of faith. Forgiveness is Christianity's leniency which follows upon the severity of sin-consciousness. In forgiving sin, God accepts the self in its insufficiency, allowing it as insufficient to exist in a loving relationship with God. God's acceptance of insufficiency allows the self to accept its insufficiency. In Christian faith, the self is fully itself as insufficient before God and itself for the first time. Only in Christian faith can the self fully live its insufficiency, and so fully be itself, through obedience and worship before God. Through the forgiveness of sin, God and self are reconciled to one another and the self is reconciled with its insufficiency. Divine sufficiency and human insufficiency attain reconciliation.

Some commentators [44] argue that the self attains realisation and fulfillment in existence through Christian faith. This interpretation sees faith as a kind of self-fulfillment in which human insufficiency is eradicated by God's saving activity. This interpretation fails to distinguish between self-fulfillment and reconciliation. The self does, indeed, attain reconciliation with God and itself in that God accepts the self in its insufficiency. Forgiveness means that God lovingly accepts the

self as insufficient, but it does not mean that God eradicates this insufficiency. In faith, human insufficiency remains, but it is no longer something which separates the self from God. In fact, human insufficiency is what allows God to express divine love for the self most deeply. God's gracious acceptance of the self as a sinner is God's most compassionate, paradoxical gift to the self, and it is possible only in the context of human insufficiency.

The reconciliation which occurs in faith must preserve the essential nature of both God and self. Kierkegaard repeatedly emphasises the absolute qualitative difference between the self and God. The distinction between divine sufficiency and human insufficiency is the basic expression for this qualitative difference. If this were removed in faith, the self would no longer be radically different from God in this crucial respect. Since insufficiency characterises the very structure of the self, its removal would essentially alter the self, and the self in faith would lose continuity with the self before faith. Kierkegaard holds that there is an inverse resemblance [45] between the self and God. Human insufficiency and divine sufficiency constitute this inverse resemblance. The self's insufficiency is the root of the self's need to be accepted by God in order to accept its own insufficiency and to live it fully. The self needs divine forgiveness in order to be itself as insufficient. Human need and divine compassion are a mutual fit.

God's activity or forgiveness is primary in faith, in that the self is unable to forgive itself. Yet the self can take offence at this and reject faith by rejecting this consciousness of forgiveness. Although God's activity is primary in faith, the self's freedom is preserved in that it can reject God's forgiveness. Kierkegaard emphasises that there is always the possibility of taking offence at divine forgiveness; offence is the opposite of faith and is the source of the continual fear and trembling that offence will destroy faith:

. . . fear thyself, fear what can kill faith. . . Fear and tremble:  
for faith is contained in a fragile earthen vessel, in the possibility  
of offence. Blessed is he who is not offended in Him but believes.  
[46]

Kierkegaard's view, I claim, preserves the radical difference between the human and divine natures, while allowing a relationship to occur between them. This relationship is one in which the self's insufficiency is reconciled with God and itself, rather than one in which insufficiency is eradicated and self-fulfillment occurs. The relationship of faith does not occur in spite of human insufficiency but in the face of and by way of this insufficiency. For Kierkegaard, the self's need for God, which is rooted in human insufficiency, becomes the way to God. Human insufficiency and divine sufficiency remain opposites and remain true to their own natures. Yet in Christian faith they are related in a loving way by virtue of their very difference. When transformed by faith, our human need of God is our highest perfection. [47]

I have argued that in spite of some interpretations to the contrary, both Shinran and Kierkegaard deny that human insufficiency is eradicated in this life by either human or divine power. Divine compassion is so powerful that it extends itself to our evil nature and accepts us as we are in our insufficiency. While this does not eradicate our insufficiency or confer self-fulfillment, it does transform our lives so we can, for the first

time, accept ourselves as we truly are as insufficient. Both hold that we remain insufficient in this life and continue to commit evil, yet once faith occurs, the person's life is transformed so our evil nature, while remaining evil in this life, is accepted by God and we can anticipate enlightenment or salvation after death. Both thinkers stress that faith during this life and enlightenment or salvation after death are ultimately dependent upon the Deity. 48] Obviously Shinran affirms Amida Buddha and Buddha-nature as ultimate while Kierkegaard affirms Jesus Christ and God as ultimate. Shinran and Kierkegaard also differ significantly in the role of human freedom in faith. Shinran holds that shinjin assures one of enlightenment after death and that one will not retrogress from this, even though one will continue to do evil. It seems that for Shinran shinjin cannot be rejected, since it is completely the work of Amida's Other-power and involves no human activity. [49] In contrast, Kierkegaard has a strong sense of the person's freedom to reject or overturn faith and fall away from God: ' . . . fear thyself, fear what can kill faith'. [50] Because Amida causes the divine qualities of mind to pervade the human mind in shinjin, and because one cannot reject shinjin, Shinran seems to deny human freedom. If a person is not free to reject shinjin, then the person's nature as finite and free seems to be eradicated by Amida so there is radical loss of continuity between who the person is before and after shinjin. While shinjin guarantees salvation later at death in a way that Kierkegaard's faith cannot, it also abrogates our human nature so that our insufficiency is replaced by Amida's divine qualities. In contrast, Kierkegaard preserves the continuity of freedom, and thus the person's identity, before and during faith.

How might Shinran reply to this Kierkegaard criticism? Shinran holds that a person receives only shinjin and not enlightenment in this life. To preserve the finite continuity of human nature in this life, he asserts that our evil passions are merely transformed by shinjin and not 'nullified or eradicated' until death. But because he affirms non-retrogression which guarantees enlightenment after death, he denies freedom and cannot make sense of his claim that evil passions continue after we receive Amida's mind in shinjin. [51] At best he would seem to posit a dual self, one which receives Amida's qualities and cannot reject shinjin, and another which continues to commit evil out of free will. How these two aspects co-exist in one unitary self remains unexplained.

An analogous problem occurs in any Mahayana view that claims that enlightenment occurs in this life; for how can a person be both alive, and thus subject to karma, and yet enlightened and beyond karma? While Shinran avoids this somewhat by holding that enlightenment occurs only after death, he replicates the problem in that the shinjin that Amida confers cannot be rejected. The basic problem is one that belongs to Mahayana and not uniquely to Shinran, but it is a problem that Kierkegaard carefully avoids. Kierkegaard preserves the self's freedom in faith, which underscores rather than eradicates the self's insufficiency, preserves the difference between God and the self, and preserves the continuity of the self's identity before and after faith.

However, Shinran might reply, as any Mahayana thinker would, that Christianity's error is precisely in dualistically affirming the qualitative difference between a person and the Deity by insisting that true human freedom is a self-power which is different from the Deity's power. Instead, true freedom is when Amida's power pervades a person's mind, infusing the mind with Amida's qualities, so that the person becomes

Amida. As Ueda puts it:

The fundamental difference between shinjin and [Christian] faith is that while the concept of faith stands on the duality of God (Creator) and man (created), shinjin is the oneness of Buddha and man, or man's becoming a buddha. [52]

Shinran's notion of jinen--of things in shinjin happening spontaneously, naturally, and of themselves--conveys the Mahayana non-duality between the person and Buddha that is absent in Kierkegaard's Christianity. Kierkegaard's emphasis on the resemblance between God and humans as inverse--human insufficiency inversely resembles divine omnipotence--underscores the Christian incommensurability between God on one side and the world and humans on the other. Kierkegaard's emphasis on judgment and forgiveness adds to this incommensurability a strong sense of God as personal. Shinran, in contrast, while theistic, affirms a strong non-duality between Buddha and the world: 'plants, trees, and land all attain Buddhahood'. [53] Influenced by Taoism and Shinto, perhaps, and certainly by Kukai's Shingon view at least indirectly, Shinran affirms much more continuity between humans and the Deity in shinjin, a continuity between humanity and divinity that Kierkegaard and traditional Christianity would reject as idolatrous.

This continuity is not a simple unity or non-duality, for Shinran expresses the Mahayana paradox that Buddha and the person are 'one and yet two, two and yet one'. [54] When shinjin is conferred, 'oneness with the Buddha's mind is actualized . . . without nullifying or eradicating his defilements . . .'. [55] While the person is different from Amida, the person is also not different from Amida. For Shinran, Kierkegaard and Christianity simplistically emphasise the duality and ignore the oneness. Yet Shinran does not simply reverse the emphasis in favour of unity but affirms both unity and difference. True freedom, then, would not simply be the freedom to continue to do evil as an assertion of self-power against Amida, but also for action to arise out of Amida's qualities that are now one's own so that this evil is immediately and paradoxically transformed into good. As Shinran says:

Unfailingly the ice of blind passions melts  
And immediately becomes the water of enlightenment . . .  
The more ice, the more water;  
The more hindrances, the more virtues. [56]

For Shinran, evil passions remain and are not eradicated, but they are transformed, paradoxically, into good even as they remain evil. This is Shinran's version of the Mahayana identification of samsara and nirvana, humans and Buddha, and it stands in sharp contrast to the Christian emphasis on the qualitative difference between God and the world as God's creation.

Shinran and Kierkegaard offer a radical critique of their respective traditions and take us deep into the labyrinth of human insufficiency. Both are sensitive to the danger of retaining subtle traces of human sufficiency and go further than most Buddhist and Christian thinkers in eliminating such vestiges. For Shinran, this means giving up the efficacy of all spiritual practices and self-power, including nembutsu, so that Amida's tariki completely replaces human jiriki: no selfworking is true working. For Kierkegaard it means avowing insufficiency more and more deeply until

one realises that the self can do nothing by itself, and that our need of God is our highest perfection. Both take seriously the paradox of self-transformation: if all of our efforts are tainted by egoistic passions, then we cannot overcome our evil through our own efforts. As Kierkegaard puts it:

. . . can a man not overcome himself in his own strength? . . . how can I be stronger than myself? . . . no man was ever stronger than himself. [57]

. . . one understands that a man can do absolutely nothing of himself. But in and with this understanding God is immediately present. [58]

In spite of striking similarities, however, Shinran and Kierkegaard differ on two subtle but crucial points. First, Kierkegaard's notion of faith preserves and even accentuates the qualitative difference between God on one side and humans and the world on the other, while Shinran retains the Mahayana view of the non-duality of samsara and nirvana, including the Buddha-nature of humanity, and so he retains a strong sense of the impersonality and immanence of Amida's activity. This difference is difficult to adjudicate since it refers to the nature of ultimate reality. Shinran's takes a 'middle way' in that he affirms, albeit paradoxically, that the person and Buddha are 'one and yet two, two and yet one', while Kierkegaard's Christianity is firmly dualistic.

Second, and rooted in the first difference, while both emphasise faith and the primacy of the Deity's activity in faith, Shinran's view of faith circumscribes human freedom while Kierkegaard's view preserves and even underscores human freedom. At first Kierkegaard's view seems more tenable. For Kierkegaard, the sense of freedom and finitude that we have before faith occurs is not abrogated after faith occurs, so there is no radical loss of continuity between who we were before faith and who we are after faith. Shinran, with his notion of non-retrogression, denies the continuity of human freedom more than Kierkegaard does since one cannot reject faith.

Kierkegaard retains traces of self-power in his conception of what true human freedom is. While true freedom involves awareness of our radical insufficiency and our radical dependency on God, traces of self-power remain in that a person is still free to lose faith. For Shinran, in the true freedom of shinjin, one does not retain any self-power that could reject faith, but enough self-power remains so our evil passions are not completely eradicated until death. Again, Shinran takes a paradoxical 'middle way' that affirms that after shinjin, a person is not free to reject shinjin, yet is free to do evil actions. Shinran does retain a kind of self-power in that a person still experiences evil passions and acts on them, but this self-power does not extend to the freedom to reject shinjin, a power which Kierkegaard affirms. While one does not attain enlightenment in this life, one does receive Amida's qualities of mind so that one is assured of enlightenment after death and so that in this life the 'ice' of one's evil actions 'melts' to become the 'waters' of Buddha's virtues.

Different conceptions of human freedom are involved, rooted in different conceptions of the relationship between the person and the Deity. Kierkegaard affirms the Christian emphasis on individuality, so that even in faith when human insufficiency is avowed, true freedom is construed to include a person's freedom to choose to reject faith. True freedom in this life means that the person of faith remains an individual who is

qualitatively different from God. The person of faith does not become God in any sense whatsoever; indeed, the person finally becomes fully aware of the qualitative difference between humans and God and is forgiven and loved by God in a way that preserves this very difference.

True freedom in this life for Shinran, however, preserves some freedom of choice to do evil, but also locates true freedom in becoming Buddha, that is, in being infused with Amida's qualities. To a significant extent in shinjin, a person ceases to be an individual in that, through Amida's power, the person's Buddha-nature is actualised, though not completely. The highest freedom one can attain in this life is when, as an individual, one still freely chooses to act on one's evil passions, yet also transcends one's individuality in that Amida infuses a person's mind with Amida's own qualities of mind. Perhaps when enlightenment occurs after death, all traces of individuality disappear. Be that as it may, in this life true freedom is approached when individual freedom of choice is replaced to some extent by the activity of Amida Buddha.

I have argued that in spite of some interpretations to the contrary, both Shinran and Kierkegaard deny that human insufficiency is completely eradicated in this life by either human or divine power. However, through faith and grace in this life, divine compassion accepts our insufficiency and transform us so our evil nature, while remaining evil in this life, is accepted by the Deity, and we can anticipate enlightenment or salvation after death. I have argued that both thinkers preserve human freedom of choice, and therefore self-power, in faith, although Kierkegaard does so more than Shinran. Their difference regarding how much freedom of choice remains in faith is rooted in their differing conceptions of true freedom, with Kierkegaard affirming a more individualistic conception of true freedom in order to preserve traditional Christianity's qualitative difference between God and the person. In contrast, Shinran affirms non-duality between the person and Amida Buddha, while still preserving, at least in this life, significant difference between them: 'one and yet two, two and yet one'. In spite of their deep similarities concerning faith, grace, and human insufficiency, Shinran and Kierkegaard differ significantly regarding human freedom and the relationship between the person and the Deity, reflecting their different roots in Mahayana Buddhism and Protestant Christianity.

## NOTES

[1] For a short version of the history of Pure Land Buddhism, see BLOOM, ALFRED (1965) *Shinran's Gospel of Pure Grace* (Tucson, AZ, The University of Arizona Press) pp. 7-25; for a more detailed history, see MATSUNAGA, DAIGAN & ALICIA (1976) *Foundations of Japanese Buddhism, Vol. II, The Mass Movement (Kamakura & Muromachi Periods)* (Los Angeles-Tokyo, Buddhist Books) pp. 11136.

[2] MATSUNAGA et al., *ibid.*, p. 5.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

[4] UEDA, YOSHIFUMI & HIROTA, DENNIS (1989) *Shinran: An Introduction to His Thought* (Kyoto, Hongwanji International Center) p. 137; BLOOM, *op.cit.*, p. 25.

[5] MATSUNAGA et al., *op.cit.*, p. 97.

[6] Ibid., p. 97; UEDA & HIROTA, op.cit., pp. 234-235.

[7] UEDA & HIROTA, ibid., p. 186.

[8] Yoshifumi Ueda discusses why 'faith' should not be used to translate shinjin in UEDA, YOSHIFUMI (1981) 'Response to Thomas P. Kasulis' review of Letters of Shinran,' in: Philosophy East and West, 31, pp. 507-512.

[9] BLOOM, op. cit., p. 47; MATSUNAGA et al., op.cit., p. 95.

[10] UEDA & HIROTA, op.cit., p. 145.

[11] BLOOM, op.cit., p. 70.

[12] Ibid,, pp. 54-55.

[13] Ibid., p. 69.

[14] Ibid., p. 74.

[15] UEDA & HIROTA, op.cit., p. 148.

[16] Ibid., p. 145.

[17] BLOOM, op.cit., p. 61.

[18] MATSUNAGA et al., op.cit., p. 103.

[19] UEDA & HIROTA, op.cit., pp. 270-271.

[20] Ibid., p. 256.

[21] UEDA & HIROTA, op.cit., p. 165.

[22] Ibid., p. 151.

[23] Ibid., p. 165.

[24] Ibid., pp. 237-238.

[25] Ibid., p. 235.

[26] Ibid., pp. 155, 157; MATSUNAGA et al., op.cit., p. 99.

[27] UEDA & HIROTA, op.cit., p. 151.

[28] Ibid., p. 151.

[29] Ibid., p. 244.

[30] MATSUNAGA, op.cit., p. 51.

[31] BLOOM, op.cit., p. 57.

[32] UEDA & HIROTA, op.cit., p. 266.

[33] MATSUNAGA et al., op.cit., p. 102.

[34] UEDA & HIROTA, op.cit., p. 265.

[35] MATSUNAGA et al., op.cit., p. 102.

[36] UEDA & HIROTA, op.cit., pp. 206, 219, 272.

[37] I do not have the space to discuss the problem of the pseudonyms. For this paper, I will attribute to Kierkegaard points made by various pseudonyms. While Kierkegaard's view is not identical to a pseudonymous author's view, the points that I discuss are part of Kierkegaard's own view, as I have argued in detail in SMITH, JOEL R. (1977) *The dialectic of selfhood in the works of Soren Kierkegaard* (Ph.D. Diss., Vanderbilt University).

[38] KIERKEGAARD, SOREN (1980) in: H. V. HONG & E. H. HONG (Ed. & Trans.) *The Sickness unto Death*, (Princeton, Princeton University Press), especially pp. 13-42.

[39] *Ibid.*, especially pp. 42-131.

[40] Regarding aesthetic and ethical existence, see KIERKEGAARD, SOREN (1987) in: V. HONG & E. H. HONG (Ed. & Trans.) *Either/Or: Part I & II* (Princeton, Princeton University Press), especially Part II where Judge William characterises aesthetic existence as despair while he argues for the validity of ethical existence.

[41] KIERKEGAARD, SOREN (1992) in: E. V. HONG & E. H. HONG (Ed. & Trans.) *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*, (Princeton, Princeton University Press) pp. 257-258.

[42] Regarding Religiousness A, see KIERKEGAARD, *ibid.*, pp. 385-561.

[43] Regarding Religiousness B, see KIERKEGAARD, *ibid.*, pp. 555-586; sin is also discussed in KIERKEGAARD, op.cit., note 38, pp. 75-131.

[44] For example, see ELROD, JOHN W. (1975) *Being and Existence in Kierkegaard's Pseudonymous Works* (Princeton, Princeton University Press), especially pp. 209, 222, 234, 245; a detailed critique of Elrod can be found in SMITH, op.cit., note 37, pp. 141-163.

[45] KIERKEGAARD, SOREN (1971) in: W. LOWRIE (Trans.) *Christian Discourses and The Lilies of the Field and the Birds of the Air and Three Discourses at the Communion on Fridays*, (Princeton; Princeton University Press) p. 300; also see pp. 132-137.

[46] KIERKEGAARD, SOREN (1944) in: W. LOWRIE (Trans.) *Training in Christianity* (Princeton, Princeton University Press) p. 80.

[47] KIERKEGAARD, SOREN (1958) *Man's need of God constitutes his highest perfection* in: P. L. HOLMER (Ed.) *Edifying Discourses: A Selection*, (New York, Harper & Row) pp. 136-176.

[48] Kierkegaard's view resembles the views of Martin Luther and Karl Barth in the emphasis on human insufficiency, faith, and grace. For a comparison of Martin Luther and Shinran, see INGRAM, PAUL O. (1971) *Shinran Shonin and*

Martin Luther: a soteriological comparison, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 39, December, pp. 430-447. For a discussion of Karl Barth's comments on Pure Land Buddhism, see WALDROP, CHARLES T. (1987) Karl Barth and Pure Land Buddhism, *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 24:4, Fall, pp. 574-597.

[49] MATSUNAGA et al., op.cit., note 1, p. 102.

[50] KIERKEGAARD, op.cit., note 46, p. 80.

[51] UEDA & HIROTA, op.cit., note 4, p. 154.

[52] UEDA, op.cit., note 8, p. 507.

[53] UEDA & HIROTA, op.cit., note 4, p. 265.

[54] UEDA, op.cit., note 8, p. 510.

[55] Ibid., pp. 510-511.

[56] UEDA & HIROTA, Op.cit., note 4, p. 155.

[57] KIERKEGAARD, op.cit., note 47, pp. 167-168.

[58] Ibid., p. 173.