Assessing Shinran's *Shinjin* from an Indian Mahayana Buddhist Perspective:

With Focus on *Adhimukti* in Tathāgatagarbha Thought

大乗仏教視点による親鸞の信心の考察
—如来蔵思想におけるAdhimukti（信解）を中心として

By Kenneth K. Tanaka

田中ケネス

Preface

Shinran (1173–1263), the founder of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism is well known for his doctrine of *shinjin* (信心; faith, true entrusting, faith-mind, etc.) rooted in the absolute Other Power of Amida Buddha. On account of the central role that it plays within his doctrinal framework it is crucial that *shinjin* be correctly understood.

However, this task is not as simple as it may seem because *shinjin* is multivalent in meaning. Shinran defined it as "truth, reality, sincerity, fullness, ultimacy, accomplishment, reliance, reverence, discernment, distinctness, clarity, and faithfulness." Despite this fact, contemporary scholars have taken a particular dimension of the meaning and rendered it into such English terms as "faith," "faith-mind," "true entrusting," and "awareness," but no single term can do true justice in capturing the whole range of meaning of *shinjin*.

An accurate understanding has been further complicated in the West as many writers have sought to understand the meaning of *shinjin* from a comparative perspective, referencing the teachings of prominent Western theologians and philosophers. For example, *shinjin* has been compared to the doctrines of "faith only" (*sola fide*) of Martin Luther and "leap of faith" of
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Søren Kierkegaard among others. “Faith” has, thus, become the primary lens for a Western understanding of *shinjin*.

Further, Shinran’s paradoxical rejection of *shinjin* as an efficient path to spiritual awakening or enlightenment has reinforced the perception of *shinjin* as representing a very different mode of seeking than from the rigorous spiritual practices that are demanded in most of the other Buddhist traditions. Consequently, *shinjin* is often perceived as being “merely” devotional in nature, rooted in a dualistic and polarized relationship involving, on the one hand, Amida Buddha, a buddha of infinite capacity and, on the other hand, a seeker (a term I shall be using for a human being who seeks enlightenment) who has no capacity whatsoever to perform an effective practice. And this devotional *shinjin* is seen to be devoid of any element of wisdom (*prajña*), which is required for realizing ultimate enlightenment. *Shinjin* is, thus, not seen as being in the same league as wisdom.

This misconception has, at times in the West, led some to regard Shin Buddhism as not being authentic Buddhism and, at its extreme, gone so far as to regard its teachings as an aberration of Buddhism. For example, Albert Schweitzer in 1936 commented, “Of course the doctrine of Shinran is an outrage on Buddhism.”¹ More recently, a scholar of Buddhism, Heinz Bechert, remarked, “It takes the ideas of the Buddha and, in a way, twists them into their opposite. The most radical spokesman for this approach is Shinran Shonin ….”²

Given the existence, albeit extreme, of this kind of assessment, particularly within the contemporary Western context, I have embarked on a project to reevaluate and clarify the nature of *shinjin* from a broader Buddhist perspective. There have, of course, been numerous studies of *shinjin* within the traditional Shin sectarian studies (*shūgaku*, 修学) framework, but given their narrow approach and limited reach beyond Shin studies they have done little to refute the criticism shown above. In contrast, the works of Takamaro Shigaraki and Kōtatsu Fujita have overcome the shortcomings
of sectarian studies and have introduced a deeper and more accurate understanding of shinjin to a wider readership. Buildings on the valuable findings of their research, I hope to focus on some of the areas not addressed in their studies.

As the first step in my overall project, I will in this paper take up a particular text from an Indian Tathāgatagarbha tradition called Ratnagotravibhāga (『宝性論』, henceforth, RGV) to examine its understanding of terms that can be rendered as “faith,” particularly that of adhimukti (信、信解、勝解: mos-pa). It is hoped that the findings from this examination will help to cast a new light on our understanding of shinjin, for I am not aware of any substantial study relating the topic of shinjin in Shinran’s thought to the topic of faith in Tathāgatagarbha thought.

**Tathāgatagarbha Thought and Pure Land Buddhism**

In order to begin to address the above-stated objective, I shall, in this paper, focus on earlier Mahayana thought, referred to as Tathāgatagarbha (“Buddha womb” or “embryo,” or in a broader sense, “Buddha nature”). “Tathāgatagarbha thought” refers to a constellation of ideas that is found in a group of Mahayana sutras and treatises that goes back as early as the 2nd century C.E. This includes sutras such as the *Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra, Lankāvatāra-sūtra, Avataṃsaka-sūtra, Nirvāṇa-sūtra* and *Śrīmāladevi-sūtra* as well as such treatises as the *Ratnagotravibhāga* and the *Awakening of Faith*.

One reason for taking up Tathāgatagarbha thought in relation to Shinran’s shinjin is due in part to the fact that there are quite a number of references to Amitābha within Tathāgatagarbha literature, a fact that probably would be surprising to many contemporary readers. For example, in the *Ratnagotravibhāga*, a concluding verse on the merits accrued from authoring the treatise states:

By the merit I have acquired through this,
May all living beings come to perceive

— 25 —
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The Lord Amitāyus endowed with infinite light,
And, having seen him, may they, owing to the arising,
Of the immaculate vision of the Doctrine in them,
Obtain the Supreme Enlightenment.⁷ (Chap. 5. Verse 25)
(Note: Throughout this paper, certain words have been underlined by the author for emphasis.)

A similar thought is found in the concluding passage of the *Awakening of Faith* (大乘起信論). In it the seekers are encouraged to contemplate on Buddha Amituo (阿弥陀, Amitāyus/Amitābha) and transfer the merit they have accrued toward birth in the Western Pure Land.

Further, a number of eminent Japanese scholars have pointed out the parallels between Tathāgatagarbha and Pure Land thought, including Ui Hakujū, Takemura Shihō, Hirakawa Akira and Takasaki Jikidō. For example, Ui points out that both the *Avatāṃsaka-sūtra* and *Mahāyanaśūtrālaṃkāra* (Paramārtha translation) conclude with a passage in which it is said that to witness Amitābha becomes the basis for one’s full enlightenment. Ui Hakujū then concludes, “It is customary for Tathāgatagarbha-related (texts) to show a close relationship with the (teachings of) birth in the Pure Land through *nembutsu* (念仏).”⁸ Hirakawa goes even further in suggesting a possible historical connection when he states, “In summarizing the above, it is possible to regard the *Sutra of the Buddha of Immeasurable Light and Life* as having been compiled as a result of the Tathāgatagarbha thought being synthesized with the concepts of ‘transcendent realms’ and ‘realms of extreme bliss.’”⁹ Although there has been no evidence to substantiate Hirakawa’s suggestion, there is adequate evidence pointing to doctrinal affinity between Amitābha Pure Land teachings and Tathāgatagarbha thought.

The second and more substantive reason for taking up Tathāgatagarbha thought in relation to Shinran’s shinjin lies in the extremely important role that faith plays in the overall doctrinal framework of Tathāgatagarbha thought. This point has been made by previous researchers, notably Ta-
kasaki Jikidō and Mizutani Kōshō, whose articles focusing on faith in the *Ratnagotračhibhāga* provided the doctrinal insights necessary for my embarking on and pursuing research on the theme of this paper.¹⁰

**The Text: *Ratnagotračhibhāga***

The full title of this text is the *Ratnagotračhibhāga-mahāyānottaratantra-śāstra*. It is the most systematic treatise extant on Indian Tathāgatagarbhā thought. This work is available in its Chinese and Tibetan translations as well and has played a particularly important role in Tibetan Buddhism.¹¹ No author is identified in the Sanskrit text, but the Chinese text attributes the authorship to Sāramati (沙羅末底, 坚慧). As for the Tibetan text, Maitreya is believed to have composed the verses and Asanga is believed to have composed the prose section. It is thought that the Sanskrit text was compiled sometime between the late 5th and early 6th centuries, since it was translated into Chinese in 511.¹²

The *Ratnagotračhibhāga* is comprised of 5 chapters: 1) Tathāgatagarbhā, 2) Enlightenment (*bodhi*), 3) Properties (*guṇa*) of the Buddha, 4) Acts (*kriyā*), and 5) Merits of Faith (*adhimuktyanuśāmsā*). The text sets out to examine the 7 Adamantine Subjects, which are the 3 Jewels of 1) Buddha, 2) Dharma, and 3) Sangha, plus 4) Tathāgatagarbhā, 5) Enlightenment, 6) Properties, and 7) Acts. The last four subjects correspond to the topics of the first four chapters of the text, respectively. The fifth and final chapter is devoted to the importance of faith (*adhimukti*) and, as noted earlier, ends by encouraging refuge in Buddha Amitāyus.

I find it extremely interesting that the author in its opening section of the *Ratnagotračhibhāga* consciously sets out to rectify what he sees as the shortcomings associated with the doctrine of emptiness as taught in the *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras*. The author describes these shortcomings as being 1) depressed mind (*linam cittam*), 2) contempt for those who are judged as being inferior, 3) clinging to unreal things, 4) speaking ill of Truth,
and 5) affection for one's self. It then concludes, "[The teaching about Tathāgatagarbha] has been taught in order that those who are possessed of these defects might get rid of them."

The Importance of Faith in the Ratnagotrabhāga

I would like to begin discussing the role of faith in this treatise by introducing passages that extol the virtues of faith, which, at times, are said even to surpass those of devotional, ethical, and meditative practices. The second verse in Chapter Five, which is entitled "The Merits of Faith" (adhimukty-anusamsā), sets the tone of the entire chapter by praising the advantages of faith.

Buddha's realm, Buddha's enlightenment, Buddha's dhammas, and Buddha's action are inconceivable even to those of the purified mind (śuddhasattva), being the exclusive sphere of the Leaders (i.e., Buddhas).

But the wise one, whose intellect accepts faith (adhimuktabuddhi)

In this exclusive sphere of the Buddha, Becomes a receptacle of the whole collection of properties, And being possessed on [sic] the desire [to obtain] The inconceivable properties of the [Buddha], He surpasses the abundance of merits of all living beings.

Here we see that a person with faith is highly praised even more than the people of purified mind. While there is no direct explanation of who the "people of purified mind" (śuddhasattva) are, it is safe to regard them as those who are at higher levels on the Buddhist path (mārga), including bodhisattvas. Thus, a person of faith is valued as much as, if not more than, some bodhisattvas (without proper faith) for the person of faith may obtain
numerous positive qualities, including motivated desire to realize the inconceivable properties of the Buddha.

The text goes on to compare the merits of faith (adhimukti) with those who engage in 1) making offerings, 2) keeping ethical purity, and 3) attaining mystic absorption, respectively.

Suppose there were one who, being anxious to obtain Enlightenment, would offer golden lands, constructed by jewels
As innumerable as the sand in the Buddha’s lands.
To the Lord of Doctrine, always, day after day:
Another if he hears but one word of this teaching.
After hearing of it, would have faith in this Doctrine (śrutvādhimucyet);
The latter would reap merits far more than the merits of offerings.
(Chap. 5, Verse 3)

Suppose a wise man, being desirous of the Highest Enlightenment, would maintain pure moral conduct of his body, speech and mind.
Without effort, in the course of innumerable aeons:
Another if he hears but one word of this teaching.
After hearing of it, would have faith in this Doctrine (śrutvādhimucyet);
The latter would reap merits far more than the merits of morality.
(Chap. 5, Verse 4)

Suppose one would give himself up to the mystic absorption, which suppresses the fire of defilements in the three worlds.
And, having been transferred to the abode of Brahman in heaven, would be irreversible from the means of Enlightenment:
Another if he hears but one word of this teaching.
After hearing of it, would have faith in this Doctrine (śrutvādhimucyet);
The latter would reap merits far more than even the merits of mystic
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absorption. (Chap. 5, Verse 5)

Thus, as these three verses argue, a person who has faith in this doctrine of Tathāgatagarbha surpasses in merit those who engage in generous offerings, strict precepts or even strenuous meditative *samādhi* practices.

Further, faith is one of the Four Causes of Purification along with wisdom (*prajñā*), meditation (*dhyāna*) and compassion (*karuṇā*). Faith is referred to as “the practice of faith in the teachings of Mahayana” (*mahāyāna-dharma-dhīmukti-bhāvanā*) and is regarded as an antidote to the enmity some people harbor toward Mahayana teachings (*mahāyāna-dharma-pratigha*). It works by rectifying people’s aversion to the Mahayana teachings (i.e., *tathāgatagarbha*), a quality found in its extreme form among the Icchantikas.

The other three practices of the Four Causes of Purification — wisdom, meditation and compassion — are also seen as antidotes to the following three obstructions, respectively: 1) conception of the self, 2) fear of suffering, and 3) aversion to or indifference to the benefits to sentient beings. And each of the Four Causes of Purification, are, respectively, identified with the analogies of seed (faith), mother (wisdom), womb (meditation) and nursing mother (compassion).

Those whose seed is the faith in the Mahayana teachings.
Whose mother is the transcendental wisdom.
On account of the origination of Buddha’s teachings:
Whose abiding womb is the blissful meditation
And whose nursing mother is called compassion:
They are the sons, the after-comers of the Buddhas.

(Chap. 1, Verse 34, p. 207)

The importance of faith is further expressed in the passage in which the truth of the teachings of *tathāgatagarbha* is touted as being true whether or not the Tathagata appears in the world:

This essence itself is not accessible to imagination or to discrimination.
It is accessible only to faith (*adhimoktavya*). (Chap. 1, p. 296)

The text then goes on to claim:

The Highest Truth of the Buddhas

Can be understood only by faith

Indeed, the eyeless one cannot see

The blazing disk of the sun. (Chap. 1, Verse 153, p. 296)

The “eyeless one” includes 1) ordinary beings, 2) Śrāvakas, 3) Pratyekabuddhas, and 4) Bodhisattvas who have recently entered the Bodhisattva path (or gotten on the Bodhisattva vehicle). Hence, even some Bodhisattvas are unable to understand the teachings of *tathāgatagarbhā*; thus, the text tells all four categories of people who are deemed blind or “eyeless” that faith is their only path to realizing the truth. This is consistent with the position of *RGV* that “even the Bodhisattvas of the tenth Bhumi cannot fully see *tathāgatagarbha* (*daśabhūmisthitā bodhisattvas tathāgatagarbham iṣat paśyantīḥ uktam*).”

**Three Terms of Faith**

We have so far looked at and confirmed the importance of faith in *RGV*. There are, however, three Sanskrit terms in this work that carry the meaning of the English word “faith” and are commonly rendered into Chinese as “hsin” (信) or its derivatives (e.g., 信心, 净心, 信行, 信解, 勝解). The three are śraddhā, *adhimukti* and *prasāda*. Since *prasāda*, with only two occurrences, does not figure prominently in the thesis of this paper, it will not be dealt with here.

We now direct our attention to śraddhā and *adhimukti*, which as will be shown reveal clearly differing qualities. Each of the occurrences of the terms will be examined in the context of 1) its Chinese rendering, 2) its object, 3) the type of seeker or person exhibiting faith, 4) practices that accompany faith, and 5) the level or kind of attainment that result from faith and atten-
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dant practices.

### Śraddhā Faith

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Object</th>
<th>Seeker</th>
<th>Attendant practices</th>
<th>Attainment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 śraddhā</td>
<td>信</td>
<td>Tathāgata</td>
<td>Ordinary beings, Śrāvakas, Pratyekabuddhas</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Tathāgatakārūpas, Dharmakāya, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 śraddhā</td>
<td>信</td>
<td>Tathāgata</td>
<td>Ordinary beings, Śrāvakas, Pratyekabuddhas</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Tathāgatakārūpas, Dharmakāya, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 śraddhā</td>
<td>信</td>
<td>Tathāgata</td>
<td>Śrāvakas, Pratyekabuddhas</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Tathāgatakārūpas, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 śraddhā (adj.)</td>
<td>信</td>
<td>Buddhist teachings (3 Jewels)</td>
<td>Non-traditional Buddhists and Pudgalavādins</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 śraddhā</td>
<td>信</td>
<td>自在者</td>
<td>Ordinary beings, Śrāvakas, Pratyekabuddhas, new Bodhisattvas</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Affirmation 隆知 of Tathāgatakārūpas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 śraddhā</td>
<td>信</td>
<td>(Buddha)</td>
<td>sentient beings</td>
<td>Limit desire, raise vow, precepts, charity, etc.</td>
<td>See 32 and 80 marks and realize a bodhi level with some desire left</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 śraddhā</td>
<td>信</td>
<td>(Buddha)</td>
<td>sentient beings</td>
<td>(same as above)</td>
<td>(same as above)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 śraddhā</td>
<td>信</td>
<td>Words of the Buddha 仏語</td>
<td>One with wisdom</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Confirmation of the Four Noble Truths</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Based on the above 10 occurrences, we are able to make the following observations about śraddhā.

1) The objects are all either a person or his teachings. And the persons are invariably the Tathāgata or the Buddha. Hence, one directs his śraddhā not to the teaching itself but to the person who delivers the teachings on the strength of his trust in the person.

2) The seekers in these occurrences include a wide range of beings from “all sentient beings” to “one with wisdom.” However, one can make the case that they mostly include those who are not advanced or even those not considered exemplary Mahayana Buddhists, such as Śrāvakas, Pratyekabuddhas, “ordinary beings,” “non-traditional Buddhists” and Pudgalavädins. Occurrence #10 is somewhat of an exception, thus, will be dealt with later in this essay.

3) In most of the examples, the act of śraddhā is not attended by any other practices, and when it is attended by other practices they are ethical in nature as in occurrences #6 and #7. In occurrence #9, it appears that śraddhā leads the seeker to cultivate wisdom, if not immediately, then down the road on the path. Occurrence #10, as noted above, is anomalous, so will be dealt with later in this essay.

4) As for the attainments connected to śraddhā, the seekers attain most of the traditional Buddhist goals, but the most prominent, as would be expected, is Tathāgatagarbha. However, it should be stressed that śraddhā
by itself does not directly lead to these attainments.

Based on the above observations, it is safe to say that śraddhā does not entail any qualities of insight or wisdom, particularly based on the fact that its object is the Buddha. It is, therefore, a faith in the teacher as a person.

### Adhimukti Faith

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Ch.</th>
<th>Object</th>
<th>Seeker</th>
<th>Attendant practices</th>
<th>Attainment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1 adhimucya | --  | dharms are illusion         | bodhisattva        | --                  | 1) not be lethargic toward Dharma,  
|             |     |                             |                    |                     | 2) possess insight,  
|             |     |                             |                    |                     | 3) awaken to the true nature of dharms          |
| 2 adhimoktavya | 信 | Dharma nature               | ---                | ---                 | (observation of mind)  
<p>|             |     |                             |                    |                     | (purification of mind)                          |
| 3 adhimoktum | 信 | Undefiled realm             | Young ordinary beings | ---                 | ---                                              |
| 4 adhimucyet | 信 | 如來威、性、菩提、諸功德、業 | Others (bodhisattva) | 間                   | Attain benefits superior to those of布施，或，or 禪定 |
| 5 adhimucyet | 信 | 如來威、性、菩提、諸功德、業 | Others (bodhisattva) | 間                   | Attain benefits superior to those of布施，或，or 禪定 |
| 6 adhimucyet | 信 | 如来威、性、菩提、诸功德、業 | Others (bodhisattva) | 間                   | Attain benefits superior to those of布施，或，or 禪定 |
| 7 trayādhimuktāns | 信 | 三供養                      | 信解者             | --                  | ---                                              |
| 8 karādhimuktān | 信 | Offerings to Buddha         | 信解者 (equal to bodhisattva) | --                  | ---                                              |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Line 1</th>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>karādhimuktān</td>
<td>信心 Offerings to Dharma 信解者 (equal to pratyeka-buddhas)</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>karādhimuktān</td>
<td>信心 Offerings to Sangha 信解者 (equal to śrāvakas)</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>adhimuktānām</td>
<td>信心 因緣法 pratyeka-buddhas</td>
<td>---</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>anadhimukta</td>
<td>不信 第一義諦 non-Buddhists within 仏法</td>
<td>---</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>anadhimukto</td>
<td>不信 有性 non-Buddhists within 仏法</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>adhimuktānām</td>
<td>信心 四處 (如来性) (菩薩)</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Benefits of 信解</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>adhimukta</td>
<td>信心 四處 (如来性) 有智慧者 (菩薩)</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>1) receiver of benefits 2) superior to benefits from other acts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>dharmādhimukti</td>
<td>信心 大乗法 bodhisattva</td>
<td>較若、三昧、大悲 (tathāgatagarbha)</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>adhimuktyādaya</td>
<td>信心 大乗法 bodhisattva</td>
<td>較若、三昧、大悲 Overcomes lechantikas’ faults and 4 kinds of barriers, and realize tathāgatagarbha</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>adhimuktīḥāvanā</td>
<td>信心 大乗法 bodhisattva</td>
<td>較若, etc. Overcomes lechantikas’ fault</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>adhimuktyādin</td>
<td>信心 大乗法 bodhisattva</td>
<td>較若, etc. Realize dharmakāya, Be Dharma prince in Buddha’s home</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<p>| 20 | agrayāṇādhiṃkṣaya-dīn | 信 | 最乘法 | (bodhisattva) | 般若, etc. | Be Buddha's child |
| 21 | adhimukṣya-dāyas | 信 | 大乘法 | bodhisattva | 般若, etc. | Benefits of Parāmitā's Purity, selfhood, bliss, permanency |
| 22 | adhimukṣibhāvanāyāh | 信 | 大乘法 | bodhisattva | 般若, etc. | Pure Parāmitā |
| 23 | adhimukṣi | 信 | 大乘法 | bodhisattva | 般若, etc. | Pure Parāmitā, Utmost Dharma realm |
| 24 | adhimukṣibhāvanāyāh | 信 | 大乘最上法 | bodhisattva | 般若, etc. | Utmost purity, Utmost Dharma realm |
| 25 | adhimukṣi | 信心 | One of 3 Vehicles | Icchantika | See Buddha nature | 見 |
| 26 | adhimukṣibhāvanā | 信 | 大乘法 | bodhisattva | Realize 仏性 | Purity of Dharmakāya, |
| 27 | adhimukṣibhāvanāyāh | 信 | 大乘法 | bodhisattva | Realize 仏性 | (Purity of Dharmakāya) |
| 28 | adhimukṣa-tau | 信 | | | | |
| 29 | adhimukṣa-tau | 信 | 衆生 | | | |
| 30 | viśayādhimukṣi | 信 | 仏の境界 | Those who doubt and misunderstand Buddha's unconditional conduct 自在 | | Elimination of misunderstanding and doubt |
| 31 | adhimukṣitaś | 信 | 実有性・可能性・有功德性 | (bodhisattva) | 具智者 | Qualification to eventually attain Buddhahood, i.e., bodhicitta and non-retrogression |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
<th>32</th>
<th>dhiyādhimuktyā</th>
<th>信受</th>
<th>bodhisattva</th>
<th>善業</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>adhimukti</td>
<td>信</td>
<td>(those who slander the Dharma)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>śraddhādhimuktītah</td>
<td>賛智</td>
<td>有智者 (bodhisattva)</td>
<td>信</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>賛者の不可思議界</td>
<td></td>
<td>Become Buddha's child endowed with bodhicitta and non-retrogression</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on these 34 occurrences, we are able to make the following observations about *adhimukti*:

1) The objects of *adhimukti* are not Buddha himself as in the case of śraddhā but are teachings themselves. The most numerous occurrences are “Mahayana teachings,” which include Tathāgatagarbha, emptiness, and various other terms pointing to the realm of enlightenment.

2) The seekers in virtually all occurrences are bodhisattvas. Thus, they are further advanced on the path compared to the seekers in the case of śraddhā.

3) In most of the occurrences, *adhimukti* is attended by other practices at a much higher rate than with śraddhā. The most frequently cited attendant practices are the cultivation of wisdom, samādhi and great compassion. In these examples, *adhimukti* is part of a set of category of practices that require more rigorous effort and realization.

4) As for the attainments connected to *adhimukti*, the seekers in most of the examples attain realms associated with enlightenment, expressed by such terms as Parāmitā, dharmakāya, and tathāgatagarbha. Noteworthy are the occurrences #31 and #34 wherein *adhimukti* on its own, without any attendant practices, leads to attainment that includes the generating of Bodhicitta and the state of non-retrogression.

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The generating of Bodhicitta is of especial interest for it reinforces one of the other features associated with adhimukti in that the seekers often exhibit a desire to aspire with greater zeal. This can be further seen in other occurrences where adhimukti is part of an integral set of practices serving as a starting point or a seed for deepening one’s cultivation of wisdom, samādhi and great compassion.

Thus the differences between the two kinds of faith have become more apparent. While śraddhā exhibits traits that are devotional in nature, adhimukti entails on the part of the seeker a higher level of insight and an enhanced motivation to aspire to enlightenment.

Analysis of Adhimukti

Based on the basic characteristics of śraddhā as faith and adhimukti as faith, derived from the analysis of their occurrences within the text, I now wish to direct our attention to analysis of a passage in which both types of faith are found (#10 śraddhā occurrence and #34 adhimukti occurrence). The passage appears in Chapter Five and reads as follows:

The person of insight (有智者) has become full of faith (adhimukti)
With regard to its existence (astītva), potentiality (śaktatva)
and virtue (guṇavatva).
Therefore, he immediately attains the potentiality
to acquire the state of Tathāgata. (Verse 8)

Indeed, as he is full of devotion and faith (śraddhādhimuktitaḥ)
That there ‘exists’ this inconceivable sphere,
That it ‘can’ be realized even by someone like him, and
That this he would be ‘endowed with such virtues’
once it is attained. (verse 9) (Chap. 5, pp. 382-83)
In verse 9, the object of the compound of śraddhā and adhimukti is that “it” exists, has potentiality, and has virtues. What then is the “it” here? It
refers to the "realm of the Buddhas." And in verse 8, the person of insight is said to exhibit *adhimukti* with regard to the three qualities of the realm of the Buddhas, i.e., its existence (*astitva*), potentiality (*śaktatva*) and virtues (*guṇavatva*). Previous studies by J. Takasaki and K. Mizutani have shown that this particular passage is based on a very similar passage found in earlier texts, particularly in Yoga texts, such as the *Vijñaptimātratā-trīṣṣika-bhāṣya* and *Chengweishilun* (成唯識論). Of great interest to us is that the *RGV* has undergone a change from the Yoga passages, wherein it changed the order of the latter two of the three qualities of existence, virtues and potentiality to read existence,—potentiality and virtues.

Both Takasaki and Mizutani have interpreted this switch as one of the evidences of *RGV*’s greater emphasis on the potentiality on the part of the seeker to realize the realm of the Buddhas. Mizutani, in particular, feels that the Yoga passage was ambiguous as to whether the potentiality lay in the object (i.e., the realm of the Buddhas) or the subject (the seeker) who displays *adhimukti*. However, with this *RGV* passage, the potentiality lies with the seeker (the subject) rather than with the realm of the Buddhas (the object). Thus the seeker comes to experience an enhanced sense that one is capable of realizing the realm of the Buddhas, for he knows that it exists within himself and that he would be endowed with its virtues once it is realized. This highlighting of potentiality is consistent with the overall emphasis of *Tathāgatagarbha* thought on the enhanced potentiality of seekers to realize full enlightenment based on the view that all beings essentially possess the same quality as the Buddhas.

Takasaki provides an explanation for what he regards as one of the reasons for this enhanced potentiality. It is to be found in the Buddhas’ actions (業) to benefit others out of their compassion for sentient beings. These actions have the power to instill in the seeker a greater sense that he has the potential to realize Buddhahood. The key to this line of thinking lies in the
view that the Buddhas actually possess the power or the capacity to have an
impact on the seeker by instilling an enhanced sense of potentiality to real-
ize full enlightenment.

Now, this shift in understanding is also made possible in the RGV on
account of its view that the Buddhas and the seeker are in essence the same.
The apparent difference between the two lies in the simple fact that the
Buddhas are those who have realized the qualities of wisdom and compas-
sion, while the seekers are those who have not yet realized their qualities of
wisdom and compassion. Hence the two groups are essentially the same, for
the Buddhas have attained the results while the seekers have simply not at-
tained them yet. This view that the two groups are essentially not two but
one can be seen in the following RGV passage:

The multitudes of living [beings] are included
In the Buddha’s wisdom.
Their immaculativeness is non-dual by nature,
Its result manifests itself on the Nature of the Buddha;
Therefore, it is said: all living beings
Are possessed of the embryo of the Buddha. (Chap. 1, Verse 27, p. 197)

In regards to the first sentence of the above passage, “the multitudes of
living [beings] are included in the Buddha’s wisdom,” the commentary helps
to clarify its meaning. It explains, “Its meaning is that the Dharmakāya of the
Buddha penetrates everywhere” (tathāgatadharmaśākṣa-parispharaṇarth). This idea, then, is said to be based on the well-known metaphor of “the one
dust includes the entire Three Thousand Great Thousand Worlds” found in
the Chapter on the “Arising of Tathagata” in the Avataṃśaka Sutra (華厳経性起品).

I wish now to unpack the meaning of the use of the two kinds of faith
(sraddhādhimukti) in the passage under examination. Takasaki translates
this compound as "devotion and faith," and adds that they are essentially of the same meaning. However, based on the findings in this paper of our examination of the nature of these two types of faith (śraddhā adhimuktī). I believe we can arrive at a different and a more nuanced understanding.

Given what we learned above about the nature of śraddhā, it would be more likely that the seeker exhibits a sense of trust or reliance on the Buddha as a person but that there would be no personal understanding yet of the teachings. We saw in the above examples that in the act of śraddhā, the seeker cannot vouch for the veracity of the teachings based on his own understanding but would find the teacher and his message to be trustworthy. In contrast, adhimuktī entails a higher level of understanding about the doctrine that is being taught and is usually manifested by someone with a higher level of insight.

Hence, in this passage, it would be better to interpret the two terms as describing two different modes of action on the part of the seeker. In the act of śraddhā, the seeker trusts that the words of the teacher are true, or, at the very least, worth investigating. At a later stage of the process, what we can call adhimuktī “kicks in.” After one has taken this first step in śraddhā, one gradually matures in one’s understanding of the teachings and comes to be impacted by the workings of Buddha’s action (kriyā) in some form of spiritual encounter as expressed in the passage cited earlier, “...the Dharmakāya of the Buddha penetrates everywhere.” Thus, human beings may experience a sense of being penetrated by the Dharmakāya of the Buddha within the process of their spiritual development, confirming for the seeker that the teaching is, indeed, true. Hence, I believe we can see in adhimuktī the following qualities in the seeker: 1) one’s deepening insight, 2) one’s encounter with the Buddha’s workings, and 3) one’s confirmation of the truth of the teachings.

Based on the above discussion, the compound śraddhādhimuktī is better rendered as “entrusting and realization.” The term adhimuktī involves
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personal insight and spiritual realization. *Adhimukti* confirms to a greater degree the veracity of the teaching in which the seeker had earlier entrusted in his act of śraddhā. Moreover, this realization was *made possible* by the workings of the Buddha’s action, which empowered the seeker to generate an enhanced level of aspiration to realize full enlightenment; this is, indeed, the *potentiality* that the *RGV* stressed, in keeping with the overall thrust of Tathāgatagarbha thought. Finally, that *adhimukti* entails a higher level of personal insight or realization can be supported by the fact that the passage describes the seeker as “the person of insight (有智者).”

**In Closing: Implications for *Shinjin* in Shinran’s Thought**

I would like to close by making some brief remarks about the implications of our findings on our understanding of Shinran’s view of *shinjin*, a topic that, as mentioned at the outset, served as the basis for embarking on this study.

For Shinran, it is clear that *shinjin* entails elements of wisdom, for he talks about the “wisdom of *shinjin*” (信心の智慧) in his *Hymns of the Dharma Ages*.

Through the compassion of Sakyamuni and Amida.

We have been brought to realize the mind that seeks to attain Buddhahood.

It is by entering the *wisdom of shinjin*

That we become persons who respond in gratitude to the Buddha’s benevolence.


Shinran explains the phrase “wisdom of *shinjin*,” by noting next to the verse, “Know that since Amida’s Vow is wisdom, the emergence of the mind of entrusting oneself (i.e., *shinjin*) to it is the arising of wisdom.” Other similar terms such as “*shinjin* of supreme wisdom” (無上智慧の信心) and “*shinjin* of wisdom” (智慧の信心) are also found numerous times throughout his
writings. I should, however, mention at this point that this wisdom is not the product of the seeker’s cultivation through self-power but is the outcome of the workings of Amida’s Vow, which is none other than the expression of Amida’s wisdom. Nevertheless, I maintain that the seeker realizes in shinjin, if not wisdom, some level of personal insight into one’s own nature (as ordinary foolish being) as well as the nature of Amida even if the source of insight derives ultimately from Amida’s Vow.

Another evidence of the wisdom element in Shinran’s understanding of shinjin is seen in the level of attainment by the persons of shinjin. Shinran states that shinjin invariably leads the seeker to the Stage of Joy, which he sees as being equal to the First Fruit in the Path of the Sages:

Thus, when one attains the true and real practice and shinjin, one greatly rejoices in one’s heart. This attainment is therefore called the stage of joy. It is likened to the first fruit: the sages of the first fruit. ⋯

(Kyōgyōshinshō, CWS, p. 54)

Not only does the person of shinjin attain the Stage of Joy, but that stage is equal to the first level of the Sages, which entails some level of wisdom. Another value of attaining this realization is that the seeker no longer backslides or, stated differently, is assured of realizing Buddhadhood. In explaining this level, Shinran quotes the words of Nāgārjuna ("immediately enter the stage of the group of the truly settled") and of Danluan ("enter the group of the truly settled").

Thus, we see that Shinran’s shinjin includes 1) wisdom and 2) being empowered by Buddha’s working, the same elements as those found in adhimukti in the RGV. While Shinran may not have explicitly stated his indebtedness to Indian Tathāgatagarbha thought for his doctrinal formulation, I believe that studying the concept of adhimukti in a key Mahayana text provides the basis for a more complete understanding of Shinran’s shinjin. We can then go on to clarify the meaning of shinjin within the context of contemporary Buddhist studies and inter-religious dialogue.
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In closing, I end with a passage that Shinran quotes from the Nirvana Sutra in his *Kyōgyōshinshō*:

Buddha-nature is great *shinjin*. Why? Because through *shinjin* the bodhisattva-mahasattva has acquired all the *paramitas* from charity to wisdom. All sentient beings will without fail ultimately realize great *shinjin*. Therefore it is taught, "All sentient beings are possessed of Buddha-nature." Great *shinjin* is none other than Buddha-nature. Buddha-nature is Tathagata.

(*Nirvana Sutra, CWS, p. 99*)

(Endnotes)


4 I am well aware of the criticism by the proponents of the so-called Critical Buddhism that Tathāgatagarbha cannot be considered authentic Buddhism, but this is not the place to address this issue. I find their assertions unwarranted. With regard to the use of the term "faith," I have elected to use this as a term that refers to a wide range of Buddhist terms including *adhimukti*. "Faith" is required in this paper as an overarching category to not only compare the various Sanskrit terms of "faith" but also to enable to participate in a wider discussion about this key psychological and religious phenomena of faith.

5 Mizutani Kōshō, "Nyorai-zō to shin," in Hirakawa Akira, et. al. eds. *Kōza daijō bukkō* (1982. Shujusha), pp. 117-149. Mizutani makes references to the affinity of the two thoughts (Tathāgatagarbha and Pure Land) but does focus on Shinran's *shinjin*.

6 Based on Takasaki Jikidō's views that are expressed in his numerous writings on the subject.

7 Jikidō Takasaki, *A Study on the Ratnagotravibhāga (Uttaratantra) Being a


11 The Chinese title is 『究竟一乘安性論』, and the Tibetan is Theg-pa chen-po rgyud bla-mahi bstan-bcos.


13 This realm of the Buddhas is further described as having four features, which are Buddhas’ nature or realm (dhātu), enlightenment (bodhi), dharmas (dharmāḥ) and action (kriyā).


15 Taisho 31, p. 29b.