

**Learning the Buddha's Great Compassion – The Amida Sutra (15)**  
**"Single Mind"**

by Rev. T. Kenjitsu Nakagaki (Sensei)

**"Shariputra, if good men or women who hear of Amida Buddha hold fast to Amida Buddha's Name even for one day, two days, three, four, five, six or seven days with a concentrated and undistracted [i.e. single] mind, then, at the hour of death, Amida Buddha will appear before them with a host of holy ones. Consequently, when their life comes to an end, the aspirants' minds will not fall into confusion and so they will be born immediately in the Land of Utmost Bliss of Amida Buddha. Shariputra, perceiving these benefits, I say: All sentient beings who hear this teaching should aspire to birth in that land."**

Amida Sutra, translated by Hisao Inagaki (brackets added)

Let me begin the episode concerning Shinran and the single mind of Shinjin.

"...As the late Master once related, in Master Honen's day, among his many disciples there were few who were of the same *shinjin* (entrusting mind) as Master Honen, and because of this, Shinran became involved in a debate with some fellow practitioners. It happened in this way. Shinran remarked, "'My *shinjin* and the Master's are one.'" Seikan-bo, Nembutsu-bo, and others among his fellow practitioners strongly argued, "How can your *shinjin* be the same as that of the Great Master Honen?" Shinran responded, "The Master possesses vast wisdom and learning, so I would be mistaken if I claimed to be the same in those respects, but in *shinjin* that is the cause of birth, there is no difference whatever. The Master's *shinjin* and mine are one and the same." The others remained skeptical, however, asking how that could be. Finally they decided that the argument should be brought before Master Honen to determine which side was right.

When they presented the details of the matter to Master Honen, he said, "My *shinjin* has been given by Amida; so has that of Zenshin-bo [Shinran]. Therefore they are one and the same. A person whose *shinjin* is different will surely not go to the Pure Land to which I will go." . . ." (from Tannisho)

A single practice and a single mind are emphasized in Shinran Shonin's works. Both practice and mind are essential to realize enlightenment through Amida Buddha's Vow of benefiting others. A single practice was selected by the profound wisdom and compassion of Amida Buddha. A single mind is directed and given by Amida Buddha to liberate all beings from suffering and pain. The single-minded are those of the Buddha's Mind, or Mind of Enlightenment, rather than the human mind, which is composed of illusion or delusion.

Why single? Single means focused, clear, and simple. We ordinary people need to be able to focus easily and experience the profound Dharma-world. Once we understand the Nembutsu deeply with the single mind of entrusting, we realize that the Nembutsu teaching embraces all the Buddha's teachings. All of Buddhism is in essence the Nembutsu.

*Saying the Nembutsu*

*I become one with inconceivable light and life.*

*Nembutsu-Dharma has a power to*

*Guide us to the world of enlightenment.*

*Like all rivers*

*Entering the ocean and becoming one taste.*

*My mindful heart is firmly standing on the*

*Immeasurable vow of the Buddha.*

*Namoamidabu, namoamidabu ...*

*Dharma is in action in me, here and now.*

*(by Shaku Kenjitsu)*