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DE LUBAC, PURE LAND BUDDHISM AND ROMAN CATHOLICISM

In current interfaith discourse, comparisons between different sets of doctrines and beliefs are frequently modelled as dialogues or encounters between different "religions." But such modelling typically construes the religions involved as homogeneous and nonporous. In reality, the participants in dialogue or encounter are individuals each rooted in his or her own denominational particularity. How each participant views prayer, scripture, worship, doctrine and spirituality in their specific denominational context will shape profoundly how he or she approaches each of these in the context of the other.[1] Henri de Lubac, the French Jesuit and Cardinal, understood this well. Although de Lubac recognised that the concept of religion usefully described a deep human impulse to find meaning and significance beyond the purely material, he was critical of the concept of "religion" employed concretely to lend conceptual coherence to constellations of beliefs and practices. He saw that there could never be real interaction between "Christianity" and any other faith considered generically. What was possible and, moreover, desirable, was encounter between individuals of different faiths each rooted in their denominational particularity.

De Lubac's own interest was Buddhism, or to be more specific, Pure Land Buddhism. Extraordinarily well-read in the oeuvre of the leading French Buddhist scholars of his generation, he produced works of enduring value that have nevertheless been largely forgotten. Why did de Lubac, a Jesuit and later cardinal, come to be studying Buddhism in 1950s France? It might be assumed that this was because he was banned from publishing Christian theology in this period following the restrictions imposed around the time of the publication of *Humani generis*.[2] But it is clear that, for de Lubac, studying Buddhism was more than a pastime activity continued until he could return to his real interests. This is evidenced bibliographically by the fact that his monographs on Buddhism, published during the 1950s, drew on lecture notes, a chapter and an article produced over the course of the previous twenty years, alongside Christian theology.[3] Moreover, interest in Buddhism did not cease with his rehabilitation in the later 1950s. His final published paper was presented in 1971, with a shorter piece produced two years earlier. Indeed, it will be seen that de Lubac's study of Buddhism comprises an early exercise in comparative theology. That is, it is a critical study of another faith as a resource for thinking in new ways about his own.

In this article, we shall first situate de Lubac's treatment of Buddhism within his wider Jesuit context and then examine his appraisals of the thought of two leading teachers,

Hōnen Shōnin (法然聖人) and Shinran Shōnin (親鸞聖人), comparing their doctrines with those of Thomas Cajetan and Cornelius Jansenius. De Lubac's discussion of the Pure Land doctrine of other-power will then be related to his exposition of the *surnaturel*, followed by contrasts between transcendence and incarnation, and birth and eschatology, then further reflections on christology. Finally, we shall consider whether and in what sense Pure Land Buddhism may be regarded as a path to salvation, particularly given that many of its exponents regard it as not only compatible with Mahāyāna but as the summit of Mahāyāna. We begin, however, by distinguishing de Lubac's view of Buddhism from that attributed to him by his Jesuit confrère Hans Urs von Balthasar.

Jesuits on Pure Land Buddhism: From Critique to Encounter

Hans Urs von Balthasar, in his well-known brief introduction to de Lubac, suggests that de Lubac saw Buddhism as generically an "Eastern atheism," the Western corollaries of which were represented in the work of Feuerbach, Comte, Marx and Nietzsche.[4] This assessment is simplistic for at least three reasons. First, de Lubac appraises many features of Buddhism positively, developing constructive comparisons with Roman Catholicism. Second, he pays close attention to Buddhism's specific forms and cultural contexts. Buddhism inculturated in the West is very different from Buddhism in its original Eastern settings, meaning that universal judgments are difficult to make. Indeed, focusing on Mahāyāna Buddhism, de Lubac notes that a capacity to adapt arguments, devices and doctrines to different settings has been part of the reason for its continuing vigour.[5] Third, de Lubac does not deal with Mahāyāna generically but develops focus on one specific variety: Japanese Pure Land Buddhism, which he usually (though unconventionally) terms "Amidism." In so doing, he evokes a lineage of similar Jesuit interest extending back to counter-Reformation missionaries four centuries earlier, for whom Japan, not China, was the principal theatre of encounter with Buddhism.[6]

Neither was de Lubac's study of Pure Land Buddhism without more recent Jesuit precedents. German Jesuit Joseph Dahlmann also recognized its distinctive character in a contribution to the *Christus* collection edited by another Jesuit, Joseph Huby—particularly the view of birth represented as being into a "place," the paradise of the Pure Land (*jōdo*, 浄土), rather than negatively in annihilation. Yet Dahlmann's concluding assessment was scathing. Quoting a contemporary study, he dismissed Pure Land Buddhism as counterfeit

Christianity, an illegitimate development of Buddhism, and a caricature of Christian redemption.[7] Its societal effects, he contended, included superstition, obscurantism and personal disempowerment.[8]

Of considerable interest are the Christian comparisons that frame Dahlmann's critique, not least because they anticipate de Lubac's methodology. De Lubac cites a corresponding attack on Christianity by a Shin cleric, who wrote to Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci: "Christianity copies the doctrine of the Pure Land (Amidism). It is my duty to protect people from this heretical and corrupt form of religion."[9] Paul Williams makes similar connections more neutrally, highlighting the importance in earlier Pure Land Buddhism of devotion to the Buddha as a person.[10] Moreover, Williams notes intense contemporary criticisms of Hōnen and Shinran from other more powerful sects, which accused them of trespassing beyond acceptable doctrinal boundaries. As shall be seen, Hōnen was seen as striving for heaven rather than seeking enlightenment through disciplined practice and karmically expedient living, whereas Shinran was later charged with seeking the perfect enlightenment of Buddhahood for personal gain rather than to aid sentient beings still trapped in cyclical existence.[11] So even in their own contexts, Hōnen and Shinran were regarded in other schools as not truly Buddhist.

This doctrinal heterodoxy, which included elements susceptible of alignment with Christian doctrines, excited St Francis Xavier and other first generation Jesuit missionaries to Japan from 1548, especially during the mission's preparatory and early years.[12] Even before his arrival, Francis had become aware of what he regarded as Pure Land Buddhism's spatial conceptualization of birth, which posited not only a Pure Land but also hell and purgatory.[13] This corresponded far more closely to Catholic categories than to the more abstract imagery of alternative schools. Shin's essentially lay profile was another reason for its appeal to Jesuits, who lived in the world with freedoms of work and travel yet maintained strong spiritual discipline. Lastly, certain Pure Land practices, such as the recitation of the name of Amida Buddha (the *nembutsu*, 念仏), could be seen as expressing devotion to a personal Buddha. This paralleled the intensely christological spirituality of the Society of Jesus, evidenced in the *Spiritual Exercises* and devotion to the Sacred Heart. Indeed, some missionaries who observed the practice of *nembutsu*—that is, repetitive invocation of the name of Amida—regarded Amida Buddha as an anonymous Christ.[14]

In his excellent survey article, Jérôme Ducor demonstrates that de Lubac's knowledge of Pure Land Buddhism dates only from around 1952, being the result of

research in the library of the Musée Guimet.[15] From this time, Buddhism was for de Lubac less a target for criticism, as claimed by Balthasar, and more a foil enabling him to continue to explore issues in Christian theology that he was prohibited from pursuing in an explicitly Christian context. On the key topic of birth into the Pure Land, for example, common questions included whether moral purity is required alongside faith and devotional practice. This formed part of wider questions about whether there is, in the "process of attaining salvation, a part left to the initiative and activity of the creature."[16] Echoes with Roman Catholic debates surrounding the nature-grace relation are obvious, and will be explored in the next section.

Hōnen and Cajetan, Shinran and Jansenius

So much for general structural correspondences. These provide inadequate grounds for convincing comparative work in religious studies, however, as well as for meaningful interfaith engagements. As a Roman Catholic theologian Gavin D'Costa observes of the threefold typology of pluralism–inclusivism–exclusivism often used to classify interreligious attitudes, that this has "failed to focus on the particular historical engagements, which provide us with the only material we have for thinking through the questions [regarding] Christians and other religions."[17] As already suggested, de Lubac's historical theology similarly did not permit him to stop at simple comparisons between supposedly homogeneous confessional identities.

De Lubac's approach is therefore compatible with D'Costa's substantive proposal. D'Costa states his desire to shift attention away from debates about how theologians view the validity or otherwise of other faiths onto the means and goals of salvation that different faiths posit via a sevenfold categorization of Trinity, Christ, Spirit, Church, God, an unclassifiable Real, and ethics.[18] These questions about whether salvation might be obtained, and if so in what it consists, are central to de Lubac's consideration of Pure Land Buddhism and Roman Catholicism, as shall be seen.

Now for more detailed comparison of Roman Catholicism with Japanese Pure Land Buddhism. We turn first to the teaching of Hōnen Shōnin (法然聖人, 1133–1212), founder of the Pure Land sect (*Jōdo-shū*, 浄土宗), and specifically to the controversy over whether saying the *nembutsu*, the name of Amida, was sufficient to gain birth into the Pure Land.[19] This teaching was predicated on the impossibility of achieving such birth by one's own

effort: only by Amida Buddha's other-power (*tariki*, 他力) of infinite compassion, Hōnen maintained, was birth possible.

By positing a source extrinsic to the person, the objectivity of birth appeared to be safeguarded. Nevertheless, critics contended that such complete reliance on other-power implied that immoral actions were compatible with birth into the Pure Land. If humans were unable to co-operate in Amida's transforming work through good works, moral goodness and moral corruption appeared equally consistent with their awakening. It was even claimed that *nembutsu* allowed Buddhists to commit the five offences—patricide, matricide, murder of a holy person, wounding a Buddha or causing schism—without fear of punishment. That judgment had been passed on this teaching seemed to be confirmed when Hōnen was defrocked and ejected from his order (being literally divested as part of this process) and exiled following a series of charges and a scandal involving some of his followers—an exile from which he later returned to be restored to Tendai orders, and with which de Lubac seems to have identified personally.[20] Yet Hōnen repudiated the accusations made against him, having already distanced himself publicly from the troublesome among his disciples.[21]

The true reasons for Hōnen's view of *nembutsu* as sufficient for birth into the Pure Land are to be found not in a devaluation of personal ethical discipline but in a pessimistic view of the wider world. This was, in its context, justified. Hōnen lived through the terrible political upheaval of the Gempei period when the Imperial court collapsed, Japan descended into feudalism and the samurai warrior class ruled.[22] Moreover, the early 1180s saw a succession of natural disasters, including major famine, an earthquake and a whirlwind. The classic account of the period records the terrors of contemporary Kyoto life when "men all felt uncertain as drifting clouds" during two years of famine. "Decomposing bodies too horrible to behold" were piled along the Kamo River such that "there was not even room for horses and cattle to pass."[23] Natural and human turmoil on this scale contributed to a sense that humankind's co-operation in its awakening by perseverance was impossible.[24]

These conditions gave rise to the belief that society had descended into *Mappō* (末法), the last Dharma Age. In contrast to the golden age of the historical Śākyamuni Buddha, where one could attain enlightenment by one's own spiritual practice (known as the Path of Sages), humanity in its present degenerate state was deemed unable to gain enlightenment unaided. Whereas figures like Dōgen and Nichiren proposed, somewhat

hopefully, a return to the supposedly pristine teachings of the historic Śākyamuni Buddha, Hōnen found it in the all-illumining essence of Buddhahood, Amida Buddha, whose Primal Vow promised to save all beings. His view of perseverance as pointless and enlightenment as unachievable by one's own merits is exemplified in his death by self-starvation.

In Roman Catholic theology, the corresponding theorist of complete reliance on other-power is Cardinal Thomas Cajetan (1468–1534), the principal scholastic expositor of Thomas Aquinas employed in the later nineteenth century neo-Thomist revival. Cajetan saw salvation as granted to humanity not in its natural condition but in a distinct spiritual state. He was correct to regard salvation as referring to an end that was not connatural to humankind, but which transcended humankind's natural state. Cajetan's error, however, was in de Lubac's view to picture humankind's natural and supernatural states as discontinuous. In Cajetan's words, "nature does not grant the inclination to anything toward which the whole power of nature cannot lead."[25] This effectively excluded the possibility that humans possess a natural desire for God. The outcome of Cajetan's argument, de Lubac contended, was that human desire for God can be awakened only when human nature is "actually raised up by God to a supernatural end and enlightened by a revelation."[26]

Because of this distinction between humankind's natural existence and its spiritual existence, human desire for the vision of God can, for Cajetan, be produced only by grace acting on nature extrinsically. De Lubac protests against this view of spiritual goals as segregated from natural human life and pursued via a distinct set of structures and processes—the Church and the special revelation it provides. In particular, he finds an analogue of this too arbitrary doctrine of merit and its associated economy of indulgences in *nembutsu*.[27] Concrete natural flourishing and happiness make, in contrast, no positive or negative contribution to spiritual life.[28]

Whether Hōnen's conception of Amida Buddha and the working of *nembutsu* was in fact extrinsicist remains controversial. After his death, the Pure Land Sect split between those followers who maintained that practices other than the *nembutsu* could result in birth in the Pure Land, and those who insisted on its sufficiency, of whom the most famous is Shinran. And so to another specific parallel between Pure Land Buddhism and Catholicism. Shinran Shōnin (親鸞聖人, 1173–1262), founder of the True Pure Land sect (*Jōdo Shinshū*, 浄土真宗) or "Shin" school that continued from it, retained an equally strong sense of human corruption and humans' consequent dependence for enlightenment on other-power. But for Shinran, the main manifestation of corruption was personal rather than

societal. This corruption encompassed many forms, including lust.[29] Indeed, he seems to have regarded *Mappō* not so much as just a period in Japanese history, but as the fundamental state of us "foolish beings" (*bombu*, 凡夫).

For this reason, de Lubac could find little basis in Shinran's thought for ethical action, maintaining that "Shinran's disciplines insist even more than Hōnen's on the feeling of absolute confidence in Amida."[30] Shinran's absolute negation of human moral agency intensified Hōnen's quietism: with Shinran, morally good actions were not simply pointless but impossible, because such actions are necessarily voluntary and their very basis a mere delusion.[31] Shinran's own defence against allegations of antinomianism, as reported by Yuien-bō in *Tannishō* 13, does not in itself seem convincing: "Do not take a liking to poison thinking [it safe] because there is an antidote."[32] Shinran expands on this in one of his letters by arguing that those who have said the *nembutsu* for many years manifest goodness anyway.[33] Yet no further reason is given for why one should not enjoy the poison, or immoral acts, while their effects last. Nor is the possibility considered that the good qualities manifested by people of the *nembutsu* might, after all, indicate some fundamental goodness inherent within the working of Amida's Vow.

Another substantive contrast with Hōnen was Shinran's rejection of ascetic practice. While in exile at Echigo, Shinran married Eshinni and fathered several children.[34] This espousal, unprecedented for a Japanese Buddhist master, established family life as a key feature of Shin Buddhism. Moreover, once he had been pardoned, Shinran declined to resume monastic orders, deeming them superfluous. Paul Williams notes the importance of this radical departure, which in combination with the strong reliance his teaching placed on other-power widened the appeal of Pure Land Buddhism in ways that crystallised the common Mahāyānist view of liberation as universal. As de Lubac states of Shrinran's doctrine, "there is no path by which to attain illumination other than that of deeds and ordinary daily life."[35] This is not to say that one is saved *by* one's deeds, but by trusting in Amida's Vow while going about one's ordinary life. The possibility of illumination was extended even to fishermen and hunters, stigmatised by traditional Buddhist thought because their work violated the basic Buddhist precept against taking life. Furthermore, Shinran did not promise them birth in the Pure Land only after successive eons of reincarnation, but birth and enlightenment at the end of their current secular life.

Shinran believed that nonretrogression (*futaiten*, 不退転) or "lesser enlightenment" could be given during present life only by other-power. Full enlightenment would inevitably

follow upon death and birth into the Pure Land. For this reason, the *nembutsu* became for him an expression of gratitude for salvation already brought by the Vow of Amida Buddha, rather than a plea or petition for transformation by that power.[36] The name of Amida Buddha only needed to be invoked once, rather than repeated as Hōnen had taught, and providing this act was given by Amida as his own activity, was sufficient for birth into the Pure Land.[37] These teachings in combination presented a picture of humanity as deeply corrupted but nevertheless as completely and immediately redeemable by other-power.

The Roman Catholic theologian in de Lubac's repository whose teaching corresponds most closely with Hōnen's is Cornelius Jansenius (1585–1638). De Lubac avers that Jansenius tended to exaggerate the role of grace in human acts, "regarding it as a manifestation of power all the more adorable the more arbitrary and tyrannical it appeared."[38] The corollary of this exalted view of grace was a deeply pessimistic assessment of human nature. Jansenius believed that human nature was entirely ruined by original sin.[39] Grace entirely mastered the will, he argued, such that no human response to grace was required or even possible.[40] Expressed differently, the will lacked even the potential to be strengthened by divine grace. A Christian analogue of this recognition of human sin and weakness when faced with God is to be found, de Lubac contended, in Lutheranism, as previously observed in relation to Pure Land Buddhism by St. Francis Xavier.[41]

Jansenius shared with Shinran a strong sense of the world's corruption, manifested in the political and religious upheavals of his age surrounding the rise of the nation state and Protestantism. Theologically, Jansenius saw these historical events as the result of Adam's sin, which had been passed down through the generations and entirely pervaded the natural order. Deliverance from this worldly corruption would be due not to any personal effort but solely to divine grace.

These comparisons of Hōnen and Shinran with Cajetan and Jansenius suggest that Pure Land Buddhism should be viewed not simply as a brand of atheism but as a body of varied teaching in which truths may be found that are capable of informing Roman Catholic theology. De Lubac's presentation of Pure Land Buddhism in terms of its degree of approximation to Roman Catholicism, in the same way as he appraises varieties of Augustianism in relation to their closeness to classic Catholic teaching, provides a possible means of understanding his ambivalent approach to it.[42] Although he found Pure Land doctrines questionable, they constituted part of the landscape in which his own theology was set.

Human Power and Other-Power

A key shift in Pure Land teaching from Hōnen to Shinran concerned the degree of continuity between human initiative and other-power. Hōnen's teaching implied that the enlightened believer's self-abandonment and joyous awakening (*shinjin*) commenced in present life in co-operation with the working of Amida Buddha's Primal Vow (本願, *hongan*). Shinran and the True Pure Land tradition that sprang from his teaching instead posited a sudden "leap" in which the opposition of self-power (*jiriki*) and other-power (*tariki*) was intensified. According to this latter view, the only means of birth into the Pure Land was to surrender oneself in complete entrusting (*shinjin*, 信心) to the power of Amida's vow.[43] Shinran writes of *shinjin*: "It is a matter of neither practice nor good acts, neither sudden nor gradual attainment, neither meditative practice nor non-meditative practice ... neither daily life nor the moment of death." Rather, it is "inconceivable, inexplicable and indescribable."[44] In order to communicate the full extent of the self-emptying required for birth into the Pure Land as seen by Shinran, de Lubac quotes the nineteenth-century teaching of Kojun Shichiri:

> Even when you have understood that the *nembutsu* is the only way of salvation, often you still hesitate, reflecting within yourself: am I quite all right now? Isn't there still something to do? That is not at all good. Better to immerse yourself fully in the thought that your karma is not destining you to any other condition than "naraka" (hell). When you are well persuaded of this, nothing remains then but to rush forward and grasp the helping hand that Amida holds out to you. You can be assured of your rebirth in his Pure Land. Do not hamper yourself with qualms by looking for the way of getting into Amida's good graces, or in asking yourself if you will really be embraced by him. These qualms arise from your not having yet abandoned all thought of reliance on yourself. Entrust yourself to Amida's grace and let him do what he has chosen for you.[45]

Shinran urges the believer to accept his total moral impotence as well as its corollary: the absolute saving power of Amida's vow.[46] This suggests, at least psychologically, the truth of de Lubac's assessment that Pure Land Buddhism is, for many adherents, practically a "true theism" and a "religion of grace."[47] In historic Shin doctrine, the dualism between Buddha

and sentient beings is arguably doctrinal, not just psychological. For example, as recently as the 1920s Nonomura Naotaro was expelled from Shin orders for criticising the historically dualistic interpretation of Shinran's thought codified by Rennyō (蓮如, 1415–99).[48]

It certainly seems difficult from a Christian perspective to argue that nothing approximating to grace is here operative. It might be presumed, however, that de Lubac would have opted for Hōnen's *Jōdo Shū* (浄土宗) in preference to the *Jōdo Shinshū* (浄土真宗) founded by Shinran, given de Lubac's more positive appraisal of the human person as desiring God naturally and primordially. His confrère Pierre Charles had commended *Jōdo Shū* precisely on the grounds that it did not depend on a "Lutheran" accentuation of personal corruption, and more recently Roger Corless has argued for its natural affinity with Catholic doctrine on the grounds of its more co-operative view of grace and nature.[49] Karl Barth, in contrast, seemed to admire what he saw as *Jōdo Shū*'s absolute dependence on faith over "meritorious" works.[50] Yet de Lubac suggests that if Christianity in the West is to be renewed, this sense of sin, and the corresponding awareness of the need for divine grace extrinsically given, needs to be recovered, not least within Roman Catholicism. In his final published text on Pure Land Buddhism, presented at the 1971 Paris meeting of the Secretariat for Non-Christian Religions, de Lubac modifies his standard critical appraisal of Jansenism. In his well-known historical exposition of the *surnaturel*, he sought to rescue a truly Augustinian view of grace as sustaining nature and acting on nature from within nature from multiple historical distortions, among which Jansenism was prominent. But in the 1971 paper, when reflecting on prayer, de Lubac offers a less negative appraisal, contestably describing the *nembutsu* as an "act of *faith*, corresponding to a certain *grace*."[51] It is clear that by "faith" de Lubac does not mean the rational acceptance of a set of dogmatic principles by which Shin scholars often misunderstand Christian faith. He instead identifies a "sentiment of a need for salvation based on a sense of sin increased by the recourse to Amida's grace, without which it is impossible for man to be delivered from his sin."[52] De Lubac then turns to Jansenism and states of the corresponding idea of grace as other-power:

> It is a very timely lesson for us, in this age when the sense of sin is rejected by a certain number of Christians as being an aftermath of Jansenism or as a depressing illusion from which the science of the psychologists and sociologists should free us; in an age when the call to divine grace is sometimes considered the effect of an

> "outdated Augustinianism," whereas it is, like the meaning of sin, at the very heart of the Gospel; in an age when many people seem to be ashamed to allude to this call to divine grace, intimidated by others who violently rebuff it as unworthy of an adult who knows himself to be master of his destiny.[53]

De Lubac notes particularly the spirit of humility that Shin Buddhism inculcates, a virtue that, he laments, has declined in the modern world. Thus, at the level of experience, de Lubac finds much to commend Pure Land Buddhism as part of a recovery in the increasingly secularized Western world of a sense of the sacred.

Transcendence or Incarnation, Birth or Eschatology

Notwithstanding Pure Land Buddhism's appealing features, de Lubac identifies two serious deficiencies in their underlying doctrines. Moreover, he argues that these are also identifiable in Buddhism considered generically. The first deficiency is in theological anthropology.[54] De Lubac recognizes the falsity of simplistic identifications of Buddhist *nirvāna* with dematerialized nothingness. Nonetheless, he avers, no Buddhist would describe the Word as becoming flesh.[55] This is because Buddhas have no substantial being, rather comprising aspects of an impersonal and insubstantial Buddha-nature that absorbs them all.[56] Indeed, Pure Land Buddhism views individuation as a form of suffering. Its goal is therefore the same as that of Buddhism more widely: transcendence of individual identity through detachment, negation and self-abandonment.[57]

Christian anthropology, de Lubac contends, is very different, its aim being not the transcendence of personhood in a universal nature but the completion of true personhood in Christ, who presents God's likeness in human form. De Lubac writes:

> Because of the divine image which lies at the heart of his being, in fact, every man shares in the eternity of God. This resemblance lies at the root of his distinctive nature, and forms the fundamental solidity of his being…. Now there is nothing of this in Buddhism. Since in the depths of his being there is no ontological solidity deriving from a Creator; since he is nothing but a mass of component parts, with no inner unity, therefore there is nothing in the human being that can call for, or make possible, any ultimate love.[58]

Underlying this critique is de Lubac's conviction of the central importance in Christian doctrine of the creation of humanity in the image of Christ. For de Lubac, the pre-existent Christ as both fully divine and fully human provides the only model for humanity, created in God's image. Christ does not simply exhibit various attractive character traits that are desirable or even ideal for transfer to other human beings; without Christ, there can be no humanity. As Paul Williams puts it, Christianity is committed to the "supreme importance of the person, you and me, as embodied living beings created by God in His own image."[59] Mainstream Mahāyāna in contrast, in refusing to acknowledge a duality between nirvanic enlightenment and samsaric existence, necessarily lacks any doctrine equivalent to the hypostatic union of divine and human natures in Christ, which grounds Christian anthropology. This helps account for its apparent view of existence as dreamlike and the self as illusory.[60]

But Christ's activity with regard to humankind continues beyond its creation. As a result of Adam's fall into sin, humans lose Christ's likeness, retaining a mere image. In order to redeem the whole of human and worldly life, Christ the Word is incarnated and assumes a material human body. In orthodox Christian doctrine, the cosmic Christ remains the "person Jesus of Nazareth, Man and God to all eternity, the one author of salvation."[61] In Buddhism, however, redemption is founded on a movement that is more universal than personal.

Associated with this anthropological distinction are contrasting conceptions of love. De Lubac recognizes the falsity of simplistic identifications of Buddhist *maitri* (pity, or compassion) as purely negative. *Maitri* encourages, for instance, altruistic virtues and a sense of human solidarity.[62] Yet according to de Lubac, it does not ultimately lead to respect for the other as a person, nor to knowledge of what it means to give completely of oneself to another. To him, *maitri* seems a "love without affection."[63] De Lubac perceives "no unitive charity, no reciprocity" in Buddhism because there are "no beings to give themselves to each other. Unity is only achieved through impersonality." Christian love, in contrast, is constitutive of the human person in both creation and redemption. Through love, God in Christ creates a real material human person, and in love redeems that person.[64]

The second element of Buddhist teaching that de Lubac subjects to substantial critique is eschatology.[65] Amida Buddha is described in several texts as the alpha and omega of all things through identity with the primordial intelligence of universal Buddha-nature,

and as the guide towards the transcendental enlightenment of birth into the Pure Land.[66] Yet the type of consummation here posited is very different from that offered by Jesus Christ. The future Buddha is Maitreya Buddha, the eighth and final of the succession of Buddhas. But unlike Christ, Maitreya is therefore "much less the hope of men today than the saviour of men who will be born later."[67] Maitreya will arguably supplant Amida permanently and assert a new law and influence as part of a new, concluding cyclical epoch of worldly existence.

But this concept of time as comprising successive births and declines leaves no place for human history understood as a comprehensible, linear progression from creation to consummation. Just as anthropology can be founded only on christology, so history may be grounded only in eschatology. De Lubac writes:

> In Buddhism, we are no longer dealing with a series of irreversible events but with a cycle. The world passes successively from progress to decline, from ruin to revival. And, if there must be a Buddha in the future, it is just as there had to be one in the past, because everything repeats itself indefinitely…. In such a conception, nothing evokes the idea of history or cosmic finality.[68]

Christian eschatology posits, in contrast, an end of history resulting from the fact that God is leading the world to its final, once-for-all completion. De Lubac's objection to Buddhist cyclicism is structurally similar to his objection to its conception of birth into the Pure Land previously discussed. Just as such birth dissolves personality, so cyclicism destroys history.

De Lubac's critique of these anthropological and eschatological insufficiencies he perceives in Pure Land Buddhism is uncompromising. It is not, however, arbitrary. De Lubac grounds his assessment doctrinally. His approach, while attuned to similarities, avoids sliding into syncretism, even if the resources available to him at the time did not always allow the fullest reading of Shin Buddhist tradition.

How do de Lubac's assessments withstand more recent scholarly scrutiny? Let us first consider anthropology and the concept of love associated with it. De Lubac's interpretation of Shin rests significantly on the Zen monk D.T. Suzuki's idiosyncratic reading. Suzuki stresses the continuity of Pure Land Buddhism with mainstream Mahāyāna thought, notably on the fundamental Mahāyāna teaching of the nonduality of *samsāra* and *nirvāna*. This is the position adopted by many Shin Buddhist scholars today.[69] On this basis de Lubac's

criticism of Shin Buddhism in general Mahāyānist terms might well stand. However, nineteenth-century Shin scholars such as Nonomura Naotaro and Sōga Ryōjin taught a non-duality between Amida Buddha and sentient beings as part of a demythologising movement, although they were accused of heresy and in some cases deprived of university positions or ejected from their orders.[70] Traditional Shin scholarship, particularly following Rennyo (1415–99), the great expositor of Shinran, very clearly defined and defended the dualism between Amida and sentient beings, the Pure Land and the defiled realm, *nirvāna* and *samsāra*.

Although we cannot here adjudicate between dualist and non-dualist readings of Shinran, the debate remains controversial and complicated enough to call into question de Lubac's wholesale identification of Pure Land thought with mainstream Mahāyāna non-dualism, and thus many of his critiques against it. In particular, the ambiguity of Pure Land dualism raises questions about the nature and interrelationality of individuals and the absoluteness of Buddha to which de Lubac's answers no longer suffice. It also challenges the mainstream Buddhist notion, which de Lubac adopts, that love is only a provisional truth, and suggests the possibility that Amida's wisdom-compassion be absolute. The possibilities of such a modified non-dualism would naturally be of great interest to Christian theologians.

De Lubac's critique of Shin eschatology is called into question by Shinran himself, whose most direct exposition on the passage of time is found in the *Notes on Once-Calling and Many Calling.*[71] He there suggests that the attainer of *shinjin* is brought instantly to a state of temporal non-retrogression, momentarily crossing the boundary from time to Buddha which is beyond time. When attaining birth in the Pure Land at the moment of death, one transcends time entirely. Buddhist salvation is the end of the cycle of rebirth. But for the Shin Buddhist, that salvation is predicated on the universal salvation of all sentient beings. Birth into the Pure Land is therefore eschatological, in so far as it implies a complete end to history when all sentient beings have reached the Pure Land.

As for the Buddha of the future, Shinran cites Wang Jih-hsiu's *Lung-shu Writings on the Pure Land* to state starkly that the "being of the *nembutsu*, as such, is the same as Maitreya."[72] Maitreya is indeed the name given to the projected future incarnation of the Buddha on earth, but we must remember that all "Buddhas" are ultimately one and that their or its Buddhahood is predicated by the Buddhahood of all sentient beings. In the timelessness of Buddha, Maitreya already "is." It therefore makes little sense to say that Maitreya is the saviour only of future humanity, or even that Maitreya will supplant Amida.

Whatever means Maitreya reveals must, from a Shin perspective, not contradict Amida's Primal Vow but reinforce it, just as Amida's Vow is seen not as replacing Śākyamuni's teaching but as grounding that teaching.

The Negative Way and the Person of Christ

Buddhism's offer of liberation from the decay of a mundane world might seem attractive to modern Western minds.[73] It answers a real spiritual need that, in much modern Christianity shorn of mystical elements, is likely to be unmet. But this negativity of the void, de Lubac contends—the only biblical precedent for which is the pessimism of Ecclesiastes—idolizes the undetermined Absolute and thereby refuses the personal call originating in a personal deity. This deeply negative theology, if pursued to an extreme, denies not only human personality and history, as seen in the last section, but also the very possibility of theism.[74] For this reason, de Lubac regards Buddhism in general, especially in many of its Western manifestations of the 1950s, as an "immense, drastic and subtle purifying way, a negative preparation by the void, with the terrible danger that this void remains enamoured only with itself."[75]

Significantly, de Lubac notes the structural similarity between negativity in Buddhist texts and in the writings of Christian theologians such as Meister Eckhart and Jacques Maritain.[76] Yet he makes such comparisons critically, implying that the apophaticism of such figures betrays a degree of heterodoxy. De Lubac observes that "many Christian thinkers have shown considerable boldness in rejecting appearances and establishing a scientific 'negative theology,' and the most classic and authoritative have often proved the boldest. In Christianity, nevertheless, affirmation always triumphs in the end."[77] Negativity of course has a vital role in Christian theology, not least in qualifying over-optimistic assessments of the extent to which knowledge and experience may advance humans towards God. Yet de Lubac's case against Buddhism rests ultimately on his opposition to its pursuit of extreme negativity as a spiritual goal.

Inflated valorisation of the negative is equally a perennial hazard in Christian theology. Take for instance some of the work of Denys Turner, who maintains that the goal of what he terms "apophatic anthropology" was to deconstruct images of the self that are artificial, rather than to deconstruct the actual self lying beyond these.[78] Yet it is unclear in his discussion how this actual self might be formed, or in what it might consist.[79]

As Turner's discussion develops, it becomes increasingly unclear how his brand of mystical theology is Christian in any substantive sense. Although he intends to remove obstacles from the believer's path to faith, his purgative way lacks any positive content, despite unrealised potential in his earlier exposition of Bonaventure's christological disruption of hierarchic neoplatonic angelology.[80] Doctrinally, the vision Turner presents seems to have at least as much in common with Buddhism as with Christianity, revelling in images of light and darkness, negation, detachment and void. Christ is glaringly absent from this schema. As Paul Williams observes in his account of converting from Buddhism to Catholicism, the negative way is "very difficult as a means of access to God" because it "throws everything back onto an unmediated experience."[81] In other words, the self-abnegation engendered is liable to form a vicious circle that hinders the believer from gaining enlightenment.

De Lubac's confrère Pierre Rousselot helps us view the question from a different angle, polemically distinguishing "ecstatic" and "physical" conceptions of love.[82] Ecstasy brings the subject to stand outside herself in a state of personal disintegration, such as described by Turner. According to the contrasting physical conception of love, identifiable in Thomas Aquinas, the subject is, in her love of God, preserved and completed. Love, in this physical conception, is personal, reciprocal, constitutive and redeeming. Ecstatic love, in contrast, is impersonal in that it lacks any sense of God as the substantive, relational object of human love. It is structurally similar to Buddhist *maitri*, the object of which is ultimately illusory. Unlike in Christianity, there is no possibility of the substantial mediation of the truth of the divinity via the divinity itself.

As Christian theologians, let us move, therefore, from the darkness of Turner towards the light of Christ. De Lubac describes Christ's uniqueness in striking terms:

> Christ does not profess to be, as does the herald of Amida, the announcer of a fabulous history and an imaginary Heaven. He is, he says himself, in his humanity the Image of the invisible God. He is his own witness to himself. He presents himself—we continue to speak as a simple observer—as the object of the faith which he preaches. Even that which, from him, must be believed, is not without roots in our human soil.
>
> There is nothing in Buddhism which really resembles this Fact of Christ. It is a matter here of a unique fact, the most tangible of facts … in relation to which, in the

> Christian vision of the universe, everything is ordered, hierarchically arranged and, so to speak, valorised in taking its exact proportions.[83]

Notwithstanding his frequently irenic comparisons, de Lubac is unable to negotiate this basic christological stumbling block. Pure Land Buddhism certainly posits faith as a relational continuity, or ultimately identity, between Amida and sentient beings in ways analogous to Christianity.[84] Yet it lacks any figure truly analogous to Jesus Christ in the fullness of his substance and power. It is therefore a path not taken, not only for reasons of its specific doctrines, as in the cases of Cajetan and Jansenius, but because it omits fundamental truths about the divine nature.

Is Pure Land Buddhism a Path to Salvation?

The previous discussion might well be taken to suggest a negative response. Pure Land is, like every variety of Buddhism, at significant variance with Roman Catholic teaching in its anthropology, eschatology and conception of God. Yet de Lubac expresses a range of views of Buddhism's ultimate status as a possible path to salvation. These might appear contradictory, however, so need to be identified and contextualized.

De Lubac directs his most negative appraisals at what he terms "Western" Buddhism, that is, at Buddhism that had migrated from its various Asian centres into Western culture and, in gaining new Western adherents, had accommodated itself to the Western mindset. One reason he is critical of at least some of the Buddhism practised in the West is that, when culturally uprooted, it can become no more than a pale imitation of the real thing.[85] Furthermore, de Lubac saw first-hand the negative social and political consequences of the cultural shifts in the West of which the growth of Buddhism during the first half of the twentieth century had been part: the "retreat from scientific rationalism and liberal democracy, the resurgence of myth, of the arcane, of the sense of the sacred, of all forms of irrational thought" that prepared ground for totalitarianism.[86] Lastly, by far the most common form of Buddhism in the West is Zen and now Tibetan Buddhism, not the more personalist Pure Land Buddhism that de Lubac esteems more highly, in which Westerners have almost no interest.

Nevertheless, de Lubac rightly regards Buddhism in its various Asian forms as a fully-developed religion potentially free of secular distortions and as forming a coherent,

comprehensive belief system.[87] It is, as such, to be preferred to those versions of Christianity that, through the course of the twentieth century, accommodated themselves to forms of political mythology, whether fascist or Marxist. Buddhism, de Lubac writes, "leaves no place outside itself, alongside itself, so to speak, for anything else that would be a religion." Moreover, it demands the comprehensive assent of the whole human person, requiring "all of humanity, with all of its powers, in order to bring it the total response, both speculative and practical, to the question of its destiny."[88] Buddhism is, indeed, grounded in an "expression of religious feeling whose value could remain unacknowledged only by a theology that is excessively severe and hardly in conformity with Catholic Tradition. It is a religious feeling that Christian education, far from destroying, must deepen and lead to its perfection."[89] Alongside this assessment of the clear superiority of Roman Catholic Christianity, as has been seen, de Lubac also saw the potential for Shin thought to reawaken in Christianity a renewed sense of the sacred, as well as resources for comparative doctrinal reflection. That is, de Lubac found in Shin Buddhism an internally coherent body of teaching from which Roman Catholic theologians, by studying its internal connexions and consistency, might learn.

At this point, we are close to discussions of the possibility of universal salvation. De Lubac's careful distinctions help us see the complexities inherent in practical applications of this doctrine in the present-day and its possible limitations. As Gavin D'Costa notes, even Karl Rahner recognized that non-Christian religions could legitimately persist only until encountering Christianity.[90] In de Lubac's day, it was still feasible to imagine Asian Buddhists who had not encountered Christianity in any form continuing in their non-Christian beliefs and practices oblivious of the alternative. It is far less credible, however, to maintain that Western Buddhists would have lacked any contact with Christianity; indeed, some would previously have been Christian or have come from Christian families.

Yet Christianity's prominence and cultural dominance in the West have declined since the 1950s, when de Lubac made his assessments. In mitigation for Western Buddhists, it might be argued that it is no longer justified to assume that everybody in the West has heard Christ's Gospel and either accepted or rejected it. D'Costa helpfully develops the patristic terms of the debate about universal salvation by suggesting that even people living chronologically "after Christ" may be seen as living analogically "before Christ" in order to leave open the possibility that they may be saved.[91] This seems a feasible proposal. Abstract knowledge that Christianity exists is not the same as hearing the Word of Christ preached. It

surely cannot be argued that people untouched by the Gospel have consciously rejected it in full knowledge of its content and truth claims. Furthermore, Pure Land Buddhists both Eastern and Western might well be willing to accept D'Costa's invitation into the "limbo of the just" in order to hear the gospel of Christ preached, given the similarities with their own soteriological geography of the borderlands (*henji*, 辺地).[92] They might well be welcomed by the gatekeepers of limbo—provided, of course, that their particular beliefs have not resulted in their devaluing of the ethical life.

This, of course, holds true only if Christians perceive such Buddhists merely as unevangelized potential Christians. Such a view of Buddhists is significantly complicated, however, by de Lubac's labyrinthine excurses on Pure Land Buddhism's possible historical origins in docetic Christianity via religious and cultural exchanges across the central Asian plains during the seventh and eighth centuries.[93] The details of possible confluences of Christianity and Buddhism are beyond the scope of this paper, but what is not is de Lubac's apparent motive for exploring them.[94] If the confluence hypothesis were true, historical justification would be provided to support the doctrinal case that Pure Land Buddhism is a syncretic form of Christianity that might therefore have preserved and transmitted seeds of Christian truth. De Lubac wisely reaches no firm historical conclusions, but even if he were able to establish a genealogy, the implications for Pure Land Buddhism's standing relative to Christianity would be ambiguous. Obscure early-medieval kinship might suggest the transmission through history of a deposit of albeit attenuated Christian truth. The traces of this "original revelation" might then be able to be reactivated by an act of faith by current believers.[95] But the confluence hypothesis would also suggest that Pure Land Buddhism was the result, at least in part, of an explicit rejection of orthodox Christian tenets by people, including Christians, who had full knowledge of them. According to this historiography, Pure Land Buddhism could legitimately be viewed as a deliberate refusal of the Christian gospel. Immersed in historical speculation, de Lubac does not appear to consider this point.

A final important distinction is that between a Christian view of Pure Land Buddhism as offering salvation, and as a set of life principles productive of virtues and beliefs that might ultimately bring its adherents to salvation in Christ. De Lubac accepts that particular non-Christians may be saved by Christ's grace acting universally. This in no way requires, however, that the confessions of those non-Christians themselves display elements of Christian truth.[96] The openness of non-Christians to divine grace rests, rather, on the common solidarity and natural reason of the whole of humanity. De Lubac states: "In that

there is to be found in their beliefs and consciences a certain groping after the truth, its painful preparation or its partial anticipation, discoveries of the natural reason and tentative solutions—so these unbelievers have an inevitable place in our humanity, a humanity such as the fall and the promise of a Redeemer have made it."[97] He adds that "though they themselves are not in the normal way of salvation, they will be able nevertheless to obtain this salvation by virtue of those mysterious bonds which unite them to the faithful. In short, they can be saved because they are an integral part of that humanity which is to be saved."[98] De Lubac perceives clearly and correctly that individual salvation is ultimately impossible, including in Christianity. Salvation in Christ is collective because humanity is collective.[99]

The teaching that faith, baptism, doctrinal assent and communion are necessary for salvation therefore poses a profound challenge to Christians to engage in mission, in order that all people may be incorporated fully into the Church.[100] Salvation comes through the Church, but because salvation is collective in the fullest, most radical sense that the visible Church merely foreshadows, it will not be effected fully in any person until the whole of humanity has been gathered in. Salvation thereby brings with it the requirement of mission: my salvation in Christ cannot be complete if others are still awaiting theirs.

Before concluding, let us return to Balthasar's judgment, with which this paper opened, that de Lubac equates Buddhism with atheism. Why does Balthasar appear to misrepresent de Lubac? De Lubac distances himself from such an assessment, stating for instance that we "cannot resign ourselves to treating a Hōnen, for example, or a Shinran simply as atheists."[101] In other places, Balthasar expressed a degree of respect for Pure Land Buddhism, especially its personalism, having gained familiarity with it at least in part via de Lubac's work.[102] Balthasar is elsewhere critical of Karl Rahner's transcendental anthropology, which he contends conflates grace and nature such that revelation is accommodated to a predetermined anthropological system. This, Balthasar fears, minimizes the "transforming power of the glory of the Lord that shines forth in Christ's revelation."[103] But as has been seen, de Lubac's assessment of Buddhism rests on his own personalist theo-anthropology that becomes a *critique* of an overweening transcendentalism such as that which frames Rahner's approach. In respect, Rahner aligns himself with a theology of religion. In this de Lubac, in contrast, is methodologically far closer to Balthasar than Rahner, opening a suggestive pathway into a comparative Roman Catholic theological approach to Buddhism. Yet Balthasar was perhaps drawn to bolder criticism as a result of his

sharply dialectical view of the grace–nature relation. Drawing his own parallels between Buddhist negativity and Christian apophaticism, Balthasar saw both as surpassed by the "positive incomprehensibility" of God's revelation in grace culminating in the only true negative theology, that of the Cross.[104] In contrast, he regarded negative philosophy and theology as ends in themselves, and paths of merely natural humanity.

Conclusion

De Lubac's study of Pure Land Buddhism is not simply illustrative, but informs his own Roman Catholic theology. His discussions of other-power, human nature and the *nembutsu* positively frame his own evolving understanding of the grace-nature relation. More dialectically, his conviction of the importance of a theological anthropology grounded in the incarnation emerges from understanding gained in his Pure Land studies of the consequences of its absence. His strong eschatology, founded on a christology in which Christ is Lord of all human history, is similarly produced by his understanding of the wide consequences of denying this. De Lubac's critiques of aspects of Pure Land Buddhism would undoubtedly be contested by many Shin Buddhists, but as has been seen are no harsher than criticisms he directs at elements of Roman Catholic tradition. Such denominational self-criticism can bring deeper self-understanding and aid others in such understanding. Because of the porosity between different faiths, it can perform similar positive functions between such faiths as well as within them.

Twentieth-century Shin scholarship has tended to identify Shin Buddhism more closely with mainstream Mahāyāna thought, moving further away from Christianity's supposed dualistic opposition of God and creation. However, Shin Buddhist professor and cleric Kenneth Tanaka's recent call for the development of a "Shin Theology" might herald an exciting development for Buddhist-Christian discourse in the future.[105] If Shin scholars, or indeed Buddhist scholars more widely, come to believe that their Buddha is not as different from the Christian God as they had previously thought, it surely behoves Christian theologians to continue de Lubac's work and investigate seriously whether their God may also be not quite so different from Buddha as they previously thought.

It is surprising that de Lubac's extensive and careful studies of Buddhism are not better known, especially given the attention lavished on Rahner's more contentious and less developed notion of anonymous Christianity, which is heavily dependent on a "theology of

religions" approach to interfaith encounter. De Lubac could not have been expected to have freed himself from this approach entirely, given that he was writing on Buddhism principally in the 1950s. For example, his later interpretation of the *nembutsu* as an act of faith corresponds with his own Roman Catholic categories and enables him to pursue Roman Catholic theological questions indirectly. Yet in advancing well beyond Rahnerian essentialism, de Lubac also lays foundations for a comparative theology of interfaith encounter, which is rightly but slowly becoming more widespread today.

De Lubac's meticulous historical research is not typically translatable into sound bites nor simple conclusions. Nevertheless, it constitutes an important contribution to the understanding of Pure Land Buddhism and its theological interpretation that for several reasons deserves far more detailed examination than it has hitherto received. It is a model of careful theological engagement fully situated in a particularity that does not rely on essentialized models of different "religions," nor on a generic model of "religion." It is attentive to points of theological method and spiritual practice in one religious context that might mediate truth elsewhere. It is cognisant of religion's cultural context and the shifts this generates in religious configuration in an increasingly interconnected world, and shows that interreligious encounter is necessarily also intercultural encounter. The product of research and reflection conducted before the Second Vatican Council and subsequent developments in Roman Catholic interfaith teaching, it does not rely on standard texts but treads an alternative, methodologically instructive path guided by fundamental theology. For all these reasons de Lubac's studies of Buddhism should be read today, and his methodology could be employed profitably in Christian engagements with other religions.

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[1] A recent Roman Catholic discussion of Hinduism that is predicated on such denominational awareness is Francis X. Clooney, *Comparative Theology: Deep Learning across Religious Boundaries* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010).

[2] E.g., Rudolf Voderholzer, *Meet Henri de Lubac: His Life and Work* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius, 2008), 74–5.

[3] Jérôme Ducor, «Les Écrits d'Henri de Lubac sur le Bouddhisme», *Les Cahiers bouddhiques* 5 (2007), 81–110 (81–6).

[4] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Theology of Henri de Lubac: An Overview* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius, 1991), 54–9; echoed in Jean-Perre Wagner, *Henri de Lubac* (Paris: Cerf, 2001), pp. 161–4.

[5] Henri de Lubac, *History of Pure Land Buddhism*, ch. 8; trans. of *Aspects du bouddhisme*, vol. 2: *Amida* (Paris: Seuil, 1955), chs 1–11 by Amita Bhaka, *Buddha Dhyana Dana Review* 12, 5–6 (2002); 13, 1 (2003), at

www.bdcu.org.au/BDDR; idem, *La Rencontre du bouddhisme et de l'Occident* (Paris: Cerf, 2000 [1952]), ch. 8; idem, "Faith," 357; D'Costa, *Meeting*, 78.

[6] De Lubac, *Aspects* 2.330.

[7] Joseph Dahlmann, «Les religions du Japon», in *Christus: manuel d'histoire des religions*, ed. Joseph Huby (Paris: Beauchesne, 1916), 196–285 (271).

[8] Dahlmann, «Les religions», 273–85.

[9] De Lubac, *La Rencontre*, 72.

[10] Paul Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations* (London: Routledge, 2nd edn, 2008), 251.

[11] Williams, *Mahāyāna*, 257, 265–6.

[12] Kishino Hisashi, "From *Dainchi* to *Deus*: the early Christian missionaries' discovery and understanding of Buddhism," in *Christianity and Cultures: Japan & China in Comparison, 1543–1644*, ed. M. Antoni J. Üçerler (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 2009), 45–60.

[13] De Lubac, *La Rencontre*, 53. This refers to the *henji* (辺地, borderlands) which in Shinran's understanding describes a realm into which are born those Pure Land Buddhists who have not yet attained entrusting (*shinjin*, 信心) in the other-power of Buddha, but still rely on their own self-power (*jiriki*, 自力). After atoning there, Shinran believed that they would be born into the Pure Land. (*Tannishō* 17, in Dennis Hirota, *Tannishō: A Primer* (Tokyo: Komiyama, 1991), 40–1.) Shinran's understanding of birth (*ōjō*, 往生) differs from previous Pure Land thought, implying not birth into an ideal space for further spiritual practice leading to enlightenment, but reaching that enlightenment immediately on death; enlightenment for Shinran is therefore synonymous with the Pure Land. (*The Collected Works of Shinran*, ed. Dennis Hirota (2 vols.; Tokyo: Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-Ha, 1997), 2.171f.)

[14] De Lubac, *La Rencontre*, 54–5; idem, *History*, ch. 10. Andrew C. Ross argues persuasively that the whole Jesuit approach to mission in Japan (and China) was uniquely respectful of indigenous culture—more so than Jesuit missions elsewhere, and much more so than the "national" missions of Spain and Portugal in Latin America. See *A Vision Betrayed: The Jesuits in Japan and China, 1542–1742* (Edinburgh University Press, 1994).

[15] Ducor, «Les Écrits», 95.

[16] De Lubac, *History*, ch. 8.4.

[17] Gavin D'Costa, *The Meeting of the Religions and the Trinity* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 92.

[18] Gavin D'Costa, *Christianity and World Religions: Disputed Questions in the Theology of Religions* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2009), 35–6.

[19] *Shōnin* (聖人) is Japanese for "saint," literally "holy person." The same word is used to describe Christian saints, but pronounced *seijin*. On *nembutsu*, de Lubac, *La Rencontre* 60, 68; *Aspects* 2.8–9, ch. 7. On the controversy, Henri de Lubac, "The notion of good and evil in Buddhism and especially in Amidism," in *Theological Fragments*, trans. Rebecca Howell Balinski (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius, 1989 [1954]), 333–54 (348–50); Williams, *Mahāyāna*, 254–9.

[20] De Lubac, *History*, ch. 8; Ducor, «Les Écrits», 102; for background, Takamichi Takahatake, *Young Man Shinran: A Reappraisal of Shinran's Life* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1987), 75–83.

[21] De Lubac, "The notion," 350.

[22] De Lubac, *History*, ch. 7.0.

[23] Kamo no Chōmei, *An Account Of My Hut,* trans. Donald Keene (Pawlet, VT: Banyan, 1976), 8–10.

[24] Dennis Gira, «La figure d'Amida revisitée: question pour aujourd'hui», in *L'Intelligence de la rencontre du bouddhisme*, ed. Paul Magnin (Études lubaciennes, 2; Paris: Cerf, 2001), 89–103 (96–100). Regrettably, no contributor to this collection engages closely with the relevant texts of de Lubac.

[25] Henri de Lubac, *Augustinianism and Modern Theology*, trans. Lancelot Sheppard (New York: Herder & Herder, 2000), 164–5; and generally idem, *The Mystery of the Supernatural* (New York: Crossroad, 1998).

[26] De Lubac, *Augustinianism*, 114.

[27] De Lubac, "The notion," 353.

[28] De Lubac, *Augustinianism*, 189, 191, 204–5.

[29] Williams, *Mahāyāna*, 259–66.

[30] De Lubac, "The notion," 351.

[31] De Lubac, *History*, ch. 9.3.

[32] "くすりあればとて毒をこのむべからず", reported by Yuien-bō in *Tannishō* 13, in Hirota, *Tannishō*, 94–5.

[33] Yoshifumi Ueda and Dennis Hirota, *Shinran: An Introduction to His Thought* (Tokyo: Hongwanji International Center, 1989), 255–6.

[34] Takahatake, *Young Man Shinran*, 93–5.

[35] De Lubac, *History*, ch. 9.0.

[36] De Lubac, *History*, ch. 9.1.

[37] Ueda and Hirota, *Shinran*, 143–6; Takahatake, *Young Man Shinran*, 71–5. To be precise, Hōnen had taught that even a single utterance of the *nembutsu* might settle one's birth in the Pure Land but that the practice should continue for life. (*Collected Works of Shinran*, 2.123.) Shinran likewise repudiated the dichotomy of once- and many-calling, but on fundamentally different grounds: for him, all practice was human, self-powered and thus

defiled. His *nembutsu* of "no-practice" (*higyō*, 非業), in contrast, is governed by the other-power of Amida himself. The distinction between Hōnen and Shinran, then, is not quite one of gratitude versus petition, but of the *nembutsu* as a practice given by Amida as the means for effecting his Vow, and as Amida's own practice working through the one who entrusts. (Shinran, *Notes on Once-Calling and Many-Calling* (一念多念文意), in *Collected Works of Shinran*, 1.484.) Each repudiated a simplistic dichotomy between once- and many-calling

[38] De Lubac, *Augustinianism*, 32.

[39] De Lubac, *Augustinianism*, 63–4, 68.

[40] De Lubac, *Augustinianism*, 72, also 74–5.

[41] De Lubac, "The notion," 353.

[42] This ambivalence is brought into sharp focus in Thomas Plant, "Henri de Lubac's call to dialogue," ch. 1 of unpublished Ph.D. thesis in progress.

[43] Paul Williams, *The Unexpected Way: On Converting from Buddhism to Catholicism* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2002), 58; Ueda and Hirota, *Shinran*, 137–43.

[44] *Kyōgyōshinshō* 51.

[45] De Lubac, *History*, 9.2.

[46] Williams, *Unexpected Way*, 98.

[47] De Lubac, *History*, ch. 11.0.

[48] Nonomura Naotaro, *Jōdokyō hihan* 浄土教批判(Tokyo: Ryūkoku University, 1923). See also James C. Dobbins, "The concept of heresy in Jōdo Shinshū," *Transactions of the International Conference of Orientalists in Japan (Kokusai Tōhō Gakusha Kaigi kiyō)* 25 (1980), 33–46.

[49] Pierre Charles, «Hōnen et le salut par la foi chez les Mahayanistes», *Recherches de science religieuse* 18 (1928), 236–52; Roger Corless, "A Christian Perspective on Buddhist Liberation," *Concilium* 116 (1978), 74–87.

[50] Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* (10 vols.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1936–77) I/2, 340–3.

[51] Henri de Lubac, "Faith and piety in Amidism" [1971], in *Theological Fragments*, 361.

[52] De Lubac, "Faith," 365.

[53] De Lubac, "Faith," 365.

[54] De Lubac, "Faith," 368–9.

[55] Henri de Lubac, *Aspects of Buddhism*, vol. 1 (London: Sheed & Ward, 1953 [1951]), 37; opening ch. "Buddhist Charity and Christian Charity" reprinted in *Communio* 15 (1988), 497–510.

[56] De Lubac, *Aspects*, 1.45.

[57] De Lubac, *Aspects*, 1.42.

[58] De Lubac, *Aspects*, 1.41.

[59] Williams, *Unexpected Way*, 91, also 19–20.

[60] De Lubac, *Aspects*, 1.37. Notwithstanding the coincidence of the Dharma-body and the body of compassion, Amida Buddha is not a human form but, as his name indicates, a form of light.

[61] De Lubac, *Aspects*, 1.74.

[62] Also, drawing on de Lubac, Dominique Dubarle, "Buddhist Spirituality and the Christian Understanding of God," *Concilium* 116 (1978), 64–73.

[63] De Lubac, *Aspects* 1.50.

[64] Many of the points in the preceding paragraphs of this section are echoed in Christiane Langer-Kaneko, *Das reine Land : zur Begegnung von Amida-Buddhismus und Christentum* (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 131–62.

[65] De Lubac, "Faith," 366–7.

[66] De Lubac, *History*, ch. 8.5.

[67] De Lubac, "Buddhist Messianism?" [1969], in *Theological Fragments*, 371–3 (372).

[68] De Lubac, "Buddhist Messianism?" 373.

[69] Notably Ueda Yoshifumi, "The Mahayana Structure of Shinran's Thought," *Eastern Buddhist* 17.1 (Spring 1984), 66–8; 17.2 (Autumn 1984), 47–9.

[70] Dobbins, "Concept of heresy;" see Naotaro, *Jōdokyō hihan*.

[71] *Collected Works of Shinran*, 1.471–90.

[72] *Collected Works of Shinran*, 1.477.

[73] De Lubac, *La Rencontre*, 281.

[74] De Lubac, *La Rencontre*, 282.

[75] De Lubac, *La Rencontre*, 285.

[76] De Lubac, *La Rencontre*, 206, 285; idem, *Aspects* 2.293.

[77] De Lubac, *Aspects* 1.51.

[78] Denys Turner, *The Darkness of God: Negativity in Christian Mysticism* (Cambridge University Press, 1995).

[79] Matters reach a head in Turner's final case study, of St John of the Cross, in which the dark nights of the soul are compared with depression. Turner attempts to maintain a theoretical distinction between the two, identifying depression with the sense of loss of the therapeutic self, and the hope of the dark nights with the non-recovery of that illusory self (ibid., 244). He nevertheless rightly questions whether, as a result of blurring first- and second-order description, John is actually able to draw such a distinction. Furthermore, Turner also questions whether

any such distinction needs to be made. "We might very well ask", he writes of John's view of depression and the dark nights, "*why* he thinks it so important to be able to distinguish them" (250). The discussion concludes with the assertion that faith immediately decentres the person, disintegrates the "experiential structures of selfhood" and recenters the person "upon a ground beyond any possibility of experience" which is "unknowable, even to us" and experientially a "nothing" and a "nowhere" (251).

[80] Turner, *Darkness*, 117–19, 129–33.

[81] Williams, *Unexpected Way*, 151.

[82] Pierre Rousselot, *The Problem of Love in the Middle Ages: A Historical Contribution* (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 2001 [1908]).

[83] De Lubac, *History*, ch. 11.1.

[84] Ryûsei Takeda, "The Pure Land Buddhist Notion of Faith," *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 14 (1994), 43–53.

[85] De Lubac, *La Rencontre*, 208, 280. De Lubac unfortunately did not consider the Shin Buddhism of Japanese émigré communities, such as that exemplified in the Shin temples on the United States west coast, which are currently celebrating their centenaries.

[86] De Lubac, *La Rencontre*, 242.

[87] Of course, like people of most faiths and denominations, Shin Buddhists have not entirely avoided economic and political corruption. For instance, both the Higashi and the Nishi Honganji were implicated in the religious legitimation of the Pacific War (1941–45). It seems strange that de Lubac did not give greater consideration to Shin's possible role in supporting Japanese military aggression, given that he was writing within a decade of this conflict.

[88] De Lubac, "The notion," 333.

[89] De Lubac, "Faith," 359; also idem, *Aspects* 2.3-5.

[90] D'Costa, *Meeting*, 91.

[91] D'Costa, *Christianity*, 179–80.

[92] D'Costa, *Christianity*, 159–211; *Collected Works of Shinran*,2.173.

[93] Henri de Lubac, "Secrets from the sand of the Gobi desert," in *Theological Fragments*, 289–307; idem, *History*, ch. 10.

[94] For more historical material, see David Grumett, "Christ and the Buddha," in *De Lubac: A Guide for the Perplexed*, with foreword by Avery Cardinal Dulles SJ (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 135–47; lightly revised as "De Lubac, Christ and the Buddha," *New Blackfriars* 89 (2008), 687–700.

[95] Riccardo Lombardi, *Salvation of the Unbeliever* (London: Burns and Oates, 1956), 211.

[96] James L. Fredericks, *Faith among Faiths: Christian Theology and Non-Christian Religions* (New York: Paulist, 1999), 30–1.

[97] Henri de Lubac, "Salvation through the Church," in *Catholicism: Christ and the Common Destiny of Man*, trans. Lancelot Sheppard and Elizabeth Englund (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1988), 217–45 (232). This chapter is identical to that in the earlier English translation, indicating that de Lubac did not revise any detail of his view of universal salvation as a result of his study of Pure Land Buddhism. Cf. idem, *Catholicism: A Study of Dogma in relation to the Corporate Destiny of Mankind* (London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne, 1950), 107–25.

[98] De Lubac, *Catholicism*, 233. The Shin Buddhist might answer likewise that others will be saved by Amida's Primal Vow because all sentient beings are promised salvation. The text of the Vow runs: "If, when I attain Buddhahood, the sentient beings of the ten quarters [i.e. all sentient beings] should not be born [in the Pure Land], may I not attain the supreme enlightenment" (*Collected Works of Shinran*, 1.493).

[99] The Pure Land Buddhist would agree that salvation is collective, since the enlightenment of all beings is interdependent, although would hold a different concept of salvation.

[100] *Lumen Gentium* 14-17.

[101] De Lubac, *Aspects* 2.307: «nous ne nous résignerons pas à traiter simplement un Honen, par exemple, ou un Shinran d'*athées.*»

[102] Raymond Gawronski, *Word and Silence: Hans Urs von Balthasar and the Spiritual Encounter between East and West* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), 22.

[103] D'Costa, *Christianity*, 21.

[104] Gawronski, *Word*, 41–76.

[105] Tanaka remarks: "Some may raise their eyebrows and question the use of the term *theology* since no 'God' is affirmed in Buddhism. However, there exists a broader meaning to this term, namely 'to discourse (*logia*) about the divine (*theo*).' And I believe that *divine* can refer to what, in Shin Buddhism, is considered 'true and real,' i.e. Amida Buddha, the Pure Land, shinjin etc." (*International Association of Shin Buddhist Studies Newsletter* 21, 1 (May 2010), 2).