

## **Theological Contradiction and Complementarity between Meritocracy and Amitacracy: Research into the True Way of Human Development and Social Formation**

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### **Abstract**

At the previous Oxford Round Table of 2008, “Religion: Politics of Peace and Conflict,” meritocracy, described as the nature of civilization in connection with scientific technologies, was considered in light of tragedies that occur during periods of paradigm shift, and monocultures produced by meritocracy were identified as causes of such tragedies. In addition, amitacracy was coined as an antonym of meritocracy by considering, theologically, the profound scale of humanity as its basis. Accordingly, we concluded that philosophical foundations for world peace must involve the “awakening of existence itself as absolute duality” described by Nishida Kitaro 西田幾多郎 (1870-1945).

In this presentation we discuss various theological problems in both meritocracies and amitacracies, and seek to deepen our understanding of “the awakening of existence itself as absolute duality.” First, we consider the failure of social theory brought about by the monoculture of meritocracy so as to highlight what meritocracy is paradoxically. Next, we consider the theory of amitacracy in connection with the form of Mahayana Buddhism espoused by Shinran. Finally, we examine theological contradiction and complementation between meritocracy and amitacracy in order to clarify the true way of human development and social formation.

### **Introduction:**

In the Oxford Round Table of 2008, “Religion: Politics of Peace and Conflict,” we gave a presentation on the theme “The Worldview Required for Preventing Tragedies in Periods of Paradigm Shift” in terms of concrete and philosophical research and pointed out that one of the causes of human tragedies between the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries was the monoculture produced by meritocracy, which describes the nature of civilization in connection with scientific technologies.<sup>1</sup> In addition, as the antonym of meritocracy, amitacracy was defined

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<sup>1</sup> Matsuda Masanori and Akiyama Hiromasa, “A Worldview for Preventing Tragedies in Periods of Paradigm

by looking at its theological background.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, we concluded that the philosophical foundations of world peace involved “the awakening of existence itself as absolute duality,” which was described by Kitaro Nishida 西田幾多郎 (1870-1945).<sup>3</sup>

In this paper, we discuss various theological problems in both meritocracies and amitocracies, and seek to deepen our understanding of the views of human and world in “the awakening of existence itself as absolute duality.” In order to do this, we contemplate the historical merits and demerits of meritocracy in the first section. In the next section, we consider the failure of social theory brought about by the monoculture of meritocracy. In the third section, we argue the theory of amitocracy as the antonym of meritocracy. In the final section, we examine theological contradiction and complementarity between meritocracy and amitocracy in order to clarify the true way of human development and social formation.

### **Section One: The Historical Merits and Demerits of Meritocracy**

Through John D. Bernal's (1901-1971) research into the history of science, it can be understood that after the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, European scientists had a contributive belief for humankind that the development of scientific technologies does away with material poverty and discrimination.<sup>4</sup> This trend can be seen in the last will of Alfred Bernhard Nobel (1833-1896).<sup>5</sup>

After the end of World War II, during the 1960s, scientists in Japan had enthusiasm based on scientific research and belief. All advanced countries framed scientific technology and industry as the foundation of development for their own national powers.<sup>6</sup> The development of scientific technology in advanced countries in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century is nothing

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Shift,” *A Journal of the Oxford Round Table*, 2008 (2008):2,  
<http://forumonpublicpolicy.com/summer08papers/relsum08.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Meritocracy refers to a social life which makes us endure various restrictions for our productive activities. That is, it means a simple scale of success or failure. The “amitocracy” is the opposite of the word “meritocracy” coined by Michael Young. In Sanskrit, the term “*mita*” as in *amita* means “measurable” and “*a*” represents a negative meaning, so “*amita*” means “immeasurable.” Amitocracy means the unconditional trust in self-existence, the recognition of fundamental faith which psychology indicates. In other words, it is profound scale of human heart.

<sup>3</sup> Nishida Kitaro was a prominent Japanese philosopher and founder of what has been called the Kyoto School of philosophy based on Buddhism.

<sup>4</sup> John D. Bernal, *Science In History* (London: C. A. Watts & Co. Ltd, 1954).

<sup>5</sup> “The Will”. Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, accessed June 6, 2012:  
[http://www.nobelprize.org/alfred\\_nobel/will/](http://www.nobelprize.org/alfred_nobel/will/).

“The whole of my remaining realizable estate shall be dealt with in the following way: the capital, invested in safe securities by my executors, shall constitute a fund, the interest on which shall be annually distributed in the form of prizes to those who, during the preceding year, shall have conferred the greatest benefit to mankind.”

<sup>6</sup> T.I. Williams, *A Short History of Twentieth-Century Technology c.1900-c.1950* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982).

short of astounding. This development can be seen in the following:

**Table 1 Development of Scientific Technology**

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1. Dissemination of electrical appliances (in the mid-1950s<sup>7</sup>)  
→ Reduction of housework.
  2. Development of heavy machinery and chemical products (after 1900s<sup>8</sup>)  
→ Enhanced convenience in living environments.
  3. Development of the traffic network through innovation in the area of transportation (1970s).<sup>9</sup>  
→ Optimization and gigantic growth of industrial systems.
  4. Worldwide usage of fossil fuels (around 1900s).<sup>10</sup>  
→ Globalization of the market economy.
  5. Worldwide supply and demand system for food (1960s).<sup>11</sup>  
→ Avoidance of starvation caused by population growth.
  6. Progress of medical technology such as organ transplant, etc (1950s).<sup>12</sup>  
→ Increasing of average life expectancy.
  7. The IT revolution (1990s).<sup>13</sup>  
→ The possibility of a world federation of nations.
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<sup>7</sup>The periods indicated in parentheses for No. 1 and 2 express the periods in which social change through technological innovation happened in Japan. Afterwards, the periods indicate worldwide shifts.

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<sup>7</sup> NHK Project X edit. *Mirai he no Sōryokusen (A Total War toward the Future)* (Tokyo: NHK Shuppan, 2004) and NHK Project X edit. *Gijutsushadamashiiyo Eien nare (Forever the Spirit of Engineer)* (Tokyo: NHK Shuppan, 2002).

<sup>8</sup> Katsuragi Yoji, *Nihon niokeru Jidōsha no Seiki: Toyota to Nissan wo Chūshin ni (The Car Century in Japan)* (Tokyo: Granpuri Shuppan, 1999) and Ijima Nobuko, *Kankyomondai no Shakaishi (A Social History of Environmental Problems)* (Tokyo: Yuhikaku Aruma, 2000), p.108.

<sup>9</sup> Ishii Ichiro, *Doboku no Rekishi (A History of Engineering Works)* (Tokyo: Morikita Shuppan, 1994). Watkins Report 45th memorial committee, *Watkins Chōsadan Nagoya/Kōbe Kōsoku Dōro Chōsa Hōkokusho 1956 (A Report on Nagoya and Kobe Road by Watkins Research Group in 1956)* (Tokyo: Keisoshobo, 2001). Francis Bacon (1561-1626) states “There are three elements expressing the prosperity and greatness of nation: the fertile land, busy factory, and transport for the human and object.”

<sup>10</sup> Williams, *A Short History of Twentieth-Century Technology c.1900-c.1950*.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> NHK Project X edit., *Fukkatsu he no Butaiura (The Backstage of Revitalization)* (Tokyo: NHK Shuppan, 2001).

<sup>13</sup> Ishida Haruhisa, *Computer Network* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1991).

These great outcomes of scientific technology brought about material wealth that did not exist previously in human history and the possibility of creating a world federation of nations. However, at the same time, they have given rise to negative legacies in this century, including the following table.

**Table 2: Negative Legacies of Scientific Technology Growth**

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1. Collapse of home education through the forfeit of domestic traditions developed between parents and children for two hundred thousands of years.<sup>14</sup>
  2. The pollution of the environment.<sup>15</sup>
  3. The destruction of the environment.<sup>16</sup>
  4. Global warming.<sup>17</sup>
  5. World domination by agribusiness.<sup>18</sup>
  6. The problem of bioethics.<sup>19</sup>
  7. Globalization and diversification of crimes.<sup>20</sup>
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The above merits and demerits of science technology reflect the light and darkness of human society based on meritocracy. So, how should society function in the future? We need to explore philosophy in order to construct a system that is released from this dilemma. This will be discussed in the next section in connection with previous research into world history.

## Section Two: The Failure of Social Theory in Meritocracy

Michael Young (1915-2002), sociologist and schoolmaster, expressed the character of civilization by using the term “meritocracy,” which implies a society that is controlled by the

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<sup>14</sup> See Yutaka Okihara, *Gakkō Sōji: Sono Ningenkeiseiteki Yakuwari (School Cleaning: Its role in Human Development)* (Tokyo: Gakuji Shuppan, 1978) and Rebecca L. Cann, Mark Stoneking and Allan C. Wilson, “Mitochondrial DNA and human evolution,” *Nature* 325 (1987): 31-36.

<sup>15</sup> Iijima, *Kankyō Mondai no Shakaishi (A Social History of Environmental Problems)*, p. 108.

<sup>16</sup> Shimokawa Koshi, *Kankyōshi Nenpyō (A Chronological Table of History of Environment)* (Tokyo: Kawadeshoboshinsha, 2004).

<sup>17</sup> Okita Saburo, *Kōza: Chikyūkankyō (Seminar: Global Environment)* (Tokyo: Chuohoki Shuppan, 1990).

<sup>18</sup> Nakano Isshin, edit., *Agribusiness* (Tokyo: Yuhikaku Aruma, 2000) and Eric Schlosser, *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal* (New York: Mifflin Company, 2002).

<sup>19</sup> Kato Hisatake, edit., *Ōyō Rinnrigaku Jiten (A Dictionary of Applied Ethics)* (Tokyo: Maruzen Kabushikigaisha, 2008), 291.

<sup>20</sup> Clifford Stoll, Kurahone Akira trans., *Internet ha karappo no Dokutsu (The Internet Is Empty Cave)* (Tokyo: Soshisha, 1997).

pursuit of economic merit.<sup>21</sup> It is needless to say that meritocracy means the system of hardcore merit and efficiency. In other words, it is a mechanism that constructs a scientific civilization. This view can be seen as the foundational cause of serious problems due to the success of civilizations based on scientific technology in the previous section.

Kitaro Nishida had philosophically foreseen this condition in the 20<sup>th</sup> century with his discussion of the failure of the worldview involving the relationship between subject and object.<sup>22</sup> Martin Buber (1878-1965) also metaphorically expresses this failure in his discussion of the relationship between I and Thou.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, the human relations of “you and I” are lost, and a new objective relation “it and I” is created. That is to say, the human is materialized.

Plainly speaking, the paradigm of modern Western times represents the failure of humanistic theories. In other words, this is the point where one’s conscience as a human is questioned in a new paradigm of meritocracy.<sup>24</sup> However, this brought about the unprecedented tragedy of over 40,000,000 deaths, which resulted from ideological fighting concerning individual conscience in groups or organizations and the deepening of the conflicts through the construction of propaganda in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. World War I was brought about in the process of the economic development based on excessive nationalism. In addition, it led humans into World War II via a subsequent severe worldwide economic depression called as the great depression in 1920s-30s. As a result of these wars, technology was wielded to create nuclear weapons of mass destruction, which deprived 46 million people of their lives in the last century alone.

In spite of this, we cannot deny meritocracy because this is the indispensable tool of productivity. The world of scientific technology is originally based on meritocracy. Although meritocracy contains serious problems, it would be impossible to stop it. Here, there is a dynamism related to human existence.

To live within a scientific civilization is to live within a meritocracy that recognizes people as goods or materials according to a simple scale of merit or demerit. This does not

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<sup>21</sup> Michael Young, *The Rise of the Meritocracy* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1982), 93-115.

<sup>22</sup> Nishida Kitaro, “Bashoteki Ronri to Shūkyōteki Sekaikan (The Logic of the Place of Nothingness and the Religious World View)” in Nishida Kitarō Zenshū 11(*The Complete Works of Kitarō Nishida Vol.11*) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2004), 371-464.

<sup>23</sup> Martin Buber, *Ich und Du* (Heidelberg: Verlag Lambert Schneider, 1979), pp. 19-20.

<sup>24</sup> Takeda Seiji argues that there is no basic alternative for the political system of sovereignty residing with the people and economic system of capitalism and understands that the modern nation is a system based on universal exchange, specialization and consumption. Also, he points out that its shortcoming is the principle of competition between nations and emphasizes the importance of Hegel’s notion of conscience. This means a belief in the universality of social good and moral spirit to know mutual good. See: Takeda Seiji, “Ningen no Rinri to Shakai no Rinri (The Human Ethics and Social Ethics)” in *Gendai to Shinran Vol. 22(The Contemporary World and Shinran Vol. 22)* (Tokyo: Shinran Bukkyo Center, 2011), 179-205.

only give rise of the ruin of individuals' spirit, so-called nihilism, but also the decline of civilization expressed as “politics without regulation, business without morality, work without wealth, education without character, and science without human nature.”<sup>25</sup> There is no way to avoid this profound lament, or so-called existential suffering.

What is “science without humanity”? This can be exemplified by the peeling of a shallot. One analyzes one after another like peeling off the shallot skin one by one and takes its life in the end. In fact, through “science without humanity,” we opened the door for human extinction with the nuclear bomb.<sup>26</sup>

The economic crisis tied to the Lehman Brothers bankruptcy reveals a consequence of “politics without regulation, business without moral, work without wealth, education without character, and science without human nature.”<sup>27</sup> If this economic crisis continues, the civilization of scientific technology will collapse. However, can human beings withdraw from the meritocracy? Even if scientists are romantic idealists with pious beliefs that scientific technology can contribute to human development, the reality that the world of scientific technology is itself a meritocracy never changes. Today’s marvelous scientific ability to measure and judge the material world was developed through the transmission of scientific technology. In a sense, it is entangled with the essence of human evolution. What should be focused on here is if we possess the wisdom to handle the monster of meritocracy.

### Section Three: The Theoretical Amitacracy

#### 3-1: Shakyamuni Buddha’s Notion of *Karma*

The human deed is called *karma* in Sanskrit. The word *karma* 業 is a Buddhist term which refers to the general human deed. However, Shakyamuni Buddha explained *karma* according to three kinds of actions: bodily, verbal and mental (will). Why did he bring verbal and mental acts up alongside bodily acts? Concerning this, Fumio Masutani 増谷文雄 states the

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<sup>25</sup> Watanabe Jiro, *Nihilism: Naimensei no Genshōgaku (Nihilism: Phenomenology in Internal Nature)* (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppan, 1975), Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, Royama Yoshiro, trans., *Gandhi Jiden (An Autobiography of Gandhi)* (Tokyo: Chuokoronshinsha, 2004), and Ved Mehta, Uemura Masao, trans., *Gandhi to Shitotachi: Idainaru Tamashii no Sinwa to Shinjitsu (Gandhi and His Disciples: A Myth and Truth of the great Spirit)* (Tokyo: Shinhyoron, 2004). Concerning the statement of “politics without regulation, business without moral, work without wealth, education without character, and science without human nature,” this has been mentioned in the context of the seven great sins of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi.

<sup>26</sup> Yukawa Hideki lamented because his elucidation about the theory of nuclear power set the stage for possible extinction with the nuclear bomb and threw himself into the movement of establishing the earth network as a single world nation in his later years. He states “the subsistence of human beings should be given priority more than any ideology.”

<sup>27</sup> A massive global financial crisis was triggered by the bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers Inc., a global financial services firm, on September 15, 2008.

following:

This subject (karma) is often mentioned with a question of “what the human should do.” This question can be rephrased as “what the human should not do.” To answer these questions is the task of morality or ethics as common sense in the world... Kant considers this question to be a task of ethics... However, the approach for this subject in Buddhism has a slightly different angle. When the karma problem is taken up in Buddhism, it is considered as one’s own problem. It is not a problem of other like human relationships (dualistic), but is a problem of one’s own human development (non-dualistic). Here deeper contemplation and more profound meanings are produced and fearful effects are revealed.<sup>28</sup>

Masutani argues that to answer “what the human should do and should not do” dualistically is a task of ethics, and to consider *karma* non-dualistically is a unique approach in Buddhism. He describes the development of *karmic* thought in the following:

To explain about *karma* in Buddhism is quite broad, profound and detailed, and its explanation reflects the characteristic of Buddhism because this is based on thoughts such as dependent co-arising, impermanence, non-self and cause and effect that were realized by Gotama Buddha. It can be seen that these thoughts made the explanation of *karma* develop in wide, profound and detailed ways.<sup>29</sup>

Shakyamuni Buddha’s emphasis on the mental act as in three kinds of actions can be seen on the first and second verses of the sutra called *Dhammapada*:

All that we are is the result of what we have thought: it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought, pain follows him, as the wheel follows the foot of the ox that draws the carriage.<sup>30</sup>

All that we are is the result of what we have thought: it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with a pure thought, happiness follows him, like a shadow that never leaves him.<sup>31</sup>

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28 Masutani Fumio, *Gō to Shukugō (Karma and the Residual Karma)* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1971).

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid

31 Ibid

In addition, the sixth verse of *Vāsetṭha-sutra* describes Shakyamuni Buddha's answer for the question of "What is a brahmin (true holy man)?" by one of *śramaṇa* who exerts himself in the quest for religious knowledge, typically as a mendicant or homeless wanderer in ancient India. The sixth verse is as follows:

Not by birth is one a brahmin,  
Not by birth is one a non-brahmin.  
By deed is one a brahmin,  
By deed is one a non-brahmin.<sup>32</sup>

Masutani understands this verse to mean that the human possesses the possibility to select deeds with one's thoughts, and its so-called karma is the decisive factor in creating the human's circumstances. Also, he argues that the interpretation of human development in Shakyamuni Buddha is composed of three elements: 1) becoming father and mother, 2) eating and drinking and 3) awareness. In particular, awareness builds human character. He points out the participation of one's free will and that only humans possess in this awareness. Concerning this, he writes:

Everything changes. The human also changes...the human becomes a part of its changing process with wisdom and free will. That is, the human participates in the process of changing with three kinds of actions: bodily, verbal and mental. This is the meaning of *karma*. Moreover, with this understanding of karma, the truths of dependent co-arising (*pratītyasamutpāda*), impermanence and non-self become the principle examples of human development. This is what Gotama [Shakyamuni] Buddha explained about *karma*.<sup>33</sup>

That is the reason why Shakyamuni Buddha emphasizes the mental as in three kinds of actions (bodily, verbal and mental) in his notion that *karma* is due to one's own human development. Hereafter, to question about *karma* non-dualistically as a problem of one's own human development represents a theory of amitocracy. This reason will be discussed in the next section.

### 3-2: The Ultimate Problem in Human Development – *Manas-Vijñāna*

To be ethical means to do good and not do evil. This is expressed as the dualism between

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.



good and evil. The dualistic “other” means society, nation, office, community, family, and another person. The evil that Shakyamuni Buddha refers to is the non-dualistic way of thinking and indicates the deed that damages one’s own human development. Evil bodily acts such as killing, adultery and stealing are deeds that hurt oneself and others. Evil verbal acts such as bad-mouthing, double-dealing, falsehoods and lies are words that hurt oneself and others. Evil mental acts such as ignorance, attachment (clinging to one’s passion) and hatred are the heart that hurts oneself and others. In the dualistic view, it is obvious that the evil of bodily acts is the worst among these ten evil acts. However, in the non-dualistic view of one’s human development, the evil of mental acts is the most severe. It is said that this is the reason why Honen 法然 (1133-1212), who was a founder of the Japanese Pure Land School called *Jodoshu* 浄土宗 and was admired as an unparalleled learned priest called himself “Foolish, stupid Honen” with his profound heart given he felt ashamed of one’s sins.<sup>34</sup>

Concerning the act, Shan-tao 善導 (613-681), whom Honen respected as his master, states the following:

[The] people do not realize the Buddha’s benevolence and do not respond in gratitude to it; though they perform practices, they give rise to contempt and arrogance in their hearts. For they act always for the sake of fame and profit; they have been enveloped in self-attachment unawares, and do not approach fellow practitioners and true teachers; preferring to involve themselves in worldly affairs, they obstruct themselves and block others from the right practice for birth [into the Pure Land].<sup>35</sup>

That is, right practice/action for birth into the Pure Land is righteous effort for the accomplishment of the human development by crossing over the ocean of suffering that pervades the four inevitables periods of human life (birth, aging, sickness and death). It can be understood that the evil of mental acts obstruct this practice. Moreover, Shinran 親鸞 (1173-1262), who is founder of *Jodo Shinshu* 浄土真宗 and is one of Honen’s disciples, mentions:

How grievous it is that, since the beginningless past, foolish, ignorant human beings possessed of defilements and hindrances have mixed the auxiliary and right and combined the minds of the meditative and nonmeditative practices,

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<sup>34</sup> Genku (Hōnen). *Senchaku Hongan Nembutsu Shū: A Collection of Passages on the Nembutsu Chosen in the Original Vow*, trans. Morri Augustine and Tessho Kondo. (Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 1997).

<sup>35</sup> *The Collected Works of Shinran* (hereafter, CWS) (Kyoto: Jodo Shinshu Honganji-Ha, 1997), 239.

so that they have had no chance of attaining emancipation. Reflecting on our transmigration in birth-and-death, we realize how hard it is to take refuge in the power of the Buddha's Vow, how hard it is to enter the ocean of great shinjin, even in the passage of countless kalpas. Truly we must grieve at this; we must deeply lament. Sages of the Mahayana and Hinayana and all good people make the auspicious Name of the Primal Vow their own root of good; hence, they cannot give rise to shinjin and do not apprehend the Buddha's wisdom. Because they cannot comprehend [the Buddha's intent in] establishing the cause [of birth], they do not enter the fulfilled land.<sup>36</sup>

Shinran expresses the mental acts that obstruct Shan-tao's "the right practice for birth" as "the minds of the meditative and nonmeditative practices (hereafter, MMNMP)." The "meditative" in this phrase means to settle the mind, and the "nonmeditative" is to mend one's lifestyle. In other words, this is the "mind of doing all practices for virtues." Also, it is a desire to improve oneself and the foundation of ambition for productive activities. However, why does this obstruct "the right practice for birth"?

The core that analyzes everything objectively is based on "the mind of the meditative and non-meditative practices." Shinran describes this mental act as "the minds of those who rely on doing good through their self[-centered mind]-power" or self-calculations.<sup>37</sup> This is the powerful and central will that constructed the civilization of modern science. That is, the mental act that brings out human productive activities itself is the mental act of self-destruction.

Ryojin Soga 曾我量深 (1875-1971) understood that Shinran's thought is based on the Yogācāra theories of Vasubandhu 世親, who is one of the main founders of the Indian Yogācāra school in the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>38</sup> Soga's interpretation of the MMNMP is described as follows: 1) the life of the MMNMP is the life of residual *karma* 宿業; 2) the residual *karma* is instinct. It is not understood through one's intellect; 3) although one contemplates the Buddha through residual *karma*, the Buddha calls and embraces us as his residual *karma*. The relationship between the Buddha and sentient beings is not based on the intellect, but on the residual *karma* of so-called instinct relationship; 4) the awareness of residual *karma* means a deep mind in relation to one's existence 機の深心; 5) there is great compassion of within the

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 239-240.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 663.

<sup>38</sup> Concerning to this, see Yasuda Rijin, *Yuishiki Sanjukkō no Menmoku (A Dignity of Triṃśikā-vijñaptimātratā)* (Kyoto: Buneido, 1983).

Buddha for one who suffers due to one's residual *karma*. One's residual *karma* refers to turning the mind because our selfish way of thinking can be transformed into a non-selfish way of thinking.<sup>39</sup> This also indicates Shan-tao's understanding of two deep minds 二種深信.<sup>40</sup> In Shinran's later years, this awareness was his view of world. That is, it can be expressed as the resignation of residual *karma*.<sup>41</sup>

The meaning of "instinct" to which Soga refers here does not relate to national matters. It means to *Manas-vijñāna* (mind-knowledge) which is the seventh of the eight consciousnesses taught in Yogācāra Buddhism. Concerning this, Vasubandhu states the following in his work "*Triṃśikā-vijñaptimātrātā*" (*Thirty Verses on Consciousness Only*) 唯識三十頌:

Next, the second transforming consciousness;  
This consciousness is called *manas* (thought).  
It evolves supported by that [store consciousness] and with it as its object,  
has the nature and character of thinking.

It is always associated with four passions:

Delusion about self, view of self,  
Self-conceit, and love of self,  
Along with others such as contact.

It is defiled and morally neutral,  
And bound to the place of birth.  
In the arhat, the samādhi of cessation,  
And the supramundane path, it does not exist.<sup>42</sup>

The history of studying Yogācāra in Japan goes back a thousand years, and there are great writings on this topic today. In the context of these works, we would like to add a few explanations. The heart that produces the "self" that directs and the "dharma" that sustains is

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<sup>39</sup> Soga Ryojin, *Tannishō Chōki (A Note of Tannishō)* (Kyoto, Higashi Honganji Shuppan, 1999).

<sup>40</sup> See Shan-tao, "Kanmuryō Juryōkyōshō (The Sutra on Contemplation of *Amitāyus*)" in *Jōdo Shinshū Seiten Shichisohen* (Kyoto: Jodoshishu Kyogaku Dendo center, 1996), 297-504.

<sup>41</sup> Hosokawa Iwao, *Bannen no Shinran (The Latter Age of Shinran)* (Kyoto: Hozokan, 1994).

<sup>42</sup> "The Thirty Verses on Consciousness Only" In *BKD ENGLISH TRIPITAKA: Three Texts on Consciousness Only*. (Berkeley: Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai and Numata Center for Buddhist Translation Research, 1999), 378.

called as *pariṇāma* (merit transference or transformation). There is threefold transformation; (1) the consciousness called *alaya* (subconsciousness or retribution), (2) the self-consciousness called *manas* (*manas-vijñāna*, thought), and (3) the concept of the object called *visaya-vijñapti* (consciousness and five senses or perception of the external realm). The *manas* means mental action that never ceases. This mental action is always transformed by four passions; delusion about self (the heart that does not realize one's own ignorance), view of self (the heart that does not understand the truth of dependent co-arising and attaches to one's untruth), self-conceit (the heart that ignores the great world transcending oneself), and love of self (the heart that is attached to only oneself). In the current psychological sphere, the subconsciousness corresponds to the first *pariṇāma*, and the consciousness meets the third *pariṇāma*. The most characteristic and central theory in Yogācāra thought is the second *pariṇāma* of *manas-vijñāna*.

Residual *karma* usually rests in the first *pariṇāma* of *alaya*. However, in the thought of Shinran in his latter age, the second *pariṇāma* of *manas-vijñāna* is also interpreted as the residual *karma*. Therefore, in his view, *manas-vijñāna* means the MMNMP, and the great compassionate vow of Amida Buddha, the so-called Other Power that breaks the MMNMP and cultivates the Buddha nature in *alaya*. This can also be understood as Soga's interpretation of *manas-vijñāna*. This understanding of *manas-vijñāna* is endorsed by Shinran's theory of "Buddha nature," which appeared in his work entitled *Notes on Essentials of Faith Alone*.<sup>43</sup>

Soga's interpretation of *manas-vijñāna* implies two meanings. One is that the MMNMP pursues the good-meditative and non-meditative as a kind of ideal in humans. That is to say, this is the theory of meritocracy. The other, however, is that the MMNMP is a heart calculation based on the expectation of one's own self-benefit and *manas-vijñāna*, which is transformed with the four blind passions: self-ignorance, self-view, self-satisfaction, and self-love. This is the evil of mental acts that obstruct the right practice to go beyond the ocean of painful existence, which contains birth, aging, sickness and death and the theory of amitocracy. These two meanings are expressed as a relation of absolute contradiction. The reason why Honen called himself "Foolish, stupid Honen" was because he realized this. The shell of the MMNMP is broken out by the Other Power of Amida Buddha.

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<sup>43</sup> Shinran explains: "Nirvana is called extinction of passions, the uncreated, peaceful happiness, eternal bliss, true reality, dharma-body, dharma-nature, suchness, oneness, and Buddha nature. Buddha nature is none other than the Tathāgata. This Tathāgata pervades the countless worlds; it fills the hearts and minds of the ocean of all beings." See CWS, 461.

In non-dualistic human development, the ultimate problem is how one goes beyond the shell of the MMNMP. To break this shell by one's own power is nihilism. Only Amida Buddha's great Primal Vow power that embraces all sentient beings can shatter the shell and drive one's residual *karma* toward cultivation. This residual *karma* (*alaya-vijñāna*) can be exemplified in the life of an egg: the mind of the meditative and non-meditative practices (*manas-vijñāna*) is the shell of the egg, and the Amida Buddha's Primal Vow power is a parent bird that calls the life within the egg out into the world. This reflects true human development.

#### **Section Four: Contradiction and Complementarity between Meritocracy and Amitacracy**

The declaration of being a nation under the *ritsuryō* 律令 political codes based on ancient Japanese amitacracy became the foundation of Japanese civilization and produced the Japanese Buddhist cultures.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, after the Kamakura period (1185–1333), it developed as the spiritual and cultural foundation of the people in medieval Japan through Honen's religious revolution, along with many twists and turns.<sup>45</sup> As discussed in the previous section, this is not the society composed of the relationship between subject and object, but is the social formation of the relationship between subject and substratum. In other words, this is the character development based on the "fundamental faith," which means the essential reliance. However, as scientific technology began to come into Japan after the Meiji period (1868-1912), the monoculture produced by meritocracy moved ahead. As a result, Japan is facing various problems due to the cultural rarefaction of amitacracy.

After the end of the bubble economy in the 1990s, the fact that over 30,000 people

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<sup>44</sup> *Ritsuryō* (律令) is the historical law system based on the philosophies of Confucianism and Chinese Legalism in Japan. The political system in accord with *ritsuryō* is called "*ritsuryō-sei*" (律令制). This system developed from the 7<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> century in Japan.

<sup>45</sup> At the time of Honen, people lived in despair, and society was marked by natural disaster, starvation and war. Under such conditions, officially ordained Buddhist priests performed religious services for the Imperial Court and their authorities, a mission of protection and devotion for improving the nation's conditions in order to create their version of an ideal society based on Buddhism. In other words, the Imperial Court had the authority to control the priesthood, and accordingly "Buddhist monks had to perform services for the court and aristocrats, 'the service of the Imperial Court's authorities.'" However, under these circumstances, those who denied the superstitious and quasi-Buddhist rituals and teachings appeared and established their own Buddhist schools apart from exoteric-esoteric Buddhism. They focused not on the Imperial Court and not on the ideal society of exoteric-esoteric Buddhism, but on the people's dignity. Accordingly, the New Kamakura Buddhism arose, whose nature was different from general Buddhism up until that time. The New Buddhist movements were not for the benefit of the Imperial Court, but to address the suffering of the masses. In other words, these movements directly confronted people's suffering and created a new ideal society based on Buddhism. The sole-practice of calling on the Name of Amida Buddha (*senju nembutsu*) developed by Honen and his followers, including Shinran, was one of the New Buddhist movements.

commit suicide annually has not changed. It is said that most of them were depressive. Generally, advanced countries have the highest rates of depression, but Japan has the highest rate. Specialized physicians point out that those who are honest, idealistic, and perfectionists tend to be depressive. It might be suggested that this is a tendency fostered in a country that has many natural disasters. This can be a problem of *manas-vijñāna* in Yogācāra.

Horio Teruhisa, a professor at Tokyo University, suggested that meritocracy forces schoolchildren to endure the obsessions of a competitive society.<sup>46</sup> That is, meritocracy means, for the child, that human development is based on utilitarianism and ability. In this environment, there is no view of child rearing according to the “Art of Loving” as emphasized by Erich Fromm, a researcher into human development.<sup>47</sup> The fact that children are socially judged according to a scale of success or failure destroys the heart of reliance and forces them into nihilistic syndromes or depressive syndromes.

Fromm argues that there are two factors destroying peace: societal factors and domestic factors.<sup>48</sup> Societal factors refers to fascism which dominates the people through propaganda constituted by the control of free speech. Carl Friedrich Freiherr von Weizsäcker (1912-2007), a German physicist and philosopher, states that the radio has more power for wounding and killing than the atomic bomb. There is no need to discuss the way of removing the societal factors. However, there is the problem that societal factors can destroy the peace of the individual. Fromm classifies this as a domestic factor.

Any human has the anxiety involved with the separation from their mother at the stage of early childhood. There are some cases where this fear remains in the adult due to the persistence of the anxiety involved in the separation from the mother. He points out that the person suffering from this anxiety has a tendency to try to escape from it in the narrow relationship between sadistic (aggressive) and passive (masochism) attitudes. He called this psychology “escape from freedom” and understands that it becomes a factor that produces fascism and cults.<sup>49</sup> Further, he describes how one must seek for the meaning and purpose of living by oneself without being given “freedom” by others. Therefore, the human development that can bear the burden or responsibility of freedom is the most significant theme in the humanitarian outlook. In addition, he interprets human development as training in the “Art of Loving,” which is composed of the following elements: (1) the experience of

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<sup>46</sup> Horio Teruhisa, *Gendai Shakai to Kyōiku (The Modern Society and Education)* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1999), 78.

<sup>47</sup> Erich Fromm, *The Art of Loving* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1962).

<sup>48</sup> Erich Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967).

<sup>49</sup> Erich Fromm, *Escape from Freedom* (New York: Avon Books, 1969).

union with all men, of human solidarity and of human atonement, (2) care, (3) responsibility, (4) respect, and (5) knowledge.<sup>50</sup>

Concerning theological contradiction and complementarity between meritocracy and amitacracy in the case of Fromm's "Art of Loving," we see that (1) the experience of union with all men, of human solidarity and of human atonement, (2) care, and (5) knowledge are the mutual essence in both meritocracy and amitacracy. In the meritocracy, (3) responsibility refers to the ability to fulfill one's responsibility of self-control and social contribution, and (4) respect means the valuation for excellent ability and achievement. On the other hand, in the amitacracy, the former implies the spirit devoted to the life of oneself and others without any condition. In other words, it is unconditional trust for oneself and others—Amida's Primal Vow. The latter means the spirit of unconditional respect for the life of oneself and others. In both meritocracy and amitacracy (3) responsibility and (4) respect conflict. Therefore, for (3) responsibility and (4) respect, meritocracy that ignores the theory of amitacracy creates a new objective relation of "oneself and others" and inevitably makes people suffer from nihilism or depression. However, the amitacracy that ignores the theory of meritocracy can become a spoiled idea and does not work as the true meaning of amitacracy. That is, the relationship between meritocracy and amitacracy is described as contradiction and complementarity.

## Conclusion

Meritocracy and amitacracy complement each other in the state of absolute contradiction. As discussed in the previous section, meritocracy based on amitacracy means absolute passivity (the Other Power). In absolute passivity, authentic activeness is born. Kiyozawa Manshi (1863- 1903) calls this "the inconceivable power of absolute infinity" and "a great path of Other Power."<sup>51</sup> This expresses the way toward true human development and social formation.

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<sup>50</sup> Erich Fromm, *The Art of Loving*.

<sup>51</sup> Terakawa Toshiaki, *Kiyozawa Manshiron* (A Theory of Kiyozawa Manshi) (Tokyo: Buneido, 1973) and Yasutomi Shinya, ed., *Kiyozawa Mannshi Shū* (*The Collected Books of Kiyozawa Manshi*) (Kyoto: Iwanami Bunko, 2012).

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