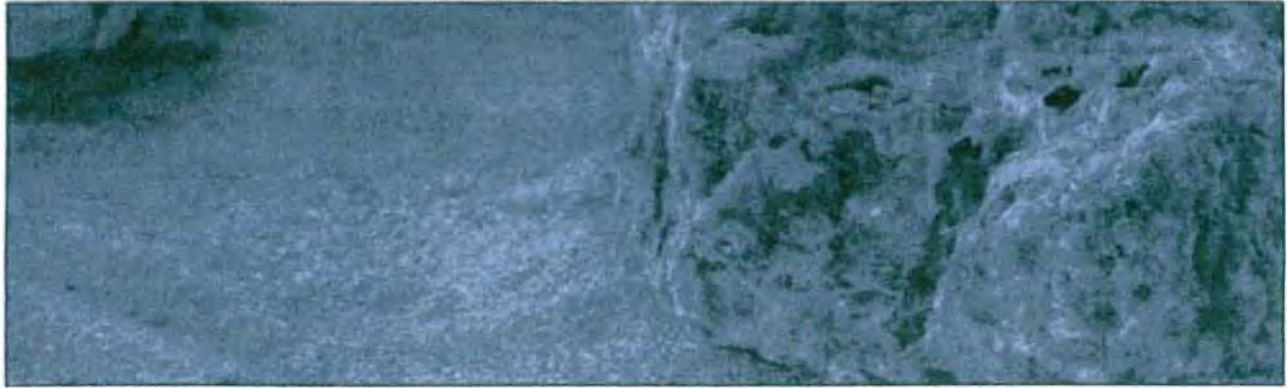


Prajna

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Walking through a dark door

Everything we know in the fascinating world of Samsara is the product of our self-centered delusion. The all-seeing, all-grasping, ever-beloved “I” is the perfect calculating machine – ever weighing, measuring, comparing, categorizing, ranking every object of its senses. It is the realm of our normal realities – of good and bad, right and wrong, superior and inferior, logical and illogical, for and against, constructive and destructive, loving and hating, etc., etc. Except that the more you think about such pairs, the more confusing and contradictory they become. Things can be good or bad, or good and bad; right or wrong, or right and wrong; superior or inferior, or superior and inferior; logical or illogical, or logical and illogical; for or against, for and against; constructive or destructive, or constructive and destructive; loving or hating, or loving and hating. And then there is the category of neither of the above. In other words anything in the world of Samsara is in the world of relativity, and trying to posit an absolute in the middle of all of this is just asking for more confusion and pain. Thus, we are to use our best thinking, our sincerest sense of right and wrong, our sense of justice, etc. in dealing with the problems that beset our world today. In terms of moral or ethical codes, Buddhists have drawn from other traditions, such as Hinduism, Confucianism, and Christianity, and tempered them with Buddhist consciousness and analysis of the ego-self. In other words, Buddhism does not create a single ethic or moral code – that is for each Buddhist group or society to determine. Jodoshinshu is about the awareness of the Nirvanic world, as opposed to and, paradoxically, in conjunction with the Samsaric world – Amidabutsu and Namu.

One can neither reason nor intuit ones way into this paradox of truth-reality. For to attempt to grasp it is to set it apart from you. What then is this reference to faith? It is to trust a promised experience. It is like being told to walk through a door into a pitch black room, to give up control, and leave it to a power or reality other than your own. The mistrusting Samsara “I” is told to abdicate and trust that the experience of Samsara and Nirvana as one and, at the same time not one is real and accessible. Namooamidabutsu is not dualistic in this way. It is where all things become one in their separateness, or distinct in their oneness. Paradoxical ? Yes. Contradictory? Yes. True and Beautiful? Yes, Yes, Yes, Yes, and Yes.