

OBITUARIES

Takasaki Jikidō (1926–2013)

I feel fortunate to have had the opportunity to study with Prof. Takasaki during the three years of my MA program in the Department of Indian Philosophy at the University of Tokyo. When I entered the program in 1975, Prof. Takasaki had returned the same year to his alma mater as an Associate Professor, having previously taught at Osaka University for six years. As I had planned on concentrating my studies on a tradition of Indian Mahayana Buddhism, it was an unexpected blessing for me to meet up with an internationally acclaimed expert on the Tathāgatagarbha tradition.

Prof. Takasaki was born 6 September 1926 in Tokyo. His family moved to Jōshōji Temple in Akabane, Tokyo, when he was three years old, and he lived the rest of his life there until his passing on 4 May 2013. While in high school he was drafted into the army in 1945 and was scheduled to report for duties on 20 August, but fortunately the war ended on 15 August. After graduating from Tokyo Metropolitan High School in 1947, he entered the University of Tokyo where he pursued his major field of studies in the Department of Indian Philosophy until his graduation in March of 1950.

In 1954, as a recipient of an Indian government scholarship, Prof. Takasaki enrolled at Poona University to study with Prof. V. V. Gokhale. There he focused his studies on the edited Sanskrit text of the *Ratnagoṭṭravibhāga*, which E. H. Johnston had published in 1950. There had already existed an English translation of the Tibetan text of the *Ratnagoṭṭravibhāga* by Eugene Obermiller, but Prof. Takasaki's studies at Poona resulted in the first English translation of the Sanskrit version of this text; it extensively consulted both Tibetan and Chinese translations and their commentaries. (The English translation of the Chinese text was started by Prof. Takasaki for the Chinese Tripitaka English Translation Project of the Bukkyō Dendō Kyōkai; it is scheduled to be completed in the near future with Prof. Takasaki as co-translator.)

This study became his dissertation for which he received his PhD degree in 1958 from Poona University. One of the members of his dissertation committee was Dr. Guisepppe Tucci, whose strong recommendation led to the publication of the studies in the Serie Orientale Roma (volume 33) in 1966. It was entitled *A Study on the Ratnagoṭṭravibhāga (Uttaratantra): Being a*

Treatise on the Tathāgatagarbha Theory of Mahāyāna Buddhism. This work would come to seal his academic reputation as one of the leading scholars on Tathāgatagarbha thought.

The other of the two major publications that came to solidify his academic stature came six years later with the submission in 1972 of a dissertation for a DLitt degree to the University of Tokyo in Japanese, entitled *Nyoraizō shisō no keisei* (The Formation of Tathāgatagarbha Thought). The dissertation was published as a book under the same title by Shunjūsha in 1974. In this monumental work, he traced the elements of Tathāgatagarbha thought that existed in numerous sutras such as the *Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra*, the *Avatamsaka-sūtra*, the *Nirvāṇa-sūtra*, and the *Śrīmāladevī-sūtra*, as well as in treatises such as the *Ratnagoṭravibhāga* and the *Awakening of Faith*. Through this work, Prof. Takasaki succeeded in showing that Tathāgatagarbha thought was a distinct stream of thought within Mahayana Buddhism and not simply an aspect or an appendage of Yogācāra thought, a view that was held by many up to that time. I believe that this best describes Prof. Takasaki's contribution to our understanding of the development of Mahayana Buddhist thought. As a result of this work, Prof. Takasaki became a recipient of the Imperial Award from the prestigious Japan Academy in 1975.

In terms of his academic post, he was appointed associate professor in the Department of Indian Philosophy in 1975 and then promoted to full professor in 1977. After serving on the faculty of the University of Tokyo for twelve years, Prof. Takasaki continued teaching as a visiting professor at a number of institutions that included Waseda University, University of California (Berkeley), Harvard University and Oxford University. Then in 1992, he began his twelve year service as president of Tsurumi University, which demonstrated another dimension of Prof. Takasaki—his effectiveness as an administrator.

His administrative abilities had already been proven earlier when in 1983 he served as Secretary-General of the Thirty-first International Congress of Human Sciences in Asia and North Africa (CISHAAN) held in Tokyo and Kyoto. The conference attracted nearly two thousand delegates from fifty countries and concluded in great success due in large part to Prof. Takasaki's pivotal role in its planning and execution. His reputation as an effective administrator also led him to a series of leadership posts with various academic associations upon retirement from the University of Tokyo. Besides the presidency of Tsurumi University noted earlier, they included the chairman of the board (1991–1997) as well as president (1999–2005) of the Eastern Academic Association (Tōhō Gakkai), president of the International

Association of Asian Studies (2002–2007) and president of the International Association of Buddhist Studies (2003–2005).

In his later years, even in declining health Prof. Takasaki managed to publish a nine volume compendium of his major writings, *Takasaki Jikidō chosaku-shu* (Collected Writings of Takasaki Jikidō), published by Shunjūsha. What was amazing is that he completed the preparations for this publication within a mere two year span (2008–2010) by editing, updating, and adding some new information to writings that had spanned over fifty years of his academic career. Each of the nine volumes was over four hundred pages long. I shall list their contents for they provide a glimpse of the breadth and depth of Prof. Takasaki's writings and interest:

- Vol. 1: Indian Thought: ancient Indian philosophy and thought; ancient and medieval Indian society and thought; modern Indian society and thought.
- Vol. 2: Mahayana Buddhist Thought (1): origins of Buddhist thought; establishment and development of Mahayana Buddhism; Mahayana sutras and treatises; the spread of Mahayana Buddhism in Asia.
- Vol. 3: Mahayana Buddhist Thought (2): introduction to Consciousness-only thought; Consciousness-only and Avatamsaka thought; on Buddhist studies research.
- Vol. 4: Formation of Tathāgatagarbha Thought (1): the three scriptures of Tathāgatagarbha sutras; Tathāgatagarbha and Buddha-nature; Tathāgatagarbha and nature (*gotra*); Tathāgatagarbha and storehouse consciousness.
- Vol. 5: Formation of Tathāgatagarbha Thought (2): the two fountains of Tathāgatagarbha thought; bodhisattvas and Tathāgata nature (*gotra*) (1) & (2); *dharmakāya* and Tathāgatagarbha.
- Vol. 6: Tathāgatagarbha Thought and Buddha Nature (1): on Tathāgatagarbha thought and Buddha nature; topics related to Tathāgatagarbha thought; concerning Tathāgatagarbha thought.
- Vol. 7: Tathāgatagarbha Thought and Buddha Nature (2): topics related to *Ratnagotravibhāga*; concerning *Ratnagotravibhāga*; on the issue of nature (*gotra*).

- Vol. 8: *The Treatise on the Awakening of Faith* and *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra*: reading *The Awakening of Faith*; topics related to *The Awakening of Faith*; topics related to *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*; other topics related to Chinese Buddhism.
- Vol. 9: Dōgen's Thought and Japanese Buddhism: Dōgen's life and thought; Dōgen's thought and Sōtō school; views on the cycle of birth and death in Japanese Buddhism.

Among the nine volumes, I wish to make special mention of volume 1 on Indian thought, which is comprised of his writings on non-Buddhist topics related to India such as Upanishadic thought. While Prof. Takasaki's writings on Tathāgatagarbha thought and Mahayana doctrine are well known, few are aware that he, especially in his earlier years, had shown deep interest in topics beyond Buddhism. For example, while residing in Poona during his studies in India, he took an interest in the Indian independence movement of the Poona region. Upon his return to Japan, his interest culminated in the publication of a number of articles on modern and contemporary Indian society and thought. These are included in volume 1.

Prof. Takasaki also wrote quite extensively for the general readership to make Buddhism and Tathāgatagarbha thought more accessible to the non-specialists. One such representative work is his *An Introduction to Buddhism*, which was translated by one of his students, Rolf W. Giebel, and published by the Tōhō Gakkai in 1987. The book has been well received internationally for its systematized, overall presentation of Buddhism, focusing on its relatively mature stage of development.

Finally, I wish to make mention of Prof. Takasaki's qualities as a human being, which in the eyes of many were as noble and stellar as his academic accomplishments and contributions outlined above. For myself personally, Prof. Takasaki kindly offered to read the *Ratnagotravibhāga*, the text with which his name had become identified, outside regular class. This extra-curricular session with Prof. Takasaki symbolized his willingness to go an extra mile for his students. Such care and sense of responsibility were felt by all of his students. It is for that reason that we students from his days at the University of Tokyo had made plans to celebrate his recovery in March by inviting Takasaki Sensei and Mrs. Takasaki for dinner. However, the dinner did not materialize as his health took a turn for the worse in February leading to his passing in May. We were obviously profoundly saddened by the loss, but I know that all of us are consoled by the fact that we feel extremely blessed and honored to have studied with and received so much,

not only academically but personally from Prof. Takasaki Jikidō, who embodied for us the very qualities of optimism and confidence that embody the spirit of Tathāgatagarbha thought.

Kenneth K. Tanaka

Itō Emyō (1932–2013)

Professor Itō Emyō passed away on 12 October 2013, closing a life that spanned eighty-three years. His name became widely known after the first volume of *Tannishō no sekai* (The World of the *Tannishō*; Kyoto: Bun'eidō) was published in 1967. In the same year I entered the graduate school at Otani University and started attending his class. Prof. Itō—recently appointed as an assistant professor—placed a cloth-wrapped *Shinshū seiten* on the table beside him, and without ever opening it, casually delivered the lecture, reciting extensive passages from the *Tannishō* from memory. His appearance at that time, in the dim atmosphere of that classroom in the old Jingenkan, vividly comes to my mind even now.

During the 1960s, Prof. Itō also held an important administrative post as dean of academic affairs, and was charged with assisting the president of the university, Soga Ryōjin. In those days, however, Otani was troubled by a variety of internal conflicts, and much to everyone's regret, Prof. Itō left the university in 1970, taking responsibility for those difficulties.

Around that time Prof. Itō came forward to participate, as a staff member at the Eastern Buddhist Society (EBS), in the editing and publication of the English translation of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*—a work left behind unpublished by Suzuki Daisetsu at his passing. It was then that I became personally acquainted with Prof. Itō. At the EBS office I had the privilege of listening, together with international students, to his lectures on the *Kyōgyōshinshō*.

Throughout his life, Prof. Itō looked up to Soga Ryōjin as a revered mentor. His discussion of Soga in volume 15 of *Jōdo bukkyō no shisō* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1993) remains a standard account that continues to lead the way in research on that important figure in modern Shin Buddhist thought.

Yasutomi Shin'ya