

# A Study of Kiyozawa Manshi's Thought about "In Our Power and not in Our Power" in Diary *Rōsenki*

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## 1. Introduction

"Beginning with the *Seishinshugi* movement in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, modern Shin Buddhist doctrinal studies of the Ōtani-ha has tended to focus on individual awakening of Other-Power faith through the realization of one's finite nature. Critics of this approach have argued that it lacks social consideration of 'benefit for others,' which is an essential aspect of Mahāyāna Buddhism.<sup>1</sup>"

Kiyozawa Manshi (1868-1903) was a Meiji-period Japanese philosopher and Buddhist minister belonging to the Higashi Honganji denomination 大谷派. As noted in the quotation above, his thought has been being criticized by some researchers for its supposed defects in regard to society and ethics. Such critics have argued that his thought lapses into self-absorption and complete acceptance of society as it is. In addressing this panel's topic of "benefit for others", we need to reconsider this issue of Kiyozawa's apparent complete acceptance of society as it is.

Japanese scholarship on Kiyozawa's thought and "*Seishinshugi*" 「精神主義」 has strongly tended to understand the basic standpoint of his thought in terms of "如意なるもの、不如意なるもの (nyoinarumono funyoinarumono)", a phrase

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that Kiyozawa used to translate ideas from Epictetus. In English, this phrase means 'in one's power, not in one's power,' or more simply, 'as one likes, not as one likes'. Scholars have understood these words to apply not only to his thought but also to the basic standpoint of *Seishinshugi*.

When we look back on the history of scholarship on Kiyozawa, we can find criticisms of Kiyozawa on this point. It seems difficult to develop "social consideration of benefitting others" from his thought. However, if we were to define his thought in terms of consideration of universal deliverance for human beings, his thought contains not only aspirations for individual deliverance but also aspirations for social development. In the diary *Rōsenki* 臘扇記, for example, he notes that the "mind of taking refuge 歸命心", which is the religious mind, develops into the "universal harmonious mind 和合心", the "social mind 社交心", the "sympathetic mind 同情心", and the "mind of compassion 慈悲心"<sup>2</sup>. Such phrases show that Kiyozawa insisted on the social development of the religious mind. Elsewhere, he notes that the religious mind is the will to avoid evils and to practice virtues 避惡就善の意志, which is given to one by the Absolute, or Tathāgata.<sup>3</sup> This signifies a revolution from the religious mind to ethical practice. However, there have been many critiques of Kiyozawa's "如意なるもの、不如意なるもの" as lacking social consideration, and of his thought as completely submissive and accepting of society as it is. Therefore, in this paper, we will reconsider Kiyozawa's "如意なるもの、不如意なるもの" and attempt to resolve the above-mentioned problems.

## 2. On the History of the Study of Kiyozawa's Thought in Japan

In his diary *Rōsenki* 臘扇記 on Oct. 12, 1898, Kiyozawa wrote the following:

○如意なるものと不如意なるものあり 如意なるものは意見動作及欣厭な

2 『清沢満之全集』 *Kiyozawa Manshi Zenshū* (The Collected Works of Kiyozawa Manshi, Hereafter abbreviated KMZ), KMZ, Vol. 8, p. 363.

3 Ibid.

り 不如意なるものは身体財産名誉及官爵なり 己の所作に属するものと  
 否らざるものとなり 如意なるものに対しては吾人は自由なり制限及妨害  
 を受くることなきなり 不如意なるものに対しては吾人は微弱なり奴隷な  
 り他の掌中にあるなり 此区分を誤想するときは吾人は妨害に遭ひ悲歎号  
 泣に陥り神人を怨謗するに至るなり 如意の区分を守るものは抑圧せら  
 る、ことなく妨害を受くることなく人を謗らす天を怨みす人に傷けられず  
 人を傷けず天下に怨敵なきなり<sup>4</sup>

Of things some are in our power, and others are not. In our power are  
 opinion, movement towards a thing, desire, aversion (turning from a  
 thing); and in a word, whatever are our own acts: not in our power are  
 the body, property, reputation, offices (magisterial power), and in a word,  
 whatever are not our own acts. And the things in our power are by  
 nature free, not subject to restraint nor hindrance: but the things not in  
 our power are weak, slavish, subject to restraint, in the power of others.  
 Remember then that if you think the things which are by nature slavish  
 to be free, and the things which are in the power of others to be your  
 own, you will be hindered, you will lament, you will be disturbed, you will  
 blame both gods and men: but if you think that only which is your own  
 to be your own, and if you think that what is another's, as it really is,  
 belongs to another, no man will ever compel you, no man will hinder you,  
 you will never blame any man, you will accuse no man, you will do nothing  
 involuntarily (against your will), no man will harm you, you will have  
 no enemy, for you will not suffer any harm. (George Long. 1877. p. 379.)

This quotation has received much attention from Japanese researchers. Past  
 scholarship on Kiyozawa's thought has often taken this quotation as clearly  
 indicating the basic standpoint of his thought. The source of this understand-  
 ing probably comes from the work of Yasumaru Yoshio 安丸良夫. Yasumaru  
 identified the phrase “如意不如意” from this passage as expressing the essence

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4 KMZ. Vol. 8, p. 356.

of “*seishinshugi*” [精神主義], and he interpreted the cutting off of “不如意,” or that which is not in one’s power, as implying the abandonment of efforts toward social reform. Thus, Kiyozawa’s religious belief become closely associated with unconditional and complete acceptance 無条件的な全肯定 of society as it is.<sup>5</sup> Thereafter, probably due to Yasumaru’s influence, Fukusima Hirotaka 福島寛隆, Akamatu Tessin 赤松徹真, Kawamoto Yosiaki 川本義昭 and others also developed arguments critical of Kiyozawa based on this phrase “in one’s power, not in one’s power” 如意不如意.

In addition, Hishiki Masaharu 菱木政晴 more recently insisted that Kiyozawa’s thought entailed unconditional and complete acceptance of society as it is, and thus an abandonment of attempts to reform society, because social problems are ‘not in one’s power’ 不如意. According to this viewpoint, Kiyozawa’s ideological position is that of “unconditional obedience to the *Tathāgata*”. Kondo Shuntaro’s 近藤俊太郎 viewpoint is similar to Hishiki’s in this regard.

Both Hishiki and Kondo argue that this ideological tendency is shared by Kiyozawa and Akegarasu Haya 暁烏敏, a close and loyal follower of Kiyozawa’s. For example, Kondo claims that Kiyozawa’s use of the phrase “not in one’s power” 不如意 and Akegarasu’s use of the term “obedience” 服従 indicate this shared viewpoint. The basis for this argument can perhaps be found in connections such as the following; Kiyozawa translated Epictetus’s “Encheiridion (manual)” as saying we are “weak and slavish” (微弱なり奴隷なり *bijyakunari doreinari*) toward things “not in our power,” whereas Akegarasu, in his “Essay on Obedience” [服従論] published in the *Seishinkai* 精神界 journal in 1902, says that a believer in the *Tathāgata* will adopt a “slavish and obedient” attitude toward others.

Regarding the interpretation of “如意不如意” among modern scholars of Shinran *kyōgaku*, or Shinran doctrinal studies, Nawa Tatsunori 名和達宣 indicates that this phrase does not represent the conclusion of Kiyozawa’s faith, but rather momentum toward recognition of the distinction 分限の自覚 between

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5 Yasumaru Yosio. 1976. p. 334.

'the sphere of action of one's self' and that of the Tathāgata.<sup>6</sup> And according to Hisaki Yukio's 久木幸男 *Examination of criticisms toward Kiyozawa Manshi* 検証清沢満之批判, although this phrase of Kiyozawa's indicates the entrance of Kiyozawa's seeking after truth, it is not the peak of his faith; thus, critics have mistakenly treated the doorway as the inner room.<sup>7</sup>

However, according to Epictetus, the correct attitude toward “如意不如意” is an extremely important matter (p. 379). He claims that it is very important that we aim to reach this mental state, which he describes as critical for philosophers. We should carefully consider what Epictetus intended to say because Kiyozawa's phrase is after all a translation of Epictetus's thought.

### 3. The Problem of “A Lecture about *Seishinshugi*” 「精神主義」 〔明治三十五年講演〕

Keeping these matters in mind, let us change perspectives. There was evidence showing that Kiyozawa's thought implied a slavish and obedient attitude toward society. “A Lecture about *Seishinshugi*,” which was published after Kiyozawa's death, mentions the following: “又私共は、社会の不足弊害等に対して、之れを満たし、之れを正さんとも敢てせんのである。精神主義より云へば、如来の光明は無限であつて、社会に満ちたるのであるから、それに不足や弊害のあらうとは思ひませぬ。之に不足弊害のあるやうに見るのは、私共の心の至らないのであります。”<sup>8</sup> (Concerning harmful effects or shortage of provisions in society, we need not supply them or cover them. According to “*Seishinshugi* 精神主義”, we don't think that the shortage of provisions are harmful because Amida's Light is infinite and present everywhere in society. If you feel harmful effects or shortage of provisions, your mind is still undeveloped, and you have to cultivate your mind.)

6 Nawa Tatsunori. 2016. “The “Excavating” of Kiyozawa Manshi: Rōsen-ki as a Cross-section.” p. 262.

7 See Hisaki Yukio. 1995. p. 193. He says that “玄関と奥座敷とを間違えた”.

8 KMZ, vol. 6, pp. 167-.

It can readily be imagined that the image of Kiyozawa's social attitudes had been molded by words like these. However, in recent years, Yamamoto Nobuhiro 山本伸裕 claimed that there is an important problem with "A Lecture about *Seishinshugi*". According to Yamamoto, this lecture was actually written by Akegarasu. To elaborate, four years after Kiyozawa's death, Akegarasu obtained a notebook containing someone's notes on Kiyozawa's lecture. Akegarasu then wrote a composition in order to introduce these notes to readers of the journal. There is evidence to show that it was written by Akegarasu. In particular, Akegarasu himself described such circumstances in a footnote in the journal.<sup>9</sup>

Moreover, Yamamoto's dissertation compared this lecture with others by Kiyozawa, revealing the lack of credibility of "A Lecture about *Seishinshugi*."

For example, consider the following sentences. The first is found in "A Lecture about *Seishinshugi*", while the second is found in "*The Diary Rōsenki*":

無限の大悲に乗托して、安心したものは、自由である。…中略…即ち此場合の自由とは、自分の心の中に、「他人の事に進んで服従する」と云ふ、自由であります。<sup>10</sup>

(Those who ride upon the Infinite's compassion and attain peace of mind are free. ... Thus, the freedom in this case is freedom by which, within our minds, we voluntarily obey others.)

決して他人に服従すべき必要なきなり 他人も亦吾人を服従すべき必要なきなり 故に他人と我人とは同等の位置に住すべきなり<sup>11</sup>

(There is certainly no need to obey others; likewise, there is no need for others to obey me. Therefore, others and I reside in an equal position.)

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9 See *Seishinkai magazine*. 1907. 7-6.

10 KMZ, vol. 6, p. 169.

11 KMZ, vol. 8, p. 427.

“A Lecture about *Seishnshugi*” greatly contrasts with the “*The Diary Rōsenki*” 臘扇記 in its use of the term “obedience” 服従. Here we need to reconsider what the basic standpoint of Kiyozawa’s thought is. Moreover, we should reconsider Kiyozawa’s views about what is “in our power, not in our power”, studying not only Kiyozawa’s understanding but also Epictetus’s. This is because the phrase “如意なるもの…” highlighted in Kiyozawa’s diary is not his own creation; rather, it is merely his translation.

#### 4. What is “In Our Power, Not in Our Power”

Nearly a month after beginning to write *Rōsenki*, Kiyozawa went to Tokyo. There he borrowed a book from Sawayanagi Masatarō 沢柳政太郎. The book was named *The Discourses of Epictetus; with the Encheiridion and Fragments*. We can identify the book used by Kiyozawa as the 1877 edition of the translation by George Long.

From September 27, Kiyozawa began to write down quotations from this book. In the entry for October 12, rather than directly quoting the English, he tried to translate quotations into Japanese. The translation is comprised of excerpts from sections 1 through 23 of “The Encheiridion, or Manual”. ‘如意不如意’ are the first words of Kiyozawa’s translation of section 1. According to a Japanese dictionary, ‘如意 nyoi’ means ‘思いのままになること、自在なこと unrestricted or free, etc.’ By contrast, the words ‘不如意’ thus mean ‘restricted or unfree’.

According to some Japanese researchers, the portion of Kiyozawa’s translation quoted above in section 2 suggests an attitude of shutting himself off from the outside world and sinking into his own mind. There are some grounds for this view. They note that in Kiyozawa’s translation, it says that everyone ought to be slavish and obedient ‘微弱ナリ 奴隷ナリ’ toward others and the external world.

However, contrary to such interpretations, the main claim of this passage is that one should be ethical regardless of one’s body, property, reputation, or offices (magisterial power). For instance, Epictetus says, “If any of you,

withdrawing himself from externals, turns to his own will (προαίρεσις) to exercise it and to improve it by labour, so as to make it conformable to nature, elevated, free, unrestrained, unimpeded, faithful, modest; and if he has learned that he who desires or avoids the things which are not in his power can neither be faithful nor free, but of necessity he must change with them and be tossed about with them as in tempest, and of necessity must subject himself to others who have the power to procure or prevent what he desires or would avoid<sup>12</sup>. Therefore, Epictetus hold that what is most important is to be indifferent toward externals, such as one's body, property, reputation, or offices. That is, regardless of whether one becomes ill or not, obtains a lot of property or not, acquires a good reputation or not, or attains a high office or not, one should be indifferent to such results while always acting ethically. Personal virtues and worldly values are not always the same, so worldly values that we deem to be good are not always good. Epictetus generally tells us that to avoid slavishly following externals, such as body, property, reputation, or offices, is the most virtuous life, and that you should live in accord with nature or God.<sup>13</sup> Living in accordance with nature is one of Epictetus's main points. Externals can be understood as things that are under the control of others and not under the control of one's will. Good and bad lie within the scope of one's will or one's power 如意. One has to choose and examine virtuous and good things apart from externals. For that reason, Epictetus distinguishes what is "in our power" from what is "not in our power." He goes on to say that what is "in one's power 如意" is the rational faculty of moral approval and disapproval, the faculty of pursuing an object or avoiding it, and the faculties of desire and

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12 George Long. 1877. p. 16.

13 For instance, see *George Long Book*, 2. Chapter, 14. he says, "The philosophers say that we ought first to learn that there is a God and that he provides for all things; also that it is not possible to conceal from him our acts, or even our intentions and thoughts. The next thing is to learn what is the nature of Gods; for such as they are discovered to be, he, who would please and obey them, must try with all his power to be like them." (pp. 141-2.)



aversion.<sup>14</sup> Thus, for Epictetus, the nature of “in one’s power 如意” is not simply a state of complete, passive acceptance, but the faculty of moral approval and disapproval.<sup>15</sup>

Epictetus stresses that we should act ethically regardless of our status. For example, he describes how Socrates and several others were ordered by the thirty tyrants to arrest Leon on the island of Salamis and to bring him to be put to death, but Socrates refused to obey the order.<sup>16</sup> This example unmistakably shows us that Epictetus is not intending to merely disregard social problems; rather, through his discussion of what is “in one’s power”, he intends to demonstrate what moral character is.

Therefore, in his diary *Rōsenki* on April 5, Kiyozawa wrote the following:

エピクテト氏の所謂エクステルナルスに三種の別あり (一) 忘念 (二) 他人 (三) 外物 是なり …外物は畢竟吾人に無関係 (インジファレント) のものたるべきなり…決して他人に服従すべき必要なきなり 他人も亦吾人を服従すべき必要なきなり…<sup>17</sup>

There are three types of externals that Epictetus describes: (1) delusion of losing sight of oneself (2) other people, (3) external things.... External things ultimately should be indifferent to us.... There is certainly no need to obey others; likewise, there is no need for others to obey me.

14 Cf. George Long. 1877. pp. 2-5.

15 Epictetus says, “Of all the faculties (except that which I shall soon mention), you will find not one which is capable of contemplating itself, and, consequently, not capable either of approving or disapproving.” (George Long, p. 2.) The faculty with such a capacity which he goes on to describe is none other than the rational faculty.

16 George Long says in his book’s footnote; “Socrates with others was ordered by the Thirty tyrants, who at that time governed Athens, to arrest Leon in the island of Salamis and to bring him to be put to death. But Socrates refused to obey the order. Few men would have done what he did under the circumstances. (From Plato’s Apology; M. Antoninus, vii. 66.)” (George Long. 1877. p. 319.)

17 KMZ. Vol. 8, pp. 426-7.

Judging from this quotation, it is evident that Kiyozawa understood Epictetus's thought correctly, and concluded "There is certainly no need to obey others; likewise, there is no need for others to obey me."

A remarkable statement of Kiyozawa's is his claim that we should obey (or follow) the Tathāgata, but not obey external things or others. On the one hand, the article 「服従論」 by Akegarasu claims that we should obey (or follow) not just the Tathāgata but other people, as well. Therefore, Kiyozawa and Akegarasu have different opinions about the use of the terms "obey" and "slave".

Kiyozawa says, "There is certainly no need to obey others; likewise, there is no need for others to obey me. Therefore, others and I reside in an equal position." Why then did Akegarasu say that we should obey others?

##### 5. Why did This Ideological Shift Take Place?

Why did this ideological shift take place? There is a strong possibility that Akegarasu, who is a very creative thinker, got a hint from 'Nyoī funyoi', and introduced to it new thoughts of his own. Kiyozawa's Japanese translation of Epictetus can be interpreted in various ways; perhaps his translation invited a certain misreading, that is, that one should slavishly obey the demands of one's body, property, reputation, or offices. Perhaps this is how Akegarasu interpreted Kiyozawa's translation, but such was certainly not Kiyozawa's intention. Otherwise, how could we explain Kiyozawa and Akegarasu's polar opposite uses of the terms "slavishness" and "obedience" 「奴隸」と「服従」.

*The Rosenki Diary* was read freely by Kiyozawa's good friends and close followers. Misinterpreting the meaning of his translations of Epictetus, new ideas were born.

At the very end of his life, Kiyozawa wrote the following in his diary:

如来の奴隸となれ、其他のもの<sup>18</sup>の奴隸となること勿れ

(Be the slave of the Tathāgata, but never be a slave of any others.)

Thus, at the very end of his life, he spoke out against slavishly following and obeying external things and others. Is this not a warning against completely accepting society as it is? These ideas arose against the backdrop of the criticisms of “Seishinshugi” that were being made at the time, which likely forced him to rethink what “obedience” is. One can say this criticism provided an opportunity for Kiyozawa to reconsider the foundational facets of “Seishinshugi”.

As stated above, Kiyozawa attached great importance to never being a slave of externals. This aspect of Kiyozawa’s thought has been neglected up until now, but it is critical for understanding his ethical views. I hope that this paper serves as gateway to further study of the idea of “benefit for others” that is present in Kiyozawa’s thought.

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18 “明治36年当用日記抄” (meiji 36 (1902) touyounikkisyou) KMZ. Vol. 8, p. 454. See also “執着は奴隷心の源なり” 有限無限録 (“Shyū tyaku ha Doreishin no Minamoto nari” *Yūgen Mugen Roku* 53 KMZ. 2, pp. 123-4).

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