

# Why Should 'Birth in the Pure Land' Take Place in this Present Life?

—Soga Ryōjin's View of 'Benefiting Others'—

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## Introduction

In 1967, Soga Ryōjin 曾我量深 (1875–1971), at the advanced age of 92, gave a series of lectures entitled “*Ōjō to jōbutsu* 往生と成仏” (Birth in the Pure Land and the Attainment of Buddhahood), in which he proposed a daring thesis that “Birth in the Pure Land should take place in this present life, not at or after the moment of death in the future.” Since it was contradictory to the accepted definition of the term and went far beyond the traditional concept of *ōjō* in Pure Land Buddhism, Soga's interpretation of Shinran's understanding of this term has been one of the focuses of doctrinal controversies in Shin Buddhist Studies for the past half century. In general, Soga's argument has been supported, on the one hand, by progressive groups and individuals in the Shin Buddhist community, while, on the other, criticized by conservative scholars and orthodox priests. Within the modern doctrinal studies of the Ōtani-ha, in which Soga occupied the highest position of authority in the 1960s, his radically new understanding of “Birth in the Pure Land” was readily accepted by its progressive members and became the dominant interpretation among the students and scholars at Otani University. In recent years, however, Soga's thesis has been strongly criticized by Odani Nobuchiyo, emeritus professor of Otani University, which has rekindled the controversy on Shinran's understanding of *ōjō*.<sup>1</sup>

I cannot respond to Prof. Odani's criticism here in this short presentation, but I would like to point out one of the fundamental problems in his reading

of Soga and Shinran. Adopting the philological method of modern Buddhist Studies, Prof. Odani meticulously examines the usage of the term *ōjō* in the Pure Land sutras and commentaries, in Shinran's works, as well as the transcripts of lectures by scholar-priests during the Edo period, and concludes that Soga's interpretation is simply "wrong."<sup>2</sup> Prof. Odani, however, does not pay attention to the social and historical contexts of the radical discourses of Shinran and Soga in their final years. In the context of the 1967 lectures, Soga's stretched interpretation of *ōjō* was related closely to the idea of "benefiting others," which he came to see as the essential part of Jōdo Shinshū that needed to be clarified by any means in the contemporary world. In his talk, Soga repeatedly quotes Shinran's later works, such as the *Shōzōmatsu wasan*, and Chapter Four of the *Tannishō*, focusing on the passage in which Shinran speaks about "the heart that desires to bring all sentient beings to Buddhahood" (度衆生心 *doshujōshin*) and "the compassion of the Pure Land" (浄土の慈悲 *jōdo no jihi*).

When Soga maintained that *ōjō* should take place in this life, he was fully aware that he was stretching the meaning of the central concept in the Pure Land tradition. This is comparable to Shinran's emphasis in his later years that people who realized true faith join "the company of the truly settled *in this present life*" (現生正定聚 *genshō shōjōju*), which clearly contradicts the orthodox understanding of *shōjōju* in the afterlife in the Pure Land.<sup>3</sup> In his talk, Soga acknowledged, repeatedly, that his interpretation of *ōjō* might be considered a stretched one, but he maintained that, at least for the

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1 Odani Nobuchiyo 2015 and 2017. See also Inoue Kenjun 2017, Inada Eishin 2017, and Nishi Yoshito 2017 in Naitō Tomoyasu ed. 2017. The latter three papers were originally presented in a panel entitled "Ima, *ōjō* wo kangaeru 今、往生を考える" at the 15th IASBS conference in 2011 at Otani University.

2 Such judgmental expressions as "過失," "過ち," "誤解に過ぎない" are used in Odani 2015.

3 Concerning the significance of Shinran's emphasis on *genshō shōjōju*, see Inoue Takami 2015, 2016a, 2016b, and Ama Toshimaro 2017, pp. 198–211.

interpretation of this critical term in Shin Buddhism, such a stretching was inevitable today.<sup>4</sup> In what follows, I will examine Soga's 1967 lectures, paying attention to the social and historical contexts, and demonstrate that he was trying to present quite a positive view of "benefiting others" on the Pure Land Path, which is meaningful in contemporary society, though not adequately recognized in Shin Buddhist Studies today.

### 1. Soga Ryōjin and the Ōtani-ha during the turbulent 1950s and '60s

The postwar Buddhist reform led by the Shinjinsha (真人社 Society of True Persons), as discussed in the previous presentation by Jeff Schroeder,<sup>5</sup> began to bear fruit in the Ōtani-ha during the 1950s. The modern Doctrinal Studies (近代教学 *Kindaikyōgaku*) of Kiyozawa Manshi was officially recognized as significant for the first time in 1956 by the chief administrator Miyatani Hōgan 宮谷法含 (1882-1962), in the White Paper of the denomination. In 1959, Soga became the head of the *Jitōryō* (侍董寮), the highest authority in doctrinal matters and in 1961, after the completion of the 700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Shinran's death, Kurube Shin'yū 訓覇信雄 (1906-1998), the passionate organizer of the Shinjinsha movement, succeeded Miyatani as chief administrator of the denomination. In the same year, 86-year-old Soga was appointed as president of Otani University. In the following year, the Ōtani-ha initiated the Movement for the Association of Fellow Companions (同朋会運動 *Dōbōkai undō*) under the leadership of Kurube, and Soga firmly supported this movement, which emphasized education and the proper understanding of Shinran's teaching in contemporary society.

In spite of his great age, Soga actively engaged in lectures throughout this

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4 *Soga Ryōjin senshū*, vol. 12, pp. 193, 211: 私の言葉などは多少お聖教の言葉を拡大して解釈しておるものと言わなければならぬと思うのでありますけれども、しかしながら、如来の思召しと、また御開山聖人の本当の思召しと、そういうものを案ずるときになれば、今の時代には、やはり拡大して解釈するということがこれは止むを得ないことではなからうかと、こう私は思う。(p.211)

5 Jeff Schroeder 2017. See also Inoue Yasuyuki 2017.

period, and notable ones were published and included in the *Soga Ryōjin senshū*, vol. 12 (1972). One of the continuing themes in his talks was “dying [of one’s old self] in faith, and finding [new] life in the Vow,” which appeared in its prototypical form in the 1948 article “Behold the Man” (この人を見よ *Konohito wo miyo*)<sup>6</sup>, which developed into the famous 1961 lecture “Die in faith; live in the Vow” (信に死し願に生きよ *Shin ni shishi gan ni ikiyo*)<sup>7</sup>. This, then, reached its radical conclusion in the 1967 lectures in which he stated “‘Birth in the Pure Land’ ought to take place in this present life, not at or after the moment of physical death in the future.”

## 2. Soga Ryōjin’s Epochal Interpretation of *Ōjō* in 1967

Soga’s lectures entitled “*Ōjō to jōbutsu*” were delivered in 1967, the year he retired from the position of president at Otani University. The spirit of the Dōbōkai movement was rising in the first five-year period, and there were great demands for his insightful lectures from highly-motivated promoters of the movement from all over Japan. Responding to their request, the 92-year-old Soga travelled extensively and gave passionate and thoughtful lectures to responsive audiences. These lectures, including lively question-and-answer sessions which usually followed, were recorded and published within a couple of months in the monthly journal *Chūdō* 中道 (Middle Way, vols. 56–66) so

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6 Quoted in Jeff Schroeder’s paper (p. 4): “dying in the vow and finding [new] life in the vow” (本願に死して本願に生きた). This is Soga’s eulogy for “the man,” Shinran. (*Shinjin* 真人, vol. 1, p. 4).

7 This was Soga’s memorial lecture on the occasion of the 700th anniversary of Shinran’s death, and delivered to a huge audience at Kyoto Kaikan Hall on April 20, 1961. The other speakers that day were Suzuki Daisetsu (1870–1966) and Kaneko Daiei (1881–1976). See *Soga Ryōjin senshū*, vol. 12, pp. 74–89.

As Soga discusses in the first part of this lecture, the title is based on the phrase “*zennen myōjū gonen soku shō* 前念命終後念即生” (in the preceding moment, life ends; in the next moment, you are immediately born) in Shandao’s *Ōjōraisan* 往生礼讚, which Shinran interpreted in his *Gutokushō* 愚禿鈔 as the critical moment of the arising of faith in Amida Buddha’s Original Vow.

that they could be shared by the active members of the Dōbō community. When we read the record of these lectures in chronological order and trace Soga's thought process, it is possible to see how he reached that radical interpretation of *ōjō* and why he presented it that way in this year.

### Lectures at Jōshūji on April 11-12

Soga's two-day talk at Jōshūji 浄秀寺 in Takefu city, Fukui Prefecture, was probably one of the earliest among the series of lectures entitled "*Ōjō to jōbutsu*,"<sup>8</sup> and it is at this initial stage that we witness how the idea of "benefiting others" was closely related in Soga's mind to the daring thesis that "Birth in the Pure Land should take place in this present life."

Apparently, there was no predetermined theme for this lecture. In its opening, Soga says, "There is no special title for my talk today (何を話しようかと、特別に題もないのであります<sup>9</sup>が、" and then, he begins to speak about the *Tannishō* and criticizes the tendency in popular *Tannishō* books to focus on Chapter Two ("Just say the Nenbutsu and be saved by Amida."), omitting the most significant opening line of Chapter One, in which Shinran explicates the critical moment of the awakening of faith and the immediate entering into *shōjōju* 正定聚 (the company of the truly settled).<sup>10</sup> Soga quotes:

At the very moment when we are moved to utter the *nenbutsu* by a firm faith that our birth in the Pure Land is attained solely by virtue of the inconceivable working of Amida's Original Vow, we are enabled to share

8 Soga Ryōjin 1967 a-n. According to the *Soga Ryōjin senshū geppō* 曾我量深選集月報 No. 12 (p. 7), there was an earlier lecture with the same title, which was published in the journal *Ganshō* 願生, No. 22 (March, 1967).

9 Soga Ryōjin 1967 a, p. 248.

10 Soga Ryōjin 1967 a, p. 258. English translation: BDK English Tripitaka 105-II. Translated from the Japanese by Bandō Shōjun in collaboration with Harold Stewart (Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 1996), p. 3 (with slight modifications).

in its benefits that embrace all and forsake none. (弥陀の誓願不思議にたすけられまいらせて、往生をばとぐるなりと信じて念仏もうさんとおもいたつところのおこるとき、すなわち摂取不捨の利益にあずけしめたまうなり)

After discussing and confirming the importance of these words, Soga moves onto *ōjō* and *jōbutsu*. This development seems to be due to the association of the “immediate entering into *shōjōju*” with the “immediate attainment of *ōjō*” (即得往生 *sokutoku ōjō*) in the thought of Shinran and Soga. This topic is introduced in the following way: “Recently, I’ve come to understand various matters more clearly concerning *ōjō* and *jōbutsu*.” (自分はこの頃、自分でいろいろハッキリしてきましたことはですね、往生ということと、それから成仏ということです). First, Soga points out that Shinran not only spoke of “Birth in the Pure Land” but also the “attainment of Buddhahood” in his works, and Soga quotes the following three verses from the *Shōzōmatsu wasan*.<sup>11</sup>

Concerning the aspiration for supreme enlightenment in the Pure Land path,

We are urged to realize the mind that seeks to attain Buddhahood;

The mind that seeks to attain Buddhahood

Is itself the mind that seeks to save all sentient beings.

浄土の大菩提心は 願作仏心をすすめしむ すなわち願作仏心を 度衆生心となづけたり

The mind that seeks to save all sentient beings

Is directed to us through Amida’s Vow of wisdom.

Those who realize this true entrusting that is directed to us

Attain great, complete nirvana.

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11 Soga Ryōjin 1967 a, pp.271-72, Soga Ryōjin 1967 b, p.282. English translation: *The Collected Works of Shinran*, vol.1 (hereafter CWS), pp.403-4

度衆生心ということは 弥陀智願の廻向なり 廻向の信樂うるひとは 大般涅槃をさとるなり

Persons who enter Amida's directing of virtue to beings

And realize the mind that seeks to attain Buddhahood

Completely abandon their self-power directing of merit,

Thus benefiting sentient beings boundlessly.

如来の廻向に帰入して 願作仏心をうるひとは 自力の廻向をすてはてて  
利益有情はきわもなし

Here, Soga emphasizes that if there is only “the mind that seeks to attain Buddhahood,” without “the mind to save all sentient beings,” the Pure Land path cannot be Mahāyāna (Great Vehicle). “If people on the Pure Land path are only saved by Amida Buddha, and thereby attain ‘Birth in the Pure Land’ or Buddhahood, that is not Mahāyāna Buddhism.” (浄土門の人は、ただ仏に助けていただいて、そうして往生したり成仏したりすると言うならば、それは大乘仏教というものではあるまい<sup>12</sup>). Soga says that there was such a criticism in the days of Hōnen and Shinran as well, and the *Shōzōmatsu wasan* verses were Shinran’s response to it. Then, Soga immediately associates the *Shōzōmatsu wasan* with Chapter Four of the *Tannishō*, saying “Bearing these hymns in mind, we read the *Tannishō*. In the *Tannishō*, it should be Chapter Four” (で、この御和讃を念頭に置いて『歎異抄』を読む。『歎異抄』は第四条)<sup>13</sup> and he quotes:

There is a divergence between the compassion of the path of sages and that of the path of the Pure Land. The compassion of the path of sages commiserates with and cares for sentient beings, and yet it is least likely to succeed in liberating them as completely as could be wished. But the

12 Soga Ryōjin 1967 a, p. 271.

13 Soga Ryōjin 1967 a, p. 272; Soga Ryōjin 1967 b, pp. 279–80. English translation: BDK English Tripiṭaka 105-II, p. 5.

true compassion of the Pure Land path consists in saying the *nenbutsu*, thereby quickly attaining Buddhahood, and then benefiting all sentient beings with the heart of great compassion and kindness as fully as possible (慈悲に聖道・浄土のかわりめあり。聖道の慈悲というは、ものをあわれみ、かなしみ、はぐくむなり。しかれども、おもうがごとくたすけとぐること、きわめてありがたし。浄土の慈悲というは、念仏して、いそぎ仏になりて、大慈大悲心をもって、おもうがごとく衆生を利益するをいうべきなり)

The underlined phrase, “saying the *nenbutsu*, thereby quickly attaining Buddhahood” (念仏して、いそぎ仏になりて), is ambiguous and difficult to interpret, but by reading this with the *Shōzōmatsu wasan* in mind, Soga tries to grasp what Shinran really meant by these words. It is important to note here that Soga’s intensive reflection this year on “Birth in the Pure Land” and the “attainment of Buddhahood” was related closely to the clarification of this “true compassion” on the Pure Land path.

He begins the second day of his lectures at Jōshūji by repeating the interpretation of Chapter Four of the *Tannishō*, in which he expresses the following remark:

There are people in Jōdoshinshū who think that if only they themselves are saved, that is wonderful, and that there is no need to save others — some actually understand the teaching of Jōdoshinshū to be that way. This kind of [half-hearted] reception makes me think that it is necessary for us to put forth our effort in order to clarify such ambiguities in the teaching from now on. (浄土真宗の人は、ただ自分さえ助かれればよい、人など助けることは要らんもんだ——そういうふうには、浄土真宗の教えはそういう教えだと、こう思っている人がありますね。まあ、そういうところにやっぱり教えというものをです、ハッキリしていく必要があると私は思うんですね<sup>14</sup>).

Soga suggests that the fundamental cause of this problem is the established exegetical theory called “*ōjō soku jōbutsu* 往生即成仏” (“Birth in the Pure Land” and the “attainment of Buddhahood” are at the same time [in the future; at or immediately after the moment of death]).

In the traditional studies of Jōdoshinshū (*shūgaku* 宗学), it has been told “*ōjō soku jōbutsu*” from old times. It might be a logical explanation, but if you accept it as the established theory, then, “Birth in the Pure Land” becomes meaningless. (真宗の宗学では昔から往生即成仏と、こう言うてある。それはまあそういうことも或いは言えるかもしれないけれどもですね、しかしそうちゃんと決めてしまうと往生の意味がなくなる<sup>15</sup>).

After tenacious reflections on this dilemma, he says that he has reached the following conclusion, which requires a broad interpretation of *ōjō*.

If “Birth in the Pure Land” and the “attainment of Buddhahood” are both in the future [and simultaneous], then, there is no point at all in being born in the Pure Land. ... Since the attainment of Buddhahood is the final, true goal, “Birth in the Pure Land” ought to take place in this present life. (往生も成仏もみな未来ならばですね、一向、往生ということは意味がないですね。…成仏ということが最後の本当の目的であるならば、往生というものは現在に往生しなければならぬ<sup>16</sup>).

Soga supports this conclusion by referring to the passage on the fulfillment of the Original Vow (*hongan jōjumon* 本願成就文) in the *Larger Sutra of the Eternal Life*, which Shinran considered to be the crux of the “true teaching”<sup>17</sup>:

14 Soga Ryōjin 1967 b, p. 281.

15 Soga Ryōjin 1967 b, p. 287.

16 Soga Ryōjin 1967 b, pp. 289–90.

17 Soga Ryōjin 1967 b, pp. 293–97. English translation: CWS, p. 639.

“All sentient beings, as they hear the Name, realize even one thought-moment of *shinjin* and joy, which is directed to them from Amida’s sincere mind, and aspiring to be born in that land, they immediately attain Birth and dwell in the stage of non-retrogression. (諸有衆生 聞其名号 信心歡喜 乃至一念 至心回向。願生彼国 即得往生 住不退轉)”.

In this talk and the subsequent “*Ôjô to jôbutsu*,” series, Soga’s argument consistently evolved around this passage on the fulfillment of the Vow.

### Lectures in Okazaki on June 26-27

In his lectures on June 26 and 27 at Okazaki Kyômusho Dôbô Kaikan 岡崎教務所同朋会館, Soga emphasizes that “Shinran realized the ‘true spirit’ (本当の精神) of *hongan jôjumon* for the very first time in the long history of the Pure Land tradition, or the *Larger Sutra of the Eternal Life*,”<sup>18</sup> and maintains that we need to grasp his inspiration in the following glossing in the *Gutokushô* 愚禿鈔 (Notes of the “Foolish Stubble-Headed One”)<sup>19</sup>,

“Entrusting of oneself to the Primal Vow” (信受本願) corresponds to [Shandao’s phrase]“in the preceding moment, life ends...” (前念命終)

This means that “one immediately enters the group of the truly settled” [Tanluan],

“one immediately enters the stage of the definitely settled” [Nāgārjuna],

or “one is termed a definitely-settled bodhisattva.”

“Immediately attaining birth” (即得往生) corresponds to

“in the next moment, you are immediately born.” (後念即生) [Shandao]

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18 Soga Ryôjin 1967 d, p. 66 : 本願成就の文は昔から読まれているのだが、親鸞聖人に  
いたって始めて、長い浄土教の歴史——大無量寿経の歴史——の中ではじめて本願成  
就の文の本当の精神をくみとり、新しい読み方というものを見出されたのであります。

19 Soga Ryôjin 1967 d, pp. 66-75. English translation: CWS, p. 594

This insightful reading of *hongan jōjumon*, correlating it with the *Gutokushō* note, was the basis of Soga's 1961 lecture "Die in faith; live in the Vow," and he continues to apply it, persuasively, throughout the "*Ōjō to jōbutsu*"<sup>20</sup> lectures. In the case of his talk in Okazaki, he relates this spiritual "ending of life" (*myōjū* 命終) and "immediate birth" (*sokushō* 即生) to "the mind to save all sentient beings" (*doshujōshin* 度衆生心) and "benefiting sentient beings"<sup>21</sup> (*riyaku ujō* 利益有情), quoting the same three *Shōzōmatsu wasan* above.<sup>21</sup> In the concluding part of these lectures, Soga states that "At the moment when we are saved, our true spiritual life begins (我らが助かったというところから、真の宗教生活がはじまるのであります)." Thus, his broad interpretation of *ōjō* was induced by his conviction that our *shinjin* should lead naturally to "true living,"<sup>22</sup> which consists in "benefiting all sentient beings with the heart of great compassion and kindness."

In the evening of June 26 (Kiyozawa Manshi's birthday), after the first day's lecture, young priests gathered at Jōmyōji 浄妙寺 in Okazaki city to talk with Soga in a roundtable discussion, where he responded to a question and stated:

Although we are foolish beings full of blind passions, when we "hear the Name, and realize *shinjin* with joy," we are equal to Buddhas. It should be in that state that the returning aspect (of Amida's directing of virtue) emerges. It is told (in Chapter Four), "quickly attaining Buddhahood, and

20 See for example, Soga Ryōjin 1967 g, pp. 91-93, Soga Ryōjin 1967 k, pp. 160-62.

21 Soga Ryōjin 1967 d, pp. 75-83.

22 Soga's adoption of the phrase "true living" (真の生活、本当に生きること) in his interpretation of *ōjō* was perhaps influenced by D. T. Suzuki's rendering of "True Practice" as "True Living" in his translation of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*. In his lecture at Jōshūji on April 12, 1967, Soga expressed his support for Suzuki's understanding of Jōdoshinshū, which was being criticized at that time by conservative doctrinal scholars in the process of editing Suzuki's draft. See Soga Ryōjin 1967 b, pp. 300-302. 鈴木大拙先生のあれは間違っているんだと、あんなして得意になっているけれど、あれは間違っている…そんなこと言わないで、あれは結構だと…。こう私は思うんですよ。

benefiting all sentient beings with the heart of great compassion and kindness ...” since the future Buddhas are equal to the past and present Buddhas.

Persons who enter Amida's directing of virtue toward beings  
And realize the mind that seeks to attain Buddhahood  
Completely abandon their self-power directing of merit,  
Thus benefiting sentient beings boundlessly.

I think that these words of Shinran's should be interpreted in such a manner.

(われわれは煩惱具足の凡夫であるけれども、「聞其名号信心歡喜」すれば、諸仏と等しい者である。そういうところに還相というのは出て来るんじゃないですかね。「いそぎ仏になりて、大慈大悲心をもて…」(『歎異抄』第四条)とこう言いますのはね、未来仏も、過去の仏、現在の仏様に等しいんですからね。

如来の廻向に帰入して 願作仏心をうるひとは  
自力の廻向をすてはてて 利益有情はきわもなし (『正像末和讃』  
そういうように解釈すべきものではないか<sup>23</sup>と思います。)

In this way, Soga consistently correlates Chapter Four of the *Tannishō* with the *Shōzōmatsu wasan* in his “*Ōjō to jōbutsu*” lectures in 1967, which is significant for our understanding of his later thought since it reveals his positive view of “benefiting others” on the True Pure Land path, based on Shinran's later works.

23 Soga Ryōjin 1967 e, p. 198. See also Soga Ryōjin 1967 m “還相もまた現在にあり,” pp. 212-3: 還相というものを“未来”におくと、そういうのが『歎異抄』のお言葉でございます。けれども、『正像末和讃』をもって照らしてみると、還相もまた“現在”にあり一如来の廻向というものが本であります。如来の廻向という方から見ると、往相も“還相”もみな南無阿弥陀仏という中にあるのであって、そこに矛盾も撞着もないものであると、『正像末和讃』へ来ますとそういうふうに教えてある。そういうのであります。

### Concluding Remarks

Soga presented a radically new interpretation of *ōjō* in his 1967 lectures and stated “Our birth in the Pure Land’ ought to take place in this present life, at the very moment of the realization of Other-Power faith in us and our saying the *nenbutsu*, which is the fulfillment of Amida’s Original Vow.” He thought that such a “stretched” interpretation of the term *ōjō* was necessary in contemporary society in order to inspire and encourage people to receive Amida’s directing of virtue toward us, in saying the *nenbutsu*, and to take part in the true compassion of the Pure Land, “benefiting all sentient beings with the heart of great compassion and kindness, as fully as possible.”

Soga maintained that “birth in the Pure Land” meant the “beginning of true living,” which leads naturally to the attainment of Buddhahood in the future, at the time of physical death. He had a strong conviction that this reading conformed to the true “intention of the Tathāgata” (如来の思召し *nyorai no oboshimeshi*) in his usage of the term in the passage on the fulfillment of the Vow and Shinran’s inspired interpretation of it. In this respect, Soga’s thoughtful reading of *hongan jōjumon*, correlating it with the *Gutokushō* note, was very persuasive.

His message was well received among the followers of the *Dōbōkai* movement and his broad interpretation of *ōjō* became the dominant one in the Ōtani-ha’s doctrinal studies. Compared with the traditional emphasis on “birth in the Pure Land” at the moment of death, Soga’s rendering of *ōjō* as “true living” had a broader appeal to liberal intellectuals who were concerned with the social and political realities of Japan during the period of high economic growth.<sup>24</sup>

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24 There seems to be an echo of Soga’s talks in *Saigo no Shinran 最後の親鸞* (The Last Shinran, 1976) by Yoshimoto Takaaki 吉本隆明 (1924-2012), who also focused on Chapter Four of the *Tannishō* and emphasized that the crux of Shinran’s thought was his unique understanding of “the state of those who are truly settled,” which he considered almost the same as the attainment of the Pure Land itself, not after death but immediately at the moment of true entrusting.

The positive views of “benefiting others” in Shinran and Soga in their final years need to be clarified further in our studies of their thoughts. I hope the recently rekindled controversy on Shinran’s understanding of *ōjō* will take such a fruitful direction, rather than a continuation of unproductive argument on technical details. That was what Soga expected when he presented that daring thesis fifty years ago.<sup>25</sup>

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25 Soga Ryōjin 1967 h, pp. 202-3: やはり往生という言葉については色々の使い方があ  
るということを思うのでございますが、そういうことは、私はやはり、真宗教学と  
いうものが完成しておらんからそうなる。だから今日のわれわれは、今までの教学は  
完成しておらんのでありますからして、完全にするようにみんなが手を取って努力し  
てゆくべきそういう時機に到達したと私は思う。今までのお聖教だけでは或いは曖昧  
なことが沢山ありまして、だからして今日やはり教学というものを決定しなくてはな  
らぬと思います。そういう時機に達したと思います。何時まで経っても弁解的の—  
何か都合の悪いことがあると、これはああだ、あれはああだと—今までの宗学みた  
いな、どこまで行っても不徹底なことを言っている、あんなことで教学や宗学が終わ  
ったら大変だと思います。……今までのような程度の、ここにこうあるから、ここ  
にあああるからどうのと、そのような程度の生ぬるい研究に終わったならば、われわれ  
の浄土真宗は滅亡します。……そういう危機に到達しておると私は思います。だから  
して、しっかり皆さんが教えを明了にするように、皆さんが力を合わせ、また各自各  
自が自分の心を養うてゆかなければならぬ。

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- c. “Ōjō to jōbutsu” (April 12, at Jōshūji in Fukui Prefecture) published in *Chūdō*, No. 58 (August, 1967). Included in *Soga Ryōjin kōwaroku* 3, pp. 302-26.
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- . e. “Shinkō zadan 信仰座談” (June 26 at Jōmyōji 淨妙寺 in Okazaki City, Aichi Prefecture) published in *Chūdō*, No. 59 (September, 1967). Reprinted in *Shinran tonō taiwa 親鸞との対話* (Tokyo: Yayoi Shobō 彌生書房, 1995), pp. 178-200, with the title “Seishin to Busshitsu 精神と物質.”
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- . i. “Ōjō no igi nitsuite 往生の意義について” (September 18, at 大谷派東京教区育成員要請講座 in Shibu Onsen 渋温泉, Nagano Prefecture) published in *Chūdō*, No. 62 (December, 1967). Included in *Soga Ryōjin kōwaroku 4*, pp. 97-127.
- . j. “Ōjō no igi nitsuite” (September 19, in Shibu Onsen, Nagano Prefecture) published in *Chūdō*, No. 63 (January, 1968). Included in *Soga Ryōjin kōwaroku 4*, pp. 128-54.
- . k. “Ōjō no igi nitsuite” (September 19, in Shibu Onsen, Nagano Prefecture) published in *Chūdō*, No. 64 (February, 1968). Included in *Soga Ryōjin kōwaroku 4*, pp. 155-81.
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\* After I had presented this paper at Musashino University, Dr. Fujiwara Satoru kindly gave me a copy of his conference paper, which he had presented in 2016, dealing with Soga Ryōjin’s “Ōjō to jōbutsu” lectures in detail.

Fujiwara Satoru 藤原智 2016. “Soga Ryōjin no “Ōjō to jōbutsu” ron nitsuite: Shinran no “jōdo ni itaru” toiu hyōgen wo tōshite 曾我量深の「往生と成仏」論について——親鸞の「浄土にいたる」という表現を通して——,” presented at the 23<sup>rd</sup> Shinshū Otani-ha Kyōgaku Taikai 真宗大谷派教学大会, on July 3, 2016. (According to Dr. Fujiwara, this paper is going to be published in the *Shinran Kyōgaku* in the near future.)

