

much in keeping with nineteenth century European norms. He provocatively concludes, “what scholars see as Shinto extremism turns out to be transplanted European monarchism” (p. 230). Josephson then demonstrates how the state’s assurance of freedom of religious belief came hand-in-hand with continued (1) policing of religious organizations and practices, (2) persecution of “superstitious” beliefs and practices, and (3) intervention in people’s private lives, especially through ethics education. Josephson here means to challenge current understandings of modern secularism’s supposed recognition of a private sphere of belief immune from government intervention. These chapters also propose interventions in standard narratives of Orientalism and the history of religious studies by tracking how Japanese intellectuals infused their own notions of religion into Western academic discourse from the 1870s forward.

Bringing fresh eyes and language to bear on familiar topics, Josephson takes aim at many standard assumptions in the fields of modern Japanese religion and religious studies. At points, he is intentionally provocative or overstates his case for rhetorical effect, which naturally opens him to critique. There are scholars of Japanese religion who will fault Josephson for not engaging more deeply with disciplinary scholarship on *kokugaku*, State Shinto, and so forth. Yet it seems to me Josephson’s real strength is his ability to draw international comparisons and cross disciplinary lines. If anything, I wish he had played on such strengths further, for example, by reviewing scholarship on the “enchantment” lying within Western secularism to bring into sharper focus his argument about the Shinto secular. Josephson’s bold claims and theoretical insights are sure to inject fresh life into old debates and provoke students and scholars to think more deeply about the translations and categories they use and too often project anachronistically into the past.

Great Living: In the Pure Encounter Between Master and Disciple. By Kemmyo Taira Sato. New York: American Buddhist Study Center Press, 2010. xv+204 pages. Paper \$24.95.

MELISSA ANNE-MARIE CURLEY

In his foreword to *Great Living*, Rev. Chimyō Takehara notes that this volume had its genesis in a series of lectures on the *Tannishō* delivered by Rev.

Kemmyō Taira Satō at the University of London, the Buddhist Society, the Golden Buddha Centre, and his own Three Wheels Temple, the London branch of Shōgyōji. The lectures themselves were inspired by Rev. Satō's experience leading a *Tannishō* study group, as part of which he took on the task of preparing a new translation of Yuien's text. That translation appears here; so do the lectures, which serve as chapter commentaries. The volume is augmented with a chronology of events in the development of Japanese Pure Land from 1133 (the year of Hōnen's birth) through 1294 (the year marking the thirty-third memorial of Shinran's death), a map marking important sites in the lives of Hōnen and Shinran, a useful introductory chapter describing the development of Hōnen's school of single practice *nenbutsu*, a glossary of terms, a list of the descriptive chapter titles developed by the early modern Shinshū scholar Myōon-in Ryōshō (1788–1842) as part of his systematic study of the *Tannishō*, and a number of plates reproducing images of Rennyo's manuscript copy of the *Tannishō* as well as a reproduction of a portrait of Shinran himself. This wealth of material leaves one with the impression that the volume's publication has been guided in part by a will to share as much information as possible with its readers, not so much to explain the *Tannishō* to them as to support their efforts to read the *Tannishō* for themselves. Satō in fact ends the book with a humble undercutting of his own commentaries: he tells us that when asked to recommend a commentary, Soga Ryōjin (1875–1971) insisted that “the best commentary on the *Tannishō* was the *Tannishō* itself”—if we want to study the *Tannishō*, Satō says, “please just listen to it repeatedly” (p. 158).

The translation itself encourages the reader in this endeavor. Written in a formal but fluid style, Satō captures the feeling that we are listening to Yuien directly and sincerely addressing a community of friends. As a translator, Satō makes a number of choices that allow the text to speak more plainly to a contemporary audience: *akunin* becomes “the person with bad karma,” rather than the “evil person” (p. 39); *junjishō* becomes “next birth,” read as pointing to one's life following the experience of *shinjin*, rather than “next life,” with its implication of transmigration (pp. 52, 56); *jishi* becomes “the practice of love” rather than the somewhat more abstract “compassion” (p. 46). At the same time, Satō also on occasion presses a quite precise point of interpretation through his translation. He argues for example that while the opening line of the *Tannishō*'s fourth chapter is usually read “there is a difference (*kawarime*) between the Path of Sages and the Pure Land Path” (p. 46), it should be read “there is a distinct turning point (*kawarime*) from the Path of Sages to the Path of the Pure Land Buddhist” (p. 46); Shinran's

meaning, Satō asserts, is not that there is a theoretical distinction between the two practice schools but rather that every individual must undergo an existential turn from one path to the other (pp. 47–48). And where others translate *mugi* as “no working,” Satō translates it (following D. T. Suzuki) as “no meaning.” Thus the famous phrase from Chapter 10 becomes “As regards the *nembutsu*, no meaning is meaning” (p. 82)—the emphasis here, Satō suggests, is placed on abandoning “intellectual calculation” or “relative thinking” (p. 86). This is a rigorously considered translation, at once exacting and highly readable.

Even as Satō works to center the original text of the *Tannishō*, however, he is of course also doing significant interpretive work in his commentaries, and for most readers I think this is where the interest of the volume will really lie. One of the things that makes Satō’s exegesis compelling is the way it reflects his own unique position as an interpreter. On the one hand, he is a Pure Land priest, disciple of his “dharma mother,” Daihi-in Ekai (p. iv). On the other hand, he is a student of philosophy, disciple of D. T. Suzuki—as noted in the volume, Satō worked as Suzuki’s assistant at the Matsugaoka Bunko during the final years of Suzuki’s life. Satō mediated an actual encounter between Ekai and Suzuki—this encounter is important enough to him that he mentions it in his epilogue, describing an occasion on which Suzuki produced a piece of calligraphy for Ekai (p. 157). But as a thinker in his own right, Satō himself represents a mediation of these two ways of encountering Shinran: one rooted in sectarian Shinshū studies and concerned with questions of religious community, the other Zen-inflected and concerned with questions of individual self-realization.

I take this image of encounter directly from Satō. As the title of the volume indicates, the *Tannishō* is read here as a record of various encounters: in it we witness the disciple Shinran’s encounter with his master Hōnen; Shinran’s encounter with Amida’s Original Vow (represented for him by Hōnen); Shinran’s encounter with his own nature; the disciple Yuien’s encounter with Shinran; and Yuien’s encounter with his fellow disciples. Satō’s reading of the *Tannishō* through the lens of encounter between master and disciple develops in two fascinating directions.

First, it leads him to specifically emphasize the significance of Hōnen and Shinran’s master-disciple relationship: until the end of his life, Satō says, Shinran never stopped “keeping in mind his Master’s words” (p. 34), maintaining an “absolute reliance on his Master Hōnen” (p. 36). Indeed, as the contemporary audience encounters Shinran directly through Yuien’s *Tannishō*, so too it encounters Hōnen: “Throughout the *Tannishō* . . . we can

clearly make out the voice of Hōnen Shōnin speaking to us through the life of one of his greatest disciples, Shinran Shōnin” (p. 14). Far from stressing the uniqueness of Shinran’s interpretation then, Satō suggests a fundamental unity between Hōnen’s Jōdoshū and Shinran’s Jōdo Shinshū.

Second, it leads him to conceive the master-disciple relationship as a way of figuring relationships broadly speaking. He suggests that one of the defining features of Shinshū (as opposed to contemporary Zen) is its informality: “there are no . . . formal restrictions regarding the transmission of truth from Master to disciple. The relationship between them is kept much freer and is consequently active within their daily lives, rather than being confined only to their lives within the monastery” (p. 60). This sense of the master-disciple relationship as something that unfolds in everyday life allows Satō to use it as a starting point for thinking about “how interpersonal relationships function in our daily life” generally (p. 61), and even how the relationship between the organic world of human beings and the inorganic world of natural phenomena should function (p. 68).

Readers with an interest in Buddhist modernism will also want to pay attention to the several ways in which Satō’s interpretation of the source text reflects his own contemporary, cosmopolitan subjectivity. As noted above, Satō is cautious about implying that belief in transmigration is required here; along similar lines, he suggests that we might understand those who have attained faith as “somehow already living in the Pure Land while still in this life” (p. 55), and that we might focus on understanding the Pure Land itself as a symbol for enlightenment (p. 136). He likewise encourages readers not to “materialise” the Borderland but to understand it as symbolizing the unenlightened or deluded mind (p. 136) and he interprets the gods and *māras* mentioned in Chapter 7 as “the manifestation of latent potentials that lie hidden deep in our consciousness” (p. 67). Following in the intellectual tradition of Kiyozawa Manshi (1863–1903), Satō presents the overcoming of self power as, paradoxically, a matter of becoming fiercely independent: “To attain true faith one needs to be absolutely oneself, standing alone as an independent individual” (p. 142). And he also explicitly develops a line of interpretation that supports social engagement: “Shinran Shōnin,” he says, “lived his ethical life in a very pure way and always with an immense sense of gratitude. Objectively speaking, he helped people to lead happy lives on their way to the Pure Land. . . . He did good deeds, but always forgot about them in his gratitude to others” (p. 45). Contemporary followers of the Pure Land path are empowered to do the same—reliance on Other Power here is not about patience or passivity; it is “the very portal to . . . a creative world” (p. 112). At the moment that one comes to rely wholly on Other Power,

one can begin working hard: “you can now strive to do your best in this relative world. . . . ‘Do for the doing’ what seems good at the time, not only for yourself but also for your family and friends” (p. 130). From this angle, *Great Living*, like the *Tannishō*, presents us with a record of a movement in flux, rearticulating what it takes to be the most correct interpretation of its founder’s words.

This is not, precisely speaking, an academic book. Nor was it intended to be one—Satō speaks often here of the “limitations” of the academic approach (p. 104). After all, the *Tannishō* “is neither an academic work nor a mere historical document; it is, rather, the record of a living encounter that took place between master and disciple in medieval Japan” (p. 19); Satō describes himself as having been unable to grasp the full meaning of that living encounter when he was working in too academic a mode, as “a researcher in Western philosophy” (p. 142). *Great Living* is, however, a book that can be taken seriously by academics. Satō’s discussion of the provenance of the *Tannishō* is informed by historical scholarship; his translation is informed by careful reflection on syntax and nuance; and his commentaries are informed by a deep background in both Asian and Western religious and philosophical thought. And, to paraphrase Satō, while *Great Living* is not merely a historical document, I would contend that it will prove to be an important document for historians of modern and contemporary Shinshū, and will reward repeated reading from this perspective as well. There are any number of translations of the *Tannishō* available already. Nonetheless, *Great Living* represents a valuable and stimulating contribution to the field.

Cultivating Spirituality: A Modern Shin Buddhist Anthology. Edited by Mark L. Blum and Robert F. Rhodes. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2011. 321 pages. Hardcover \$75.

W. S. YOKOYAMA

During the modern age Japan embraced science and technology at the expense of religion and culture. The title of this book *Cultivating Spirituality* cleverly directs our attention to the challenge Japanese Buddhism faced in the modern world: that of cultivating spirituality in an age that rejected what it had to offer. As far as Shin Buddhism goes there were two general trends we can detect. The Nishi Hongwanji represents the trend to maintain continuity