

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 After all, the *Tannishō* “is neither an academic work nor a mere historical document; it is, rather, the record of a living encounter that took place between master and disciple in medieval Japan” (p. 19); Satō describes himself as having been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 And, to paraphrase Satō, while *Great Living* is not merely a historical document, I would contend that it will prove to be an important document for historians of modern and contemporary Shinshū, and will reward repeated reading from this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

with the past by cultivating traditional doctrinal study known as *shūgaku*. Their long-standing commitment to this goal has enabled them to produce a constant stream of doctrinal works including the *Collected Works of Shinran* edited by G. M. Nagao, a new *Shinshū seiten* series, and as recently as this year a new Shinshū dictionary. By contrast the freethinkers of the Higashi Honganji, with which this book deals, elected to embrace change, this in a variety of ways and at times to the point of seemingly rejecting their own past. It is against this interplay of continuity and change that Shin Buddhist institutions and individuals have sought then as now to forge an engaged Buddhism aimed at revitalizing their spiritual and cultural legacy in an age of scientism and materialism.

This book deals with the contributions of four thinkers in the Higashi Honganji (Shinshū Ōtani-ha) tradition: Kiyozawa Manshi (1863–1903), Soga Ryōjin (1875–1971), Kaneko Daiei (1881–1976), and Yasuda Rijin (1900–1982). It is difficult to categorize all of them in a pinch. The first, Kiyozawa Manshi, founding president of Shinshū Daigaku, Tokyo, is the person to whom all Shinshū scholars of its present-day iteration, Otani University, Kyoto, supposedly trace their roots. This is true in the case of Soga who regarded him as his teacher, but less so for Kaneko who met Kiyozawa but in fact regarded Soga as his teacher. Yasuda, on the other hand, never met Kiyozawa and is drawn into this circle only by Soga's inspired writings. Nor are all of these figures related by temple or university affiliation. Soga and Kaneko were in fact dismissed or resigned from the church or faculty for long periods before being reinstated, and Yasuda was a philosopher who wisely preferred to distance himself from the toxic culture of academia and was never assigned to a Shinshū temple. Institutionally, Soga and Kaneko were born into Shinshū temple families, while Kiyozawa and Yasuda had Zen backgrounds before entering Shin circles. The institutions themselves have switched back and forth between liberalism and conservatism during the course of the twentieth century as Japan herself shifted from militarism to a form of elitist democracy.

Yasutomi Shin'ya's foreword gives only scant or dated information on each contributing editor or translator: the late Jan Van Bragt (1928–2007), Nanzan University, Nagoya, translated Soga; Paul B. Watt, professor, Waseda University, Tokyo, translates and introduces Yasuda; co-editor Robert F. Rhodes, professor, Otani University, Kyoto, translates Kaneko and introduces Soga and Kaneko; and editor Mark L. Blum, professor, then SUNY Albany, presently University of California, Berkeley, translates and introduces Kiyozawa. Robert F. Rhodes provides a good translation of an impor-

tant Kaneko item while Paul B. Watt shows the impact of Zen on Yasuda who could well be mistaken for a Zen thinker though he followed Soga.

Those of us who are aware of the affiliation of D. T. Suzuki (1870–1966) with Otani may wonder why he is not included in this volume and why references to him are so few. After all it is his association with the university that puts it on the map, is it not? For the present volume focused on Kiyozawa, it seems Suzuki was living abroad much of the time that Kiyozawa was active and so he had little or no personal contact with him. That would explain his exclusion up to a point. Is there not also a tendency to downplay his role, however? It is hard to tell if there is indeed a conspiracy afoot or whether this is only the imagination of this researcher who expects D. T. Suzuki to be given a bit more exposure since he was a longtime faculty colleague to both Soga and Kaneko.

As the galvanizing figure of this volume, Kiyozawa is a thinker to be reckoned with, his essays on religious philosophy revealing a brilliant mind. It is surprising to me that some scholars evaluate him negatively as being not worthy to represent his generation. However, Kiyozawa established some important historical precedents that potentially affected generations to follow. First, as a liberal thinker educated in Western philosophy at the Imperial University of Tokyo, he sought to present Buddhism in terms of Western philosophy. Seeking to open up Buddhism to the world he consciously abandoned traditional Buddhist jargon and, as Nishitani Keiji (1900–1990) would point out, he insightfully grasped that the discussion of Buddhism in modern Japan would be mediated by Western philosophy. Kiyozawa's English work *Skeleton of a Philosophy of Religion*, translated by Noguchi Zenshirō (n.d.), is an excellent example of this principle applied. Another is his advocating what he called spiritism, or *seishinshugi*, a philosophical term he coined to express Buddhism's stand in contrast to the materialism of the age.

Second, Kiyozawa sought to establish a new Shinshū university in Tokyo. As a graduate of the Imperial University of Tokyo, he must have recognized the central role the Kantō area would take in the modern age and wished to locate his university at the hub of activity. Some ten years after his untimely death, however, it was moved back to Kyoto where it was once again placed under the watchful eye of the Mother Church. It leaves one to wonder what might have happened to the university if it had been allowed to follow Kiyozawa's wish and had developed freely in the heart of modern Japan.

While Kiyozawa was politically aware and philosophically shrewd neither one fully accounts for the lasting impression he made on generations to follow. In the end his political reform of the church institution failed. In 1900 he

wrote an essay called “The Independent Spirit” that prefaced a book called *The True Spirit of Buddhism* edited by Ōsaki Shin’ichi (n.d.). This book advocated the nationalistic goal of *kokutai*, that is, Japan as one national body. It urged the Shin denomination at all levels from individual to institution to be willing to sacrifice themselves for the sake of their country, that is, one is to give one’s life for the sake of one’s country during time of war, in short, putting religion in service of the state which was then in the process of adopting militarism. In his preface Kiyozawa opposed this idea, urging people to think for themselves, but alas to no avail as his attempts at political reform collapsed from within.

Nor was the Western philosophy of which he was so enamored of any use when life dealt him a bad card. While we may assume his beloved spiritism may have offered him a degree of solace as he lay dying, I would assert that his despair was due in part to his relatively young age. At forty he had yet to develop a strong enough doctrinal framework. If we look at Soga around the same age he just had the epiphany that would release him from the shackles of the conventional religion he was raised on. It is not surprising that Kiyozawa too had yet to make any real headway with developing his own deep Buddhist understanding and was left with nowhere to turn. He presents the thoughts he has at this final juncture in life honestly and unflinchingly in a moving essay called “My Faith,” an excellent translation of which is contributed to this volume by editor Mark L. Blum. In it Kiyozawa admits frankly that he failed to achieve anything of worth in his life.

Long after Kiyozawa died this final essay had an impact on generations of seekers, some of whom would commit it to memory. It long absorbed Soga who held Kiyozawa in the highest esteem in part because of the sheer honesty that he observed in his teacher on more than one occasion. At the same time Soga realized that Kiyozawa’s religious understanding was not fully developed at the point of his untimely death. Even some sixty years later he would recall meeting Kiyozawa and although he was accepting of his shortcomings, he tried to demonstrate what it was that was lacking. This strategy might be said to characterize his lifework: to revitalize Shin Buddhism in the modern age by restoring the missing element to it. Thus the impact of Kiyozawa on Soga is an important point to keep in mind when reading the essays in this book even though the effects of that influence did not begin to surface until at least a decade after his teacher died.

As far as revitalizing Shin Buddhism, Soga’s freethinking essays can be said to go beyond the guidelines set down by Shinran. In fact what Soga does with Shin thought would simply be shocking to the traditional *shūgaku*

scholar. The last thing these old masters would want is someone like him in their midst. It is not that Soga held *shūgaku* in contempt. As far as I know Soga never held anyone in contempt, he had a magnanimous nature open on all sides to everyone, even Nichiren. Somehow Soga manages to locate the source of Shinran's inspiration in the *Lunzhu* by Tanluan (476–542?), a subtle and complex *kanbun* work by the brilliant Pure Land Buddhist thinker of sixth century China. The *Lunzhu* was also a subject of traditional *shūgaku* study and these studies may even have served as a clue that triggered Soga's epiphany as he sought to move beyond the dry conventions of traditional Shinshū and restore the teaching to the primitive dynamic state that once existed when Shinran encountered it.

In particular, as a student of Consciousness-only theory one thing that Soga could not understand as a young man was what was on the mind of Dharmākara Bodhisattva. The *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* does not tell us. It only tells us that Dharmākara Bodhisattva visited so many worlds to establish his Forty-eight Vows. Tanluan is the one who enlightens us on this point. In the *Lunzhu* Tanluan elaborates on the dramatic process by which Dharmākara Bodhisattva made his vows and describes more fully the thoughts he had as he visits each world. Tanluan tells us that Dharmākara Bodhisattva would visit a world like our own, for instance, and seeing the squalor and misery there, would vow that his land will be one without squalor and misery, and so on. Written in a fiendishly learned literary style, Tanluan's creative discourse allows us to look into the mind of the bodhisattva while on his exploratory mission. This revelation lies at the core of Soga's epiphany. For Soga Tanluan's work allowed Consciousness-only theory to illuminate the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* and the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* to illuminate Consciousness-only theory like two bright mirrors mutually reflecting one another. We might say that in this moment of epiphany Soga was born the love child of these two unmarried traditions. This is a perfectly suitable arrangement in the enlightened world but it is frowned upon by the prudish world of academia which doubts the correctness of his pedigree. In the pages of this book we get a glimpse of the intriguingly complex and sometimes controversial character of Soga Ryōjin who explores the creative potential of the mythical figure of Dharmākara Bodhisattva to certain effect. We may not always agree with what he says and sometimes even Soga contradicts himself when he espouses different views at different times, but he was one of a kind and there has never been anyone quite like him since.

Mark L. Blum contributes an excellent overview of the problem leading up to the appearance of our modern figures. This masterful study draws on

numerous sources and could well serve as an introduction to this volume. At the same time the overview stops short of dealing with the actual age in which Kiyozawa and company appear, no doubt reserving it for future research. The Meiji period in which Kiyozawa appears is when modern printing methods enabled mass production of Edo period *shūgaku* studies in modern type. Two works especially important for Shin Buddhism in the modern age were the Edo period studies on Tanluan's *Lunzhu* and the *Tannishō* by the Higashi Honganji *kōshi* Kogatsu-in Jinrei (1749–1817). Although each text has since racked up hundreds of studies in the past century alone, I would contend that neither document is really that well understood even now. The *Tannishō*'s popularity is said to be due to Kiyozawa's adoption of it as one of his Buddhist Bibles, but this has just come down to us as an article of faith. It is now well over a hundred years since he died and it is time we reexamine this point more closely. At least we should note that the development of modern Shin thought is occurring on no less than two different levels: at a popular level the *Tannishō* is being celebrated in part for its fine literary qualities but the understanding expressed there is not necessarily that deep, and at a deeper level the *Lunzhu* is being explored by minds more capable of dealing with this difficult *kanbun* text but it is not necessarily that popular. Also few people saw any connection between the *kanbun Lunzhu* and the *wabun Tannishō*. As far as I know Soga is the only person who connects the *Tannishō* with the *Lunzhu*, other than myself. The present book stands on the verge of important themes for researchers to consider as well as pointing us in directions that Shin Buddhism might choose to consciously develop.

As we look at the Soga section of this book, prepared by the late Jan Van Bragt whom we all regard as our great Christian friend, the prophetic words of the preface by Yasutomi Shin'ya loom up before us: that every contributor was given the freedom to do things their own way. Jan Van Bragt has published on Soga previously. His idea was that Soga's talks had too much extraneous matter that had to be edited out to avoid needless repetition. He insisted on putting them into the digested form shown here with only the philosophical protein and none of the literary fiber. I am surprised the other people involved with this book project bought the idea but no doubt his role as senior scholar allowed his approach to prevail. So here is where Yasutomi Shin'ya's injunction comes in: let every contributor have the freedom to do things their own way. I myself find it hard to concur. After all to be authentic we want to know what Soga is saying and even how he says it. I find the Soga section gives the readers a somewhat fractured view of what Soga thought, although it certainly does whet our appetite.

So many times have I heard even Shinshū scholars say that Soga is illogical, and I would like to dismiss this view. I have translated a good dozen of his works, most of which are still unpublished, and do not find him to be at all so. He is a deep thinker who expresses himself most eloquently and engagingly, there is simply no one else like him. What this volume presents on Soga in digest is fine, but one day Western readers will be able to access these writings in full to arrive at a better understanding of what Soga thought. Just as Soga wanted to enter the mind of Dharmākara Bodhisattva so too should we wish to enter the mind of Soga Ryōjin as he formulates his thoughts. When reading his essays oftentimes I feel that Soga should really be the centerpiece of modern Shin studies; he had so much to say, some of it having an uncanny resonance with what D. T. Suzuki had to say about Shin Buddhism in the postwar era. Of course Jan Van Bragt also had a deep appreciation of Soga and so this book truly does serve the purpose of introducing him. Hopefully the Soga section of this book will set its readers' minds atwitter demanding more on Soga in full from Otani University.

Each thinker featured in this book is unique and certainly worth investigating further. As a volume intended to introduce these thinkers, however, one thing that researchers may find lacking is an adequate bibliography for each of them. As a result we have only a vague idea of what they wrote when. To compile a decent bibliography is no easy task, however. It took K. Kirita long years to compile his D. T. Suzuki bibliography and chronology totaling upward of four hundred pages. Once it was published, though, it became the Bible for D. T. Suzuki researchers and the cornerstone for the new field of Suzuki studies. We need something similar for each of the thinkers in this book to kickstart their research. A comprehensive bibliography for each writer is something that Otani University should put on its agenda for it would lay the groundwork for future researchers. One useful related item might be Itō Emyō's essay on the life and thought of Soga Ryōjin in volume 15 of *Jōdo bukkyō no shisō*, edited by Kajiyama Yuichi. The same volume also has essays by other scholars on Kaneko Daiei (Hataya Akira) and D. T. Suzuki (Bandō Shōjun). Though a work aimed at a popular audience is not entirely satisfactory for a Western academic one, I suppose a translation of it or works like it might serve as a good starting point for researchers that would well complement the present book. As for the bibliography appended to this book I suppose one ought be charitable and say it is good enough. Compiling a proper bibliography has become a lost art these days and the problem occurs so often it makes one wonder if it is endemic to the academic culture here in Japan. When someone takes the time to do it right, though, a good bibliography like a good cup of coffee

after a meal has the effect of enhancing the entire experience. In the case of this bibliography, however, we could have used less of Yasutomi's fabulous laissez-faire policy and more of Jan Van Bragt's critical editing skills to make a digest of the bibliography by trimming the fat and retaining the lean.

This minor reservation aside the book is a compelling one. In an unassuming way it continues to pursue Kiyozawa's dream of placing Shin Buddhism at the hub of activity. The dream is still valid today and although some of the essays may date back well over a hundred years, their message is no less timely and has lost none of its power to move us. After all very little has changed since the days of Kiyozawa; if anything the present age is worse off than ever and the world we are experiencing is no less steeped in squalor and misery. Though the modern world puts value on the material over the spiritual, no matter how much we have materially somehow nothing can ever satisfy us. You stick something in a drawer new and the next time you take it out it is old, was what Soga once commented. It is because we can find no satisfaction in the material world that there is a perennial need for books like *Cultivating Spirituality*. In its pages we find pointed out a way beyond, whereby we can find the strength to truly live in this modern age.