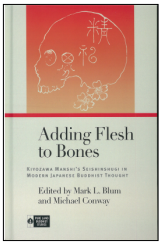

Mark L. Blum and Michael Conway, eds., *Adding Flesh to Bones: Kiyozawa Manshi's Seishinshugi in Modern Japanese Buddhist Thought*

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Insofar as the bulk of the research on modern Japanese philosophy is dedicated to thinkers associated with the Kyoto School of philosophy, our picture of it cannot but be woefully incomplete. Irrespective of the fact that philosophy has been a part of Japanese intellectual life since Nishi Amane's return from Leiden in 1866, Nishida Kitarō's 1911 *An Inquiry into the Good* is widely regarded as marking the beginning of modern Japanese philosophy proper. Although Nishi was a scholar of philosophy rather than a philosopher, the idea that no "real" philosophy took place in Japan between 1866 and 1911 is a hard sell. If Nishida's *Inquiry* qualifies as an original piece of philosophy, then so does—despite being no more than an outline—Kiyozawa Manshi's 1892 *Skeleton of a Philosophy of Religion* (『宗教哲学骸骨』). Compellingly, Kiyozawa and Nishida are not two unconnected figures. From 1900, Kiyozawa was involved with the development of the philosophical—or perhaps rather, anti-philosophical—position known as "spiritualism" (精神主義), which was advocated by the members of his spiritual circle—the Kōkōdō (浩々洞; initially headquartered on the doorstep of Tokyo University, Kiyozawa's *alma mater*)—and disseminated through its journal *Seishinkai* (『精神界』), which remained in print until 1919. Spiritualism brackets the metaphysical concern with the true nature of reality to emphasize practice and self-examination. This introspective tendency turned out to be influential. The fact that it also marks Nishida's *Inquiry*—in which in contradistinction to spiritualism introspection ends up connected precisely to metaphysical speculation—is unsurprising given that he interacted with the Kōkōdō's members and published his earliest works in their journal. Spiritualism can be said to have grown out of the challenges faced by Shin Buddhism as Japan underwent modernization. Confronted by the fact that many of

its core teachings were now deemed superstitious, spiritualism transmuted what formerly was regarded as objective fact (e.g., the material existence of Amida's Pure Land to the West) into subjective truth, the significance of which had to be uncovered inside rather than outside of the self.

Adding Flesh to Bones: Kiyozawa Manshi's Seishinshugi in Modern Japanese Buddhist Thought examines not only the coming about of spiritualism but also its impact on the subsequent development of Shin Buddhist thought, thereby performing the great service of in detail filling in one of the blanks in our picture of modern Japanese philosophy. A strength of this volume is that many of its contributions were originally penned by Japanese experts, and Dylan Luers Toda, Michael Conway, and Wayne S. Yokoyama have done a superb job at translating these contributions in such a way as to allow for a seamless reading experience. The book's seventeen chapters build the compelling case that thinkers like Soga Ryōjin and Sasaki Gesshō, who eventually rose to prominence in the Shin Buddhist school partly as a result of their membership of the Kōkōdō, merit study in their own right, or at least as much as their more well-known Kyoto School counterparts. Most of the contributions are intended to introduce these thinkers to scholars who similarly work on modern Japanese thought but operate beyond the confines of Shin Buddhist studies.

I think that this book is best approached with the expectation that it offers a comprehensive introduction to the main figures involved with and inspired by spiritualism, rather than, as the preface by the series editor suggests, "a detailed introduction to the thought of Kiyozawa" (vii). Any introduction to Kiyozawa that focuses primarily on spiritualism cannot but be inadequate, not only because the core of Kiyozawa's thought is contained in his earlier works—notably the two Skeletons, that is, the above-mentioned *Skeleton of a Philosophy of Religion* and the 1895 *Skeleton of a Philosophy of Other-Power* (『他力門哲学骸骨』, which was unpublished in Kiyozawa's own lifetime)—but also because it is unclear how much spiritualism actually reflects Kiyozawa's own later standpoint. As Yamamoto Nobuhiro shows in his chapter, articles that appeared in *Seishinkai* under Kiyozawa's name were heavily edited by other members of the Kōkōdō. Spiritualism is accordingly perhaps best understood as the Kōkōdō's collective product. It is a separate issue, though, whether spiritualism—whoever the author(s) of this doctrine might have been—is *fundamentally* at odds with Kiyozawa's basic philosophical orientation, as I take Yamamoto to argue. I do not think that it would be impossible to motivate the anti-philosophical and practical character of spiritualism by recourse to Kiyozawa's 1895 *Skeleton*, where reaching the limits of philosophical logic leads to the practical need to erect either the gate of self-power or the gate of other-power. While I agree with Yamamoto that Kiyozawa placed special emphasis upon logic,

already in 1895 Kiyozawa's primary concern appears to have been *practical* rather than theoretical or logical—namely, how to achieve an enduring state of "peace of mind" (安心) in a world marked by constant change.

In Fukushima Eiju's contribution, I detect an attempt to deal with some of the fallout of Yamamoto's views—but I am not ready to commit to his conclusion that there are "...as many images of Kiyozawa as there are people who write about him" (168). I think that there are accurate and inaccurate images of Kiyozawa, and that what scholars of Shin Buddhism have yet to come to terms with is that Kiyozawa is a multifaceted figure whose different faces can only really be understood by, as Imamura Hitoshi astutely observed, reading him as a *philosopher*. By my lights, in a volume in which the names "Leibniz," "Kant," "Hegel," "Spencer," and "Lotze" do not or only incidentally figure, the chances of getting an accurate image of Kiyozawa's different faces are close to zero. When Sueki Fumihiko considers the question of the transcendent character of Kiyozawa's absolute, he notes that "there *might* have been some influence of Christianity on Kiyozawa here" (108, my emphasis), which, given the strong influence of German philosophy in particular on Kiyozawa's thought, truly is an understatement. Kiyozawa's absolute cannot be reconstructed based solely on the conceptual resources of Shin Buddhism. For this, the metaphysics and, perhaps more importantly, logic of 19th-century German thought are required. And while the series editor's preface hints precisely at this connection (vii), it is otherwise passed over in silence—an oversight that is anything but slight.

All the more reason, then, to treat this volume as an introduction to spiritualism rather than to Kiyozawa, for that is where its strength lies. For those who come to this book with a specific interest in philosophy, its second part contains several chapters from which much can be gained. Michael Conway's contribution on Soga Ryōjin stands out as an insightful treatment of a philosopher who I estimate to be of relevance to those working on Nishida's understanding of self-awareness or Tanabe Hajime's *Philosophy as Metanoetics*. In connection with the latter work, Hase Shōtō's chapter on merit transference is also most helpful. While these two chapters do not make explicit mention of Tanabe, Melissa Anne-Marie Curley's chapter does, marking, to my knowledge, the first attempt to link spiritualism to Tanabe where this had previously already been done for Nishida and, to a lesser extent, Nishitani Keiji. Curley is not afraid to deal with *Philosophy as Metanoetics* head on, and while I found her chapter particularly valuable and illuminating, there lies great potential in further developing the conceptual connection, sketched out by her only briefly (353–6), that clearly exists between Tanabe and Kiyozawa. Between them, they can show why any philosophy that advocates absolute other-power cannot but destroy itself, for self-power is the necessary other of other-power

that on logical grounds cannot, and on ethical grounds should not, be eliminated from the picture.

Where Curley succeeds in producing an enlightening treatment that links thinkers of the spiritualist tradition to those of the Kyoto School, the same cannot be said for those contributions that attempt to do so with Nishida. Sugimoto Kōichi's article, while being a welcome exception to the volume's relative neglect of Kiyozawa's early to middle works, presents us with a reading of Nishida's *Inquiry* that I believe to be inaccurate. Sugimoto appears to misunderstand pure experience as something exceptional, and therefore as something ordinary commoners do not have access to (reflecting a worry typical of Shin Buddhism) (221). However, since both me writing this book review and you reading it are cases of pure experience in Nishida's sense of the term, such experience is exceedingly common. In fact, it is so common that Nishida has the problem opposite to the one Sugimoto attributes to him: not how the relative (particularly the average person) could experience the absolute, but how, given that *all* experience is pure experience, there can be something non-absolute or relative in the first place. Paul B. Watt, in turn, succumbs to the tendency that exists in the scholarship to read Nishida's more mature ideas back into the *Inquiry*. Clearly working from the Abe Masao translation of that text, he projects Nishida's absolute nothingness onto *Inquiry*, even though that term there has yet to attain any technical meaning (what Abe translates as "absolute nothingness" in the Japanese original corresponds to 全く無, not to 絶対無). When Watt finds Yasuda Rijin to in a 1931 text speak of "the self-determination of the transcendent" and of "absolute nothingness" as "absolute negation" (377-8), it seems clear that Yasuda does not have *Inquiry* but a work from Nishida's middle period in mind.

Let me be clear that in finding the occasional fault with the letter of the volume I by no means disagree with its spirit. What we have in this book is a most valuable addition to the existing literature. The scholars of Shin Buddhism who have contributed to this book are attempting to build bridges to others who similarly work on modern Japanese (Buddhist) thought, and for this they are to be commended. That they at times show themselves somewhat unfamiliar with the other shore they are trying to reach is only natural. More important is whether that other shore will reciprocate—and my belief is that it can and should.

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