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contrapuntal discipline which in its interplay of tensions and releases—crescendi and diminuendi—reflects spiritual disciplines in the "counterpoint we call life.' "

D. Seyfort Ruegg

The Heart of Buddhism by Takeuchi Yoshinori, edited and translated by James W. Heisig. New York: Crossroad, 1983, xxii + 165 pages, glossary and index. $17.50 hardcover.

This book is the fourth in the series *Nanzan Studies in Religion and Culture,* a series which has thus far been largely dedicated to making available the thought of the Japanese Kyoto school of Philosophy to the English-speaking world. It contains seven essays by Takeuchi Yoshinori, a follower of Nishida Kitarō and Nishitani Keiji—the major figures in the Kyoto school—and, in his own words, a "Pure Land believer of an extremely conservative stamp" (page 132). The first three of these essays—"The Silence of the Buddha," "The Stages of Contemplation" and "Centering and the World Beyond"—have to do with Takeuchi's understanding of the relevance of dhyāna in early Buddhism, and have previously been published in both German and Japanese. The concluding essays are concerned with Takeuchi's understanding of the Bultmannian and Heideggerian hermeneutic and its possible application to Buddhism; they were all originally published in Japanese.

The Nanzan *Studies* in general—and this work in particular—give those Western Buddhologists and philosophers of religion who cannot read Japanese access to a fascinating cultural and intellectual phenomenon. They make available the thought of a Japanese philosophical movement which is profoundly rooted in Buddhism, and which has also soaked itself in the German philosophical tradition; it is therefore syncretistic in the most positive sense of that term. Takeuchi's main concern—and that of the Kyoto school generally—is to make sense of and to communicate what it takes to be the central religious meaning of Buddhism. To do this, Takeuchi uses the hermeneutical tools of German philosophy and theology. Thus, he interprets the Buddha's famous silence on certain metaphysical issues as a "sign of contemplation," a manifestation of the effects of the meditative techniques practised by the Buddha and an attempt by him to

show his hearers that "the religious situation . . . belongs to a sphere totally different from that of metaphysics" (page 15). Similarly, the twelve-fold chain of *pratītyasamutpāda* is interpreted existentially, as an attempt to describe the nature and origins of the human situation.

Takeuchi's work, therefore, is essentially one of creative religious philosophizing. It shows us the worldview arrived at by a contemporary Pure Land intellectual in applying the categories of German existentialism to the materials found in the Pāli canon. It is possible to disagree with the central philosophical position taken by Takeuchi—as indeed this reviewer does—and still to find much of interest in his work, especially when it is considered as a primary source, a witness to the interaction of Pure Land metaphysics with German existentialism, rather than as a work of historical scholarship. We have cause to be grateful to Professor Takeuchi, the Nanzan *Institute*, and James W. Heisig, the editor and translator of the material which makes up this book.

However, the work does have severe conceptual drawbacks which arise directly from its methodology. The author seems frequently unsure—and this is a fault common to many aficionados of the Heideggerian hermeneutic—whether he is writing history or philosophy, and (worse) it is not always clear that he is aware of the difference. For example, in his analysis of the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* (especially pages 37ff.), Takeuchi places great stress on the images of purification which accompany the descriptions of the jhānas in that *sutta*, and bases his analysis of the religious meaning of these altered states of consciousness upon the images of purification. He apparently does not realise that these images are not always applied to the jhānas; they are in fact floating units of tradition, used elsewhere in the Pāli canon for quite other purposes. It is therefore not legitimate to take them, as Takeuchi does here, as a historically unproblematic basis for hermeneutical philosophizing.

Another example of Takeuchi's apparent disregard of history is the way in which he places great stress on the relationship between contemplation and compassion in early Buddhism, without mentioning that in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*—which he takes as his paradigm—the four *brahmavihāras* are in fact not found. In many—if not most—of the attempts to construct a normative path-structure in the *suttas* of the Pāli canon, compassion is not a very significant value; one would scarcely guess that this is the case by reading Takeuchi.

The major drawback of Takeuchi's work, therefore, and of

others which take a similar approach, is that the significance of history—the question of what actually happened, of how things actually were—tends to become swallowed up by the demands of hermeneutical philosophy. Philosophical conclusions are read back into historical scholarship, and the two become mixed to the detriment of both. This process is especially clear in Takeuchi's astonishing comments on pages 67–8 about the influence of the founders of the world religions; to suggest that Shinran and Dogen can provide illuminating "models" for the understanding of primitive Buddhism may be philosophically interesting but is certainly not good history. The Christian scholarly world has long since learned the dangers of taking Luther as an unproblematical guide to the thought of Paul, much less to that of Jesus. To arrive at a historical understanding of any phenomenon the only data which are relevant are historical data: to suggest otherwise, as do Takeuchi and the Kyoto school, is to blur important distinctions.

Despite these criticisms, Takeuchi's work has great value, as does that of the Kyoto school generally. It cannot be taken as historical scholarship, but once this is realised its value as creative philosophy becomes apparent.

Paul Griffiths

Paritta: A Historical and Religious Study of the Buddhist Ceremony for Peace and Prosperity in Sri Lanka, by Lily de Silva. *Spolia Zeylanica*, Vol. 36, Part 1. Colombo: National Museum, 1981. ISSN 0081-3745.

Lily de Silva's *Paritta* is a very welcome addition to the literature on the relationship between traditional Buddhist belief and practice. *Paritta*, a Theravāda protective ritual based mainly on texts from the Pāli Canon, is a centuries-old tradition extending from Sri Lanka throughout Southeast Asia. As de Silva points out (page xi), it has attracted the attention of Western scholars for over a century. Although anthropologists such as Spiro and Tambiah have dealt with *paritta* in wider ethnographic contexts, it has rarely been given due treatment by Buddhologists—at any rate, not with the depth, precision, and balance found in the present study.