CORRESPONDENCE

To Answer Professor Wentz' Questions

Dear Editor:

I thank you (and your reviewer) for your kind appraisal of my *In Quest of the Historical Buddha*. Your reviewer, Professor Wentz, ends with questions for the author; hence this brief reply. My little book is an attempt to do with fiction what it would be difficult to do in a scholarly essay. I was motivated by two puzzles. First, Daisetz Suzuki always told us in class that *dukkha* does not mean pain in the physical sense, but the psychological sense, as mental commotion or agitation. But with the passing years, I have come to doubt that, and suspect that its usage may presuppose both meanings. Second, in reading the *Dhammapada* over the years, I have had a growing sense that there are two Buddhas represented there: one a gentle poet of nature, the other a rather grim ascetic. How to reconcile the two? and do not the two meanings of *dukkha* coincide with the two Buddhas?

My solution: If a great man's sayings are recorded over a lifetime, and it is a long lifetime, what he said when he was twenty-five is apt to get all jumbled together with what he said when he was sixty. Need I point out that what we say about love and sorrow at one age is very different from what we say at the other?

With that simple premise, I set about creating my own legend of the Buddha—and then speculating about how the traditional account of his life—the official legend (here is the folklore connection) might have come about.

What I venture to propose, then, is that the historical Buddha set about solving the problem of pain *twice* in his life: in his youth, the problem of psychological pain, and in his dotage the problem of physical pain. In the first he succeeded, in the second he failed. The traditional (legendary) account of his life attempts to hide his failure, and blur the difference between the young Buddha and the old Buddha.

W.W. ("Wrong Way") Corrigan is a character out of American folk history. He proposed to cross the Atlantic solo in a Piper Cub, was turned down by the federal authorities in Washington and ordered back to Los Angeles. When he arrived in Dublin, he looked around and said he must have gone the wrong way.

About the fox girl you know.

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On Kirkland's Review of F. Bock: *Classical Learning and Taoist Practices in Early Japan.*

Dear Editor:

In *Asian Folklore Studies* 45, 1: 129–131, Russell Kirkland reviewed Felicia Bock's *Classical Learning and Taoist Practices in Early Japan; With a Translation of Books XVI and XX of the Engi-shiki*, an installment in her ongoing project of translating the *Engi-shiki*.[1] His review requires counterpoise.

Kirkland has specialized in Chinese and religious studies. When I began reading his review, I was delighted to see him reaching out to early Japanese history. I was doubly delighted to see Mrs. Bock's work under review (I had thought of reviewing it myself, but rejected the project for its difficulty). Disappointment quickly set in, however, when I found him bitingly critical without due consideration for Mrs. Bock's goals, situation, and point of view.

His criticism of her minimal competence in Taoism and of her deficient reference to scholarly works on that subject is perhaps not as well taken as may seem, since the work under review focuses rather on Confucian ceremonies and Yin-yang practices than on generally Taoist matters (the title unfortunately misleads in this regard). At one point (Kirkland, p. 130, 11. 20–26) he himself seems almost to recognize the fact. Perhaps he overlooked Mrs. Bock's explicit comments (on pages 10 and 22) that philosophical and religious Taoism, as well as Chinese alchemy, were not adopted into Japanese culture in the Ritsuryō period—the period the *Engi-shiki* procedures were in effect.

Nor does her bibliography necessarily show Mrs. Bock to be unread in Taoism, as her reviewer asserts. Though all the works he suggests certainly are essential for studies focusing on Taoism, her work (I repeat) is not of that species. The works he suggests have to do solely with Taoism among the Chinese, and have no direct bearing on Taoism as practised in Japan; hence they are not absolutely required in her bibliography. Moreover, the book by Wechsler which he mentions had yet to be published when she submitted her finished manuscript in 1982.

To be sure, Kirkland makes some good points, especially where he is concerned with word usage. And I should scarcely blame him for his genuine confusion when he states, " The present work appears to present itself as something more than a simple annotated translation, yet the author does not develop the material into a satisfying topical study." Mrs. Bock herself is at fault for this confusion when, for instance, she says in her opening paragraph of Chapter One, " This study attempts to point out the progress of Chinese studies and Chinese thought in Japan . . . ." Such statements apparently gave her reviewer the mistaken impression that she intended a study in comparative civilizations. She really ought to have introduced her work as a translation, then found a title that would show it as such. As it happens, her intention is to furnish a reliable translation, indeed not a treatise; her work should be evaluated for its usefulness as a translation above anything else. Problems such as these in the commentary by no means compromise the overall value of the work. After all, every translator of early Japanese texts (including Aston, Chamberlain, and Philippi) has erred in his commentary, yet the translations have become lasting monuments and pillars of research.

The bulky and problematic *Engi-shiki* deals with a rainbow of topics. It is no easy text to translate, and the rewards for translating it few. But when completed the translation will become a useful resource for anyone interested in Japanese history, culture, or religion. While additional in-depth research would certainly be welcome, in this case, what with a body of secondary literature in Japanese that is large, difficult of access, hard to assess, I fear that extensive topical research concurrent with translation would tax the best of us.[2] Certainly there has been no rush among Western academics to do the work! Even native Japanese scholars have been forced to specialize in certain topics or certain volumes, such as the *Norito*, rather than deal with the entire body of the *Engi-shiki*.

Finally, while it is perfectly legitimate to review Mrs. Bock's work exclusively from the perspective of Taoist studies, this limitation should be made clear to the reader and

generalizations drawn accordingly. No ordinary person would deny that the text of the *Engi-shiki* makes for dull reading, but one should read the translation carefully before condemning it.

NOTES

1. Previous installments are: *Engi-Shiki: Procedures of the Engi Era* (Tokyo: Sophia University Press, Vol. 1 [Books I–V] 1970, Vol. 2 [Books VI–X] 1972). Reviews in *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 4, 4: 315–319; *Monumenta Nipponica* 29, 1: 103–104.

2. For a brief survey of *Engi-shiki* scholarship, see Torao Toshiya 虎尾俊哉, *Engi-shiki* 延喜式, Nihon rekishi sōsho 日本歴史叢書, vol. 8 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1964, 1972), Chap. 5, 218–233, *Engi-shiki* no riyō to kenkyū no rekishi (History of *Engi-shiki* Research and Applications). Torao's book offers an excellent general introduction to the *Engi-shiki*.

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