

## The Theme of Subjectivity in Kiyozawa Manshi's *Seishinshugi*

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A careful consideration of the notion of subjectivity is an appropriate starting point for understanding Kiyozawa Manshi's religious faith. Subjectivity emerges as a major theme in Kiyozawa's thinking especially during the last five years of his life, from 1898 until 1903. It is also during this period that he adopts the name *Seishinshugi* for his distinctive interpretation of the Shinshu faith. This name is usually rendered as Spiritualism in English, although the more common usage of the term spiritualism with its belief in communication with the dead has nothing to do with Kiyozawa's term. The meaning Kiyozawa gives to *Seishinshugi* clearly points to a form of religious faith centering on the development of the *seishin* (mind or spirit) as a subjective reality, not after death but here and now.

Kiyozawa's contributions to the *Seishinshugi* movement and some of his other published articles from this same period are the basic sources for learning about his notion of subjectivity and its application to religious faith. We see him, in effect, attempting to restate the Shinshu faith in terms that were intended to make it more accessible to modern minds.

Looking back from our present perspective nearly a century later, we see Kiyozawa's language and his religious ideas as belonging more to the 19th century than to our own. But the fruitfulness of his insights should not be judged merely by our own standards. Paradigms do change, but change in itself is not necessarily progress. The change of our paradigms makes it increasingly difficult to recover the values imbedded in past systems of thought. Yet, that is precisely why we study the past, and, in this case, why we are to

attend to Kiyozawa's subjectivity. Some of the values he was earnestly trying to achieve may still be recoverable. And some of his ideas may be found to point in forgotten directions. This is reason enough, I think, to take another look at Kiyozawa's subjectivity.

And so, it seems worthy to ask what was Kiyozawa's understanding of subjectivity? This is the central question. But at the same time, it will be necessary to know something about the circumstances under which Kiyozawa's thought developed in the last years of his life. The distinctively practical as opposed to theoretical nature of his thought must be kept in mind, because Kiyozawa nowhere treats the matter of subjectivity with analytical rigor. It will be appropriate, therefore, to proceed from a general introduction of subjectivity as a concept to some of the more specific applications of the idea that can be found in Kiyozawa's essays. I trust that, in the process, some notion of the value of Kiyozawa's thought to present-day reflection will become apparent.

### CIRCUMSTANCES THAT HELPED TO SHAPE THE *SEISHINSHUGI*

Kiyozawa's *Seishinshugi* movement began with the publication of a magazine called *Seishinkai* (Spiritual World) in January of 1901. At this time Kiyozawa was living in Tokyo and was serving as president of the newly relocated Shinshu College (the forerunner of Ōtani University). His home, to which he gave the name *Kōkōdō*, quickly became a lively center for lectures and discussions of religious matters. Unfortunately, his early death in 1903 deprived the fledgling

movement of his leadership, and the movement lasted for only a few years after his death. Yet, in the last several years of his life, Kiyozawa made a significant contribution through his lectures and articles, and it is this material that will be of particular importance for the present inquiry.

The character of the movement was significantly influenced by Kiyozawa's reading and reflections during the years immediately preceding the move to Tokyo. A case of pulmonary tuberculosis had forced him into semi-retirement in 1898 and had given him time to synthesize his thoughts. It is said that the three sources that most occupied his attention at this time were the *Āgamas* of the *Theravāda* tradition, the *Tannisho*, and the *Discourses and Manual of Epictetus*. One must be struck by the breadth of his interests and his openness to traditions other than his own. He was, for instance, in the forefront of those who, in the 1890's, were giving serious attention to the *Theravāda* texts. Among Shinshu scholars, he was an early advocate of opening up the *Tannisho* for public use instead of keeping it restricted to the priestly curriculum. He was conversant, through his studies in Tokyo Imperial University in the 1880's, with the broad sweep of Western philosophy and particularly with German Idealism from Kant through Hegel and Lotze. His views toward the end of his life reflected this earlier philosophical study in a general way, but it was the Stoic philosopher Epictetus who most inspired him at this time and helped to shape his thought in the *Seishinshugi*. The very heart of Epictetus' message was subjective in character, as it focused on the power of the mind to maintain equanimity by controlling its own states.

#### THE PRACTICAL NATURE OF KIYOZAWA'S THOUGHT

Kiyozawa's prevailing attitude during his final years could be called existential and practical rather than theoretical. He was motivated by a

strong need to make sense out of his own life in the face of life-threatening illness and bitter personal disappointments. Likewise, the view of religious faith that he offered to the public at this time was intended for the practical use of the modern seeker and not for the religious specialist or the philosopher. He wrote in October, 1901:

In propagating our *Seishinshugi*, we have discussed spirit to the utter disregard of matter, adopting a subjective view of things instead of an objective view. But it is far from our intention to encroach upon the area of philosophy with this *Seishinshugi*, which is only for the practical life. . . . Monistic idealism regards the universe as a mental phenomenon. It holds that what is called matter is a mental phenomenon having no existence of its own. Our Spiritualism has no such theory. It is quite unconcerned over such philosophical questions as whether the universe is a mental phenomenon or a material one, or whether so-called matter is a mental process with its own existence. Our Spiritualism is based on the correlation of the individual and the universe, the subject and the object. This can never be neglected by any philosophical theory, and on it we base our satisfaction and freedom as a practical need in life. [VI, 29]<sup>1</sup>

Kiyozawa's emphasis on the practical benefits of faith shows clearly in his short piece, the *Waga Shinnen* (My Faith), written just a few days before his death. It is, in fact, the benefits of faith which first command his attention in the essay:

My faith helps me in that it drives away all my cares and suffering; I may call this relief or succor. When I am bewildered and troubled by various annoyances, my faith comes to my help, and at once brings comfort and peace to

my mind. The fact is that when my faith enters, it completely fills my mind; there is no room for evil thoughts. . . . My sense of gratitude comes indeed from this religious faith which saves me from all worry and pain. [VI, 228]

In religious terms, Kiyozawa speaks of the benefits in terms of a "boundless mercy," a "vast wisdom," and "an unlimited power" that come from the *Tathāgata*. He does not allow these terms to remain abstractions; he translates them into practical effects that can be felt in the daily life.

Another aspect of the practicality of Kiyozawa's faith is its this-worldliness. His message has little to do with the idea of rebirth in a future Pure Land, as these comments make clear:

. . . The chief aim of *Seishinshugi* is to live at peace in this actual present. A thorough understanding of the way of the Immeasurable Mercy can not come before we are established in our firm belief about the present. . . . The true significance of the past and the future will appear only to those who appreciate the fact that perfect salvation is realized in our present faith and our everlasting future is the direct result of that present faith. [VI, 39]

Again, in another context, he calls attention to those unfortunate ones who "turn their eyes only to the distant future instead of to the present. The freedom of spirit, the absence of worldly cares, true satisfaction — those people long to possess these things in the future, but not in the present. They see vaguely the blessed state of the soul only in the future; they do not want it now. This is poor judgment, for we are not living in the future but in this very present!" [VI, 97]

#### THE CONCEPT OF SUBJECTIVITY

We come now to the heart of the matter, which is: To identify and describe the particular

sense in which Kiyozawa used the terms subjective and subjectivity. In its broadest sense, the word subjective simply designates something coming from, belonging to, or affected by, the mind. The functions of the mind, that is, thinking, feeling, and willing, are considered to be the immediate sources of subjective experience. In common usage at the present time, however, the word "subjective" carries with it a negative connotation. In psychological parlance, a subjective judgment is one originating and existing within the observer's mind, hence, it becomes a judgment incapable of external verification. Without the possibility of such verification according to objective criteria, any personal judgment stands the risk of distortion due to bias or lack of adequate information. So, both in the scientific community and in the popular mind in so far as it values what it perceives as "scientific objectivity," the word "subjective" has lost favor since the time when Kiyozawa was writing.

In philosophical circles, mostly in times prior to Kiyozawa's productive years, the word has had a more illustrious history. Forms of idealism, starting with the so-called Subjective Idealism of Berkeley, have thoroughly explored the possibilities for subjective knowledge. Kant's analysis of the so-called categories of pure reason influenced the way nearly all philosophical enterprises after his time were to be done. Fichte and Schelling developed subjectivist systems with implications for ethics, art, literature, and religion. Hegel carried the subjectivist trend to a culmination with his confident claim to knowledge of the Absolute through the application of the dialectical method. Coleridge, as a writer and critic, explored the implications of subjectivity for the literary imagination. Schleiermacher constructed a systematic view of religion based on a subjective definition of religion as a feeling of dependence. These are just a few examples from among many that might be cited.

It should be acknowledged in this context that subjectivity, in one form or another, has

played an important role in Buddhist thought as well. The Mahayana tradition has shown a fundamental inclination toward subjective idealism, especially in the *Yogacarashool* (*Hossō* in Japan) with its teaching of mind as the sole reality. The history of these developments is amply recorded elsewhere and does not require further treatment in the present context.

The Pure Land tradition, both in China and in Japan, has usually been associated more with practice than with theory, and therefore has been minimally involved with the effort to explain the world as a subjective reality. Persons motivated by piety directed to Amida seldom bothered to explore the subject-object implications of the relationship between the Buddha and the believer. Is Amida Buddha an objective reality outside the mind, an "Other Power" that is genuinely Other? Or is Amida really one with the mind of the believer, yet experienced as Other because of the limitations of human understanding? Or is the otherness of the Other Power nothing more than a symbol used to emphasize the shortcomings of a self-sufficient view of the self? Such speculations as these, if they occurred at all, seemed to lapse into insignificance in the face of more practical considerations generated by a living faith.

As has already been shown, Kiyozawa carried on the tradition of emphasizing the practical over the merely theoretical. Yet, at the same time, he testified to a powerful tendency within himself to conceptualize, or as he put it in the *Waga Shinnen*, to engage in study aimed at measuring "the absolute and unlimited reality with a limited and incomplete standard." Throughout his final years, Kiyozawa continued to raise probing questions about the faith. It was only a few days before his death that he wrote, "It was necessary for me to be at my wits' end with what knowledge I had, before the realization of my helplessness came." [VI, 227]

## SUBJECTIVITY AS A THEME IN KIYOZAWA'S WRITINGS

This section and the next one will focus on a number of passages from Kiyozawa's writings that shed light on his thinking about subjectivity. Passages are numbered for convenience of identification.

(1) The activity of *Seishinshugi* is based on our firm belief that Truth pervades every nook and corner of the world. If the omnipresence of Truth is thus accepted, we are compelled to admit that Truth is present both in our subjective and objective worlds. And, because the Truth in the objective world can only be known through that Truth in our subjective world, it is evident that our consciousness of subjective Truth must precede our awareness of objective Truth.

As *Seishinshugi* is nothing but our consciousness of subjective Truth, it is the conviction of *Seishinshugi* that our subjective experiences can reach to the heights of perfection. [VI, 17] (May, 1901)

Notice how sharply Kiyozawa states his disagreement with the view that objectivity is the reliable pathway to truth, a view which was already gaining popularity in his day. It should also be noticed that what he claims is omnipresent is something he calls "truth." Truth, here, is not to be equated with facts about the existence of physical things and processes. The latter is the proper concern of the scientific enterprise, but the word "truth" belongs more naturally to the province of philosophy and religion. Another way to say this would be to say that the word "truth" is integral to the language and logic of subjectivity.

(2) Any religion is a subjective fact. A subjective fact of any kind is examined as to its

validity only in our own heart. It should not be judged true or false by its relation to the outer world or because of other men's comments about it, as in the case of all objective facts. [VI, 102] (November, 1901)

The question of validity had to emerge in an environment more and more inclined to depend upon scientific observation, measurement, and experimentation. This was the trend in Kiyozawa's day. The case he sought to make was a defensive one in the face of a process that threatened to obliterate the traditional religious values.

(3) There is a contention that the existence of gods or Buddha can be ascertained only after a decision is reached whether gods or Buddha are inevitable facts in the relations between all things in the universe. This contention is apparently based on the attitude that the existence of supernatural beings must be studied as objective facts. Some men insist that the existence of gods or Buddha is beyond doubt because all prominent men in both the East and the West through all ages have believed in them. This is also a manifestation of the mind which regards the existence of holy beings as objective facts.

It is the same with the existence of paradise or hell. Undoubtedly, it is from the motive of proving things as facts that some men wish to fly ten billion miles westward to inspect paradise or dig down one thousand *yojanas* to ascertain the whereabouts of hell. Some people wish to vindicate the existence of heaven and hell on the grounds that they are mentioned in the teachings of all religions, including Christianity and Buddhism. But we can only regard a question reached in such a way as merely an academic concern which has nothing to do with religion. For those methods

reduce religion to an objective fact suitable for academic research and are far from the truth that all religion is a subjective fact. [VI, 102] (November, 1901)

In short, the defense of religion in the face of skeptical criticism is not to be carried on on the basis of objective arguments. Such arguments are bound to fail. The only adequate defense of religion, and the only necessary one from Kiyozawa's point of view, is one that starts from a clear recognition that religious truth is *sui generis*. It does not require validation from anything in the objective world. It is through and through a subjective reality.

One may make an interesting comparison at this point with Tillich's description of religion in *The Dynamics of Faith*. Instead of arguing for a distinctively subjective realm within which religion exists and must be judged, Tillich points to a distinctive language in which we find religious statements expressed, namely, a language of symbols. The symbols point, it is true, to a subjective realm in which the individual experiences a sense of ultimacy, but, at least the symbols themselves stand in the world of objective realities and can be studied as such. One may wish, in this connection, that Kiyozawa might have had an opportunity to grapple with the phenomenon of symbols. Unfortunately, we find no evidence in his writings to indicate that he did.

(4) How can we prove the existence of hell or paradise while holding that religion is a subjective fact? Indeed, it is one of the hardest questions to answer. For it is as if we were trying to answer the questions, "What is cold?" or "What is warmth?" But if you were forced to answer, perhaps this might be somewhere near the truth: We do not believe in gods or Buddha because they exist; gods and Buddha exist because we believe in them. We



do not believe in hell or paradise because they exist; rather, they come to exist for us because we believe in them. [VI, 102] (November, 1901)

This is one of the most arresting passages in Kiyozawa's work. His attitude in putting it forward is one of tentativity. Yet, what he says here is in line with everything else that he says about subjectivity. One may speculate here about the possible reaction of a conservative-minded believer in Amida Buddha. In effect, Kiyozawa is telling such a believer, "There is no Buddha until the very moment you come to believe in him. Likewise, there is no Pure Land until the moment you come to believe that such a thing exists." The logic of such a statement precludes the believer from taking the traditional language of faith literally. How can faith be viewed as a gift from Amida Buddha if the Buddha doesn't even exist until we believe in him? How can the faithful believer say the *nembutsu* in gratitude to a Buddha who hasn't done anything, hasn't even existed until this very moment?

Such a line of questioning, however intriguing to the logical mind, would not begin to touch the real heart of Kiyozawa's confident faith in subjective reality. The reason is that, within the framework of subjective logic, the existence of the Buddha for the believer is to be understood as a particular manifestation of the universal reality of the Absolute. For Kiyozawa, the Absolute may be known by many and various names: Amida Buddha, *Tathāgata*, the Other Power, the Most Merciful, the Infinite, the Unlimited, even God. These are simply names given by different persons at different times to the One Reality when it manifests itself to them. In the language of subjectivity, the One Reality always and everywhere is or has its being, but this is to be distinguished from existing, which is what it does when it manifests itself to a particular believer.

Thus, on the basis of subjective reasoning, the Pure Land faith is not in the least undermined by the assertion that the Buddha comes into existence only as individuals believe in him. Kiyozawa's faith is grounded in the ultimate being of the Absolute and not in the existence of its manifestations.

(5a) This *Seishinshugi* of mine does not mean that there are two kinds of things in the world, subjective and objective, and that we should accept only subjective things and unhesitatingly reject objective things. It means that all things are subjective, including even those generally believed to be objective. In other words, subjective and objective things are not two kinds of existence, but all belong to a single kind of existence. [VI, 109] (April, 1901)

Again, the logic of subjectivity attributes all assertions about the existence of objective things (all things in the world, including the bodily self) to the action of the perceiving mind. The operations of the mind are, by definition, subjective. Therefore, as the mind surveys the world, it subjectively registers the existence of objective things and processes. And as that same mind turns in upon itself it registers the existence of subjective things and processes. Or, in other words, consciousness takes objective things as its objects, while self-consciousness takes subjective things as its objects. But both kinds of consciousness are subjective in nature.

(5b) To change the expression again, both subjectivity and objectivity are the products of one's fancy; it is in the same fancy that subjectivity and objectivity exist. And that fancy itself is a subjective thing. [*Ibid.*]

Here, Kiyozawa touches on the role of the imagination (*sōzō*), or as he calls it, the fancy (*kūsō*). These references to fancy, as well as other later ones in the same context, seem to have been inspired, at least in part, by a conversation Kiyozawa had just had with an employee of the Sugamo Insane Asylum in Tokyo. This person told how the inmates under his charge were accustomed to expressing themselves. Giving free rein to personal fancy, one would claim to be king, another a queen, and another a great general. As Kiyozawa recounted the conversation, he made the observation that the inmates never quarreled with one another because, as he said, "each has built up his own world of fancy and does not take seriously what others say about him." In contrast, quarrels and bad feelings that occur among people generally are indications, Kiyozawa says, "that men are not in possession of their full freedom. We are not as wise as the lunatics in this respect, at least. Once the world of fancy is firmly built within us, and we obtain perfect freedom of our spirits, everything which occurs before our eyes (everything, that is, of an untoward nature) . . . will be accepted with gratitude as warnings to us."

It seems significant that Kiyozawa chooses to use here the word "fancy," (the word *kūsō* having such English equivalents as idle fancy, daydream, vain dream, fantasy, chimera, etc.) rather than the more general word "imagination" (*sōzō*, meaning imagination, fancy, the mind's eye, a supposition, etc.). Perhaps it was for the shock value of employing an unexpectedly light-hearted word for such a seemingly important function. But, in any case, it was not his intention to engage in a serious analysis of the faculty by which artists create and writers write. It was more to his purpose to suggest that the all-important faculty of the subjective mind to form faith-affirming images is a faculty that belongs to everyone. It is so immediately accessible that it resembles a daydream more than it resembles an achievement of the trained artistic imagination.

(5c) Any religious faith is, after all, a fancy standing on a firm basis. Such things as hell, paradise, and Amida Buddha cannot be actually proved in concrete form; they are fancies in this respect. Assuredly, however, they have a practical use which exists whether the object in question is a reality or not. In other words, there is utility where there is faith — faith being a fancy built up in our mind with unshakable firmness. [*Ibid.*]

The dual identification of fancy with faith, and of faith with utility, deserves careful attention. Kiyozawa's use of the word "fancy" is broad enough to include both the fantasy world of a mental patient (the claim to be a king, a queen, or a general) and the religious beliefs of a devotee (hell, paradise, and Amida Buddha). Clearly the meaning he has in mind is closer to "belief" than to mere "whim" or "caprice." "Fancy" in this sense includes "fantasy" but without the ephemeral quality suggested by a mere daydream. "Fancy" also includes "belief," but it links the notion of belief so closely to fantasy that it clearly suggests the illusory nature of belief. In Kiyozawa's mind, the beliefs of all religions partake of the same quality: Instead of pointing to an objective "truth" outside the self, they indicate the presence of a subjective reality and give palpable form to that reality. Rather than concerning himself with the objective existence of the things in which religious people believe, Kiyozawa prefers to interpret the objects of faith as things of essentially practical significance. Thus, belief in hell, paradise, and even Amida Buddha, while partaking of the illusory nature of all beliefs, are nevertheless practically useful for the person of faith.

(5d) We are naturally led to think that since both subjectivity and objectivity are the products of the same fancy, such a fancy or subjectivity includes both subjectivity and

objectivity. These two kinds of subjectivity are commonly called the Larger Universe (*dai-uchū*) and the Smaller Universe (*shō-uchū*). All objective phenomena exist in the smaller universe of subjectivity, while both objective and subjective phenomena are contained in the larger universe of subjectivity. . . We may say, on the other hand, the Greater Self (*dai-ga*) and the Smaller Self (*shō-ga*), respectively, for the larger universe and the smaller universe. We ourselves are both the larger universe and the smaller universe at the same time. [*Ibid.*]

Here, Kiyozawa links the language of subjectivity with the traditional Buddhist terms, larger and smaller universe, and larger and smaller self. One significant feature of his usage of the terms is that the small self is given a continuing function and is allowed to remain unchallenged. Kiyozawa's "small self" is not identified with that false conception of individual selfhood (Skt., *ātman*) which must be eliminated before liberation can be attained. Instead, the small self (or universe) is made a part of the on-going life of a religious person and corresponds to the ground level subjectivity with its two forms of consciousness, as mentioned above.

The fact that the small self (or universe) is contained within the larger one suggests the relation of cell to body. Kiyozawa did, in fact, view the world in terms of the organic analogy. In the same essay here being quoted, he had earlier said, "All things are inseparably related to me in organic relation. And so I have recently been teaching the oneness of everything in the universe (*bambutsu ittai*)." Thus, he stresses the oneness of the small self with the larger self rather than the elimination of the small self to make way for a fuller identification with the larger self. His reliance on the organic analogy enables him to say, "We ourselves are both the larger universe and the smaller universe at the same time. There is no difference between myself and others or between this thing

and that one, as viewed in this light. All things are the same, not only from this angle but from all angles."

A fuller expression of the organic view is contained in the following passage:

(6) I, with other persons, constitute an organism called society. And going further, I, with other persons, have an inseparable, organic relation with heaven and earth, mountains and rivers. Following the same logic even further, I, together with all the things in heaven and earth, constitute an inseparable, organic system. Because of such reasoning as this, I have recently been advocating the truth of *bambutsu ittai*. To put it in a word, let anything in the universe be touched, and the effects of this act will extend eventually to all things, if only we were able to trace their relationships. Even a single ant, for example — when we inquire into its essence and investigate its relationships — turns out to be related to all things in heaven and earth, and to have as its essence the essence of the whole. Based on this reasoning, there is nothing to prevent us from saying that, even though things may differ in their appearances, they are all equal in their essence. [VI, 107-108]

The logic here described was not invented by Kiyozawa; he was simply giving expression to a way of thinking that was current in his day. In doing so, however, he placed himself in line with an earlier Buddhist tradition, represented for instance by the totalistic thinking of the Hua-yen school. But, whether these ideas are original or not, they begin to take on a new relevance in our day, after years of neglect, because of our concern about the environmental crisis. Ecological research has led us once again to begin to take seriously the remarkable interconnectedness of things. The projection of ecosystem terminology on larger and larger dimensions of reality follows naturally from our concern for particular environ-



ments and, indeed, for the fate of the earth itself. In this light, Kiyozawa's organicism may turn out to be not so much a reflection of an outmoded way of thinking as, in fact, a pointer to the future.

#### KIYOZAWA'S VIEW OF SUBJECTIVITY AS A PROCESS

In this section, particular attention is given to the process by which a person moves from an ordinary, or objective, view of reality to a subjective one, and then, beyond that, to a transcendent level of subjectivity.

(7a) Whatever our undertaking may be, our thoughts, in the first stage, are attracted to external things. Then our next thoughts are turned toward how we may make those outer things conform to our own mind. When we reach the next stage we overcome the distinction between self and other and we carry on our life with our minds calmly composed. We may say that the first stage is the objective stage; the second is the subjective stage; and the third is that of subject/object transcendence (*shūkyaku-chōetsu-shugi*). According to our own experience, the changes that take place in our minds follow such an order as this, and we see the same process taking place in other people. [VI, 132] (October, 1901)

This is the first and most general statement of the process. Kiyozawa places this discussion in the context of an essay on the way people change their minds. He begins by acknowledging that most people change their minds countless numbers of times in life. But then he classifies those numerous changes into the three principal stages just mentioned. One interesting feature of his treatment of the subject is that he applies the scheme to a variety of enterprises and does not confine himself to the sphere of religion, as the following excerpt shows.

(7b) The three stages of our mental development may also be seen in our seeking after profit. In the beginning, we are quite indiscriminate in our profit-making; we do not mind slightly disreputable trading. We see only money and other valuables and never stop to think whether it is good or bad to lay hands on them, for we are solely absorbed in acquiring everything in view. . . . Gradually, however, we see that having profit as the sole purpose is not the best means of gaining profit. Then we begin to think more or less of ourselves, and finally make up our minds to take no kind of profit that is unsuitable for us. This is the stage of the subjective view. Next, this second stage will gradually disappear, being overcome, for instance, by some run-in with others. Thus we come to see neither objective profit nor subjective gain; and we then come to be established in our own business. When this third stage is reached, we never think of profit while engaged in business; we never think of crops when cultivating the fields. We are simply satisfied with doing what we ought to do. . . . Furthermore, this is the stage in which more profit will come than when we were almost beside ourselves running after it! [*Ibid.*, 132f]

It should be remembered that Kiyozawa was neither a business man nor a farmer, and that these observations were made, as it were, from the outside of the economic arena. The main reason for including these remarks here is to show that the development of the mind was not viewed simply as a religious undertaking. He went on to comment on such things as the gaining of fame, the establishing of social relations in the community, and the choosing of ethical principles to guide one's life. Passing over these remarks which are not central to our main concern, we move directly to the matter of religion.

(7c) Finally, the same thing may be said about religion. When we are in the embryonic stage of religious faith, we take wooden images or painted pictures and make them the objects of our worship. Then, advancing further, such things as gods and the Buddha come to be in our own mind. If we cultivate the mind, it becomes the Buddha and then it is no longer necessary to worship images. The first stage, that of idolatry, is the stage of objective faith. The stage at which one's mind is the *Tathāgata* is the stage of subjective faith. But the two are alike in that they have not yet reached the goal. As for those who worship merely images and know nothing else and those who know Amida within the mind and ignore all else, I would have to say that neither has yet arrived at (true) religion. When the state of religion has been truly reached, you see neither wooden images nor the mind within; but yet you worship images *and* you appreciate Amida within. The person who has really arrived appreciates Amida in the mind and also acknowledges the images. At one and the same time he believes in the *Tathāgata* that is everywhere and he believes in Amida in the West. At the same time that he believes in this corrupt world he believes in the paradise at the western limit of the world. Only when he arrives at this point has he (truly) entered into religion. [*Ibid.*, 133]

Here, then, is a description of the process of mental cultivation that leads to true religious faith. Two points deserve attention. One is that religious faith is depicted as a goal to be achieved through mental cultivation rather than something that simply happens or something that happens because of the conscious intervention of the Other Power. Kiyozawa actually seems to view the process at two different levels, what might be called a micro level and a macro level. At the micro level, the individual moves through a series of mental stages as he is guided by experience and

personal reflection, arriving, if he is fortunate, at a point at which a transcendent-subjective faith enables him to live in the world with a sense of freedom and serenity. At the macro level, the world of living beings moves along the same path, but very slowly and gradually, as many remain attached to objective or ordinary subjective views and long periods of time are required in order to wean whole societies of people to the highest level. Reflections of the evolutionary mode of thinking Kiyozawa found in Herbert Spencer are detectable in this macro level process as he describes it.

The other point of special interest is that Kiyozawa was here, in effect, pointing a finger at many in the Shinshu tradition whose religious faith was in a state of arrested development. First of all, those who viewed Amida Buddha and the Pure Land as completely external phenomena with an objective existence outside themselves were grievously mistaken. They were only fooling themselves in thinking that they had acquired a religious faith. But then, in the second place, even those who viewed Amida as an inner reality identical with the mind — and surely there were many such persons among the more thoughtful, conservative members of the denomination — even those were not yet at the stage of true religious faith! They had, he would have said, accepted the limited framework of the subject-object view of reality, and even though they could see the limits of mere objectivity, they could not yet see the limits implied by the framework itself. In short, Kiyozawa was saying that true religious faith cannot exist within the limits of subject-object thinking but only by transcending that dichotomy, transcending it, that is, in a way that did not obliterate the subject-object distinction but rather embraced it in organic unity.

#### THE PRESENCE OF THE ABSOLUTE IN TRANSCENDENT SUBJECTIVITY

To portray the pathway to faith as a self-motivated process leading, through personal effort, to a personally anticipated goal is to give a

very one-sided view. Actually, in Kiyozawa's thinking, the point at which religious faith becomes real for the individual is a point of meeting, a meeting of the self and the Other, a meeting shrouded in mystery and incapable of mere logical expression.

(8) On casual view, our *Seishinshugi* seems to insist on the omnipotence of self-power. But in reality, it does nothing of the sort. It relies on the Other Power. This *Seishinshugi* is a practical doctrine which develops at the point where the relative enters into the absolute, where the limited meets the unlimited, where the finite meets the infinite. These words, "enters into" and "meets," are almost beyond explanation; but in order to show that our *Seishinshugi* relies on Other Power, we must use them to distinguish between Other Power and self-exertion. When using such terms as "the relative enters into the absolute" and "the finite meets the infinite," we imply that the Absolute is other than the relative and the Infinite is other than the finite. Then we can say that this contentment that we feel within ourselves is a gift bestowed on us by the Absolute and the Infinite. [VI, 32]

Here is the point at which language fails; words fall short in trying to mirror experience. The state of contentment is real and can be talked about, but the sense of confrontation with the noumena defies description. In another context, Kiyozawa writes, "How is it possible for us, relative and finite beings, to describe the absolute and infinite being? It is impossible! And that is why the Buddha is called the light or existence beyond human thought." [VI, 164] Nevertheless, two things can be said. One is that, whatever it is that happens in this confrontation, it is not something that happens by our willful effort. It is, as it were, a crossing of a boundary, an entering, a meeting. Yet it defies description. The second thing that can be noted is

the state of contentment that results from the meeting and verifies the fact that something has really happened. Little more than this can be said about something that remains a great mystery.

The final quotation in this series comes from the *Waga Shinnen* essay. It speaks to the same point that has just been made, but in a slightly different way:

(9) It goes without saying that when I speak of my faith I refer to my state of mind when I believe in *Tathagāta*. There are two things connected with this: the believing and the *Tathagāta*. These two things may appear to be entirely separate, but to me they are not; the two things are completely one. What is my faith? Believing in *Tathagāta*. What is the *Tathagāta* of which I speak? It is the essence of that in which I believe. If I were to distinguish them, I might speak of them in terms of the distinction between *nōshin* (the active aspect of believing) and *shōshin* (the passive aspect of believing). Or I might distinguish them as *ki* (the believing person, the fulcrum upon which the Dharma exerts its force) and *hō* (the Dharma that is believed and felt). Yet, when I resort to such categories as these I am afraid that things that are understandable will become obscure, so I shall omit such things entirely. [VI, 227] (June, 1903)

Once more, Kiyozawa reaffirms the practical and eschews the merely theoretical. Religious faith is, after all, something to be experienced and not just talked about. Words point to reality in a cumbersome way, more or less indicating the region in one's subjective experience where faith is to be found, but never really comprehending its fullness. This final testament of Kiyozawa's faith prior to his death was an appropriate expression of the end of words and the beginning of ultimate experience.

In conclusion, we have seen how Kiyozawa's thought in the final years of his life moved in the direction of an attempted definition of a higher form of subjectivity as the distinctive ground of religious faith. The *Seishinshugi*, which gave practical expression to Kiyozawa's point of view, spoke briefly to the religious seeker of Japan at the turn of the century, and then, shortly after his death, ceased to exist as a distinct movement. Later decades were to see the continued growth of confidence in the primacy of objective, materialist values. It remains to be seen whether the values that Japan has chosen — and with it, the rest of the

world — will continue to sustain us. It may be that the time has come for us to look for new directions in some of the closed books of the past, and it may be that Kiyozawa still has something of irreplaceable value to say to us and to our children.

#### FOOTNOTE

1. This and all later references are taken from *Kiyozawa Manshi Zenshū* (Collected Works of Kiyozawa Manshi). Eds. Akegarasu Haya and Nishimura Kengyō. 8 vols. Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1953-1957.