

R.H. Blyth on Henry David Thoreau: “Perhaps the Greatest Man America Has Produced” *

R. H. ブライズのソロー観： 「おそらく最も偉大なアメリカ人」

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本論は、1972年に*OTSUKA REVIEW*第9号（東京教育大学大学院英文学会）に英語のみで発表された。今回これに日本語解説と要約を添えて再録するものである。

Keywords R.H. Blyth, D.T. Suzuki, Zen, East-West understanding, H.D. Thoreau, Nature, poetry, haiku, Basho, humour. R.H.ブライズ、鈴木大拙、禅、東西理解、H.D. ソロー、大自然、詩、俳句、芭蕉、ユーモア。

解説

2011年3月11日の東日本大震災は、それに対する日本人の対処の仕方が世界中に報道され、日本人は「自然と共に」生きる民族であること、しかも「忍耐強く、協調して」生きる国民であることを、強く認識させたようだ。

英国人 R.H. ブライズ (1898-1964) は、1930年代から、そうした日本人やその文化の特質に注目し、これを褒め称えて、英文著書 *Zen in English Literature* (禅と英文学) や *HAIKU* (俳句) その他によって広く世界に知らせようとした。今日世界中の多くの国で “Zen” が愛好され、またさまざまな言語で俳句 “haiku” が書かれている事実は、ブライズの功績の一つである。このことが日本ではあまり知られていないのは残念なことだ。彼は 1946 (昭和 21) 年から 64年に亡くなるまで、学習院大学の教授として皇太子殿下 (現天皇) の家庭教師をつとめ、また東京の多くの大学で英語英文学を講じた。

さて、そのブライズについて、海外では全く知られていないであろうことは、彼が日本人学生のために多くの英語英米文学関係の教科書や参考書を出版したことである。そして注目すべきは、英米文学にも禅があることを説きながら、「おそらく最も偉大なアメリカ人は、ヘンリー・デイヴィッド・ソロー (Henry David Thoreau, 1817-62) である」と書いていることである。

ソローは、19世紀前半から中葉にかけてのアメリカの思想家で、*Walden* 『ウォールデン：森の生活』などで自然との一体の生活を賛美し、*Civil Disobedience* 『市民の不服従』（講演、死後に出版された）などで奴隷制を激しく批判した人物である。

英国人ブライズは、高校を卒業したばかりの第一次大戦中、「良心的徴兵忌避者」としてロンドンの刑務所で服役し、また太平洋戦争中は神戸の交戦国民間人抑留所にあつて俳句研究に没頭し、そして戦後は東京で次々にその著作を発表しながら、GHQと日本政府や皇室との橋渡しをし、日本の民主化に努め、天皇の「人間宣言」の英文草案を起稿し、皇太子の英語の家庭教師を務め、約二十年間、多くの大学で彼一流のユーモラスな話術で、精神的に打ちのめされた日本人を励まし続けた。

ブライズは十代後半から生涯をヴェジタリアン（菜食主義者）で通し、平和について語ることの少ない絶対平和主義者・非戦主義者であった。ブライズの残した言葉に次のようなものがある。「私の国の敵は、私の敵ではない」。「世界中で一番えらい詩人は松尾芭蕉である」。「科学はやがて人類を破滅に導くだろう」。「人生はユーモアなしでは生きてゆけない」。氏の思想と生涯については、拙著『ブライズ先生、ありがとう』を参照いただきたい。以下に、本論文の日本語要約を掲げる。

（なお、アメリカの代表的なソロー研究者でソロー協会事務局長のウォルター・ハーディング教授が、1964年ブライズ教授死去後まもなく日本各地での講演のため来日されたとき、東京教育大学での講演後の茶話会で、筆者が「ブライズ先生はこの10月に亡くなられました」と申し上げると、「お会いしたかった。それがこの度の訪日の一つの目的であった」と大層残念がっておられたこと。そしてその後、1973年、筆者が訪米の折に、この英文拙論を同教授にお目につけたことを、ここに初めて記録します）。

Abstract（要約）

仏教哲学者鈴木大拙（1870-1966）は、65歳で急逝した R.H. ブライズの死を悼み、「1964年、世界は現代における最も優れた日本文化の解説者の一人を失った。氏の俳句、日本的ユーモアについての研究は、禅についての研究と共に東西理解へのユニークな貢献であった」と書いた。R.H. ブライズの名は、戦後まもなく *Zen in English Literature* や *HAIKU* の著者として広く世界に知られ、やがてアメリカ・カナダ・イギリス・フランスをはじめ世界各地に「禅ブーム」「俳句ブーム」を巻き起こした。だが、彼が日本人学生のために多くの英語英文学の著書を著しその中で、「H. D. ソローは最も特異なアメリカ人で、おそらくアメリカが生んだ最も偉大な人物である」と繰り返し述べていたことは、一般には全く知られていなかったろう。

以下に、ブライズが目したソローの特徴を掲げる。

ソローは「完全に大自然（Nature）の意志に従って生きた」。ゆえに彼は、「生や死や宗教などから超然として生きた」。そして彼は、過去や未来ではなく、常に「現在に生きた」。臨終に際して神について問われたとき、「神と争ったことは一度もない」と答え、また来世については、「今はこの世だけ（一時に一世）」と答えた。その生き方は、「禅に通じる」ものであった。

良心的徴兵忌避者のブライズは、皇太子のアメリカ人家庭教師にクエイカーのヴァイニング夫人を推薦したが、自らは政治的発言を慎み、その著作にも、インド独立の父マハトマ・ガンディやアメリカ公民権運動の活動家マーティン・ルーサー・キング牧師に大きな影響を与えたソローの著書『市民の不服従』(*Civil Disobedience*)からではなく、もっぱら『コンコード川での一週間』(*A Week on the Concord*)のような紀行文から引用して、ソローの偉大さを称えている。ソローの生き方が、いかに松尾芭蕉のそれに酷似しているかを指摘し、英語国民は世界一偉大な詩人芭蕉の『奥の細道』を読むべきだ、と説く。

ブライズは、西洋の独立心や自尊心と共に東洋の無我や自然との一体感を合わせ体得したソローを、エマソンと並んで賞賛する。またソローの偉大さは、「その著作が自ずから書けたもの」であり、それは「バッハの音楽と同様」であり、「あるがまま」であり、正に禅である、という。「山は山」から「山は神秘」の段階を経て、再び「山は山」に至って禅の境地となる。すなわち「禅の目的は、生死を超えて生きること」である、とする。

ブライズが最後に到達した境地が、「ユーモア」(Humour)であった。その禅の境地には「ユーモア」があって、「ソローは最大のユーモリストの一人」であった。「何かを真に理解しようとするならば、人はまず陽気になることだ。『ユーモア』こそ生の源、生の意味、生の目的である。「ただしこれをくそ真面目に(ただ文字どおりに)受けとらないように」。

R.H. ブライズ関係最近の拙著参考文献 (Recent publications on R.H. Blyth)

- ・ 『融合文化研究』第15号、国際融合文化学会、2010年8月 (*The Bulletin of the International Society for Harmony & Combination of Cultures*, No. 15, ISHCC, August 2010).
- ・ 上田邦義『ブライズ先生、ありがとう』三五館、2010年5月 (UEDA Kuniyoshi, *Thank You, Professor Blyth*, Sangokan, Tokyo, May 2010).

THE MOST REMARKABLE AMERICAN: R. H. Blyth on Henry David Thoreau**

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“With the death of Dr. Reginald Horace Blyth on October 28, 1964, the world lost one of the most eminent exponents of Japanese culture of recent years. His studies on *haiku* and the Japanese sense of humor as well as Zen were unique contributions towards East-West understanding.” —D. T. Suzuki, in the memorial article in *The Eastern Buddhist*, September, 1965.¹

Most readers of R. H. Blyth's voluminous writings on Japanese culture, beginning with

the *Zen in English Literature and Oriental Classics* (1942)², may have missed his unique “Introductions” in his small textbooks edited for Japanese students of English.³ In the “Introduction” to *Selections from Thoreau’s Journals* he writes: “Thoreau is the most remarkable, perhaps the greatest man America has produced,” and also in the “Introduction” to *A Shortened Version of A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*: “When the final account is made and God closes the books, it may be found that Thoreau was the one real man America produced.” It must be natural that in these simple writings addressed to his students (of the country he loved) he revealed more directly than in any other writings which English and American authors he loved most and which he regarded as great as a writer or as a man. Now, in this paper, availing ourselves of all his writings published so far as well as his lectures and talks I heard as an undergraduate and graduate student at Tokyo University of Education, we will examine what brought this British scholar of Japanese culture and professor of English Literature to estimate an American essayist so highly.

The Context

Let us first examine in what contexts he arrives at such strong conclusions. Preceding the above-quoted sentence claiming Thoreau to be “the most remarkable... man America has produced,” Blyth says:⁴

Thoreau’s death is memorable for his absolute obedience to the will of Nature, and for three great sayings concerning it. The first is contained in a letter written three months before he died:

I may add that I am enjoying existence as much as ever, and regret nothing.
When asked on his death-bed if he had “made his peace with God,” he replied,
“I have never quarreled with him.”
When someone wished him to speak about religion and the next world,
“One world at a time!”
he answered

Here we know Blyth evaluates Thoreau so highly from the following points:

- 1) Thoreau is absolutely obedient to the will of Nature.
- 2) He always lives in the present, enjoying existence deeply.
- 3) He is always true to (his) God.
- 4) He is transcendent of religions and life and death.

We may deduce from these a fifth proposition:

- 5) Blyth sees in Thoreau a Zen attitude towards life.

There are also other ingredients in Thoreau’s thought that appeal to Blyth. Turning to the “Introduction” to *A Shortened Version of A Week*, Blyth makes comments on the anarchism and social criticism of the mid-nineteenth century American critic: “Thoreau’s anarchism is one of his fundamental characteristics; it is a somewhat unamerican and

unenglish quality. We are reminded of Shelly, Lawrence, and Nietzsche.” Blyth, himself a conscientious objector in World War I, spent about four years in an internment camp near Kobe in Japan during World War II. We might call him an anarchist-pacifist, as we guessed in his seminar talks at the Tokyo University of Education Graduate School. Understandably, however, there is to be found no reference in Blyth’s writings to his past experiences, nor to Thoreau’s social activities, such as participation in the anti-slavery and anti-war movements. It is clear, though, that he supported Thoreau’s principles of “civil disobedience” which later became the leading principles of the Gandhian method of nonviolent resistance in South Africa and India, as well as the “manual of arms” for the anti-Nazi resistance movement in Denmark in the 1940’s, and more recently the guiding light in Martin Luther King, Jr.’s equal rights fight in the United States.⁵

Blyth goes on, quoting from Thoreau:

If our merchants did not most of them fail, and the banks too, my faith in the old laws of the world would be staggered.

Thoreau’s anti-social feeling is very strong, even violent. He says that this failure of the banks is as “exhilarating as the fragrance of the mallards in spring.” His economic theory is very simple, but few people have enough serenity of mind to attend to it:

If thousands are thrown out of employment, it suggests they were not well employed. Why don’t they take the hint? It is not enough to be industrious; so are the ants. What are you industrious about?

Blyth, who chose to be a conscientious objector and was very critical of his countrymen’s treatment of Indian subjects, moved to Seoul in Korea in 1924 at the age of twenty-five as a teacher of English in a college under the Japanese administration.⁶ His action certainly is strong evidence that Blyth believes early in his own life in Thoreau’s “civil disobedience” and his social criticism. Yet, in spite of all his experiences, Blyth maintains that the greatness of Thoreau lies fundamentally not in his social criticisms, though they are truly sane, nor in his literary judgements, however just, but “in his ever-present knowledge of that which is important and that which is not.” And quoting a passage from *Thoreau’s Journals*: “What after all does the practicalness of life amount to? I could postpone them all to hear this locust sing,” Blyth concludes:

Thoreau is always “mindful that the earth is beneath and the heavens are above him.” Everything in him begins in nature. When the final account is made and God closes the books, it may be found that Thoreau was the one real man that America produced.

So, Blyth’s highest estimation of Thoreau does not emerge from Thoreau’s literary or social criticisms or even from his civil disobedience notions which have had a wide influence

in this century, but from his discriminating knowledge of things of ultimate importance. As Blyth says, Thoreau appreciates the momentary experience of nature more than any other human activity, and is always mindful of being human in a religious sense; for Blyth and Thoreau, everything with nature.

Nature

The “Introduction” to *Thoreau’s Journals* opens with a beautiful description of Thoreau’s early life. Here is Blyth’s, as well as Thoreau’s, friendly and submissive relation to Nature commingled.

Henry David Thoreau was born in Concord in 1817. The scenery in which he grew up was one of slow rivers, great trees, small lakes, low ranges of hills, and fields and undulating country with a rich flora and fauna. As a boy he was grave in manner but active and fond of the open air. After trying and giving up teaching, he earned his living chiefly by manual labour, especially surveying. In 1839, together with his brother John, whom he loved dearly, he went for a week’s voyage on the Concord and Merrimac(k) rivers, an account of which he published, at his own expense, in 1849. In 1834 Emerson settled in Concord, and the two men profoundly influenced each other; Emerson was then thirty one and Thoreau only seventeen, but Thoreau matured at a very early age.

In 1842 his brother John died, and Thoreau was deeply and permanently affected. But in a letter to a friend a month later, he writes:

Only Nature has a right to grieve perpetually, for she alone is innocent. Soon the ice will melt, and the blackbirds sing along the river which he frequented, as pleasantly as ever. The same everlasting serenity will appear in the face of God, and we will not be sorrowful he is not.⁷

To Nature, Thoreau gives his ready submission and faith which never ceases to the last moment of his life. In the “Introduction” to his *A Shortened Version of A Week*, Blyth argues that though Thoreau’s own verse is some of the worst that has ever been penned, much of it irregular, impossible to scan, wooden in form and prosaic in idea, yet there are lines that reveal the “poetic life” that lay buried so deep under that clumsiness of expression. The last lines of *Inspiration* is a choice example:

Now chiefly is my natal hour,
And only now my prime of life;
I will not doubt the love untold
Which not my worth nor want have brought,
Which wooed me young and woos me old,
And to this evening hath me brought.

Blyth thinks that these are the most religious lines that have ever been written, and that they possess that “natural piety” which the poet shares with the early Wordsworth.

In addition, in the “Introduction” to *Thoreau’s Journals*, Blyth criticizes Thoreau’s later poetical life, together with Wordsworth’s by indicating that as he grew older, there was a gradual decrease in poetic and intuitive power, corresponding somewhat to that of Wordsworth. In Wordsworth, he says, it was theology that represented the stiffening of the mind, the ebb of poetic life. In Thoreau, it is science, not so much the scientific spirit as the mechanical collection of mere objective facts, that smothers the poet in him. Blyth concludes that Thoreau is not as great a naturalist as he is deeply *religious*. According to Blyth’s explanation, this “religion” has the unique quality of being as much concerned with all the aspects of nature, the sweet and savage, as with the aspiring soul of man.

In *A Survey of English Literature*,⁸ Blyth writes that the deepest point Wordsworth reached was the union of Man and Nature expressed in *Resolution and Independence*. Yet he also writes that when we compare some of the best poems of Wordsworth with the Japanese poet Bashō’s haiku, we feel a certain shallowness in the Western poet.

Blyth thinks in *Zen and Zen Classics*: Vol. VII that Thoreau is closer to Bashō than Wordsworth, partly due to the Indian writings which he receives through an English friend, giving him that philosophic background needed for his poetical and religious experiences. The difference between Bashō and Wordsworth, he maintains, are those between the Chinese-Japanese mind and the German-English mind, the latter always moving from the particular to the universal, the concrete to the abstract, the former never leaving the particular and the concrete however much the universal and the abstract may be implicit, Blyth writes in *Zen in English Literature* that Bashō is the world’s greatest poet. In this book, he employs the word “poetry” in two allied meanings: a life in accord with reality and writing of poetry.

In *Haiku*: Vol. I and *A History of Haiku*: Vol. I, Blyth argues that haiku poems or something like them may be found scattered throughout English prose, perhaps more frequently than in poetry, and that though Thoreau’s poetry is wooden, *Walden* and *A Week on the Concord* remind him of the short pieces of poetic writing by haiku poets, known as *haibun*. That is, Thoreau’s prose writings are *haibun* if not haiku, in many places. From *A Week on the Concord* Blyth gives such examples:

We see men haying far in the meadow, their heads waving like the grass they cut.
In the distance, the wind seemed to bend all alike.

The stillness was intense and almost conscious, as if it were a natural Sabbath.

Our thoughts too begin to rustle.

The meadows were a-drinking at their leisure: the frogs sat meditating, all Sabbath

thoughts, summing up their week, with one eye out on the golden sun, and one toe upon a reed, eyeing the wondrous universe in which they act their part; the fishes swam more staid and soberly, as maidens go to church.

Moreover, in *Haiku*: Vol. III, explaining the following haiku by Bashō:

名月や池をめぐりて夜もすがら
Meigetsu ya ike o megurite yomosugara
 The autumn moon;
 I wandered round the pond
 All night long,

he cites a passage from *Walden* which, he says, gives us a hint of Bashō's state of mind as he wandered along the edge of the lake:

As I walk along the stony shore of the pond in my shirtsleeves, though it is cool as well as cloudy and windy, and I see nothing special to attract me, all the elements are unusually congenial to me. The bullfrogs trump to usher in the night, and the note of the whippoorwill is borne on the rippling wind from over the water. Sympathy with the fluttering alder and poplar leaves almost takes away my breath; yet, like the lake, my serenity is rippled but not ruffled.

And again, in *Haiku*: Vol. IV, citing Bashō's haiku:

聲すみて北斗に響く砧かな
Koe sumite hokuto ni kibiku kinuta kana
 The clear voice
 Of the fulling-block echoes up
 To the Northern Stars,

Blyth writes that Thoreau, listening to a similar sound, the thud of oars, feels the same relation to the stars of the sky,

... a sort of rudimental music suitable for the ear of night, and the acoustics of her dimly lighted halls;

Pulsae referunt ad sidera valles,
 And the valleys echoed the sound to the stars.

Here Blyth asserts that both Thoreau and Bashō have that remarkable objective-subjective quality that is not a mixture of the two, and that the mind that composed Bashō's verse and the passage from Thoreau, is that which Ikkyū speaks of in

one of his *Songs of the Way*, 道歌:

心とは いかなるものを いふやらん
 すみ絵にかきし 松風の音
 The mind, --
 What shall we call it?
 It is the sound of the breeze
 That blows through the pines
 In the Indian ink picture.

In the “Introduction” to *Thoreau’s Journals*, Blyth declares that Thoreau is great, together with Emerson, in combining Western independence and self-respect, the deep sense of differences in things, with the spirit of the East, and its weak sense of the ego, its mystical feeling for nature and the sameness of things.

Zen

In the chapter “Zen and Music” in *Zen and Zen Classics*: Vol. VII, Blyth compares Thoreau with Bach. “Bach is Zen itself. Like Zen he absorbed everything. Like Zen, everything he wrote wrote itself.” “The only way to describe,” Blyth says, “this naturalness, the selfful selflessness of Bach’s music is to quote from *A Week on the Concord* concerning literature:

As naturally as the oak bears an acorn and the vine a gourd, man bears a poem, either spoken or done ... Homer’s song is a vital function like breathing, and an integral result like weight ... He is as serene as nature, and we can hardly detect the enthusiasm of the bard.

Again, in the same book, Blyth asks: What is Zen? In literature, he answers that the best examples come from Thoreau. Blyth cites as an example, from *A Week on the Concord*, of a past that is always present:

As the bay-wing sang many a thousand years ago, so sang he tonight. In the beginning God heard his song and pronounced it good, and hence it has endured. It reminded me of many a summer sunset, of many miles of gray rails, of many a rambling pasture, of the farm-house far in the fields, its milkpans and well-sweep, and the cows coming home the pasture.

The best, the most serene, Blyth states, is the present which is always present:

Autumnal mornings, when the feet of countless sparrows are heard like rain-drops

on the roof by the boy who sleeps in the garret.

This is Blyth's favourite passage. In a Tokyo University of Education Graduate School lecture in 1963, he compares it with Keats' famous sparrow passage:

The setting sun will always set me rights -- or if a Sparrow come before my Window I take part in its existence and pick about the Gravel.

He concludes that Thoreau's passage is much deeper and truer than Keats'. In the last essay in *Zen and Zen Classics*: Vol. II, published, in July, 1964, three months before his death at 65, Blyth goes so far as to say: "Keats was a liar; he could not become a sparrow outside the window and peck in the gravel."⁹ By contrast, Blyth thinks enough of Thoreau to say: "In his depth, no man goes deeper; the truth takes place as he walks and feels and thinks; his silences are more significant than the most eloquent periods of other men."¹⁰ Thoreau says of himself: "Being is the great explainer."

Also, in the "Epilogue" of *Zen and Zen Classics*: Vol. II, Blyth believes that poetry, which itself is Zen, is the poetry of Wordsworth and Thoreau; it is the highest form of life, and somehow must be carried over, as in Shakespeare, to the world of human beings, who live it so far as they really live at all. He doubts then, whether this good life can be lived without any reference to nature, without a deep and constant love of it. And he adds:

The Chinese Zen monks, and the Japanese after them, unlike the Christian, preserved themselves from ego-centricity by a constant reference to natural phenomena as justifying both their (apparently) excessive materiality, and spirituality.

The following passage from *A Survey of English Literature* finally confirms the greatness of Thoreau from the Zen point of view:

We are taught in Zen that there are three stages in our apprehension of the world: first a mountain is just a mountain as the primrose was simply a primrose by the river brim to Wordsworth's Peter Bell. Then the mountain becomes a mystical, symbolic, divine, mysterious, poetical, magical things. The mountain is in the world of poetry; it is a passion, an appetite. But there is a third stage, when the mountain becomes a mountain, -- but quite different from the first. The nature poetry of John Clare is of this third kind. It has gone beyond the mysticism of Vaughan, the pantheism of Wordsworth, and the imagination of Keats. It strongly resembles the practical transcendentalism of Thoreau. Like him, Clare is full of humour.¹¹

And to complete this discussion, "The object of Zen," declares Blyth in the "Preface" of *Zen and Zen Classics*: Vol. II, "is to transcend life and death, and really to live."

Humour

Looking to another relationship shared by Blyth and Thoreau, we might now lastly turn to humour. In the “Preface” to *Humour in English Literature*, published in Blyth’s sixtieth year, he confesses:

I also once thought, rightly enough, that poetry is the only important thing in the world, that is, the poetry of prose and verse and music and art and action. I now think, at last quite rightly, that humour, in its broadest meaning, and as including or rather suffusing poetry, is the real thing. It is even more delicate, more gusty, more intractable, more volatile than poetry.

And significantly, the first name he mentions in his *Japanese Humour* is Thoreau:

Thoreau, one of the most human and humorous men who ever lived, the only man who can make me weep, and always does, says in his *Journals*:

If you would understand aught, be gay before it.

If D. T. Suzuki states for Blyth memorial article: “Perhaps to those of us who knew him, he was first and foremost a poet with a wonderfully keen and sensitive perception,” he is also a perfect humorist, looking a mixture of Charlie Chaplin and Sir Laurence Olivier, who could make any person laugh, even the Empress, at any time he liked. (Professor Blyth was the private tutor of English to the Crown Prince from 1945 to 1964.) In the classroom, too, as described by Shojun Bando in his warm memorial article in *The Eastern Buddhist*¹², all Blyth’s students “were kept amused and delighted from the beginning to the end by his refreshing sense of humor.” Since Blyth could read both classical and modern Japanese with ease, and spoke the language freely, he too, might be called remarkable, for, as anyone knows, being humorous in these two different languages is no easy task.

In the end, Blyth read Thoreau compassionately and harmoniously, declaring:

Every word, every sentence that Thoreau wrote is suffused with humour, his own humour.¹³

Humour of course meant for Blyth not just a rhythmical movement of the diaphragm at some paradox or unexpected profit, or someone else’s discomfiture, but, as he writes at the end of the “Introduction” to *Humour in English Literature*, “All things are contained in humour, are in God. A piece of humour is a piece of the Godhead, and just as God is completely and fully in every thing, so in one piece of true humour the whole of God is implicit. Humour is not an extra, an appendage, a decoration. It is the very essence, the

nature of the thing itself. Thus 'the stone which the builders refused is become the head-stone of the corner.' Humour is the origin of life. Humour is the meaning of life. Humour is the object of life. But don't take it too seriously!"

Notes: -

1 *The Eastern Buddhist* (New Series Vol. I No. 1.), The Eastern Buddhist Society, Otani University, Kyoto.

2 Aldous Huxley in a letter to Mrs. Elise Murrell writes on November 4, 1951, at Los Angeles: "There is a very curious book by a man called T. H. Blyth, called *Zen in English Literature*. Blyth is a professor at some Japanese university and he lived in that country for many years. The book deals with the relation between moment-by-moment experience of Things-as they-Are [and] Poetry. It is a bit perverse sometimes, but very illuminating at others." See *Bibliography*. Blyth's later publications include *Haiku* (4 Vols.), *Senryu*, *Japanese Humour*, *Oriental Humour*, *Zen and Zen Classics* (5 Vols.) and *A History of Haiku* (2 Vols.)

3 See *Bibliography*.

4 Though the whole "Introduction" on four and a half pages is well worthy of note, this passage is of immediate importance here.

5 In his essay "In Praise of Suzuki Daisetsu and Zen", Blyth writes: "There is one question which Dr. Suzuki does not touch on in this selection from his writings, and which he seldom deals with, - the relation between Zen and peace and war, Zen and socialism and capitalism, Zen and daily life. I wish to rush in where angels fear to tread, and that a good society is to be composed of people who have little interest in the distribution of wealth, because they are not interested in wealth itself."

6 One day in 1964, a few graduate students (I was among them) at Tokyo University of Education were reading together with "Mr. Blyth" some passages in his *Thoreau's Journals*. Someone read the following passage:

... I know of no redeeming qualities in me but a sincere love for some things, and when I am reprov'd I have to fall back on to this ground. This is my argument in reserve for all cases. My love is invulnerable. Meet me on that ground, and you will find me strong. When I am condemn'd, and condemn myself utterly, I think straightway, 'But I rely on my love for some things.' Therein I am whole and entire. Therein I am God-propp'd.

Blyth, then, slowly and reflectively said, "When I was a boy, I liked grass. As I liked grass, I became a vegetarian. As I became a vegetarian, I got interested in Buddhism. As I got interested in Buddhism, I wanted to go to India. But, when I got to India, there was no room for me to enter." And he added jokingly, "So, here I am."

7 Parenthetically, Blyth in keeping with Thoreau's beliefs built his own house in his

sixties at a mountain foot in Ōiso, using his own hands and mind, something quite un-English, and surely un-Japanese.

8 In the “Preface” to this unique survey, the author says: “Poetry, whether in verse or prose, in thoughts or deeds, is the only thing that makes life worth living. What has no poetry in it, those who pretend to be poets, are omitted from this *Survey*. As Virgil says to Dante, ‘Non ragioniam di lor, ma guarda e passa.’ (Let us not speak of them, but look and pass by.)”

9 It must be remembered that in his first *Zen* book, *Zen in English Literature*, issued in 1942, Blyth quoted this passage of Keats and wrote that Keats’ poetic character expressed there was in accord with Four Statements of Zen Sect, *i.e.*, 1. 教外別伝. A special transmission outside the scriptures. 2. 不立文字. No depending on books or words. 3. 直指人心. Direct pointing to the soul of man. 4. 見性成佛. Seeing into one’s nature and the attainment of Buddhahood. He explained in that book that the poet was so empty that he could contain anything, everything. He arrived at the state of 3 and 4, that is, the state of seeing into the nature of the Sun and attainment of Sparrowhood.

10 “Introduction” to *Thoreau’s Journals*.

11 Taken from his discussion of Clare on page 299. A similar passage is also to be found in the “Epilogue” of *Zen and Zen Classics*: Vol. II.

12 *Op. cit.*

13 *Humour in English Literature*, p. 188,

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** When Professor Walter Harding visited Japan in 1964, I had a chance to talk with him at the reception following his lecture at Tokyo University of Education. During our conversation I told him, "Professor Blyth passed away last October." Upon hearing this news he was very sorrowful, saying that one of the purposes of his visit to Japan was to see the Professor. Consequently in 1973, I attended his summer seminar in Concord and showed him the paper "The Most Remarkable American: R.H. Blyth on H.D. Thoreau" (Ueda, 2011)