Takahatake states that he wants to make a contribution to the study of Shinran's personality by overcoming the traditional dichotomy of purely historical and purely religious-philosophical studies, and by focusing on "Young Man Shinran." He deplores the fact that the Shin tradition has "concentrated its efforts on the study and transmission of Shinran's mature thought," with neglect of "Shinran's early life as the formative years in the history of a religious leader" (p. xii). In view of the fruitfulness of the post-war plethora of studies on the young Hegel, the young Marx, etc., we must applaud this intention. It can be inferred that it was mainly E. Erikson's *Young Man Luther* that stood as a model, not only from the title but also from the Conclusion where, with special reference to Erikson, Shinran's family background is stressed as his "curse." The problem is, of course, whether the scarce historical data
suffice to carry such analysis.

While it may be true that Takahatake's book does not break much new ground in the biographical study of Shinran, the fact remains that he provides the reader of English with a view into the state of these studies and with many details not offered in Bloom's work. Personally, I especially appreciated his summarizing evaluation of Shinran's personality (p. 123), the stress on Saichô's influence on Shinran (pp. 27–30), the interpretation of Shinran's great devotion to Shôtoku Taishi (pp. 31–32 and 34–38), the comparison of the Kamakura figures, Nichiren, Dōgen, and Hōnen (pp. 114–120) and, no matter how minor this may seem, the insightful remark that "there are no statements in Shinran's works which glorify nature" (p. 91).

Now a word on the "flies in the ointment." There are not a few of them and they can mostly be attributed to the author's imperfect command of English. Rather than trying to list the most annoying examples, which space does not permit, I want to single out as especially regrettable the English translation of titles of some of Shinran's works and of Shinshū terminology in general—a rendering that often does not permit any insight into the meaning of the original. Take for example "opportunity of profound faith" for ki no jinshin 機の深心 (p. 101), "true opportunity for the wicked person" for akunin shōki 惡入正機 (p. 104) or "Hymns on righteousness, imitative, degenerate" as a translation of Shinran's Shōzōmatsu wasan 正像末和讃 (p. 208). It would also have been helpful if the author had told us where the translations of the Shinran quotes come from. This is only to say that, in this reviewer's opinion, the book most certainly deserves a second edition wherein these peccadillos are set right.

REFERENCE

Bloom, Alfred


Jan Van Bragt

Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture