

While this book seems primarily written for Christian seminaries and congregations, it is also a wonderful theoretical resource for Christian leaders in spiritual care, clinical supervision, spiritual direction, and contextual education. The various roles of the teacher and focus on creating an intentional learning community rooted in hospitality and mutuality speak well to many disciplines and ministries.

The authors emphasize *Christian* spiritual formation and the core theological and biblical reflections are rooted in the Christian Scriptures, the life and teachings of Jesus, and the prophetic call to engage diversity in its many forms as a matter of faith. The authors' passion for authentic multicultural community inspires hope. I appreciate their strong convictions and commend this much-needed dialogue and work in Christian communities.

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**Jonathan Watts, ed., *This Precious Life: Buddhist Tsunami Relief and Anti-Nuclear Activism in Post 3/11 Japan* (Yokohama, Japan: The International Buddhist Exchange Center, 2012), 208 pp.**

For those in Japan, the March 11, 2011 tsunami and nuclear disaster will continue to shape culture and history. Disasters often awaken us to our spirituality and it is human nature to seek outside ourselves for support. *This Precious Life: Buddhist Tsunami Relief and Anti-Nuclear Activism in Post 3/11 Japan* helps those of us who are outside of Japan to enter into this event from the perspective of Buddhist priests who were serving in the hardest hit communities. The book is a collection of essays written by different Buddhist priests as they grappled with how to respond to the needs of the people and how to respond publicly to the nuclear disaster in hopes of shaping the future.

I was interested in reviewing this book because I married into a Japanese family. I am Christian and my Japanese family is also Christian. However, in my desire to better understand Japanese culture, I also want to understand Buddhism as this religion has shaped culture greatly. I share this to help my readers understand how I approached this book.

Much in this book felt familiar to the American Christian pastoral experience. In Japan, Buddhism is often referred to as “Funeral Buddhism.” One goes to the temple for funerals and memorial services. Many of the priests mention a revival of the Japanese people to Buddhism. Now with weakened economic growth and the aftermath of the tsunami, people are more open to Buddhist principles and lifestyle. The priests want to help the Japanese people see how Buddhism can help them seek a better life which does not focus on materialism but leads more to deeper spiritual fulfillment. Historically, Buddhist temples have served as emergency responders and always have extra food and shelter available. Now they are seeking to help the Japanese people reflect on their emotional and spiritual needs and thus, help build a stronger community.

Some of the essays read like someone’s private journal. These essays are especially helpful in illustrating the Action/Reflection model. One priest, who lived near Fukushima, wrote about his emotional conflict about wanting to evacuate with his family and yet wanting to care for the people. He tried to convince everyone to move and when few did, he committed himself to return to the area. His first trips back he wore protective clothing and worried about radiation. As his trips continued, he realized that he could not effectively serve the people like that. They offered him hospitality without wearing surgical masks so how could he refuse their offering? This essay, in particular, would be a great case study for student reflection.

Overall, *This Precious Life* is a powerful glimpse into the realities of the aftermath of the tsunami and nuclear disaster in Japan and how Buddhist priests responded to help the community. It provides readers insight into the struggles and thoughts of the priests as they ministered and would serve as good case study materials for students. This book may also be good to help non-Buddhists understand a bit more about the Buddhist culture in Japan, however, it is not a book about Buddhist beliefs, but may be a good conversation starter about this religion.

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