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Ashida Enosuke's Postwar Educational Thought: From “Companions in Self-cultivation” and “Teachers and Students Sharing the Same Flow to “Let Us Grow Together”¹

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Keywords: Ashida Enosuke (芦田恵之助), Japanese language education (*kokugo kyōiku* 国語教育), self-cultivation (*shūyō* 修養), practice (*shugyō* 修行), teachers and students (*shitei* 師弟)

Author's Statement

This paper examines Ashida Enosuke's postwar education slogan, “let us grow together,” as the culmination of his self-cultivation (*shūyō* 修養) philosophy of education, tracing its development from the Taishō 大正 period (1912–1926) slogan “companions in self-cultivation” to the prewar Shōwa 昭和 period's (1926–1989) “teachers and students sharing the same flow” and “comrades and fellow practitioners.”

Introduction

This paper focuses on Ashida Enosuke 芦田恵之助 (1873–1951) and his post-WWII educational motto “let us grow together” (*tomo ni sodachimashō* 共に育ちましょう). This phrase encapsulates Ashida's postwar educational philosophy, which drew on earlier concepts he had previously articulated: “companions in self-cultivation” (*shūyō no michizure* 修養の道連) during the Taishō 大正 period (1912–1926) and “teachers and students sharing the same flow” (*shitei kyōryū* 師弟共流) during the prewar Shōwa 昭和 period (1926–1989).

Ashida is widely known as a prominent prewar Japanese language education practitioner, particularly for elective subject selection (*zuii sendai* 随意選題) and the Ashida-style “seven transformations” (*shichihenka* 七変化). His practices were deeply influenced by his engagement with Okada Torajirō's 岡田虎二郎 method of *seiza* 静坐 (lit.,

¹ This article is a translation of Saitō Tomoya 齋藤智哉, “Sengo no Ashida Enosuke no kyōiku shisō ni kansuru oboegaki: ‘Shūyō no michizure’ ‘shitei kyōryū’ kara ‘tomonni sodachimashō’ e” 戦後の芦田恵之助の教育思想に関する覚書—「修養の道連」「師弟共流」から「共に育ちましょう」へ—, *Kokugakuin Daigaku Kyōikugaku Kenkyūshitsu kiyō* 57 (2023), pp. 1–12.

silent sitting), his continued attendance at Zen 禅 lectures by the Sōto 曹洞 sect's Takeo Raishō 巖尾来尚 (*godō* 後堂 of the temple Sōjiji 総持寺), and his mentorship under Kaitō Matsuzō 垣内松三 and Mori Nobuzō 森信三. Notably, Ashida's encounters with Okada Torajirō and Zen master Takeo marked a turning point in his placing "self-cultivation" (*shūyō* 修養) at the center of his educational philosophy.

This paper forms part of a broader study on Ashida Enosuke's concept of "self-cultivation."² In a previous article, I have clarified Ashida's ideas on "self-cultivation"¹ during the Meiji period (1868–1912).³ While examining their evolution, I found that Ashida's postwar slogan "let us grow together" can be seen as the culmination of his educational philosophy.

Although there is a vast body of prior research on Ashida, studies focusing on his postwar period are, as far as I can ascertain, almost nonexistent. No scholarly articles on "let us grow together" were found when searching the academic database J-STAGE.⁴ As Hatano Kanji 波多野完治 has noted, the scarcity of postwar writings by Ashida may be a contributing factor.⁵

However, when I examined Ashida's writings with a focus on "self-cultivation," I found that if we trace his slogans expressing the relationship between teachers and students from the Taishō period onwards, it is possible to clarify his postwar slogan "let us grow together" even from limited historical materials. In this paper, I aim to explore this topic using the twenty-five volume *Complete Works of Ashida Enosuke on Japanese Language Education* (*Ashida Enosuke kokugo kyōiku zenshū* 芦田恵之助国語教育全集).

The structure of this paper is as follows: the first section examines the Taishō period's "companions in self-cultivation"; the second section goes through the concepts of "teachers and students sharing the same flow" and "comrades and fellow practitioners" (*dōshi dōgyō* 同志同行) from the prewar Shōwa period; and the third section discusses his postwar concept of "let us grow together," clarifying the main topic of this paper.

1. "Companions in Self-cultivation": The Relationship Between Teachers and Children in the Taishō Period

Ashida's slogans expressing the relationship between teachers and children began with the Taishō period concept of "companions in self-cultivation." An early formulation of

² Kuwabara, *Ashida Enosuke no tsuzurikata kyōshi shūyōron ni kansuru kenkyū* and Yamada, *Ashida Enosuke no kyōiku shisō* are representative previous studies providing an overview of Ashida's concept of self-cultivation, but they do not address changes from the Meiji period through the postwar era.

³ Saitō, "Meiji jidai ni okeru Ashida Enosuke no shūyō."

⁴ A search for *tomo ni sodachimashō* on the academic database J-STAGE (accessed 17 December 2022) produced three hits: two symposium records and one study mentioning Ashida's *tomo ni sodachimashō* as part of a discussion on learning abilities. There were no articles centered specifically on this phrase.

⁵ Hatano, "Ashida Enosuke no kyōikuron," pp. 28–29.

this idea appears in *Teaching Composition* (*Tsuzurikata kyōju* 綴り方教授; 1913), which states, "If children's character is shaped by the character of their teacher, then the teacher's attitude toward writing directly determines the child's attitude as well."⁶ This notion would later develop into "companions in self-cultivation" and "teachers and students sharing the same flow."

Three years after beginning *seiza* under Okada, Ashida introduced "companions in self-cultivation" in *The Self-Cultivation of Teachers Regarding Teaching Composition* (*Tsuzurikata kyōju ni kansuru kyōshi no shūyō* 綴り方教授に関する教師の修養; 1915). In this work, Ashida defined the significance of self-cultivation as "returning to the root" (*moto ni kaeru* 本に帰る),⁷ i.e., "returning to the original nature of humans" (*ningen no honsei ni tachikaeru* 人間の本性にたち帰る).⁸ For Ashida, self-cultivation meant facing oneself and understanding one's own being. He also outlined four methods of self-cultivation: *naikan* 内観 (practicing introspection), maintaining consistent effort, focusing energy on the *tanden* 丹田 (center of energy in the lower abdomen), and reading.⁹ Of these four, the influence of Okada's method of *seiza* is evident in all but the practice of reading.

Ashida declared, "I consider all children to be my companions in self-cultivation."¹⁰ Unlike common theories of self-cultivation, Ashida's approach required the presence of others, as children serve as mirrors reflecting the teacher." In *The Self-Cultivation of Teachers Regarding Teaching Composition*, the ideas expressed in *Teaching Composition* were in this way absorbed into Ashida's self-cultivation educational philosophy through his ongoing practice of *seiza*.

Ashida stated, "The teacher-student relationship is one of companions cultivating the way (*shūdōsha toshite no michizure* 修道者としての道連). It requires completely being of one mind despite having different bodies and communing intimately, leaving no room for misunderstandings or doubt."¹¹ The term "companions in self-cultivation" encapsulates Ashida's sense of responsibility and commitment as a teacher.

2. "Teachers and Students Sharing the Same Flow": The Relationship Between Teachers and Children in the Prewar Shōwa Period

(1) "Teachers and Students Sharing the Same Flow"

The concept of "teachers and students sharing the same flow" was introduced in 1925 in *Teaching Reading: No. 2* (*Daini yomikata kyōju* 第二読み方教授) just before Ashida

⁶ Ashida, *Tsuzurikata kyōju*, p. 360.

⁷ Ashida, *Tsuzurikata kyōju ni kansuru kyōshi no shūyō*, p. 281.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 260.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 266.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 273.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

began his teaching tours. This idea was later deepened through these tours.¹² After he retired from the elementary school attached to the Tokyo Higher Normal School (Tōkyō Kōtō Shihan Gakkō 東京高等師範学校), in the three and a half years between October 1921 and March 1925 Ashida worked as a compiler for the Government-General of Korea and as an editor for the textbooks by the South Seas Agency (Nan'yōchō 南洋庁). This experience likely influenced the transformation of “companions in self-cultivation” into “teachers and students sharing the same flow.”

In *The Easy Path to Japanese Language Education* (*Kokugo kyōiku igyōdō* 国語教育易行道) (1935), Ashida reflected that *Teaching Reading: No. 2* “primarily addressed the concept of ‘teachers and students sharing the same flow.’”¹³ In the latter text, Ashida expressed concerns about post-WWI societal trends and critiqued the state of elementary education, and detailed the idea of “sharing the same flow” as follows:

Regardless of the subject or materials, teaching is sharing the same flow, as it involves teachers and students researching, appreciating, and critiquing together. Sharing the same flow—this is my sole conviction about teaching. Teacher-centered teaching aims to get students to flow to a specific destination, and child-centered teaching focuses on arranging the environment while letting students flow as they will. Whether teacher-centered or child-centered, teaching loses its meaning without a consistent flow. ... However, in teacher-centered teaching, the idea of doing things for the young children is so strong that it seems that they often make them flow rather than letting them flow, even to the point of some students feeling oppressed. In child-centered teaching, there is a strong idea that children are a certain way. Children flow by themselves, but the flow often becomes disrupted. Teachers tend to stand outside the flow, as observers or monitors of it. “Sharing the same flow” is my spirit of teaching. There is collaboration between teachers and students, fostering genuine understanding, mutual enthusiasm, and the joy of collectively exploring, appreciating, and critiquing subjects. This shared journey enables continuous progress on the path of improvement.¹⁴

Ashida here critiques the merits and flaws of both teacher-centered and child-centered teaching. He emphasizes that “teachers and students flowing together” is the core principle and spirit of teaching. The phrase “regardless of the subject or materials”

¹² *Daini yomikata kyōju* was published by Ashida Shoten on 15 September 1925. Ashida’s teaching tour began on 22 September of the same year, when he taught about the *higan* 彼岸 holiday to fourth-grade students at the elementary school attached to Hamamatsu Normal School (Hamamatsu Shihan Gakkō 浜松師範学校).

¹³ Ashida, *Kokugo kyōiku igyōdō*, p. 59.

¹⁴ Ashida, *Daini yomikata kyōju*, pp. 432–433.

indicates that this principle applies broadly to all teaching, not just reading instruction. This assertion is supported by volume two of Ashida's autobiography (*Keiu jiden gekan* 恵雨自伝), which describes *Teaching Reading: No. 2* as "clarifying my perspective on whether education should be teacher-centered or child-centered, which was a central debate in the educational world at the time."¹⁵ Ashida's philosophy of "teachers and students sharing the same flow" emerged as an attempt to transcend this dichotomy.

Ashida's starting point in the Taishō period's "companions in self-cultivation" was the influence of a teacher's character on a child's character. Children were considered "companions" who reflected the teacher's state of self-cultivation-based character formation. This earlier perspective centered on the teacher's self-cultivation, with the child's development depending on the teacher's progress. With "teachers and students sharing the same flow," however, Ashida presented a mutual process in which teachers and children grow together through their interactions. Ashida's statement in *The Easy Path to Japanese Language Education* underscores this transformation:

The debate over whether teaching should be teacher-centered or child-centered was significant in the elementary education world, but as for the work of education, pupils grow under the guidance of teachers, and teachers grow by guiding their pupils. It was my view that in their fusion and unity, there is resonance, mutual love, and the joy of growing together. I asserted that only by reaching this state can true education take place. Ten years have passed since then, and, living a completely different lifestyle from before, I am publishing *The Easy Path to Japanese Language Education* merely as a record of my growth. What underpins it all are the concepts of "going inward" (*uchi e* 内へ) and "practicing" (*gyōjite* 行じて).¹⁶

The "ten years" refers to the decade following the publication of *Teaching Reading: No. 2*. Ashida's statement that it is a record of his growth indicates that he is presenting his idea of "teachers and students sharing the same flow" that he had deepened on his teaching tours.

A similar sentiment to "pupils grow under the guidance of teachers, and teachers grow by guiding their pupil" appears in the second volume of *Elementary Japanese Language Textbooks and Podiums* (*Shōgaku kokugo tokuhon to kyōdan* 小学国語読本と教壇) (1933), which notes, "Through instructional materials, teachers grow by guiding their pupils, and pupils grow by being guided by their teachers."¹⁷ This marks a shift from teacher-centered thinking to recognizing mutual growth through teacher-student interaction. Additionally,

¹⁵ Ashida, *Keiu jiden*, p. 291.

¹⁶ Ashida, *Kokugo kyōiku igyōdō*, pp. 59–60.

¹⁷ Ashida, *Shōgaku kokugo dokuhon to kyōdan*, p. 552.

expressions like “the joy of growing together” suggest the seeds of the postwar “let us grow together” philosophy.

Another key point is the emphasis on “going inward” and “practicing.” The former refers to actions to clarify one’s own being, essentially “self-cultivation.” By the 1930s, however, Ashida increasingly employed the term “training” (*shugyō* 修行), used in religious and other contexts, over “self-cultivation.” This shift is reflected in his phrase “practicing.” While “self-cultivation” remained central to Ashida’s educational philosophy, it is important to note this change in nuance.

(2) “Comrades and Fellow Practitioners”

Among Ashida’s phrases, “comrades and fellow practitioners” (*dōshi dōgyō* 同志同行) is more widely recognized than “teachers and students sharing the same flow,” especially because it was used as the title of a magazine. However, during the prewar period, “comrades and fellow practitioners” described the relationship between Ashida and other teachers, not that between teachers and students. The publication announcement in the inaugural issue of the eponymous magazine states the following:

Haiku poets have magazines to discuss their interests. *Waka* 和歌 poets have magazines to discuss their interests. However, we comrades and fellow practitioners have no such thing. While there are educational magazines, none exist to discuss the enjoyment of education. Therefore, I have collaborated with the central [i.e., Tokyo] comrades and fellow practitioners to publish this magazine. If this magazine becomes a source of connection for comrades and fellow practitioners to discuss the way and the joy of education, I would be very grateful. Resonance among those seeking the way is one of the world’s most delightful and beautiful things.¹⁸

This magazine was first published in 1930, five years after Ashida began his teaching tours. Through these tours, he realized there were many like-minded teachers who wished to elevate education to the “great way” (*daidō* 大道) through practice, and came to think that a medium was necessary to foster “resonance among those seeking the way.”¹⁹ In a foreword written just before the magazine’s closure in 1941, Ashida reiterated this intention: “Through some means, I hope to facilitate mutual connections among comrades, thereby fully realizing the benefits of mutual refinement.”²⁰

¹⁸ Ashida, “Hakkan no ji,” p. 420.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Ashida, “Kaiko,” p. 574.

The origin of the term "comrades and fellow practitioners" is explained as follows:

This magazine was first published twelve years ago, a few years after I began my teaching tours. At that time, the world of elementary education was rife with debate, and few educators were seriously considering the education of the nation. . . . During this period, I happened to observe fellow *waka* and haiku poets dedicated to their training. I wished to transplant their seriousness into the world of education. Even if this was not entirely possible, I believed we must return education to its true path. This was the motivation for publishing *Comrades and Fellow Practitioners*. The name derives from Shinran's phrase about people with the same belief, *dōbō dōgyō* 同朋同行 (fellow believers and fellow practitioners), with the character *bō* (*hō*) 朋 replaced by the character *shi* 志.²¹

The phrase "comrades and fellow practitioners" was inspired by Shinran's concept of *dōbō dōgyō*. However, the reasons for adopting Shinran's terminology remain unclear beyond this explanation. Ashida himself was affiliated with the Sōtō Zen sect and regularly attended Zen lectures by Takeo Raishō from the time he began practicing Okada-style *seiza*.²² During this period and throughout his later years, Ashida avidly read works such as Dōgen's *Tenzokyōkun* 典座教訓, and found out about the Zen master's teaching of "practice as the activity of inherent enlightenment" (*hōshō myōshu* 本證妙修). Additionally, Ashida wrote that he read *Tannishō* 歎異抄 by Shinran's disciple Yuien 唯円 during a visit to Kyoto in the summer of 1913 upon a friend's recommendation, and he wrote that he only understood Section 6 well,²³ which states, "It is utterly unthinkable that among the followers of single-hearted nenbutsu practice there are arguments about 'my disciples' and 'other's disciples.' As for myself, Shinran, I do not have a single disciple."²⁴ It is evident that Ashida engaged not only with Sōtō Zen but also with Shinran's thought.

In the 1930s, why did Ashida increasingly frequently use "training" rather than "self-cultivation," and begin to use words meaning "practice"? The foreword to the magazine discusses the concept of practice, stating, "The role of education through practice has long been neglected. As comrades and fellow practitioners, let us fully internalize practice education."²⁵ While Ashida did not explicitly define "training" or "practice," his writings suggest influences from *Tenzokyōkun*, as seen in his statement, "I had lived ignorant of the world of self-cultivation inherent in everyday life, such as drinking tea or eating

²¹ Ashida, *Keiu jiden*, p. 291.

²² Ashida, *Kokugo kyōiku igyōdō*, pp. 59–60.

²³ Ashida, *Shōgaku kokugo dokubon to kyōdan*, p. 552.

²⁴ Yuien, *Tannishō*. Translation slightly modified.

²⁵ Ashida, "Gyō," p. 423.

meals. This ignorance left me so miserable. . . . By regarding all aspects of life as training, I realized a path might emerge naturally. Thus, I devoted my full effort to enriching life.²⁶ Ashida also addressed this in *The Easy Path to Japanese Language Education*:

What is the easy path to Japanese language education? The Buddha rejected extreme asceticism and returned to the comfortable practice of *seiza*, single-mindedly dispelling the confusion of the mind daily in pursuit of enlightenment. Likewise, Okada-sensei also made us see the correct mind in *seiza*-based correct posture, and by doing so, we can escape all suffering and enter a bright world where everything flourishes. Following in the footsteps of these two people's training, I would like to have the young, even though they are still young, first seek the resonance of the single mind in everything and then play in the true world that is the root of it. To do this, I would like to gradually enable children to attain the true world through their power to immerse themselves in things. In short, I would like to lead them to great peace of mind through the two major principles of seeking the outcome with a single mind and attaining it in everything. I hope to guide students to be people who follow in the footsteps of the Buddha and Okada-sensei, finding peace in that state, enjoying that land.²⁷

Pointing to the Buddha and Okada as examples, Ashida emphasized the integration of body and mind through silent sitting, achieving a state described as “a bright world where everything flourishes” and immersing oneself in things. The concept of *tenchi kaishun* 天地皆春, more literally meaning “everything in heaven and earth anew” but translated here as “everything flourishing,” originates from Okada. Ashida explains, “One who acts according to their desires without going outside of norms possesses true freedom and experiences a state in which everything flourishes.”²⁸ While the above primarily discusses children, the same idea can be applied to teachers under the framework of “teachers and students sharing the same flow.” Teachers must first engage in practice and cultivate themselves. Observing this, children begin their own journey of practice and self-cultivation, prompting teachers to further reflect and continue their practice. This cycle is indispensable for the growth of both teachers and children.

Ashida further stated, “The inefficacy of asceticism lies in its separation of body and mind. People torture their bodies to purify their minds. While some may themselves awaken amidst suffering, to attain mind-body unity, the body must be at ease and the

²⁶ Ashida, *Seiza to kyōiku*, p. 260.

²⁷ Ashida, *Kokugo kyōiku igyōdō*, pp. 62–63.

²⁸ Ashida, “Zuihitsu: Mikawa ugoku,” p. 346.

mind at ease, otherwise, it cannot be called the true path."²⁹ In mind-body dualism, one can attain peace of mind through ascetic practices that torture the body. However, if one sits and regulates one's breathing to attain mind-body oneness, both the body and the mind will become stable. There is no asceticism here. The mind-body experience of observing oneself through *seiza*, freeing oneself from the judgments of others, and embracing both pure and impure lies at the root of Ashida's view of the unity of body and mind, which he expressed through Okada's phrase "everything flourishing."

If "practicing" is understood as stabilizing the body and mind and immersing oneself in learning by sitting, then sitting is essential. First, sit. This practice is referred to as the "easy path" by Ashida.

For Ashida, "self-cultivation" was in the first place an act of self-formation that required others. In the process of developing his idea of self-cultivation, he placed emphasis on practicing to gain a greater understanding of the self.

3. "Let Us Grow Together": A Postwar Slogan Representing Educational Relationships

In *Let Us Grow Together*, Ashida's final work published posthumously in 1952, he wrote: "I chose the title *Let Us Grow Together* as a way to encapsulate my educational beliefs into a slogan."³⁰ (Since the book was published after his death, and each section specifies the year it was written, below I will include the writing year at the end of each cited passage.)

Using his reflections on a lecture delivered at Yamaguchi Elementary School in Tajima's 但馬 Asago 朝来 District in 1951 as a basis, this section examines what the phrase "let us grow together" truly means.

Education, I believe, is the process of advancing the realities before us within the contexts of parent-child relationships, teacher-student relationships, and interpersonal relationships in society. When parents nurture their children, they themselves become respectable parents. When teachers nurture their students, they themselves become respectable teachers. Among members of society, a desire for mutual growth is also essential for genuine education. This is the essence of what I call "let us grow together."³¹ (1951)

Since Ashida passed away on 9 December 1951, this excerpt represents some of his final

²⁹ Ashida, *Kokugo kyōiku igyōdō*, p. 50.

³⁰ Ashida, *Tomo ni sodachimashō*, p. 482.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 574.

thoughts. “Let us grow together” extended beyond parent-child and teacher-student relationships, encompassing even relationships among adults without clear hierarchies. Considering Ashida’s longstanding emphasis on the importance of home education that goes back to wartime and that “comrades and fellow practitioners” refers to relations between teachers, this concept appears to be the culmination of his practice and ideas.

Holding that “the secret to growing together is practicing together,”³² Ashida said the following:

Practicing means doing with the body and enjoying. Merely reading the *Analects* without doing it with the body is meaningless. Those who can carry out the *Analects*, even without reading it, are truly admirable. When parents and children, teachers and students, and members of society mutually engage in good practices and immerse themselves in harmony and joy, does this not represent the ultimate goal of education? I wish to emphasize the importance of practice across all aspects of education.³³ (1951)

When teachers enjoy putting into practice what is written in the *Analects*, their students, as their reflective mirrors, will also enjoy learning. This extends beyond the teacher-student relationship to all types of relationships. Thus, “practicing together” becomes the key to “growing together.” The concept of “let us grow together” integrates and builds upon “companions in self-cultivation,” “teachers and students sharing the same flow,” and “comrades and fellow practitioners,” expressing mutual learning and growth even without clear hierarchical relationships.

Ashida stated, “We must advance with the belief that ‘we grow together with those who gather [around us].’ This is the essence of democratic education.”³⁴ (1950) This suggests that Ashida had postwar democratic education in mind. A formal proposal he submitted to Prime Minister Higashikuninomiya Naruhiko 東久邇宮稔彦, dated 30 September 1945, expresses his concerns about the future of postwar education: “I have heard that Your Highness is deeply attentive to the sentiments of the people. I have resolved to submit this heartfelt proposal without regard for my humble status. I believe the current situation in Japan requires urgent attention to the nation’s education. I will now summarize my humble opinions based on my experience of working with schoolchildren for nearly fifty years, including the facts that need to be changed and the methods for remedying them.”³⁵

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 523.

³⁵ Ashida, “Jōsho,” p. 528.

He also wrote, "Only when teachers and students understand that they are training companions, comrades, and fellow practitioners can they grow together for the rest of their lives. For this reason, I want to think of education as training." Based on his prewar concepts of "companions in self-cultivation," "comrades and fellow practitioners," and "training," he proposed that "the national schools of defeated Japan should take their first steps forward."³⁶

Initially, Ashida's educational goals remained tied to the Imperial Rescript on Education (*Kyōiku chokugo* 教育勅語). Just over a month after Japan's defeat, he appears to have not fully understood the new democratic form of education, writing, "Those responsible for children's education must wholeheartedly follow the Imperial Rescript on Education, advancing without hesitation, progressing together with the children."³⁷

However, in July 1947, the third issue of *Low and Tranquil* (*Teihei* 低平),³⁸ the successor to *Comrades and Fellow Practitioners*, included the following reflection:

The Curriculum Guidelines (*Gakushū shidōyōryō* 学習指導要領) were compiled based on the opinions of a committee of pioneers in this field and covers all aspects of elementary education comprehensively. During my travels, I will carry this book, observe those on the ground continuously exploring and innovating in elementary education and engage in my training of old age. . . . I used to happily explain the meaning of "comrades and fellow practitioners" as "those who see all life as education are our comrades, and those who deeply love teaching are our fellow practitioners," and the meaning of instruction (*shidō* 指導) as, "Does the water make the raft flow, or does the raft flow in the water? The difference is slight. The raft master only chooses a direction and flows together" (*Mizu ikada o nagasu ka, ikada mizu ni nagaruru ka, sono aida bimiyō. Ikadashi wa tada hōkō o sadamete*

³⁶ Ibid., p. 530.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ashida explained his reasoning for the naming of the successor journal:

I would like to say a word about choosing the name *Low and Tranquil*. I took this from Zen Master Dōgen's *Tenzo kyōkun*, specifically the last two characters of the phrase "High places are high and tranquil; low places are low and tranquil" (*kōsho kōhei teisho teihei* 高処高平低処低平; Dōgen, *Instructions for the Cook*; English translation modified). Although the words "high" and "low" seem oppositional, viewed from the perspective of "tranquility," they are inherently equal. I interpret the character *hei* 平 not as "flatness," but as "tranquility," and I wanted to emphasize peace of mind. I published the educational magazine *Comrades and Fellow Practitioners* for over ten years. At its peak, it had seven thousand readers nationwide. Some of those readers suggested that the new journal should continue with the same name However, I insisted on renaming it to *Low and Tranquil* at this time. The reason is that "comrades and fellow practitioners" is centered on training, while "low and tranquil" is centered on peace of mind. Training and peace of mind are not opposites; it goes without saying that peace of mind naturally accompanies training. However, at present, the issue is one's foundation. Therefore, I chose "low and tranquil." In essence, it is about following the endeavor of peace of mind while continuing to engage in training. (*Teihei*, p. 464).

tomo ni nagaruru nomi 水筏を流すか、筏水に流るるか、その間微妙。筏師はたゞ方向を定めて共に流るゝのみ) When I overlay the Curriculum Guidelines onto such dreams, connecting this with that and supplementing one with the other, I feel as though something cohesive is gradually taking shape in my mind. . . . Writing this far, I realize that my conversion (*tenkō* 転向) is no longer an issue. Now that the 1947 Curriculum Guidelines have been published, except for certain private schools, I believe all elementary schools across the country will need, to some degree, to convert to its spirit and form. As someone who wishes to remain connected with these schools and to live out the remainder of my years joyfully, how could I not fully embrace this conversion? Receiving Professor Hatano's advice and Professor Mori's teachings, I feel that the Curriculum Guidelines have completely purified and clarified my foundation. From here on, I am entirely renewed. I wish to follow the teachers and children on the ground and share in the profound joy they experience.³⁹

A draft of the Curriculum Guidelines was issued on 20 March 1947. This text was written on 9 May 1947, so Ashida had about a month and a half to read it. His usage of the term “conversion” indicates a transformation in his educational goals, shifting from the Imperial Rescript on Education to the aspirations outlined in the Curriculum Guidelines, and an intention to train himself in them.

With advice from Hatano Kanji and Mori Nobuzō, Ashida attempted to put into practice the principles of the new postwar education during his postwar teaching tours. However, it was a process of trial and error—“decades of rust cannot be removed in a single day.”⁴⁰

In relation to this, Yayoshi Kan'ichi 弥吉菅一 recalls an interesting episode. During a debriefing session following Ashida's lesson at Takii 滝井 Elementary School in Moriguchi 守口 City in 1947, Yayoshi told Ashida, “From the perspective of postwar trends, I must say that today's lesson belongs to the old model. It needs to shed its skin.” Ashida replied in the waiting room, “I'll study and return again.”⁴¹ Yayoshi later reflected on observing Ashida's lessons in subsequent years, noting how they evolved with each visit. He learned from Ashida's willingness to “learn from criticism,”⁴² and came to feel ashamed of his earlier critique of Ashida.

While Ashida worked to understand and implement the principles of the postwar period's new education, certain aspects of his approach remained unchanged. This is

³⁹ Ashida, “Shichi: Wakayama,” pp. 524–525.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 521.

⁴¹ Yayoshi, “Rōshi ni mananda Takii shō no sannenkan,” p. 120.

⁴² Ibid., p. 121.

evident from his statement while reading the draft Curriculum Guidelines, "When I overlay the Curriculum Guidelines onto such dreams, connecting this with that and supplementing one with the other, I feel as though something cohesive is gradually taking shape in my mind." While his trial-and-error approach in practice was discussed above, what about his intellectual or philosophical development?

In April 1947, while immersed in reading the draft Curriculum Guidelines, Ashida wrote in a letter to Okigaki Hiroshi 沖垣寛, "As the goal of self-cultivation, I have always advocated for teachers and students being fellow practitioners, sharing the same flow, no matter the era."⁴³ Ashida's educational philosophy, which evolved from "companions in self-cultivation" to "teachers and students sharing the same flow" and "comrades and fellow practitioners," basically remained consistent even in the postwar period. However, the following passage also reveals Ashida's flexibility:

Still, what makes me feel lonely is the realization that I was not raised in the way new education demands. I feel painfully aware of my own inadequacy. ... Recently, however, I've started feeling slightly more positive due to my way of thinking. What's difficult is difficult; what I don't know, I don't know; if I'm not equipped, then I should start from there unequipped, standing in the same position as the children. If I don't understand something, I can investigate it together with the children. If we encounter a bottleneck, it's both my problem and the children's problem, so we can work together to devise solutions. This genuine interaction will inevitably lead to genuine educational realities. I believe this is how we can witness the first steps of new, authentic education."⁴⁴

Ashida acknowledged the difficulty of implementing teaching methods that he himself had not experienced or put into practice before. He emphasized the importance of engaging in educational practice while openly learning together with children and accumulating new facts.

Amid the significant educational shifts brought about by Japan's defeat in World War II, Ashida's ability to adapt quickly stemmed from his educational philosophy, which focused on the teacher-student relationship. Above all, his unwavering prioritization of children's learning and his concomitant relentless pursuit of teacher growth enabled him to respond to the changes of the era. As a result, he arrived at the idea "let us grow together" by engaging in actual practice together.

⁴³ Ashida, "Okigaki Hiroshi ate shokan," p. 158.

⁴⁴ Ashida, "Kantōgen: Shūshifu," p. 499.

Conclusion

This paper has elucidated the meaning of Ashida Enosuke's postwar educational slogan "let us grow together" by examining the Taishō-period concept of "companions in self-cultivation" and the prewar Shōwa-period concepts of "teachers and students sharing the same flow" and "comrades and fellow practitioners."

In the concept of "companions in self-cultivation," others are necessary, and the relationship between teachers and children's characters and attitudes toward writing discussed in *Teaching Composition* is absorbed into the concept of "self-cultivation."

"Teachers and students sharing the same flow" emerged as an evolution of "companions in self-cultivation," influenced by Ashida's experiences as a compiler for the Government-General of Korea and an editor for the South Seas Agency's textbooks. This concept shifted the focus from solely teachers' self-cultivation to include children's growth, emphasizing the mutual growth of teachers and children through their relationships. By the 1930s, "comrades and fellow practitioners" came to describe the connections between Ashida and teachers nationwide and was also used as a magazine title. Ashida rejected dualistic perspectives on the body and mind, advocating instead for thinking of them in an integrated fashion as a path to tranquility. Drawing from *Tenzokyōkun*, he redefined all aspects of life as training, culminating in the notion of (a path of easy) practice, which frames sitting as a way to align the body and mind and wholeheartedly engage in with life without asceticism.

His postwar slogan "let us grow together" synthesized the ideas of "companions in self-cultivation," "teachers and students sharing the same flow," and "comrades and fellow practitioners" in response to the rise of postwar democracy. Amid the challenges following Japan's defeat in World War II, this represented the culmination of Ashida's educational philosophy.

This study leaves three areas for further exploration: (1) Examining the concepts of training and practicing, which Ashida frequently employed beginning in the 1930s, through the lens of Zen philosophy; (2) investigating the education centered on "practice" that Ashida developed in the mid-1930s and contextualizing his notions of training and related ideas within this framework; and, after having done (1) and (2), (3) revisiting "let us grow together" using postwar materials not analyzed in this study, such as Aoyama Hiroshi's writings on Ashida (*Hōrakuji no Ashida Enosuke sensei I-V*; Ōsaka Keukai).

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と「教養」に関する基盤的研究/A foundational study of "cultivation (*Shu-yo* & *Kyo-yo*) in school education from the Meiji Era to the early Showa era.

(Translated by Dylan L. Toda)

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