

nothing more than a mistranslation, but the book contains several problems that stem from its original version. Its sparse references, for instance, are limited to citations from primary sources, and most of the items that comprise its bibliography do not appear in the text. Furthermore, the book lacks even a token reference to non-Japanese scholarship, whether in English, Chinese, or any other language. In discussing the rise of militant and patriotic sentiment, to mention only a few examples, Ury Eppstein's study on the onset of military poems in Japanese schools shortly before the war could be useful, as could be Mark Ravina's recent study of the politics of Saigō's legend.⁵ Similarly disturbing is the tendency to jump from topic to topic without a summary and the absence of substantial discussion and conclusions at the end of each chapter and the book as a whole. These shortcomings may have derived from the broad and nonacademic readership the original book was intended for, but regardless of the reasons, the English text does not at times satisfy the standard expected by current academic scholarship.

Despite these misgivings, Saya's book provides a fresh glimpse of contemporary Japanese writings on the war as well as a solid list of recent work published in Japan concerning the war and the rise of patriotic consciousness in the late nineteenth century. Its focus on the way ordinary Japanese experienced the war is unparalleled and as such is highly recommended, especially for undergraduate classes and certainly for any research library. What the English-language scholarship in this area still requires is a balanced history of the entire conflict that takes both belligerents into account together with a detailed examination of the public response to and repercussions of the conflict in China.

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Purifying Zen: Watsuji Tetsurō's Shamon Dōgen. By TETSURŌ WATSUJI. Translated by STEVE BEIN. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011. xvi, 174 pp. \$55.00 (cloth); \$24.00 (paper).
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Purifying Zen: Watsuji Tetsurō's Shamon Dōgen [Dogen the Adept] is an outstanding work that will undoubtedly make its mark in the fields of modern Zen studies and Japanese intellectual history. Steve Bein's smooth translation

⁵Ury Eppstein, "School Songs, the War and Nationalist Indoctrination in Japan," in *Rethinking the Russo-Japanese War: Centennial Perspectives*, ed. R. Kowner (Folkestone, Kent: Global Oriental, 2007), 185–201; Mark J. Ravina, "The Apocryphal Suicide of Saigō Takamori: Samurai, Seppuku, and the Politics of Legend," *Journal of Asian Studies* 69, no.3 (2010): 691–721.

faithfully conveys the clarity and strength of Watsuji Tetsurō's prose, and his superb commentaries greatly enrich our appreciation of the critical role that Zen Buddhism played in the formation of interwar Japanese thought.

The importance of this work for English-language readers cannot be overstated. Not only does it bring forth a foundational text from the works of Dōgen Kigen (1200–53), the monk widely regarded as one of Japan's greatest philosophers, but it also provides a wealth of insight into the thought of Watsuji himself. In one volume, we grow closer to two great Japanese thinkers, about both of whom it can be said that we know somewhat less than we think we do, and a great deal less than we should.

Bein opens with a summary of Meiji intellectual history, including Watsuji's motivations for turning to the study of Dōgen. He then discusses Dōgen's own historical contexts, clearly demonstrating that this "adept" was anything but the inflexible master that Zen students in the West have come to know.

Inasmuch as Western Zen studies have represented Dōgen and Eisai as a set of bookend monks who founded the Sōtō and Rinzai schools respectively, they have undermined our ability to think about Zen outside of certain ready-made artificial constraints. How can there be such a divide between these two schools, the novice asks, if Zen is supposed to cut through binaries? Why should we worry about the writings of Zen masters if the "whole point" of Zen is supposed to be the wordless transmission of enlightenment? From the outset, Western readers are exposed to such mixed messages, usually reinforced with essentialist truisms declaring that Zen is not supposed to make sense—it's all a great paradox, it's inscrutable, unknowable, irrational, etc. Accordingly, popular works on Zen are often fluffy attempts to inspire reflection on the "deeper" meaning of life beyond the linear Western way of thinking, and academic works on Zen come off as exercises in nitpicking over doctrines that ultimately do not "mean" anything anyway.

What makes this volume so refreshing is that Bein sidesteps this conventional disciplinary quicksand, and introduces us to a text that cuts straight to the marrow of Zen spirituality. His sympathetic and smart handling of Watsuji's meditations on Dōgen brings us lucid Zen teachings, and an intelligent modern interpretation that steers clear of pop-orientalism or academic hairsplitting. *Shamon Dōgen* is a concise presentation of the key elements in Dōgen's Zen, interpreted by a savvy modern dialectician.

Watsuji approaches Dōgen and Zen in a manner familiar to the modern intellectual historian. In his preface he identifies two central concerns; the first is the question of how any layman can enter into a valid "conversation" with a monk about Zen spirituality, and the second is the question of how anybody, layman or monk, can authentically apprehend Zen in an academic way, when it so obviously deals with nondiscursive domains of knowledge. As Watsuji asks, "When a religious truth is accepted as the *foundation* of everything, what cultural and historical understanding can there be of such a view" (p. 25)?

Watsuji resolves these questions by acknowledging that since the texts exist, and the religious practices are knowable, we must at least attempt to frame the insights they communicate in some secular, academic way. This is not only the

rationale for all religious history, but arguably—as Watsuji’s own career as a romantic nationalist in a decidedly logical international world shows—the rationale for any earnest thinker trying to engineer a creative fusion between the ostensibly nonrational East and the ostensibly rational West inside the historical process.

In the main body of the text, which could well serve as a modern-day manual for spiritual growth, Watsuji discusses Dōgen’s views on “self-cultivation,” *zazen* (sitting meditation), worldly attachment, spiritual attainment, faith, compassion, aesthetics, and truth. We learn that Dōgen’s desire to “purify” Buddhism stemmed from his deep faith that the dharma had to be fully expressed by real people in the material world—not for their sake, but for the sake of truth itself. We learn of Dōgen’s conviction that this expression was best realized in the purified personalities of adepts who had successfully cast off the “mind-body” of worldly delusion. We learn that this conviction led Dōgen to practice sincere, self-aware obedience to his masters, as well as earnest imitation of the virtues of the Buddhist patriarchs. This way of imitation, as it is more commonly known, led Dōgen to exalt the traditional practice of *zazen*, not merely as a means to truth, but as the very expression of truth itself.

In reading through Watsuji’s meditations, we come away impressed by Dōgen’s pragmatic and straightforward faith. The authoritarian and often intolerant master of conventional understanding—who roundly condemned all but “his” Zen as the means to enlightenment—gives way to a thoughtful and ethical philosopher who operated from a deep desire for holiness. Watsuji’s Dōgen became a “*shamon*” through a practical yearning to transcend the world, not a self-serving desire to control his piece of it.

No less impressive than Dōgen is Watsuji himself, whose intellectual curiosity cuts to the central issues of Dōgen’s Zen and renders them immediately and alluringly intelligible to the modern reader. Bein too should be commended for helping to “purify” the debate on interwar Japanese thought. By translating this work, which in its day (it was first published in 1926) helped spark a revival of Japanese interest in Dōgen, he reminds us that many of the “essentialist” and “orientalist” questions on East-West dialectics that conveniently disappeared from the postwar academic world are still *good* questions. His commentaries in the “Introductions” and “Tourist’s Guide” help to illuminate many of the dark spots in a conversation that has long been clouded by misplaced political interpretations. This book will be greatly valued by all students of Zen and modern Japanese intellectual history.

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