



Moon In a Dewdrop: Writings of Zen Master Dogen

D?gen , Kazuaki Tanahashi (Editor) , Robert Aitken (Translation) , Reb Anderson (Translation) , Edward G. Brown (Translation) , Norman Fischer (Translation) , Arnold Kotler (Translation) , Daniel Leighton (Translation) , more... Lew Richmond (Translation) , Katherine Thanas (Translation) , Brian Unger (Translation) , Mel Weitsman (Translation) , Dan Welch (Translation) , Philip Whalen (Translation) , David Schneider (Translator) ...less

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Eihei Dogen (1200-1253), among the first to transmit Zen Buddhism from China to Japan and founder of the important Soto School, was not only a profoundly influential and provocative Zen philosopher but also one of the most stimulating figures in Japanese letters.

Kazuaki Tanahashi, collaborating with several other Zen authorities, has produced sensitive and accurate translations of Dogen's most important texts. *Moon in a Dewdrop* contains the key essays of the great master, as well as extensive background materials that will help Western readers to approach this significant work. There is also a selection of Dogen's poetry, most of which has not appeared in English translation before.

Dogen's thought runs counter to conventional logic, employing paradoxical language and startling imagery. It illuminates such fundamental concerns as the nature of time, existence, life, death, the self, and what is beyond self.

Moon In a Dewdrop: Writings of Zen Master Dogen Details

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From Reader Review Moon In a Dewdrop: Writings of Zen Master Dogen for online ebook

Andrew Olsen says

The writings of a zen master can sometimes be difficult to understand. But the writings of Dogen are so clear they can be confusing. This book is a selection of his enormous corpus of literature and some of the ideas surrounding the self, being and not-being rival the ideas of Sartre, Heidegger, Camus, and Marleau-Ponty for existential importance. It is amazing to think that his ideas recently were rediscovered.

As for Buddhist thought it is beautifully written and often peaceful to read. Trying to think beyond yourself, placing yourself as part of the whole of the universe is expounded over and over again. His idea of zazen, or sitting zen is a beautiful thought that just by sitting one can obtain enlightenment. I look forward to obtaining complete works of Dogen but until then this condensed collection of his sayings will have to do.

Scott says

Dogen's writing can run from straightforward practical instruction to completely confusing discussions along the lines of "A is B, but not-B is not not-A. A is not B, but B is A. A is A. B is B. Consider this deeply." A little bit of the latter goes a really long way for me, but the more approachable selections outweigh the genuinely obscure ones in this collection.

Don't expect much help from Tanahashi's notes, they could be better organized and don't clarify much anyway.

Chris says

(...)
Under the burden
of solitude,
under the burden
of dissatisfaction

the weight,
the weight we carry
is love
(...)

Allen Ginsberg (3 June 1926 – 5 April 1997 / Newark, New Jersey)

The village I finally reach

Eihei Dogen (1200 – 1253) is one of the great teachers of Zen Buddhism and an inspiring poet and writer.

Dogen ordained as a monk at the age of fourteen and started studying Zen at eighteen. He went to China at the age of twenty-four to complete his study. He established his first training centre 'Kosho Monastery' when he was thirty-four and started building a full-scale monastery in a remote province of Echizen at the age of forty-four. He died at the age of fifty-four. So far the statistics of his life.

Next to his formal writings – alto the difference is not too big – Dogen also wrote poetry in a Chinese style of thirty-one syllables, five, seven, five, seven and seven sentences.

Following his sincere aspiration to realise 'wholeness' Dogen studied in China at Tiantong Monastery there the abbot immediately acknowledged him 'The dharma gate of face-to-face transmission from buddha to buddha, ancestor to ancestor, is actualized now' Alto it took Dogen two more years to 'drop away body and mind' and come to the great realisation of wholeness.

Then he understood fully in body and mind that from the very beginning wholeness is the fundamental reality for all beings. That in fact every form of life is an all-inclusive manifestation of 'original wholeness' it's only our dualistic thinking that prevents us from knowing our complete and original self.

As a result Dogen spent the rest of his lifetime teaching and writing so that others might also clarify the great matter of birth and death.

In this volume the translators allow us to walk with Dogen as one of lives great teachers and allow us to discover Dogen as a true companion.

the village I finally reach
deeper than the deep mountains
indeed
the capital
where I used to live

Eihei Dogen (1200 – 1253)

(...)
We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time
(...)

The Little Gidding is the last of T. S. Eliot's Four Quartets

Gretchen says

A primary text of D?gen's teachings. Rather abstruse, but valuable Zen thought. Will revisit at a later date to appreciate fully.

Ali says

This is a book I will be reading for the rest of my life, and am almost certain I will never understand, but will always appreciate.

Fergus says

This is recreational reading in the very BEST sense of the word...

It is reading that will, if you let it, RE-CREATE your headspace.

It'll clear out all the cobwebs of traditional, discursive thinking.

To understand the gist of what Dogen is saying, though, you'll have to put on your Anti-thinking Cap.

Feed your dreamscapes rather than your head. Think against thinking, as Martin Heidegger told us!

Dogen lived in the same historical timeframe in Japan as Thomas Aquinas, way over in Europe.

And, very much like Aquinas, he built up a enormous legacy of profound metaphysical writings based on SOUND COMMON SENSE.

And just like Aquinas, he gave ultimate answers to the perplexed.

Both men were unflinchingly ethically minded, though that card is never overplayed.

Both showed ardent compassion towards the host of young would-be followers that streamed to their doors.

And both 'would gladly teach', as Chaucer puts it so felicitously.

Yet Dogen was intuitive, and Aquinas excelled in discursive thought. I'm much more like Dogen, I have to admit!

Got problems?

Sit with them, Dogen would say, don't escape them.

Let your subconscious give you the answers, as it always will when the time is ripe.

Just sit: Soto Zen. Nothing else.

And this intense idleness, which Bertrand Russell praised so highly, will reveal your SELF to you.

You know, I'm delighted that twenty years after I bought my own thick copy of this wonderful book it's still a bestseller on Amazon - and priced under twenty dollars.

So go for it.

Bend your mind a little....

dj says

ikkyu would have found this book to be invaluable kindling and/or toilet paper

Joseph says

A book kept at hand by my bed.

Kenzie says

Beautiful meditations on life, death, language, liberation. I didn't feel like I could read this book from cover to cover, because after a while it feels like you've stepped into Wonderland and the same linguistic terms just keep repeating over and over. But reading it bit by bit, it helps you step out of the habits of daily living and see the world with new eyes.

What I appreciated most about this publication was the glossary in the back that explained unfamiliar terms and allusions. I felt like it was a great introduction to Zen thought, even if it wasn't very well organized.

Lysergius says

This is not an easy read. The terminology is specialised and unfamiliar. It is hard to get a glimpse of the meanings behind this unfamiliar language. This is not your average Zen text. There are some sections in which Dogen deals with the practicalities of Zen, but there are also sections in which there is no familiar ground to stand on. Not to be recommended for the newcomer to Zen. This not Alan Watts or Robert Aitken level.

Julie says

This is one of those shimmering books that changes every time I read it. Just when I think that I understand what it is saying to me, it pulls the rug out from underneath my feet. And I start over with it again. I will continue to read this book until I go to the grave, and I hope its indelible mark has left a trace on my mind.

Jim says

I read this book years ago and have reread it many times. This is an excellent book on Zen Buddhism. It was written by Dogen Zenji, the founder of Soto Zen Buddhism in Japan.

He was born in 1200 in Japan and went to China to study Zen. He returned and founded Soto Zen Buddhism.

His writings are clear and convey the wisdom of Zen.

One of my favorite chapters is Tenzo Kyoku or Instructions for the Cooks. He gives instructions for the cooks in the monastery, who because of their duties were not able to practice with the rest of the monks. He describes how the practice of cooking is no different than the practice of Zen.

A wonderful book, well worth the read.

michael lequire says

It's a beautiful thing to spend one's time reading this. The essence of zazen, the mountains, the rivers and the mind. A joy to read and learn.

Adrian Astur Alvarez says

Viewing Peach Blossoms and Realizing the Way

In spring wind
peach blossoms
begin to come apart.
Doubts do not grow
branches and leaves.

-pg 214

The amount of wisdom in this collection of writings by 13th Century Zen Master Dogen is devastating. I had to read the book very slowly, sometimes only a single page per day. The book is broken into five main parts after a brief but interesting introduction and biography of the man:

Part 1, Practical Instructions; Part 2, Philosophical Works; Part 3, Poetic Imagery; Part 4, Transmission of the teaching; and Part 5, Poems

The material here is rich. Particularly in the Philosophical Works section, I didn't feel any amount of intellectual foundation work could prepare me for Dogen Zenji's writings. Rather, steady and focused Zen practice seemed the only helpful context. That said, it seems a lifetime of practice could be spent contemplating his work. This stuff goes deep. No wonder we are still reading his work over 800 years later and still finding it shockingly relevant.

The translations in this book are outstanding. They make what are already pretty universal topics (present tense living?) even more relevant. One would never figure the age of these texts from the clear and concise language used in the translations.

All in all, I am very hesitant to recommend this book to anyone who hasn't had much exposure to Zen writing and thought. This would certainly be a challenging read for anyone with scant experience practicing Zen meditation. That said, the work here is so often beyond gorgeous that I would love to share it with anyone interested. Shunryu Suzuki may be a better place to start but students shouldn't wait too long to dive into Dogen. There is a lifetime of contemplation here; one should get started right away.

Bob says

As a sample collection of Dogen's material, it comes as no surprise that there will be highs and lows in the collection. Parts are confounding and beautiful. Parts are simple, yet overwhelming. And parts are more informational about different formal approaches to Buddhism. As always, many portions of this text should be reread because the effect of the teaching is a lifetime of practice.
