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A History of Zen Buddhism by Heinrich Dumoulin, S. J.

*Translated from the German by Paul Peachey
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Text 290 pp., 16 illustrations, notes 24 pp., biblio-
graphy 9 pp., Index.*

Any new publication by Dr. Heinrich Dumoulin, S. J., of Sophia (Jōchi) University in Tokyo is bound to be an event of significance for scholars in this field of the History of Religions in Japan and, if it is a book about Zen, it is especially welcome. However, there is such interest in the subject throughout the world, it is to be expected that this volume will find a much broader public reception than ordinarily would be accorded a book on Japanese religion.

So much nonsense has been spoken and written about Japanese Zen, and so little has appeared in English that is objective and scholarly, that it is a pleasure to read a book that is both reliable and understandable. Dr. Dumoulin has provided the reliability in the original German text; Dr. Paul Peachey

has placed the English-language reader in his debt by producing a splendid, readable translation.

It must not be inferred from what is said above that the writings of Japanese Zen scholars are not to be regarded as generally reliable. Of course they are; but scholars who are devotees of Zen are no less human than those of other faiths, and there is need for a great deal more to be written about this faith from the pen of scholars who are not devotees. Moreover, there has been all too much ill-advised exploitation of Zen abroad, mainly by foreign "devotees," so that it is inevitable that there should be a great deal of misunderstanding about the faith in this country. This exploitation has resulted in the strange notion, for example, that Zen can be equated with Japanese

Buddhism, whereas it is in fact only one, and by no means the largest, school of Buddhism in Japan. Furthermore, it has resulted in an extreme idealization of Zen which makes the reality in this country extremely disillusioning when a visitor to these islands seeks to learn what it is all about. And, of course, no one deplores this exploitation and misunderstanding more than the true exponent of Zen as a way of life.

A History of Zen Buddhism begins with four chapters dealing with Zen before it entered China: (I) "The Mystical Element in Early Buddhism and Hinayana," (II) "The Mysticism and Mahayana," (III) "The Mahayana Sutras and Zen," and (IV) "The Anticipation of Zen in Chinese Buddhism." Following these are four chapters dealing with Chinese Zen; (V) "Zen Patriarchs of the Early Period," (VI) "The High Period of Chinese Zen," (VII) "Peculiarities of the Five House," and (VIII) "Spread and Methodological Development During the Sung Period," which all together take up about half of the volume.

The last half deals with (IX)

"The Transplanting of Zen to Japan," (X) "The Zen Master Dōgen," (XI) "The Cultural Influence of Zen in the Muromachi Period," (XII) "The First Encounter between Zen and Christianity," (XIII) "Zen in the Modern Japanese Age," (XIV) "The Zen Mysticism of Haikuin," and finally (XV) "The Essence of Zen." This is followed by 24 pages of copious notes, 9 pages of bibliography, and a very satisfactory index.

Such being the contents, it goes without saying that this is a book which must be read by all who would understand Zen. Here are the answers to the many questions which people have been asking. For example, the rise and psychological structure of the *Koan* are discussed on pages 126—132, after which there is an explanation of the two main streams of Zen — Soto and Rinzai — both of which are strong in this country. The technique of meditation known as *Zazen* is referred to at many points in the volume and presented in some detail on pages 159—66. Not unnaturally the final chapter in which the author sums up "The Essence of

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Zen" is especially helpful with its discussion of "History and Form," "The Experience of Satori," "The Psychological Interpretation of Satori," and "Natural Mysticism." But probably all but a very few specialists will find on almost every page new information that provides a better understanding of the meaning of Zen and the multitudinous ways in which Zen has influenced the culture of this country.

It may seem inappropriate, then, to say that something is lacking, because actually nothing is. But there is an urgent need for an objective evaluation of the place of

Zen in contemporary Japanese society, and no one is better qualified for this task than is the author. It is to be hoped, therefore, that he will do this in the not too distant future.

Dr. Domoulin, who was born in the Rhieinland, came to Japan in 1935. He has done postgraduate work at Tokyo University, and currently is professor of Philosophy and the History of Religion at Sophia University in Tokyo. By his arduous study of Zen, he has placed every student of Buddhism in his debt. W. P. W.