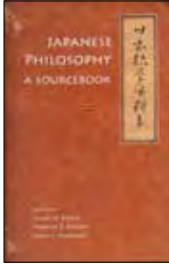


REVIEWS



James W. Heisig, Thomas P. Kasulis, and John C. Maraldo,
eds., *Japanese Philosophy: A Sourcebook*

Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011. xviii + 1341 pages.
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JAPANESE PHILOSOPHY: A SOURCEBOOK is no doubt *the* most comprehensive volume on Japanese thought to date. This truly impressive book has over 1,300 pages, contains over 200 translations (110 translators and contributors) that span over 1,400 years of Japanese history, and all of the sections, thinkers, and translations are accompanied by excellent introductions and background information. Each of the sections begins with a helpful overview and a list of suggested further reading. The titles and “key ideas” of the translated selections appear in gray boxes, which make them very easy to identify throughout this massive volume.

The volume begins with an explanatory section (“Framework”) for the project, which offers a historical overview, a definition of philosophy, difficulties and issues related to translations, and explains the editorial decisions that went into making the translations as consistent as possible. After the “Framework” we find the first and longer part of the book, “Traditions,” begins with a “Prelude” on Prince Shōtoku’s Seventeen-Article Constitution of 604. The editors rightly consider this constitution as marking the birth of Japanese philosophy, as it offers the first instance of original Japanese thought that emerged from Confucian and Buddhist influences. “Traditions” is divided into Buddhist Traditions, Zen Tradition, Pure Land Tradition, Confucian Traditions, Shinto and Native Studies, and Modern Academic Philosophy.

“Buddhist Traditions” covers not only well-known thinkers such as Kūkai (774–835) and Nichiren (1222–1282) but also includes less well known but nevertheless significant thinkers such as Kakuban and Myōe, as well as contemporary thinkers such as Ishizu Teruji, Nakamura Hajime, and Tamaki Kōshirō. It also contains a helpful discussion of the thematically organized “original enlightenment debates” on themes such as “universal Buddha Nature,” “suchness,” and “critical Buddhism.”

“The Zen Tradition” begins with Dōgen (1200–1253) and follows the historical development through the fourteenth to the twentieth centuries with representative thinkers such as Takuan, Bankei, Hakuin, D. T. Suzuki, Hisamatsu Shin’ichi, and Karatani Junzō. “The Pure Land Tradition” begins with Hōnen (1133–1212) and Shinran (1173–1263) and extends to the twentieth century discussions by Soga Ryōjin and Yasuda Rijin. The extensive section on “Confucian Traditions” covers a rich array of representative thinkers and debates of the pre-Tokugawa to Tokugawa (Edo) Confucian Schools during the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, beginning with Fujiwara Seika (1561–1619) and including Hayashi Razan, Kaibara Ekken, Ogyū Sorai, and Ninomiya Sontoku, among others. “Shinto and Native Studies” adds a welcome introduction to the often neglected but significant aspect of philosophical thought uniquely developed in Japanese history. This section covers, among others, Kamo no Mabuchi (1697–1769), Motoori Norinaga (1730–1801), Orikuchi Shinobu (1887–1953), up to the contemporary period and Ueda Kenji (1927–2003). All of these sections provide an excellent historical foundation for understanding the long tradition of Japanese philosophical thought.

The extensive section on post-Meiji (“Modern Academic Philosophy”) covers what is also often called “modern Japanese Philosophy,” including the Kyoto School. This section presents probably the best and most systematic collection of modern Japanese thinkers in any anthology. The section begins with “Beginnings, Definitions, Disputations” that summarizes well the Meiji debates over the importation of Western philosophy into Japan. All of the key figures of this period are included: Nishi Amane (who coined the term *tetsugaku* to translate “philosophy”), Fukuzawa Yukichi, Nakae Chōmin, Inoue Tetsujirō, Inoue Enryō, and Ōnishi Hajime. The section on the Kyoto School includes not only the key figures such as Nishida Kitarō, Tanabe Hajime, Nishitani Keiji, and Abe Masao, but also offers valuable translations of other thinkers such as Mutai Risaku, Miki Kiyoshi, Kōsaka Masaaki, Kōyama Iwao, and Shimomura Toratarō, all of whom are well known in Japan but due to a grave lack of translations have remained relatively unknown outside Japan. The much-needed selections on offer here therefore fill a gap. Also especially noteworthy are the inclusions of the present-day followers of the school: Tsujimura Kōichi, Ueda Shizuteru, Hase Shōtō, and Ōhashi Ryōsuke, who represent the continuity and legacy of the Kyoto School philosophy today. Following the section on the Kyoto School is a substantial subsection, “Twentieth-Century Philosophy”; this section also contains a wealth and breadth of twentieth-century Japanese philosophical thought which had not been widely translated, although all of the authors here are well read in Japan. It is therefore extremely useful that some of the ideas from these thinkers have now become available in English, most of them for the first time. Some of the thinkers included in this section have been loosely associated with the Kyoto School (Takahashi Satomi, Kuki Shūzō, Watsuji Tetsurō, and Tosaka Jun, who was himself an important Marxist scholar), but they are philosophers in their own right, and it is right that they should deserve separate consideration.

Others in this section include Funayama Shin'ichi (Hegel-influenced philosophical materialism), Izutsu Toshihiko (world-renowned scholar of Islam and mysticism), Maruyama Masao (Marxist and intellectual historian), Minamoto Ryōen (specialist on the influences of the Tokugawa period in Japanese culture), Yuasa Yasuo (Jungian psychology and the theory of the body), Nakamura Yūjirō (well known for “deconstructing” Nishida), Kimura Bin (psychiatrist and cultural theorist), Hiro-matsu Wataru (specialist on Marx, Lukács, and Heidegger), Sakabe Megumi (aesthetics), and Fujita Masakatsu (modern-day grounder of Japanese Philosophy as a discipline).

Following the lengthy first section, “Traditions,” the second is “Additional Themes.” In my view this part makes the volume truly unique and valuable as a new sourcebook on Japanese thought: it is thematically organized into “Culture and Identity,” “Samurai Thought,” “Women Philosophers,” and “Aesthetics,” enabling a wealth of authors and ideas to be introduced to an audience outside Japan, again some of them for the first time. “Culture and Identity” includes the controversial (now often regarded as “infamous”) and important “Overcoming Modernity” debates of 1941–1942; the participants included some members of the Kyoto School, who discussed the role of Japan and the Great East-Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere (Dai-Tōa Kyōei-ken) during the period of Japanese imperialism. This section also contains critics such as Takeuchi Yoshimi and the modern-day literary critic, Karatani Kōjin. Last but not least, the addition of “Women Philosophers” is truly a welcome addition to the grave lack of literature on women thinkers in Japan, not just in philosophy but among any field. All of the three authors selected—Yosano Akiko, Hiratsuka Raichō, and Yamakawa Kikue—are excellent and invaluable sources in order to understand the uniquely situated current of thought in Japan.

The end of the volume contains a massive list of references: Glossary, Bibliography, Chronology, Thematic Index, and General Index, all of which provide excellent sources for research and make the book truly useful and easier to use, despite its detail and length. All in all, this volume is a *tour de force* of its class; it is definitely a must-have not only for libraries but for anyone who specializes in Japan, as well as those who would like to learn a thorough, comprehensive intellectual history, and the range of philosophies to emerge out of Japan.

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