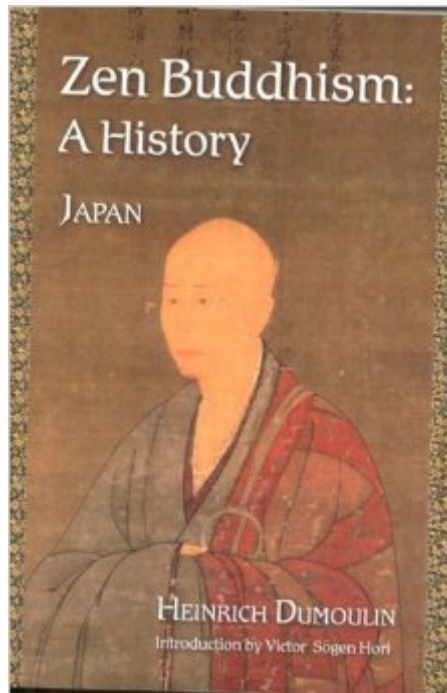


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Zen Buddhism: A History (Japan) (Treasures Of The World's Religions) (Volume 2)



Synopsis

In this second volume of his classic history Dumoulin turns his attention to the development of Zen in Japan.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I already had Dumoulin's book on India and China, so I knew what I was getting. There have been further findings since he wrote Zen Buddhism: A History (Japan), but the basics are there, and it's readable. Glad this got updated and printed again.

An essential reference for all Zen students/practitioners This book along with its companion volume (Zen Buddhism: A History, Vol. 1 - India & China), also by Heinrich Dumoulin, is unique in offering the only extensive single-set history of Zen Buddhism available. As such it is an essential reference for all Zen students, teachers, and practitioners. It also has plenty to offer students of Buddhism of all traditions, especially those of Mahayana. While not as informative as its companion: Zen Buddhism, Volume 1: A History - India and China, it does offering an extensive overview of the rise and development of Zen in Japan. After furnishing the reader with an overview of the spiritual landscape of the Japan during the time of its incorporation of Zen, Heinrich Dumoulin examines the lives and teachings of the major figures associated with the transmission of Zen from China. Dumoulin then traces the developments of the two major sects of Zen Buddhism as they

developed and competed for recognition and authority. While many of the details fail to acknowledge recent scholarship, Dumoulin's work still manages to provide readers with a general overview of these schools. Providing both, historical and traditional accounts and information concerning the more influential Japanese Zen masters, Dumoulin offers readers some insights into the elements that distinguish the Ch'an of China from Zen Buddhist schools of Japan. While this book, in offers an extensive overview, it does not offer in-depth examinations, unlike Volume One, some of the out-dated material is at significant odds with recent scholarship. Nevertheless, with all the trimmings, front and back matter of quality scholarship (notes, detailed index, glossary, etc) this second of the two-volume history of Zen offers plenty of unique material that will be welcomed by Zen students for many generations to come.

... than Volume 1. I am a lay person so I can not speak to the challenges in recent years that have been made to Dumoulin's depiction of Zen. I can say unequivocally that this volume was compelling, even exciting, at times at times for me. I'll let historians fight it out, to me this volume is a masterpiece. My preference has been for Chinese Zen so I was not expecting to enjoy this volume so much. Just the sections on Dogen, Bankei and Hakuin make the book worthwhile to me. Dogen is so hard to follow. I've read some of his work and much about him and still get confused although dazzled by the issues he raises and his own language. Dumoulin presents Dogen as clearly as I have ever found and I would definitely recommend the chapter in this book on Dogen as the best introduction to Dogen. Dumoulin also presents Bankei as well as I have found. Bankei's own writings, however, may be considerably more accessible than Dogen's but understanding his place in Zen history is a challenge Dumoulin seems more than up to. The chapter on Hakuin is similarly helpful and a wonderful introduction to this key Zen teacher. In this volume the importance of koans in raising one's level of doubt so as to intensify Zen practice becomes clearer. This is no mere history but besides the sections on these 3 major Japanese Zen masters there is a detailed history: more detail than you may want, with stories of many other Japanese Zen masters, of Zen's introduction from China and the help of Chinese Zen masters, of the severe persecution of Buddhism at times that Zen survived, of how Zen interacted with other Japanese religions, of Zen's contribution to Japanese arts and education, of how Christianity met Zen within Japan, of how Zen monks became beloved by the Japanese people not least of all for their willingness to work alongside the Japanese people as needed. The Rinzai, Soto, and, to a lesser extent, Obaku approaches to Zen are presented, including how Dogen's Zen evolved into Soto Zen. Here is a German Jesuit who is so sensitive to the intricacies of Japanese Zen, it's amazing. Dumoulin closes

his history at the beginning of the 20th century but with an openness to the impact that Zen's spread into the West may have for the future history of Zen. So this is a book for both historians and Zen practitioners. When you see a Zen practitioner sitting in meditation, you would not realize just how much has gone before and how much diversity lay within the Zen Buddhism religion. I strongly recommend reading first volume 1 Zen Buddhism: A History, India & China and then this volume. I found these books and even the passages about enlightenment more helpful than in Dumoulin's own book focused on that subject Zen Enlightenment: Origins And Meaning (Buddhism & Eastern Philosophy). It may be that, as a historian, Dumoulin was more comfortable explaining from a more historical framework although "Zen Enlightenment" certainly is not lacking in history.

Zen Buddhism: A History Japan is the new edition of volume two of Zen scholar Dumoulin's classic two-volume reference of the history of Zen. Specifically focusing upon the development of Zen in Japan from its inception to its expansion during the middle ages and modern Zen movements, Zen Buddhism: A History Japan has now been enhanced with notes by James W. Heisig of the Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture and a new introduction by Victor Sogen Hori of McGill University. Zen Buddhism: A History Japan is an extensive, in-depth, scholarly, superbly written and presented resource and reference, intended especially for scholars, historians, and students of Zen Buddhism due to its thorough detail.

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