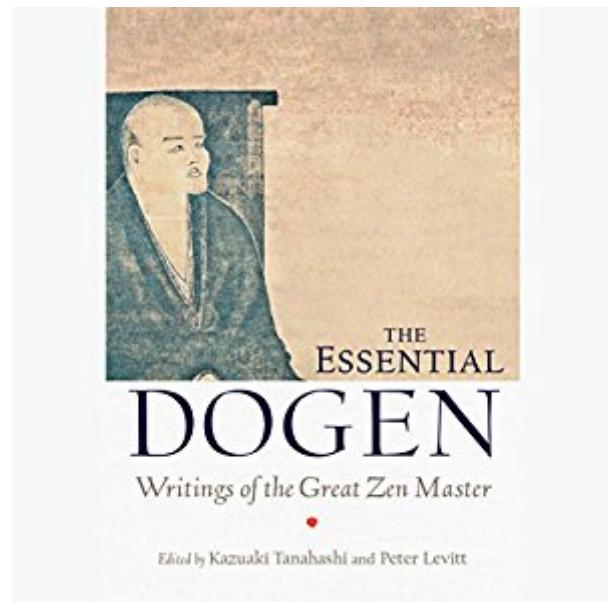


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The Essential Dogen: Writings Of The Great Zen Master



Synopsis

Eihei Dogen (1200 - 1253), founder of the Soto School of Zen Buddhism, is one of the greatest religious, philosophical, and literary geniuses of Japan. His writings have been studied by Zen students for centuries, particularly his masterwork, Shobo Genzo or Treasury of the True Dharma Eye. This is the first book to offer the great master's incisive wisdom in short selections taken from the whole range of his voluminous works. The pithy and powerful readings, arranged according to theme, provide a perfect introduction to Dogen - and inspire spiritual practice in people of all traditions.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

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Customer Reviews

Kazuaki Tanahashi and his various collaborators have been hard at work for years making Dogen's writings available to English readers in elegant, clear translations sponsored by the San Francisco Zen Center. I'd get my hands on these when they came out and find myself copying little excerpts into a small notebook for use on the trail or traveling from city to city -- no way to stuff all those books into a pack! Now Tanahashi and his co-editor, Peter Levitt, with this lovely selection -- many of them the same as my hand-copied paragraphs and sentences -- have done the work of organizing them all by their central themes. I suppose, given the overlap with my own selections, I'd be biased in saying how well they've chosen. But the truth is, they've done the job well and now I have the book that I've always wanted for tossing into that pack. This is a collection that serves for old Dogen hands wanting to revisit and be reminded on their travels. But it also serves as a

wonderful introduction to his lessons for first-timers, maybe most especially those who, as Tanahashi writes in his preface, "contemplate in different spiritual traditions and are interested in expanding and deepening their meditative experience." Even better, Peter Levitt's introductory essay is a genuine dharma talk all its own, beautifully drawing out Dogen's relevance to our own times and perturbations. This is a carefully, artfully chosen selection unhampered by scholarly overkill -- but solidly rooted nonetheless in two lifetimes of Dogen and Zen studies. (For those who need the scholarly tools, the Sources and Translation Credits section at the end will point you to where you need to go.) This might be the book you want to buy before springing for the also just-released masterpiece, the one volume Treasury of the True Dharma Eye: Master Dogen's Shobo Genzo, also published by Shambhala. And for those who already have that, here's the best carry around collection going.

There is a bunch of Dogen material out there. Of course Treasury of the True Dharma Eye: Zen Master Dogen's Shobo Genzo is the masterpiece. But as a great book to carry around, read again and again, this really cannot be beat.

I love Dogen's teachings and this is one of the most clear writings and translations of his thoughts and being. I like the way it is broken up into chapters, "Practical instructions" such as zazen, bowing, each activity is sacred, etc. And History, Gates of Dharma including sections on buddha nature, compassion, trust, women, precepts, and Students and Teachers, Philosophical View, and Expression, such as poetic expression, intimate language, etc. This contains a wonderful introduction and chronology of Dogen's life. Very well broken out, clear print and language. Nice translations the average zen student can relate to.

I have both the softcover and audible.com audiobook versions, and use both. The audiobook version is one you listen to dozens if not hundreds of times if you are into mindfulness or zen practice...it gets richer and deeper has your practice matures. I started with the marvelous Gary Snyder readings from "Moon in a dewdrop" (called on Audible "Dogen: the teachings of the great zen master" and as a book it's called "Moon in a Dewdrop") and can hardly play anything else in my car! (Goodbye music!) I will be adding this in also, in rotation. The third book in my rotation is ZEN MIND BEGINNERS MIND. I'm just hoping that some other Tanahashi Dogen books find their way onto Audible.

What an accomplishment! Kaz Tanahashi has spent much of his life devoted to Buddhist and especially Zen texts. He has worked carefully with the poet Levitt here to produce the most readable version of Dogen's writings to date, and all arranged in a table of contents--very useful. What's more this is an affordable text for the serious, if hopefully not too serious, student of Buddhism, as revitalized here by Dogen for his contemporaries. A deep bow of gratitude, then, to these lifelong scholars of Dogen. --LL

I'm sure it's great for what it is, but what it is isn't so great. Book has no references to find the excerpts in Dogen's original works. And the selected excerpts don't strike me as his best. At least, I hope they aren't. I find it difficult to believe the translation is well done. Sounds like 21st century, digital age, American Buddhism.

another excellent collection of Dogen's work. some details here that are not available other places. i recommend this book.

Dogen's writings will elevate your perception to the next level. Most of it might go over your head, but every so often you'll find a golden-nugget that'll give you a flash of insight. It was the best kind of treasure hunt.

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