

Japanese Philosophy

A SOURCEBOOK

EDITED BY

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- WB William BODIFORD
Zen Buddhist
- WJB Willem J. BOOT
Confucian
- WM WATANABE Manabu 渡邊 学
Twentieth Century
- WNH Wilburn N. HANSEN
Shinto
- WRL William R. LAFLEUR
Aesthetics
- WSY Wayne S. YOKOYAMA
Buddhist, Zen Buddhist
- WTB William Theodore DE BARY
Confucian
- YM YUSA Michiko 遊佐道子
Kyoto School, Women
- YT YASUNAGA Toshinobu 安永寿延
Confucian

Framework

The idea that people of different cultures actually think differently has been slow to find its way into the heart of western philosophy. Over the past century or so, anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, and cognitive scientists have often examined this issue and compared results. But until recently, the majority of philosophers in the West have exempted themselves from the debate, often assuming that philosophy's kind of thinking is universal and transcultural. Others have claimed to the contrary that philosophy is so distinctively western an enterprise that there is little point to look for it elsewhere. In either case, "nonwestern philosophy" is dismissed as an oxymoron.

Meanwhile, Japanese studies has seldom focused specifically on the philosophical dimensions of the culture, typically treating them only in the background or margins of scholarly works in literature, religion, politics, intellectual history, or the arts. Although books dedicated to Indian philosophy and Chinese philosophy have played a central role in the development of Asian studies for many decades, this has not been the case for Japanese philosophy. This omission leaves the impression that, even compared with its Asian neighbors, Japan has not been very much engaged in philosophical reflection, analysis, and argument. Indeed, the romanticized image of Japan in much popular writing explicitly says as much. Japanese culture's face to the western world is one of haiku, Zen gardens, tea ceremony, the martial arts, woodblock prints, novels, and, more recently, anime and manga. Behind those phenomena, however, are powerful critical traditions of thought and value for which there is no better word than "philosophy." A focus on Japanese philosophy, therefore, can broaden and deepen not only our understanding of philosophy, but also of Japan.

This *Sourcebook* addresses these issues by making available, for the first time in a single volume, translations of a wide variety of texts from multiple intellectual traditions spanning the whole of Japan's recorded history. Our working assumption is that the philosophical nature of a cultural heritage—its forms of analysis, its use of distinctions, its patterns of argument, its selection of issues on which to focus—cannot be fully appreciated by looking at any single work by any given author from any particular period. Rather, Japanese thinkers can

best be appreciated as philosophers only by seeing how they have argued with each other, how intellectual traditions have developed over centuries, and how individuals and traditions have responded throughout history to new ideas from continental Asia or the West. The *Sourcebook* not only tries to establish parameters for the study of Japanese philosophy in the West; it also aims to address readers intrigued by the question of how culture and systematic thinking have interacted in a sophisticated literary tradition radically different from that of Western Europe.

The perception of what counts as philosophy in Japan today is radically ambiguous. First, it has come to represent a meticulous study of mainline currents of western philosophy, and along with that a large number of minor currents, some of which are given attention disproportionate to what they enjoy in the cultures of their birth. As the discipline took hold in universities a little over a century ago, its study broadened to include parallels in Islamic, Russian, and Jewish thought, not to mention a healthy interest in the esoteric traditions accompanying them.

Second, Japanese scholars have not merely approached western philosophy as a subject of historical and objective interest; they have taken their own critical stance, making their own adjustments and contributions in light of their own experience and intellectual history. In a few notable cases, this has led to major contributions to philosophy that have attracted attention around the world. Most often, however, the changes have been more subtle and aimed at specialists in the field. In both instances, the primary audience for philosophical texts has been Japan and the language Japanese. What is known to scholars abroad through translation is a small, and often far from representative, sampling of the entire contribution.

Third, preceding the entrance of the western academic discipline, there were traditional Japanese systems of theory and praxis associated with Buddhism, Confucianism, artistic expression, and Shinto. These contained understandings of language, truth, human nature, creativity, reality, and society that were explained and argued in a variety of ways. For many Japanese today, these may not be “philosophy” in the modern academic sense, but they are parallel to traditions of what we call in English “classical Indian philosophy” or “classical Chinese philosophy.” They are part of the cultural background against which modern Japanese thinking develops. That modern Japanese thinkers have typically filtered so much of western philosophy through their own modes of thought, aesthetic feeling, and religious experience is hardly surprising. Such filtering belongs to the story of great ideas and great philosophical systems everywhere; as they cross back and forth between civilizations and from one epoch to another, they become transfigured, reoriented, even radically inverted.

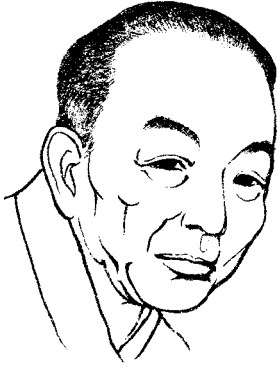
Yet there are special circumstances that set the history of philosophy in Japan apart. The most obvious of these is that academic philosophy, and indeed the university system itself, as it is known throughout the West and much of the rest of the world, did not arrive until about one hundred and fifty years ago. As a result, the technical term *philosophy* came to be reserved for what was fundamentally a foreign import. Cut off from the long history of conflict and synthesis that led to the forms of western philosophy that came to Japan as completed systems of thought, Japanese thinkers at first tended to embrace the western import not so much as a colleague to be engaged in dialogue, but rather as a foreign dignitary to be shown respect and proper attention. This reception was further reinforced by the awareness, never far from the mind of Japanese scholars, that by the time literacy had come to Japan, this western discipline called *philosophy* was already into its second millennium.

More important for the aims of the *Sourcebook* are the native resources on which Japanese philosophy as a modern academic discipline draws for its critical appraisal of ideas. These differ from those of traditional philosophy in the West. The ways of thought tacitly embedded in religious scriptures, literature, theater, art, and language that run between the lines and beneath the surface of western philosophical texts received from abroad are, at least until recently, largely absent from the Japanese mind. In their place we find different, no less rich and variegated, ways of thinking and valuing. Assumptions transparent to the western historian of ideas are often opaque to the Japanese, and vice-versa.

The range of resources open to the Japanese thinker is as broad and deep as the culture itself, and any attempt to generalize about them is fraught with danger from the start. One way to get at them is to probe the history of Japanese ideas for philosophical “affinities,” that is to say, comprehensive worldviews, systematizations of moral values, methods of analysis and argument, and, in general, reflection on what we consider universal questions about human existence and reality. This is the task we have set ourselves in the pages of the *Sourcebook*.

The *Sourcebook* is divided into two parts of unequal length. The first, historical part treats philosophical resources from the major traditions of Japanese intellectual history: Buddhism, Confucianism, Shinto and Native Studies, and Modern Academic Philosophy. The second part, “Additional Themes,” picks up a sampling of recurrent topics that are not treated in detail elsewhere and that cut across the lines defining the traditional schools of Japanese thought. In settling on this dual method of presenting the material, we were aware that the story of philosophy in any cultural context not only has to respect the development of arguments and themes within schools of thought, but also has to take into account important topics that overlap traditions and involve the interface of philosophy and other forms of intellectual discourse.

WATSUJI Tetsurō 和辻哲郎 (1889–1960)



Watsuji Tetsurō was not only Japan's premier ethical theorist and historian of ethics in the first half of the twentieth century, but also an astute philosopher of culture and interpreter of religious traditions and practices. Born the son of a country physician in a village near the Inland Sea, at age sixteen he ventured out to the metropolis of Tokyo to study at its First Higher School and then the Imperial University, graduating in 1912 with a thesis on Schopenhauer's pessimism. Forty years later he published a memoir of his philosophy professor there, Raphael von Koeber. In his student years he took up the study of

Nietzsche, the subject of his first publication in 1913, followed two years later by a book on Kierkegaard, the first in Japan. In 1918 he issued a critique of Taishō-era infatuation with democracy, coupled with an appeal to ancient nature cults, under the ironic title, *The Revival of Idols*, and then began work on *A Critique of Homer* published nearly twenty years later. Among the religious, cultural, and historical studies he authored were *The Cultural-Historical Significance of Primitive Christianity* (1926), and *The Practical Philosophy of Primitive Buddhism* (1927).

Although he was not the first person to find philosophical thought in Dōgen* or Shinran*, the essay cited below opened Dōgen's writings to nonsectarian, philosophical inquiry for the first time. Watsuji's works were informed by the philological methods he learned from Koeber and later by the hermeneutical approach he gained during a year spent in Europe from 1927 to 1928, when he studied in Berlin, engrossed himself in Heidegger's just-published *Sein und Zeit*, and made excursions to the cultural centers of Italy. The trip proved to be a turning point in Watsuji's career and interests. Soon after returning to Japan he was made a professor of philosophy at Kyoto Imperial University, and in 1934 was appointed to the chair in ethics at Tokyo Imperial University. Inspired to develop the hermeneutical phenomenology he had come to know in Germany and further elucidate cultural differences, he published *Climate and Culture*, demonstrating how human spatiality shapes the intentionality of our perceptions and actions, and how climatic zones shape the character of interhuman relations and give rise to distinct cultures: pastoral, desert, and monsoon. The excerpt below from this work represents perhaps the world's first phenomenological description of weather.

Watsuji later abandoned these rather impressionistic idealizations of cultural types but continued to focus on interrelations among humans and between humans and their environments. His three-volume work on *Ethics* was completed in 1949 and followed Heidegger's lead in exploiting the literal meanings and the cultural

nuances of terms in his native language to drive home the insights of his analysis. The term translated as “human being” is an example. The ordinary modern Japanese word *ningen* refers to humans but its sinographs literally indicate the *inter-human* or relationship between one person and others, all who live together in a shared cultural space or “betweenness.” At the same time, he argued that Heidegger’s *Dasein* was individualistic and overemphasized the temporality of human existence to the neglect of relationality—spatial, temporal, cultural, and climatic—that Watsuji considered central. The passage cited below on the negative, dialectical structure of human existence reveals the influence of Nishida’s philosophy and Buddhist thought as well, but the work overall implies a critique of traditional Confucian and Buddhist thought that lacked a notion of intentionality and therefore an adequate base for philosophical analysis.

For Watsuji, ethics forms the core of philosophy, and in a two-volume *History of Japanese Ethical Thought* published in 1952 he attempted to lay out the manifestations of universal human relatedness in the particular historical strata of Japanese value systems, including that of emperor veneration as opposed to a feudal ‘*bushidō*’. His critique of the samurai ethic did not, however, keep from applauding the benefits of self-negation, the superiority of Japan’s view of the human, and the virtue of the nation-state as the supreme form of human community—all of which served military factions during the Asian Pacific War with a rationale. While the political status of his views remains controversial, the clarity of his analyses is striking.

[JCM]

SHINRAN AND DŌGEN

WATSUJI Tetsurō 1923, 192–203

The most remarkable part of Shinran’s* teaching is his explanation of boundless ‘compassion’. For Shinran, compassion is the image of the absolute being.... But Shinran does not explain infinite compassion in phrases such as “love thy neighbor,” “love all humankind,” or “love between people is the most meaningful thing in life.” This is because he understands how feeble human love truly is, and how difficult it is for human beings to love selflessly. He distinctly separates human compassion from the Buddha’s compassion.... The path of sages is one of cultivating pity and sorrow. However, as long as people live in this world, we cannot truly help others, no matter how much our hearts pity or yearn for them.

Shinran’s great love for humanity is expressed here; we cannot help but be moved deeply by it. Indeed, how many hurting souls can we see immediately around us? And how much do we suffer because we cannot save people from their pain—or rather, because their pain is such that they cannot be saved from it? It is not that we don’t know the means to eradicate their suffering. The prob-

lem is that we can never embody these means, because our love is too meager, and human ability cannot go beyond certain limits....

This is where Shinran explains the compassion of the Buddha: The compassion of the 'Pure Land' is nothing other than chanting the name of the Buddha, quickly attaining buddhahood and, with that great compassionate heart, saving all sentient beings according to one's heart. It is not suffering due to unending compassion, but rather the interpenetrating compassion that is attained by chanting the Buddha's name, which we must call an all-encompassing compassionate heart. In other words, to save oneself is simultaneously to save others. To save others, one must be saved oneself. If you want to perfectly manifest the idea of "love thy neighbor," there is no alternative but to call upon 'Amida' Buddha. Through Amida we can *be perfectly loved* and we can *love perfectly*.

Thus the compassion that Shinran teaches is a great love that "cannot belong to humans." His emphasis was not on the relationship of person to person but rather the relationship of people to love itself. It is in this relationship of people to love that we can see the special quality of his belief that "all is forgivable." He says, "Of course even good people can reach the Pure Land (i.e., enter Heaven). Evil people are even more able to reach it..." According to this way of thinking, before the compassion of Amida there is no distinction between good and evil in human behavior. Indeed, it even seems that evil possesses more positive meaning than good....

Here there is a clear distinction between the 'karma' that controls humans and the humans that are controlled by karma. While karma leads much of human behavior, it is possible for humans, while being moved by karma, to place their hearts on the other shore. Namely, they can chant the '*nenbutsu*'. Thus, as long as a man's heart is on the other shore—or to put it another way, as long as he is chanting the name of the Buddha—no matter what evil deeds karma forces him to commit, he is not really the one responsible for them. Because of this, he is not punished for these evil deeds and can still be saved. However, if he does not entrust everything to Buddha, or in other words, if he believes he can make his heart one with karma and take the responsibility for his behavior himself, his fate and his karma must now go together. In this case, he cannot be saved. The question of whether or not a person can be saved is simply a matter of the attitude he takes toward *humans* and karma....

I have clarified two points so far. First, Shinran preached about Amida's compassion *toward* human beings, not about love *between* human beings. Second, at the core of his principle that all is forgivable is the condition that evil is both fearful and shameful. In contrast with Shinran, I will take up Dōgen*, who advocates "seeking the truth for the truth's sake...." What is the basis of his teaching of compassion? On what basis does he forgive evil, or fear it?

Dōgen says 'body-mind' must be abandoned for the sake of the 'dharma'.

Glossary

The following Glossary includes only technical terms that are not direct Japanese translations of standard western philosophical terms. These terms are flagged in the text with raised brackets (↑) on their first appearance in each chapter. Unless otherwise indicated, foreign terms are Japanese. The numbers enclosed in parentheses refer to the pages on which the term in question appears. Many of these terms have multiple uses across traditions and through time. The definitions here are limited to meanings most relevant to the use of the terms in the selections found in the *Sourcebook*.

absolute nothingness 絶対無 (J. *zettai mu*) → nothingness

Amaterasu 天照. The sun goddess in the Shinto pantheon of celestial '*kami*'; considered the ancestor of the Japanese imperial family. (7, 327, 379, 459, 477–9, 483–5, 496, 510–12, 514, 529, 540–1, 909–10, 1019–21, 1023, 1118, 1129)

Amida 阿弥陀 (S. *Amitābha*, *Amitāyus*). A particular buddha associated with the 'Pure Land' of Perfect Bliss in the west. (10–11, 49, 75–79, 237, 239–240, 242–45, 248–9, 251, 253–60, 273–4, 278–80, 283–5, 295–6, 331, 531, 597, 630, 667, 748–9, 785, 790, 852, 854–6, 1028–9, 1057–8)

Amitābha → Amida

Avalokiteśvara → Kannon

birth-and-death → samsara

bodhi-mind 菩提心 (S. *bodhicitta*, J. *bodai shin*). The aspiration for *bodhi* or enlightenment. (220, 245)

bodhisattva 菩薩 (J. *bosatsu*). One who aspires to *bodhi* or enlightenment. In the context of 'Mahayana' Buddhism as practiced in Japan, any Buddhist who believes in the Mahayana scriptures and cultivates practices described therein. It also refers to celestial beings whose compassion for suffering sentient beings makes them the object of Mahayana Buddhist devotion, contemplation, and supplication. (53, 56–7, 69–72, 74, 76, 82, 85, 96, 100, 104, 106, 108–9, 178, 180, 193, 205–6, 219, 228, 237, 243, 256–7, 273, 275, 279–82, 622, 630, 760, 793, 1044, 1174)

body-mind 身心 (J. *shinjin*). The human individual as a whole, a unity of the physical and mental. (20, 28, 47, 51, 145–6, 162, 852–3, 855, 945, 999, 1080)

bright virtue 明德 (J. *meitoku*). Sometimes called “luminous virtue,” a Confucian term for virtue as it is brilliantly displayed for all to see. Also used politically in the sense of manifesting the kind of virtue that might transform not only the self, but society and the entire world. (211, 301, 303, 313–16, 322–3, 329, 340, 378, 436–8)

buddha-dharma → Buddha’s truth

buddhahood. The state of awakening attained by or exemplified in a buddha. It denotes completion of the path and is used as a synonym for complete enlightenment. (46–8, 53, 59–61, 63, 67, 69, 74, 78, 81, 86, 88–90, 92, 94, 96–8, 100–3, 168–9, 172, 186, 196, 198–200, 237, 242, 252, 255–6, 258, 260, 323, 331, 424, 686, 852)

buddha-mind 仏心 (J. *bushshin*). In Zen, one’s original nature or state of enlightenment. (190, 195–201, 418, 420, 436, 438)

buddha-nature 仏性 (J. *bushshō*). The potential for ‘buddhahood’; the innate presence of the seed of buddhahood. (90, 92–5, 101–3, 139, 167, 182, 185, 195–6, 198, 202, 207–9, 223, 238, 254, 257, 730, 1042)

Buddha’s teachings → Buddha’s truth

Buddha’s truth 仏法 (J. *buppō*). Literally, the buddha-dharma. The term refers to the teachings of the Buddha as opposed to the teachings of other masters, and at times was used to identify the Buddhist religion as a whole. Also commonly used to represent the true way of living and perceiving reality. (160–1, 855)

bushidō 武士道. A term often used anachronistically to mean the Way of the samurai or Way of the warrior. (14, 289, 374, 567, 708, 829, 851, 1103–15, 1107, 1112, 1123, 1245)

compassion 慈悲 (S. *karuṇā*, J. *jīhi*). The Buddhist virtue that disposes one toward the liberation of others. Often paired with ‘*prajñā*’ or wisdom. Strictly speaking, it is the second of “four immeasurable states of mind” (S. *catvāri apramāṇāni*, J. *shimuryōshin* 四無量心): benevolence (S. *maitrī*, J. *jī* 慈), compassion (S. *karuṇā*, J. *hi* 悲), co-rejoicing (S. *muditā*, J. *ki* 喜), and detached impartiality (S. *upekṣā*, J. *sha* 捨). (45, 61, 106, 123–4, 180, 185–6, 188, 192–3, 238–239, 241, 245, 251, 258, 267, 269, 272, 299–301, 303, 305, 309, 317, 344, 353–5, 364, 397, 431, 525, 531, 771, 792–796, 798, 851–6, 1040, 1042, 1207)

Consciousness-only → Yogācāra

cultivation 修行 (J. *shugyō*). One of a cluster of terms that can also be translated as “practice” or “praxis,” the activity of learning by way of bodily engagement and mental attention. Closely related terms include *gyō* 行 and *keiko* 稽古. (70, 79, 236, 251, 298, 265, 325, 375, 411, 418–20, 422–4, 426, 428, 447–8, 452, 545, 589–91, 627, 856, 943–5, 1033, 1130)

Bibliography

The following list contains all the original sources and, where applicable, English translations of material included in the *Sourcebook*. In some instances alternative translations have also been indicated. The dates to the left refer to the original date of publication or composition, or their nearest approximation. Bibliographic information specific to the introductions and historical overviews is contained at the end of each entry and is not repeated here.

Abbreviations used in the text

- Analects* *Confucian Analects*. Trans. consulted: James Legge, *The Four Books* (New York: Paragon Book Reprint Corp., 1966); Arthur Waley, *The Analects of Confucius* (New York: Vintage Books, 1938).
- Book of Changes* Trans. consulted: *I Ching: The Book of Changes*, trans. by James Legge (New Hyde Park: University Books, 1964).
- CK *Chūōkōron* Discussions. 『世界史の立場と日本』 [The world-historical standpoint and Japan] (Tokyo: Chūōkōronsha, 1943).
- Hekiganroku* (C. Pi-yen lu) 『碧巖録』 [Blue cliff record]. Trans. consulted: Katsugi Sekida, *Two Zen Classics: Mumonkan and Hekiganroku* (New York: Weatherhill, 1977).
- Kojiki* *Kojiki*, trans. by Donald L. Philippi (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1968).
- Kyōgyōshinshō* See SHINRAN 1247.
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- KNST 『近代日本思想大系』 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1974–1978), 35 vols.
- MBZ 『明治文学全集』 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1977), 100 vols.
- NKBT 『日本古典文学大系』 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1957–1969), 102 vols.
- NKBZ 『日本古典文学全集』 (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1970–1976), 51 vols.
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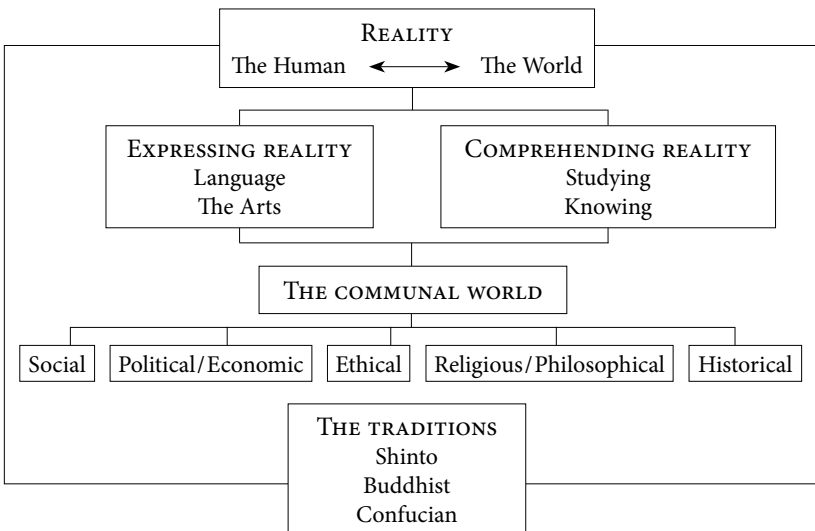
Chronology

JAPANESE ERA	FIGURE	MAIN CITATION	CHINESE DYNASTY
Kofun 古墳 300-710	Prince Shōtoku 聖德太子 (574?-622?)	35-9	Tang 唐 618-907
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Thematic Index

The Thematic Index invites us to explore topics in Japanese philosophy without privileging western philosophical categories. For example, the diagram of its organization below shows no discrete self apart from the world because most Japanese philosophers consider the two to be abstractions from a single continuous reality. From that starting point, they typically recognize two ways to engage that reality: through expression and comprehension. Just as the potter and the geologist engage clay in sophisticated but dramatically different ways, Japanese ethics requires both artistic responsiveness and epistemic analysis to do justice to the fullness of the communal world. In dealing with these issues, each of the principal philosophical traditions of Japan seeks to encompass the entire dynamic represented in the diagram.

To further explore these topics in their own vocabulary, the Thematic Index includes related items from the Glossary. The Glossary lists all page references where the terms in question can be found.



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GLOSSARY: birth-and-death, body-mind, buddha-mind, buddha-nature, five relations, *kata*, original enlightenment, other-power, self-nature, self-power, temperament, *tathāgatagarbha*, unborn, *yomi*

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GLOSSARY: bodhisattva, buddhahood, cultivation, *daimoku, dhyāna*, expedient means, great matter, Hinayana, investigation of all things, *kōan*, learning, Mahayana, mind, *nenbutsu*, no-mind, place, pratyekabuddha, refined person, reverence, *samādhi, satori*, self-enjoying *samādhi, śrāvaka, shingaku*, sudden enlightenment, Tathāgata, thought-moment, *vajra*, Vajrayana, Way, wisdom, *Yogācāra, zange, zazen*

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GLOSSARY: buddha-mind, Buddha's truth, *dharmadhātu*, Dutch Studies, Enlightenment, inverse correlation, investigation of all things, *jōri*, learning, middle way, mind, no-mind, nothingness, *prajñā*, *prajñāpāramitā*, self-identity of absolute contradiction, *soku-hi*, *vijñāna*, wisdom

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GLOSSARY: bright virtue, <i>bushidō</i> , compassion, filial piety, five constant virtues, humaneness, karma, middle way, not-doing, ordinary people, perfections, propriety, refined person, reverence, righteousness, <i>shingaku</i> , sincerity, transference of merit, <i>zange</i>	
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GLOSSARY: bodhi-mind, buddha-mind, buddha-nature, Buddha's truth, compassion, dharma, dharma-body, <i>dharmadhātu</i> , <i>dharmatā</i> , empty, expedient means, Hossō, Indra's net, karma, Kegon, <i>mappō</i> , middle way, mind, no-mind, nothingness, not-doing, original enlightenment, other-power, <i>prajñā</i> , <i>prajñāpāramitā</i> , <i>pratitya-samutpāda</i> , principle, samsara, self-nature, self-power, Shingon, Shinto incarnations of the Buddha, <i>soku-hi</i> , suchness, <i>tathāgatagarbha</i> , Tendai, thought-moment, three bodies, three worlds, trusting faith, unborn, unobstructed penetration of thing and thing, <i>vijñāna</i> , Way, wisdom, Yogācāra, <i>zange</i>	
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GLOSSARY: bright virtue, filial piety, five constant virtues, five relations, humaneness, investigation of all things, <i>jōri</i> , <i>ki</i> , learning, Lord above, mean, mind, nonfinite, nothingness, not-doing, ordinary people, principle, propriety, refined person, reverence, righteousness, <i>shingaku</i> , sincerity, Son of Heaven, supreme ultimate, temperament, void, Way, will of heaven, wisdom	

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