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INTRODUCTION
CONTINUING A CONVERSATION
FROM EAST TO WEST
Buddhism and Psychotherapy

Polly Young-Eisendrath and Shoji Muramoto

This collection of papers came into being largely as a beginning attempt to engage in a dialogue between a group of Western psychotherapists – mostly psychoanalysts (the majority Jungian) – and teachers and scholars of Japanese Zen Buddhism. The Westerners made the trip to Japan because of their gratitude for, and informed curiosity about, Zen Buddhism. The Japanese participants were interested in hearing from Western psychotherapists about their involvement with Zen because the Japanese were impressed with the fact of such an involvement. The Western participants were largely long-time practitioners of Buddhism (mostly Zen) – familiar with both psychotherapy and meditation – whereas the Japanese participants practiced either Zen or psychotherapy. This hidden and sometimes provocative difference between Western and Japanese participants was unknown until the conference was underway, but it became obvious in many group discussions in which Westerners were eager to ask questions about Zen practice and meaning, but the Japanese respondents could not relate their answers to any aspect of psychotherapy because they were not familiar with it. Nor did they seem curious about it.

When the conference was originally conceived, as we say below, we envisioned it as a highly select group of friends and colleagues from America and Japan coming together in Kyoto, to discuss Zen and psychotherapy. We thought that our psychotherapeutic focus would be on Carl Jung’s psychology because we, the conference planners, both have considerable expertise in analytical psychology (Young-Eisendrath is a Jungian analyst and both of us are authors of books on Jung and his psychology) and Jung’s depth psychology is better known in Japan than Freud’s.

As things evolved, however, the conference grew by word of mouth until it included more than ninety participants from six countries: Japan, America, England, Belgium, Holland and Germany. Represented among the Western participants were both Jungian and Freudian analysts, as well as other kinds of
therapists and a few non-therapists. Among the Japanese were psychologists and academics with a variety of approaches to psychology and psychotherapy, as well as Zen monks and scholars of Buddhism. There were also a number of American Zen monks and teachers participating in various ways, even in the unenviable role of translator (Japanese to English). Most of these people were Americans who now live in Japan because of their connection to Zen.

The formal conference was preceded by a four-day silent retreat (in the manner of a Zen sesshin). The retreat was held at a 530-year-old Zen monastery in the coastal mountains of central Japan and was attended by eighteen of the Western participants, led by Paul Haller, an American Zen teacher from San Francisco Zen Center.

As we say below, the focus of our conference and of the papers was opening a conversation about some of the insights, methods, and biases that emerge from Westerners and Japanese in relation to the subjects of Buddhism and psychotherapy. We hoped for true dialogue, but it was difficult to achieve. Partly this was due to language and cultural differences, but partly it was due to the foreignness of this type of conference for Japan.

Originally we thought that our scope of cultural interest would be Japan and America in relation to Zen and psychotherapy. Because our Western presenters and participants included people from Europe and England, and because the Buddhist topics went well beyond the confines of Zen, our focus expanded, but did not deepen. The papers show that our presenters varied greatly in their acquaintance with Buddhism (some practice it as a religion; others are scholars of it; others use aspects of Buddhist practice – for example, meditation – without practicing it as a religion). Similarly, there is a lot of variance of acquaintance with psychotherapy, psychoanalysis, and psychology.

This diversity, as well as the uniqueness of the conference, meant finally that the presenters did not share much common ground, with the exception of the American presenters who tended to know each other through their professional contacts. Even this similarity among the Americans lent nothing helpful to the dialogue because we Americans had come with the distinct desire to learn from our Japanese colleagues, not to huddle among ourselves. The difficulties of trying to understand each other, through translators and confusion and lack of common ground, was frustrating, but not undermining. Instead, good will, enthusiasm, shared warmth – even feelings of intimacy in being together in such a ground-breaking conference – were palpable at every moment. There was enormous excitement in feeling the respect we had for one another, while acknowledging the shadows of World War II still hanging over such meetings.

The nature of this extraordinary conference has both positive and negative effects on this volume of papers. On the positive side, it is an opportunity for readers to become acquainted with Japanese authors, and Americans living in Japan, who have a perspective that is deeply influenced by Japanese views. On the negative side, the papers do not appear to be responding to each other or
deepening a dialogue. Rather, each paper stands somewhat alone in its perspective. This is especially true of the papers coming from Japan.

With all of this in mind, we would caution our readers not to judge too quickly what is being expressed here. Westerners now have access to many books about Buddhism and psychotherapy. Some readers may feel that nothing said here is ‘new’ or ‘original,’ but that would be a very narrow judgment. We recommend that you think of yourself meeting our Japanese and Dutch authors, and those Americans who live in Japan, as though you were listening to someone speaking in a foreign country, a context different from your own. Read carefully, try to see what is implied between the lines (so to speak), and then think about your own perspective on the issues. In Japan it would be considered extremely impolite to have even an academic conflict in a public conference. People do not engage in open conflicts, even about ideas. Ideas are offered with respect and are considered on their own merit. Respondents ask questions that expand or apply the ideas presented.

In the West, we tend to believe that only new or original thinking brings us forward in our understanding. We tend to look for such insights in reading. But we may then overlook how we can deepen by seeing things from a new angle, in a new light, although at first it seems that what is said is known to us, or at least that we have read it before. Please try to join us then in feeling the spirit of the conference and the challenge of the presenters – the authors here – of treading new ground together for the first time.

In the following remarks, we two editors speak individually and then join together to say something about how the conference was planned and evolved. These comments are meant to situate this book in the context of our experiences at the conference. We make no claims that these papers are comprehensive, in terms of a dialogue between Zen and psychotherapy. Rather, we believe that they are a good example of a first attempt to meet on Japanese soil to discuss some of the important ideas Western psychotherapists may have borrowed from Japanese Zen, as well as the perspective of our Japanese colleagues on the influences coming their way from the West.

**Buddhism**

Buddhism was introduced to the West many centuries ago, as early as the fifth century BCE, even before Alexander the Great came to India, where his followers remained after his death. As Buddhism traveled from India to other countries and cultures, as is well known, it blended with the indigenous religious practices of its new homes. When it came to Europe and America in the 1950s and 1960s, the fertile soil in which its roots were planted had been nourished largely by psychology and psychotherapy, rather than religion. Especially since the beginning of the 1990s, many efforts have been made to advance the differentiation and integration of Buddhism and its therapeutic ancestors in the West, especially in America (e.g. Meckel and Moore 1992;
Epstein 1995; Rubin 1996; Molino 1998; Welwood 2000). Most of these efforts have been led by the therapeutic endeavor, that is, by the ways in which psychotherapists think and act from a therapeutic stance towards the ideas of Buddhism.

In some ways, this collection continues the same conversation. In some important ways, though, it has its own distinctive features, as we have said. In 1958, Professor Shin’ichi Hisamatsu of the famous Kyoto School of Philosophy at Kyoto University made a journey from Japan to the West in his own attempt to understand how contemporary Zen Buddhism might apply to certain Western disciplines, psychoanalysis being one of those. Among his various destinations was Zurich, Switzerland. In May of 1958, Professor Hisamatsu met with psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Carl Jung to speak with him directly about Jung’s theory of an archetypal Self and to explore the similarities and differences between psychoanalysis and Zen, especially in regard to the alleviation of human suffering. In many ways, Hisamatsu was a radical and revisionist thinker – as well as a long-time Zen teacher – and he wanted to find out whether or not psychotherapy, as practiced in the West, had as its goal something akin to the extinction of suffering held out as an ideal for Zen practitioners.

In this volume, we present a new and revised translation (Muramoto, pp. 109–121) of this notorious meeting. Dr Hisamatsu and Dr Jung attempted to have a conversation about the matters at hand, but in fact the differences in their languages (neither spoke the other’s native language) and their cultures have left us with a great deal of confusion and guessing about their access to each other’s ideas. In fact, we know that they did not have a ‘dialogue’ because dialogue requires give and take, an attempt to understand the other’s perspective, and a willingness to ask questions with an open mind. These conditions were not present in their conversation. All the same, their meeting opens up some important issues for those of us now wrestling with the fertile, but confusing, entanglement of Buddhism and psychotherapy in the twenty-first century. Several papers here (e.g. Shore, Heisig, Muramoto, and Payne) address themselves to various themes in the Hisamatsu–Jung meeting.

MEETING IN JAPAN: YOUNG-EISENDRATH AND MURAMOTO

On 24 May 1999, more than fifty people from America, Europe and Japan – psychotherapists, scholars, American and Japanese Zen monks and nuns, Jungian and Freudian psychoanalysts, and students of psychology and Zen – gathered for an opening ceremony of a unique five-day conference on Zen Buddhism and psychotherapy at a famous Rinzai Zen monastery, Myoshin-ji in Kyoto. Eighteen participants had earlier attended a four-day retreat held at Rinsoin, a Soto Zen temple in the mountains of central Japan. Rinsoin is headed by Abbot Hoitsu Suzuki-roshi, son of the late Shunryu Suzuki-roshi who was the founder of San Francisco Zen Center. Bringing together both Rinzai and Soto influences, kept
apart as different Zen sects (much as various Protestant sects are kept apart in the West) in Japan, this conference was treading new ground.

In Kyoto at Reiun-in Temple in Myoshin-ji Temple, our special opening ceremony included a tour of Shunko-in Temple, where Hisamatsu had lived. We heard many stories and memories of his wonderful influence on countless people, including large numbers of Westerners (Americans especially) who were taught by Professor Masao Abe, a major disciple of Hisamatsu.

When the entire conference finally gathered to hear and discuss the presentations by our speakers, we had more than ninety people attending various events from case conferences to formal papers. At each session, there were two presenters, one from Japan and the other from a Western country, followed by impassioned discussion. It was our honor that Professor Abe was among our speakers, offering his paper on the self in Jung and Zen which is not included here because it is easily available elsewhere (e.g. Meckel and Moore 1992; Molino 1998). In all, we had about seventy Japanese participants and twenty-five from the US, Great Britain, and various parts of Europe. English was the language of the conference that included tours of several Rinzai monasteries, zazen at Ryosen-an Temple in Daitoku-ji Temple, a meeting with Professor Kawai at the International Research Center for Japanese Studies, and a visit to Hanazono University which offers basic studies for those who want to be RinzaiZen priests, and was the main sponsor of the conference. Our daily conference meetings were held at a hall run by an Anglican church in Kyoto. Even with our team of about four very competent translators, we had many funny, frustrating, and complicated moments of not-knowing. For example, what is the Japanese word for ‘deconstruction’?

For Japanese participants, this conference was perhaps the first occasion at which they encountered a context in which Buddhism and psychology had been combined by Westerners, a challenge to both psychology and Buddhism in Japan. In this regard, a comment by Zen priest Taiun Matsunami (from Ryosen-an) was illuminating. He said that modern Japanese Zen monks, unlike earlier ones, have generally spent so many years and so much energy getting inka, the certification for becoming a roshi, that they have little contact with the outside world and are often poorly equipped to face their own and their students’ problems. In other words, in Zen training there is today a distinct absence of psychological knowledge.

This volume includes most of the papers given at the Kyoto conference. Unfortunately, a stimulating presentation on nirvanic substance by Kiyoshi Kato, a psychiatrist who is also a disciple of Hisamatsu, was not able to be included here. Three papers (Masis, Payne, and Heynekamp) have been added from people who wished they could have attended, but were unable. One paper (Anbeek and de Groot) was not able to be included in the conference program, although the authors were participants. Nevertheless, the intent of this volume is to reproduce the excitement (without the confusion and frustration) of a conference that was meant to be a continuation of a conversation that began in 1958.
Perhaps more important, this was an occasion of the West coming to the East. Those of us from America and Europe were looking to our Japanese colleagues for guidance. We came as questioners and seekers. We came in uncertainty and concern about whether we (many of us long-time practitioners of Buddhism) had been correct in making the assumptions that we had been making in comparing and contrasting Buddhism and psychotherapy.

And yet, surprisingly or perhaps not, Taitsu Kono-roshi – President of Hanazono University and Director of its International Research Institute for Zen Buddhism (IRIZ) – welcomed us with the statement that Japanese Zen Buddhism had become ‘devitalized’ and added that it was his hope that ‘psychoanalysts coming from America and Europe’ might revitalize it. He hoped that we could open new ways of thinking and speaking that might interest Japanese lay people anew in the practice of Zen. We Western practitioners of depth psychologies were keen to hear from Japanese Zen teachers, especially from those monks and nuns who might be interested in the conversation between psychology and Buddhism.

The Conference on Zen Buddhism and Psychotherapy was initially just a glint in the eyes of the two editors of this volume. When we first became acquainted in 1984 (Dr Muramoto translated from English into Japanese a book on Jung’s psychology for couples written by Dr Young-Eisendrath), we were startled, even amazed, at the similarities in our interests: Jung’s psychology, feminism, Buddhism, hermeneutic philosophy, and the confluence of East–West. Although we did not meet in person until 1996, we became very good friends through reading each other’s work and corresponding. In 1996, Young-Eisendrath traveled to Kyoto for a visit and presentations that were hosted by Muramoto. At that time, we began to think about a special conference for our own friends and colleagues. That vision expanded to a formal program with many events. Our hopes and expectations for the conference also expanded. This volume is the final product of those hopes and expectations.

The assumptions that Japanese writers and practitioners of Zen bring to their essays are often quite different from the assumptions of our Western contributors, whether or not the latter practice some form of Buddhism. Asian philosophy and culture never endured an intellectual upheaval like the Cartesian split of mind and body that brought the so-called Enlightenment to the West. The consequent achievements of scientific method and the less fortunate by-products of secular self-interest together laid the groundwork, in Europe and America, for the personal psychology of psychoanalysis and psychotherapy.

Our Japanese colleagues take for granted a different perspective, whether or not they embrace it, in which mind and body, self and family, individual and
group, life and death are fused or blurred or integrated in a way that is unknown among contemporary educated people in Europe and America. Our Japanese colleagues do not experience these dualities as split apart, rent asunder. Many of the concepts offered to any serious student of Buddhism, such as the teachings of karma and rebirth, stir consternation and discomfort in an educated Westerner, but seem familiar and comfortable (even if one disagrees with them) for an educated Japanese. The Westerner has to stretch her or his perspective on self–world and life–death to appreciate, much less practice, many fundamental Buddhist teachings. Consequently, the Westerner may find it useful, even comforting, to recast them somewhat in terms that are familiar from the personal psychology of psychotherapy which also deals with levels of subjective life and suffering.

On the other hand, the Japanese person has to stretch her or his perspective on self–world and life–death to appreciate, much less practice, many psychotherapeutic teachings about the importance of personal knowledge and insight without self-condemnation or shame. These differences are deep and difficult. They should not be quickly pushed aside in any desire to achieve a premature consensus about Buddhism and psychotherapy, even for the sake of trying to make sense of a particular moment – or a paper published here.

These are the differences that we encountered in our meetings in Japan in which we tried to speak together, through complicated translations of often technical terms, about the nature of human suffering and its alleviation. Whether we were discussing case material (e.g. transference and counter-transference), personality theory (e.g. yogacara or the psychology of complexes or ego), we often were uncertain about our ‘understanding’ each other. And yet, we tried hard to reach that common ground from which a true dialogue can be launched. Still, it is uncertain whether a Japanese psychotherapist ‘works with the transference’ in the way an American psychoanalytic therapist might be trained to do. It is uncertain whether an American Zen teacher means the same thing by ‘karma,’ in casting it as intentional action and personal responsibility, as a Japanese Zen teacher would. It is even uncertain whether any of us at the conference could speak fully to people of a different language and background about the term ‘unconscious’ or ‘unconsciousness.’ We tried. But we may not have meant the same thing by the words we used. At times, these kinds of obvious and hidden differences seemed more than a little daunting.

On the other hand, the good will and strong positive intentions, as well as the times we spent meditating together, embraced us all throughout our time together. On one level, we did not seem to care whether or not we understood our words because we were so happy to meet, and to share our common concerns in an atmosphere of great respect for each other, true intellectual discipline, and genuine open-mindedness. We did not bring with us the fear and prejudice that Jung and Hisamatsu must have had to endure in their
meeting with each other. At least, it seemed this way to this participant-observer. Overall, there was an atmosphere of pervading love for the practices that we shared, and ultimately for ourselves in our willingness to encounter the difficulties of trying to understand what had not previously been explored between Japanese and Westerners, especially concerning the more complex concepts of Buddhism and depth psychology.

There is one final bit of information that needs to be noted. For a variety of cultural reasons, some of which were alluded to in Professor Kawai’s presentation (an informal talk that is not reproduced here), Jung’s psychology takes precedence over Freud’s psychology in the national character of Japan and its people. As Professor Kawai explained it, when Japanese psychologists and psychiatrists began to become acquainted with the depth psychologies that were coming from Europe, they quickly felt more at home with Jung’s work. Jung gave primacy to the mother–child relationship and central focus to the ‘mother complex’ in the adult, especially the adult male. This immediately resonated for Japanese men and women. The Japanese mother tends to be a dominant force in the family system, although she has had little power in decision-making and status in the culture at large. Freud’s concept of an Oedipus complex did not immediately make sense to Japanese men, who generally did not know their fathers well and respected them from a distance. The idea of a young son competing with the father to possess the mother just didn’t make sense. A young son simply felt that he possessed his mother! No problem. The problems that might develop from this psychological situation as the son reached adolescence and adulthood, wanting to develop a family and place in the world of his own, seemed better mapped through the Jungian ideas of Mother and Child complexes, than through the Freudian notions of unresolved Oedipal conflicts. There were many other ways that Jung’s psychology seemed a better fit than Freud’s, not the least of which was Jung’s theory of the archetypal Self or a universal organizing principle of subjectivity. This idea fits well with various aspects of Buddhism, especially as it has been shaped and practiced in Rinzai and Soto sects of Zen.

As we mentioned above, the conference was originally planned as a Jung–Buddhism event, but expanded over the course of its development as various Freudian and object-relational and interpersonal psychoanalysts heard about the event, and asked if they could attend. Both Young-Eisendrath and Muramoto have strong interests in object relations and interpersonal theories and practices of psychoanalysis. Young-Eisendrath’s commitment to using the ‘developmental approach’ (see Young-Eisendrath and Dawson 1998 for a comprehensive review of the three Jungian schools or approaches) means that she practices a form of object-relational or intersubjective analytical psychology. Muramoto has also taken a keen interest in these aspects of analytical psychology as they also connect with his interest in constructivism and hermeneutical philosophy. These have much in common with contemporary Zen Buddhism, especially regarding perception and reality.
INTRODUCTION

Thus, the reader might notice that, in addition to Zen Buddhism ‘taking the lead’ in the papers presented here, Jung’s analytical psychology also takes the lead. And yet, one will also see that our contributors include Freudian and interpersonal psychoanalysts, as well as practitioners of object-relational approaches. And one paper deals with a contemporary cognitive-behavioral method, Dialectical Behavior Therapy, that was designed to incorporate various Buddhist ideas and methods. Overall, a reader interested in almost any aspect of the conversation between Zen Buddhism and psychotherapy will find something here that will bring new insights and raise new questions. Naturally, those readers who may be approaching this volume from religious studies will also find that many questions have been opened, and critiques offered, concerning the ongoing conversation between Zen Buddhism and Western religions, especially Christianity, because that encounter reflects, and is reflected by, many of the interests of psychotherapists.

We believe that we have achieved the basic groundwork for developing a true dialogue in future conferences. Although this volume and the Kyoto conference represent perhaps only the ‘toe in the water’ of true dialogue, they have been marked by a true open-mindedness. Our desire to understand each other and our deep love for our practices have joined us in a common effort. We have attempted to examine aspects of psychology and psychotherapy that concern the unconscious and its manifestations in light of the practices of Zen Buddhism. We have attempted to reveal and refine what we know about the transformation of human suffering through the formal relationship of therapist and client, as well as the formal relationship of Zen teacher and student. What we offer here is offered in this spirit and with the desire to carry the dialogue forward.

MURAMOTO

There is a saying that Buddhism is transmitted eastward. Apart from some historical evidence that it has also travelled westward, the history of Buddhism largely testifies to the saying. This is not only to say that the religion that originated in India was finally transmitted, via China and Korea, to Japan – the farthest eastern country in Asia, but that Buddhism crossed over the Pacific Ocean and reached further and further into America. As a world religion, Buddhism has no national boundaries, no formal center (like Rome, Jerusalem or Mecca), and pursues its inherent and universal logic of enlightenment.

On the other hand, no religion is more able than Buddhism to adjust to, and assimilate, the prevailing ideologies of its adopted cultures. The Buddhism of each country where it is practiced is characteristic of that society and culture: Indian Buddhism was speculative and logical through its interactions with Hindu philosophy; Chinese Buddhism was practical under the influence of Taoism and Confucianism; and Japanese Buddhism is
aesthetic and merged with nature worship under the influence of Shintoism. American (and, to some extent, European) Buddhism seems to have developed against the background of psychology, as William James predicted a century ago. So it is misleading to have a monolithic conception of Buddhism. Buddhism in any society and culture expresses a very local character without necessarily having an interest in, or knowledge of, Buddhism in another place.

America is a country where Buddhism travelled westward across the Atlantic Ocean, as well as eastward across the Pacific. These two may be merging with one another, although there is still a gulf between the form of Buddhism practiced by immigrants from Asian countries (who largely came to the West Coast of America) and American converts (see Seager 1999: 233). And now, partly as a result of so many Americans coming to Japan to study and practice Buddhism, the Japanese may be about to experience American Buddhism imbued with psychology, psychoanalysis, feminism, and democracy. The Japanese also need to know how their ancestors, mostly practitioners of Shin Buddhism, have struggled to adapt their religion to the values and lifestyle of America since the 1870s.

I was born, raised, and have mostly been living and working in Japan. Buddhism here has for a long time been spiritually devitalized. People often take it for granted that it is only concerned with tourism and funeral ceremonies, both of which allow the Buddhist temples to secure a stable income. So the Japanese often consider Buddhism to be a business that has nothing to do with spirituality although this assessment also needs critical examination.

And as Gross (1993: 12) points out, unlike other Asian Buddhist countries, Japan has never adopted the ordination of nuns, and the male priests usually get married, are permitted to drink alcohol, and may have a more secularized lifestyle than Buddhist nuns would be permitted to have. Feminist theology in the West is unlikely to find in Japanese Buddhism a counterpart that could be called feminist or to be able to pursue a feminist approach to Buddhist studies, with a few exceptions.

It is interesting to see how many everyday Japanese words derive from Buddhism. For example, the word いしき, a term that is currently translated as ‘consciousness’ in psychology, is a transliteration of a Chinese word that refers to 眠覚心, a Buddhist term for a thought-consciousness, the sixth of eight consciousnesses. Without a cultural heritage of an accumulated fourteen centuries of Buddhist influences, Japan would have found it very difficult to interpret terms from psychology and philosophy that were imported into Japan from Western civilization in the late nineteenth century.

Many Japanese words of Buddhist origin are nowadays used in a completely secular, and sometimes opposite, meaning. For example, 仏教, a Japanese translation of ‘Buddha,’ also refers to ‘the dead’ or ‘a corpse.’ 不思議, a transliteration of the Chinese word 虚幻, referring to the state in which the mind has stopped functioning so as not to be attached to
anything, often translated as ‘no-mind’ in English, is sometimes now used to describe one’s behavior of begging or asking for money or something precious. In other words, it is the manifestation of greed. Gaman, usually translated as ‘patience’ – a favorite virtue of Japan – originally carried the Buddhist meaning of arrogance or boasting. The dramatic mask from Noh Theatre called hamnya, after a transliteration of prajna or wisdom in Buddhism, expresses the rage and fury of an extremely hurt woman. So while Buddhism has long been self-evident for us Japanese, something that is in the air, we are very likely to have misunderstood and misinterpreted large parts of it.

In this and other ways, Buddhism in Japan may be similar to Christianity in the West. Christianity has long failed to meet the spiritual needs of many of the people it serves by being reduced to a social institution. Despite the emergence of several Japanese religious geniuses such as Kukai (774–835 CE), Shinran (1173–1262) and Dogen (1200–53), Japanese Buddhism has also failed to remain vitally connected to a spiritual path. Japanese people would rarely look to Buddhism when they feel spiritually frustrated. But that does not mean that they would look to psychology or psychotherapy to find an answer either.

There have been some Japanese psychologists such as Enryo Inoue (1858–1919 mentioned by Onda in this volume), and some philosophers such as the philosophers of the Kyoto School, especially Kitaro Nishida, who expected Buddhism to rescue the Japanese people from their predicaments. Buddhism has largely failed to meet such expectations, and we must inquire into this failure. There is a wide gap between the traditional Buddhism of social institutions and customs in Japan and the practice and study of Buddhism as initiated under the influence of Western scholarship. Such scholarship has proceeded independent of Japanese customs and is rarely accessible to the ordinary people of Japan. In the 1930s, Buddhism was mobilized into a national ideology in a nationwide campaign to justify the war of Japan with the West, as well as the invasion into other Asian countries. The Buddhist doctrine of no-self then degenerated into selflessness and self-annihilation in service of the emperor as a deity who would insure the victory of Japan. At that time, Kiyoshi Miki (1897–1945) – one of Nishida’s students – warned against the political abuse of Buddhism, and pointed out the necessity to develop disciplines such as Buddhist philosophy, Buddhist psychology, and Buddhist economics so that Buddhism might legitimately address diverse social needs.

Defeat in World War II forced Japan to rid itself of nationalist and militaristic elements, and to be exposed, especially in scholarship and educational influences, to the massive and overwhelming influence of American culture. As a result, the development of Buddhist studies in Japan, as advocated by Miki, has yet to be accomplished. Unlike the influence of Christianity in Germany, Buddhism in Japan has yet to examine itself critically, especially in regard to its involvement in nationalism and militarism.

Philosophy, especially religious philosophy of the Kyoto School, represented particularly by Keiji Nishitani – a student of Nishida – has been
the main entry of post-war Japanese Buddhism, especially Zen, in a dialogue with the West. The main partners in this dialogue have been theologians and philosophers, not psychologists and psychotherapists. But, as King (quoted in Molino 1998: xii) points out, Nishitani, in *Religion and Nothingness*, fails to appreciate how the psychological tradition of Westerners would contribute to a strong interest of Western people in Buddhism. Contemporary Western depth psychology has already been incorporated into the social systems of the West, and now may offer some help in spiritual crises such as boredom, meaningfulness, and obsessions with relationships when they emerge in the lives of ordinary people. In general, Japanese religious philosophers have paid little attention to psychology, humanities, and social sciences.

To make matters worse, Japanese psychologists are rarely interested in philosophy or religion because the curriculum in Japan has so far not required university students to study philosophy or religion. There is no conception of ‘Buddhist psychology’ in a contemporary Japanese university.

The conference that was the basis of this book was perhaps the first occasion for many Japanese Zen practitioners and mental health professionals to be exposed to the flourishing tree that has developed in the West from the seeds sown about forty years ago by two Japanese philosophers and practitioners of Zen. D. T. Suzuki and Shin’ichi Hisamatsu began a dialogue with various psychoanalysts – most especially Erich Fromm and C. G. Jung – that has continued and born fruit. Now it is no exaggeration to say that Zen Buddhism, affected by and affecting psychotherapy, is also transmitted westward across the Pacific Ocean, revealing more and more of its global character, a key to spirituality in the twenty-first century.

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