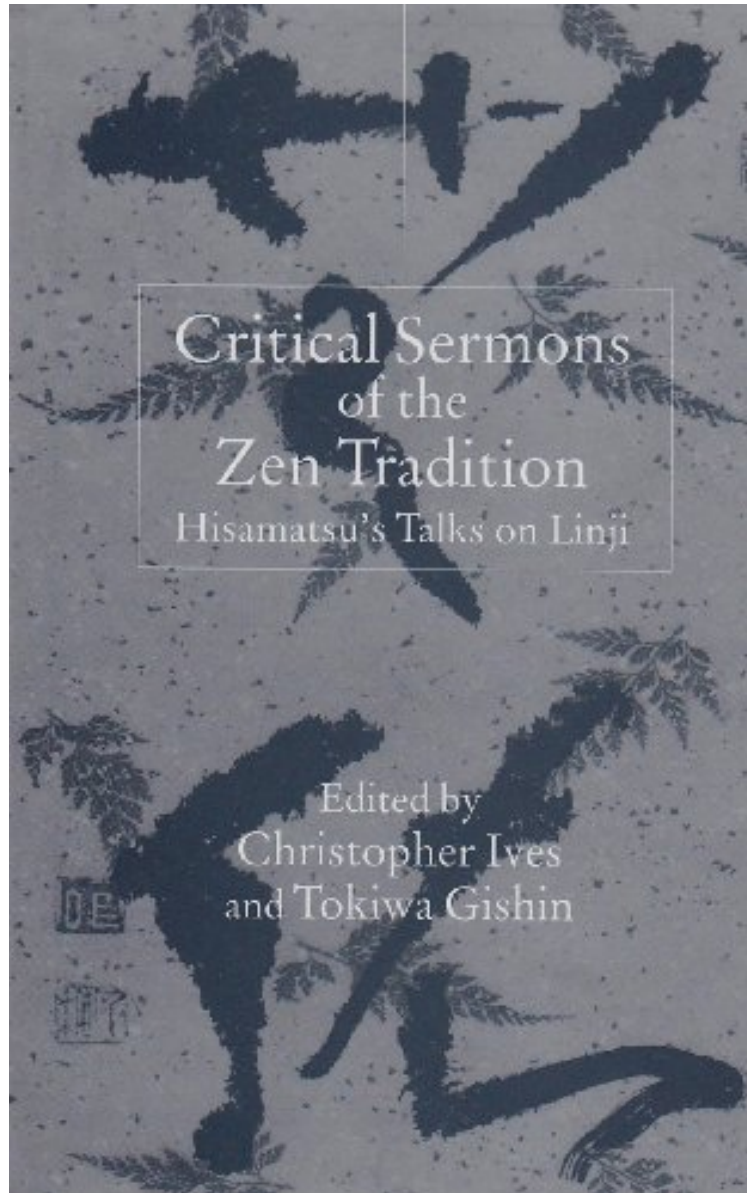


(Mobile book) Critical Sermons of the Zen Tradition: Hisamatsu's Talks on Linji

Critical Sermons of the Zen Tradition: Hisamatsu's Talks on Linji

Shin'ichi Hisamatsu

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Shin'ichi Hisamatsu : Critical Sermons of the Zen Tradition: Hisamatsu's Talks on Linji before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Critical Sermons of the Zen Tradition: Hisamatsu's Talks on Linji:

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Taking away the self to find the self By John C. Marshall Jr. I first encountered Hisamatsu's name while reading *The Other Side of the Mountain: The End of the Journey* (Journal of

Thomas Merton), volume seven in Thomas Merton's journal collection. It is a brief but positive reference in his May 30, 1968 entry written shortly before his trip to Asia. With a growing interest in the Kyoto school, and an approving appraisal by one of the great spiritual writers of the twentieth century, I began looking for material to read by Hisamatsu. This book of sermons, or to use Hisamatsu's term "teiko," meaning "bringing out guiding principles," was available through University of Hawaii Press, and I quickly purchased it. Happy I did. This collection is taken from retreats given in the early 1960's. There is a detailed chronology in the Forward written by Kitahara Tyutaro. I am inclined to believe Merton was reading them, or perhaps similar material written by Hisamatsu at that time. Merton's references to "standing on our own two feet" made late in his life and spiritual quest may have found some of their inspiration from Hisamatsu and the Zen tradition. Merton's probing of the "true self" and interest in spontaneity echo the teiko printed here. These teiko are largely concerned with the writings of Linji. Hisamatsu explains his Zen principles based on Linji's work and life story. You will find comments on the true self, or Original Face, the formless self, One True Person without Rank, the One Great Matter, the experience of "body and mind dropping off," the Great Doubt, and genuine Awakening. I found the writing very readable and understandable. There are 104 endnotes to assist the reader with technical terms and additional information. Hisamatsu is always concerned with avoiding meditation that is superficial and prone to a delusion of Awakening that is not the Great Awakening. There is a strong element of double negation in his writing (the mystery within mystery, to borrow language from a friendly Taoist quarter) that makes his teiko energetic and challenging, inspiring the reader to dig deeper into his nature and not find refuge in the psychological. Hisamatsu's true self is rigorously formless. Merton's brief entry makes mention of it. There is a difference between a psychological self and Ultimate Self. The meditator is not to settle for a mindful anesthesia of sentient contentment but find in Zen practice a new way of living without attachments. A self lost to complacency and disassociation does not reflect genuine Zen. I found this book very useful and inspiring. Not only did it give me a better idea of what Merton was reading before his trip to Asia, but it provided me with valuable insights into many Zen ideas and terms. If you want a better sense of the world of Zen and the writing of Linji, this book is recommended. Hisamatsu does a fine job of "bringing out the guiding principles."

This title provides English translations of 22 of Hisamatsu Shin'ichi's Zen teisho (Dharma talks) from the classical Zen text Record of Linji. It should appeal to both scholars and a more general audience of those interested in Buddhism and Japanese culture.

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