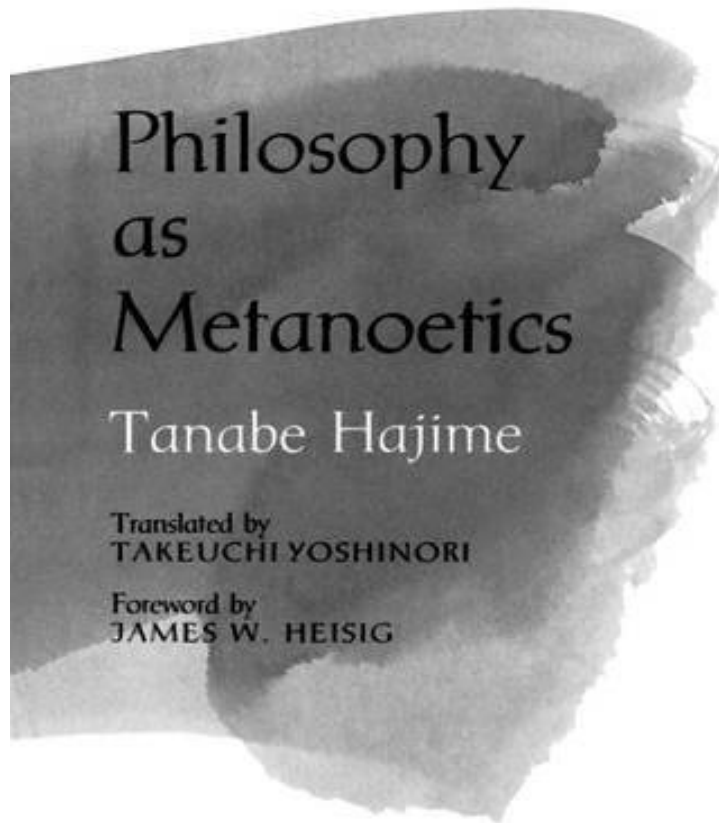


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Philosophy as Metanoetics (Nanzan Studies in Religion and Culture)

Hajime Tanabe

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Hajime Tanabe : Philosophy as Metanoetics (Nanzan Studies in Religion and Culture) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Philosophy as Metanoetics (Nanzan Studies in Religion and Culture):

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Shin Buddhist Philosophy By Upasaka Heng He This is a whole philosophical system built on the foundation of Shinran's spirituality: that is, the insight into the fundamental finitude and incompleteness of human nature. 19 of 26 people found the following review helpful. Let "the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah show us the way" By Bruce P. Barten Tanabe Hajime wrote his Preface for PHILOSOPHY AS

METANOETICS in October 1945, a year after delivering his final series of lectures on which this book is based at Kyoto Imperial University. Though he fell ill in November 1944, he left his sickbed just long enough to deliver lectures until "It was with a great sigh of relief that I completed the final lecture in December, after which I spent the rest of the winter in bed." (p. lix). The book uses some Greek words to describe the kind of change involved in religious experiences that parallel the philosophy which gave Tanabe Hajime the strength to complete his final year before retirement in the midst of "the hunger and poverty of the vast majority of the people in sharp contrast with the luxury enjoyed by a very few owing to the maldistribution of food and goods," (p. lxi), notably, "Since metanoesis implies remorse and sorrow, it is necessarily accompanied by feelings of shame and guilt." (p. lx). The Japanese Ministry of Education sent Tanabe to study in Europe in 1922, where he spent a year in Berlin before going to Freiburg to study with Husserl. Heidegger tutored him privately in German philosophy. Numerous thinkers familiar from this tradition are mentioned in this book, including Walter Kaufmann, who did not get a Ph.D. until 1947, a year after the Japanese version of the book was published. Kaufmann's English translations of THE WILL TO POWER, ECCE HOMO, and THUS SPOKE ZARATHUSTRA by Nietzsche were used for the University of California Press translation of this book into English in 1986: "that one wants nothing to be different, not forward, not backward, not in all eternity" (p. 298). The first paragraph of Tanabe's Preface states an extreme condition about which philosophers have frequently had a desire to complain. "All public opinion, except for propaganda in favor of the government's policy, was suppressed. Freedom of thought was severely restricted, and the only ideas given official recognition were those of the extreme rightists." (p. il). In a democratic society, a similar complaint is heard whenever rightists feel they have some mandate from the last election or public reaction to events such as 9/11. While I did not play a large part in the movement opposing the Vietnam war as an undesirable aspect of American foreign policy, I was subject to what Tanabe called "a radical self-awareness" (p. l) of how weak the American position in Vietnam as a global superpower desiring peace with honor fit the dialectical basis for a religious situation, where "anything I achieve apart from true zange can only be immediately contradicted by reality itself. ... This is in fact the basic principle that shapes history. In terms of its concrete content, metanoetics is a radical historicism in that the continuous repetition of zange provides basic principles for the circular development of history." (p. lii). Bitter experience is the basis for the insight, "Quite by accident I was led along the same path that Shinran followed in Buddhist doctrine, although in my case it occurred in the philosophical realm." (p. lii). Chapters 6 and 7 are based on the three stages of religious transformation of the Pure Land Shin sect established by Shinran (1173-1262). Tanabe Hajime was originally a student in mathematics who discovered that he did not have the ability to solve problems in mathematics at a university level. He turned to philosophy, only to end his career with "a philosophical method of "destruction" more radical than even the methodical skepticism of Descartes. It cannot be treated on the same level as philosophy up to the present inasmuch as it is a philosophy achieved through a death-and-resurrection process of transformation." (p. lv). "In the radical self-consciousness of being driven to the extreme, reason can only be torn to shreds in absolute disruption, after which such self-affirming reason is no longer of any use to us. Absolute criticism means that reason, faced with the absolute crisis of its dilemma, surrenders itself of its own accord." (p. lvi). Basing everything on "a relationship of reciprocal mediatory transformation between the absolute and the self" (p. lvii), the only possibility of irony is that a rightist campaign identifying flip-flops always works to put together a democratic majority of voters who can't figure out the message. Nevertheless, anyone interested in advanced oriental thought in a world dominated by superpower politics should find plenty of food for thought in this book.

A milestone in Japan's post-war philosophical thought and a dramatic turning point in Tanabe's own philosophy, Philosophy as Metanoetics calls for nothing less than a complete and radical rethinking of the philosophical task itself. It is a powerful, original work, showing vast erudition in all areas of both Eastern and Western thought.

"One of the most original, creative, and important philosophical texts to have emerged from what has become known as the 'Kyoto School' of Japanese Buddhism. . . . A monumental work in the philosophy of religion. Along with the writings of Nishida Kitaro and Nishitani Keiji, Tanabe's thought is another major achievement to arise from the tradition of modern Japanese philosophy."--Steve Odin, "Japanese Journal of Religious Studies Language Notes Text: English, Japanese (translation) From the Inside Flap" Tanabe's agenda was not religious but philosophical in that he tried to integrate Eastern and Western insights in order to acquire a cross-cultural philosophical vision for the post-war world community. . . . This book shows his superior philosophical originality. . . . It is high time that Tanabe's thought should be introduced to the West." Joseph Kitagawa, University of Chicago