

## *In Remembrance of Ueda Shizuteru*

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Ueda Shizuteru 上田閑照, one of the most consequential and celebrated Japanese philosophers of the last hundred years, passed away on June 28, 2019, at the age of 93. A professor of religious studies at Kyoto University, he was not only a leading scholar of Meister Eckhart and Nishida Kitarō, he was a highly original philosopher in his own right and widely recognized as the central figure in the third generation of the Kyoto School. Moreover, he was not only one of the foremost philosophical interpreters of Rinzai Zen Buddhism, he was himself an *inka* certified lay master.

The first and last books Ueda published were in German. In 1965, based on his doctoral dissertation submitted to Marburg University, he published a book on Eckhart's mysticism with an appendix comparing it to Zen: *Die Gottesgeburt in der Seele und der Durchbruch zur Gottheit: Die mystische Anthropologie Meister Eckharts und ihre Konfrontation mit der Mystik des Zen-Buddhismus* (reissued in 2018 by Verlag Karl Alber). In 2011, Ueda published a collection of his articles written in German over the years under the title *Wer und was bin ich? Zur Phänomenologie des Selbst im Zen-Buddhismus* (Verlag Karl Alber).

In the years between 1965 and 2011, Ueda published some twenty books in Japanese. Most often by way of groundbreaking interpretations of Eckhart, Nishida, and especially Zen, he developed a distinct philosophy of what he called “the self that is not a self” living in a “twofold world.” The self is both an individual living in a linguistically determined meaningful world, and a “no-self” (*muga*) opened to the “infinite expanse” (*kokū*) in which all such worlds are situated. In 2001–3, Iwanami Shoten, a premier press in Japan, published the eleven-volume *Ueda Shizuteru shū* [Collected Works of Ueda Shizuteru], and, in 2007–8, a five-volume paperback selection of Ueda's writings entitled *Tetsugaku korekushon* [Philosophical Collection].

In the 1980s and 1990s, a number of Ueda Sensei's articles were published in excellent English translation in the pages of *The Eastern Buddhist*. To represent some of his main philosophical contributions, Ueda contributed a chapter to *Japanese Philosophy: A Sourcebook* (University of Hawaii Press, 2011), translated as “Language in Twofold World.” I am presently editing an anthology of English translations of some of his key works, based on several consultations with him about its content and organization. Soon to appear is the first collection of articles in English on Ueda Sensei's philosophy: *Companion to the Philosophy of Ueda Shizuteru* (Springer Publishing).

It is a vast understatement to say that Ueda Sensei lived a long and fruitful life. I am deeply grateful for the great fortune of having been able to learn directly from him over the last quarter of it. And I believe that all of us—not just those who are interested in the specific tradition of Zen Buddhism or in intertraditional philosophy of religion, but anyone who is interested in the deepest and most existentially urgent questions of life and death—should not only mourn the loss of this intellectual and spiritual giant, but also celebrate the vital legacy and wonderful body of work that he has left behind.

**Bret W. Davis** is Professor and T. J. Higgins, S.J. Chair in Philosophy at Loyola University Maryland. Along with earning a PhD in philosophy from Vanderbilt University, he has studied and taught for more than a year in Germany and for more than 13 years in Japan. He has published more than seventy-five articles, including “Beyond Philosophical Euromonopolism—Other Ways of, Not Otherwise than—Philosophy” (*Philosophy East and West*, 2019), and seven books, most recently *The Oxford Handbook of Japanese Philosophy* (Oxford University Press, 2020).