

*Genshi Bukkyō no Jissen Tetsugaku*—Doctoral dissertation of Tetsuro Watsuji (an example of the collection of the Kansai-kan)

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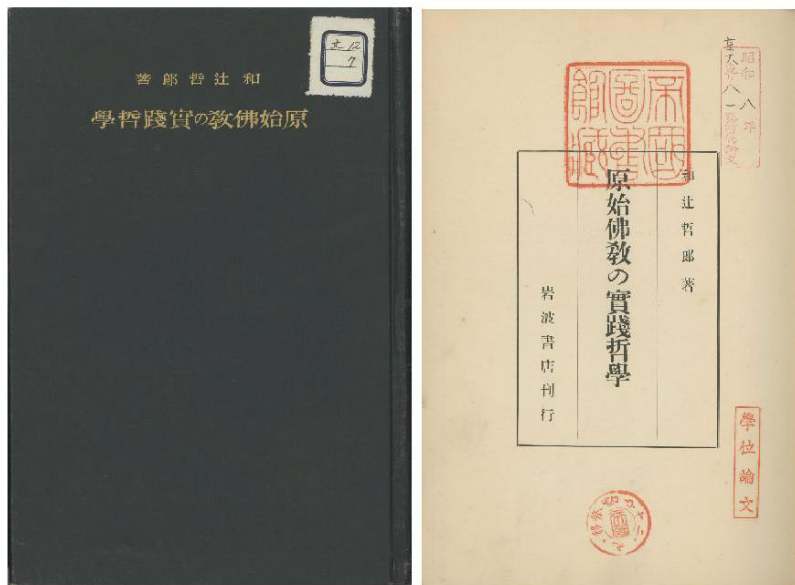
This article is a translation of the article in Japanese of the same title  
in NDL Monthly Bulletin No. 619 (October 2012).



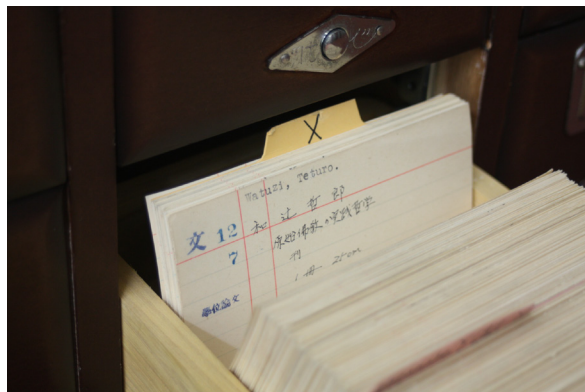
<<Photo 1: Portrait of Tetsuro Watsuji around 1921 (from volume 17 of *Watsuji Tetsurō Zenshū*)>>

Tetsuro Watsuji (1889-1960) (Photo 1) is one of the most famous Japanese philosophers and ethicists, known as the author of *Koji Junrei* (*lit. A Pilgrimage to Ancient Temples*) and *Fūdo* (*lit. Climate and Culture*). The *Genshi Bukkyō no Jissen Tetsugaku* (*lit. The Practical Philosophy of Early Buddhism*) (Photo 2), which was published in 1927, discusses how to approach Buddhist materials, the stance of early Buddhism and its fundamental doctrines such as *prattya-samutpda* (*lit. dependent co-origination*) and *four noble truths and eightfold path*, and places particular emphasis on the attitude of *anatman* (*lit. suppressing one's self*): attachment to the *atman* (*lit. one's self*) inevitably creates conflict with others, and therefore *atman* is the root of the agonies of life. According to his thesis, the

innovation of early Buddhism lies in the *anatman*, detachment from one's self. This point of view is considered as the origin of his own system of ethics to be developed later, which criticized Western individualism and focused on the Japanese *aidagara* (*lit.* betweenness), and as “the essential moment<sup>1</sup>” in his personality building. He received his Doctorate degree in Letters from Kyoto Imperial University, based on this work on July 12, 1932. The Kansai-kan of the National Diet Library (NDL) owns this material as a piece of its Japanese Doctoral Dissertations Collection (Photo 3).



<<Photo 2: Cover and title page of the “Genshi Bukkyō no Jissen Tetsugaku”>>



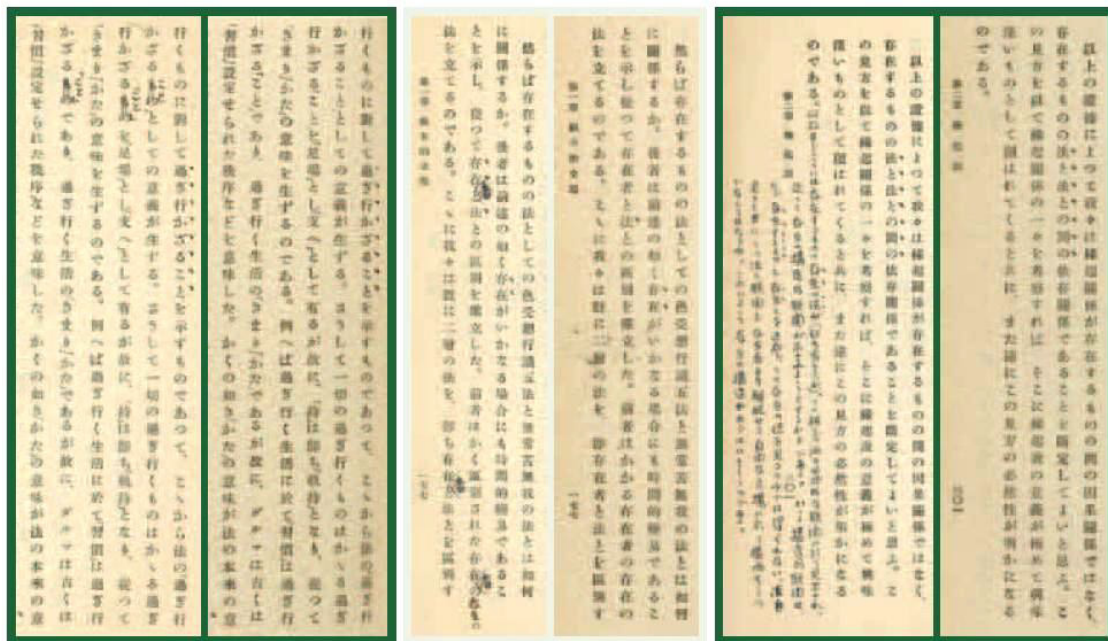
<<Photo 3: Card catalog of doctoral dissertations>>

Remarkably, this material has a lot of handwritten notes supposedly written by Watsuji himself (Photo 4). It is well-known that he often scribbled comments on the margin of books<sup>2</sup>, and he also elaborated

<sup>1</sup> Hajime Nakamura, “Kaisetsu,” (*lit.* commentary) from the volume 5 of *Watsuji Tetsurō Zenshū*, Iwanami Shoten, 1962, p.581 (NDL call number: 121.9-W99w)

<sup>2</sup> Eiji Makino, *Watsuji Tetsurō no kakikomi o miyo : Watsuji riinrigaku no konnichiteki igi*, Hoseidaigaku

and revised his own works again and again. Many of these rewrites are corrections of words, but even a minor change of words has important implications for understanding a philosopher's thought. And among these insertions, there are some sentences which are not reflected in the revised reprint edition of 1932, when he received a degree<sup>3</sup>.



<<Photo 4: Watsuji's handwritten notes and the same page of the revised reprint edition  
*left:* page 173 of his dissertation and the same page of the reprint edition  
*center:* page 177 of both      *right:* page 301 of both>>

The Kansai-kan holds about 550,000 doctoral dissertations gifted after the Great Kanto Earthquake (1923).

Before the Second World War, universities were required to confer a doctoral degree with an accreditation from the Minister of Education and dissertations were to be attached to the application documents submitted from the universities to the Minister. The received doctoral dissertations were stored in the Ministry of Education but they were destroyed in the fire of the Great Kanto Earthquake in 1923. As a disaster preparedness measure, the Imperial Library, one of the predecessors of the NDL, which was spared from severe destruction in the earthquake, came to an agreement with the Minister of Education on jurisdictional transfer to store doctoral dissertations. After that, doctoral dissertations were housed in the Imperial Library<sup>4</sup>. After the Second World War and the foundation of

Shuppankyoku, 2010.9 (NDL call number: HA144-J6)

<sup>3</sup> See Photo 4. A handwritten note of the rightmost page 301 is not reflected to the reprint edition.

<sup>4</sup> Narau Okada "Kyū Uenotoshokan no Shūshūhōshin to sono Zōsho," *Toshokan kenkyū sirizu vol. 5*,

the NDL, the acquisition through the Ministry of Education still continued; however the NDL negotiated with the Ministry of Education and started to receive dissertations directly from the universities in April 1975. The Kansai-kan has been in charge of the acquisition, cataloging and preservation of the Japanese Doctoral Dissertations Collection since 2002<sup>5</sup>.

Generally speaking, doctoral dissertations are frequently used in the academic fields which compete in new findings, but they could also be regarded as the historical records of 90 years of accomplishments of academic activities in Japan. I hope the Japanese Doctoral Dissertations Collection of the Kansai-kan will be more widely used!

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1961.12, p.204 (NDL call number: Z21-127)

<sup>5</sup> "Information about Japanese doctoral dissertations," NDL Monthly Bulletin No.574, 2009.1, pp.34-35 URL: <http://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/1001065> (Japanese only)