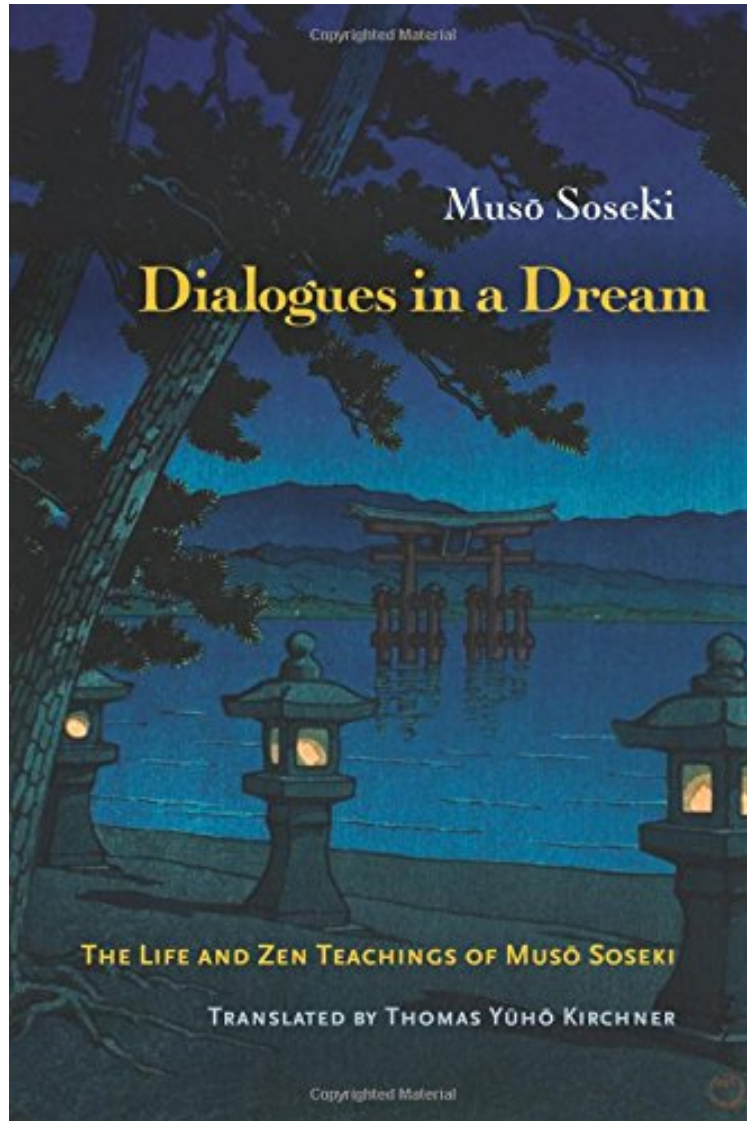


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Dialogues in a Dream: The Life and Zen Teachings of Muso Soseki

Muso Soseki

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Teaching. By Atisha Dipankara For anyone who loves Zen, but want a clear, concise, set of teachings, this book is it. One of the most useful, and direct group of Teachings available. Not abstract, nor Koan filled set of statements. The Teaching comes alive. There really isn't anything that is abstruse or mystical about these teachings. Very concrete instructions that you would get from any truly enlightened Master, first hand IMHO. A very Cool and pragmatic array of Zen points.

Drawing on his encyclopedic knowledge, one of the most famous masters in the history of Zen leads us on a grand tour of Buddhist theology in all its timeless relevance. Muso Soseki, the renowned fourteenth century Zen master, is today most known for developing the art of traditional Japanese Zen gardening. Even more impressive is his creation of the institutional structure for all Japanese Buddhist temples, which still in use today. *Dialogues in a Dream* is one of the many projects Soseki took on in this final period of his life. Written in the guise of a conversation between Soseki and the shogun, the work covers the breadth of Buddhist philosophy and practice, and includes insightful discussions of prayer, mediation, and the place of study in religious life. His penetrating analysis deepens our appreciation of even the simplest Buddhist practices. Acclaimed scholar Thomas Yuho Kirchner painstakingly translates this classic text into English.

An astonishing book in its depth and breadth. This is a treasure of Buddhism. (Joan Halifax, author of *Being with Dying*) Muso Soseki was a towering figure in the early history of Japanese Zen. The luminous gardens he designed remain on view in Kyoto, and now we have this excellent record of Muso's major writing. Tom Kirchner presents this text skillfully, with useful annotation and introduction, matching his exemplary volumes *Tangling Vines* and *Record of Linji*. Muso's teachings are valuable as an historical document, framed as dialogues with the shogun, and providing deep insights into traditional Buddhist and Zen lore. His teachings also offer gems of helpful spiritual support still relevant today. Muso warns of many available sidetracks and obstacles to clear awareness, how even wisdom can lead to confusion. He clarifies the need to study the intent rather than the words, but how also studying words is necessary for beneficial guidance. These words from Muso Soseki still have power to shepherd contemporary students of the Way. (Taigen Dan Leighton, author of *Zen Questions*)

About the Author Muso Soseki (1275-1351) was a Rinzai Zen Buddhist monk and teacher, and a calligraphist, poet and garden designer. The most famous monk of his time, he is also known as Muso Kokushi ("national Zen teacher"), a honorific conferred to him by Emperor Go-Daigo. Thomas Yuho Kirchner was born in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1949. He went to Japan in 1969 to attend Waseda University in Tokyo for a year, after which he remained in Japan to study Buddhism. He spent three years training under Yamada Mumon as a lay monk at Shofuku-ji before receiving ordination in 1974. Following ordination he practiced under Minato Sodo Roshi at Kencho-ji in Kamakura and Kennin-ji in Kyoto. Following graduate studies in Buddhism at Otani University he worked at the Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture in Nagoya and subsequently at the Hanazono University International Research Institute for Zen Buddhism. He presently lives at Tenryu-ji in Arashiyama, Kyoto. Among his publications are the *Record of Linji*, *Dialogues in a Dream*, and *Entangling Vines*.