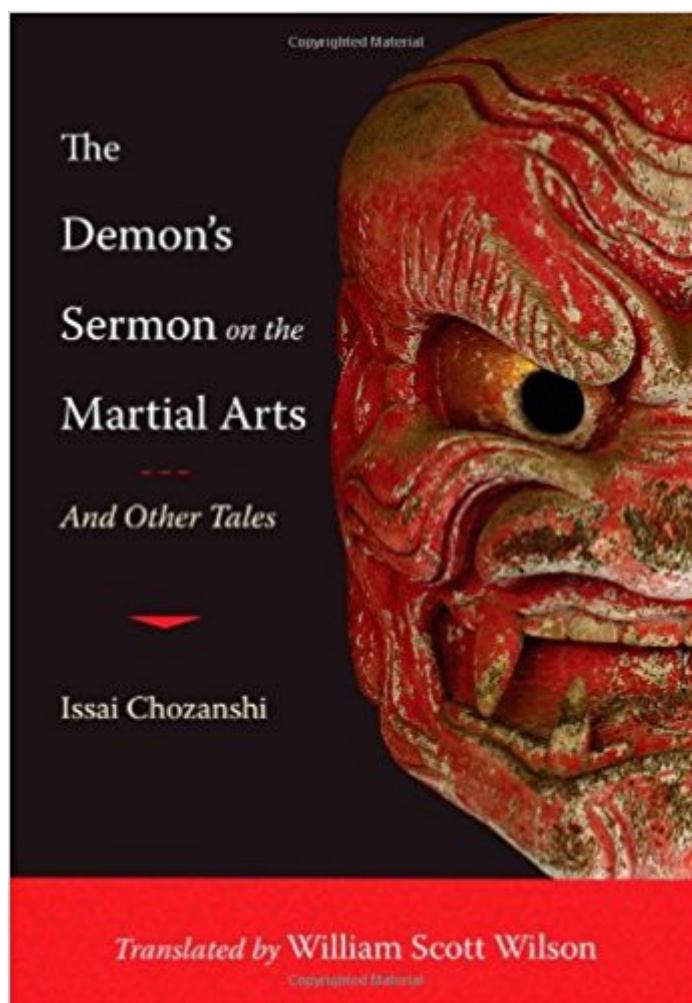


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# The Demon's Sermon On The Martial Arts: And Other Tales



## Synopsis

This collection of parables written by an eighteenth-century samurai is a classic of martial arts literature. The tales are concerned with themes such as perception of conflict, self-transformation, the cultivation of chi (life energy), and understanding yin and yang. Some of the parables seem light and fanciful, but they offer the reader valuable lessons on the fundamental principles of the martial arts; "The Mysterious Technique of the Cat" is iconic. The "demon" in the title story refers to the mythical tengu, who guard the secrets of swordsmanship. A swordsman travels to Mt. Kurama, famous for being inhabited by tengu, and in a series of conversations he learns about mushin (no-mind), strategy, the transformation of chi, and how the path of the sword leads to the understanding of life itself. The author, Issai Chozanshi, had a deep understanding of Taoism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Shinto, as well as insight into the central role of chi in the universe—points that are succinctly explained in William Scott Wilson's fine introduction and extensive endnotes. This is essential reading for anyone who wants to truly understand the philosophical underpinnings of martial arts, and how these principles relate to our existence.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In keeping with his author's aims, William Scott Wilson, in his elegant and erudite translation, embeds the sermon between a kind of overture and a postlude comprising some of the charming animal allegories to be found in another Chozanshi book, the "Inaka Soshi" (here winningly rendered as "The Hayseed Taoist"). The centipede questions the snake, the sea gull and the mayfly discuss the "Tao," and the toad speaks of the way of the gods. Their message is very

like that of the demon "get down to essentials, forget yourself, rely on nothing, search for the heart of the truth." Japan Times

William Scott Wilson is the foremost translator into English of traditional Japanese texts on samurai culture. His best-selling translations include Hagakure and The Book of Five Rings.

I have been searching for a graphic novel that touched on more philosophical and in depth subjects for years and I have finally found it with The Demon's Sermon on the Martial Arts. Everything about this book is above and beyond anything I have found in terms of graphic novels. The artwork is beautiful, even though it is black and white which I generally do not like, the story has a wonderful flow which actually has a deeper meaning talked about in the afterword, and the subjects contain deeper philosophical questions and teachings that almost require them to be read again and again. I think what puts it over the top however is the whimsical and unexpected characters that bring the story to life. Have you ever encountered an enlightened cicada that taught you the secret of happiness? Exactly. This will definitely be part of my permanent collection and I plan on buying everything that has been released from William Scott Wilson, Sean Michael Wilson, and Michiru Morikawa. I'm keeping my fingers crossed that they are working on more gems like this!

Well written, profound, meaningful, gripping. It resonates. This is one of those books that you hold on to for life, and I don't have many of those. What is most interesting is that as of the writing of this review, not one reviewer mentioned the true message of this work. Some of the reviews only say that it is good. Others go to great length to explain why it's good, but none of those actually get it. So either no one else understood the text, or I didn't understand the text. Either way, I'm going to give it another read. I suggest you do the same.

Another awesome book from Sean Michael Wilson. I have all of his Manga adaptations of classic Japanese texts including: Hagakure: The Code of the Samurai (The Manga Edition), The Book of Five Rings: A Graphic Novel, and The Demon's Sermon on the Martial Arts: A Graphic Novel... and they are all excellent books. I had heard of the story of the 47 Ronin, but this the first time I've seen it all the way through... and I really enjoyed it. From the book: "If you would let go of your private worry and deal with the essence of the matter, the criticism of other samurai would not bother you." Replace the word 'samurai' with whoever you feel you need to impress or be accepted by... and you have universal wisdom for life. The only slight challenge I had with the story was I

found myself a little mixed up in the first chapter. But after that, the story is excellent, and I'm very happy with the art as well. Well worth the read!

This graphic novel is based on the philosophical teachings of Issai Chozanshi, an 18-century samurai, on the meaning of life. This book does a beautiful job with its images to narrate the stories.

I have recently read and reviewed numerous graphic novels, many of them based upon legendary martial art philosophies such as the famous Miyamoto Musashi's "The Book of Five Rings" and Sun Tzu's "The Art of War." This one ("The Demon's Sermon on the Martial Arts: A Graphic Novel") is based upon the classic stories and legends written by Issai Chozanshi, who was a Samurai in the eighteenth-century. He was also a student and teacher of Zen Buddhism, Taoism, Shinto and Confucianism. This text is based on the translation by William Scott Wilson, adapted by Sean Michael Wilson and beautifully illustrated by Michiru Morikawa. He stressed many of the well-known philosophical concepts many serious life-time martial artists are familiar with, if they have trained under true martial art masters. As someone who has been fortunate to have studied numerous martial arts (Judo, Jujitsu, Karate-Do, Kobudo, Kenjutsu, Kendo and other arts) under some fantastic teachers, I really enjoyed reading this excellent volume. This text is organized into 5 parts. Part 1 explains the parable about "Transformation of the Sparrow and the Butterfly and Meeting the Gods of Poverty in a Dream. Part 2 covers the story about "The greatest Joys of the Cicada and its cast-off shell and "The Owl's understanding." Part 3 deals with the sermon of "The centipede Questions the Snake." Part 4 is my favorite sermon because it deals with "The Toad's Way of the Gods" and "The Mysterious Technique of the Cat." The final part is the shortest and provides insight into the lessons learned by the traveling Samurai as he becomes enlightened. "I have been to the mountains, met with demons, and now I can carry on... Man is a moving being." In conclusion, if you are a serious student of the martial arts you may already be familiar with Issai Chozanshi's writings; nevertheless, this graphic novel version should also be in your personal library of Martial Arts philosophy. A wonderful and enjoyable book to read. Rating: 5 Stars. Joseph J. Truncala (Author: The Samurai Heart: An old warrior's poetic tribute)

This is a most accurate portrayal of the historical 47 Ronin that is celebrated in Japan on December 17. Artwork is exquisite and the story line matches the events as close as possible to the actual story. A good read to learn what loyalty is and it brings out the heart of Samurai code.

This really isn't about the martial arts except in an oblique sort of way. As with many Asian teachings, these are stories that have layers of meaning and must be reflected upon by the reader. I found them enjoyable both as stories and as teachings. The translator has done a fine job; the stories seem to flow along nicely with no awkwardness from being translated from another language and culture. Highly recommended.

This is one of those books that will leave you swimming in the information it contains long after you read it. Not a how to manual, but a mindset for training manual. Unlike other Japanese works from the Feudal Era the focus is not on being ready to die, but on how to approach training from day to day. The supplementary texts included with the book are very helpful in laying a groundwork to understand the actual sermon.

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