

禪

(Kanji character for the word "ZEN")



Still Center Zen Order



Steps on the Path

A Beginner's Guide to Zen Buddhism

Caught in the self-centered dream, only suffering.
Holding to self-centered thoughts, exactly the dream.
Each moment, life as it is, the only teacher.
Being just this moment, compassion's way.

"The Four Practice Principles"

Charlotte Joko Beck

Let me respectfully remind you,
Life and death are of supreme importance.
Time passes by swiftly and opportunity is lost.
Each of us should strive to awaken.
Awaken! Take heed, do not squander your life.

"Evening Admonition in Zen Buddhist Monasteries"

***Walking meditation**

. We encourage everyone to participate in the walking meditation (Kinin), but if you are in a particularly deep meditative state and wish to remain seated in the classroom during walking meditation, please feel free to do so. If the mobility of the walking meditation is an issue, please feel free to remain silently in the classroom and relax. The walking meditation is also a good time to use the restroom or get a drink of water if necessary. Please return to the group quietly and in a timely way so we may begin the second meditation period together.

Before zazen - Verse of the Kesa (3x)

Vast is the robe of liberation,
A formless field of benefaction.
I wear the Buddha's teaching,
Freeing all sentient beings.

Ending zazen - Four Bodhisattva Vows (3x)

Sentient beings are numberless, I vow to free them all.
Delusions are inexhaustible, I vow to end them all.
Dharma gates are boundless, I vow to enter them all.
The Buddha way is unsurpassable, I vow to embody it.

MAHA PRAJNA PARAMITA HEART SUTRA

(Great Wisdom Beyond Wisdom Heart Sutra)

Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, doing deep prajna paramita,
Clearly saw emptiness of all the five conditions,
Thus completely relieving misfortune and pain,
O Shariputra, form is no other than emptiness, emptiness is no other than form;
Form is exactly emptiness, emptiness exactly form;
Sensation, conception, discrimination, awareness are likewise like this.
O Shariputra, all dharmas are forms of emptiness, not born, not destroyed;
Not stained, not pure, without loss, without gain;
So in emptiness there is no form, no sensation, conception, discrimination, awareness;
No eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind;
No color, sound, smell, taste, touch, phenomena;
No realm of sight . . . no realm of consciousness;
No ignorance and no end to ignorance . . .
No old age and death, and no end to old age and death;
No suffering, no cause of suffering, no extinguishing, no path;
No wisdom and no gain. No gain and thus
The bodhisattva lives prajna paramita
With no hindrance in the mind, no hindrance, therefore no fear,
Far beyond deluded thoughts, this is nirvana.
All past, present, and future Buddhas live prajna paramita,
And therefore attain anuttara-samyak-sambodhi.
Therefore know, prajna paramita is The great mantra, the vivid mantra,
The best mantra, the unsurpassable mantra;
It completely clears all pain, this is the truth, not a lie.
So set forth the Prajna Paramita Mantra, Set forth this mantra and say:
Gate! Gate! Paragate! Parasamgate!
Bodhi svaha. Prajna Heart Sutra.

BUDDHISM 101

HISTORY

Siddhartha Gautama was born around 567 B.C., in a small kingdom just below the Himalayan foothills. His father was a chief of the Shakya clan. It is said that twelve years before his birth, the Brahmin priests prophesied that he would become either a universal monarch or a great sage. To prevent him from becoming an ascetic, his father kept him within the confines of the palace. Gautama grew up in princely luxury, shielded from the outside world, entertained by dancing girls, instructed by Brahmins, and trained in archery, swordsmanship, wrestling, swimming, and running. When he came of age he married Gopa, who gave birth to a son. By today's standards, he had everything.

And yet, it was not enough. Something as persistent as his own shadow drew him into the world beyond the castle walls. There, in the streets of Kapilavastu, he encountered three simple things: a sick man, an old man, and a corpse being carried to the burning grounds. Nothing in his life of ease had prepared him for this experience, and when his charioteer told him that all beings are subject to sickness, old age, and death, he could not rest. As he returned to the palace, he passed a wandering ascetic walking peacefully along the road, wearing the robe and carrying the single bowl of a holy man, and he resolved to leave the palace in search of the answer to the problem of suffering. He bade his wife and child a silent farewell without waking them, rode to the edge of the forest where he cut his long hair with his sword and exchanged his fine clothes for the simple robes of an ascetic.

With these actions Siddhartha Gautama joined a whole class of men who had dropped out of Indian society to find liberation. There were a variety of methods and teachers, and Gautama investigated many - atheists, materialists, idealists, and dialecticians. The deep forest and the teeming marketplace were alive with the sounds of thousands of arguments and opinions, and in this it was a time not unlike our own.

For six years Siddhartha, along with five companions, practiced austerities and concentration. He drove himself mercilessly, eating only a single grain of rice a day, pitting mind against body. His ribs stuck through his wasted flesh and he seemed more dead than alive. His five companions left him after he made the decision to take more substantial food and to abandon asceticism. Then, Siddhartha entered a village in search of food. There, a woman named Sujata offered him a dish of milk and a separate vessel of honey. His strength returned, Siddhartha washed himself in the Nairanjana River, and then set off to the Bodhi tree. He spread a mat of kusha grass underneath, crossed his legs and sat.

He sat, having listened to all the teachers, studied all the sacred texts and tried all the methods. Now there was nothing to rely on, no one to turn to, and nowhere to go. He sat solid and unmoving and determined as a mountain, until finally, after six days, his eye opened on the rising morning star, so it is said, and he realized that what he had been looking for had never been lost, neither to him nor to anyone else. Therefore there was nothing to attain, and no longer any struggle to attain it.

"Wonder of wonders," he is reported to have said, "This very enlightenment is the nature of all beings, and yet they are unhappy for lack of it." So it was that Siddhartha Gautama woke up at the age of thirty-five, and became the Buddha, the Awakened One, known as Shakyamuni, the sage of the Shakyas.

For seven weeks he enjoyed the freedom and tranquility of liberation. At first he had no inclination to speak about his realization, which he felt would be too difficult for most people to understand. But when, according to legend, Brahma, chief of the three thousand worlds, requested that the Awakened One teach, since there were those "whose eyes were only a little clouded over," the Buddha agreed.

When the five ascetics who had left him saw Shakyamuni approaching at Deer Park in Benares they decided to ignore him, since he had broken his vows. Yet they found something so radiant about his presence that they rose, prepared a seat, bathed his feet and listened as the Buddha turned the wheel of the dharma, the teachings, for the first time.

The five ascetics who listened to the Buddha's first discourse in the Deer Park became the nucleus of a community, a sangha, of men (women were to enter later) who followed the way the Buddha had described in his Fourth Noble Truths, the Noble Eightfold Path. These monks lived simply, owning a bowl, a robe, a sewing needle, a water strainer, and a razor, since they shaved their heads as a sign of having left home. They traveled around northeastern India, practicing meditation alone or in small groups, begging for their meals.

The Buddha's teaching, however, was not only for the monastic community. Shakyamuni had instructed them to bring it to all: "Go ye, O monks, for the gain of the many, the welfare of the many, in compassion for the world, for the good, for the gain, for the welfare of gods and men."

For the next forty-nine years Shakyamuni walked through the villages and towns of India, speaking in the vernacular, using common figures of speech that everyone could understand. He taught a villager to practice mindfulness while drawing water from a well, and when a distraught mother asked him to heal the dead child she carried in her arms, he did not perform a miracle, but instead instructed her to bring him a mustard seed from a house where no one had ever died. She returned from her search without the seed, but with the knowledge that death is universal.

As the Buddha's fame spread, kings and other wealthy patrons donated parks and gardens for retreats. The Buddha accepted these, but he continued to live as he had ever since his twenty-ninth year: as a wandering holy man, begging his own meal, spending his days in meditation. Only now there was one difference. Almost every day, after his noon meal, the Buddha taught. None of these discourses, or the questions and answers that followed, was recorded during the Buddha's lifetime, but they were orally transmitted.

The Buddha died in the town of Kushinagara, at the age of eighty, having eaten a meal of pork or mushrooms. Some of the assembled monks were despondent, but the Buddha, lying on his side, with his head resting on his right hand, reminded them that everything is impermanent, and advised them to take refuge in themselves and the dharma - the teaching. He asked for questions a last time. There were none. Then he spoke his final words: "Now then, monks, I address you: all compound things are subject to decay; strive diligently."

The first rainy season after the Buddha's death, or parinirvana, it is said that five hundred elders gathered at a mountain cave near Rajagriha, where they held the First Council. Ananda, who had been the Buddha's attendant, repeated all the discourses, or sutras, he had heard, and Upali recited the two hundred fifty monastic rules, the Vinaya, while Mahakashyapa recited the Abhidharma, the compendium of Buddhist psychology and metaphysics. These three collections, which were written on palm leaves a few centuries later and known as the Tripitaka (literally "three baskets"), became the basis for all subsequent versions of the Buddhist canon.

SO, WHAT IS BUDDHISM?

Buddhism has alternately been called a religion, a philosophy, an ideology and a way of life. As with all the other great spiritual traditions that have withstood the test of time, Buddhism offers many different paths for people with different kinds of sensibilities, needs and capacities.

There are several ways of understanding differences within Buddhism:

The Spread of Buddhism into Different Cultures - Buddhism began in Northern India six hundred years before the Christian Era. Over a period of about a thousand years, Buddhism spread north into Tibet, south into Sri Lanka, Southeast into Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, and east into Burma, China, Korea and Japan. As Buddhism spread it adapted to these "host" cultures, and in each case was shaped and influenced in flavor and style by preexisting rituals and cosmologies. Thus, we speak of Tibetan Buddhism or Japanese Buddhism or Korean Buddhism. And within each cultural sphere, many different paths, lineages and sects emerged.

CORE TEACHINGS

There are immutable core teachings expounded by the historical Shakyamuni Buddha that create a collective wellspring for all forms of Buddhism. Specifically, these are the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path. Yet these basic teachings have themselves been subject to interpretation and again have various flavors within different Buddhist cultures.

THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

1. The first truth is that life is full of suffering - this includes pain, getting old, disease, and ultimately death. We also endure psychological suffering like loneliness, frustration, fear, embarrassment, disappointment, and anger. This is an irrefutable fact that cannot be denied. It is realistic rather than pessimistic because pessimism is expecting things to be bad. Buddhism explains how this suffering can be avoided and how we can be truly happy.
2. The second truth is that suffering is caused by craving and aversion. We will suffer if we expect other people to always conform to our expectation, if we expect others to always like us, if we do not get something we want, etc. In other words, getting what you want does not guarantee happiness. Rather than constantly struggling to get what you want, or pushing away what you don't want, try to let go of your wanting. Wanting deprives us of contentment and happiness. A lifetime of wanting and craving, and especially the craving to continue to exist, creates a powerful energy that leads to lifetimes of suffering.
3. The third truth is that suffering can be overcome and happiness can be attained; that true happiness and contentment are possible. If we give up useless craving and learn to live one day at a time, moment by moment (not dwelling in the past or the imagined future) then we can become happy and free. We then have more time and energy to appreciate our lives and to help others.
4. The fourth truth is that the Noble 8-fold Path is the path that leads to the end of suffering.

THE EIGHTFOLD PATH

Right View	Right Livelihood
Right Thought	Right Effort
Right Speech	Right Mindfulness
Right Action	Right Concentration

THE THREE DHARMA SEALS (Marks of Existence)

1. Impermanence - Everything is always changing.
2. Suffering - Nothing found in the physical or psychological realm can bring eternal deep satisfaction.
3. No Self - The body and mind are perishable, our idea of a permanent abiding self is only an idea.

THE PRECEPTS (Taking Refuge, Receiving the Precepts, Jukai)

The sixteen precepts are appreciated from the Three Refuges, the Three Pure Precepts, and the Ten Grave Precepts.

The Three Refuges (Three Treasures) - correspond to the "container or substance". These are the essence of the precepts. The refuges are:

1. **Buddha** - Devotion to The Buddha (recognition of the historical figure, the enlightened nature of all beings, including ourselves, unity)
2. **Dharma** - Devotion to The Dharma (the historical and realized teachings, diversity)

3. Sangha - Devotion to The Sangha (the micro/macro community of believers, harmony)

The Three Pure Precepts - (Three Resolutions) correspond to "aspect". These pure precepts express the "form" of one's mind. These are:

- 1. Do No Evil**
- 2. Do Good**
- 3. Do Good for Others.**

The Ten Grave Precepts - correspond to "function" of one's mind

1. Do not kill.

As awakened beings throughout all space and time have observed the precept of non-killing, not leading a harmful life nor encouraging others to do so, so will I, with gratitude, abstain from killing living beings. I will live in harmony with all life and the environment that sustains it.

2. Do not steal.

As awakened beings throughout all space and time have observed the precept of non-stealing, so will I, with contentment, abstain from taking anything not given. I will freely give, ask for, and accept what is needed.

3. Do not be greedy (sexually immoral).

As awakened beings throughout all space and time have observed the precept of chaste conduct, so will I, with love, abstain from unchastity. I will give and accept love and friendship responsibly, without clinging.

4. Do not tell a lie.

As awakened beings throughout all space and time have observed the precept of non-lying; speaking the truth and deceiving no one, so will I, with honesty, abstain from lying; speak the truth, and deceive no one. I will see and act in accordance with what is.

5. Do not be deluded (intoxicated).

As awakened beings throughout all space and time have observed the precept of not taking intoxicants, nor encouraged others to do so, so will I, with awareness, abstain from using intoxicants, nor encourage others to do so. I will embrace all experience directly.

6. Do not talk about others errors and faults.

As awakened beings throughout all space and time have observed the precept of not talking about others errors and faults, so will I, with kindness, abstain from blaming or criticizing others. I will acknowledge responsibility for everything in my life.

7. Do not elevate yourself to put down others.

As awakened beings throughout all space and time have observed the precept of not elevating themselves and blaming others, so will I, with humility, abstain from competing with others or coveting recognition. I will give my best effort and accept the results.

8. Do not be stingy.

As awakened beings throughout all space and time have observed the precept of not being stingy in the bestowal of the teachings, so will I, with generosity, freely bestow the teachings. I will not foster a mind of poverty in others and myself.

9. Do not be angry.

As awakened beings throughout all space and time have observed the precept of not being angry; so will I, with determination, abstain from anger, not harboring resentment, rage, or revenge. I will roll all negative experience into my practice.

10. Do not speak ill of the Three Treasures.

As awakened beings throughout all space and time have observed the precept of not distinguishing between sacred and secular, so will I, with tolerance, abstain from assuming religious authority. I will recognize others and myself as manifestations of Oneness, Diversity, and Harmony.

There is No One Buddhism

There has never been, nor is there now, a central authority in Buddhism. There is no equivalent to the Holy Father of the Roman Catholic Church or to anything that resembles papal law. With no supreme arbitrator, the diversification of Buddhism has flourished. This also means that there is no "one" Buddhism. There are many Buddhisms. So when we try to answer the question, "What is Buddhism?" we can only try our best to present the most inclusive and pan-Buddhist answers. And yet, it will serve you well to remember that the vast array of traditions combined with the absence of a singular authority, means that in general, thinking in terms of "right and wrong" answers and "good and bad" answers is not a very useful approach.

Diversity of View and Understanding

This diversity of view and understanding may offer a refreshing alternative to doctrinal rigidity. It can also yield some very sloppy and indulgent versions of what "Buddhism means to me." But to maintain respect for differences, keep in mind some of the historic distinctions that exist within all religions and within all cultures. Some people approach spiritual belief systems in order to comfort themselves and to soften the inevitable harsh blows of life - illness, loss, death, and grief. For many people, the communal activity of ritual - congregations or sanghas - itself offers a powerful experience of transcending the claustrophobic boundaries of the individual self in order to participate in a larger, more generous, bountiful experience. This can also be easily accomplished through collective singing or chanting, which is such a common feature of religions around the world. There is the way lay people engage in religion versus the lifestyle and commitments made by monastics. There are mystics and maverick masters, enlightened householders, dutiful abbots and those whose spiritual aspirations demand to know what this life is all about.

THE THREE MAIN VEHICLES

Today in the West, through Western converts to Buddhism and Asian immigrant communities, we have an unprecedented opportunity to experience every kind of Buddhism, and furthermore, to bring to our understanding an educated, historical perspective of the whole sweep of Buddhist activity. For an introduction to Buddhism, we offer the most generalized, commonly accepted, main "yanas" or vehicles of the Buddha's teachings. These three are known as:

"Theravada" is a Pali term meaning "Teachings of the Elders." Prevalent in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia, this vehicle adheres closely to the original sutras (discourses) and vinaya (disciplinary rules) taught by the historical Buddha. Like Jesus Christ, the Buddha himself did not leave written texts. Rather, a council of his elder disciples met the year after his death and compiled a collection of his teachings, called the Pali Canon, which was handed down orally until it was committed to writing a few hundred years later.

Theravada teachings cluster around the doctrine of karma, or action, which states that one's experience of pleasure and pain, happiness and sorrow, is shaped by the quality of the intentions underlying one's past and present actions. The quest for true happiness is thus a matter of developing skill in one's thoughts, words, and deeds. Because skill is something that individuals can develop only for themselves, and because it requires mindfulness and alertness, Theravada stresses the individual development of these qualities in all areas of life. On the external level of word and deed, this involves following precepts of harmless behavior. For laypeople, the standard list of precepts includes refraining from killing, from stealing, from illicit sex, from lying, and from taking intoxicants. For monastics, there is a more elaborate code of precepts, reflecting the fact that they are completely dependent on the generosity of the laity for their support, and so must behave in a way that is

scrupulous, unburdensome, and worthy of respect. For example, a monastic may not handle money, eat food after noon, touch a member of the opposite sex, or have sexual intercourse with anyone at all.

Building on the bedrock of the mindfulness and alertness developed through following the precepts, Theravada meditation strengthens these qualities through practices aimed at developing powers of concentration and insight. A common meditation theme for developing these powers is mindfulness of in-and-out breathing. By pursuing this theme in increasing levels of refinement, an individual may learn to navigate all experience in skillful ways devoid of craving, clinging, and ignorance, and thus achieve liberation from the wheel of birth and death.

"Mahayana" In the second century of the Common Era, there arose in India a new movement that came to be called Mahayana, which means "Great Vehicle." In contrast to the older Theravada schools, the Mahayana placed less emphasis on the accepted texts of the Buddha; inspired adepts from that time, such as Nagarjuna, imbued the Buddha's teachings with new interpretations. The Mahayana schools relaxed the stringent adherence to the rules and regulations that had been laid out in the monastic code developed by the Buddha some 700 years earlier; the focus instead became the Buddha's teachings on the nature of emptiness and the relationship between form and emptiness. The Mahayana placed great importance on the inherent embodiment of Buddha nature - or enlightened mind - by all human beings, and encouraged individual experience to be the basis of insight and attainment in the process of realizing one's own Buddha nature.

In China, Mahayana Buddhism flourished and took on many forms. The Pure Land Schools advocated surrender to a bodhisattva as a means to be reborn in the Pure Land, a realm free from suffering, from where it is easier to achieve liberation. Ch'an (which means meditation) taught its followers that the path of the bodhisattva leads to liberation in this very lifetime; and it emphasized discovering the nondual reality of one's Buddha nature through meditation. Ch'an moved to Japan in the 13th century and is now known in the West as Zen. Japanese Zen was probably the first form of Buddhism to begin to capture the imagination of the West.

"Vajrayana" Also commonly called Tantric Buddhism; Vajrayana Buddhism is the "Diamond Thunderbolt." It developed out of the Mahayana teachings in northwest India around 500 B.C.E. and spread to Tibet, China and Japan. Today it is practiced mainly in the Himalayan regions and involves esoteric visualizations, rituals, and mantras, which can only be learned by study with a master. In the Vajrayana path, all situations can be used as a spiritual path. It teaches not to suppress energy, but rather to transform it. There is no external "good" reference point. For this reason, the role of the teacher is especially important in the Vajrayana. Without a clear motive to help others and a strong grounding in meditation, practicing tantra is dangerous and ultimately self-destructive. This necessary practice of complete devotion to the teacher is known as "guru yoga."

There is a long-standing debate about whether these different yantras were all taught by the Buddha himself or were introduced later on and, for reasons of "skillful means," attributed to the historical Buddha.

All three, however, share a common foundation encapsulated in the Buddha's first teaching, the Four Noble Truths, which he delivered at the Deer park in Sarnath. The first Truth starts with the point that suffering is an undeniable part of this world of birth and death. Because of this emphasis on suffering, Buddhism has wrongly been confused with nihilism and pessimism. But the Buddha focused on suffering in the same way that doctor focuses on disease: only by addressing the problem can a solution be found. This solution lies in the remaining three Noble Truths: that suffering has a cause, which is craving based on ignorance; that suffering can be ended by eliminating its cause; and that the cause can be eliminated through developing the path of virtue, concentration, and discernment.

The discernment developed in meditation is central to the path, in that it sees through the illusory notion of self-identity that grows out of craving and ignorance, thus leading to repeated suffering and stress. Buddhism points out that any experience we might identify as our "self" is impermanent, continually in flux, coming into existence and passing away, conditioned from one moment to the next by interrelated, empty phenomena. If

we do not abandon our sense of self-identity, we are bound to suffer pain and alienation, as our "self" inevitably falls subject to circumstances outside our control.

To gain freedom from this predicament, we must first develop a healthy sense of self, based on being harmless and compassionate, both to ourselves and to others. Then, through meditation, we enter the present moment by dropping our memories of the past and fantasies about the future. Observing the present, we see that our "self" is simply an internal dialogue of incessant chatter. As this chatter grows still, a point is reached in which "self," "other," and "present" are transcended. That is where liberation is found.

"ENSHO" a well-known
Zen that symbolizes



symbol in
shunyata (emptiness)

A Brief Buddhist Glossary

Many of these terms are used in discussing Buddhism and Zen

Amitabha: Sanskrit; Amida (Japanese); one of the major buddhas of Mayahana Pure Land School; he created a Pure Land free from suffering in which one can attain rebirth by calling out his name.

Arhat: Sanskrit; literally, "worthy one"; one who has attained the highest level of enlightenment in the Theravada school; the fruition of arhatship is nirvana.

Avalokitesvara: Sanskrit; Kannon (Japanese), Chen Resig (Tibetan), Kwan Um (Korean), Guan Yin or Kwan Yin (Chinese); the bodhisattva of compassionate wisdom.

Bodhidharma: (ca. 470-543) Considered the first patriarch of Zen Buddhism; according to legend, he was the "Barbarian from the West" who brought Zen from India to China; "Why did Bodhidharma come from the West?" is a famous koan in Zen Buddhism.

Bodhisattva: Sanskrit; Bosatsu (Japanese), Bosal (Korean); one who postpones his or her own enlightenment in order to help liberate other sentient beings from cyclic existence; compassion, or karuna, is the central characteristic of the bodhisattva; important bodhisattvas include Avalokitesvara, Manjushri, and Jizo.

Buddha: Sanskrit; literally, "awakened one"; a person who has been released from the world of cyclic existence (samsara) and attained liberation from desire, craving, and attachment in nirvana; according to Theravadins, Shakyamuni, the historical Buddha, is considered to be the first Buddha of this age who was preceded by many others and will be followed by Maitreya; Mahayanists believe that there are countless Buddhas for every age.

Daisan: Private interview with a sensei-level teacher

Dharma: Sanskrit; dhamma (Pali); the central notion of Buddhism; it is the cosmic law underlying all existence and therefore the teaching of the Buddha; it is considered one of the three "jewels" of Buddhism; it is often used as a general term for Buddhism.

Dogen: (1200-1253) (Eihei Dogen, Dogen Zenji) Credited with bringing the Soto school of Zen Buddhism to Japan; he stressed shikantaza, or just sitting, as the means to enlightenment.

Dokusan: Private interview with a roshi-level teacher

Dzogchen: Tibetan; literally, "great perfection"; the supreme teachings of the Nyingmapa school of Tibetan Buddhism; its adherents believe these teachings are the highest and therefore that no other means are necessary; also known as ati-yoga.

Enlightenment: The word used to translate the Sanskrit term bodhi ("awakened"); generally used by Mahayanists instead of the Theravada term nirvana; it connotes an awakening to the true nature of reality rather than the extinguishing of desire implied by the term nirvana.

Gassho: Mudra (hand posture) of placing the two palms together.

Gelugpa: One of the four major schools of Tibetan Buddhism; His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama is considered the spiritual head of this school.

Jodo-shin-shu: literally, "True School of the Pure Land"; a school of Japanese Buddhism founded by Shinran; it has no monastic aspect and is purely a lay community; its emphasis on relying on the power of Amida Buddha (Amitabha) for salvation is more extreme than that of the Jodo-shu school; it is the most important school of Buddhism in Japan today.

Jodo-shu: literally, "School of the Pure Land"; a school of Japanese Buddhism derived from the ideas of the Pure Land School of China which were brought to Japan in the ninth century; it was officially founded by Honen in the twelfth century as a means to open up an "easy path" to liberation by calling out the name of Amida Buddha (Amitabha); in contrast to the Jodo-shin-shu school, its adherents enter the monastic life and understand calling out the name of Amida as an act of gratitude rather than a means to strengthen trust in Amida.

Jukai: aka as "Taking Refuge in the three Treasures" Ceremony of receiving the Precepts

Kagyupa: One of the four major schools of Tibetan Buddhism; the teaching was brought to Tibet in the 11th century by Marpa; the school places strong emphasis on the transmission of knowledge from master to student.

Karma: Sanskrit; literally, "action"; universal law of cause and effect, which governs rebirth, and the world of samsara.

Kinhin: Walking meditation done between zazen periods

Koan: A seemingly paradoxical riddle or statement that is used as a training device in Zen practice to force the mind to abandon logic and dualistic thought.

Mahayana: Sanskrit; literally, "the Great Vehicle"; one of the three major schools of Buddhism which developed in India during the first century CE; it is called the "Great Vehicle" because of its all-inclusive approach to liberation as embodied in the bodhisattva ideal and the desire to liberate all beings; the Mahayana school is also known for placing less emphasis on monasticism than the Theravada school and for introducing the notion of sunyata (Emptiness).

Maitreya: the Buddha expected to come in the future as the fifth and last of the earthly Buddhas; he is believed to reside in the Tushita heaven until then (about 30,000 years from now); devotion to Maitreya is widespread in Tibetan Buddhism.

Mudra: Symbolic hand positions or gestures

Nirvana: Sanskrit; literally, "extinction, blowing out"; the goal of spiritual practice in Buddhism; liberation from the cycle of rebirth and suffering.

Nichiren: (1222-1282) Japanese monk who believed in the supreme perfection of the Lotus Sutra; he advocated the devout recitation of "Namu myoho renge kyo," the title of the sutra, in order to attain instantaneous enlightenment.

Nyingmapa: One of the four major schools of Tibetan Buddhism; the Dzogchen teachings are considered to be the supreme embodiment of this school.

Pure Land: A realm free from suffering in which it is easier to attain nirvana; the most famous one, Sukhavati, is the Pure Land of Amitabha Buddha and requires only calling out his name in order to be reborn in it; "Pure Land Buddhism" refers to this devotion directed towards Amitabha.

Rinzai: Japanese; Lin-chi or Lin-ji (Chinese); one of the two major schools of Zen Buddhism; it was founded by the Chinese master Lin-chi I-hsuan (Japanese; Rinzai Gigen) and brought to Japan by Eisai Zenji at the end of the twelfth century; it stresses koan Zen as the means to attain enlightenment.

Roshi: Venerable teacher (one who has received final, complete transmission from another Roshi)

Sakyapa: One of the four major schools of Tibetan Buddhism; it is named after the Sakya Monastery in southern Tibet and had great political influence in Tibet during the 13th and 14th centuries.

Samsara: Sanskrit; the cyclic existence of birth, death and rebirth from which nirvana provides liberation.

Sangha: Sanskrit; a term for the Buddhist monastic community which has recently come to include the entire community of Buddhist practitioners; it is considered one of the three jewels of Buddhism (along with the Buddha and the Dharma).

Sensei: Lit., one-who-goes-before on the path; a certified teacher

Sesshin: Intensive retreat of 2,3,5,7, or 10 days

Shakyamuni: (ca. 563-422 BCE) (Siddhartha Gautama) The historical Buddha; Theravadins believe that he was the first to attain enlightenment in this age.

Shashu: Hand position used when walking or standing in the Zendo (left hand in a fist, thumb tucked in and covered by the right hand; both are placed against the solar plexus)

Shinran: (1173-1262) Founder of the Jodo-shin-shu school of Japanese Buddhism; he taught that attempting to attain enlightenment through one's own effort is futile; instead liberation can be attained exclusively through the help and grace of the Buddha Amida (Amitabha); he advocated calling out the name of Amida as the only practice necessary in order to be reborn in his Pure Land.

Shunyata: Japanese; Sunyata (Sanskrit); sunnata (Pali); literally, "emptiness"; a central Buddhist idea which states that all phenomena are "empty," i.e. dependent and conditioned on other phenomena and therefore without essence; Theravadins applied this idea to the individual to assert the non-existence of a soul; Mahayanists later expanded on this idea and declared that all existence is empty; emptiness became the focus of the Madhyamika school of the Mahayana Buddhism; the Western notion of emptiness has often led to Buddhism being wrongfully confused with a nihilistic outlook.

Soto: Japanese; Ts'ao-tung or Caodong (Chinese); one of the two major schools of Zen Buddhism; it was brought to Japan by Dogen in the thirteenth century; it emphasizes zazen, or sitting meditation, as the central practice in order to attain enlightenment.

Sutra: Sanskrit; a discourse attributed to the Buddha; sutras comprise the second part of the Buddhist canon, or Tripitaka; they traditionally begin with the phrase "Thus have I heard..." and are believed to have been written down by Buddha's disciple Ananda one hundred years after his death.

Tenzo: Head cook

Theravada: Sanskrit; literally, "the School of the Elders"; one of the three major schools of Buddhism which is widely practiced in the countries of Southeast Asia; its teachings focus on the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path; also pejoratively referred to as the Hinayana, or "Lesser Vehicle," school due to its emphasis on personal rather than collective liberation.

Tripitaka: Sanskrit; literally, "the three baskets"; this term is commonly used for the Buddhist canon, which consists of three parts: the Vinaya, or monastic code; the Sutras; and the Abhidharma, or Buddhist philosophical treatises.

Vajrayana: Sanskrit; literally, "the Diamond Vehicle"; one of the three major schools of Buddhism; this form of Buddhism developed out of the Mahayana teachings in northwest India around 500 CE and spread to Tibet, China and Japan; it involves esoteric visualizations, rituals, and mantras which can only be learned by study with a master; also known as Tantric Buddhism due to the use of tantras, or sacred texts.

Zabutan: Square sitting mats

Zafu: Round sitting cushion

Zazen: Sitting meditation

Zen: Japanese; Chan (Chinese); a branch of Mahayana Buddhism which developed in China during the sixth and seventh centuries after Bodhidharma arrived; it later divided into the Soto and Rinzai schools; Zen stresses the importance of the enlightenment experience and the futility of rational thought, intellectual study and religious ritual in attaining this; a central element of Zen is zazen, a meditative practice which seeks to free the mind of all thought and conceptualization.

What is Zen?

Zen is the Japanese name of Mahayana Buddhist schools, practiced originally in India as *dhyana*, which then came to be known in China as *ch'an*, and subsequently traveled to Korea called *seon* that was later passed on to Japan. Zen emphasizes the role of sitting meditation (*zazen*) in pursuing enlightenment for the benefit of others, thus emphasizing compassion. Though considered simply a philosophy by many of its Western practitioners, Zen is a school of Buddhism and considered a religion by most of its Asian practitioners. It was only during the last century or so that Zen began to be viewed by Westerners as a philosophy, a way of life, work, an art form, etc. Such a view is not shared by the vast majority of Zen followers in the countries of its origin.

Zen is the common name for this branch of Buddhism in Japanese as well as in English. However, in the last half of the 20th century, Zen has become an international phenomenon, with centers in many countries around the world.

Spread of Zen

Traditionally, Zen traces its roots back to Indian Buddhism and, while not an independent school of Buddhism there, takes its name from the Sanskrit term for meditation, "*dhyāna*". This word was transliterated into Chinese as *ch'an*; "*ch'an*" was passed on to Korean as *seon* and to the Vietnamese as *thiền*, then later Korea passed it on to Japan as "*zen*." They are just different pronunciations of the same Chinese character. Their teachings may vary in methods, but the principles claim the same origin.

According to legend, zen was founded in China by an Indian Buddhist monk, Bodhidharma. He was the 28th in the line of transmission from the Buddha's disciple Kashyapa. According to the Record of the Transmission of the Lamp, circa 520 AD he traveled by sea to the southern Chinese kingdom of Liang where, in a famous exchange with the Emperor Wu, he declared that good deeds done with selfish intention were useless (conferred no merit) for gaining enlightenment. He then went to a monastery near Luoyang in eastern China and, according to legend, spent nine years meditating before a cliff wall before accepting any disciples. He later died at the Shaolin Temple, in Hunan Province, China.

Later, Korean monks studying in China learned what was by then called *ch'an*, and which had by then been profoundly influenced by Chinese Taoism and to a lesser degree Confucianism. After the tradition was expanded to Korea, it came to be called *Seon* there.

It is important to note, however, that *ch'an*, *seon* and *zen* continued to develop separately in their home countries, and all maintain separate identities to this day. Although lineage lines in China, Korea, Japan and elsewhere appear to show direct descent from Bodhidharma, changes in belief and practice have inevitably appeared with the profusion of *ch'an*, *seon* and *zen*.

Zen in Japan

The following Zen schools still exist in Japan: Rinzai, Soto, and Obaku. Originally formulated by the eponymous Chinese master Linji (Rinzai in Japanese), the Rinzai school was introduced to Japan in 1191 by Eisai. Dogen, who studied under Eisai, would later carry the Caodong, or "Soto" Zen school to Japan from China. Ikkyu revitalized Zen in the 15th century and greatly developed the tea ceremony. Obaku was introduced in the 17th century by Ingen, a Chinese monk.

Some contemporary Japanese Zen teachers, such as Daiun Harada and Shunryu Suzuki, who also taught in the United States, have criticized Japanese Zen as being a formalized system of empty rituals with very few Zen practitioners ever actually attaining realization. They assert that almost all Japanese temples have become family businesses handed down from father to son, and the Zen priest's function has largely been reduced to officiating at funerals.

Zen is a branch of Buddhism and as such is based on and deeply rooted in the Buddha's teachings. It is also very much the child of China and has some teaching derived from Confucianism and Taoism. The Zen branch calls itself the Buddha Heart School and traces its lineage back to the Buddha, with the Flower Sermon being the first transmission of the Dharma. It's common for daily chanting to include the lineage of the school, reciting the names of all "dharma ancestors" and teachers that have transmitted Zen teaching.

Zen is part of the Mahayana branch of Buddhism (Northern) and some practical differences are to be found with the Theravadins (Southern). For example, Zen and other Mahayana traditions place greater emphasis on the practice of the Paramitas (Path of Perfection) as well as on the Eightfold Path. Another difference is in sutra study; Zen and other Mahayana traditions focus on the Mahayana Canon, while the Southern schools place emphasis on Tripitaka study.

All Zen schools, Rinzai or Soto, are versed in Buddhist Doctrine and Buddhist Philosophy, including the Precepts, Four Noble Truths, Three Signs of Being, and the Five Skandhas. At the same time, Zen's emphasis on direct seeing into one's nature keeps it lively and at the edge of the tradition.

This openness has allowed non-Buddhists to practice Zen, especially outside of Asia, and even for the curious phenomenon of an emerging Christian Zen lineage, as well as one or two lines that call themselves "nonsectarian." With no official governing body, it's perhaps impossible to declare any authentic lineage "heretical." The principal safeguard is lineage and any authentic Zen school will be able to trace its line of teachers back to Japan, Korea, Vietnam or China.

Zen teachings and practices

Zen teachings often criticize textual study and the pursuit of worldly accomplishments, concentrating primarily on meditation in pursuit of an unmediated awareness of the processes of the world and the mind. Zen, however, is not exactly a quietistic doctrine: the Chinese Chan master Baizhang (720-814 CE), (Japanese: Hyakujo), left behind a famous saying which had been the guiding principle of his life, "A day without work is a day without eating." When Baizhang was thought to be too old to work in the garden, his devotees hid his gardening tools. In response to this, the master then refused to eat, saying "No working, no living."

These teachings are in turn deeply rooted in the Buddhist textual tradition, drawing primarily on Mahayana sutras composed in India and China, particularly the Platform Sutra of Huineng, the Heart Sutra, the Diamond Sutra, the Lankavatara Sutra, and the Lotus Sutra. The body of Zen doctrine also includes the recorded teachings of masters in the various Zen traditions. The heavy influence of the Lankavatara Sutra, in particular, has led to the formation of the "mind only" concept of Zen, in which consciousness itself is recognized as the only true reality.

Zen is neither primarily an intellectual philosophy nor a solitary pursuit. Zen temples in Asia and Zen centers in the west emphasize meticulous daily practice, and hold intensive monthly meditation retreats. Practicing with others is valued as a way to avoid the traps of ego. In explaining the Zen Buddhist path to Westerners, Japanese Zen teachers have frequently pointed out that Zen is a way of life and not solely a state of consciousness. D.T. Suzuki wrote that the aspects of this life were: a life of humility; a life of labor; a life of service; a life of prayer and gratitude; and a life of meditation. The history of Zen has also been closely connected to the development of several forms of martial arts, most notably Karate, Jujitsu, Judo and especially Aikido, sometimes considered the most religious martial art in Japan and Kung Fu in China.

Zazen

Zen sitting meditation is called zazen. Walking meditation is called kinhin. Meditation as a practice can be applied to any posture. During zazen, practitioners usually assume a lotus, half-lotus, Burmese, or seiza sitting position. A round cushion (zafu) placed on a padded mat (zabuton) is used to sit on, or a chair may be used. Rinzai practitioners traditionally use a square cushion and typically sit facing the center of the room, while Soto practitioners sit facing a wall. Awareness is directed towards one's posture and breathing.

In Soto, shikantaza meditation ("just-sitting") that is, a meditation with no objects, anchors, "seeds," or content, is the primary form of practice. Considerable textual, philosophical, and phenomenological justification of this practice can be found in Dogen's *Shobogenzo*.

The daily time spent in zazen varies. Dogen recommends that even 5 minutes daily for householders is beneficial. The key is daily regularity, as Zen teaches that the ego will naturally resist, and the discipline of regularity is essential. Practicing Zen monks may spend 4-6 periods of zazen 30-40 minutes each during a normal day. During the monthly retreat sesshins of 1-, 3-, 5-, or 7-day duration, they may spend 9-12 periods of scheduled group zazen, and occasionally more individual zazen late at night. The zazen periods are usually interleaved with brief periods of walking meditation to relieve the legs.

Dogen's teacher Rujing was said to spend less than 4 hours in actual sleep each night, spending the balance in zazen. However, in practice, it is not uncommon for monks to actually sleep during zazen. Some meditation researchers have theorized that Zen adepts who are able to achieve the deeper levels of samadhi in meditation are actually fulfilling the same need as REM sleep, so that when zazen time is added to actual sleep time, they are in effect still getting the normal amount of daily sleep that the brain requires. However, such ability to enter into deep samadhi during zazen is apparently fairly rare, and may not arise even after decades of meditation.

The Teacher

Because the Zen tradition emphasizes direct communication over scriptural study, the role of the Zen teacher is important but not entirely crucial. Generally speaking, a Zen teacher is a person ordained in any tradition of Zen to teach the dharma, guide students of meditation and perform rituals.

A central part of all formal Zen sects is the notion of "Dharma transmission," the claim of a line of authority that goes back to the Buddha. Originally this derived from the description of Zen attributed to Bodhidharma.

Since at least the Middle Ages, Dharma Transmission has become a normative aspect of all Zen sects. Every Zen teacher stands within one lineage or another. Some sects, including most Japanese lines, possess formal lineage charts that are drawn up for the ceremonial practice of transmission, which document the lineage back to Shakyamuni Buddha.

Honorific titles associated with teachers typically include, in Chinese: Fashi or Chanshi; in Korean, Sunim or Seon Sa; in Japanese: Osho or Roshi or Sensei; and in Vietnamese, Thầy (teacher; pronounced tie). Note that many of these titles are common among Buddhist priests of all schools present in the specific cultural context. Some titles, such as the Japanese sensei, are also used beyond the Buddhist schools.

The term Zen master is often used to refer to important teachers, especially ancient and medieval ones. However, there is no specific criterion by which one can be called a Zen master. The term is less common in reference to modern teachers, because they are generally reluctant to proclaim themselves "masters." At the same time these teachers willingly acknowledge their lineage connections, naming who authorized them as teachers.

In Japan during the Tokugawa period (1600–1868), some came to question the lineage system and its legitimacy. The Zen master Dokuan Genko (1630–1698) for example, openly questioned the necessity of written acknowledgement from a teacher, which he dismissed as "paper Zen." The only genuine transmission, he insisted, was the individual's independent experience of Zen enlightenment, an intuitive experience that needs no external confirmation. What is called Zen enlightenment is not dependent on another's enlightenment or some external confirmation. An occasional teacher in Japan during the Tokugawa period did not adhere to the lineage system and were what is termed *mushi dokugo* in Japanese; which means "enlightened without a teacher." They are often also known as *jigo jisho* "self-enlightened and self-certified." They were generally dismissed and perhaps of necessity leave no independent transmission. Still, they represent a thread that continues to modern American Zen where there are a few teachers such as Cheri Huber who refuse to discuss where or even whether they studied Zen in any traditional way. In any case this is a minority position within Zen where a formally and publically acknowledged transmission is usually the case.

Koan practice

The Zen schools (especially but not exclusively Rinzai) are associated with koans (Japanese; Chinese: gongan; Korean: gong'an). The term originally referred to legal cases in Tang-dynasty China.

In some sense, a koan embodies a realized principle, or law of reality. Koans often appear paradoxical or linguistically meaningless dialogs or questions. The "answer" to the koan involves a transformation of perspective or consciousness, which may be either radical or subtle, possibly akin to the experience of *metanoia* in Christianity. Koans are a tool to allow the student to approach enlightenment by essentially "short-circuiting" the logical way we order the world. Through assimilation of a Koan it is possible to "jump-start" an altered mindset that then facilitates enlightenment.

An example of a Zen koan is: "Two hands clap and there is a sound. What is the sound of one hand clapping?" It is sometimes said that after diligent practice, the practitioner and the koan become one. Though most Zen groups aim for a "sudden" enlightenment, this usually comes only after a great deal of preparation.

Zen teachers advise that the problem posed by a koan is to be taken quite seriously, and to be approached quite literally as a matter of life and death. There is a sharp distinction between right and wrong ways of answering a koan - though there may be many "right answers", practitioners are expected to demonstrate their understanding of the koan and of Zen with their whole being.

The Zen student's mastery of a given koan is presented to the teacher in a private session (called in various Japanese schools dokusan, daisan or sanzen). The answer to a koan is more dependent on "how" it is answered. Or, to put it somewhat differently, the answer is a function not merely of a reply, but of a whole modification of the student's experience; he or she must live the answer to the koan rather than merely offering a correct statement.

It is misleading to suggest there is a single correct answer for any given koan, though there are "correct" and "incorrect" answers, and, indeed, there are compilations of accepted answers to koans to help understand the paradox, and prepare for the interview. These collections are of great value to modern scholarship on the subject.

Following the tradition of "living koans," a number of western Zen teachers supplement the traditional koan curriculum using various western sources, such as apparently paradoxical sayings from the Bible.

Radical teachings

Some of the traditional Zen fables describe Zen masters using controversial methods of "teaching", which modern Zen enthusiasts may have a tendency to interpret too literally. For example, though Zen and Buddhism deeply respect life and teach non-violence, the founder of the Zen Rinzai school, Linji said: "If you meet the Buddha, kill the Buddha. If you meet a Patriarch, kill the Patriarch."

A contemporary Zen Master, Seung Sahn, has echoed this teaching in saying that in this life we must all "kill" three things: first we must kill parents; second we must kill Buddha; and last, we must kill the Zen teacher (e.g. Seung Sahn). Of course, kill here is not literally killing. What is meant is to kill one's attachment to teachers or other external objects. Rather than see concepts outside of themselves, Zen practitioners must integrate these objects with their concepts of self.

When visiting Zen centers, people who began with the stories featuring apparent iconoclastic encounters are often surprised by the conservative and ritualistic nature of the practice. Most Zen centers in the west, like their counterparts in the east, emphasize regular meditation, both on a daily basis and in monthly retreat, as well as a discipline based in practice schedules and everyday household chores such as cooking, cleaning, and gardening as the path of enlightenment.

Zen and Western culture

Since the 1930s in the United Kingdom, and at least since the Beatnik movement of the 1950s in the United States, the West has had a growing interest in Zen. Often, it has been diluted or used as a brand name, leading to criticism of Western appreciation for Buddhism. However, there is some genuine interest as well.

In Europe, the Expressionist and Dada movements in art tend to have much in common thematically with the study of koans and actual Zen. The early French surrealist René Daumal translated D.T. Suzuki as well as Buddhist Sanskrit texts.

The British-American philosopher Alan Watts had a personal interest in the Zen school of Buddhism and wrote and lectured extensively on it. He was interested in it as a vehicle for a mystical transformation of consciousness, and also in the historical example of a non-Western, non-Christian way of life that had fostered both the practical and fine arts.

The *Dharma Bums*, a novel written by Jack Kerouac and published in 1959, gave its readers a look at how a fascination with Buddhism and Zen was being absorbed into lifestyle experimentation by a small group of mainly west-coast American youths. Besides the narrator, the main character in this novel was Gary Snyder, thinly veiled as "Japhy Ryder" by his friend Kerouac. The story was based on actual events taking place when Snyder prepared, in California, for formal Zen studies that he pursued in Japanese monasteries between 1956 and 1968.

Many youths in the Beat generation and among the hippies of the 1960s and 1970s misunderstood the goals and methods of Zen. While the scholar D.T. Suzuki may have brought attention to concepts basic to the Zen tradition - such as humility, labor, service, prayer, gratitude, and meditation — by contrast the "hip" subculture often focused on states of consciousness in themselves. Japanese Zen master Zenkei Shibayama commented: "It may be true that the effect which such scientifically prepared drugs as LSD produce may have some superficial resemblance to some aspects of Zen experience... When the effect of the drug is gone, the psychological experience one may have had is also weakened and dispersed, and does not endure as a living fact."

In *"The Tao of Physics"*, Fritjof Capra explores the parallels between Eastern Mysticism and Modern Physics, and also includes a detailed discussion of Zen and its philosophies

Many modern students have made the mistake of thinking that since much of Zen, and particularly koans, sound like nonsense (especially in translation and out of context), any clever nonsense is also Zen. Another problematic usage that has emerged in western culture is taking the word "koan" to mean "a particularly thorny problem." Neither usage is correct.

Over the last fifty years "mainstream" forms of Zen, led by teachers who trained in East Asia or were trained by such teachers have begun to take root in the west. In North America the largest family of "lineages" is derived from the Japanese Soto School. These include the "White Plum" founded by Hakuyu Taizan Maezumi Roshi and the "Ordinary Mind" school founded by Maezumi's Dharma heir Zen master Joko Beck; as well as the "San Francisco Zen Center" lineage established by Shunryu Suzuki Roshi; and the "Katagiri" lineage established by Suzuki's sometime associate, Dainin Katagiri Roshi which has a significant presence in the midwest.

A Soto reform school which emphasizes lay practice as well as incorporating a full koan curriculum, the Sanbo Kyodan (or Order of the Three Treasures) is represented in North America by Ruben Habito Roshi, as well as Robert Aitken Roshi's Diamond Sangha network, the Pacific Zen Institute led by John Tarrant Roshi, and Boundless Way Zen led by James Ishmael Ford, Roshi.

The single largest Zen lineage is the Korean derived Kwan Um School of Zen established by Zen Master Seung Sahn. There are also a number of Japanese derived Rinzai centers, most notably the "Rinzaiji" lineage of Kyozan Joshu Sasaki Roshi and the "Dai Bosatsu" lineage established by Eido Shimano Roshi. There are also a few centers based in Chinese Chan, most notable in that it has significant western leadership is the "Dharma Drum" lineage of Zen Master Sheng Yen.

The Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh established "The Order of Interbeing", a monastic and lay order based on the principles of Engaged Buddhism. His community is based in France at Plum Village, the meditation center he founded, but also has branches in America, and affiliated sanghas around the world.

Zen Meditation - The Seat of Enlightenment

Zazen is a particular kind of meditation, unique to Zen, that functions centrally as the very heart of the practice. In fact, Zen Buddhists are generally known as the "Meditation Buddhists." Basically, zazen is the study of the self.

The great Master Dogen said, *"To study the Buddha Way is to study the self, to study the self is to forget the self, and to forget the self is to be enlightened by the ten thousand things."* To be enlightened by the ten thousand things is to recognize the unity of the self and the ten thousand things. Upon his own enlightenment, Buddha was in seated meditation; Zen practice returns to the same seated meditation again and again. For two thousand five hundred years that meditation has continued, from generation to generation; it's the most important thing that has been passed on. It spread from India to China, to Japan, to other parts of Asia, and then finally to the West. It's a very simple practice. It's very easy to describe and very easy to follow. But like all other practices, it takes doing in order for it to happen.

We tend to see body, breath, and mind separately, but in zazen they come together as one reality. The first thing to pay attention to is the position of the body in zazen. The body has a way of communicating outwardly to the world and inwardly to oneself. How you position your body has a lot to do with what happens with your mind and your breath. Throughout the years of the evolution of Buddhism, the most effective positioning of the body for the practice of zazen has been the pyramid structure of the seated Buddha. Sitting on the floor is recommended because it is very stable. We use a zafu - a small pillow - to raise the behind just a little, so that the knees can touch the ground. With your bottom on the pillow and two knees touching the ground, you form a tripod base that gives three hundred and sixty-degree stability.



Burmese position

There are several different leg positions that are possible while seated this way. The first and simplest is the Burmese position, in which the legs are crossed and both feet rest flat on the floor. The knees should also rest on the floor, though sometimes it takes a bit of exercise to be able to get the legs to drop that far. After awhile the muscles will loosen up and the knees will begin to drop. To help that happen, sit on the front third of the zafu, shifting your body forward a little bit. By imagining the top of your head pushing upward to the ceiling and by stretching your body that way, get your spine straight - then just let the muscles go soft and relax. With the buttocks up on the zafu and your stomach pushing out a little, there will be a slight curve in the lower region of the back. In this position, it takes very little effort to keep the body upright.



Half Lotus

Another position is the *half lotus*, where the left foot is placed up onto the right thigh and the right leg is tucked under. This position is slightly asymmetrical and sometimes the upper body needs to compensate in order to keep itself absolutely straight.



Full Lotus position

By far the most stable of all the positions is the *full lotus*, where each foot is placed up on the opposite thigh. This is perfectly symmetrical and very solid. Stability and efficiency are the important reasons sitting cross-legged on the floor works so well. There is absolutely no esoteric significance to the different positions. What is most important in zazen is what you do with your mind, not what you do with your feet or legs.



Seiza position

There is also the *seiza position*. You can sit seiza without a pillow, kneeling, with the buttocks resting on the upturned feet, which form an anatomical cushion. Or you can use a pillow to keep the weight off your ankles. A third way of sitting seiza is to use the seiza bench. It keeps all the weight off your feet and helps to keep your spine straight.



Chair position

Finally, it's fine to sit in a chair with your feet flat on the floor. You can use the cushion, or zafu, the same way you would use it on the floor - sitting on the forward third of it. Alternatively, you can place the zafu at the small of the back. It's very important to keep the spine straight with the lower part of the back curved. All of the aspects of the posture that are important when seated on the floor are just as important when sitting in a chair.

The importance of keeping the back straight is to allow the diaphragm to move freely. The breathing you will be doing in zazen becomes very, very deep. Your abdomen will rise and fall much the same way an infant's belly rises and falls.

In general, as we mature, our breathing becomes restricted, and less and less complete. We tend to take shallow breaths in the upper part of the chest. Usually, we've got our belts on very tight or we wear tight clothing around the waist. As a result, deep, complete breathing rarely occurs. In zazen it is important to loosen up anything that is tight around the waist and to wear clothing that is non-binding. For instance, material should not gather behind the knees when you cross the legs, inhibiting circulation. Allow the diaphragm to move freely so that the breathing can be deep, easy, and natural. You don't have to control it. You don't have to make it happen. It will happen by itself if you assume the right posture and position your body properly.

Once you've positioned yourself, there are a few other things you can check on. The mouth is kept closed. Unless you have some kind of a nasal blockage, breathe through your nose. The tongue is pressed lightly against the upper palate. This reduces the need to salivate and swallow. The eyes are kept lowered, with your gaze resting on the ground about two or three feet in front of you. Your eyes will be mostly covered by your eyelids, which eliminates the necessity to blink repeatedly. The chin is slightly tucked in. Although zazen looks very disciplined, the muscles should be soft. There should be no tension in the body. It doesn't take strength to keep the body straight. The nose is centered in line with the navel, the upper torso leaning neither forward nor back.

The hands are folded in the cosmic mudra. The dominant hand is held palm up holding the other hand, also palm up, so that the knuckles of both hands overlap. If you're right-handed, your right hand is holding the left hand; if you're left-handed, your left hand is holding the right hand. The thumbs are lightly touching, thus the hands form an oval, which can rest on the upturned soles of your feet if you're sitting full lotus. If you're sitting Burmese, the mudra can rest on your thighs. The cosmic mudra tends to turn your attention inward.

There are many different ways of focusing the mind. In other practices, there are visual images called mandalas that are used as a point of concentration. There are mantras, or vocal images. There are different kinds of mudras used in various Eastern religions. In zazen, we focus on the breath. The breath is life. The word "spirit" means breath. The words "ki" in Japanese and "chi" in Chinese, meaning power or energy, both derive from breath. Breath is the vital force; it's the central activity of our bodies. Mind and breath are one reality: when your mind is agitated your breath is agitated; when you're nervous you breathe quickly and shallowly; when your mind is at rest the breath is deep, easy, and effortless.

It can be helpful to center your attention in the hara. The hara is a place within the body, located two inches below the navel. It's the physical and spiritual center of the body. Put your attention there; put your mind there. As you develop your zazen, you'll become more aware of the hara as the center of your attentiveness.

Begin rocking the body back and forth, slowly, in decreasing arcs, until you settle at your center of gravity. The mind is in the hara, hands are folded in the cosmic mudra, mouth is closed, tongue pressed on the upper palate. You're breathing through the nose and you're tasting the breath. Keep your attention on the hara and the breath. Imagine the breath coming down into the hara, the viscera, and returning from there. Make it part of the whole cycle of breathing.

We begin working on ourselves by counting the breath; we inhale and then count each exhalation, beginning with one and counting up to ten. When you get to ten, come back to one and start all over. The only agreement that you make with yourself in this process is that if your mind begins to wander - if you become aware that what you're doing is chasing thoughts - you will look at the thought, acknowledge it, and then deliberately and consciously let it go and begin the count again at one.

The counting is a feedback to help you know when your mind has drifted off. Each time you return to the breath you are empowering yourself with the ability to put your mind where you want it, when you want it there, for as long as you want it there. That simple fact is extremely important. We call this power of concentration joriki.

Joriki manifests itself in many ways. It's the center of the martial and visual arts in Zen. In fact, it's the source of all the activity of our lives.

When you've been practicing this process for a while, your awareness will sharpen. You'll begin to notice things that were always there but escaped your attention. Because of the preoccupation with the internal dialogue, you were too full to be able to see what was happening around you. The process of zazen begins to open that up.

When you're able to stay with the counting and repeatedly get to ten without any effort and without thoughts interfering, it's time to begin counting every cycle of the breath. Inhalation and exhalation will count as one, the next inhalation and exhalation as two. This provides less feedback, but with time you will need less feedback.

Eventually, you'll want to just follow the breath and abandon the counting altogether. Just be with the breath. Just be the breath. Let the breath breathe itself. That's the beginning of the falling away of body and mind. It takes some time and you shouldn't rush it; you shouldn't move too fast from counting every breath to counting every other breath and on to following the breath. If you move ahead prematurely, you'll end up not developing strong joriki. And it's that power of concentration that ultimately leads to what we call samadhi, or single-pointedness of mind.

In the process of working with the breath, the thoughts that come up, for the most part, will be just noise, just random thoughts. Sometimes, however, when you're in a crisis or involved in something important in your life, you'll find that the thought, when you let it go, will recur. You let it go again but it comes back, you let it go and it still comes back. Sometimes that needs to happen. Don't treat that as a failure; treat it as another way of practicing. This is the time to let the thought happen, engage it, let it run its full course. But watch it, be aware of it. Allow it to do what it's got to do, let it exhaust itself. Then release it, let it go. Come back again to the breath. Start at one and continue the process. Don't use zazen to suppress thoughts or issues that need to come up.

Scattered mental activity and energy keeps us separated from each other, from our environment, and from ourselves. In the process of sitting, the surface activity of our minds begins to slow down. The mind is like the surface of a pond - when the wind is blowing, the surface is disturbed and there are ripples. Nothing can be seen clearly because of the ripples; the reflected image of the sun or the moon is broken up into many fragments.

Out of that stillness, our whole life arises. If we don't get in touch with it at some time in our life, we will never get the opportunity to come to a point of rest. In deep zazen, deep samadhi, a person breathes at a rate of only two or three breaths a minute. Normally, at rest, a person will breathe about fifteen breaths a minute - even when we're relaxing, we don't quite relax. The more completely your mind is at rest, the more deeply your body is at rest. Respiration, heart rate, circulation, and metabolism slow down in deep zazen. The whole body comes to a point of stillness that it doesn't reach even in deep sleep. This is a very important and very natural aspect of being human. It is not something particularly unusual. All creatures of the earth have learned this and practice this. It's a very important part of being alive and staying alive: the ability to be completely awake.

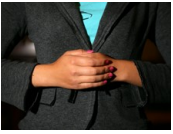
Once the counting of the breath has been really learned, and concentration, true one-pointedness of mind, has developed, we usually go on to other practices such as koan study or shikantaza ("just sitting"). This progression should not be thought of in terms of "gain" or "promotion"; that would imply that counting the breath was just a preparation for the "real" thing. Each step is the real thing. Whatever our practice is, the important thing is to put ourselves into it completely. When counting the breath, we just count the breath.

It is also important to be patient and persistent; to not be constantly thinking of a goal, of how the sitting practice may help us. We just put ourselves into it and let go of our thoughts, opinions, positions - everything our minds hold onto. The human mind is basically free, not clinging. In zazen we learn to uncover that mind, to see who we really are.

Hand Positions



Gassho - Hold the palms and fingers of both hands together. Your arms should be slightly away from your chest, your elbows should extend outward from your sides in a straight line parallel with the floor. The tips of your fingers are approximately the same level as your nose. In this expression of respect, the two hands (duality) are joined together, expressing mind and body coming together as "One Mind."



Shashu - This is the hand position for walking while in our meditation area. It is used especially during walking meditation (Kinhin). Put the thumb of your left hand in the middle of the palm and make a fist around it. Place the fist in front of your chest, about solar plexus height. Cover the fist with your right hand. Keep your elbows away from your body, forming a straight line with both forearms.

Kinhin - Walking Practice

Kinhin gives you a chance to stretch your legs between sits, but it is not "break time." It gives you the chance to continue your practice as you perform a more active task. Ultimately, your Zen practice will integrate into your daily life. Kinhin is a transition stage. When you sit silently on the cushion, your body is relaxed and your mind is not distracted by outside demands. The circumstances are ideal for Zen practice, but we can't sit on a cushion forever. As we walk silently and mindfully, we have the opportunity to continue our practice under just slightly more demanding circumstances. As you carry your practice with you through each stage, it becomes a habit, and it's easier to bring the mindfulness you find on the cushion into your daily life.

1. When you hear the ending bell, put your hands together in gassho and bow. If your legs/feet are sore or asleep, you can rub them. When you stand up, do so mindfully and at a good tempo, not hurriedly so you lose awareness. (If your legs/feet have completely fallen asleep during a sit and won't support you, just remain seated. After the Kinhin line has left, stretch your legs until they come back to life, and then join the Kinhin line.)
2. Next adjust your cushion for the next sitting period. In gassho, bow toward your seat, turn clockwise and stand facing the aisle in gassho.
3. When the timekeeper signals with a "clap" of the wooden blocks, everyone bows to each other and mindfully moves outside, puts on their shoes, and mindfully move to form the line for walking meditation. If you are new, we suggest you aren't at the front of the line, or at the back, but in the middle. That way you can follow the pace and posture by following along with others.
4. With the next "clap" we bow and begin to practice slow kinhin, walking with our hands in shashu.
5. **Slow Kinhin** - Move your feet very slowly, taking about a half step forward with each exhalation. Be mindful of the lifting, moving and placing of the foot, of the shifting of your body weight as you move one foot to the other. Place heel first, then toe, as in normal walking. Keep with the pace the timekeeper sets; don't collide with the person in front of you or let too much space grow between you.
6. If you need to use the bathroom or get a drink of water, you can bow briefly and step out of the Kinhin line. When you return, stand with your hands in gassho. When the line comes past you, bow briefly to the person who was behind you in line, then resume your place and continue walking.
7. When slow Kinhin ends, the timekeeper will sound the clappers once. We bow while in shashu, and then proceed to fast Kinhin.
8. **Fast Kinhin** - Just like slow Kinhin, we move mindfully, but now at a brisk pace. We keep pace with the speed that the timekeeper sets; don't collide with the person in front of you or let too much space grow between you.
9. When fast Kinhin ends, the timekeeper will sound the clappers once. We all then put our hands in gassho and, following the Kinhin line, we make our way back to the meditation room, Bow as we enter the doorway, and move to our cushions.
10. When you arrive at your cushion, face it, bow in gassho, then turn clockwise and stand facing the aisle in gassho.
11. When everyone has returned and is standing in gassho together, the timekeeper will sound the clappers once; we all bow in gassho to each other and take our seats. Prepare for the next round of zazen, as the start of the next period is just moments away.

Zazen Checklist

Zazen, the formal practice of seated meditation, is the cornerstone of Zen training. Za means “sitting”. Zen - which derives from the Sanskrit “dhyana” - means meditation. In its beginning stages, zazen is a practice of concentration, with a focus on following or counting the breath. But more than just meditation, zazen is a powerful tool of self-inquiry, boundless in its scope and ability to reveal the true basis of reality. Through zazen, we realize the unity of the self with all of creation, which has the potential to transform our lives and those of others.

There are five basic sitting positions from which to choose: the full lotus, the half-lotus, burmese, seiza (kneeling), or you may use a chair. The essential point is to find a position which you can maintain. Most of us can tolerate some minor discomfort, but if a particular position is unduly painful, find another one that isn't. Weight, flexibility, and body type all influence your experience of sitting, so be mindful of your body.

In each of these positions: Seat yourself on the forward third of your cushion (or chair), using an extra cushion if needed, so that your hips are slightly higher than your knees. Tuck in your chin slightly and make sure your nose is aligned with your navel and your ears aligned with your shoulders. Your head should rest squarely over your spine and not tilt or lean in any direction. If you notice any tension in your shoulders, relax them. Slightly arching the small of the back so that the pelvis tilts forward, extend your spine upward. Avoid straining or tensing either your back or abdominal muscles. To center your body, sway several times from the hips in decreasing arcs until you drift to a stop. In this position, your posture is upright, leaning neither left nor right, forward nor backward.

Place your left hand, palm up, on the palm of your right hand. Make a gentle oval by touching the tips of your thumbs together. Let your hands rest in your lap. Keep your eyes slightly open, looking downward in the direction of the floor 2 or 3 feet in front of you. Let them drift out of focus into a soft lazy gaze. If facing a wall, look downward at about a 45-degree angle, and let your eyes drift out of focus.

Take a few deep slow breaths through the mouth, and exhale freely, to settle mind and body. Close your lips and place the tip of your tongue on the roof of your mouth just behind the front teeth. Swallow any saliva in your mouth. This will empty your mouth of air, creating a slight vacuum. Avoid tensing your jaws. Breathe quietly through your nose. Let your breathing become deep and natural, without particularly straining to control it.

Pay close attention to your breathing, to the sensations of breath leaving and entering your body with each exhalation and inhalation. Be aware of the movement of your lower abdomen. As you inhale, notice it expand; as you exhale, notice it contracting. Direct your attention to the center of your lower abdomen, about two or three inches below the navel, or onto the palm of your left hand. As you breathe, you may count each exhalation, repeating the process counting from one to ten. When you have counted ten breaths, return to “one,” and begin again. If you lose your count, gently return to one. Do this until you can focus your attention and maintain it. Once you are able to count your breaths, you may be ready to follow your breaths without counting. Simply follow your breathing attentively. When you notice your mind wandering or pursuing thoughts, memories, emotions, etc., simply notice this and return your attention to your breath in the present moment.

Make sure your whole body is arranged the way you want it before beginning zazen. If using reading materials, set them off to your side or behind you to avoid distractions. Keep as still as possible during zazen. Let your attention remain with your breath. Be patient with yourself, as it may take some time before you can reliably focus your attention for an extended period of time.

At first, you may only sit a few times a week, for a few minutes. At your own pace, gradually increase the frequency and duration of your sitting until you can sit daily for 30 to 35 minutes at a time. Don't rush this process, but allow your mind and body to gradually adjust to the practice. Some people prefer to sit in the morning, others at night, and some do both. Experiment to find which of these works best for you, then make it your own regular practice. When practicing, it is useful to sit in the same place and at the same time of day, if possible.

Patience, consistency, and perseverance are important in establishing and settling into your practice.

Buddhist Altar & Offering Symbolism

An **altar** serves as a focal point, and expression of one's Buddhist training. It is usual to offer a stick of incense at the altar before beginning a period of meditation, while reciting scriptures or when offering merit for a friend in need. An altar may also be used as a means to ask for the help and guidance of one's True Self (Buddha Nature). The symbolism for this "call and answer" can be found within the altar arrangement itself.

Water represents both the stillness and flow of meditation. The water-offering cup occupies the very center of the altar. Likewise, when we are quiet within ourselves we can hear the still, small voice of our Buddha Nature, which is often drowned out by the noise of our thoughts and opinions. To ask a true question one must be still enough to hear the answer. Keep the cup filled and change the water regularly.

Flowers are an attractive, but fleeting, phenomena. Likewise, all things are constantly changing and cannot be grasped as a lasting refuge. To understand this is to see impermanence. To recognize impermanence is to awaken the Mind that "Seeks the Way" which looks beyond the surface appearance of things to "That which is Eternal and Unchanging". Silk flowers, or a potted plant, are often used instead of cut flowers.

A **statue** of a Buddha or Bodhisattva represents "That which we seek to reunite with", our True Self. The statue itself is not worshipped. Nor is the figure that the statue represents worshipped. The statue is only symbolic of character traits we already possess. It is a reflection of our own True Nature. It may be good to place the statue on a **plinth** or box to raise it above the altar surface. The meaning here is that one must be willing to elevate oneself to the level of the Teaching and not attempt to bring it down to one's own level of understanding. The Cosmic Buddha meets us halfway, but we are the ones who must make the effort to change.

A **candle** stands for the light of wisdom, or religious insight, that comes forth from our True Self. Wisdom is not a collection of ideas or knowledge but a genuine understanding of the way things are. Like a bright lamp brought into a dark room, wisdom has the power to dispel ignorance and fear and illuminate what needs to be done. A simple candle or electric light is adequate.

Incense symbolizes training. We may offer incense at the altar for several reasons: to ask for help with an attitude of mind that we wish to change, as an offering of gratitude or merit, or the wish to understand a Teaching more deeply. Having sat still (water) and looked beyond impermanence (flowers) for help from "That which is Greater than self" (Buddha / Bodhisattva statue) we hear the voice of our own Buddha Nature speaking to us (candle flame). Insight alone, however, is not enough. One must be willing to put that Teaching into practice. Thus, incense symbolizes our resolve to train. When lit by the flame of wisdom and offered in the incense burner, what was once hard and brittle is gradually transformed into the fragrance of the Dharma, which permeates all things.

The **incense burner** itself is shaped like a small cauldron, another symbol for resolve. Just as great heat can melt various objects into one mass of metal so, too, by turning up the fire under our own Buddhist training (i.e., by becoming sufficiently motivated) we become One with the Truth. Fill the burner with fine sand or incense ash, and sift out the incense stubs periodically through a wire strainer. An incense wheel may also be used.

Zen Buddhism Beginner's Booklist

The Three Pillars of Zen

by Roshi Philip Kapleau
Publisher: Anchor
ISBN: 0385260938

Zen Meditation in Plain English

by John Daishin Buksbazen
Publisher: Wisdom Publications
ISBN: 0861713168

Way of Zen

by Tenshin Fletcher, David Scott
Publisher: Thomas Dunne Books
ISBN: 0312206208

Taking the Path of Zen

by Robert Aitken
Publisher: North Point Press
ISBN: 0865470804

Buddhism Plain and Simple

by Steve Hagen
Publisher: Broadway Books
ISBN: 0767903323

Meditation Now or Never

by Steve Hagen
Publisher: HarperOne
ISBN-10: 0061143294

The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching

by Thich Nhat Hanh
Publisher: Broadway Books

Finding the Still Point (Book and CD edition)

by John Daido Looi
Publisher: Shambhala
ISBN-10: 1590304799

ISBN: 0767903692

Old Path White Clouds

by Thich Nhat Hanh
Publisher: Parallax Press
ISBN-10: 0938077260

Buddha

by Karen Armstrong
Publisher: Viking Press
ISBN: 0670891932

A Path With Heart

by Jack Kornfield
Publisher: Bantam Doubleday Dell Pub
ISBN: 0553372114

Start Where You Are

by Pema Chodron
Publisher: Shambhala Publications
ISBN: 1570628394

Meditation For Dummies (Book and CD edition)

by Stephan Bodian
Publisher: For Dummies; 2nd edition
ISBN-10: 0471777749

Beginner's Mind: An Introduction to Zen Buddhism

by Ryuko Tim Langdell, Roshi
Publisher: StillCenter Publications/Oxbridge Pub.
ISBN-10: 0999092820

Zen Buddhism Intermediate Booklist

Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind

by Shunryu Suzuki
Publisher: Weatherhill
ISBN: 0834800799

Zen Flesh Zen Bones

by Paul Reps
Publisher: Tuttle Publishing
ISBN-10: 0804831866

Buddhism Without Beliefs

by Stephen Batchelor
Publisher: Riverhead Books
ISBN: 1573226564

Being Zen: Bringing Meditation to Life

by Ezra Bayda
Publisher: Shambhala
ISBN-10: 1590300130

Everyday Zen: Love and Work

by Charlotte Joko Beck
Publisher: Harper
ISBN: 0060607343

Nothing Special : Living Zen

by Charlotte J. Beck
Publisher: Harper
ISBN: 0062511173

Opening The Hand of Thought

by Kosho Uchiyama
Publisher: Wisdom Publications
ISBN: 0861713575

The Wholehearted Way: A Translation of Eihei Dogen's Bendowa

by Eihei Dogen, Kosho Uchiyama, Shohaku Okumura
Publisher: Tuttle Publishing
ISBN: 080483105X

Flowers Fall: A Commentary on Zen Master Dogen's Genjokoan

by Hakuun Yasatani
Publisher: Shambhala
ISBN: 157062674X

How to Cook Your Life: From the Zen Kitchen to Enlightenment

by Eihei Dogen, Kosho Uchiyama Roshi (Translator)
Publisher: Shambhala
ISBN-10: 1590302915

Moon in a Dewdrop: Writings of Zen Master Dogen

by Eihei Dogen (Author), Kazuaki Tanahashi (Editor)
Publisher: North Point Press
ISBN-10: 086547186X

Instructions to the Cook

by Bernard Glassman
Publisher: Harmony/Bell Tower
ISBN-10: 0517888297

The Heart Sutra

By Red Pine (Bill Porter)
Publisher: Shoemaker & Hoard
ISBN: 1593760825

The Diamond Sutra

By Bill Porter (Red Pine)
Publisher: Counterpoint LLC
ISBN: 1593760825

The Platform Sutra: The Zen Teaching of Hui-neng

by Bill Porter (Red Pine)
Publisher: Shoemaker & Hoard
ISBN-10: 1593760868

Trust in Mind: The Rebellion of Chinese Zen/Hsin Hsin Ming

By Mu Soeng
Publisher: Wisdom Publications
ISBN: 0861713915

The Heart The Universe: Exploring The Heart Sutra

By Mu Soeng
Publisher: Wisdom Publications
ISBN: 0861715748

Branching Streams Flow in the Darkness: Zen Talks on the Sandokai

By Shunryu Suzuki
Publisher: University of California Press
ISBN: 0520232127

The Art of Just Sitting

by John Daido Looi
Publisher: Wisdom Publications, 2nd edition
ISBN-10: 086171394X

Sitting with Koans: Essential Writings on the Zen Practice of Koan Study

by John Daido Looi
Publisher: Wisdom Publications
ISBN-10: 0861713699

Zen Buddhism Advanced Booklist

The Record of Transmitting the Light: Zen Master

Keizan's Denkoroku

by Francis Dojun Cook

Publisher: Wisdom Publications

ISBN-10: 0861713303

The True Dharma Eye: Zen Master Dogen's Three Hundred Koans

by John Daido Looi

Publisher: Shambhala

ISBN-10: 1590302427

The Blue Cliff Record

by Thomas Cleary

Publisher: Shambhala

ISBN-10: 159030232X

Dogen's Extensive Record: A Translation of the Eihei Koroku

by Reb Anderson

Publisher: Wisdom Publications

ISBN-10: 0861713052

Zen's Chinese Heritage - The Masters & Their Teachings

by Andrew Ferguson

Publisher: Wisdom Publications

ISBN-10: 0861711637

The Book of Equanimity: Illuminating Classic Zen Koans

by Gerry Shishin Wick

Publisher: Wisdom Publications

ISBN-10: 0861713877

The Lankavatara Sutra: An Epitomized Version

by D.T. Suzuki

Publisher: Provenance Editions

ISBN-10: 0972635742

The Vimalakirti Sutra

by Burton Watson

Publisher: Columbia University Press

ISBN-10: 0231106572

Threefold Lotus Sutra

by Bunno Kato

Publisher: Charles E Tuttle Co

ISBN-10: 4333002087

Treasury of the True Dharma Eye: Zen Master

Dogen's Shobo Genzo

by Kazuaki Tanahashi

Publisher: Shambhala

ISBN-10: 1590304748

LINKS

Buddhist Supplies-

Zen Mountain Monastery <http://www.dharma.net/monstore>
Dharma Crafts <http://www.dharmacrafts.com>
Samadhi Store <http://www.samadhicushions.com>
Carolina Morning <http://www.zafu.net>
Chopa Imports <http://www.chopa.com>
Great Patience Zen Stitchery <http://www.zenstitchery.com>
Four Gates <http://www.fourgates.com>
Myojo Morning Star <http://www.myojostar.com>
Yoga Mats <http://www.yogamats.com>
Body Mind Wisdom <http://www.bodymindwisdom.com>

Some quality incense retailers-

Scents of Earth <http://store.yahoo.com/scents-of-earth>
Ecclecstacy Arts <http://www.ecclecstacy.com/incense.html>
Essence of the Ages <http://www.essenceoftheages.com>

Buddhist Information Websites-

Yokoji Zen Center Instructional Videos <http://zmc.org/video>
About dot com <http://buddhism.about.com>
Buddhist Studies Virtual Library <http://www.ciolek.com/WWWVL-Zen.html>
Tricycle Magazine <http://www.tricycle.com>
Buddhanet <http://www.buddhanet.net>
Journal of Buddhist Ethics <http://jbe.gold.ac.uk>
Dharmanet <http://www.dharmanet.org>
Shambhala Sun Magazine <http://www.lionsroar.com>
Zen Stories To Tell Your Neighbor <http://www.rider.edu/users/suler/zenstory/zenstory.html>
Buddhist History Links <http://www.guidetoonlineschools.com/library/buddhist-studies>
Official Soto Zen Website <http://global.sotozen-net.or.jp/eng>

