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Zen And Japanese Culture (Mythos: The Princeton/Bollingen Series In World Mythology)



Synopsis

Zen and Japanese Culture is one of the twentieth century's leading works on Zen, and a valuable source for those wishing to understand its concepts in the context of Japanese life and art. In simple, often poetic, language, Daisetz Suzuki describes his conception of Zen and its historical evolution. He connects Zen to the philosophy of the samurai, and subtly portrays the relationship between Zen and swordsmanship, haiku, tea ceremonies, and the Japanese love of nature. Suzuki's contemplative work is enhanced by anecdotes, poetry, and illustrations showing silk screens, calligraphy, and examples of architecture. Since its original publication in 1938, this important work has played a major role in shaping conceptions of Zen's influence on Japanese traditional arts. Richard Jaffe's introduction acquaints a new generation of readers with Suzuki's life and career in both Japan and America. Jaffe discusses how *Zen and Japanese Culture* was received upon its first publication and analyzes the book in light of contemporary criticism, especially by scholars of Japanese Buddhism.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Praise for Princeton's previous editions: "As one turns the pages of this delightful book, one seems to catch intimations of how and why certain aspects of the 'spirit of Zen' are making themselves felt in America today."--The New York Times
Praise for Princeton's previous editions: "[In] Dr. Suzuki's beautiful book, . . . the cults of tea, sword, archery, garden, painting, handwriting are shown as

separate petals of that precious efflorescence which, in spite of history, madness and the disturbed surface of the tangible world, are celebrated today, inside and outside of many golden pavilions."--Lincoln Kirstein, The Nation

Daisetz T. Suzuki (1870-1966) was Japan's foremost authority on Zen Buddhism and the author of more than one hundred books on the subject.

I have great appreciation for D.T. Suzuki, but was surprised by how much I liked this book. Learning how Japanese Culture has utilized Zen made it much more understandable as something that goes well beyond simply religion. The chapters on sword fighting were especially interesting in the way they showed how use of the sword was directly enhanced by Zen mindfulness. They showed how unity of mind and spirit vitalizes the performance of something seemingly quite practical.

Transcending life and death takes on a whole new meaning if you have a sword in your hands and are facing an opponent who wants to kill you. Suddenly it is not just an idea, it is as real as real can get, and there is no time for hesitation or thinking-you must act.

Mr Suzuki writes with a spare, elegant decorum that is direct, meaningful, and touching. the more I read, the more I like

A towering book of scholarship from the mind of a Japanese Zen master with an almost mystical mastery of English prose. One needn't be a student of Buddhism or particularly interested in the history of Zen and its historical impact to benefit mightily from this book. It's beautiful literature! The passages (in two generous chapters) on Zen and Swordsmanship stand with the best in English literature. Suzuki's perspective is broad and inclusive, if entirely his own, and includes the historic relationship of Zen to nature, art, haiku, and more narrowly the Japanese Tea Ceremony. It's a rewarding book that only deepens with each reading. Unconditional recommendation.

Very satisfied.

Dr. Suzuki and his wife, an American scholar and translator are able to offer comparisons between the two cultures and present the differences in a writing style that is unusually clear and insightful for the English reader.

Through this delightful and profound text the concept of Zen is presented as the facets in a diamond. Suzuki does so by presenting Zen in a variety of ways: from a swordsman's perspective, painting and other art forms. The simplicity of Suzuki's style never cheapens nor detracts from the teachings; on the contrary, it seamlessly guides us through all the nuances and difficult to explain concepts. His writing style contributes to the "feeling", if I may say so, of the flow of Zen. It is not dogma. It does not pretend to give answers. It is a guide or portal to the way of Zen and gives us an awareness that may help us find our own way to it. If organized religion does not do it for you this may be the path you are looking for.

Excellent book. You don't have to be into Zen to enjoy it. It goes over different aspects of Japanese culture and how they have evolved from Zen teachings. Especially powerful is the part about the art of swordsmanship.

amazing book! he breaks down japanese culture in an easy to understand and relate to way coming from a complete outsiders perspective on the culture and zen.

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