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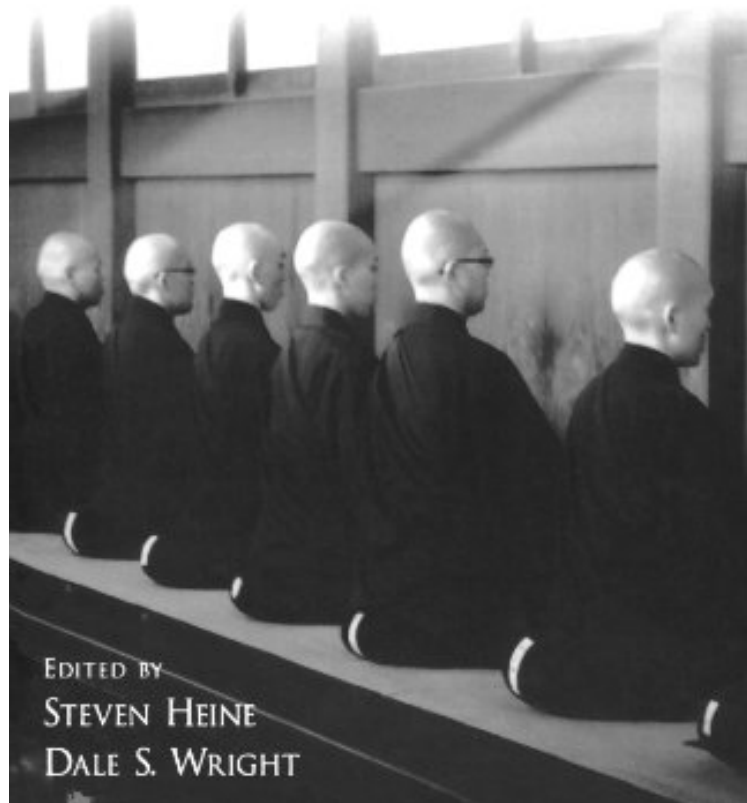
Zen Ritual: Studies of Zen Buddhist Theory in Practice

From Steven Heine

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ZEN RITUAL

STUDIES OF ZEN BUDDHIST
THEORY IN PRACTICE



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#654404 in Books Steven Heine 2007-11-14 Original language: English PDF # 1 6.10 x 1.00 x 9.10l, 1.02
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From Steven Heine : Zen Ritual: Studies of Zen Buddhist Theory in Practice before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Zen Ritual: Studies of Zen Buddhist Theory in Practice:

17 of 19 people found the following review helpful. In-depth analysis on the actual practices (from Zen's early history through the present) of many Zen rituals By Ted Biringer Book Review (corrected - I wrongly attributed the quote from

Albert Welter to Michel Mohr) Zen Ritual: Studies of Zen Buddhist Theory in Practice This book is a welcome addition to the growing collection of literature revealing the huge gap between the actual practices of the various Zen schools and the common Western ideals of what Zen Buddhism represents. It presents in-depth analysis on the actual practices (from Zen's early history through the present) of many Zen rituals. These studies focus on Zen rituals as diverse as "Dharma Transmission" and "Zazen", to the rituals to "Glorify the Emperor" and "Protect the Country." For those readers familiar with Zen only through "romantic" treatments of it by charismatic popularizers, this book may be an eye-opening read. For instance, the actual incorporation of Zen into Japan seems to have had little to do with "spiritual realization." As Albert Welter writes: "While it is commonly supposed that early Kamakura bakufu leaders were attracted to Zen for spiritual reasons and for its discipline and rough and ready call to action that was part and parcel of samurai life, nothing could be further from the truth. Early Zen patrons looked to Zen ... to honor the dead, ensure victory in warfare, and alleviate sufferings associated with drought and natural disaster." While many of the truths revealed and outlined in this wonderful and readable collection of essays have already been revealed (or at least implicated) in previous works, this book brings them together in one place offering an overview of the actual activities and functions of Zen institutions. While many westerners have become aware of some discrepancies between romantic accounts of the Zen schools and the actual theories and practices of those schools, some may be astonished at just how wide these discrepancies actually are. Most westerners associate Zen with "koans", "zazen" (meditation), enlightenment, etc. Many would not have guessed that, in the words of T. Griffith Foulk: "...funerals and memorial services are the mainstay of the Zen tradition in Japan and its most important contribution to Japanese Buddhism at large." In fact, outside of actual "training centers", it is only a very small minority of Zen priests that engage in anything like "koan-introspection" or "zazen." Even in the so-called "training centers," reports Foulk: "Sutra-chanting services (fugin) take up more of the time of monks in Zen monasteries than any other kind of observance. They are regarded as a vital part of the daily (as well as monthly) routine, for it is through them that all the spirits enshrined on altars in various monastery buildings are nourished and propitiated." One essay, "Zazen as an Enactment Ritual," written by Taigen Dan Leighton, a scholar, Soto priest, and Dharma heir, offers some "unorthodox" information on Dogen's "zazen." For instance, Leighton offers Dogen's own writings as evidence that: "It is clear in context that Dogen considers zazen the core ritual but still simply one of the many ritual activities in the everyday life of the monks' hall." This may not sound all that radical, but anyone that has had the "pleasure" of discussing the significance of "zazen" with western Soto "adherents" will find the confession that zazen "is simply one of the many ritual activities in the everyday life of the monks' hall", unusual, to say the least. Leighton, as a learned scholar, is one of the few Soto "Dharma heirs" that is willing to acknowledge the validity of many things in Dogen's record that contradict much of what is postulated by "orthodox" Soto adherents. Among these are the notions of progressive practice, the validity of "enlightenment" experiences, and the necessity of study and right understanding in authentic Zen practice-realization. Another interesting essay offers a deep analysis and overview of the ritual to "Glorify the Emperor." This ritual is so important in both the Rinzaï and Soto schools in Japan that it is elaborately carried out at least 26 times a year in all the major monasteries. This was one ritual that some may not realize was fully endorsed by Dogen--and indeed, this book reveals that every single one of the rituals that Dogen dismissed in his "Bendowa" was actively encouraged and practiced by him and his followers. This book also offers the first in-depth analysis on the practice of "kinhin" (walking meditation) in the Soto school of Zen. Said to have been passed down from Dogen, David E. Riggs reveals that this practice was actually devised about 500 years after Dogen's death. The essay on "Dharma Transmission" is perhaps one of the most important revelations for modern western students. While many are aware of the untenability of anything like an "unbroken" line of Transmission from the Buddha to any modern Zen master, the details of the corruption of "Dharma Transmission" offered here force us to question how this ritual could be considered as valid in any context today. Revealed are a number of "posthumous" and "proxy" Transmissions (Dharma Transmissions "after death" or through "mediators" without ever meeting the "successors"). For instance, the "Transmission" of Dogen's own teacher, Tendo Nyojo, was re-created by means of a posthumous transmission by proxy (a previous "master" took transmission from a "dead" master, then transmitted it to Tendo Nyojo's lineage). This collection of essays may be a disillusioning experience for those students with romantic notions of modern masters purported to be teaching the "authentic" or "true" Zen transmitted from master to disciple down through the ages. However, dis-illusion opens the door to authentic Zen. This book, along with others that reveal the truth behind the "orthodox" doctrines and institutional dogmas regarding the authentic message of Zen, allows students with genuine aspiration to see through the bias, narrow, and one-sided teachings inherent in hierarchical systems of all kinds. Rather than becoming the "followers" of those "creative interpretations" by the modern sects, schools, and institutions seeking to win power through authority, students become free to go directly to the sources of the Zen records themselves and discover the timeless wisdom embodied therein. Master Dogen, for one, seems to have foreseen the appropriation and corruption of his own teachings by future "authorities." In order to preserve the "True Dharma" he did not decide to establish "a sect" or a "school" or a "transmission" from successor to successor, but a written record: "I decided to compile a record of the customs and standards that I experienced first-hand in the Zen monasteries of the great Kingdom of Sung, together with a record of pro-found instruction from a [good] counselor which I have received and

main-tained. I will leave this record to people who learn in practice and are easy in the truth, so that they can know the right Dharma of the Buddha's lineage."Shobogenzo, Bendowa (Trans. Gudo Nishijima Mike Cross)This book, with its revelations of the gap between "authentic Zen" and the "teachings by Zen institutions" highlights the necessity for genuine students to look to the classic Zen records, rather than modern sects and schools, to discover the authentic message of the great Zen masters.23 of 25 people found the following review helpful. Rite On!By Crazy FoxFinally the study of Zen here in the States is coming of age, and this excellent book is a key contribution in that regard. Consisting of an assortment of interesting and scholarly articles by various writers, it is something of a successor to Heine and Wright's prior collections "The Zen Canon" and "Zen Classics" though it shifts the focus from Zen texts to Zen ritual praxis. Years ago I would've considered the very idea an oxymoron, since Zen has for decades been presented as spontaneous and anti-ritualistic--the reason I and others had this skewed impression are fully addressed herein, but the writers spend less time polemically slamming predecessors in the field and instead concentrate their efforts positively in exploring just what Zen rituals are and how they function in the Zen tradition, subtly overturning earlier misrepresentations in the process. This is one of the few studies of the subject that properly addresses what I actually saw Zen temples doing in Japan when I lived there back in the 1990's, too, and was something of a breath of fresh air in that regard--not abstract idealizations but concrete actualities. In fact, with the exception of the second article which looks at Chan historically in China, the overriding emphasis of this book is on Zen in Japan, with a fairly even balance between Soto and Rinzai Zen traditions along with extensive considerations of the role of Obaku Zen in their development. Each article is quite detailed but with larger implications, and the tone throughout is pleasantly academic and accessibly readable. I highly recommend this fine volume to anyone even remotely interested in Zen Buddhism: if you're an old hand at the topic you will surely find these articles every bit as fascinating and informative as I did, and if you're a beginner they'll correct for much of the misinformation out there in print (D.T. Suzuki especially) and nip such problems in the bud. One hand clapping, two thumbs up!The following articles are included in this book:"Introduction: Rethinking Ritual Practice in Zen Buddhism" by Dale S. Wright1. "Ritual in Japanese Zen Buddhism" by T. Griffith Foulk2. "Chan Rituals of the Abbots' Ascending the Dharma Hall to Preach" by Mario Poceski3. "Buddhist Rituals for Protecting the Country in Medieval Japan: Myoan Eisai's 'Regulations of the Zen School'" by Albert Welter4. "Is Dogen's Eihei-ji Temple 'Mt. T'ien-t'ung East'?: Geo-Ritual Perspectives on the Transition from Chinese Ch'an to Japanese Zen" by Steven Heine5. "Zazen as an Enactment Ritual" by Taigen Dan Leighton6. "Women and Dogen: Rituals Actualizing Empowerment and Healing" by Paula K.R. Arai7. "Invocation of the Sage: The Ritual to Glorify the Emperor" by Michel Mohr8. "Meditation in Motion: Textual Exegesis in the Creation of Ritual" by David E. Riggs9. "Dharma Transmission in Theory and Practice" by William M. Bodiford0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy D. K. CarriganGood book.

When books about Zen Buddhism began appearing in Western languages just over a half-century ago, there was no interest whatsoever in the role of ritual in Zen. Indeed, what attracted Western readers' interest was the Zen rejection of ritual. The famous 'Beat Zen' writers were delighted by the Zen emphasis on spontaneity as opposed to planned, repetitious action, and wrote inspirationally about the demythologized, anti-ritualized spirit of Zen. Quotes from the great Zen masters supported this understanding of Zen, and led to the fervor that fueled the opening of Zen centers throughout the West. Once Western practitioners in these centers began to practice Zen seriously, however, they discovered that zazen - Zen meditation - is a ritualized practice supported by centuries-old ritual practices of East Asia. Although initially in tension with the popular anti-ritual image of ancient Zen masters, interest in Zen ritual has increased along with awareness of its fundamental role in the spirit of Zen. Eventually, Zen practitioners would form the idea of no-mind, or the open and awakened state of mind in which ingrained habits of thinking give way to more receptive, direct forms of experience. This notion provides a perspective from which ritual could gain enormous respect as a vehicle to spiritual awakening, and thus this volume seeks to emphasize the significance of ritual in Zen practice. Containing 9 articles by prominent scholars about a variety of topics, including Zen rituals kinhin and zazen, this volume covers rituals from the early Chan period to modern Japan. Each chapter covers key developments that occurred in the Linji/Rinzai and Caodan/ Soto schools of China and Japan, describing how Zen rituals mold the lives and characters of its practitioners, shaping them in accordance with the ideal of Zen awakening. This volume is a significant step towards placing these practices in a larger historical and analytical perspective.

"These essays are valuable because they reflect a crucial sea change in the contemporary study of religion: a shift away from the study of what religion says it is about (as explained in sacred texts) to what religion is actually about (as discovered in historical records and sociological observation)."--Buddhadharma"This impressive collection of essays by prominent Zen scholars should dispel the popular notion of Zen as a religious experience independent of ritual and institutional structures. The writers explore a range of ritual activities in the tradition, including rituals to protect the emperor and the country, formulaic sermons, seated and walking meditation, empowerment and healing rituals conducted by nuns, and a dharma-transmission ceremony recently formulated for North American Zen. This volume fills an important lacuna in Zen Studies, and it merits a close reading by anyone interested in ritual, Buddhism, or East

Asian cultures." --Christopher Ives, author of *Zen Awakening and Society*"*Zen Ritual* is an excellent volume and should be of great interest to scholars of East Asian Buddhism, be useful in upper-level undergraduate courses, and may also challenge Western Zen practitioners to further refine and define their own traditions vis-a-vis Japanese Zen. Each essay has something interesting to contribute, and together they demonstrate unequivocally that Zen, like all Buddhism, is inextricably associated with many kinds of ritual and that we cannot hope to understand Zen without understanding its rituals." --*Journal of Japanese Studies*"Ten excellent scholars contribute nine chapters (plus an introduction) that cover such aspects as women's rituals of 'actualizing empowerment,' meditation as a rite of enactment of original enlightenment (in Dogen's enigmatic formation), and dharma transmission...Highly recommended." --*Choice*About the AuthorSteven Heine is Professor of Religious Studies and History and Director of the Institute for Asian Studies at Florida International University. Dale S. Wright is David B. and Mary H. Gamble Professor of Religious Studies and Asian Studies at Occidental College. They are the coeditors of *The Koan, Zen Canon, and Zen Classics*.