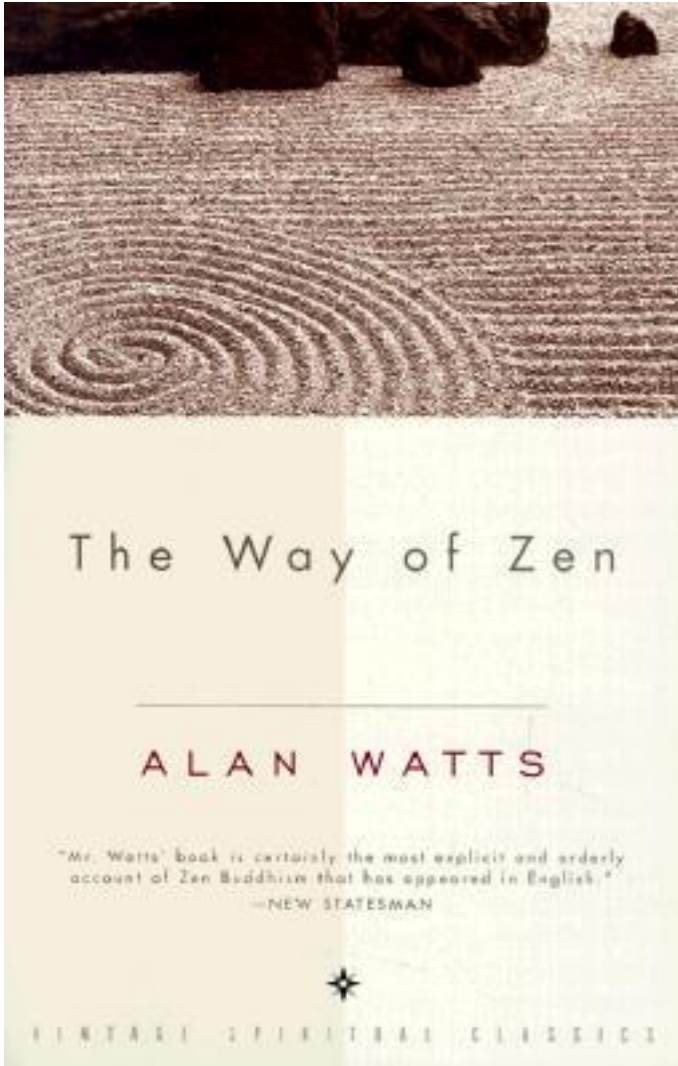


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**Alan W. Watts**

**The Way of Zen**



Title: The Way of Zen

Author: Alan W. Watts

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## Description

In his definitive introduction to Zen Buddhism, Alan Watts explains the principles and practices of this ancient religion to Western readers. With a rare combination of freshness and lucidity, he delves into the origins and history of Zen to explain what it means for the world today with incredible clarity. Watts saw Zen as “one of the most precious gifts of Asia to the world,” and in *The Way of Zen* he gives this gift to readers everywhere.

## Insightful reviews

Richard: Written in Watts' eminently readable attractive prose style, concise and provocative, *The Way of Zen* has annoyed American practitioners since its 1957 publication. Philip Kapleau went out of his way to denounce it in the introduction to his *Three Pillars of Zen* for downplaying zazen.

Watts' critique of zazen does in fact have merit, to the extent that Buddhadharma is reduced to sitting and nothing else. The other very interesting point he makes in his chapter on meditation is the introduction of Tariki or Other Power, the way of Shin Buddhism. He mentions Shinran Shonin (founder of the Jodo Shin Shu sect) and the myokonin Kichibei to show the possibility of another way to come to realization.

Nico Vlaming: Great insights can be obtained while reading this book which is why I think it is worth a lot. The beginning of the book I found a little hard to get through because I had a hard time reconstructing the historical narrative of Watts in my own mind, but fortunately it is sprinkled with clear thoughts and great lessons. The rest of the book was very readable to me. A great many points of pause to reflect upon the given information or on the experience the words evoke makes me value this book very much.

I'd recommend it to anyone.

Read selectively, look for the gems. You might even reach nirvana just by reading this book that sometimes has the quality of a guided meditation.

I learned so much. Hope it brings you as much.

A: I picked this up on a whim whilst searching for books on Buddhism at the library. Actually, an online friend years ago had mentioned Watts among several other recommendations on the subject of Buddhism, so as I was searching this one immediately popped out. I wasn't interested in reading about Zen specifically, but then it's not something I know a ton about and the book was a pretty reasonable length, so why not?

I'm glad I got this book, because now I feel much more knowledgeable and conversant on the subject of Zen, along with feeling a little more confirmed on my opinion of Buddhism in the general sense. What I like primarily is that Watts very clearly lays out a history of Buddhism, its historical foundations in Vedantic religion/philosophy, and its travel through China to Japan. He covers the influences of Confucianism and more notably Taoism, from which Zen gets its emphasis on unfettered naturalness, and then moves on to the growth of Zen monastic tradition and related practice. Like Zen itself, Watts's style is straightforward and unfettered by

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terminology. He has a knack for translating sometimes difficult Eastern concepts into a Western context, showing the limitations of that context and highlighting the common mistranslation of said concepts. He uses concrete metaphors and sometimes comparisons to Western philosophical/religious concepts to clarify, which for someone like me is always the clearest and easiest approach.

I didn't personally find the approach too meandering or overly prone to tangents--or, if there were tangents, they seemed clearly enough related to the subject at hand to maintain focus/interest. He packs the text with lots of references and footnotes, and there's a nice thick bibliography I'll be scouring later tonight. The last chapter on Zen aesthetics was mostly redux for me and will be for anyone who's studied Chinese and Japanese art in any depth. I took a class on Japanese art in college and while we didn't go in too much depth with Zen, we did cover enough that I understood the basics. He does go into some detail as well on haiku and Zen forms of poetry, which might be helpful for those trying to understand the forms better beyond simply construction and delve into the necessary philosophical underpinnings.

While he kinda hurries through the aesthetics to the conclusion, I nevertheless liked how he pulled it all together. Overall, it's very effective at what it aims to do (inform the reader in detail on Zen Buddhism), and it gave me exactly what I needed without any irritations or distractions. There were a few instances where its age showed, being that this was written prior to the 60's, with its explosion of interest in Eastern and "alternative" belief systems, but for the most part it has a timeless feel and seems as useful today as it must have been 50 years ago.

Rick Goff: Wow! This little publication is astounding in its efficiency. It takes a philosophical subject that's in each method overseas to the fashionable Western mind. It offers history, philosophy, perform and artwork feedback - in 201 pages total! The booklet is straightforward to eat yet pleasant in its content. p.s. i admire the topic.

Elwood D Pennypacker: this is Elwood's manner of Zen on a given day:-Breakfast: domestic cooked One huge jumbo egg, cooked sunnyside or over easy. occasionally scramble with cheese, vegetables, and spices.-Coffee, plenty of it. trade among cups of black and cups of heavy cream (use part n part as an alternative)-Read-Public Radio and podcasts of public radio-like quality-Water all day till 3:00 tea rite (tea can also be coffee)-If operating in an office, play very loud punk music-If operating at home, play public radio-If now not working, workout after which search for work-Lunch: if working, gentle and cheap, made of groceries; if no longer operating - giant Italian-style 2 hour lunch. In both version, plenty of cheese. As a compromise among the styles, one might partake in a British/Irish kind pub lunch on a once-a-week basis.-After lunch, if working: write day-by-day letter to boss to persuade them to institute an incredible Italian-style 2 hour lunch. Then resume enjoying very loud punk music.-After work, if operating - exercise. If necessary, a drink or with alcohol sooner than exercise. Play very loud punk music. After exercise, play very outdated radio show.-Night time: trade among seeing associates in social settings and falling asleep instantly to any kind of entertainment. -Dinner: until seeing neighbors in social setting, make a house cooked meal from groceries-Weekends (for people with fastened Monday to Friday schedules): exercise, grocery purchasing ritual, laundry, entertainments

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Dimitris Hall: Alan Watts is taken into account by means of many because the bringer of jap philosophy to the west, a Marco Polo or Carlos Castañeda of Zen and Buddhism. This honour is under no circumstances unwarranted; I don't imagine I've ever learn whatever at the topic which used to be this transparent or within which the writer learn as though he quite knew what he was once speaking about. Raymond Smullyan and Ray Grigg come shut yet Alan Watts takes the cake if in simple terms simply because he did it a long time sooner than an individual else. I in truth can't give some thought to someone else who has notes at the topic within the unique chinese language ideograms (not that I've learn that many books on all this) and is going into quite a bit aspect –sometimes just a little too much– on all of the various principles and traditions. by way of the top it's all come properly jointly however the occasional trudging robs the way in which of Zen from its 5th star. This man evidently had had an within glance on every little thing he wrote approximately yet now and then his motives have been a section too dense. may possibly it were the other way?Read the way in which of Zen and think as though you're one step in the direction of figuring out the complete philosophy of Taoism, Buddhism and Zen. knowing isn't understanding and being conscious approximately it defeats the total purpose, yet it is a begin for going past the stereotypes and for truly attempting to comprehend those thoroughly overseas philosophies which are progressively disappearing even of their lands of origin. As Smullyan places it: simply learn bankruptcy 1 of how of Zen within which he introduces Taoism. in the event you like it, likelihood is you are going to locate the remainder of the publication both agreeable, highlight- and nod-worthy.I in particular cherished the elements during which he defined Zen's connection to haiku, calligraphy and the ceremonial serving of tea. particularly great and cosy.It's really applicable that this e-book performed no small half within the cultural revolutions of the '60s. One has to ask yourself although why no reconciliators of western and japanese mentalities have not rather made a distinction since.

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