



Public Zen, Personal Zen: A Buddhist Introduction (Critical Issues in World and International History)

Peter D. Hershock

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Among Buddhist traditions, Zen has been remarkably successful in garnering and sustaining interest outside the Buddhist homelands of Asia, and “zen” is now part of the global cultural lexicon. This deeply informed book explores the history of this enduring Japanese tradition—from its beginnings as a form of Buddhist thought and practice imported from China to its reinvention in medieval Japan as a force for religious, political, and cultural change to its role in Japan’s embrace of modernity. Going deeper, it also explores Zen through the experiences and teachings of key individuals who shaped Zen as a tradition committed to the embodiment of enlightenment by all. By bringing together Zen’s institutional and personal dimensions, Peter D. Hershock offers readers a nuanced yet accessible introduction to Zen as well as distinctive insights into issues that remain relevant today, including the creative tensions between globalization and localization, the interplay of politics and religion, and the possibilities for integrating social transformation with personal liberation.

Including an introduction to the basic teachings and practices of Buddhism and an account of their spread across Asia, *Public Zen, Personal Zen* deftly blends historical detail with the felt experiences of Zen practitioners grappling with the meaning of human suffering, personal freedom, and the integration of social and spiritual progress.

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