

Encyclopedia

Dōgen

Dōgen (dō'gen) [key], 1200–1253, Zen master (see Zen Buddhism) and founder of the Sōtō Zen school in Japan. After studying in China, he received the seal of enlightenment and succession to the Ts'ao-tung (Sōtō) school. In 1236 he established the first independent Zen temple in Japan. Sōtō Zen stresses zazen, sitting meditation, based on the Buddha's own practice. Whereas for Rinzai Zen koans are a means to enlightenment, Sōtō stresses the identity of practice and attainment. Dōgen, unlike many Zen masters, stressed practice without rejecting scripture.

See H.-J. Kim, *Dōgen Kigen, Mystical Realist* (1975); Y. Yokei, *Zen Master Dōgen* (1976); F. Cook, *How to Raise an Ox* (1978); C. Bielefeldt, *Dōgen's Manuals of Zen Meditation* (1988); G. Snyder, *The Teachings of Zen Master Dogen* (1992).

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koan

koan (kō'ān) [key][Jap., =public question; Chin. *kung-an*], a subject for meditation in Ch'an or Zen Buddhism, usually one of the sayings of a great Zen master of the past. In the formative period of Ch'an in China, masters tested the enlightenment of their students and of each other through statements and dialogue that expressed spiritual intuition in nonrational, paradoxical language. In later generations records of such conversations began to be used for teaching, and the first collections of subjects, or koans, were made in the 11th cent. Koan practice was transmitted to Japan as part of Zen in the 13th cent., and it remains one of the main practices of the Rinzai sect. The most famous koan collections are the *Wu-men-kuan* (Jap. *Mu-mon-kan*) or "Gateless Gate" and the *Pi-yen-lu* (Jap. *Heki-gan-roku*) or "Blue Cliff Records." A well-known koan is: "What is the sound of one hand clapping?"

See D. T. Suzuki, *Zen Buddhism* (1956); I. Miura and R. F. Sasaki, *Zen Dust* (1966); H. Dumoulin, *A History of Zen Buddhism* (1989).

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Zen. The Japanese term *Zen* derives from the Sanskrit term *dhyana*, meaning meditation. So Zen is a meditation school of Buddhism. More specifically, it is a Mahayana Buddhist school that uses various techniques to attain *satori* (enlightenment). It was popularized in the United States by the Zen layman D. T. Suzuki (1870–1966) and by Jack Kerouac and other members of the Beat generation, who together helped to kick off a Zen vogue in 1950s America. The popularity of Robert Pirsig's best-seller, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* (1974) prompted authors to write hundreds of "Zen and" titles—from *Zen and the Art of Poker* to *Zen and the Art of Happiness*.

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