

BOUNDLESS WAY ZEN

Our tradition

THE LINEAGE OF BOUNDLESS WAY ZEN

Opening essay by James Ishmael Ford: A NOTE ON DHARMA TRANSMISSION AND THE INSTITUTIONS OF ZEN

This essay addresses some of the issues concerning our emerging western Zen sangha, in particular the relationship between awakening, Dharma transmission and the institutions of Zen. It is my thesis that each of these things, our individual awakening, the confirmation of our experience by our teachers and the institutions that support this work are wound up together as tightly as a well woven cord.

The Zen way is just barely beginning to be established in the west. The first generation including those pioneers who traveled east, learned the ways of the Dharma, then brought their precious gifts home and those missionary teachers, eccentric and often brilliant, who left their homes, came west and made their life work here.

When these teachers came west, however, they couldn't bring everything that existed in the east. This western Zen was a new enterprise, and to unduly tie it to the cultural patterns of the east would not only limit its accessibility to us in the west, the support systems of the institutional sanghas of the east simply could not be transplanted across the seas. Here there simply isn't the financial or emotional infrastructure to establish much less support the ongoing work of Japanese-style temples or monastic-style training centers. There are no Buddhist universities. There is no system or culture of support for those who wish to devote their lives to the practice and preservation of the Dharma. Essentially these teachers had to bring what they could pack into a rucksack and carry on their backs.

So these early teachers brought a bare minimum. They brought the disciplines of shikantaza and koan study. They brought the ordination forms of the traditional transmission, including that central facet of the transmission the personal acknowledgement of a teacher, what we call Dharma transmission. Here they expressed an ancient connection, one joining us, their Dharma heirs, to them, and back through them to the ancestors of our way. To look at a document like the Zen lineage chart is to catch a sense of what this means.

There is no doubt, the Zen lineage chart is an impressive document. In the chart that follows this essay we find the traditional line of teacher and student ranging from Gautama Siddhartha who lived more than twenty-five hundred years ago in the foothills of the Himalayas to me, a teacher living today in the suburbs of Boston, Massachusetts. Depending on which sub-line one counts my lineage chart traces eighty-four or eighty-five generations of teachers following down from the Buddha.

Within this chart we can discern the essence of Zen's story. In that story we quickly find two particularly important terms, kensho and transmission. Kensho is a Japanese word, (chien-hsing in Chinese), and means "seeing (one's) nature." It's used synonymously with another term, satori, (wu in Chinese), which ultimately derives from the Sanskrit and which means, "to know." This knowing is not knowledge in the sense of accumulated facts, but rather wisdom in the sense of one's deepest insight. So kensho or satori points to the fundamental experience of the Zen way: enlightenment or awakening.

Awakening in Zen is the experience of a falling away of self and other. This experience is our deepest, our most intimate understanding that who and what we are as ordinary human beings is fundamentally boundless, endlessly open. With the experience of kensho we are told one discovers

a life of freedom and joy, no longer bound by constraints of habit or ego. Satori releases us from a self-imposed bondage, letting us act freely according to the actual circumstances of life as they present themselves.

So, kensho is the salvific vision of the Zen Buddhist way.

Den'e, "handing on the robe," denbo, "Dharma transmission," and in koan traditions, inka-shomei, "the seal of confirmation" is a student's authorization to become a teacher in her or his own right, joining a line tracing directly back to Gautama Siddhartha, the Buddha of history. Within the Japanese-derived koan schools (represented today by, among others, the Rinzai school, several Soto lines which have inherited the Sanbokyodan koan curriculum, as well as the modern lay lineages Sanbokyodan, Diamond Sangha and the Pacific Zen Institute) this is also the acknowledgment by a teacher of a student's realization, that direct and deeply intimate experience of awakening.

What this is, is summarized in a four line verse attributed to Bodhidharma, the Indian founder of the Chinese line. "A direct transmission outside of scriptures, apart from tradition/Without dependence upon words or letters./A direct pointing to mind./Seeing into one's nature and awakening."

This is the story of the Zen way. And there is much profound and beautiful truth to it. People do find joy and freedom. Hurt is healed, and new lives are revealed. But there is more to Zen than these four lines suggest. The four line verse speaks of an inner reality, but it also obscures some of the form that has allowed that inner reality to be carried forward for more than a thousand years, taking it from ancient China to our own western homes. For instance regarding that assertion of being outside scriptures and apart from tradition, while it is a departure from the orthodoxies of its day, the plain truth is Zen is a school, a coherent discipline that trains and authorizes guides to help us as we walk our personal way to our own authenticity and depth.

When visiting Zen centers in the west it is possible to meet teachers who do not name the source of their authority. Appealing to the heart of that four line verse, one such person replies "who I studied with has nothing to do with your quest for awakening." On the one hand, this is true. On the other hand Zen is a transmitted lineage. If one cannot produce a lineage chart, if one cannot name her or his teacher, that person is not a Zen teacher. Anyone who refuses to name their teacher should be assumed to not have had one. Certainly this person should be assumed to not have had an authorization to teach. Maybe they are wise and good counselors. But, do you really want to go to a physician who cannot or will not tell you what medical school she attended?

(Then there is the perverse phenomenon of the person who asserts a transmission from someone named, but that transmission is denied by the original teacher. In a situation like ours today, where there is little institutional structure and it isn't always immediately obvious whether someone is what they say they are; it is always good to do a little homework. It is amazing what one can find in a standard web search.)

While there is an inner truth to the transmission being outside institutions, nonetheless institutions are important. This is not just to sort out poseurs and fakes, but also to find people who have been adequately trained to actually help us on the way. While it has had different emphases over the generations, still, from its beginnings Zen has been a formal institution, a school of awakening (or perhaps more accurately a family of schools) first within Chinese Buddhism, then throughout eastern Asia, and now with a presence on every continent except perhaps Antarctica.

In China, Korea and Vietnam Zen leadership has almost entirely derived from the Vinaya sangha, the ordained order of Buddhist monks and nuns. That is, with one major exception. Since the cusp of the eighth and ninth centuries in Japan a new type of ordination emerged sometimes characterized as "neither monastic nor lay." This Bodhisattva ordination is to a type of elder or priest. For more than a hundred years now a Bodhisattva priest might be a celibate monastic, but often, usually, is not. However, even here Zen leadership has been carried forward by "professionals" functioning within institutions.

From its beginnings there have also been lay Zen masters. Still, the normative form of spiritual leadership has always been people ordained within formal Buddhist institutions. The rise of the Sanbokyodan in the early part of the twentieth century together with its western inheritors the Diamond Sangha Network and the Pacific Zen Institute are examples of a relatively new phenomenon. How they will manifest as lay organizations unaffiliated with ordained sanghas over the years to come remains an open and intriguing question. Although some hints are manifesting. Already priestly or ministerial functions, such as officiating at marriages and presiding at funerals, are being conducted by these putatively "lay" teachers. Perhaps we're witnessing the beginnings of a new form of institutional leadership, an "amateur" rather than "professional," where the teachers generally support themselves in some other capacity and guide their communities without internal financial support.

The major point here is that the Zen transmission, whether carried within the Vinaya ordained tradition, the Bodhisattva ordained tradition or through an emerging lay tradition, has always been and continues to be carried forward through time within historically formed institutions. This "direct transmission outside of scriptures, apart from tradition" has always existed within the bounds of organization.

And even as the appeal to being something standing completely outside historic conditions and structures, while speaking to an inner truth, are also more complex than the traditional assertion might lead one to believe; kensho and its acknowledgement through Dharma transmission are more nuanced than the mere reciting of the verse or telling of the story might lead us to believe.

When we set off in search of Zen what we find is more complicated than we might have thought by reading Zen's spiritual literature. Which as some have observed is a rather prodigious effort for a school not dependent upon words or letters. In this complicated world of living Zen we can meet teachers guiding communities of practice with compassion and grace. But we also find Zen teachers having inappropriate sexual relationships, abusing the power dynamics of their relationships and otherwise acting in ways contrary to the mythic status of their positions as teachers.

In recent years there have been a number of books and essays exposing the ills of Zen institutions east and west as well as the foibles of individual Zen teachers. Here in the west there are few lineages that have passed unscathed by scandals, mostly of a sexual nature. And in the east, particularly in the Japanese institutions, we've learned how masters and whole schools were at various times, co-opted by the state, most notoriously in the years leading up to and including the Second World War. Previously revered teachers, dramatically including teachers in my own line, have been revealed to have written anti-Semitic essays as well as publishing broadsides attacking the foundations of bourgeois democracy.

Most of the western writers who have exposed these issues speak with the passion of disappointed lovers, listing these ills as litanies of betrayal. Certainly the hurt they convey should not, cannot be ignored.

And this isn't the only problem to reconcile when we look at Zen transmission. A close examination of the traditional lineage charts, such as that one which follows this note, raises many questions. First, the entire Indian transmission makes no historical sense. It lists the most prominent Indian Buddhist sages more or less chronologically, but then throws together teachers of various and sometimes contending schools, people who have no obvious connection other than being Buddhist and Indian, as if they were in a line leading back to the Buddha and forward to the Zen schools when in fact they are not.

Even the beginnings of the Chinese line are at least questionable. The charts don't become "historical" within any reasonable usage of that term until the seventh century, with Hung-jen, the "fifth ancestor" of the Chinese line. And anyone who reads further into the literature of Zen knows there are numerous "breaks" in many of the lines from after that point. Anyone who has observed the formation of Zen institutions in the west can cite people who appear to have received Dharma transmission

for reasons other than their awakened state. In fact in some of the Soto lineages awakening is not even considered a necessary prerequisite for receiving Dharma transmission.

So, what really is actually going on? Most scholars agree the concept of "lineage" arises in early medieval China. It is part of a movement that on one hand acknowledges the Chinese culture's emphasis on proper relationships between parents and children, and between teachers and students. On the other hand, it makes claims of antiquity for what was in reality a new school. Through the story of lineage, this new school -- which was the child of Indian Buddhism and Chinese culture, particularly Taoism -- could point to its place as a wisdom tradition that was completely Chinese and faithfully Buddhist.

To acknowledge that Zen took its shape in China, miles and centuries apart from the actual Buddha, and that it is a human institution with all the flaws that term suggests, is not to say that there is no awakening, nor an authentic transmission. There is something in the stories of kensho and transmission that is precious and true and worth noticing and preserving and passing on.

First, about our awakening: People do experience the falling away of self and other. The ego does shatter. The bottom does fall out of the bucket. We can and do see how we are fundamentally as vast as the sky. This experience can be testified to by generations of Zen practitioners. And in the next breath that ego reconstitutes, self and other re-form. And this reality can be testified to by generations of friends and companions of those who have experienced kensho.

What this suggests is that kensho is a verb rather than a noun.

Along this way of deep reflection, of pure encounter, of paying attention, we discover many things about ourselves. At one moment we discover love rising within us. At another, we find hate deep within us. We find grasping. We find longing. We find moments of such joy that there are no words. And at some point we discover our intimate identity with the world. Gradually we find how each moment reveals the way in all its kaleidoscopic mystery. Here we forget. Now we awake. And, of course, again, now we forget.

Then at some precious moment we find how the world and our very selves each fall away.

But this doesn't mean we are no longer human, no longer shaped by genes and history. We can reach out with empty hands. But we also still can hold a knife in those hands. There is never an end to our training, to our deepening; the way is dynamic, just as we are. So, of course, our path, our training continues. There is that old Zen saying that even the Buddha himself is still training.

This is a powerful and dangerous path filled with surprising and sometimes shocking revelations about ourselves and the world. These many and various experiences we have along the way really can be transformative. We really do begin to see the world and ourselves in new ways. But with each insight students and even teachers are all prone each time to mistake such experiences, shallow or deep, for the end. And there is no idea as dangerous as a good idea, one that is close to the truth of the way the world actually is. When we cling to these ideas however noble or fine they might be terrible consequences can follow in the wake.

Possibly the greatest danger for us as western practitioners at such a moment comes from our inclination to privatize our spirituality. This can be particularly difficult for those of us who started our Zen life with the works of writers who were shaking off the constraints of western and particularly American culture and seeking freedom through some rhetoric of "immediacy". Too often this has come to mean the check on our experience is the single question "does it feel good?" Without others, without a guide or a community that genuinely checks our realization we can easily lose our way in the maze of self-congratulation, of self-aggrandizement.

Here we find the wisdom of modern Soto which is traditionally very

suspicious of assertions of kensho. Any undue concern with moments of awakening is seen as a trap. And witnessing so many teachers who have passed through numerous koans or otherwise have had their realization "certified," but who nonetheless present as unbalanced and sometimes even unhealthy people underscores the wisdom of such a perspective.

The best rule of self assessment might be that at any time we think we're done, we should note all we've done is freeze dynamic reality, and we've in fact created a demon thought. As one wise teacher observed it is perhaps better to speak of enlightening experiences than enlightenment. As I said already, but think it very much worth repeating it is a venerable Zen tradition that even the Buddha is still practicing, still training.

So, as a practical experience, what we might think of as a "true transmission," a worthy human guide, sometimes even skips generations of Dharma holders without damage to the teachings or the possibilities of awakening. In rough times the institution itself carries the tradition. Here we find how unfaithful teachers can guide authentic students. Now this is something wonderful to realize. Zazen, koans and the transmission itself allows each generation to rediscover the authentic experience within the way. The way is always open. The possibility of our liberation is always at hand.

Zen is a powerful but human institution. It is also here in the west an institution that is yet to take full shape. We have the bare necessities, but the larger support systems are still seeking their manifestation. It is also, as I've said, all dynamic. So, a significant western Zen community was founded by a teacher who had limited authority to teach but never in fact received Dharma transmission. Other communities are led by "Dharma orphans," people with some training, but for various reasons, often no fault of their own, find themselves leading communities without having completed training or having obtained formal authorization. And, to make things even more complicated it is all too easy to find people who have unquestioned technical Dharma transmission but are terrible teachers, or worse.

So, what to do? While genuine institutions are emerging here in the west, still the Zen that one is going to encounter here is mostly ad hoc, mostly about a deeply personal relationship with a teacher within the context of a small or smallish community—that bare minimum of the transmission. So, first some thoughts about encountering and dealing with that teacher within the context we actually live.

As I said early in this essay a Zen teacher should be able to say who they studied with and who authorized them to teach. If they cannot, or will not, or say such things are of no importance; probably this is a good enough reason to continue looking. But as important as who authorized any particular teacher is the question with whom does the teacher associate? Does the teacher belong either formally or informally to groups or associations of other Zen teachers, or does she or he go it alone? To whom is this person accountable?

In seeking authentic teachers, this lateral "transmission" of association can be as important as the technical lineage transmission, and possibly more so. The institutions that are forming in the west today are very much in their infancy, loosely coming together, easily fracturing. Still, one can discern patterns emerging.

Maybe even more important for the seeker is that other aspect of institution, what does the community of practice look like? Here we may discover the power of a sangha "transmission." When you look at members of the community are they people you can respect, are they open, do they seem generous and caring? Do you want to be among them?

Some important questions that arise for us out of a reading of the history of Zen might be what are the checks on any individual teacher? Zen institutions here being co-opted by the state has not yet become an issue. Rather in the west where everything is much smaller and more personal, sex and other personal abuses of power are the more common difficulty.

It's fair to ask what kind of training the teacher had. In addition to the

expected years of meditation and retreat and encounter with a spiritual director, is there anything comparable to formal education? Does this teacher have an intellectual understanding of the Dharma? Does this teacher have any understanding of psychology and interpersonal relationships? These are abilities that have a natural component, but almost always need some formal cultivation.

Another significant question might be does the community you're considering joining have an ethical code? So, critically, to what degree does this person feel bound by the strictures and structures of the precepts? And again, to whom is this teacher accountable for violations of the precepts? Is there a real way to complain about inappropriate behaviors on the part of teacher or teachers? And perhaps so very important for avoiding possible abuses and harkening back to the power of a lateral transmission; does the teacher seek continuing guidance from others?

In the west most sanghas, having only one teacher, struggle with ethical guidelines that have meaningful remedies for errant teachers. Our own sangha in Boston is an example of such a small community where the situation is if one is unhappy with the teacher for any reason there really is little option but to find another sangha. And this has been the way it is. In such situations the potential student has the right at the very least to expect some form of transparency, some willingness for questions of right relationship to be part of the conversation.

Still, even if the standard Zen center is still small with that single teacher, Zen has been establishing itself as a western phenomenon for over fifty years now, and things are changing. In addition to the informal associations that exist within and across schools larger institutions are beginning to form that are outlining both standards of behavior and training possibilities. The Kwan Um School of Zen in the Korean Chogye lineage, the San Francisco Zen Center complex and the forming Soto Zen Buddhist Association which is attempting to draw together various Japanese-derived lineages are each particularly worth noting in this regard.

These organizations carry the seed of that next step, the cultivation of the necessary infrastructure to support the training of teachers, to provide ethical and ongoing forms that allow the flourishing of the great way as something more than the beautiful but in itself limited aspect of one student meeting with one teacher. Zen is about the awakening of the world. Each of us is responsible. And we do it together.

What we see before us in the west today is all the good and ill possibilities of a new transmission, here using that term transmission in its broader sense, the passing of the Buddhadharma and particularly the path of Zen into our western cultures. The time of unexamined embracing of the myths has largely passed. This is a good thing.

Here we find an ancient and wise way. It includes the lineage chart as a necessary but of itself not a sufficient thing. This is a way of liberation, for ourselves and for the many beings. It is a way for real human beings. Now we're experiencing a time of serious adaptation, of finding our way as a western Zen school, or again, perhaps better, we're finding many western Zen schools emerging. Many will disappear in the course of time. Some, however, may flourish. And with them the Dharma in the west will flower.

There should be no doubt the Dharma is cast out over the world, a healing balm available for each of us in times of suffering and strife. We need only keep our eyes and our hearts equally open. Do this and you will find what you need, a true vision and a way to walk in the world.

This is the authentic transmission of the Buddhas and the ancestors.

The Seven Ancient Buddhas

The Indian Transmission
Shakyamuni Buddha

Mahakashyapa
Ananda
Sansavasa
Upagupta
Dhrtaka
Micchaka
Vasumitra
Buddhanandi
Buddhamitra
Parsva
Punyayayas
Asvaghosa
Kapimala
Nagarjuna
Kanadeva
Rahulata
Sanghanandi
Gayasta
Kumarata
Jayata
Vasubandhu
Manorhita
Haklenayayas
Aryasimha
Basiasita
Punyamitra
Prajnatara

The Chinese Transmission

Bodhidharma
T'ai-tsu Hui-k'o
Chien-chih Seng-ts'an
Ta-i Tao-hsin
Ta-man Hung-jen
Ta-chen Hui-neng ¹
Ch'ing-yuan Hsing-ssu
Shih-t'ou His-ch'ien ²
Yao-shan Wei-yen
Yun-yen T'an-sheng
Tung-shan Liang-chieh ³
Yun-chu Tao-ying
T'ung-an Tao-p'i
T'ung-an Kuan-chih
Liang-shan Yuan-kuan
Ta-yang Ching-hsuan
T'ou-tzu I-ch'ing
Fu-jung Tao-k'ai
Tan-hsia Tz-ch'un
Chen-hsieh Ch'ing-liao
T'ien-t'ung Tsung-chueh
Hsueh-tou Chih-chien
T'ien-t'ung Ju-ching

The Japanese Transmission

Eihei Dogen ⁴
Koun Ejo
Totsu Gikai
Keizan Jokin ⁵
Meiho Sotetsu ⁶
Shugen Dochin
Tetsuzan Shikaku
Keigan Eisho
Chuzan Ryohun
Gisan Tonin
Shogaku Kenryu
Kinen Horyu
Teishitsu Chisen
Kokei Shojun

Sesso Yuho
Kaiten Genju
Shuzan Shunsho
Chozan Genetsu
Fukushu Kochi
Meido Yuton
Hakuho Genteki
Gesshu Soko ⁷

Dharma Cloud Lineage

Manzan Dohaku ⁸
Gekkan Giko
Daiyu Essho
Kegon Sokai
Shoun Taizui
Nichirin Togo
Sonno Kyodo
Sogaku Reido
Daishun Bengyu
Koho Hakugun
Keido Chisan ⁹
Jiyu Kennett ¹⁰

Three Treasures Lineage

Tokuo Ryoko
Hogan Soren
Sekiso Tesshu
Ryuko Ryoshu
Renzan Soho
Motsugai Shido
Gukei Youn
Kakusho Sodo
Daiun Sogaku ¹¹
Hakuun Ryoko ¹²
Koun Yamada ¹³
Robert Aitken ¹⁴
John Tarrant ¹⁵

Boundless Way Zen

James Ford
(Zenno Etusjo Osho)

Sensei James Ford was ordained Osho and received Dharma transmission from Roshi Houn Jiyu Kennett on the 2nd of May, 1971 of the Common Era at Mount Shasta, California

Sensei Ford continued his training with teachers in a variety of spiritual traditions before beginning formal koan practice with Roshi John Tarrant in the early 1980's.

In 1998 James Ford was authorized by Roshi Tarrant to teach the Harada/Yasutani koan curriculum. In 2000 Sensei Ford was formally installed as a teacher of the Pacific Zen Institute

Since 2001 Sensei James Ford has served as Head Teacher of Boundless Way Zen

¹ Ta-chien Hui-neng (638 – 713) The great teacher of "sudden awakening," whose life and teachings are collected in the *Platform Sutra of the Sixth Ancestor* (available in several translations). While there are many legendary elements in the *Platform Sutra*, nonetheless, Huineng is the first unambiguously historical person in the direct Zen lineage.

² Shih-t'ou His-ch'ien (700 – 790) A key figure in the history of Zen.

³ Tung-shan Liang-chieh (807 – 869) A contemporary of Lin-chi and the founder of the Soto school in China.

⁴ Eihei Dogen (1200 – 1253) Established the Japanese Soto school and founded its first major training temple, Eihei-ji. His writings stand as a major achievement of the world's religious literature, and his influence on subsequent generations of Zen practitioners is incalculable.

⁵ Keizan Jokin (1219 – 1325) founder of Sojiji which ranks with Eihei-ji as the two principal training temples of the Soto school. Author of the *Denkoroku*, a "lamp anthology," a collection of the lives of Zen teachers in lineage, cast as koans.

⁶ Meiho Sotetsu (1277 – 1350) founder of the Meiho Line, one of the two main branches of Japanese Soto Zen.

⁷ Gesshu Soko (1618 – 1698) A major figure in the seventeenth century revitalization of Soto Zen. He is generally regarded as the person responsible for bringing Dogen's teachings to public attention. Two of his Dharma heirs would form the lines leading to Jiyu Kennett & John Tarrant.

- ⁸ Manzan Dohaku (1636 – 1714) A contemporary of master Hakuin Ekaku, Manzan continued the renewing spirit of his teacher Gesshu Soko, earning him the title "Great Reformer."
- ⁹ Keido Chisan (1879 – 1967) late master of Daihonzan Sojiji, one of the two principal training temples of Soto Zen.
- ¹⁰ Jiyu Kennett (1924 – 1996) late master of Shasta Abbey. The first English woman to be acknowledged as a Zen master. Founder of the Zen Mission Society, and Shasta Abbey. Founder of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives. Controversies followed in later life upon publication of her visionary experiences as well as the apparently theistic cast in some of her writings.
- ¹¹ Harada Daiun Sogaku (1871 – 1961) professor at Daigakurin University and master of the Soto training temple Hosshinji. Also studied with the Rinzai master Unmunken Taigi Sogon, and completed koan study with Dokutan Sosan (master of Nanzenji). Modified the Takuju Kosen koan curriculum of Hakuin's Rinzai Zen (eliminating most "capping phrases" and introducing two traditional Soto koan collections), and required completion this koan curriculum of all his students.
- ¹² Yasutani Hakuun (1885 – 1973) A Dharma successor of Daiun Harada and founder of the Sanbo Kyodan, an independent reform of the Soto school teaching koan Zen primarily to lay people. This school through his Dharma heirs and theirs, has had a broad influence on the shape of koan Zen in the west. The lineage established through the dual work of Harada and Yasutani is variously called Three Treasures and Harada/Yasutani Zen. A brilliant teacher, Yasutani relentlessly advocated kensho as a critical experience in Zen. In recent years stories of his fierce ultra-nationalism and also some anti-Semitic writings published during the Second World War have marred his reputation.
- ¹³ Koun Yamada (1907 – 1989) master of Sanum Zendo, first lay head of the Sanbo Kyodan.
- ¹⁴ Robert Aitken (1917 -) master of the Diamond Sangha network. Introduced to Zen by R.H. Blyth while an enemy civilian internee in Kobe during the Second World War. Studied with Nyogen Senzaki, Soen Nakagawa, Daiun Harada, and Hakuun Yasutani among others. Received Dharma transmission from Koun Yamada. The author of ten books, including *Taking the Path of Zen*.
- ¹⁵ John Tarrant (1949 -) master of the Pacific Zen Institute. An iconoclastic Zen teacher, the first Dharma heir of Robert Aitken. A poet with a doctorate in Psychology. Widely known for his many teisho (Dharma talks, mostly on koans) published at many different sites on the world wide web, John Tarrant is arguably the most important koan teacher in the West today.