



The Art of Just Sitting: Essential Writings on the Zen Practice of Shikantaza

John Daido Loori , Taigen Dan Leighton (Introduction)

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Shikantaza--or "just sitting"--is one of the simplest, most subtle forms of meditation, and one of the most easily misunderstood. This peerless volume brings together a wealth of writings, from the Buddha himself to Bodhidharma and Dogen and many of modern Zen Buddhism's most influential masters, all pointing directly to the heart of this powerful practice. Edited by one of America's pre-eminent Zen teachers, this book is a rich resource for wisdom seekers and scholars alike.

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From Reader Review The Art of Just Sitting: Essential Writings on the Zen Practice of Shikantaza for online ebook

Tim Weakley says

A very good selection of texts relating to shikantaza, or sitting meditation. I really enjoyed the mixture of early, and modern masters and what they had to say. It improved my personal practice.

Johnny Cordova says

A compilation of essays on shikantaza meditation, the Zen practice of simply sitting with the mind as it arises spontaneously. A great idea for a book, but I found the selections to be repetitive, didactic, and mostly dry. A shame because shikantaza, more than any other form of meditation, lends itself to poetry and there is very little poetry between these pages.

Tom Otvos says

Some of the essays were quite hard to penetrate, others very interesting or useful. Very much a reference that can be consulted many times over.

Walter Burton says

As noted by others some essays are hard to "get into" but on the whole it give a great deal of insight into the purpose and practice of Zazen. It is a book I will visit later as my practice progresses.

William2 says

This book has been indispensable to me as I have sought to teach myself zazen. I don't have a teacher, so the intense clinics in shikantaza contained herein have been a godsend. It's a collection of dharma lectures—*teisho*—by some two or three dozen Zen masters, some ancient, most Americans alive today. I have found the book more helpful to me than the koan school of enlightenment (Rinzai) which is described in Philip Kapleau's *The Three Pillars of Zen*, which is no doubt optimal for some persons. The school represented in *The Art of Just Sitting* is Soto. This Soto form seems to be entirely without mention of the dreaded *kyosaku*, or any of Buddhism's multifarious hells. In fact, all supernatural aspects seem to have been stripped away. The Soto school says that the moment you assume the zazen posture, you have entered a state of enlightenment. No additional striving or aspiration is necessary. You are enlightened simply by virtue of your sincere intent to practice. The *teisho* here are rich, literary productions in themselves, as well as vital instruction. They must represent some two or more centuries of collective Zen experience. Re-reading them soon will be necessary.

Greg says

a bunch of essays and writings around the topic of 'just sitting' or 'shikantaza' or 'silent illumination'. there are a few good writings in here. but alot of it is covering the same ground which is good to hear things repeated in different ways. most of the writings touch on dogen's writings about zazen, or the lancet of seated meditation, or hongzhi's 'silent illumination'. for a deeper more poetic look into shikantaza, id recommend 'cultivating the empty field : the silent illumination of zen master hongzhi' by taigen dan leighton. mind blowing reads!

Garvice says

I calling it finished on page 179, which finishes the overall book without [pages 180-250+.]
(The Appendix.)

John says

If you want to find out about Zen Buddhism, there are other books that will give you a good introduction. If you have an established sitting practice, then this is probably the best practical manual available.

Because it's an anthology of short pieces from the Buddha onwards, the teachings are from a wide variety perspectives on a wide variety of issues, so whatever help you need, you stand a good chance of finding it here.

jampa says

Just loved it

James Elliott says

An amazing compendium of writings on the type of Zen meditation known as "shikantaza" - the practice of sitting with full awareness, neither attaching to thoughts nor trying to suppress thought, without any particular object of focus - despite its seeming simplicity, it is regarded as one of the most challenging meditations, and can be quite difficult to wrap your head around. This book, compiled by the late master John Daido Loori features some of the best writings on the subject, primarily in the tradition of Zen masters Hongzhi and Dogen - wherein practice and enlightenment are seen as being inseparable - to wholeheartedly sit is itself the manifestation of the buddha seal.

Ona Kiser says

The first book on Zen I've read that I just drank like water. A really nice diversity of essays. Nice commentaries on classic stories and teachings. Highly recommended.

Scott says

Some of the articles in this anthology were worth reading; some were mediocre, and a couple were Zen obscurantism at its worst. And to add to the problem, the connection between the supposed subject and some of the selections was a bit strained. This one shouldn't go on anybody's "must read" list.

Monkey C says

great book, but not for the beginner. some zen training required to understand the principles/concepts expressed.
