



Two Shores of Zen: An American Monk's Japan

Jiryu Mark Rutschman-Byler

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When a young American Buddhist monk can no longer bear the pop-psychology, sexual intrigue, and free-flowing peanut butter that he insists pollute his spiritual community, he sets out for Japan on an archetypal journey to find "True Zen." Arriving at an austere Japanese monastery and meeting a fierce old Zen Master, he feels confirmed in his suspicion that the Western Buddhist approach is a spineless imitation of authentic spiritual effort. However, over the course of a year and a half of bitter initiations, relentless meditation and labor, intense cold, brutal discipline, insanity, overwhelming lust, and false breakthroughs, he grows disenchanted with the Asian model as well. Two Shores of Zen weaves together scenes from Japanese and American Zen to offer a timely, compelling contribution to the ongoing conversation about Western Buddhism's stark departures from Asian traditions. How far has Western Buddhism come from its roots, or indeed how far has it fallen? www.ShoresOfZen.com

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