

**Endless Path Zendo**, founded by Rafe Jnan Martin, Roshi, in 2011, is dedicated to lay Zen practice--Zen practice in life. Rafe trained with two of the most noted American Zen teachers of our time, Philip Kapleau Roshi and Robert Aitken Roshi. He completed his advanced training and received authorization to teach from Danan Henry Roshi, a Kapleau Dharma heir and an Aitken line Dharma Master. Rafe is also an award-winning author whose books have been featured in Time, Newsweek, USA Today, and the NY Times. His most recent books are: *A Zen Life of Buddha* and *A Zen Life of Bodhisattvas* (Sumeru Books, 2023)



Rafe Martin, Roshi (Senior Zen teacher)  
Endless Path Zendo, Rochester, NY

Cover Art — Traditional Japanese ink painting from the Zen Ox-Herding pictures. Gift to Rafe Martin from Roshi Philip Kapleau



DRAGON STAFF  
BY ZEN MASTER HAKUIN

## Endless Path Zendo



## What is Zen?





The Buddha was not a god but a person who, deeply motivated by his own personal experience of impermanence, attained to a life freed of suffering, that would also benefit others. Zen teaches that, at our own level and to our own degree, we can each do the same.

Zen Buddhism begins with the Buddha, a young, prince in India some 2500 years ago, who, struck to the core by the facts that even the richest must get sick, get old, and eventually die, gave up his privileged life to search for and Awaken to a greater reality. Upon Awakening he is said to have spontaneously exclaimed, “How wondrous! All beings are Buddhas, already fully endowed with wisdom and compassion. Only their self-centered delusions prevent them from realizing this.”

Zen Buddhism is a *practice*, not a belief system, that developed in China over a thousand years ago. It embodies the Buddha’s profound enlightenment experience and the teaching that grew from it. Zen later spread through Korea, Japan, and Vietnam and is now regularly practiced here in the West. The aim of Zen is to help us actualize the Buddha’s profound Realization in our own ordinary lives. Rather than depending on particular texts or devotions, Zen emphasizes meditation (*zazen*). The wisdom and compassion that Zen offers comes through our work of ongoing practice and the effort that we ourselves put in. One contemporary way of presenting Zen summarizes it like this: showing up (to practice), waking up (to greater insight and clarity), and growing up (maturing as human beings), freer from the old habits of mind and emotion that create personal and societal suffering.

Fundamentally, Zen is a practical, proven path of liberation, a way to happiness, helping us live lives of decency and humanity, of connection, creativity, and peace. Given our aspiration and degree of dedication we can also, through Zen practice, ultimately Awaken to the fundamental unity of all life.

Full information at [www.endlesspathzendo.org](http://www.endlesspathzendo.org)  
Also Endless Path Zendo on FB, plus podcasts at Apple, Spotify, and Buzzsprout.

