## When is Zen, Zen?: Remarketing Zen Buddhism for the West

#### **Abstract**

As Zen Buddhism has developed in the West the familiar process of acculturation has occurred. Zen has successfully remarketed and repackaged itself to suit Western culture. Western Zen practitioners can now choose to practice Zen in a variety of styles, ranging from the more traditional to a secular or psychotherapeutic context; and the activities practitioners can undertake within the Zen context now include innovations such as wilderness sesshins and psychotherapeutic counselling. In view of these changes it could be argued that a new koan should be added to the Rinzai Zen koan curriculum: "When is Zen, Zen?" This article details some of the different form of Zen now existent in the West, and examines how these are still legitimated as forms of Zen Buddhism.

#### Introduction

In the last one hundred years Zen Buddhism has been practised by an ever-increasing number of people in the Western world. As Zen has developed in Western countries such as the United States of America, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and many countries in both Western and Eastern Europe, it has undergone the acculturation process common to religions adapting to a new cultural context. Changes range from alterations to the structure of retreats to changes in the nature of the student-teacher relationship.

However, many traditional elements still remain. For example, Zen is often well-known for a meditation practice called koan practice, which requires practitioners in the Rinzai school of Zen Buddhism to meditate on paradoxical questions such as "what is the sound of one-hand?" and "what was your face before you were born?" These are still practised in the West, although new koans are also being added. In view of the adaptations Zen has undergone since being practised in the West, it could be argued that a new koan should be added to the curriculum: "When is Zen, Zen?" What can and cannot be changed about Zen Buddhism if it is to remain Zen Buddhism? This article questions how authentic Zen can be recognised and defined, utilising case studies from a variety of Western Zen groups that practised Japanese forms of Zen.

## **Traditional Japanese Zen**

Zen is difficult to define in historical terms Many Westerner practitioners assume that the forms of Zen Buddhism that originated in Korea, China or Japan, and are now commonly practised in a variety of Western countries, can be safely considered to constitute "authentic" Zen. However, this conveniently overlooks the fact that since Buddhism's inception 2,500 years ago, it has gone through the same process of acculturation during its moves from India to China, and then again from China to Japan and Korea. Just as Zen is being remarketed to the West now, it was altered to suit Chinese, Japanese and Korean audiences.

It is difficult to even define Japanese Zen. The Zen the West inherited from Japan is not even particularly "traditional" Japanese Zen. According to Tworkov, many of the Japanese Zen Masters who imported Zen to America had challenged and changed the Zen system as it was known in Japan (Tworkov, 1989: 4). Similarly, Finney suggests that well-known Japanese Zen teachers who took their teaching to the West, such as Yasutani Haku'un Roshi<sup>1</sup>, Soyen Shaku Roshi, Dr Daisetsu Teitaro Suzuki and Nyogen Senzaki, did so in response to the decline of Zen Buddhism in Japan (Finney, 1991: 387). These Zen Masters argued that Zen in Japan had become focused around ceremonies performed by priests, and had lost the true Zen emphasis on reaching enlightenment.

The Sanbo Kyodan provides a good example. The Sanbo Kyodan is a Japanese-based Zen Buddhist organisation that was founded on the teachings of Harada Dai'un Sogaku Roshi (1871-1961). According to Tworkov, Harada was considered revolutionary in his time because he departed from his Soto Zen heritage to utilise meditation techniques from both Soto and Rinzai Zen (the two main schools of Zen in Japan); he treated monastics and lay-practitioners as equals rather than privileging monastics; and he departed from the traditional Soto Zen teaching method of leaving novice monks devoid of verbal instruction with his development of introductory talks (Tworkov, 1989: 13). In 1954 Harada's successor, Yasutani Haku'un Ryoko Roshi (1885-1973), separated from the Soto lineage in which he had been ordained and founded a new organisation, the Sanbo Kyodan, based on Harada's teachings. The Sanbo Kyodan is considered an independent lay stream of Soto Zen that incorporates aspects of Rinzai Zen.

Yasutani initiated the global spread of the Sanbo Kyodan; a direction continued by his successor, Yamada Koun Zenshin Roshi (1907-1989), who came to lead the Sanbo Kyodan in 1973. According to one of his successors, Yamada continued to differentiate the Sanbo Kyodan from the majority of Japanese Zen organisations by dissolving distinctions between monastic and lay-practitioners; emphasising the social dimension of human existence, often discussing political, social and economic issues; and continuing to break the traditional sectarian barriers that separated Buddhists and Christians (Habito, 1990: 234-235). By the end of Yamada's life approximately one quarter of the participants at his sesshins were Christians (Sharf, 1995: 439). Sanbo Kyodan Zen Masters are not necessarily Buddhists, and include teachers who are ordained Catholic and Jesuit priests and nuns. The Sanbo Kyodan and its offshoot, the Diamond Sangha, are often congratulated for their emphasis on Western values such as ecumenicism and emphasis on the laity. While these characteristics may have been enhanced in the West, these principles were manifested well are not uniquely Western developments, but nor do they stem from "traditional" Japanese Zen.

The chances of finding traditional Japanese Zen for use as a barometer against which to measure whether Western Zen Buddhist groups are legitimate or not, seem about as likely as ever finding out what the sound of one hand is - unless you are a Zen practitioner, in which case, being able to solve this koan will be proof in itself that the tradition one is practising in is authentic Zen. This gives us a clue as to how this problem can be overcome: by use of a functional definition of Zen.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Roshi is the honorific used to denote an authorised teacher or Zen Master.

### The Essence of Zen

The concept of Zen as having an essence or fundamental core, which is expressed differently in different cultures, is commonly held by practitioners. It is generally accepted that Buddhism can, and should, be adapted to suit new cultures. Precedents were set during Buddhism's adaptation to countries such as China, Japan, Korea, Tibet and Sri Lanka. It is argued by practitioners and scholars alike that as Buddhism moves into a new culture (or time period), it sheds some of the now obsolete cultural forms of its predecessor culture, and the remaining core teachings of Buddhism are assimilated into the new culture through use of indigenous cultural forms. Through this process, cultural accretions can be added or removed to suit the culture Buddhism is in, while maintaining the core or essence of Buddhism. So it follows that as Buddhism comes to different Western countries, it is acceptable that Buddhism adapt itself to suit the values of these cultures.

Examples of this belief can be found in the teachings of many Western Zen teachers. A member of the Association Zen Internationale, founded by Taisen Deshimaru, writes: "All the great masters down to Master Deshimaru believed it wise to install their own rules, taking their inspiration from those of the past but adapting them to their times and the country in which they lived and with the everpresent concern of infusing them with a new and creative spirit." (Triet, 2000). The Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh, a well-known Zen Master in the Chinese tradition, writes: "The forms of Buddhism must change so that the essence of Buddhism remains unchanged. This essence consists of living principles that cannot bear any specific formulation." (Quoted in Batchelor, 1994: 274)

If Zen can be defined in terms of what it does and how it does it, contemporary forms of Zen can theoretically be tested against this formula for authenticity. As Harris notes, this method was recently used by two Soto-Zen affiliated scholars who took it upon themselves to design a ruler by which to measure authentic Buddhism; their determined criteria was adherence to the doctrine of dependent origination - and on this basis concluded that Zen Buddhism is not Buddhism (Harris, 1995). But how to define the key characteristics or essence of Zen that is fundamental to its practice? The aim of Zen Buddhism, as of all Buddhist traditions and lineages, is to achieve enlightenment. However, Zen differs from other Buddhist schools on how to achieve this. The essential nature of Zen is often summarised as:

- 1. A special transmission outside the scriptures;
- 2. No dependence upon words and letters;
- 3. Direct pointing at the human heart;
- 4. Seeing into one's nature and the realisation of Buddhahood.

However, it is obviously a little difficult to translate these principles into a yardstick against which to assess contemporary Zen practices and beliefs. The legitimacy of this definition is also problematic: this description is often cited but not referenced to an

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original source (for example, it is found in: Batchelor, 1994: 212; Schuhmacher and Werner, 1994: 442; and Wilson Ross, 1960: 5).

### Zazen

At a more concrete level, Zen claims to differ from other Buddhist schools in its emphasis on seated meditation, called zazen. Legend has it that in contrast with his contemporaries, Bodhidharma de-emphasised the existing focus on priestly ritual and the endless chanting of the sutras or Buddhist scriptures. While other Buddhist schools often balance meditation with other religious practices such as intellectual analysis of doctrines or devotional practices, Zen considers these practices useless in attaining enlightenment. The core of Zen practice is zazen, or seated meditation. This has been found to be a practical way of setting the conditions for enlightenment. However, while most Western Zen groups also emphasise these, a range adaptations are also present.

For example, Roshi Bernard Glassman requires his students to do work-practice in his the Zen Centre of New York's Greyston Bakery, to disabuse them of notions of the specialness of Zen training (Tworkov, 1989: 119). According to Glassman, running the bakery is Zen training and just as important as traditional seated meditation, although his students do not always agree. Glassman maintains that he is trying to remove his students' attachment to the specialness of Zen training and to prove to them that any activity in any place can be Zen practice. While many students think social action to be a more appropriate type of work for Zen students, Glassman sees no contradiction in running a competitive enterprise that involves the Zen Centre of New York in the corporate structure of capitalist America (Tworkov, 1989: 115-125).

### Retreats

A key element of traditional Zen practice is the meditation retreat known as a sesshin. It is usually five to ten days in length, and comprises up to ten hours of seated meditation each day. Sesshins are highly structured; almost every act from exercise to eating is ritualised. Strict guidelines are followed, particularly the three essential rules of sesshin: do not talk or whisper, do not look around, and do not greet people or make gestures. However, a variety of new sesshins are appearing in the West that have different structures.

One new type of sesshin are "bearing witness retreats", conducted at Auschwitz by Glassman for the Zen Peacemaker Order. The Zen Peacemaker Order was co-founded by Glassman and his wife, Sensei Sandra Jishu Holmes. The "bearing witness retreats" have been attended by rabbis, Catholic monks and nuns, and Buddhist priests; and lay Sufis, Muslims, Jews, Christians and Buddhists. The traditional structure of long hours of meditation and rules such as silence has been changed; for example, in the evenings the practitioners came together to "share our personal burdens of pain." (Meyer: 1999: 52-54)

Another change to these retreats in comparison to "traditional" retreats is the inclusion of people from a variety of religious backgrounds, and the inclusion of activities such as

prayer services for Jews, Christians, Muslims and Buddhists, silent meditation, and chanting names of the dead (Meyer: 1999: 52-54). While it is becoming more common in many Zen Buddhist schools to allow practitioners from other religions (as occurred in Japan in the Sanbo Kyodan, as noted above), the incorporation of these religions' rituals into the Zen Buddhist sesshin format is not so common.

Western Zen groups affiliated with the Diamond Sangha have also designed new sesshins. The Diamond Sangha was founded by Robert Aitken Roshi, who received his authorisation as a Zen Master in 1959 from Yamada Roshi, who was then the leader of the Sanbo Kyodan. In 1983 Yamada gave Aitken an additional qualification, that of Shoshike (Correctly Qualified Teacher), which gave Aitken the authority to teach independently of the Sanbo Kyodan lineage if he so chose. Few teachers in the Sanbo Kyodan lineage exercise this right, but Aitken did. The Diamond Sangha separated from the Sanbo Kyodan and became an independent lineage with headquarters in Hawaii and Aitken as its leader. In 2000 nineteen groups were formally affiliated with the Diamond Sangha, at least six more maintained informal links. Ten of the formal affiliates were located in the United States of America, five in Australia, and one each in Argentina, Germany, New Zealand and Switzerland.

Wilderness sesshins have been practised by a number of Diamond Sangha groups, beginning with the Ring of Bone Zendo (California, USA). Wilderness, or hiking sesshins, usually consist of several hours a day of hiking from camping spot to camping spot, with walking substituted for some of the time usually allocated for seated meditation. Again, these sesshins differ from "traditional" Japanese sesshins due to the lessened amount of time spent in formal seated meditation, and the different nature of interaction between members; speaking is permitted more often, and sometimes group discussions are held. Women's sesshins, as held by another Diamond Sangha affiliate, the Sydney Zen Centre (Australia), also incorporate different activities and discussions. The teacher of the Sydney Zen Centre, Subhana Barzaghi Roshi, comments on the structure of these sesshins:

"From the very beginning we wanted to introduce new elements - for example, a two-hour sharing in the afternoon block during retreats. We started talking about our experiences and introducing speaking as a practice, which is very different from the classical form. Out of that sharing grew the two-hour periods, most of which I was invited to lead. We started introducing other elements into our block of time - working with clay, making art, sometimes bodywork and various other things. As a therapist I enjoy creative processes as a way of expressing the truth and exploring the inner life, so partly they made that extension into the women's retreat." (Quoted in Allen, 1996: 13)

# Student-Teacher Relationship

The student-teacher relationship is considered fundamental to Zen schools that utilise koan practice, as the Diamond Sangha does. To ensure that student progress is monitored carefully, dokusan, a private meeting of the student and the teacher occurs regularly. During

a retreat, dokusan may occur up to three times per day. However, the lack of Zen Masters in the West has meant that many Zen practitioners do not have the regular access to teachers that they need.

The Maitai Zendo in Nelson, New Zealand, is one example of a Western Zen group who are providing alternative methods of accessing Zen Masters, while still retaining the central characteristics of the interaction. The Maitai Zendo's founder, Mary Jaksch Sensei, is an assistant teacher in the Diamond Sangha (as designated by the honorific, Sensei). One of Jaksch's foremost innovations is the Zen Distance Training program: "The Zen Distance Training (ZDT) program is offered to students who would like to deepen their spiritual practice by entering a study program which includes regular personal contact with a Zen teacher. This program is especially designed for those who are prevented, by distance or circumstance, from working with a Zen teacher." ([Maitai Zendo], n.d.)

Practitioners undertaking Zen Distance Training receive a monthly posting of a Zen articles and practice suggestions, together with a variety of reading materials and a reading program. However, it is expected that students will attempt to attend at least one retreat held by the teacher, Mary Jaksch, to allow more personal contact. This also helps Jaksch justify this alternative method of teaching as not so far removed from "traditional" Japanese face-to-face encounters. solution to the lack of teacher contact for most practitioners has been the introduction of dokusan via telephone or email (although some teachers still maintain that a face-to-face meeting is vital). Other Zen Masters have introduced dokusan via telephone or email, although some teachers still maintain that a face-to-face meeting is vital and will not consider alternative methods of communication.

While the student-teacher relationship is changing with the advent of technology so it can occur at a distance, there are also adaptations occurring in the nature of the relationship. Zen Masters tend to adopt the traditional role of guide, but often also take on the additional role of personal counsellor, particularly as a number of the Western teachers are qualified psychotherapists. As this is a relatively new development there is a lack of clear guidelines on how this additional role should be managed.

Zen Master Richard Baker Roshi provided a clear example of the problems that this can cause. Baker's movement away from the traditional role of a Zen Master who was not interested in personal history to one involved in personal decisions, was a factor contributing to the scandal that later removed him from his position as Abbot of the San Francisco Zen Centre (Tworkov, 1989: 201-252). But even significant problems like this do not dissuade students for long; Baker is now the spiritual head of Dharma Sangha, which has centres in Crestone, Colorado, and the Black Forest, Germany.

John Tarrant Roshi, leader of the California Diamond Sangha, provides another example. Tarrant is a qualified psychotherapist who incorporates psychotherapeutic principles into his teaching. However, this emphasis differs from that of other groups affiliated with the Diamond Sangha, and was one of the reasons behind the California Diamond Sangha's recent decision to become an independent lineage. Tarrant wrote of the decision:

"We are very involved in making Zen native, in reaching out to the artistic, medical and professional communities, in incorporating meditation methods common in other traditions such as mindfulness of the interior states, in making koan work freely available through seminars, and in linking koan work directly to the life of the student. We also emphasise the value of a crucial enlightenment experience. Some of Robert Aitken's teachers find it difficult to work with our students. These teachers prefer to keep the psychological processes of life out of the koan practice. We think it is crucial to bring them in." (Tarrant, 1999/2000)

### The Buddhist Tradition

One of the central characteristics of Zen Buddhism would have to be that it is a part of the Buddhist tradition. However, some Zen centres in the West are even changing this. In an extreme case, Toni Packer, a dharma heir of Philip Kapleau, ceased using rituals that she felt were overtly Buddhist. For example, practitioners in Kapleau's tradition who have formally become Buddhists usually signify this by wearing a rakusu, a rectangular piece of cloth which is worn on a cord around the neck. Packer felt that the rakusu created a hierarchy and divisions that could cause ego and pride, and stopped wearing it. She questioned the performance of rituals such as prostrating and lighting incense, and concluded that her involvement in these acts influenced other people to also do this, because she was a teacher. She eventually removed Zen from the name of her centre, the Springwater Centre, on the basis that people link Zen to Buddhism and Japan (Friedman, 1987: 50-52, 62). An excerpt from a question and answer session at a "Buddhism in America conference", held in 1997, elucidates her point of view. In response to a question regarding Packer's seeming abandonment of the central Buddhist concepts of transmission and lineage, Packer said:

"Truth itself needs no lineage, it is here, without past or future. ... Transmission takes place when two people, or a group of people, see completely eye to eye - one single eye seeing. I'm not talking of sharing the same opinions or traditions, but being free from conditioned opinions and traditions at the instant of seeing. ... I do remember koans from Zen training which dealt with 'preserving the house and the gate' - the house and the gate referring not just to the temple, but to the entire tradition. The budding Zen teacher going through koans has to learn not only to speak and act before the teacher out of 'nonduality,' but also to take on the responsibility of preserving and perpetuating the house and gate of their lineage. That's not what I'm interested in. I wish for Springwater to flourish in its own spontaneous and unpredictable ways, and not become a place for the transmission of traditional teachings. But if this should happen, so be it." (Packer, 2000).

This ability to separate the Buddhism from Zen Buddhism is not a purely Western development. For example, Yamada, former head of the Sanbo Kyodan, argued that people of differing religions could have the same experience through zazen:

"The theories and philosophies of all the sects are but the clothing covering the core. . . . And the core, this experience, is not adorned with any thought or philosophy. It is merely

a fact, an experienced fact, in the same way that the taste of tea is a fact. A cup of tea has no thought, no idea, no philosophy. It tastes the same to Buddhists as it does to Christians. There is no difference at all." (Yamada Koun, 1975)

With this philosophical basis, it is not a big step to then separate this experience from Buddhism. But again, this is not a new development. Sharf notes that the Sanbo Kyodan's emphasis on zazen as a technique beyond culture is a trend that was exhibited in Japanese Zen Buddhism as early as the 1870s, after modern Japan's exposure to the West:

"In the case of Zen, such reforms were legitimised by a rhetoric that sharply distinguished between the 'goal' or 'essence' of Buddhism - the experience of kensho or satori - and various 'skilful means' leading the way to the goal. Following a logic borrowed in part from the West, this 'essence' was presented as a transcultural and transhistorical 'religious experience' logically distinct from the 'institutional trappings' and 'cultural accretions' that veil that essence. This logic allowed groups such as the Sanbo Kyodan to reject the 'trappings' of Buddhist devotionalism and monastic ordination in order to focus on transformative personal experience alone." (Sharf, 1995: 434-435)

Batchelor argues that this concept began even earlier, noting that in both Sung Dynasty in China (tenth to thirteenth century) and the Kamakura period in Japan (1185-1333), there was a tendency to isolate Zen as an autonomous experience. Zen therefore became isolated from Buddhist philosophy and doctrine, and was simplified to the single practice of zazen, which agreed with the popular demand of the time (Batchelor, 1994: 212-213). Obviously the same demand is now occurring in the West, and Zen is again changing in response to this.

### **Teacher Transmission**

With core Zen practices such as zazen and sesshin being altered, maintenance of traditional forms cannot necessarily be used to demonstrate the legitimacy of Western Zen groups using these forms. However, maintenance of traditional lineages may prove more useful. According to legend, the Buddha established the foundations of Zen Buddhism during a discourse on Vulture Peak during which he did not speak, but held up a flower. Only one of the Buddha's students, Mahakashyapa, understood this message, and had an experience of enlightenment. Mahakashyapa became the first Indian patriarch in the Zen Buddhist lineage. Contemporary Zen Masters are said to be part of an unbroken lineage connecting them back to the Buddha himself; this unbroken line of transmission is proof that a Zen Master's credentials are justified. For example, Glassman was given transmission by Hakuyu Taizan Maezumi Roshi; and Mary Jaksch was authorised to teach by Ross Bolleter Roshi, an Australian Zen Master who, in turn, received authorisation as a Zen Master in the Diamond Sangha school of Zen Buddhism, from Robert Aitken Roshi.

However, factual evidence for this claim that teachers can trace their lineage back to the Buddha is lacking. Additionally, there are well-known international Zen teachers who have gained large followings in the West but were never given formal authorisation by their

Japanese teachers. For example, Philip Kapleau was authorised as an Assistant Teacher in the Sanbo Kyodan lineage by Yasutani Roshi, but Kapleau left the lineage and became independent before full transmission was given. Kapleau then founded the Rochester Zen Centre and has authorised at least seven successors. Some of Kapleau's successor are repeating the pattern; Toni Packer went independent before she received full authorisation, as did Richard Clarke. Kapleau claims that Clarke has no basis for claiming transmission from Kapleau or any connection with Kapleau's organisation (Ciolek, 2000).

Some Zen Buddhist groups no longer even subscribe to this system. The Princeton Area Zen Group was founded in 1991 in New Jersey, USA, provides one example. The Princeton Area Zen Group describe their transmission system as follows:

"[The Princeton Area Zen Group] emphasises traditional elements of Zen practice, like sitting meditation, Dharma talks, private interviews, and retreats, but within a framework of Western culture with an emphasis on democratically discussed and implemented community policies. Upon completion of this curriculum, the teacher will present the student with a 'Certificate of Completion' which will list the works completed, the date of completion, and both the student's and teacher's names. This is not a document of 'transmission'. Rather, it enables the Zen practitioner to provide the necessary credentials for a prospective teaching position. We believe that renouncing any form of 'religious transmission' protects Zen students from arbitrary appointments and helps prevent Zen teachers from indulging in yet another illusion of permanence." ("Princeton Area Zen Group: Curriculum", n.d. 2000).

In light of this information, the use of lineage to prove authenticity also seems problematic.

# The Importance of Authenticity

Since we have not established starting point from which to judge authentic Zen, perhaps a more constructive question is how is this judged, and by whom? In light of all of this, authenticity would seem to be a moot point. While alterations to Zen practice seem obvious to outsiders, they are generally not issues for practitioners. Saito notes that there are many transformations of understanding of meaning during the adaptive process, and that changes are usually small and hardly noticeable when examined separately. Saito notes that Bartlett's studies have revealed that individuals are usually unaware of the changes they have made; people often believe they have carefully reproduced a tradition when an outsider would observe that changes have occurred (Saito, 1994: 63-64). Similarly, Shils notes that the changes associated with the transmission of a religion are not seen to be changes, and that changes are often so small they are not perceived as significant by practitioners (Cited in Mellor, 1989: 76). Williams, Cox and Jaffee note that an outsider may see an innovation where the insider sees continuity, and vice versa, making it difficult to define innovation (Williams, Cox and Jaffee, 1992: 3-4).

While authenticity may not be a conscious issue for Western Zen practitioners, academics can trace changes in how practitioners decide on legitimisation. Waterhouse's study of Buddhism in Bath identifies four different categories of authority sources:

authority of texts, lineage, teachers, and personal experience. She notes that individuals in groups reach compromise positions about which authorities they accept as primary (Waterhouse, 1997: 219). In "traditional" Japanese Zen personal experience was deemphasised, but Waterhouse found that most Western Buddhist practitioners hold personal experience and traditional authority in creative tension (Waterhouse, 1997: 239).

### Conclusion

The issue of authenticity is of significant interest to academics studying the acculturation process. Examination of the different levels of acculturation between different Buddhist traditions leads to interesting insights about the nature of these traditions. For example, some Buddhist schools have undergone major adaptations to suit Western culture; others have not. For example, many Tibetan Buddhist sects maintain very strong links with their country of origin, and the maintenance of traditional practices is seen as a way of perpetuating Tibetan culture; when Tarthang Tulku began teaching Tibetan Buddhism in America he had two goals: to preserve his Tibetan Buddhism heritage and to adapt Buddhism to America (Browning, 1985, 8). In contrast, many Western Zen Buddhist groups have weaker ties with their Asian parent centres; the Diamond Sangha was founded in the West by a Westerner, and consequently places comparatively less emphasis on its Japanese roots.

Differing emphasises on "authenticity", and different interpretations of how this can be judged, yield insights into the acculturation process of Buddhism to the West through elucidating information on issues such as: emphasis on texts, role of teachers, relations with the parent culture, and location of the sacred centre. To more fully understand the acculturation process, further research on how changes are legitimised in Western Buddhist groups would be invaluable.

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