

ZEN

of those quoted being his unless otherwise indicated. I am also indebted for much general information upon the subject to the late Sokei-an Sasaki, Abbot of Jofuku-in, who lived and taught for many years in New York, though I do not wish to make him responsible for any of the opinions given lest they should be in error. Some of this information I owe also to Mrs. Sasaki, who let me read many of the manuscripts of his lectures and translations, and discussed them with me, though, for the same reason, I must not make her responsible either. It is a pleasure to me, however, to have this opportunity of expressing thanks to them all.

At the end of the book will be found a bibliography and an explanation of the drawings, symbols, and Chinese characters used as chapter headings.

Alan W. Watts,
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INTRODUCTION

THERE IS NOTHING THAT MEN DESIRE MORE than life — the fullness of life, Reality itself. In one form or another they try to possess it by every possible means, as happiness, as power, as joy, as wealth, as spiritual insight, and even as simple existence to which they cling with all their might for fear that it will be taken away. But one thing is certain: the harder you try to possess life, the faster it slips away from you, and the

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O venerable Mahakasyapa!" Tradition asserts that this knowledge was handed down from Mahakasyapa through a line of patriarchs to Bodhidharma, who brought it to China, where it continued to be passed from teacher to teacher. Because this knowledge can never be written down Zen does not rely on scriptures, even though it may use them as devices. Words cannot convey it, just as they cannot describe colors to a blind man. Thus Zen is summed up as:

A special transmission [of insight] outside the scriptures;
No dependence upon words and letters;
Direct pointing to the soul of man;
Seeing into one's own nature.

To understand Zen adequately, however, we must realize that it is the fruit and synthesis of the most important trends in both Indian and Chinese religion.

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THE BACKGROUND
IN INDIAN RELIGION

INDIAN RELIGION HAS EVER BEEN CHARACTERIZED by the quest for "that One thing, knowing which we shall know all." In the Upanishads this "One thing" is termed Brahman, the absolute Reality of the universe beyond all opposites. All ordinary things and experiences have opposites; life is opposed to death, pleasure to pain, joy to sorrow, light to darkness. These opposites are necessary to one another, so that life is always