

Zen Buddhism

ID Terms: Please learn the terms below, to be able to identify them for discussion and the short exam (Who or What? Significance?)

satori	Yagyû Tajima	Prajna Immovable
Takuan	suki	“Moon in the Water”
kono-mama/sono-mama	kufû	myôyô
wabi	mushin/“no-mind”	Odagiri Ichion
sabi	tomaru/“stopping”	
“Sword of Non-Abiding Mind”	“Waters of the West River”	

The following questions are designed to guide your reading and prepare you for discussion on Tuesday and Thursday. Bring the text under discussion to class.

Please write out a response to question SEVEN of about 250-300 words and post to the course website by Thursday class time. In answering the question, please refer to specific examples or quotations from the text. Bring a printout to class as well.

QUESTIONS:

Chapters 1 and 2 (“What is Zen?” and “Some Remarks on Japanese Culture”)

1. How does Zen grasp reality and experience? What is Zen knowledge, if there is such a thing? How does this compare with our conventional ways of understanding reality and experience?
2. What is the relation between Zen and creativity?
3. Does Zen constitute a morality or ethics? Why or why not? In answering, compare Zen with certain conceptions of ethics or morals that you are familiar with.

Chapter 4 (“Zen and the Samurai”)

4. In what way is there no contradiction between Zen religion and bushido?

Chapters 5 and 6 (“Zen and Swordsmanship I and II”)

5. How is swordsmanship ultimately a spiritual discipline as opposed to a technical discipline of war? Give specific examples or anecdotes from the text.

6. How is swordsmanship a creative discipline? Where does this creativity come from? Give specific examples from the text.

7. Compare some of the earliest descriptions of warriors in *The Tales of Heike* with some of the later Zen philosophies behind swordsmanship and warriorhood. In what ways did the warrior ideal change from the earlier descriptions you've read? In answering the question, please refer to specific examples or quotations from the texts.