

The Compass of Zen

BY ZEN MASTER SEUNG SAHN

Compiled and edited by Hyon Gak Sunim. Shambala, Boston and London, 1997. ISBN 1-57062-329-5

This book is a simple, clear, and often hilarious presentation of the essential teachings of the main Buddhist traditions — culminating in Zen — by one of the most beloved Zen Masters of our time. In his many years of teaching throughout the world, Zen Master Seung Sahn has become known for his unique ability to cut to the heart of Buddhist teaching in a way that is strikingly clear, without relying upon esoteric or academic language. In this book, based on his talks, he presents the basic teachings of Buddhism in a way that is wonderfully rich and accessible for both beginners and long-time students.

"The Great Way and a dozen side paths: all are present in *The Compass of Zen*. However lost it may get you, it always points true north, because it issues straight from the great bodhisattva heart of Zen Master Seung Sahn." — Stephen Mitchell

"Like two arrows meeting in the air, this extraordinary book meets the mind point." — Joan Halifax

"This *Compass* is rich and full of energy, reflecting Dae Son Sa Nim's limitless attainment. I am grateful that his unique and rare style of teaching is now even more accessible." — Jakusho Kwong Roshi

An Extract from "The Compass of Zen"

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When the Buddha was alive, he only gave talks about the Dharma. He never taught sutras, or gave special mantras, or taught the recitation of his name. People would listen to his talks and then return to their homes to meditate. They would sit in meditation under trees or up on high rocks.

The most important thing that characterised their practice is that they simply looked inside, very deeply inside, to find their true nature. This is how the Buddha's first students attained his teaching, preserved it, and passed it down to us. This is how they attained their own nature and truth. This is how they attained the correct way and correct life. After all, the path of meditation was the way that the Buddha himself had attained enlightenment.

So if you want to practice Buddhism, then you should never become attached to any speech or words. Do not become attached to any one technique. That is the first course in the Buddha's teaching.