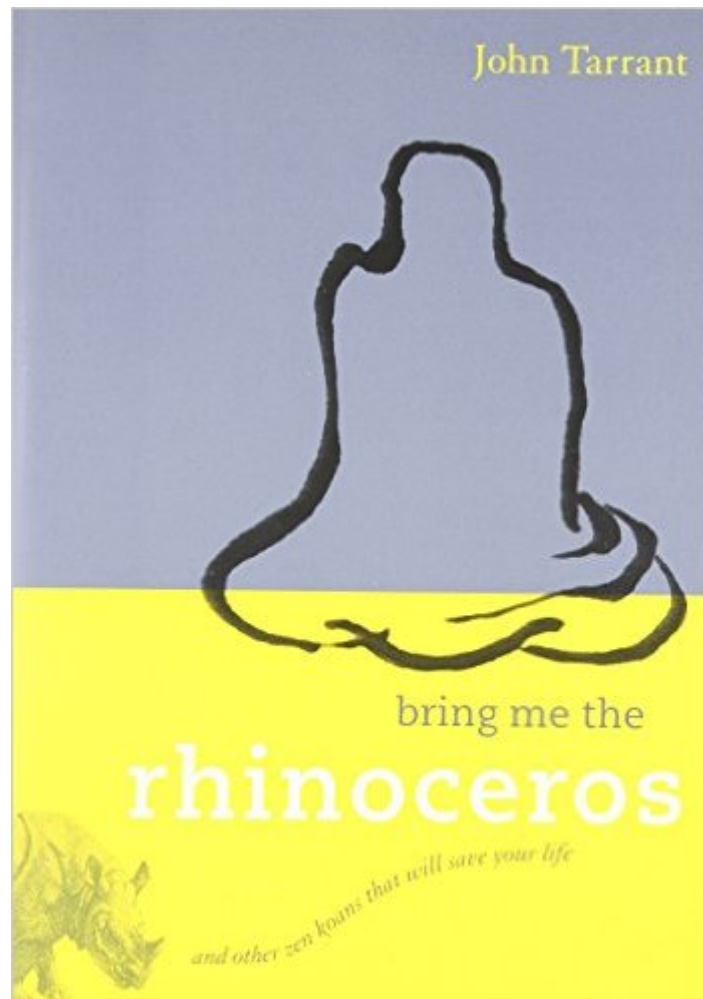


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Bring Me The Rhinoceros: And Other Zen Koans That Will Save Your Life



Synopsis

Bring Me the Rhinoceros is an unusual guide to happiness and a can opener for your thinking. For fifteen hundred years, Zen koans have been passed down through generations of masters, usually in private encounters between teacher and student. This book deftly retells more than a dozen traditional koans, which are partly paradoxical questions dangerous to your beliefs and partly treasure boxes of ancient wisdom. Koans show that you don't have to impress people or change into an improved, more polished version of yourself. Instead you can find happiness by unbuilding, unmaking, throwing overboard, and generally subverting unhappiness. John Tarrant brings the heart of the koan tradition out into the open, reminding us that the old wisdom remains as vital as ever, a deep resource available to anyone in any place or time.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Koans are gateways for a Zen practitioner to realize Buddha nature. John Tarrant's book is a pleasant introduction to some of the "Greatest Hits" of Koans, adding one new one of Australian aboriginal origin. (Tarrant is a Tasmanian.) The form of realization that Tarrant focuses on is the one-ness of all things. Over and over he describes the experience of realization as perceiving all things as glowing with presence and meaning, accompanied by the feeling of certainty that you are all things and that all things are you. He makes it seem as if that specific experience - should you ever get there - is the end of suffering, the beginning of the potential for true happiness. The initial Kensho (realization) experience is, in general, a shallow one. If you place too much emphasis on it

and get stuck in the initial experience of one-ness there's a "zen stink" associated with that condition. It takes years to internalize and broaden the initial realization to the point where you can be called "realized". Even a long-ripened realization can be seriously incomplete. Tarrant and also Yasutani roshi, Eido Shimano roshi, Genpo Merzel roshi (among many others) are cases in point that being realized - even deeply realized - doesn't necessarily make you a good person, a happy person, a smart person, a compassionate person, or someone who does not suffer or cause others significant suffering. John Tarrant broke with Aitken roshi's Diamond Sangha in 1999 due to a well-publicized dispute about unethical behavior. Readers of this book should learn more about that split to understand who Tarrant is in the Zen world. See the link to a PDF on Matthew T.

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