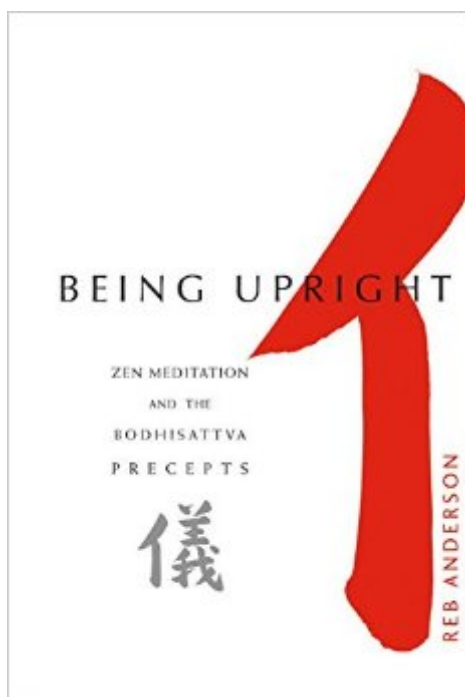


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# Being Upright: Zen Meditation And The Bodhisattva Precepts



## Synopsis

Being Upright takes us beyond the conventional interpretation of ethical precepts to the ultimate meaning that informs them. Reb Anderson first introduces us to the fundamental ideas of Zen Buddhist practice. Who was Shakyamuni Buddha and what was his central teaching? What does it mean to be a bodhisattva and take the bodhisattva vow? Why should we confess and acknowledge our ancient twisted karma? What is the significance of taking refuge in Buddha, dharma, and sangha? The author explores the ten basic precepts, including not killing, not stealing, not lying, not misusing sexuality, and not using intoxicants. A gifted storyteller, Anderson takes us to the heart of situations, where moral judgments are not easy and we do not have all the answers. With wisdom and compassion, he teaches us how to confront the emotional and ethical turmoil of our lives.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"being upright" points directly to our daily lives and gives inspiration for practicing the all-important buddhist precepts. by expanding on each precept, anderson-roshi shows how they are not black-and-white rules, but not to be ignored either. he shows how our lives can truly be transformed to happiness if we keep mindfulness in our practice and our lives. anderson-roshi brings what many foreign masters of zen can't - an american upbringing. his stories touch home and his words rings true. i highly recommend this book for any student of life, and i thank anderson -roshi for his teaching.

If you are one who intends to "receive the precepts" by whatever ceremony or process your sangha follows, then this is definitely the book for you. It does not presume to dictate precept practice to anyone. As the book makes clear: Practice arises out of one's realization while practice simultaneously fosters realization. The author does discuss targets to aim for. However hard those targets may seem at this point in your life, shooting at a target with no bullseye won't improve anyone's aim. Ultimately, of course, we each set our own targets. One caution: "Being Upright" says it is written for people already in Zen practice. It is for those who are considering making a public, formal statement of their personal dedicated intent to follow specific Buddhist precepts. As the author says, his title refers to "the integration of precept practice and meditation." He makes it clear that it is the Zen meditator who decides whether or when to make the vows to practice the precepts. He also says that while some, in his experience, might make their avowal after six months of meditation practice, most should have sat for three years or more (many, many more in his own case). Don't buy this book if you are looking for an introduction to Zen.

Tenshin Reb Anderson is one of the original exponents of American Zen. The Midwestern Anderson became a student of Shogaku Shunryu Suzuki in 1967, staying with him until Suzuki's death in 1971. Having briefly met and received teisho from the dignified Anderson, a model of equanimity and rectitude, at a sesshin he conducted in 2007, BEING UPRIGHT took on a very direct and personal tone for me as I read through it. Although Anderson's personality imbues this book with a kind of "warm reserve," making it perhaps a bit less penetrable than Aitken Roshi's THE MIND OF CLOVER, which discusses the Bodhisattva Precepts as well, the differences in tone are only those as arise between different teachers. The lessons are equally as valid. Reb Anderson's thesis is that the Bodhisattva Precepts are central, as central as, and perhaps even a shade more so, than zazen. Although zazen is considered by many to be the heart-mind ('shin') of Zen, the Precepts are the thoughts and feelings that imbue that heart-mind, an infinitely complex and organic set of principles that underlie each aware moment. In their externals rather like the Ten Commandments, the Precepts arise from, and at the same time are, and also create, the way of right living. A self-perpetuating, closed, and yet infinitely open manner of addressing the world, to be a Bodhisattva, an awakened one who remains in the world but not of it pending the enlightenment of all beings, is to be totally, joyfully, human. Reb Anderson uses traditional teachings, examples from his own tenure as a teacher and as a student, and examples from the life of Suzuki, to underscore the nature of the Precepts and their practical application to American life. An important book for the

Zen practitioner, BEING UPRIGHT asks us to be all that we are.

"Being Upright" explains everything you wanted to know about Zen Meditation. It breaks it down into sections and explains everything in detail. This is a good book to read and to have as a reference.

This book was recommended to me by a local Zen priest because of my Zen practice and questioning of how to live in a Zen manner. "Being Upright" did not disappoint. You will learn much about the precepts and have a good foundation upon what living in a manner that is "free from suffering" is all about. Reb Anderson mixes Zen stories and personal stories to make this book well-rounded. Definitely a book I will come back to when I want to be upright and stand still in this chaotic world.

I have read a few books on the precepts and this one is my favorite. It helped me prepare for my precepts ceremony and now my local sangha and I are using it as part of a precepts discussion group. What I appreciate most is how open Reb is with sharing his real life experiences where he or others struggled with upholding the precepts, which makes the lessons of this book more practical than philosophical.

This is a good book. Anderson is an excellent teacher. All his points are solid and he provides narratives that are to the point. While it is more touchy-feely than Aitken, it is still a good introduction to the Precepts. Actually, the best introduction is from your teacher.

This book is really good! It covers a lot of subjects that some Buddhist books don't touch on and a good book for those who are just getting interested in Buddhism. It is easily understood and clear in its meaning. Makes you look at your actions in a new light and helps you to see alternative behavior, which is what so much of Buddhism is about. Good Book

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