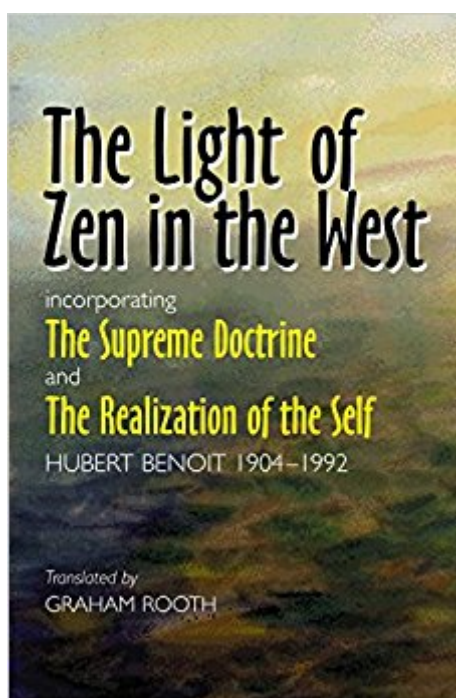


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The Light Of Zen In The West: Incorporating The Supreme Doctrine And The Realization Of The Self



Synopsis

Following the success of the publication of *The Supreme Doctrine* in 1998, Sussex Academic Press is proud to announce a completely new and updated translation by Graham Rooth, MD, MRCPsych, of this seminal work. *The Light of Zen in the West* also includes a new translation of one of Benoit's other major texts, *The Realization of the Self*. The volume also contains two lesser known works - *Buddha and the Intuition of the Universal* and *Techniques of Timeless Realization* - and has a glossary and index. Benoit's writings on the human predicament were influenced by his studies in Zen Buddhism and psychoanalysis. Both books foreshadow contemporary transpersonal and integral psychology: through the re-integration of psychology and metaphysics, Benoit invites us to make our own journey toward spiritual transformation and the intuitive understanding of universal truths.

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Customer Reviews

“There were giants in the earth in those days.” This line from Genesis comes to mind as I look again, after a gap of some years, at the writings of Hubert Benoit. Like Karlfried Graf von Durckheim (author of *Daily Life as Spiritual Exercise*), who was of virtually the same generation, Benoit brought a formidable mind and a seeker's firm dedication to the exploration of Zen. They were deciphering then what remains for us to continue deciphering: teachings Asian in origin but native to our minds and hearts. “Roger Lipsey, author, *The Spiritual in Twentieth-Century Art* This is a book that should be read by everyone who aspires to know who he is and what he can do to acquire such self-knowledge.” “From the Foreword to the first English edition,

Aldous Huxley's idea of publishing a fresh translation of Hubert Benoit's two works on Zen from a psychoanalytic point of view is good news for those who take human freedom seriously. While all religions are interested in this matter, the seriousness with which Buddhism has addressed this issue has been widely acknowledged. The Buddhist concept of suffering as the human predicament and its cessation in nirvanic freedom, and the Freudian concepts of illness and health, have been found to have something in common before and after Benoit. The unique characteristic of Benoit's presentation of Zen is that he articulates it in a language and metaphor intelligible to the contemporary mind informed of psychology, philosophy and science.

From the Foreword, Professor Asanga Tilakaratne, Kelaniya University: Paralysis of the hand may seem a strange route to becoming a famous writer, but the French thinker Dr Hubert Benoit (1904-1992) specialized in surgery until injuries sustained in the defence of Saint L  in the Second World War partially paralysed his right hand and brought an end to his surgical career. Benoit turned his attention to psychoanalysis and to Zen, producing in 1955 the seminal work *The Supreme Doctrine*. In this edition to mark the centenary of Benoit's birth, Graham Rooth, MD, MRCPsych, offers a new translation of the French text with the original preface by Swami Siddheswarananda, founder of the Ramakrishna Vedantic Centre near Paris, and the original foreword by novelist Aldous Huxley, together with a new foreword by Professor Asanga Tilakaratne, Director of the Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies at the University of Kelaniya, Colombo. Also included are *The Realization of Self* (1981) and two short essays by Benoit: "Buddha and the Intuition of the Universal" and "Technique of Timeless Realization". The volume forms an excellent insight into Benoit's work on the human being and the nature of our suffering.

The Middle Way

Graham Rooth MD, MRC Psych, is a retired consultant psychiatrist with a longstanding interest in languages, and the relationship between spirituality and humanistic therapies.

Dr. Benoit provided the Western world an excellent collection of insights into life based on his study of the earliest Zen/Ch'an teachers, Western psychology and, I'm sure, personal suffering. These were essays in the true, original sense of the word: attempts. Each chapter pretty much stands on its own as a new effort of understanding. It represents a considerably deeper view of Zen than is popularly circulated. Benoit brings the necessity of self-knowledge to the mix of energetic meditation and satoris that people associate with modern Zen, and he provides hard won clues as to what self-knowledge really can consist of. It is a study of partiality. We are, unknowingly, dreaming our lives. The psyche is steeped in conditioning of all sorts that it mistakes for objectivity. Among these

conditioned beliefs masquerading as objectivity are those that assert that we are free, that we have the power to improve ourselves, that our perpetual failures are personal faults. Zen is not or ought not to be a self-improvement program. All this personal improvement stuff is symptomatic of the illness not the cure. There is above us, beyond the reach of personal ambition, a healing goodness that is trying to find us. Graham Rooth's apparently rather free translation is excellent. The original translation was at times unnecessarily difficult, involving made-up words and requiring knowledge of clinical psychology beyond what most of us have, and reminding one painfully at times of the well-educated, French academician. Graham Rooth seems to have fully understood the author's purposes and communicates them quite well. This is the type of material that requires a long digestion. It's not the type of book you can read once and get. It's one of those rare books that is about something Real, the real possibility of inner transformation, and so it is of great value, especially in this bizarre world of empty, soul-less distractions.

Really too bad Graham Rooth's translation of "The Supreme Doctrine" and "The Realization of Self" appears to be out of print. Because it's a fantastic 2-in-1. "The Realization of Self" was written after "The Supreme Doctrine" and towards the end of Benoit's life, and is a much distilled, more mature, more succinct attempt to capture that which cannot be captured. But it sure is a valiant effort. If you can pick it up used for a reasonable price, I highly recommend it. Otherwise, you'll have to go for another translation.

This is a must read for anyone interested in inner work and freedom. The book is not the usual self-help stuff or exclamations about the virtues of states which you are unable to access for more than a moment. This is a real book by someone who has tried many avenues including Gurdjieff and Zen and has been able to assess the results of his efforts objectively. The author is a psychologist who is familiar with the obstacles and does not offer a one size fits all solution. Instead, he looks at efforts and without discounting them in any way, he puts them in perspective by revealing the underlying assumptions. This is a book about understanding by a careful and precise writer with a real search.

I would never have found this wonderful book (which incorporates "The Supreme Doctrine," which I read as an undergraduate many decades ago, and "The Realization of the Self") had not a wiser man than I recommended it. The writing sometimes is dense, as is the argument. But perseverance brings rewards and at least the promise of a better state of consciousness, if you are patient and

work hard... and patient and work hard... and patient and....

This new translation of Hubert Benoit's work constitutes one of the most important, and challenging, books ever written on the nature of Zen and its relation to human psychology. Graham Rooth is to be congratulated for giving us a better translation of Benoit's classic work. And Sussex Academic Press is to be congratulated for publishing this collection of Benoit's work in a single volume. Benoit unpacks the teaching of Hui-Neng in terms of modern psychology (and its relation to classical metaphysics). However, this unpacking unfolds over several hundred pages of dense analytical work in which Benoit sometimes shifts his perspective and amends his conclusions. This book requires both patience and determination. My suggestion is to first scan through this collection and establish a reading map for further, in-depth, consideration. Read this work selectively, one small part at a time, reading those parts that make the most sense, first. This book is not easy to understand --like Zen itself, it challenges the way you think. However, once you get a foothold, it is a book that you can return to for many, many years. For serious students of Zen, this book is one of the most important and valuable books ever written. It is well worth the struggle that it will require.

great text explaining the philosophy and practice of zen in the modern world. Sometimes the explanation is complex, not sure if this is due to the difficult translation. Wonderful translation...

If Banished to an Island and could only take one book, this would be it. Though not the easiest read it is the best explanation I have ever read about what's transpiring. I have read hundreds of books from different faiths yet this one encapsulates in words, which is impossible, better than any I've read. Couldn't put it down. It's a slow read, preferably read in quietness, but once finished you will be left satisfied, relaxed and quite possibly the end of seeking where one can begin to BECOME what he has been shown. The supposed separation of Subjects and objects is difficult to transcend, especially in our sense-craved western world. This book will assist in dissolving any such notions of so-called separate entities.

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