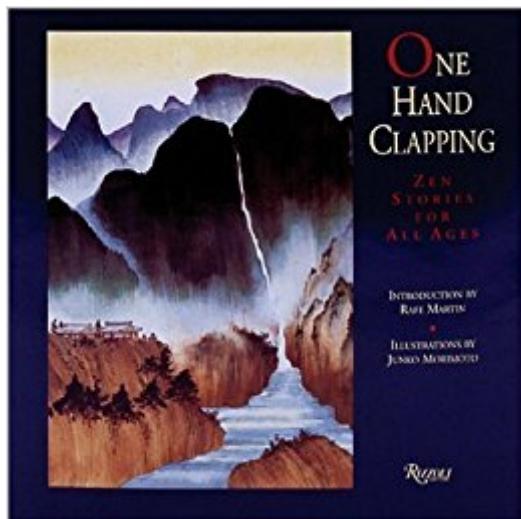


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# One Hand Clapping: Zen Stories For All Ages



## **Synopsis**

When is a tiger not a tiger? When is a mountain more than a mountain? What is the sound of one hand clapping? The stories of this collection come from the Zen Buddhist tradition-- from tales told by the Buddha himself to anecdotes from the lives of the Zen masters of China and Japan who helped pass on the Buddha's teachings. These stories reflect the wisdom, directness, and spontaneity of which Zen is known. Zen stories delight as they challenge, enchant as they point towards a different way of seeing things. In the simple language of stories passed down over hundreds of years, this collection can point us toward our own natural Mind of wisdom, insight, peace, and compassion. They help us see past our seeming differences into what is the same for all of us. Rafe Martin, a student of Zen for over 25 years, introduces these tales, providing both background and insight into the collection. Junko Morimoto's beautiful illustrations reflect the tranquility, wit, and power of these stories.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

This thought-provoking collection, designed ``for the tender heart that children and adults naturally share," provides a window onto the contemplative nature of Buddhism. The selections offer many layers of meaning for different levels of interest. Whether they concern a baby fish asking a wise old fish to explain the sea ("When you swim you reveal its presence. It's just because it's so close to you that it's very hard to see") or a would-be swordsman who must first learn patience before he learns his desired skill, the stories all illuminate, stimulate, instruct and ultimately hint at ageless

truths. Like beads on a necklace, the stories are strung together and unified by Morimoto's (My Hiroshima) agile illustrations. Her diverse styles range from watercolors to pen-and-ink, from charcoals to cartoons. Gracefully compiled and beautifully designed, this is a one-of-a-kind book. All ages. Copyright 1995 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

"A fragrant bouquet of Zen flowers that do not talk but say so much, adapted and retold by that masterful storyteller Rafe Martin. One Hand Clapping is a book parents and children are going to enjoy sharing."--Philip Kapleau (author, Three Pillars of Zen)"Gentle lessons in fun stories with amusing illustrations-- this is a book that will appeal to the young of all ages."--Robert Aitken (author, The Gateless Barrier)

If you like Jon Muth's "Zen Shorts" for children, about the panda named Stillwater and his interactions with 3 children, you will love "One Hand Clapping." "One Hand Clapping" came out in 1995, much earlier than "Zen Shorts" and is unsurpassed in the story selection and the beauty of its illustrations. Each tale is a self-contained page or two, written in simple, elegant language, with beautiful illustrations. In collections of Jataka Tales (from India), or even in folktales from Japan, China or other Asia cultures, you may encounter stories and fables whose morality does not necessarily translate into today's values, and/or into Western morality. But this is a collection of stories that I think will resonate with, if not move, most modern Western readers. One story I remember from my prior ownership of this book is the story of a nun who sought shelter for the night in a village but the villagers turned her down. It was going to be very cold that night. She walked out of town and up a hillside and slept under a cherry tree. The night was so cold, the ground was covered with frost by the morning. When she awoke. She looked up into the tree and saw the sunlight shining through the frosted cherry blossoms. She was dazzled by the beauty of it. She stood up and bowed towards the village and composed a haiku in which she thanked them, for through their actions she was able to experience the sight of the sunlight on frosted sakura. One reason I want to find this book again is to re-read that haiku. Fifteen years ago this story stunned me. Part of the lesson was not "let go of anger" it was that she didn't have the anger in the first place. She was truly living a Buddhist life. Since my first reading years ago, I have learned other lessons by remembering this story. The great Zen stories are like that---one may get more and more meaning out of it over time. I have taught the pre-school class at our Buddhist temple for 9 years and this book contains stories that neither I nor our reverend had heard before. I lent this book out once years ago and it was never returned. I have been looking for this book in Buddhist bookstores and

in the religion sections of major bookstores but none of them knew about it nor carried it. I am delighted to find a few copies here through .

I read this book while sitting in a book store one day after not being able to put it down. It is a compilation of simplified tales and fables from the Zen perspective. Though this is a book intended for children I think many adults would appreciate this book to and this would make a great book to read to a child. The tales are very simple yet hold a lot of deep meaning and one could think about them a long time while gleaning new insights. The illustrations are neat too. Over all a very gentle and beautiful book which I would highly recommend. I am getting a copy for my mom for Christmas!

very good for all ages

Beautiful stories. I use them to illustrate zen teachings.

The perfect little book with big messages, the whole family can come together and talk about after evening chores. \* smiles\*

Sometimes it's so obvious we can't see it. Coming from a Christian background, when I first bought this book, it was impossible to see the simple threads that run all through these stories: patience of the little child awaiting a persimmon, the nun being turned away and then beholding the splendor of nature itself. The stories are simple, easy to read, and deeply profound. The artwork is insightfully accomplished. Most of us have had experiences which parallel the stories, and therein lies the power of this wonderful book!

This is an excellent book for both adults and children. I read it with my children and the keep it as a prized possession. They read it on thier own and I have bought multiple copies as gifts for relatives. This will be some of the best money you'll ever spend.

I always liked Zen and Sufi stories, and this book has some good ones. Beautiful illustrations... This book may be a good gift to someone who is dear to you and has interest in spirituality.

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