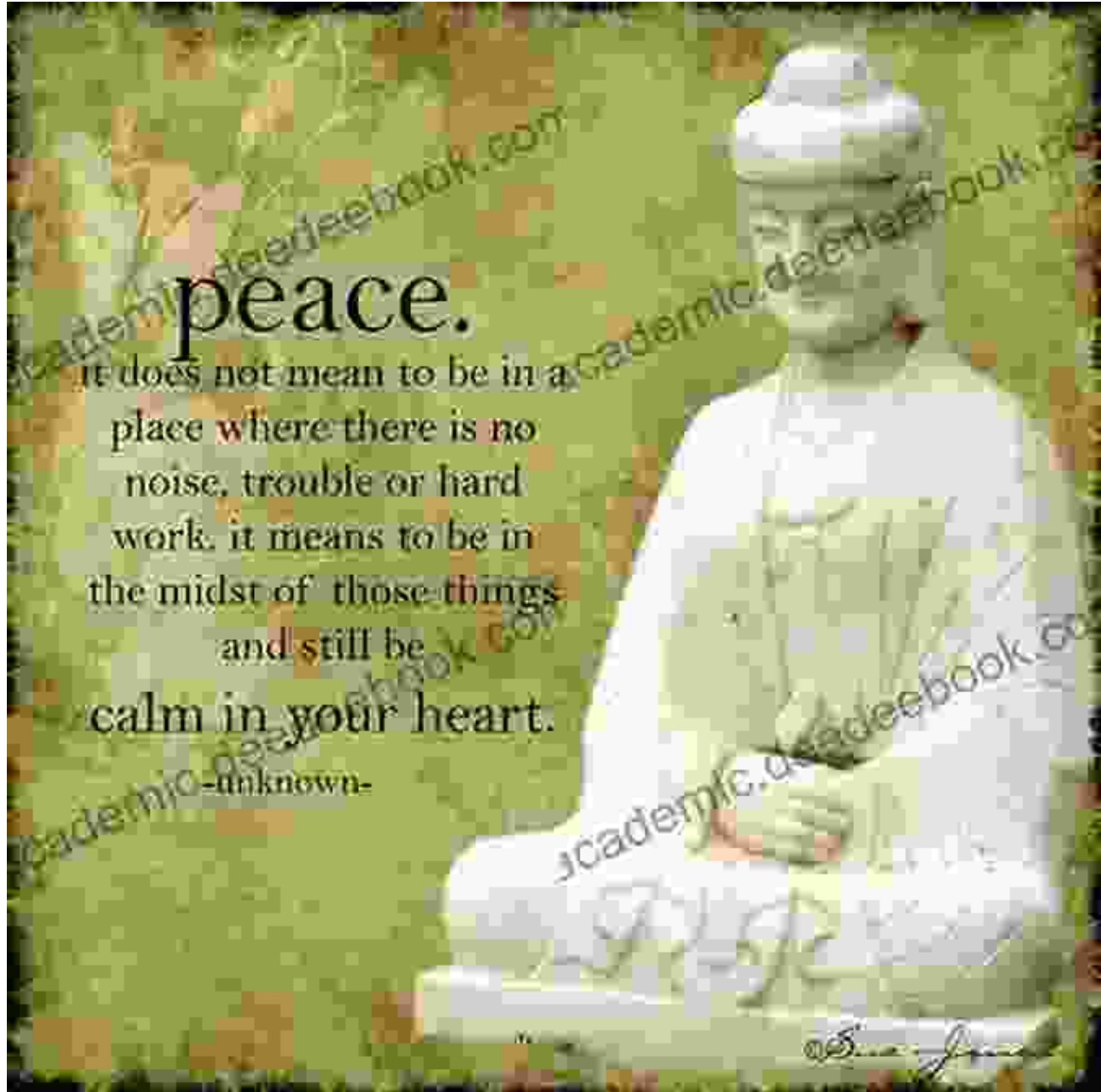


# Dogen Zenji Goroku: Profound Sayings from the Master of Zen



Dogen Zenji, a legendary figure in Japanese Buddhism, left behind a treasure trove of wisdom in the form of his writings. Among them is the Dogen Zenji Goroku, a collection of his recorded sayings that provides

invaluable insights into the practice and philosophy of Zen. This article will delve into the profound teachings of the Dogen Zenji Goroku, exploring its central themes, exploring the Goroku's teachings on zazen, koans, and the nature of the self, and highlighting the enduring legacy of Dogen's teachings in contemporary Zen practice.



## Dogen Zenji Goroku: Sayings of Zen Master Dogen

by Susan Vreeland

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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### Central Themes of the Dogen Zenji Goroku

The Dogen Zenji Goroku is a vast and multifaceted work, covering a wide range of topics, but at its core, several central themes emerge:

1. **The Importance of Practice:** Dogen emphasized the paramount importance of daily practice, particularly zazen meditation, as the path to enlightenment. He taught that through sustained and dedicated practice, one can cultivate a deep understanding of the true nature of reality.
2. **The Non-Dualistic Nature of Reality:** Dogen propounded a non-dualistic view of reality, seeing no separation between the self and the

world, between subject and object. He believed that all beings and phenomena are interconnected and interdependent, forming a seamless web of existence.

3. **The Importance of Self-Inquiry:** Dogen encouraged practitioners to engage in self-inquiry, to question their assumptions and beliefs, and to penetrate the depths of their own minds. He taught that through self-inquiry, one can come to a profound understanding of the true nature of the self.

### **Zazen: The Gateway to Enlightenment**

For Dogen, zazen meditation was the cornerstone of Zen practice. He believed that through the practice of zazen, one could cultivate a deep and abiding experience of the present moment, letting go of distractions and attachments. Dogen's instructions on zazen are detailed and precise, outlining the posture, breathing, and mental focus necessary for effective meditation.

In the *Goroku*, Dogen writes:

> "To study the Buddha way is to study the self. To study the self is to forget the self. To forget the self is to be enlightened by the myriad things. To be enlightened by the myriad things is to drop off body and mind and become one with the universe."

### **Koans: Tools for Awakening**

Koans, paradoxical riddles that challenge logical thought, were another essential element of Dogen's teachings. He believed that koans could help practitioners break through their habitual patterns of thinking and open their

minds to the deeper truths of Zen. Dogen's Goroku contains numerous koans, each with its own unique commentary and interpretation.

One of the most famous koans in the Goroku is "Mu," the Japanese word for "nothing." Dogen explains that "Mu" does not refer to the absence of something but rather to the non-conceptual, non-dualistic nature of reality. By contemplating "Mu," practitioners can glimpse the true nature of the self and the world beyond the confines of conventional thought.

### **The Nature of the Self**

Dogen's Goroku also explores the nature of the self, challenging conventional notions of individuality and separateness. He taught that the self is not a fixed entity but rather a dynamic process, constantly changing and evolving in response to its surroundings. Dogen emphasized the interconnectedness of all beings, seeing the self as an integral part of a larger web of existence.

In the Goroku, Dogen writes:

> "The self is not a thing. It is a process. It is a relation. It is a becoming. The self is not a fixed entity. It is a fluid, dynamic, ever-changing process."

### **Enduring Legacy of Dogen's Teachings**

Dogen Zenji Goroku has had a profound impact on Zen practice and philosophy, influencing countless practitioners and scholars throughout history. Its teachings on zazen, koans, and the nature of the self continue to guide and inspire Zen practitioners to this day. Dogen's legacy extends far beyond the Soto Zen tradition, influencing other Zen schools and even Western philosophy and psychology.

In contemporary Zen practice, the Dogen Zenji Goroku remains an essential text, studied and revered by practitioners around the world. Its profound teachings provide a timeless roadmap for anyone seeking to deepen their understanding of Zen and cultivate a life of mindfulness, compassion, and wisdom.

The Dogen Zenji Goroku is a treasure trove of wisdom, offering a profound exploration of Zen practice and philosophy. Through its teachings on zazen, koans, and the nature of the self, the Goroku provides invaluable guidance for anyone seeking to deepen their understanding of Zen and cultivate a more mindful, compassionate, and awakened life. Dogen's teachings continue to resonate with Zen practitioners today, inspiring them to let go of attachments, penetrate the depths of their own minds, and realize the true nature of reality.



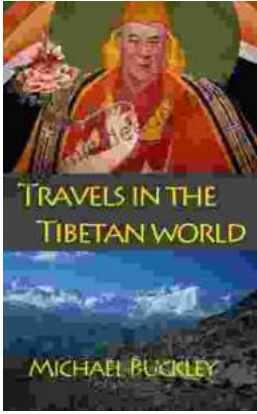
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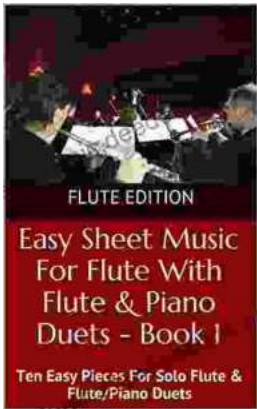
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