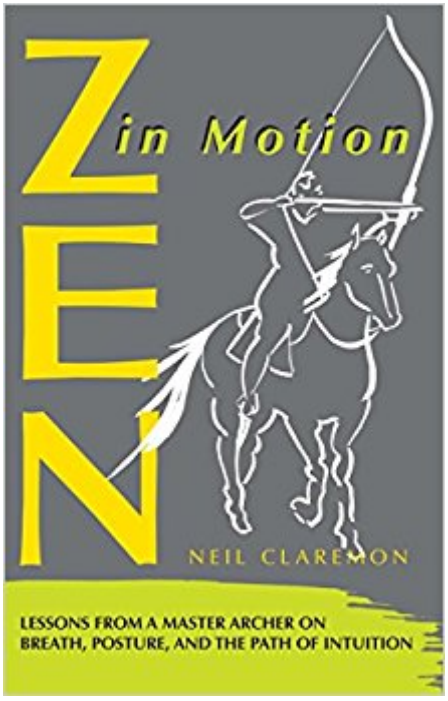
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Zen In Motion: Lessons From A Master Archer On Breath, Posture, And The Path Of Intuition



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Synopsis

Both a fascinating glimpse of the interaction between spiritual master and disciple and a lucid analysis of the Zen path of awareness, this book describes techniques for breathing, standing, walking, concentrating, moving the mind, overcoming ego, healing the body, and finally, opening a Ã¢â ¬Å“window of opportunityÃ¢â ¬Â• between stillness and motion that allows the expansion of time and consciousness.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Neil Claremon is a Zen archer and author of numerous works of poetry, fiction, and nonfiction, with a special interest in themes of Native America and the Southwest.

This is a classic text, well written, informative, and deep.It is slightly more about martial arts then you might hope, but does an admirable job of steering the discussion towards topics important for Zen Buddhism.Some may find that the book errs on the side of Unitarian Universalism (I first encountered this book in the library of a Unitarian Universalist church). It has a dusty, book-like feel, and clearly is both not a bad book, and also not the best book you will own. A familiar feeling.The writer is clearly a religious practitioner, and the religiosity of his work in horse archery clearly shows.

It was more than Archery . this is a wonderful book

My wife loves me

When one thinks of Zen, one thinks of stillness. Sensory and motor deprivation is what scientists call it. But stillness is a favored term among Zen Buddhists. Being someone who is fascinated by movement and activities at the body-mind intersect, this title immediately snagged my attention despite the narrow print on this thin bookÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s spine. The value of a Zen state of mind in the practice of movement arts is clear and well-established. ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Zen in MotionÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• recounts the lessons of the author as a student of the Japanese style of mounted archery (kyÃƒâ |Ã Â«dÃƒâ |Ã Â•.) Claremon studied with a Japanese KyÃƒâ |Ã Â«dÃƒâ |Ã Â• master residing in New Mexico.It will be clear to many why mounted archers might take allegiance in Zen. Charging down a trail on a horse towards a small, round target, thereÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s no time for conscious thought in calculating pull and release. Furthermore, thereÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s stillness in motion (sounds like a koan) that must be maximized because the slightest imperfection in movement can send an arrow astray.It should be noted that this is neither the first nor the only book written on the nexus of Zen and KyÃƒâ |Ã Â«dÃƒâ |Ã Â•. (Though itÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s the first one IÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ve read in full.) Probably the most famous book on the subject is Eugen HerrigelÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Zen in the Art of ArcheryÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â•, but thereÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s also a more recent book by John Stevens, entitled ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Zen Bow, Zen ArrowÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• that tells the story of Awa KenzÃƒâ |Ã Â• (who was HerrigelÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s teacher.) The logical question is what is the value-added of ClaredonÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s book. If we have two books by more famous authors on seemingly the same subject, why should one read this one? I believe Claremon carved out a good niche with this book that makes it sufficiently different from the books of those other authors.What is ClaremonÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s niche? The body portion of the mind-body equation is at the forefront in this book. Claremon directs most of his energies to topics such as breathing, posture, grounding, walking, and balance. HerrigelÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Zen in the Art of ArcheryÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• focuses more heavily on the mind portion of the equationÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â •i.e. the philosophy / psychology of Zen, if you will. This may make it sound like ClaremonÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s book isnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t much about Zen, which is widely considered a mental pursuit. However, one must remember that postural alignment and breath are crucial in zazen, and that Kinhin, walking meditation, is a well-established practice in Zen Buddhism. Furthermore, I donÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t want to imply that Claremon leaves out the mental piece altogether, just that the balance of the discussion is toward the physical. (Whereas, it seems

like the balance of HerrigelÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s discussion is in the realm of the mentalÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â •but Herrigel gets into physical topics as well.) Having said all that, an argument could be made that a more appropriate title might be ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Ki (Chi) in MotionÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• as the author devotes a great deal of space to discussing life energy (Ki in Japanese or Chi in Chinese.)Another valuable piece of ClaremonÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s work is that there is plenty of value to individuals who donÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t practice archery, but who are interested in discovering how these lessons might apply to other movement arts. For example, I found the topic of the 10-point ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Diamond BeingÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• that is a central concept in the book to be quite thought-provoking. The 10 points that are roughly arranged in a diamond shape (vertical alignment of 3 nodes down the left side of body, 4 nodes down the bodyÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s centerline, and 3 nodes on the right side, and all these nodes connected by edges (line segments)) and map to the human body. While much of what Claremon said about this construct was esoteric and not of much use to the scientific-minded reader (i.e. sending ki between the various nodes), the construct had value in thinking about postural alignment, for example. There is an entire chapter devoted to healing that, of course, has a value to non-archers as well as archers.Some of the concepts that are mentioned can be thought of in terms of the modern-day construct of ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Flow,ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• which is related to Zen states of mind and which has gained a following among modern practitioners of high-speed / high-risk sports.) For example, the idea of perceiving time at a slower rate, which is an established part of Flow states valued by skiers and skydivers, would be a valuable state of mind for shooting an arrow from a moving horse toward a small target. Another example is discussed on the chapter of the fear of falling. Whatever one calls the mental state, avoiding an adrenaline dump and the fear associated with it is critical.The only graphics are drawings, but they seem adequate to the task.I enjoyed this book. For me the bookÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s greatest weakness was a tendency to be ethereal and esoteric. While the author denied believing in magic, there was a fair amount of explanation that no scientifically-minded person could hang his hat on. To be fair, this may in part be because the science of some of these experience isnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t yet well-established. (I recently watched a clip from a Discovery Channel program called ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Human WeaponÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• in which there were some Chi related activities that the technicians and experts said they couldnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t explain for all of their state-of-the-art equipment.) However, it could also be that false experiences were arrived at by the leading statements of a trusted teacher.IÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢d recommend the book particularly for those who have interests in activities at the intersection of body and mind.

This book was an autobiagraphical approach as to who one man learned. In this way the book was not what I anticipated. I thought thst I would be reading a book about techniques not how one internalized techniques. The below book was what I found more helpful. Kyudo: The Essence and Practice of Japanese Archery (Bushido--The Way of the Warrior).

and nearly as charming as that other fine book, Zen in the Art of Archery by Eugen Herrigel.The author went to a retreat in the american southwest, and if anyone can find the contact information of the teacher (if he’s still around) let me know.I bought this book over two years ago and only now am slightly "getting" some of it. It bears repeated rereading - but without a qualified instructor in moving meditative practices your progress will be greatly slowed.

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