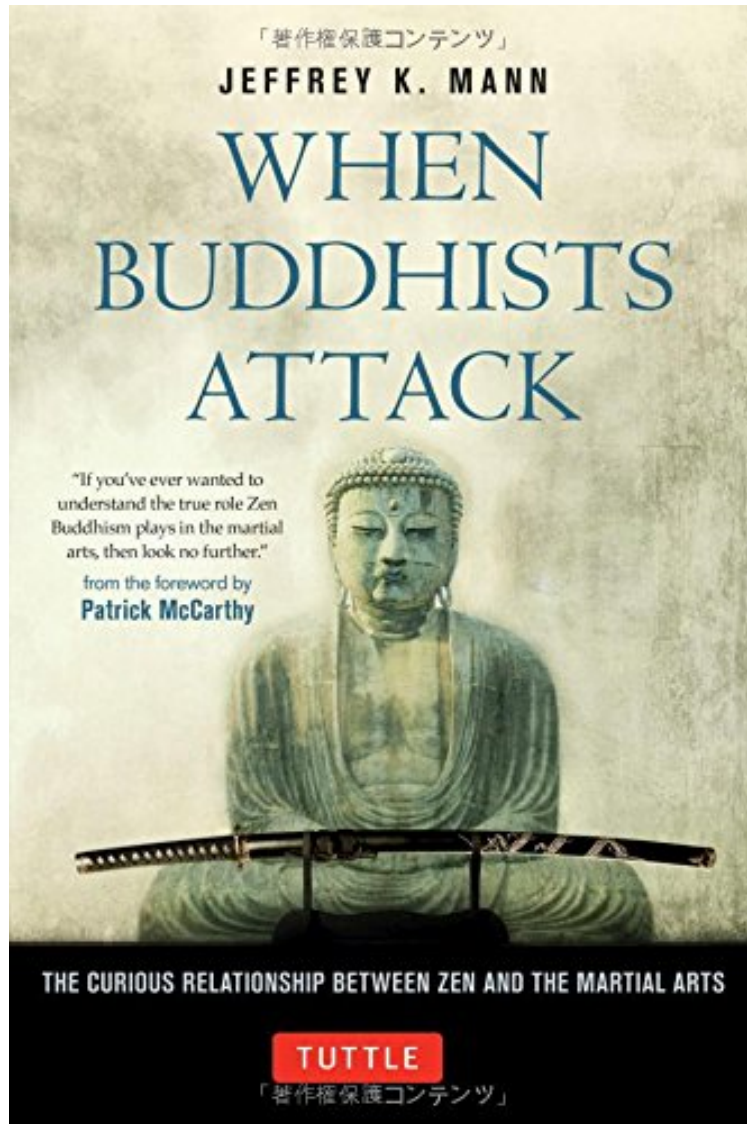


(Read now) When Buddhists Attack: The Curious Relationship Between Zen and the Martial Arts

When Buddhists Attack: The Curious Relationship Between Zen and the Martial Arts

Jeffrey K. Mann

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Jeffrey K. Mann : When Buddhists Attack: The Curious Relationship Between Zen and the Martial Arts before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised When Buddhists Attack: The Curious Relationship Between Zen and the Martial Arts:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Answers the fascinating question of why pacifistic Buddhism produces awesome killing machinesBy Bernie GourleyManns book considers one of Asian historys intriguing little

questions: How is it that one of the most pacifistic of world religions, i.e. Buddhism, came to be integrally connected to some of the worlds most fearsome and devastatingly effective warriors? Specifically, the author looks at the connection of Zen Buddhism to warrior traditions like the samurai of Japan and to a lesser extent the Shaolin monks of China. It should be noted that while Zen was one of the most firmly established intersects of Buddhism and martial arts; its not the only one. Branches of Vajrayana (esoteric) Buddhism had their own warrior-monk traditions which he mentions as well as Shugendō (combines Buddhist, Shinto, and Taoist elements) warrior connection. The book is heavily weighted toward the Japanese martial arts. This may be in part owing to the authors particular background, but also because many of the works that establish this firm connection between Zen and martial arts are Japanese (e.g. works by Takuan Shō, Yagyū Munenori, and even Miyamoto Musashi.) Its worth noting that both Buddhists and modern martial artists have tried to downplay or outright deny the connection between these traditions. However, Mann suggests the connection is undeniable in the face of historical evidence, and that it even has a logic that belies the apparent contradiction. (Note: Presumably many Buddhists deny this connection because they want to distance themselves from the taint of violence, and many modern martial artists deny it so their religious students wont ditch the art because it isnt 100% secular [or based entirely in the students religious belief structure.]) The book consists of eight chapters as well as front matter and an Epilogue that explores the question of whether the Zen of samurai lore is truly Zen Buddhism. The first couple chapters give the reader an introduction to Buddhism and, specifically Zen. There are then chapters that show the linkage between Zen and the martial arts of East Asia. The book then considers the nature of the advantages offered by Zen to martial artists that made it so appealing to warriors like the samurai. It also considers the interpretation of violence that allows for the dichotomy under discussion, and explores the degree to which the connection between Zen Buddhism and martial arts is relevant in the modern era. The book is a mix of history, religious studies, philosophy, and the art and science of fighting systems. So if ones interests are eclectic, theres a lot to take away from this book. If you have narrow interests, youll want to make sure they include the aforementioned central question (i.e. Why pacifistic Buddhism has helped produce some of the worlds greatest fighting systems.) The book is well-researched and documented. There are many interesting and informative stories throughout the book. For example, Id never read about the 19th century jujutsu murders until this book. This is a fascinating case in which several experienced students of one particular school of jujutsu were found dead with the exact same wound. While the murderer wasnt captured, investigators quickly discerned his (or her) method. That is, the killer knew the trained responses of this school and made a feint to draw a certain defense and then exploited a vulnerability the response presented. How is this story relevant? It speaks to the perceived advantages of Zen, which emphasizes avoiding habituation and residing in the moment. Id recommend this book for martial artists who are interested in the history and cultural context of their arts [and of the martial arts in general.] Theres a class of martial arts student who may want to avoid the book. If youre a devout adherent of a Western religion who practices a traditional style of East Asian martial art and think that there isnt an imprint of the local religion on that art, your delusions may be shattered by this book. Buddhists may find the discussion of the less absolutist interpretation of ahimsa (non-violence) to be illuminating (or for all I know infuriating.) Its a short book, coming in at around 200 pages, but is end-noted and referenced in the manner of a scholarly work. It has a glossary and bibliography, but no graphics.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent insight to Zen and Martial arts
By Martin
I have been studying Buddhism for the past year and happened to come across some interesting pieces of work. This one, by far, exceeds all of my expectations that I had when I picked it up. It is an excellent piece of work, very informative and at the same time very engaging. The author keeps the readers interest through quotations of Japanese Master swordsmen, philosophers and martial artists as well as adding colorful stories to support the context presented. I learned more about zen than I could ever anticipate. He presents the extremely complicated zen concepts in a clear and concise manner leading to a deeper understanding and appreciation of this ancient art. You have to be mature enough and intelligent enough to really appreciate and understand the concepts presented in this book. However, I believe that everyone and anyone will benefit greatly from carefully reading and analyzing it.

I have studied martial arts for over 11 years in different disciplines, as well as philosophies that goes with them so I know what I am talking about when I recommend this book.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Excellent Text!
By Steven R. Byers
Very thoughtful, well researched and enlightening! Enhances your practice as a martial artist with Mann's treatment of the relationship between martial practice and Buddhist principles.

Uncover the historical truth about Buddhist warrior monks with this informative and enlightening book. Film, television and popular fiction have long exploited the image of the serene Buddhist monk who is master of the deadly craft of hand-to-hand combat. While these media overly romanticize the relationship between a philosophy of non-violence and the art of fighting, *When Buddhists Attack: The Curious Relationship Between Zen and the Martial Arts* shows this link to be nevertheless real, even natural. Exploring the origins of Buddhism and the ethos of the Japanese samurai, university professor and martial arts practitioner Jeffrey Mann traces the close connection between the Buddhist way of compassion and the way of the warrior. This zen book serves as a basic introduction to the history, philosophy, and current practice of Zen as it relates to the Japanese martial arts. It examines the elements of Zen that

have found a place in budothemartial waysuch as zazen, mushin, zanshin and fudoshin, then goes on to discuss the ethics and practice of budo as modern sport. Offering insights into how qualities integral to the true martial artist are interwoven with this ancient religious philosophy, this Buddhism book will help practitioners reconnect to an authentic spiritual discipline of the martial arts.

"This rich and accessible introduction explores one of the more complex aspects of Buddhist culture." Publishers Weekly
"The great Zen master Hakuin contended that a samurai could accomplish in a few days of Zen practice what would take a monk a hundred days. His reasoning was that monks generally assume they have years to devote to Zen, while warriors are well aware of impending death, so warriors will throw themselves into practice with a far greater sense of urgency than monks. That being said, the relationship between martial arts and Zen has been greatly exaggerated, especially in the West. In *When Buddhists Attack*, Jeffrey K. Mann unpacks the facts and fiction." Shambhala Sun
"What does a religion known for teaching non-violence have to do with martial arts disciplines designed to cripple or kill? A great deal, it turns out. By offering insights into how the qualities of a true martial artist are linked with ancient religious philosophy, Mann hopes to help other practitioners reconnect to an authentic spiritual discipline of the martial arts." Newswise.com
"If you've ever wanted to understand the true role Zen Buddhism plays in the martial arts, then look no further." Patrick McCarthy, from the foreword
"Mann's book illustrates the intertwining of martial arts and Zen. Mann deftly braids the physical and the spiritual into a strong rope for the serious student to ascend. This book has simplicity and yet heft it is brilliant." Kris Wilder, author of *The Way of Kata* and *The Little Black Book of Violence*
"This book clearly shows us how the Japanese Budo spirit is related to religion. Specifically, the author explains the concept of mushin very well, a principle to which we Japanese attribute much importance in overcoming various difficulties." Katsumi Shimane, Ph.D. Professor of Sociology Senshu University 3rd Dan Karatedo, Jodo
"I would like to congratulate the author on this book, which is based on both experience and research. I recommend it to all traditional martial artists and anyone interested in Japanese culture." Tetsuji Nakamura, 6th Dan, International Okinawan Goju-Ryu Karate-Do Federation Vice Chief Instructor
"an interesting and very informative overview of Zen Buddhism and its relation to martial arts. Dr. Mann's perspective as an academic and passionate practitioner of martial arts gives the work a personal tone and energy. It will appeal to avid practitioners of martial arts as well as to anyone interested in the development of Buddhism and its relation to Japanese culture." Charlene P. E. Burns, Ph.D. Professor, Dept. of Philosophy Religious Studies University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire
About the Author
Jeffrey K. Mann earned his doctorate in Religious Studies at Vanderbilt University and is currently Chair of the Religious Studies Department at Susquehanna University. In addition, he has served as a Visiting Professor of Religion at Senshu University in Ikuta, Japan. A longtime student of Japanese martial arts, he has trained and competed in karate throughout North America, Japan, Okinawa and the Philippines. He is instructor of the Susquehanna Goju-ryu Karate-do Club, a school affiliated with the International Okinawan Goju-ryu Karate-do Federation