



Silence and Noise: Growing Up Zen in America

Ivan Richmond

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A fresh new voice in American Buddhism -- a twenty-nine-year-old raised among Buddhists in California -- offers wisdom for both longtime practitioners and a new generation of students in this fascinating memoir of his Zen upbringing.

Over half a century ago, when the first Zen Masters came to America, eager young students in search of enlightenment flocked to hear their teachings. Many, like Ivan Richmond's parents, became Buddhist teachers themselves while raising their children at monasteries and retreat centers. Growing up in the seventies in the deliberate silence of a Buddhist community, young Ivan knew only the hippies and redwoods of Northern California. When his family left in 1983, he became an immigrant in his own country, suddenly entering a mainstream society that was full of paradox and pop culture, uncertainty and noise. This is the story of his struggle to find peace amidst the chaos.

Whether dispensing kernels of Buddhist insight taught to him as a child or reflecting on the merits of rock concerts, Richmond narrates his emergence from seclusion with a sensitivity that is often touching, frequently funny, and always honest. The story of the powerfully resonant journey of this foot soldier in the front lines of American Buddhism is an essential read for anyone interested in the current state of Zen in America.

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