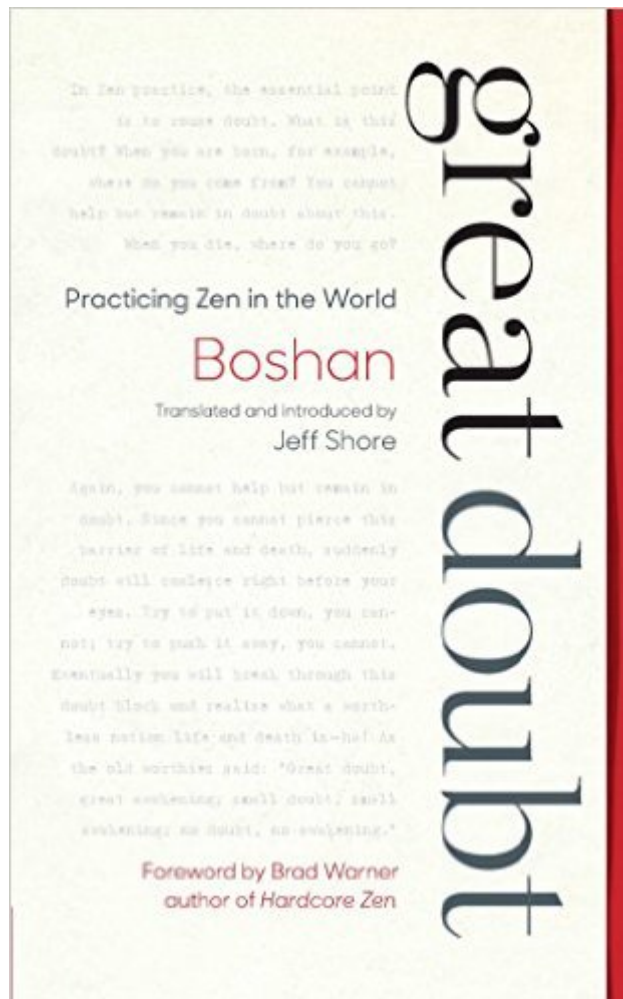


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# Great Doubt: Practicing Zen In The World



## Synopsis

The greater the doubt, the greater the awakening. In this brief but remarkably thorough book, Boshan puts into words what it means to truly doubt. Not just to be skeptical but to push all the way to the very foundations. Anyone interested in Zen can learn a whole lot from this little book.

- from the foreword by Brad Warner, author of *Hardcore Zen* "Great doubt and great faith are foundations of Zen practice. This great gift of a book provides essential checkpoints along the path."
- Grace Schireson, author of *Zen Women* "Upbeat, insightful, and inspiring teachings a rich resource for all Buddhist practitioners."
- Richard M. Jaffe, Duke University, author of *Neither Monk nor Layman* "Boshan addresses the reader directly with vivid metaphors and stern (sometimes humorous) admonishments. He pulls no punches | These concise texts, not previously available in their entirety in English, offer classic wisdom for those exploring the Zen paths."
- Publishers Weekly "A classic Chinese text with clear and inspiring commentaries"
- Thomas Yuho Kirchner, translator of *Entangling Vines*

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

By Michel Jansen Bought and read this great book. Truly helpful. Reading it I found a couple of pitfalls and was very pleased learning about them. The great Doubt and great Trust mantra started for me with Philip Kapleau, but you can get lost quickly with this Mind. The writing here is clear and to the point, as is Jeff Shore's teaching, just the way I like it. This should be required

reading for all those on the Zen path. The book is short/long enough to reread and get deeper into Boshan and Jeff's insights.

The standard account of the history of Zen, at least here in the West, goes something like this. First there was Bodhidharma and the patriarchs, then the Golden age of the Tang dynasty: Mazu and Shitou, Nanquan and Zhaozhou, Linji and Deshan, and so on. At some point Zen was transmitted from China to Japan, and so we have Dogen, Bankei, Hakuin and their schools. Then from Japan to the West, and the rest is history. But what happened to the Zen school in China during all these years? It turns out it was alive and well. Jeff Shore brings us a short text from Chan master Boshan (1575-1630) in which he succinctly and thoroughly deals with Great Doubt, and the problems or pitfalls that appear when rousing it. Boshan's style is direct and without concessions. His words are poisonous darts, direct to the jugular. Every time he says "This is just your wavering mind; it is not Zen" I can't help but admitting that I have fallen into every one of these diseases many, many times. Far from discouraging, though, his words are like whips that spur me on in my practice. Jeff's commentary is very helpful as well, expanding some of Boshan's more obscure references, and hammering out the central theme: don't think you've got it just because you've had a wonderful experience! Jeff writes with an energy that only thirty years studying in Rinzai Zen monasteries in Japan can give you. If Boshan's words are like darts, Jeff's feel like punches that come out of the page and knock you down. How very fortunate of us to have this book. For a more thoroughgoing review of the place of Great Doubt in Zen practice through history, Jeff has written about that elsewhere: [...] If you have only an academic interest in Zen, I don't think you will get much out of this book. If, however, you practice or plan to start practicing meditation, this book will be very helpful. Keep it close, and beware of the dangers mentioned! Boshan and Jeff will kindly push you onwards.

A wonderful reminder from Boshan and Jeff Shore that this practice doesn't belong to us, no matter how hard we try. Finally, no effort will do, and everything must end with this notion of "self." Only then does great doubt arise, naturally, and the beauty and completeness that is always here is revealed.

A powerful little bullet of a book. Well translated, well introduced by Brad Warner, and well worth the wait (it was written long ago, only translated now).

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