



THE FIRST ZEN INSTITUTE OF AMERICA

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會協禪一第國美

Film Series

Buddhism

With Professor Malcolm David Eckel

4 Film Modules Presented Courtesy of *The Teaching Company*

Friday, January 7, 2010 7:30 – 9:30 PM

113 East 30th Street New York, NY 10016

The Origins of Japanese Buddhism – Buddhism was first introduced into Japan from Korea in the year 535, and the Japanese adapted Chinese Confucianism and Buddhism to their own culture. Shinto, Japan's indigenous religions tradition, had a rival set of deities and initially opposed the practice of Buddhism. The Nara Period (710-784) saw the first appearance of Buddhism as a de-facto Japanese state religion.

Honen, Shinran and Nichiren – The Kamakura period in Japan (1192-1333), was particularly bloody, and the country was torn by warring clans striving for power. The Pure Land school of Honen and Shinran responded to this crisis with their doctrine of faith in Amida Buddha. Nichiren was a Buddhist prophet who believed in salvation based on faith in the *Lotus Sutra*, and whose sect survives to this day as the movement known as Soka Gakkai.

Zen – Zen also grew out of the religious atmosphere of the Kamakura period, and was a direct product of the Chinese tradition of Ch'an. Eisai (1141-1215) and Dogen (1200-1253), the founders of the Rinzai and Soto Zen schools were important figures in the early history of Zen. Over the centuries, Zen has had a large influence on Japanese arts and martial arts.

Buddhism in America – The first European and American contacts with Buddhism in the 19th century included the Asiatic Society of Bengal, the Theosophists Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott, and the World Parliament of Religions in 1893. More recent Buddhist teachers in America include Shunryu Suzuki, Yasutani Roshi, Chogyam Trungpa, and Geshe Wangyal. Buddhism has had a significant influence on American popular culture.

Admission is free.

