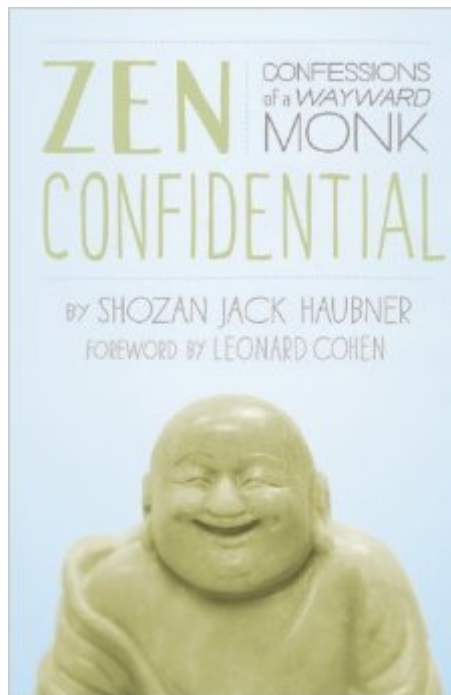


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Zen Confidential: Confessions Of A Wayward Monk



Synopsis

“This punk of a monk, who should be tending to his own affairs, has decided to infect the real world with his tall tales, and worse, to let the cat out of the bag. And what a sly, dangerous, beautiful, foul-smelling, heart-warming beast it is.” —Leonard Cohen, from the foreword

These hilarious essays on life inside and outside a Zen monastery make up the spiritual memoir of Shozan Jack Haubner, a Zen monk who didn't really start out to be one. Raised in a conservative Catholic family, Shozan went on to study philosophy (becoming de-Catholicized in the process) and to pursue a career as a screenwriter and stand-up comic in the clubs of L.A. How he went from life in the fast lane to life on the stationary meditation cushion is the subject of this laugh-out-loud funny account of his experiences. Whether he's dealing with the pranks of a juvenile delinquent assistant in the monastery kitchen or defending himself against claims that he appeared in a porno movie under the name "Daniel Reed" (he didn't, really) or being surprised in the midst of it all by the compassion he experiences in the presence of his teacher, Haubner's voice is one you'll be compelled to listen to. Not only because it's highly entertaining, but because of its remarkable insight into the human condition.

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Customer Reviews

My husband and I took ZEN CONFIDENTIAL as an accompaniment to our road trip. We took turns reading the stories out loud as the other one was driving. We had many laughs, deep conversations, and a few moments of "can he do that?!". I loved every minute of it. As a person who

tries to live a zen life but fails miserably the second the children come home from school, I have to say this book is Modern Zen life in it's rawest form (rawest... yeah you read it first here). It is extremely well written and I look forward to reading more of his work.

Once I started, I couldn't put this book down. Definitely a page-turner to the very end. Think J.D. Salinger as Zen monk. I learned a lot about Zen and a bit about life in general. I feel like I now know as much about the author as I do about my best friend. Very funny, very human, very honest. Haubner isn't afraid to tell the kinds of family secrets every single one of us has and does so in a voice that knows itself to be broken, is trying his best to fix, while making us aware of the beauty behind normal human foibles. I highly recommend it.

One of my all-time favorite books & I'm only on page 50. I'm slow reading it because I have to stop so often to post quotes of cutting wisdom from the pages. The author uses disturbingly hilarious prose to bring to light our own insecurities by poking fun at himself. I will be buying more copies as gifts.

I had read Shozan Jack Haubner's pieces in the past in Tricycle magazine and elsewhere and have even assigned some of the pieces to my students in an Introduction to Religious Studies class. For some reason, North Americans view Zen as a serene practice free of complication and, in short, reality. Shozan Jack conveys the challenges of bringing the theories of the mind (and of faith by extension) into the concrete. Meditation looks beautiful on film, but sitting for hours on end has real consequences for the body and on the mind. Shozan Jack demystifies the practice of Zen and, by extension, makes it more accessible to the potential practitioner. The honesty about the harsh realities of giving one's life over to Zen practice is refreshing. In addition to Shozan Jack's deep understanding of Zen practice and history, his ability to communicate the challenges of the monk life is laudable. I highly recommend this text as a concrete presentation of the pursuit of enlightenment..

I loved this book. I loved its honesty, depth and humor. Clearly a partial view of life at Mt Baldy but in its way a very accurate one. I asked my husband to read this book because I thought that I might have enjoyed it due to my many years of practice at Mt Baldy. He laughed out loud and did not put it down. You do not have to be a Zen practitioner to see the cutting humor of this book but, it helps!!!

Spiritual growth is a messy, brutal, hilarious business, and Shozan Jack Haubner doesn't leave

anything out in this beautifully personal tale of his journey to monkhood. Studying under one of the oldest living zen masters, Haubner battles his family, his fellow monks, and, most often, himself in his attempt to become one with a world he's always rebelled against. If you're looking for trite, spiritual platitudes or a soft focus approach to zen, this is not the book for you. There is talk of s***, of porn, of constant human pettiness while trying to find the middle path. It is shocking, blasphemous and profane. It is loving, generous and kind. It does what a truly great memoir does - it brings us to a world few people have experience in and lays bare the author's mistakes and insights, so we can become better people just by reading it.

This book had me laughing toward awakening. Jack Haubner rips open and lays bare what lies beneath discreet social niceties. Human feces are transformed to compost, bodily discharges are torn from their taboos; there are arms manufacturing, homosexuality, and porn films in this Zen. With each exploration the raw bold awakening is unearthed, and the truth of what Zen practice uncovers is revealed. Haubner says the purpose of Zen practice is not to make you a better person but to awaken you to the truth of your being. Nevertheless, I venture to guess that this author has become a better person as a side effect. I felt his humility taking hold throughout the book, his willingness to let the world become his teacher, and his acceptance of the lessons. Carl Jung said that one does not become awakened by contemplating images of light but by casting light into the darkness. This author shines his laser beam on the profane with deep honesty, and we witness the enantiodromiaâtransformation into sacredness, gratitude, and compassion. This was a page-turner and kept me up both reading and reflecting on the deep wisdom transmitted through the authorâs courageous tenacity to see the practice through. Bravo! Rev. Hannah Rappaport

"Zen Confidential" is biting, brilliant and insightful. No holding back in this memoir when it comes to describing the internal suffering of this monk of a man. A former stand up comic in Hollywood, Shozan has the raw edge of a Lenny Bruce transformed into Zen preacher. I loved almost every page and in the end felt that I had learned something of the essence of Zen....a truly valuable piece of work. Not for the faint of heart.

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