



## Zen for Kids: 50+ Mindful Activities and Stories to Shine Loving-Kindness in the World

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Laura Burges's soothing children's guide to Buddhist meditation, *Zen for Kids*, shares how Zen practices can improve lives.

Beginning with Siddhartha Gautama's biography, this introduction to Zen Buddhism includes Asian folktales, such as "The Cry of the Camphor Tree," in which an old woman learns to speak to birds and helps a family regain their health by allowing a trapped tree to grow unencumbered near their home. Here, the abstract idea of being connected to nature becomes tangible through the physical example of the tree providing nourishment for the family while the family cares for the tree. And stories like "The Tortoise and the Hare" are reinvented with new, enlightening morals, like putting forward an honest, wholehearted effort to achieve honorable success. The brief, entertaining tales also work to nurture a Buddhist ethos, as when a boy feels guilty after breaking his teacher's favorite teacup.

The book also suggests exercises to bring the ideals of its tales—like generosity, patience, and asceticism—into one's life. Its tactile, cerebral practices include various types of meditation, sharing activities with friends, and gardening techniques. Their instructions are straightforward and inviting. Practices range from being quick (taking three deep breaths before beginning a difficult task) to complex (interviewing family members for inspiring stories about overcoming challenges) for variety and versatility. Repetitions of significant ideas, like ringing a bell and listening until you can't hear it anymore, reinforce the importance of the most effective practices. Single haiku complete each chapter to encapsulate their themes and provide enduring encouragement and a sense of calm. The cute, colorful illustrations are an endearing addition.

Featuring an assortment of uplifting activities and entertaining stories, *Zen for Kids* is a heartfelt Buddhist self-help guide.

AIMÉE JODOIN (March / April 2023)

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