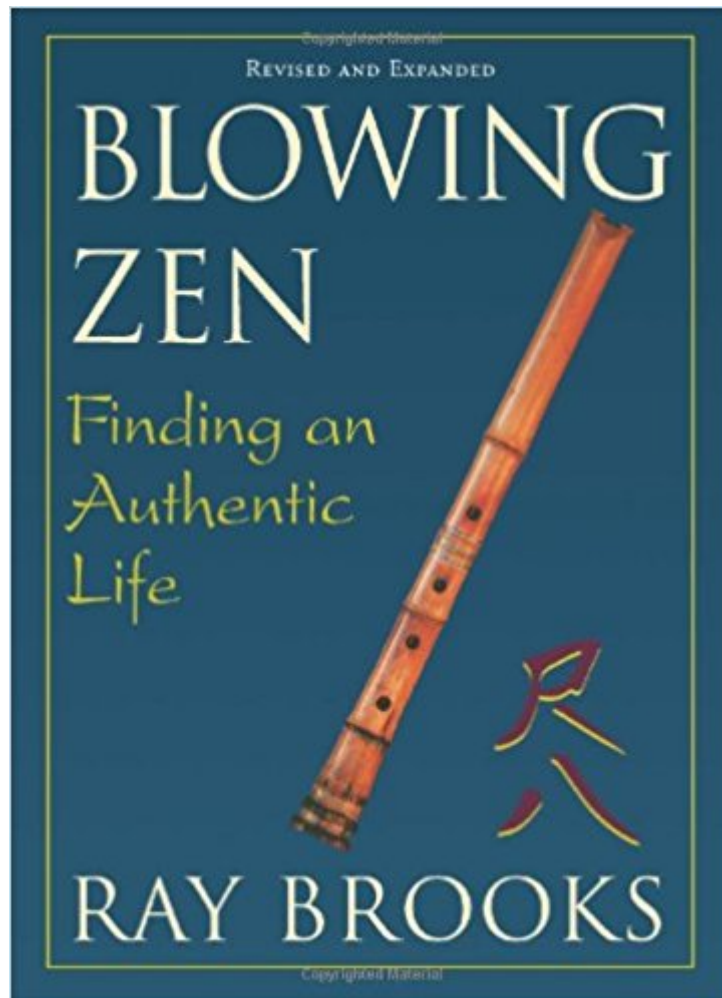




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# Blowing Zen: Finding An Authentic Life, Revised Updated Edition



## Synopsis

As a young, up and coming electrical engineer living in England, Ray Brooks had everything he could want—a high paying job, late nights, and fast cars. All he was missing in his life was the meaning. A series of events brought him to Japan, where he met a man who played the shakuhachi, an ancient Japanese flute. That fortuitous interaction motivated Brooks to embark on a journey to learn this very difficult instrument. Through playing the shakuhachi, he began to understand the Zen discipline that is a crucial aspect of Japanese culture. This understanding greatly changed his outlook on life, putting him in touch with his authentic self. *Blowing Zen*'s humor and its irresistible story of cultures converging lets the underlying message come through without preachiness: life is about finding your true calling, not just what brings you superficial joy. Brooks's spontaneous approach to the collaboration of art, mind, body, and spirit is inspiring and instructive. This uplifting memoir has been entrancing readers since its release in 2000, and it is now being re-released with a new chapter and lots of photographs. This is the expanded and revised edition with photos.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Blowing Zen is a shining paradigm of positive, life-affirming change. Ray's awakening to the deep, inner song that is life inspires and gives hope to those searching for their own true path."

--John Robbins, author of *Diet for a New America* Ray Brooks's unique and captivating book provides an insightful view of the heart and spirit of the Japanese culture and the musician's

journey. In sharing his quest, he has enriched my life, and may inspire many others on the path of music, the ways of Zen." --Dan Millman, author of *Way of the Peaceful Warrior*"A genuine spiritual journey, finding Zen, music, and one's own true self. A lovely spirit blows through this book."  
--Jack Kornfield, author of *A Path with Heart*The shakuhachi is a haunting instrument. I love its melancholy tones. But, then my tastes in music have always been unusual. I even like bagpipes. This is a story of awakening through music. It is a beautiful story, inspiring and uplifting. It's my latest favorite feel-good book. --The Messenger; January 15, 2012A good book captivatesâ "takes you to a different corner of the world and a different way of thinking. It's one you reach for again and again. *Blowing Zen* is such a good book.--Todd Shimoda, author of *365 Views of Mt. Fuji*

Ray Brooks, a British musician, composer, writer and teacher, is internationally known in the world of shakuhachi music. He has studied with Japanese shakuhachi masters, learned to play a variety of wind instruments (such as the Balinese Suling flute), mastered circular breathing under the tutelage of Tibetan monks, and studied tabla with an Indian master. He has held small solo shakuhachi concerts in Zen temples throughout Japan and has performed with Akikazu Nakamura, Japan's premier flute player. Ray has been interviewed by NHK television in Japan and various radio stations in Canada and Europe. He gives workshops in breath work, speaks about the effect of Zen on his life, and performs concerts at Zen centers, Buddhist gatherings, universities, music academies, and spiritual centers throughout the United States, Europe, Japan, and Canada. His most recent CD, entitled *Hollow Bell*, on the New Albion label, includes all the pieces of music mentioned in *Blowing Zen*. An avid traveler, Ray has journeyed throughout the Far East, walked the world's highest valley in the Himalayas, and trekked through the mountains of Northern India and Nepal. He now lives in Victoria, B.C. with his wife, Dianne.

This is the second time around for a reading; the first time was many years ago when the first edition came out. That copy disappeared from my bookshelf so I decided, especially since the revised edition was available, that I needed to read it again. The new edition is every bit, and more, as enjoyable today as was the first one. I highly recommend it for anyone who enjoys Asian travel dialogues and for musicians, especially those who play wind instruments. Of course it is a must read for anyone who plays or enjoys listening to shakuhachi. Ray spins a good tale that engrosses the reader's attention from the first page to the last. I wish the book was longer!

Great story and an easy read. A bit of shakuhachi and Japanese culture, in a nice flowing story.

Worth a read if you are into either.

This is a very good story concerning a man's personal growth while learning to play the shakuhachi.

great book!!!

This book is an inspiration and demonstrates the twists that life takes. You do not have to be a musician or shakuhachi player to enjoy this - it is more a spiritual journey along a path the author did not plan or expect. Very enjoyable, educational and humorous in parts. I recommend you read alongside a similar book, but with a very different style - The Single Tone: A Personal Journey into Shakuhachi Music.

I recently took up the Shakuhachi flute. I am a practitioner of Zen. This book adeptly merges the two. I honestly had a difficult time putting the book down. Much of my knowledge of Shakuhachi was self taught and not 100% correct. This book fills the chasm of incorrect knowledge I had about the Shakuhachi. This is not done with long winded hyperbole, but, instead with heartfelt and warm stories about his foray into the world of the Shakuhachi. I highly recommend this book for all interested in the Shakuhachi or with people looking to help find their center.

In the process of learning the Anasazi/Pueblo flute, I came across the term "Blowing Zen" in an instructional guide I had purchased. Seeking additional information on this practice technique, I stumbled on Ray Brooks' book of the same title. This is the wonderful and uplifting story of one man's journey of transformation while living in Japan and learning the Shakuhachi flute. It's an easy and enjoyable read and gives one the sense of being there with Ray as he meets interesting characters and dedicates himself wholeheartedly to mastering the Shakuhachi flute. Highly recommended!

Roy writes wonderfully and keeps you entertained as well as informed of the shakuhachi world during his travels.

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