

## **The Commercial Circulation of Buddhism Merits: Business Zen in the Hong Kong Region**

**Jian Xie, Ph.D.**

Assistant Professor

Center of International Arts and Humanities

Harbin Institute of Technology Shenzhen Graduate School

Shenzhen, China

**Joyce G. Webb, Ph.D.**

Foreign Expert in Communications

Center of International Arts and Humanities

Harbin Institute of Technology Shenzhen Graduate School

Shenzhen, China

### **Abstract**

---

*This essay examines the development and commercialization of Zen activities as it relates to one type of product which has been separated from Zen's original way. In the past decades, Hong Kong has flourished, economically. As a famous international financial center, the ubiquitous commercial air in the Hong Kong region made the Zen Meditation a type of commercial activity. The combination of Business and Zen Meditation program breeds a novel form of the "Business Zen" that is so different from those originating in Japan and North America. This essay involves three contentions: The first includes the market segmentation of Zen Meditation before 2015 in the Hong Kong region. Two broad scenarios of Zen Public-Facing Meditation patterns are mentioned. These two were the products of maturity of the Zen market in the Hong Kong region. The combination of both made the prototype of the "Business Zen" on Hong Kong Island. The focus of the second issue is on the development of the "Business Zen". Aspects of the "Business Zen" such as characteristics, patterns, original ideas, and developing trends are included. Finally, the "Business Zen" discusses the circulation of merits. It is a representative operating model of business ethics in the world.*

---

**Keywords:** Commercial circulation, Business management, Buddhism, Zen

### **Introduction**

Zen, the meditation approach of the ancient Buddhism system, never stopped changing with the times. Early in 1988, Kenneth Kraft edited a book about the analysis of Zen's tradition and the transitional aspects what is going on in Western Zen. This book attempts to bridge the gap between masters and scholars. The first five chapters are written by five Zen masters, four of them living in North America. This part offers us the redefined image of Zen as anti-intellectual in many aspects. Included are: the origins of Western Zen: the basic principles of Western Zen and the Morinaga Soko Spiritual Odyssey.

The second part of this book is written by six Zen scholars. This part explores the anti-textual forms of Japanese Zen. Based on the fieldwork data regarding Japanese Zen, scholars thought they were still in keeping with the mainstream of ancient Buddhism, in spite of the Zen institutions in Japan becoming brief and practical. This book finally drew the conclusion that Western Zen has been separated from its original Buddhist setting, the Western Zen is a new Zen system while the Japanese Zen still kept close to the mainstream of Buddhism<sup>1</sup>. This conclusion Enlightens us in many ways: First, Zen has been globalized early in the 1980s and in the process of globalization, some part of Zen has been separated from its ancient and original body, some parts still remain in touch with it. The Journal of Global Buddhism, might be the most important and interfacing site with an open access upon the research of Buddhism's globalization.

We can find many published articles, discussions, and book reviews in regard to the globalization of Buddhism. Accompanying the progress of Zen's globalization, the scientific and technical characteristics of Zen became protruding and more obvious resulting in the new concept of "Technê-zen" which emerged at that historic moment.<sup>2</sup> There was no more meaningful magnum opus in this field than the book *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance: An Inquiry into Values* published by Robert M. Pirsig in 1974. This work was built on the theory of "Cybernetic Zen" which emerged in the 1950s. During this work, Pirsig developed the concept "Cybernetic Zen" into "Technê-zen", and further considered Zen as superior to scientific technology: "The Buddha, the Godhead, resides quite as comfortably in the circuits of a digital computer or the gears of a cycle transmission as he does at the top of a mountain or in the petals of a flower. To think otherwise is to demean the Buddha—which is to demean oneself".<sup>3</sup>

Pirsig's research in the 1970s continued to attract the research passion from academia. By the early 21st century, Patrick McDermott published a book about "Zen and the Art of Systems Analysis". McDermott in the book kept an extensive topic about Zen among science and technology in the contexts of internal theoretical structure of Zen and computer' systems development.<sup>4</sup> The ancient oriental wisdom's product, Zen, and the complexity, refinement, extensiveness and profoundness in its internal artistic structure were seen by McDermott as compared to the technology of computer.<sup>5</sup>

Nevertheless, an often overlooked and less glamorous side of the globalization of Zen is that Zen is becoming more and more commercialized, which was gradually realized by the end of 20th century. During this period, the Buddhist principles became the new blood of the management gurus, and made management a creative discipline.<sup>6</sup> Academics were pleasantly surprised by the unification of Buddhism and business management. This kind of new management model was affectionately known by academics as the "Enlightened Management".<sup>7</sup> Some scholars started to explore the paths of spiritual practice like meditation from Buddha, Buddhism, and Zen to offer service in the promotion of working efficiency.<sup>8</sup> After years of argument, scholars thought the Buddhism approaches could be used in some concrete managed objects, for instance, project management, sales performance and the overcoming of obstacles.<sup>9</sup> Mindfulness meditation was regarded by the career warrior as taking over the construction of Zen entrepreneurship.<sup>10</sup> When managerial personnel undertakes mindfulness meditation, his or her natural management skills are awakened, involuntary. That is why meditation of Zen can lead an ordinary office clerk through different stages of leadership, then turn his or her disadvantages and faults into advantages and learning points.<sup>11</sup> Because Zen paths were so useful in the practice of enterprise management, scholars called this particular approach the "Zentrepreneurism", the "Twenty-First century guide to the new world of business"<sup>12</sup> and "the power to succeed".<sup>13</sup>

It is noted that in 2005, the meaning of Zen in commerce extended to the dual transformation of personal work and life. The power of Zen began to infiltrate into sectors of the public and private. The commercial orientation of Zen in 2015 could be expressed in two main aspects: first, the concepts of Zen were penetrating virtually every corner of present financial system, forming a critical part of additional culture value of commodity. The United States academic Joshua A. Irizarry published a paper early in the year (2015) about the commercialized inclination of Zen under the background of globalization from the Japanese Zen sets sample. He was keenly aware of the redefining of Zen's business for meeting the needs of global consumption. In his article, Joshua pointed out that "Zen has evolved through strategic cultural and linguistic associations, and show how the resulting polysemy has led to Zen becoming an ideal marketing byword—one that is freely appropriated and commoditized in a manner that differentiates Zen from almost all other religious traditions."<sup>14</sup>

Second, the ideas of Zen were being applied to business management. Related articles were usually posted on line. The titles of these articles were: "7 Zen Principles Make You Happier and More Successful in Business"<sup>15</sup>; "The Zen Way To Build A Successful Business"<sup>16</sup>. The focus of these articles was the practice and application of Zen's principles in business management. Zen seems like a mountain of administrative knowledge for business managers. Many concepts in Zen's system such as, "Dastsuzoku", "Seijaku" are helpful in promoting the amazement, calm solitude in life.<sup>17</sup>

### **Zen Offers Business Practicality:**

Zen also offered business people some efficient operation policies. Barry Moltz presented many policies of Zen in his article titled "The Zen Way to Build a Successful Business".

One of these policies was to “Always direct your thoughts towards what is good, what is noble and what is true”, meaning that “Business people aren’t perfect, but we strive to build a company that does good (e.g. solves the pain) for its customers, employees and community. We may not always succeed at each goal (especially simultaneously), but we can strive to set goals that accomplish just this over the long term”<sup>18</sup>.

This illustration instructs business people how to face those faulty situations and turn things around by means of Zen’s policy. This essay also examines the commercialized side of how Zen activities develop into one type of product which is separated from Zen’s original way. Development of the “Business Zen” in the Hong Kong region is the main research focus in this essay. In the past decades, Hong Kong has flourished economically. It is noted that public-facing Zen Meditation Program became more prevalent in recent years in the Hong Kong region, which is indicated by the mature market of Zen meditation programs. As a famous international financial center, the ubiquitous commercial air in the Hong Kong region made the Zen Meditation one kind of commercial activity, inevitably. The combination of Business and Zen Meditation programs breed a novel form of the “Business Zen” that is so different from those in Japan and North America.

This essay involves three main contentions. The first is about the market segmentation of Zen Meditation before 2015 in the Hong Kong region. Next, two broad scenarios of Zen public-facing meditation patterns are mentioned. These two were the products of the maturity of the Zen market in Hong Kong New Territories region and Kowloon. The combination of them both made the prototype for “Business Zen” on the Hong Kong Island. The second issue gives focus to the development of the “Business Zen” in the Hong Kong region. Aspects of the “Business Zen” (e.g. characteristics, pattern, origins, and developing trends) are involved, comprehensively. Finally, this essay centers on the “Business Zen”, discussing the circulation of merits, and the representative operating model of Buddhism in the volatile business world. In order to explore the features and the developing progress of the “Business Zen” in the Hong Kong region, specifically, this article adopts both theory and demonstration, combining both quantitative and qualitative analyses.

### **Market Segmentation of Zen Mediation before 2015 in the Hong Kong Region:**

The market of Zen mediation in the Hong Kong region had started subdividing long before the rise of the “Business Zen” in 2015 in College and university settings. One indicator of this subdivision in Research institutions was the organization of Zen mediation camps for research purposes. The University of Hong Kong (HKU) early offered unique advantages in the field. HKU integrated with local Buddhism communities. Many monks, nuns, and householders (Ju shi) were engaged in teaching and research work inside colleges and universities. Most of them grew up in Hong Kong, and had strong backgrounds of overseas studies. These unique life experiences gave them enough qualifications to gain a professorship in the colleges and universities while they were advancing the Zen cultivation activities in temples or training grounds. Hin-hung Sik is one of the representatives who wears two different hats. He is the president of the center of Awareness Spiritual Growth Center, serving on the Board of the Buddhist Association of Hong Kong and as a lecturer in Centre of Buddhist Studies of HKU. The Hin-hung Master was born in Hong Kong, and he received computer science, international trade and business dual bachelor degrees in the United States. After returning to Hong Kong, he started to learn Buddhism, then became a monk in 1990. Several years later, he received a master degree of religious studies in the college of Asia and African studies, at the University of London. Hin Hung Master, the assistant professor of Centre of Buddhist Studies for HKU, created the “Awaking Training Program” posted by Centre of Buddhist Studies for HKU in 2014. This Zen cultivation program is held at the Awareness Spiritual Growth Centre. The venue is located in the Xing-hua business center, Shanghai Street, Yau Ma Tei, the region of Kowloon. The Awareness Spiritual Growth Centre positions itself as a local social agency that offers service to these Hong Kong citizens in the middle and lower classes. They provide a broad range of services which involves basic education, higher education and palliative care.

The “Awaking Training Program” was knowledge-based and practice-based, with richer theoretical emphasis than other Zen cultivation programs. The “Awaking Training Program” was a comprehensive program in that it which consisted of six workshops and Zen meditation camps. Attendees were required to be present in workshops six times during the two day Zen camp. People who took this course were randomly divided into two groups then separated into workshops and Zen camp training. As the program’s poster indicated, group A started the course in the spring while group B began in the winter. Attendees were obligated to complete a working paper and mark down their feelings, cultivating experiences, and lessons learned for the purpose of data collection, as was showed in Table 1.<sup>19</sup>

This type of Zen meditation camp can be expressed in one word, the “Academic Zen”. The “Academic Zen” was normally implemented with one or more of the following features: 1) emphasis on the interpretation of Buddhism argumentation; 2) there may be no age limitation for participants who enter in this kind of Zen camp; 3) participants are required to complete some tasks in black and white, like working on the paper for the data collection; 4) the main object of the “Academic Zen” is to serve academic research.

Apart from the “Academic Zen”, another new form of Zen-cultivation was also created in the Hong Kong region accompanied with the entrance of Taiwan Buddhism groups. Dharma Drum Mountain, one of four biggest Buddhist groups in Taiwan, came to Hong Kong as early as 1994. Yet Dharma Drum Mountain foundation (Hong Kong) created the public-oriented Zen cultivation camp as late as 2010. Zen cultivation camps organized by Dharma Drum Mountain foundation focused on the entertainment experiences of the participants. We can call it the “Entertainment Zen”. After the completion of the entire Zen cultivation workshop, participants can gain the real Zen cultivation experience which is so different from their real life. A completed “Entertainment Zen” progress includes three key links, which are as follows:

### **The Conceptual Link:**

This part is an introduction about the ideas of Zen cultivation and the methodology of Zen. During this link, participants can feel free to ask a Monk Master about problems they encountered in the Zen meditation and their real life.

### **The Experience Link:**

This part involves the exercise of walking, meditation and deep meditation on tea in the spacious interior.

### **The Link of Life:**

During this part, participants can learn how to use the mobile phone in the Zen way. They are required to fulfill some simple tasks like playing mind games, communicating with each other without language. Participants can also appreciate the blessing of doing Zen meditation.<sup>20</sup> Because the content of the “Entertainment Zen” like this is populist, Zen Cultivation started to become one part of out-of-class activities in colleges and universities. We can distinguish the “Entertainment Zen” from the “Academic Zen” by comparing them in Table 2.

The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) is one of eight state-run colleges and universities who started cooperation with large Buddhist groups (e.g. Fo-guang Shan) from Taiwan in the field of the promotions of academic success and teaching achievements. On July 10, 2014, for example, two-hundred students of CUHK who participated in the “5-day Zen cultivation for Young People” started their Zen meditation on the campus of CUHK. This camping activity was offered by The Office of the Arts Administrator of CUHK and the Union of Dharma Drum for Young People. Zen cultivations created by Dharma Drum Mountain are always well received by young people. As Chang Chan Master from Dharma Drum Mountain said, “Zen cultivation for young people is so different from others. There will be a lot of mind games in the procedure of the Zen Cultivating. Young people will get to know more about themselves sincerely and deeply, and learn how to live in a group”(The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2014).<sup>21</sup>

“Holding Water Bowl”, “Guidance for Breathing”, “Zen of Eating” were the more popular mind games. The archetype of the mind game of “Holding Water Bowl” is a Buddhism story set in ancient India. As the story points out, there was a Bhikshu in ancient India who wasn’t capable of achieving enlightenment. The Indian king got so angry with the Bhikshu that he forced that Bhikshu to walk along the road with thorns. The Bhikshu had to hold a bowl filled with hot oil during the long walk. Once a single drop of hot oil sloshed out of that bowl, the Bhikshu would be killed. In the program of “Entertainment Zen” sponsored by Dharma Drum Mountain Foundation, this old story was developed into a mind game. Every participant imitated the Bhikshu by holding one bowl filled with cold water, and walking a distance. The more the participants paid attention to the bowl, the more easily the water splashed from the bowl. Only when they no longer focus on the bowl would the water obediently stay in the bowl. The main purpose of this mind game is to lead the participants to avoid some impractical expectations and be released from goals they are unable to achieve.

**“Guidance for Breathing”** is one of the most reliable mind games. In this exercise, the master would lead the participants to pay attention to the very common movements in daily life, breathing. The spirit of man is always disturbed by the outside chaos under the current social background. “Guidance for Breathing” releases one from spiritual pressures, temporarily. Participants can slow down and concentrate on their own breathing, enjoying the relaxation from the head to the toes.

**“Zen of Eating”** is another specific practice of Zen. In this game, participants would have plenty of time to taste their meals. According to the concept of this game, each grain of rice is precious and worthy of chewing carefully. Participants can only appreciate the real beauty of life, observantly, when they taste the gains of rice carefully. By means of well-designed mind games, those young people will come to understand the importance of “just eating when you are eating; just working when you are working”, and intuitively touch the quite calm inside of them when they are in hurry and confusion.

The reason why the **“Entertainment Zen”** mediation is so popular in our current society is the paths shown in the meditation leads participants to peace and happiness. The more a person understands his or her own life deeply, the more competent he or she is to resolve the sufferings that might make life worse than death and the pressures that hound us, incessantly.

### **The “Business Zen”: The Creative Side of Zen Cultivation:**

As one type of general method of spiritual entertainment in contemporary Hong Kong, China, Mainland China and Taiwan Society, the **“Business Zen”** is defined by scholars as the “creative, rebellious side of Zen”.<sup>22</sup>

However, the “Business Zen” develops an all new methodology that distinguishes it from the old one. Just as the name implies, the ultimate goal of the “Business Zen” is to help the practitioners became better leaders and entrepreneurs. Scholars also tend to recognize the “Business Zen” as a condensed version from the landscape of the traditional Zen Cultivation.

Motivational publications, in this vein, encourage their largely-male readership to use Zen to boost their careers by learning to ignore conventional wisdom, trusting their gut feelings, and not being afraid to stand out from the crowd.<sup>23</sup> This definition only embodies the most vulgar content in the Zen cultivation camps that is popular in our society. It has to be pointed out that the original intention of the “Business Zen” cultivation was to show the practitioners the Zen paths of becoming successful in their study, work, and daily life, instead of asking the practitioners to finally reached the status of Nirvana. That is, the “Business Zen” tries to help customers to find a new potential possibility in the solution of thorny problems (e.g. depression in the case of an emotional disorder, the gaps of expectations between the boss and subordinate) via just erasing the customers' innate way of thinking.

The schedules of Zen medication camps were also redesigned by the operators again and again when new requirements were rising from the potential customers. In the view of the growing pressures on agency leaders, at a rate of extremely high intensity, The School of Social Science, in Hong Kong University, launched a new business –themed Commonweal Product in the form of Zen cultivation camps in 2014. Business, daily life, and Zen cultivation are three main topics in the camps' three-day duration. The camps' schedule is intensive, given that the businessmen are usually very busy. The Zen camp was located in the Heritage Lodge (Cui Ya Shan Fang). The Heritage Lodge, formerly the hospital of Lai Chi Kok, may be the most famous ancient cultural, architectural complex on the Hong Kong Island. The Heritage Lodge is made up of five hotels. Each of them is a two-story classical building in a garden to insure the privacy of every hotel guest, effectively. These two-level private residences offer the views of these quiet Chinese gardens in a wide angle. Residents have the opportunity to enjoy the hermitage in the duration of Zen camp. It's also worth mentioning that all of the interiors of hotel rooms are decorated antiques. The arrangement of accommodation are in accordance with the standards of the business man. It must be a safe, private, comfortable, and peaceful, sheltered space.

It is worth mentioning that this meditation camp is just one of the subprojects of the Wisdom (Ruizhi) Project which is supported by the Social Science School of Hong Kong University. The goals of the project are for the capacity-building in the fields of entrepreneurship and leadership. The project gives great impetus to the construction of multiple platforms which involve philanthropy, foundations, investors, from non-governmental organizations, and scholars from academia. Topics such as rights and interests of the citizen, citizen's community involvement, leadership and governance, philanthropy, and innovation of companies are incorporated into the mission of the Wisdom Project.

It appears that the fields of leadership and governance in the companies are the main issues into which the Zen cultivation is entering. Table 3 shows the schedule of a typical day in a Business Zen Camp.

The table mentioned above indicates the commercial orientations in Zen Cultivation. In a simple analysis on the time distribution of participants who take the Zen-Cultivation program, each participant spends two hundred and ten minutes on Zen Cultivation activities; one hundred and ninety-five minutes on lectures of Business Management; one hundred and ninety-five minutes on practice mixed with Zen Meditation and lectures of Business Management. The training of business administration makes up half of the Zen Camp's duration, not including the occupation of rest, eating, and interaction. Figure 1 shows the proportion of time distribution of the whole process in the Zen camp in the Heritage Lodge.

The arrangement of the Zen camps showed some trends in the Hong Kong region. In this case, we find the Zen camps in Hong Kong focus on the promotion of the participants' experience, with no attention to the interpretation of doctrines any more. Organizers required business leaders who joined this camp to keep from talking and connecting with the outside world during the duration of the, 3day-2night, Zen camp in order to avoid their internal peace from being disrupted. In the Zen camp, every business leader would have the opportunity to rethink their ideas and concepts. Finally, they would find the paths not only to becoming a successful manager in terms of emotion and enterprise, but also to be an efficient coordinator for the physical body, heart and spirit. Meanwhile, the business administration course entered into the Zen Cultivation System. Usual topics arising in the Zen Business Management courses involve, but are not limited to, "Arts and Skills in Business Administration" and "Management: Theory and Practice". In order to attract the business leaders with the multifarious religious faiths, the keynote speaker of that camp has constantly been emphasizing the tolerance of Zen Cultivation for the diversity of religious beliefs in the modern society.

It can be easily be seen from the theme "Dialogue Unfolded between Bodhisattva and Jesus Christ", and other similar topics, that the organizers even declared the Zen Cultivation Service's non-denominational background in the advertisement. Hence, the "Business Zen acts as a bridge for connection between believers and non-believers, and provides a platform for people whose beliefs are varied in the developed, city life.

In this case we can, no doubt, see the "Business Zen" is rooted in colleges or universities. Nevertheless, the "Business Zen" tended to grow out of colleges and universities as they tried to expand the Zen-Cultivation market to wide areas outside the range of higher education. The year 2015, not only saw the rise of the "Business Zen", but also its expansion. Hong Kong University also generalized the "Business Zen" in the form of a workshop. On October 20, 2015, the Humanities and Law College of HKU invited Dr. Bruce Cheung to give a lecture entitled "Zen Concepts in Managers' Ideas" in an up-market office building in Central (Zhong Huan) District for the executive staff from different social sectors. This lecture was designed as one link of the entire Zen curriculum chain concerning executive Zen certificates for managers. That Zen curriculum started on November 4, 2015, officially, and ended on April 27, 2016. The entire curriculum lasted almost half a year. The period is longer than ever before. The courses' participants will pay 8,880 Hong Kong dollars for five Zen meditation topics. Each topic contains three main parts: theory teaching, practice of Zen, and case studies (Table 4). In case of the curriculum of Zen, we can find the "**Business Zen**" has developed into one type of compound Zen-cultivation in the Hong Kong society, combining the characteristics of the "**Entertainment Zen**" and the "**Academic Zen**". The Buddhism theory-teaching obviously originated from the "Academic Zen" while the Zen Cultivation practice came from the "Entertainment Zen".

In terms of venue, the "Business Zen" is held, either at a private, classical, garden, cultural hotel or a top-grade office space in Central District of Hong Kong, compared to college campuses. "Entertainment Zen" is held in suburb regions, while "Academic Zen" appears in retreat centers.

### **Reaching the Goal:**

The primary goal of "Business Zen" is to improve business leaders and entrepreneurs' professional reputations and skillsets of management. Hence, the sponsors added some courses related to business management. In the long term of Zen curriculum, the pure Zen cultivation courses comprises more than 25 percent, while one-third of the whole curriculum is occupied by case studies on how to apply the idea and the doctrine of Zen into business management. The participants will be taught to improve the work efficiency and smooth managing procedure. In that short term of Zen camp, practice mixed with Zen cultivation and management courses account for 16% of the typical day in the "Business Zen" camp which lasts no more than one week.

This shows that “Business Zen” seems to be smartly tailored to the business leaders and entrepreneurs. Its commercial inclination has become increasingly clear. At the same time, the “Business Zen” gives enough consideration to the needs of the release of personal pressure. Compared to the purpose of the “Entertainment Zen” whose only focus is the enlightenment of individual spirit, the goal of the “Business Zen” seems obvious and much more comprehensive.

The target audience gains the value of respect, from the venue of Zen Cultivation and from the teaching content, and yet, “Business Zen” isn’t only just the simple copy of the combination of the “Academic Zen” and the “Entertainment Zen”, but also creates its own ground. Notice that, pushed by the market operation system, the Buddhism religious background is removed from the face of Zen to a great extent. The line upon the sequence of development of public-faced Zen Cultivation indicates that from the “Academic Zen” to “Business Zen”, the initial strong religious content has faded step by step, already. It seems that Zen Cultivation may become a separated entertainment product line in the near future with the rise of the “Business Zen”. The rise of the “Business Zen” also changes the pattern of the Zen Cultivation market in the Hong Kong region. Even by the end of 20th century, Zen Cultivation was preconceived as the extraordinary approach of living for the monks, nuns and householders. So that the early public-faced Zen Cultivation activities were often conducted on a small-scale. Only after the entering of Taiwan Buddhism groups, did the Hong Kong local Zen Cultivation begin to change into a sort of experiential training project. The main concentration of the “Entertainment Zen” activities was in the New Territories region. This is possibly related to the early cooperation between colleges and Taiwan Buddhism groups located there. In addition, because some colleges and universities focus on the Kowloon region, the “Entertainment Zen” is trending to the Kowloon region from the New Territories during most recent years. The “Business Zen” seems like an innovation based on the “Entertainment Zen” and the “Academic Zen”. Its presence means Zen Cultivation which is accepted by the middle class public, has broken down Class barriers, and has become a public campaign.

#### **Circulation of Merits: Representative Operating Model of Buddhism in Modern Society:**

Some scholars discussed the leadership in for-profit organizations. A successful entrepreneur meets those challenges from time to time. The leadership challenges brought on by these changes can be viewed through the prisms of change from a production orientation to a marketing orientation and a related organization culture change.<sup>24</sup> Marketing Orientation involves these following questions: “What does a marketing orientation mean to regulated utilities? What are the implications for employees and managers?” The culture change section involves questions like this “what forces are changing this relationship and how do utility leaders cope with the change?”<sup>25</sup> To handle these problems more effectively, leaders and entrepreneurs are obligated to carefully think of enterprise’s innovation and the promotion of customer’s satisfaction. Enterprise innovation includes, but is not limited, in two respects: technological innovation and service innovation. Besides that, “this term ‘customer satisfaction’ and ‘service quality’ are bedrock issues in the discipline of marketing”.<sup>26</sup> These three dimensions are involved with three others: individual, enterprise, and society.

To summarize, eligible and excellent leaders should have three good qualities which are as follows: first, he or she should have the ability to release themselves from the huge work pressure, operate the magnificent personal desires, dexterously, and carry on various innovations and promotions in the enterprise. Second, he or she is obligated to deal with the internal conflicts and contradictions caused by profit distribution, to build up an effective qualitative assessment to ensure the implementation of technological and service innovations in the enterprise dimension. Third, a successful leader should take the responsibility to promote the satisfaction of the customer, and adjust the coordination between corporate profits and the social missions in the social dimension. In many cases Buddhist business men (Fo shang) benefit from the Zen Meditation because of the effective spiritual relaxation. The American Psychological Association (APA) affirmed the positive role played by Zen mindfulness in psychotherapy in 2007. APA thinks Zen mindfulness is helpful in that it enhances in the promotion of concentration of mind, avoiding emotional disorder.<sup>27</sup> From this perspective, Zen meditation may indeed help leaders and entrepreneurs avoid unhealthy reactions to stressful situations. It makes challenges easier to face for leaders and entrepreneurs individually.

Look at the current situation, the development of the “Business Zen” is showing two trends: focus on the body-mind-spirit health of leaders and entrepreneurs and focus on the application of the idea of Zen in business management. The latter makes Zen cultivation extend to enterprise and social levels.

Accompanying the development of the “Business Zen”, is an opening cycle of “Current Merits” which involves three main factors: individual, enterprise, and society. When a leader or an entrepreneur joins the Zen cultivation camp or curriculum, he or she receives the merit from the Buddhism missions, individually. These leaders and entrepreneurs will develop their enterprises or teams more rationally by remaining in accordance to the principles of Zen. The merits flow from the individual to the whole enterprise. This type of enterprise which is based appropriately on the Zen is positively bound to repay society. Hence the merits flow from enterprise to society. On one hand, an enterprise which repays society, positively wins the trust from its’ customers. On the other hand, profit begins to move from society to the enterprise upstream, which brings the leaders and entrepreneurs fantastic returns, monetarily. These entrepreneurs are happy to pay an abundance of money for Zen workshops, curriculums, and camps, which have been considered as one type of a spirit entertainment product for themselves and their staff. With this, a reversed circulation upon the flowing money from society to the Buddhism mission is forming. The result of the combination of these two circulations with opposite directions is that the Buddhism missions gain material rewards from society, while the society receives the mental rewards from Buddhism missions. The appearance of the “Business Zen” makes the interaction between Buddhism missions and society possible. Figure2 shows the model of bidirectional circulation of merits and profits.

### **Conclusion:**

This essay examines the variation which occurs when Zen meditation is pushed toward the public market commercially under the background of globalization and drive of economic advantage. In the local society of the Hong Kong region, Zen meditation has been considered as the special way of monks for a long time, and religious people had no intention to increase the public acceptance of Zen meditation until the last century when some monks and nuns with a good education in colleges and universities carried out the small-range and public-facing “Academic Zen” to service the academic. “Knowledge-based” is the character of these types of Zen activities. Early in this century, large Buddhism groups from Taiwan began to cooperate with Hong Kong local colleges and universities in the fields of teaching and research. These Buddhism groups arranged many “spiritual games” into the Zen meditation to promote the participants’ cultivating experience. Many young people were attracted into these new meditation activities in the “Entertainment Zen”. From then on, Zen meditation became more popular and the area of activity also spread from the New Territories to Kowloon. Finally, it impacted the formation of the ideas of business management on the Hong Kong Island, the most commercial and cosmopolitan part of the Hong Kong region. The appearance of the “Business Zen” on the Hong Kong Island combined the advantages of the “Academic Zen” and the “Entertainment Zen”. It offered good Zen approaches for participants to gain management methods and to receive release from their work pressures. It seems like a line of tailored approaches for leaders and entrepreneurs. Meanwhile, this type of Zen service even charges fees. In the circulation of the “Business Zen”, merits flow from Buddhism to society while profits from society to the Buddhism mission flow, conversely. Through this exchange, Zen meditation is becoming one kind of circulation commodity in a religious market.

**End Notes:**

- 1 Kenneth Kraft , ed., *Zen Tradition and Transition* (New York: Grove Press, 1988).
- 2 R. John. Williams, "Technê -zen and the spiritual quality of global capitalism", *Critical Inquiry* 2011.38(01): 17-70.
- 3 Robert M. Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance: An Inquiry into Values* ( New York: Morrow, 1974).
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Patrick McDermott, *Zen and the Art of Systems Analysis: Meditations on Computer Systems Development* .(Bloomington: Writers Club Press, 2002).
- 6 Albert Low, *Zen and Creative Management* (North Clarendon: Tuttle Publishing, 1992).
- 7 Dona Witten, *Enlightened Management: Bringing Buddhist Principles to Work* ( Paris: Park Street Press, 1999).
- 8 Lewis Richmond, *Work as Spiritual Practice: A Practical Buddhist Approach to Inner Growth and Satisfaction on the Job* (New York: Harmony, 2000).
- 9 George Pitagorsky, *The Zen Approach to Project Management: Working from Your Center to Balance Expectations and Performance* (New York: International Institute For Learning, 2007); Lee Godden, *Zen Wise Selling: Mindful Methods to Improve Your Sales and Your Self* (Signal Hill, Calif.: Telsius Publishing, 2004); Steven Heine, *White Collar Zen: Using Zen Principles to Overcome Obstacles and Achieve Your Career Goals* (New York: Oxford University press, 2005).
- 10 Rizwan Virk, *Zen Entrepreneurship: Walking the Path of the Career Warrior* (Cambridge: BayView Labs, 2013).
- 11 Michael Carroll, *The Mindful Leader: Awakening Your Natural Management Skills through Mindfulness Meditation*. (Boston: Mass,2008).
- 12 Allan Holender, *Zentreprenurism: A Twenty-First Century Guide to the New World of Business* (San Diego, Calif.: Book Tree press, 2008).
- 13 Murli Menon, *ZeNLP: The Power to Succeed* (Calif.: SAGE Publications Pvt. Ltd, 2005).
- 14 Joshua A. Irizarry, "Putting a price on zen: the business of redefining religion for global consumption," *Journal of Global Buddhism*2015(16): 51-69.
- 15 Deborah Shane, "7 zen principles make you happier and more successful in business," last modified February 7, 2014, <http://smallbiztrends.com/2014/02/7-zen-principles-in-business.html>
- 16 Barry Moltz, "The zen way to build a successful business", August 17, 2011, <https://www.americanexpress.com/us/small-business/openforum/articles/the-zen-way-to-build-a-successful-business/>
- 17 Deborah Shane, "7 Zen principles make you happier and more successful in business".
- 18 Barry Moltz, "The Zen way to build a successful business".
- 19 The Centre of Buddhist Studies for HKU and Public, "Awaking training program", lasted modified October 2014, [https://hkuems1.hku.hk/hkuems/ec\\_hdetail.aspx?guest=Y&ueid=32286](https://hkuems1.hku.hk/hkuems/ec_hdetail.aspx?guest=Y&ueid=32286)
- 20 The Chinese University of Hong Kong Library, "'Experience of Zen': workshop of Zen cultivation", lasted modified October 2015. <http://www.lib.cuhk.edu.hk/tc/about/news/lg-touch-chan>
- 21 The Chinese University of Hong Kong,. "Zen on campus." last modified July , 2014, [www.cuhk.edu.hk/chinese/features/zen-on-campus.html](http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/chinese/features/zen-on-campus.html)
- 22 Joshua A. Irizarry, "Putting a price on zen: the business of redefining religion for global consumption," *Journal of Global Buddhism*2015(16): 59.
- 23 Ibid. 14
- 24 Ronald R. Sims and Scott A. Quatro, *Leadership: Succeeding in the Private, Public, and Not-for-profit Sectors*(London: Routledge press , 2005),p.3.
- 25 Ibid.
- 26 Ibid,p.5.
- 27 M. Kostanski and C. Hassed, "Mindfulness as a concept and a process", *Australian Psychologist* 2008.43(01): 15-21.

**References:****Books:**

- Kraft, Kenneth. ed. *Zen Tradition and Transition*. New York: Grove Press, 1988.
- Pirsig, Robert M. *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance: An Inquiry into Values*. New York: Morrow, 1974.
- McDermott, Patrick. *Zen and the Art of Systems Analysis: Meditations on Computer Systems Development*. Bloomington: Writers Club Press, 2002.
- Low, Albert. *Zen and Creative Management*. North Clarendon: Tuttle Publishing, 1992.
- Witten, Dona. *Enlightened Management: Bringing Buddhist Principles to Work*. Paris: Park Street Press, 1999.
- Richmond, Lewis. *Work as Spiritual Practice: A Practical Buddhist Approach to Inner Growth and Satisfaction on the Job*. New York: Harmony, 2000.
- Pitagorsky, George. *The Zen Approach to Project Management: Working from Your Center to Balance Expectations and Performance*. New York: International Institute For Learning, 2007.
- Godden, Lee. *Zen Wise Selling: Mindful Methods to Improve Your Sales and Your Self*. Signal Hill, Calif.: Telsius Publishing, 2004.
- Heine, Steven. *White Collar Zen: Using Zen Principles to Overcome Obstacles and Achieve Your Career Goals*. New York: Oxford University press, 2005.
- Virk, Rizwan. *Zen Entrepreneurship: Walking the Path of the Career Warrior*. Cambridge: BayView Labs, 2013.
- Carroll, Michael. *The Mindful Leader: Awakening Your Natural Management Skills through Mindfulness Meditation*. Boston: Mass, 2008.
- Holender, Allan. *Zentreprenurism: A Twenty-First Century Guide to the New World of Business*. San Diego, Calif.: Book Tree press, 2008.
- Menon, Murlu. *ZeNLP: The Power to Succeed*. Calif.: SAGE Publications Pvt. Ltd, 2005.
- Sims, Ronald R. and Scott A. Quatro, *Leadership: Succeeding in the Private, Public, and Not-for-profit Sectors*. London: Routledge press, 2005. Journals
- Williams, R. John. "Technê -zen and the spiritual quality of global capitalism", *Critical Inquiry* 2011.38(01): 17-70.
- Irizarry, Joshua A. "Putting a price on zen: the business of redefining religion for global consumption," *Journal of Global Buddhism* 2015(16): 51-69.
- Kostanski, M., and C. Hassed, Mindfulness as a concept and a process. *Australian Psychologist* 2008.43(01): 15-21.

**Websites:**

- Shane, Deborah. "7 zen principles make you happier and more successful in business". last modified February 7, 2014. <http://smallbiztrends.com/2014/02/7-zen-principles-in-business.html>
- Moltz, Barry. "The zen way to build a successful business", August 17, 2011. <https://www.americanexpress.com/us/small-business/openforum/articles/the-zen-way-to-build-a-successful-business/>
- The Centre of Buddhist Studies for HKU and Public, "Awaking training program". lasted modified October 2014. [https://hkuems1.hku.hk/hkuems/ec\\_hdetail.aspx?guest=Y&ueid=32286](https://hkuems1.hku.hk/hkuems/ec_hdetail.aspx?guest=Y&ueid=32286)
- The Chinese University of Hong Kong Library, "Experience of zen': workshop of zen cultivation". lasted modified October 2015. <http://www.lib.cuhk.edu.hk/tc/about/news/lg-touch-chan>
- The Chinese University of Hong Kong. "Zen on campus." last modified July, 2014, [www.cuhk.edu.hk/chinese/features/zen-on-campus.html](http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/chinese/features/zen-on-campus.html)

**Special Terms:**

Ju shi 居士

Sik Hin-hung 释衍空

Hin-hung master 衍空法师

Awaking Training program 觉醒训练项目

Xing-hua business center 兴华商业中心

Dharma Drum Mountain 法鼓山

Fo-guang Shan 佛光山

Chang-ghan master 常禅法师

Sir Run Run Shaw Hall 邵逸夫夫人楼

Heritage Lodge (Cui Ya Shan Fang) 翠雅山房

Lai Chi Kok 荔枝角

Wisdom (Ruizhi) project 睿智计划

**Table 1.** The Arrangement of Awaking Training Program

Date	Workshop	Zen Camp
Group A(2014)	15/11; 22/11, 29/11, 13/12, 20/12, 27/12	6/12-7/12
Group B(2015)	11/4, 18/4, 25/4, 9/5, 16/5, 23/5	2/5- 3/5

**Table 2.** Comparison between “Entertainment Zen” and “Academic Zen”

Items	Entertainment Zen	Academic Zen
<b>Basic information</b>		
Leading force	Taiwan Buddhism groups	Hong Kong local Buddhism groups
Active region	Region of New Territories	Region of Kowloon
<b>Condition of activity</b>		
Pattern of activities	Zen camp/work shop	Curriculum(workshop+ zen camp)
Active duration	No longer than one week (7 days)	Several months
Main content	Mind games/practice of zen cultivation	Buddhism argumentation /practice of zen cultivation
Fees	A small fee (100 Hong Kong dollar approximately) /For free	For free
<b>Situation of Participants</b>		
Limitation of age	For young people mainly	No limitation of age
Reason for involvement	To be acquaint oneself with zen cultivation	Want to know more about zen cultivation
Special requirements	No	Working paper

**Table 3.** the Schedule for a Typical Day during the Period of Wisdom of Project

Time	Process
6: 00am	Wake up
6:30am	Standing–cultivation of zen; Acting-cultivation of zen; Sitting-cultivation of zen
7:40am	Breakfast time
8:40am	Walking-cultivation of zen
9:30am	Lecture: Arts and Skills in Management Practice
11:15am	Sitting-cultivation of zen
12:00nn	Lunch time
12:30pm	Lecture: Zen in the work
1:15pm	Lunch break
2:00pm	Film appreciation: zen in films
4:30pm	Lecture: Arts and Skills about Solution of Problems
6:00pm	Supper& Bath time
7:00pm	Questions & Answers
9:15pm	Sitting-cultivation of zen
10:00pm	bedtime

Notes. From “Working, Life, and Zen: Zen Meditation Camp for Leaders”, by Wisdom project, social science school of HKU, May,2014, [http://www.socsc.hku.hk/ExCEL3/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Meditation-Camp\\_Programme-Chinese.pdf](http://www.socsc.hku.hk/ExCEL3/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Meditation-Camp_Programme-Chinese.pdf)

**Table 4.** Course Structure of the “Business Zen” Curriculum in the Hong Kong Island

Sequence of topics	Topics	Content of theory teaching	Content of case studies	Content of Zen practice
1	Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the history about zen’s doctrines and its impact on human nature</li> <li>Buddhist theory on equality (Ping-deng guan) and the theory of ultimate reality (Zhu Fa Shi Xiang)</li> </ul>		
2	Zen cultivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How to achieve Completeness (Yuan man)?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to found the compassion in the real sense</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>concentration of mental strength</li> </ul>
3	Present (Dang xia)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ideas of the moment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“live in the moment” and work’s responsibility</li> <li>“live in the moment” and professionalism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>application of ideas of the moment</li> </ul>
4	“Being present” in zen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“live in the moment” as a concept of zen</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the concept “live in the moment” and alterative solution on the day-to-day administrative issues</li> <li>the concept “live in the moment” and art of inspiration</li> </ul>	
5	Way of Bodhi Mind (Pu-ti xin)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Way of Bodhi Mind” and alterative solutions on administrative issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Various concrete measures in the solution of administrative issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>practice about the concept of “The way of Bodhi Mind”</li> </ul>

Notes. Ping-deng guan 平等观 Zhu Fa Shi Xiang 诸法实相 Yuan man 圆满 Dang xia 当下 Pu-ti xin 菩提心

Figure 1. The proportion of time distribution of the whole process in 3day-2night zen camp

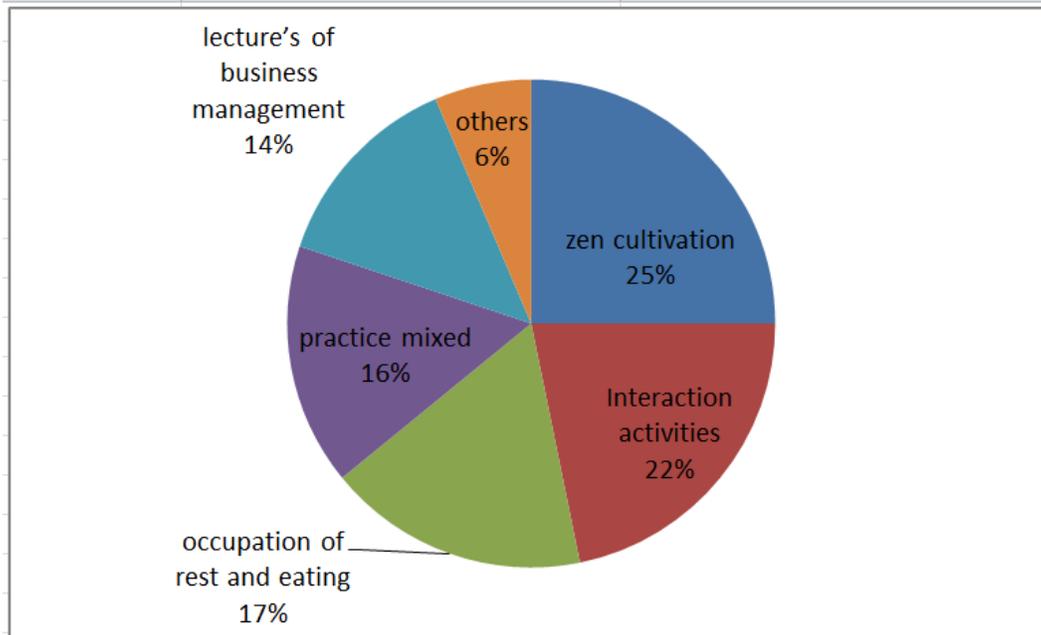
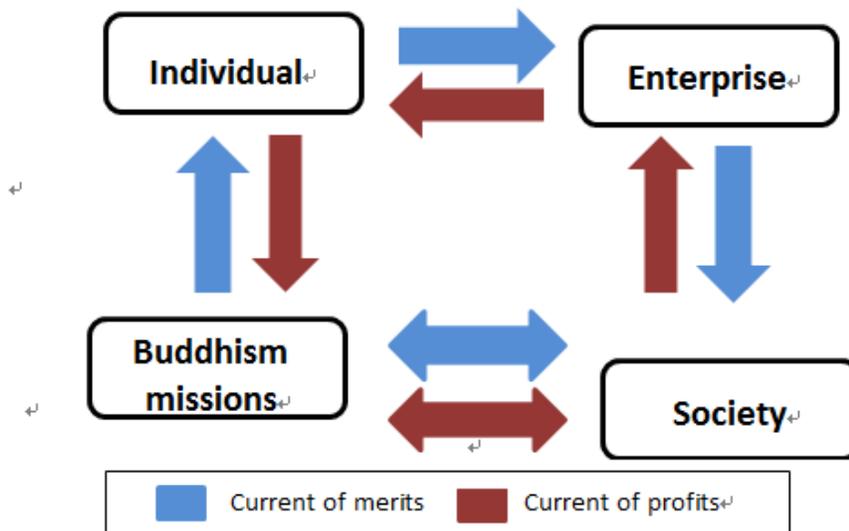


Figure 2. Model of bidirectional circulation of merits and profits involving individual, enterprise, society, and Buddhism mission four subjects



Buddhism is a major religion in Hong Kong and has been greatly influential in the traditional culture of its populace. Among the most prominent Buddhist temples in the city there are the Chi Lin Nunnery in Diamond Hill, built in the Tang Dynasty's architectural style; the Po Lin Monastery on Lantau Island, famous for the outdoor bronze statue, Tian Tan Buddha, which attracts a large number of visitors during the weekends and holidays.