

研究・調査プロジェクト報告

Seeking the Dharma in North America: Then and Now

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Finding, studying, and practicing Buddhism as a teenager outside Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in the 1980s was a bit of a challenge. My interest had been piqued in high school. I went to a Catholic high school where a couple of the teachers would sometimes share Zen anecdotes and *kōans* with us before class began. These witty and wise stories instilled in me a fascination for Buddhism, or at least for Zen Buddhism. However, there was no internet, nor were there yet any of the large bookstores like Borders or Barnes & Noble. A person in that time looking for books about Buddhism would be limited to a bookshelf or two of either the most recent and popular books or else of books by the Rinzai Zen proponents Alan Watts (1915-1973, author of *The Way of Zen*), D.T. Suzuki (1870-1966; author of *Introduction to Zen Buddhism*), or Philip Kapleau (1912-2004; author of *Three Pillars of Zen*). One might also find Shunryū Suzuki's (1905-1971) book about Soto Zen practice, *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*. Books like Paul Rep's (1895-1990) *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones* provided translations of the *kōan* collection known as the *Gateless Gate* (J. *Mumonkan*;) as well as other Zen anecdotes and stories. If I had wanted to find a Buddhist temple or practice center my only recourse would have been the yellow pages, and even then the yellow pages would only cover a limited geographic area, such as the county I lived in. As a high school student the only Buddhist group that I ever came across was