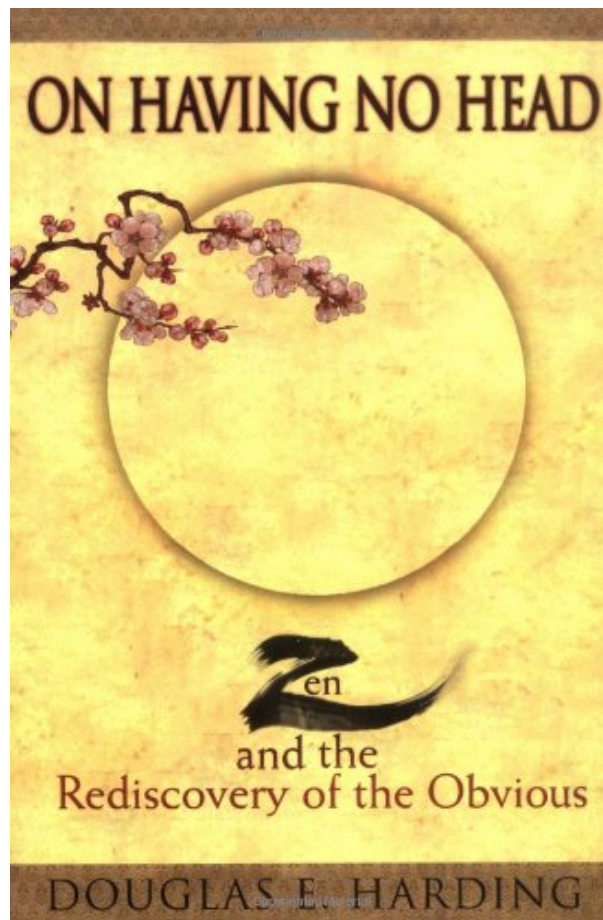
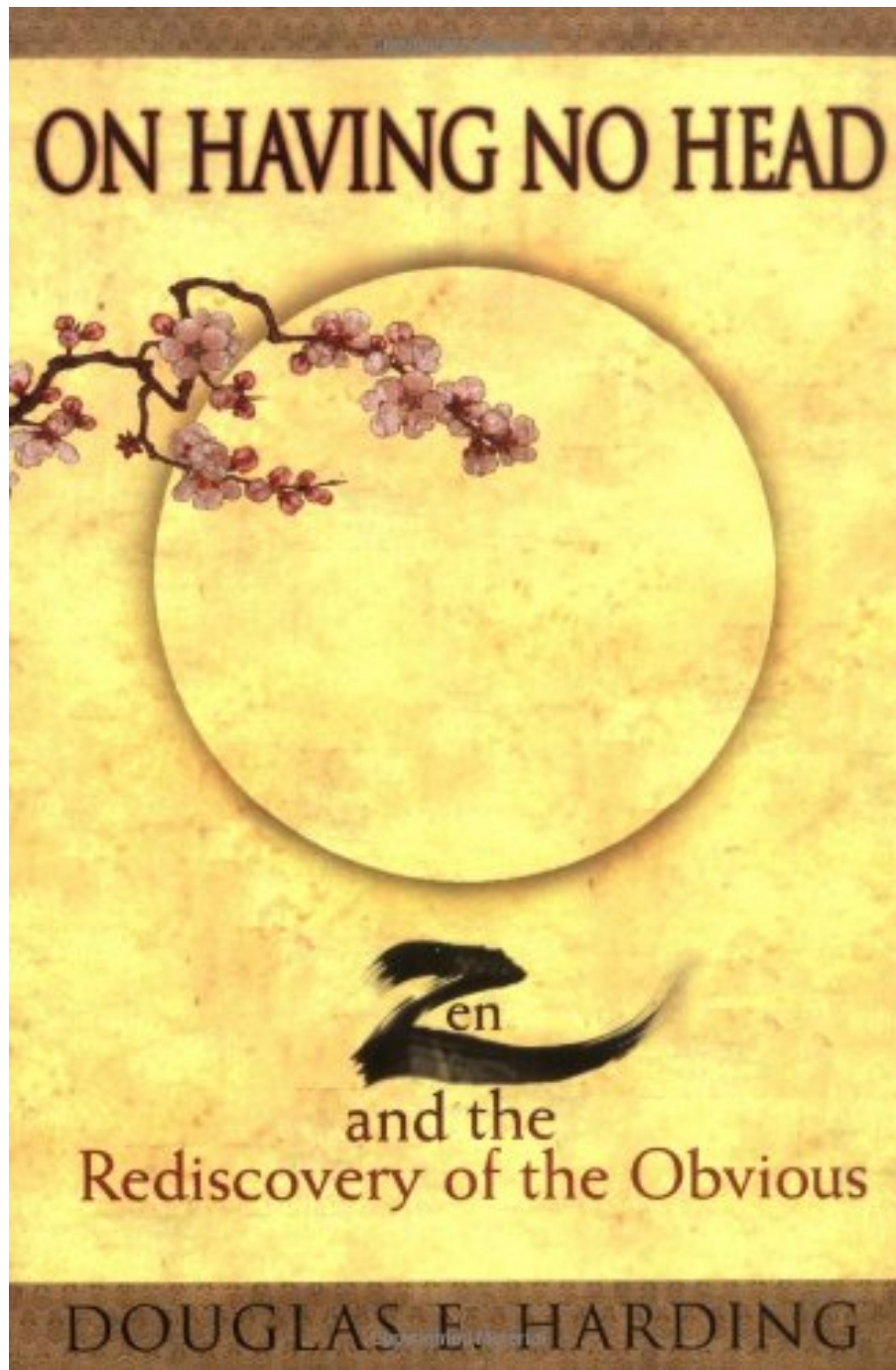


**ON HAVING NO HEAD: ZEN AND THE
REDISCOVERY OF THE OBVIOUS BY
DOUGLAS E. HARDING**



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About the Author

Douglas Harding is a highly respected mystic/philosopher who was known for his experience of Headlessness--the experience of "seeing" our original nature. Harding spent his live expressing this abiding experience, and also developed a series of awareness exercises that enabled other to see for themselves, "who we really are" in essence.

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Headlessness, the experience of "no-self" that mystics of all times have aspired to, is an instantaneous way of "waking up" and becoming fully aware of one's real and abiding nature. Douglas Harding, the highly respected mystic-philosopher, describes his first experience of headlessness in "On Having No Head," the classic work first published in 1961. In this book, he conveys the immediacy, simplicity, and practicality of the "headless way," placing it within a Zen context, while also drawing parallels to practices in other spiritual traditions. If you wish to experience the freedom and clarity that results from firsthand experience of true Being, then this book will serve as a practical guide to the rediscovery of what has always been present.

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awareness of awareness

By Danelos Georgoudis

Harding wants to convince us, literally, that we do not have a head. It sounds preposterous but he is rather insistent and, incredibly, it starts to dawn on us that somehow he has a point. The phrase "I have no head" says something new not about the word "head" but about the word "I". Actually what Harding should have written is that "I am not a head": our experience of the world is something much more basic and elemental, and only later do we learn about our head. This becomes clearer when one finds that Harding also claims that we don't have a body. In fact, even after reading the book I shall continue to talk about my head as something I have - it sounds more natural.

I think that Harding is talking about one of the most intriguing philosophical problems of today, which is

consciousness. He wants us to become aware of our awareness, and to show how this experience fundamentally changes the way we see everything else.

To my mind, his connection to Zen Buddhism is strenuous. He mentions many passages from Zen Buddhism (and also from some Christian mystics) to make his point. Zen Buddhism is about rational thought being an obstruction of truth, but thinking about awareness is a very rational enterprise. I am not convinced that when the Zen masters talked about the disappearance of the self they meant the same as headlessness. Anyway the connection with Zen adds little to the main idea of the book, which I think can very well stand on its own.

All in all, I think this book touches on something that is really very important, even fundamental. My only criticism is that the book contains much that I thought peripheral and even unnecessarily opaque.

24 of 26 people found the following review helpful.

Worthwhile, However. . .

By Bruce McElhaney

I purchased the book in part due to its good reviews here and elsewhere, and because of the author's interesting website. I can appreciate the obvious but original slant of the author's views. (There is no self, only Self) While I can comprehend the essential message of the book, I feel its presentation somewhat lacking. If you don't "get it" within the first few pages, then you probably won't get it at all, as the explanation of the message appears (to this reader) to be more murky than the message itself. Some might believe that it's only problematic of a murky reading. I can pretty much agree with the previous reader who wrote: "This book lacks clarity. If you are familiar with Zen I don't think he has much to add." That's the bad news. The good news is, you don't need to buy the book! Fortunately, the essence of the message presented here has been clarified in the author's later works as well as on his excellent website. In addition, the experiments offered on the website are enlightening in themselves.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Five Stars

By Lorraine Tucker

excellent

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