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Body, Mind & Spirit

This Truth Never Fails: A Zen Memoir in Four Seasons
David Rynick
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David Rynick was raised in a Presbyterian family and regards his gradual journey into Zen Buddhism as a natural step. “The teachings sounded like what I had been hearing all my life,” he explains. “What is most precious and sacred is right here, all we have to do is turn towards it.”

This is a well-organized book of short meditations based on the seasons of the year and centered on Zen faith and practice. In “Summer” the author focuses on purchasing and moving to a new home to be based around a Zen temple he and his wife, also a Zen instructor, have purchased. In one segment he ruminates on that big question that afflicts all of us when we move: “What to hold on to? What to let go? … the real issue is the interplay between fear and faith.” He describes the placid beauty of “kayak camping” (he is also an official Maine Sea Kayak Guide), and his dilemma with some pottery he fired that didn’t turn out the way he wanted, and a walk with his “invisible dog,” a great excuse for getting out and having “an easy saunter.”

As Rynick rakes autumn leaves, he contemplates the inevitable cycle of birth and death, and when he purchases a large stone statue of the seated Buddha, he thinks about the ancient tradition of just sitting still. In “Winter” he speaks about someone who is dying and who wishes he could be out shoveling snow, putting a reverse spin on that most arduous of household chores. A bout with the flu shows Rynick that his weakness allows others to be strong and generous. With the coming of spring, he thinks about the life of a tomato sprout and about the morning glories that, he is sure, “dreamed themselves into my head and convinced me to buy the package” of seeds. In all of these vignettes we learn more about Rynick, his wife and family, his temple, his faith, and his world. This is both a personal memoir and a practical manual for accepting life and getting through it peaceably.

This is a positive, thoughtful book that is written to inspire. In its competent, quietly amusing, and gently guiding way, it recalls simple, homely tasks and activities and illustrates

how they can be transformed into little gifts on a spiritual pathway. Rynick is a life coach who teaches through a framework of Zen understanding. His book will be welcomed by his students and will most certainly garner him a new following.?

Barbara Bamberger Scott