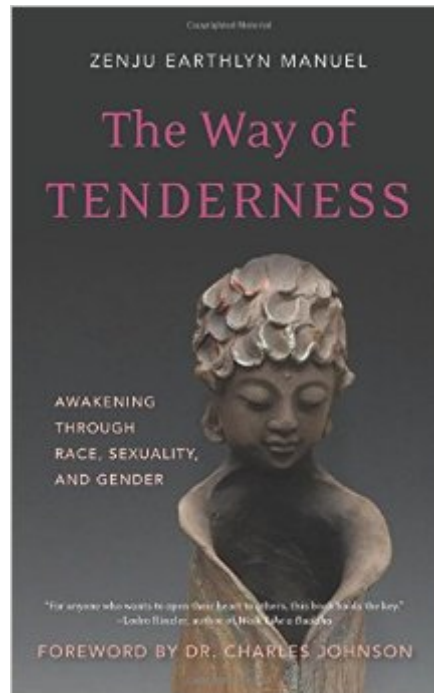


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# The Way Of Tenderness: Awakening Through Race, Sexuality, And Gender



## Synopsis

“What does liberation mean when I have incarnated in a particular body, with a particular shape, color, and sex?” In *The Way of Tenderness*, Zen priest Zenju Earthlyn Manuel brings Buddhist philosophies of emptiness and appearance to bear on race, sexuality, and gender, using wisdom forged through personal experience and practice to rethink problems of identity and privilege. Manuel brings her own experiences as a lesbian black woman into conversation with Buddhism to square our ultimately empty nature with superficial perspectives of everyday life. Her hard-won insights reveal that dry wisdom alone is not sufficient to heal the wounds of the marginalized; an effective practice must embrace the tenderness found where conventional reality and emptiness intersect. Only warmth and compassion can cure hatred and heal the damage it wreaks within us. This is a book that will teach us all.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Oneness is itself. We are not one in the sense of each other, we are one in the oneness. We do not create diversity, it already is and therefore when we speak of race, sexuality, and gender we are speaking of the natural multiplicity of oneness (constructed or otherwise). When we ignore the systemic suffering in unacceptable differences between us, we ignore the oneness." - Rev. Zenju Earthlyn Manuel  
A groundbreaking, truly revolutionary Buddhist and humanist book on the nature of self in a world suffering from very real divisions. Timely, compassionate and inspiring. A must read!!

Zenju raises an essential point - Buddhists correctly identify our incarnation into bodies as a temporary affair, and tend to de-emphasize the temporary aspects of the body in favor of focusing on eternal truths. We do not have a permanent identity, identity is fluid, not just from incarnation to incarnation (if you believe in that sort of thing), but even within a lifetime, as your body ages and changes, and your experiences shape your "identity" (as much as any such thing truly exists). So, the danger is in ignoring issues relating to the body or identity as unimportant, even engaging in willful blindness about issues of race, gender, and sexuality as uncomfortable, and therefore safely shoved to one side as irrelevant. But Zenju - a bisexual woman of color - points out that we engage with the truth while incarnated in bodies, and our bodies and the things we do with our bodies shape our incarnate experiences. "Race" does not exist scientifically speaking, and is an illusory, fleeting thing according to Buddhist thought, so can't we just ignore "race"? That is a trap, because to do so is to be unjust, and to ignore that the experience of race (as a social construct, if nothing else) has as much reality as any experience in the body. Our experiences of "race" affect us, cause us to act certain ways, be treated certain ways, which is pretty powerful for something that isn't truly real (which, I suppose, could be taken as exemplary of a certain line of Buddhist thought on ALL experiences in the body) . . . Quite a powerful, and often uncomfortable, book.

Zenju Earthlyn Manuel tackles the most important issues for any religion or spiritual practice of our time. She helps us to see why Buddhist and others shouldn't keep walking over the bodies to get inside the temples to meditate or pray. We fail to be one until the pain and suffering of others often caused by spiritual policies is understood and acted upon. I am happy she had the courage to do this.

This beautifully written book takes on the subject of the intersectionality of race, religion, sexuality, and gender with honesty and with a relatable voice that is easy to invest in. Beautiful binding, too. I love the texture of the cover.

I had the reaction that this was the first 21st Century expression of the Buddha Dharma I have encountered. A torrent of truth, but utterly fresh. Recommended at the very least for everyone who practices Buddhism in a community.

Beautiful, courageous, insightful. Buy this book and read it!!!

This is one of the most powerful books I have ever read!

Thank you, Zenju for your personal testimony on Zen Buddhism.

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