SEVEN LANTERNS



Seven Nights in Kyoto

A gentle week-long sleep ritual with Japanese zen music

LANTERN OF KYOTO

WELCOME

A quieter week begins tonight

Thank you for listening to Lantern of Kyoto. This little guide is our gift to you: seven evenings, each with a short calming practice, a place to picture as you drift off, and a Japanese zen mix to play while you do it.

How to use it

- [ ] Read one night each evening, about 30 minutes before you want to sleep.
- [ ] Start the music first, at a low volume, then do the practice.
- [ ] Read the scene, close your eyes and picture it. Let the music do the rest.
- [ ] In the morning, write a line in the diary at the back.

You do not have to do it perfectly, or seven nights in a row. Skip a night, repeat a favourite, fall asleep halfway through. All of that counts.

This guide is for relaxation and winding down. It is not medical advice and does not replace a doctor. If you have ongoing trouble sleeping, please talk to a health professional. During the breathing exercises, if you feel dizzy or uncomfortable, simply return to normal breathing.

THE PLACE

Kyoto by night

Kyoto lies in a valley ringed by wooded hills in the heart of Japan. For more than a thousand years, from 794 until 1868, it was the home of the emperor and the capital of the country.

Some two thousand temples and shrines are scattered through the city. Behind their wooden gates you find raked gravel gardens, moss that has grown undisturbed for centuries, and ponds where koi drift slowly under maple leaves.

In the west of the city, paths wind through the tall bamboo forest of Arashiyama, where the stems creak softly in the wind. In the old streets of Gion, paper lanterns glow outside wooden teahouses, and on rainy evenings the stone lanes shine like water.

The music on this channel is built from two old Japanese voices. The koto is a long zither with thirteen strings, plucked so that each note rings and fades. The shakuhachi is a bamboo flute once played by wandering monks as a form of meditation: one breath, one sound. Listen to how much space they leave between the notes, and let your breathing fill it.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Setting up your evening

A calm night starts a little before bed. You do not need all of these. Pick the ones that are easy for you.

- [ ] **Dim the lights** an hour before sleep. A single lamp or a candle (never left burning) is enough.
- [ ] **Put your phone away** after starting the music. Turn the screen face down, or use a sleep timer.
- [ ] **Keep the volume low**, just loud enough to hear. Softer music is easier to fall asleep to.
- [ ] **Cool, dark and quiet:** a slightly cool room with fresh air helps most people sleep.
- [ ] **A warm drink** without caffeine, such as herbal tea or warm milk.
- [ ] **Same time each night** if you can. Your body likes a rhythm.
- [ ] **Sleep timer:** set one on your phone (or in the YouTube app) so the music fades out on its own and you never need to reach for the screen.

NIGHT 1 OF 7

Arrive

Tonight is only about arriving. Nothing to fix, nothing to achieve: just a slower evening than usual.

The long exhale

1. Sit or lie down comfortably and let your shoulders drop.
2. Breathe in gently through your nose for a count of 4.
3. Breathe out slowly through your mouth for a count of 6, as if cooling a cup of tea.
4. Repeat for about ten breaths. Let the exhale be the longest part.

Tonight's scene

> *You slide open a wooden door onto a temple veranda. Rain is falling softly on the tiled roof and dripping from the eaves. Sit down on the smooth boards and listen.*

TONIGHT'S MUSIC

Rain on the Temple Roof

Japanese zen for sleep and meditation · 60 BPM ·
www.youtube.com/@LanternOfKyoto

NIGHT 2 OF 7

Let the day go

Thoughts about tomorrow are loudest when the lights go out. Tonight you give them a place to wait.

The worry page

1. Take a piece of paper and a pen (not your phone).
2. Write down everything still on your mind: tasks, worries, things to remember.
3. Next to each one, write the first small step and when you will take it.
4. Fold the page and put it away. It will still be there in the morning; you do not have to hold it tonight.

Tonight's scene

> *Before you lies a garden of raked white gravel and a few dark stones. The lines in the gravel are perfectly even, like ripples on still water. Let your eyes follow them slowly.*

TONIGHT'S MUSIC

Rain on the Temple Roof

Japanese zen for sleep and meditation · 60 BPM ·
www.youtube.com/@LanternOfKyoto

NIGHT 3 OF 7

Into the body

After a day in your head, tonight you come back into your body, one part at a time.

The slow body scan

1. Lie on your back, arms beside you, and close your eyes.
2. Bring your attention to your feet. Notice warmth, weight, tingling, or nothing at all.
3. Move slowly upward: calves, knees, thighs, belly, chest, hands, arms, shoulders, neck, face.
4. At each place, breathe out and imagine it growing a little heavier. If your mind wanders, simply return to where you were.

Tonight's scene

> *You walk a narrow path through the bamboo forest. The stalks rise high above you and sway in the evening wind, knocking gently together like hollow wooden bells.*

TONIGHT'S MUSIC

Rain on the Temple Roof

Japanese zen for sleep and meditation · 60 BPM ·
www.youtube.com/@LanternOfKyoto

NIGHT 4 OF 7

Steady

A simple rhythm, like the slow pulse in the music, gives a busy mind something calm to follow.

Square breathing

1. Breathe in for a count of 4.
2. Hold gently for 4.
3. Breathe out for 4.
4. Hold empty for 4. Picture tracing the four sides of a square. Repeat for a few minutes.

Tonight's scene

> *You kneel in a small tea room. Water hums in an iron kettle. Someone whisks a bowl of green tea and sets it before you. Hold the warm bowl in both hands.*

TONIGHT'S MUSIC

Rain on the Temple Roof

Japanese zen for sleep and meditation · 60 BPM ·
www.youtube.com/@LanternOfKyoto

NIGHT 5 OF 7

Release

Tension hides in the jaw, the shoulders and the hands. Tonight you find it by tightening first, then letting go.

Tense and release

1. Make two fists and squeeze gently for 5 seconds. Then open your hands and feel the difference for 10 seconds.
2. Do the same with your shoulders: lift them toward your ears, hold, and let them fall.
3. Then your face: scrunch it up, hold, and soften it completely.
4. Finish with your whole body at once, then let everything go loose and heavy.

Tonight's scene

> *On a mountain slope stands a single stone lantern, covered in soft green moss. A candle flickers inside it. Around you, the forest is dark and quiet.*

TONIGHT'S MUSIC

Rain on the Temple Roof

Japanese zen for sleep and meditation · 60 BPM ·
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NIGHT 6 OF 7

Gratitude

Ending the day on something good changes the last picture your mind takes into the night.

Three good things

1. Think back over today and find three small good things: a kind word, a warm drink, a moment of quiet.
2. For each one, recall it in detail: where you were, what you saw, how it felt.
3. If you like, write them in the diary at the back of this guide.
4. Let the last one stay with you as the music plays.

Tonight's scene

> *You sit in a wooden boat on a temple pond. Red maple leaves float on the surface around you. The boat barely moves, and neither do you.*

TONIGHT'S MUSIC

Rain on the Temple Roof

Japanese zen for sleep and meditation · 60 BPM ·
www.youtube.com/@LanternOfKyoto

NIGHT 7 OF 7

Your own ritual

On the last night you choose. You now know six ways to wind down; keep the ones that worked for you.

Build your evening

1. Look back at your diary. Which nights felt calmest?
2. Choose one breathing exercise and one other practice (the worry page, the body scan, tense and release, or three good things).
3. Put them in an order and do them tonight with the music, start to finish.
4. This is your ritual now. Repeat it whenever you need a quiet evening.

Tonight's scene

> *Far away, a great temple bell is struck once. Its deep hum spreads across the city and slowly fades into the night, until only the sound of rain remains.*

TONIGHT'S MUSIC

Rain on the Temple Roof

Japanese zen for sleep and meditation · 60 BPM ·
www.youtube.com/@LanternOfKyoto

YOUR WEEK

Sleep diary

Each morning, write a few words. Print this page or copy it into a notebook.

	BEDTIME	CALM (1–5)	WHAT HELPED / ONE GOOD THING
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			

KEEP LISTENING

The music of Kyoto

Rain on the Temple Roof

Japanese zen for sleep and meditation · 60 BPM
www.youtube.com/@LanternOfKyoto

New mixes appear every week on www.youtube.com/@LanternOfKyoto. Subscribing is the easiest way to find them.

The other lanterns

Lantern of Shiraz, Persian ambient: www.youtube.com/@LanternOfShiraz
Lantern of Yerevan, Armenian duduk: www.youtube.com/@LanternOfYerevan
Lantern of Seville, flamenco guitar: www.youtube.com/@LanternOfSeville
Lantern of Paris, café jazz: www.youtube.com/@LanternOfParis
Lantern of Galway, Celtic harp: www.youtube.com/@LanternOfGalway
Lantern of Varanasi, Indian raga: www.youtube.com/@LanternOfVaranasi



Sleep well.

SEVEN LANTERNS

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