



The Religious Art of Zen Master Hakuin

Katsuhiro Yoshizawa

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A charismatic and extraordinary Zen teacher and artist, Hakuin (1686–1769) is credited with almost single-handedly reforming and revitalizing Japanese Zen from a state of extreme spiritual decline. As a teacher, he placed special emphasis on koan practice, inventing new koans such as the famous “What is the sound of one hand clapping?” He also stressed the need to extend the benefits of Zen to others.

What made Hakuin even more remarkable was that he was not only a religious teacher but also a prolific artist. Using calligraphy and painting to create “visual Dharma,” his teachings were rendered on paper in pictures, characters, and images, uniquely and magnificently expressing the nature of enlightenment as he wished to impart it to his students.

The Religious Art of Zen Master Hakuin is a stunning volume containing many of Hakuin’s finest calligraphies and paintings, along with brilliant commentary by Katsuhiro Yoshizawa, the leading Japanese expert on Hakuin and his work. Yoshizawa masterfully guides the reader from one piece of artwork to the next, sharing the story of Hakuin’s life, revealing the profound religious meaning embedded in each illustration, and providing a detailed documentary of the lessons of one of Zen’s most respected teachers.

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