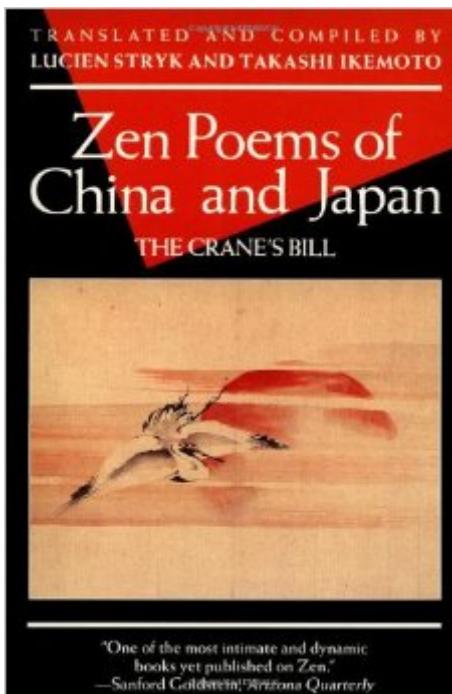


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Zen Poems Of China And Japan: The Crane's Bill (Evergreen Book)



Synopsis

Capturing in verse the ageless spirit of Zen, these 150 poems reflect the insight of famed masters from the ninth century to the nineteenth. The translators, in collaboration with Zen Master Taigan Takayama, have furnished illuminating commentary on the poems and arranged them as to facilitate comparison between the Chinese and Japanese Zen traditions. The poems themselves, rendered in clear and powerful English, offer a unique approach to Zen Buddhism, as Lucien Stryk writes, "the many disquisitions on its meaning are as dust to living earth. We see in these poems, as in all important religious art, East or West, revelations of spiritual truths touched by a kind of divinity."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

THE CRANE'S BILL : Zen Poems of China and Japan. Translated by Lucien Stryk and Takashi Ikemoto with the assistance of Taigan Takayama, Zen Master. 143 pp. New York : Grove Press, 1973 and Reprinted. Zen poetry is one of the glories of Zen, and yet few in the West seem to care or even know about it. Though undoubtedly sincere in their efforts to understand Zen, most readers seem drawn to prose treatises or explications or analyses of one sort or another, while overlooking the fact that, as Taigan Takayama expresses it : "Zen detests conceptualization" (page xi). Tenzan Yasuda has expressed the same idea this way : "What expresses cosmic truth in the most direct and concise way - that is the heart of Zen art" (page xxxvii). The poetry of Zen ranges all the way

from the tiny seventeen-syllable haiku of a stupendous poet such as Santoka, which have been beautifully translated by John Stevens (in 'Mountain Tasting : Zen Haiku by Santoka Taneda'), through to the Zen verse treatise, of which the finest example is the Third Patriarch Seng-ts'an's 'Hsin-hsin-ming.' This poem brilliantly captures the essence of Zen in its thirty-one verses, and is a text that deserves to be far better known. Although the present book is devoted to shorter poems, an easily accessible translation of the 'Hsin-hsin-ming' will be found in D. T. Suzuki's 'Manual of Zen Buddhism' ('On Believing in Mind,' pages 76-82). 'Crane's Bill' is a collaborative effort which falls into three parts. First we are given, in a Foreword, Preface, and Introduction, 42 pages of interesting and informative material in which a very persuasive case is made for the fact that we should be reading these poems.

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