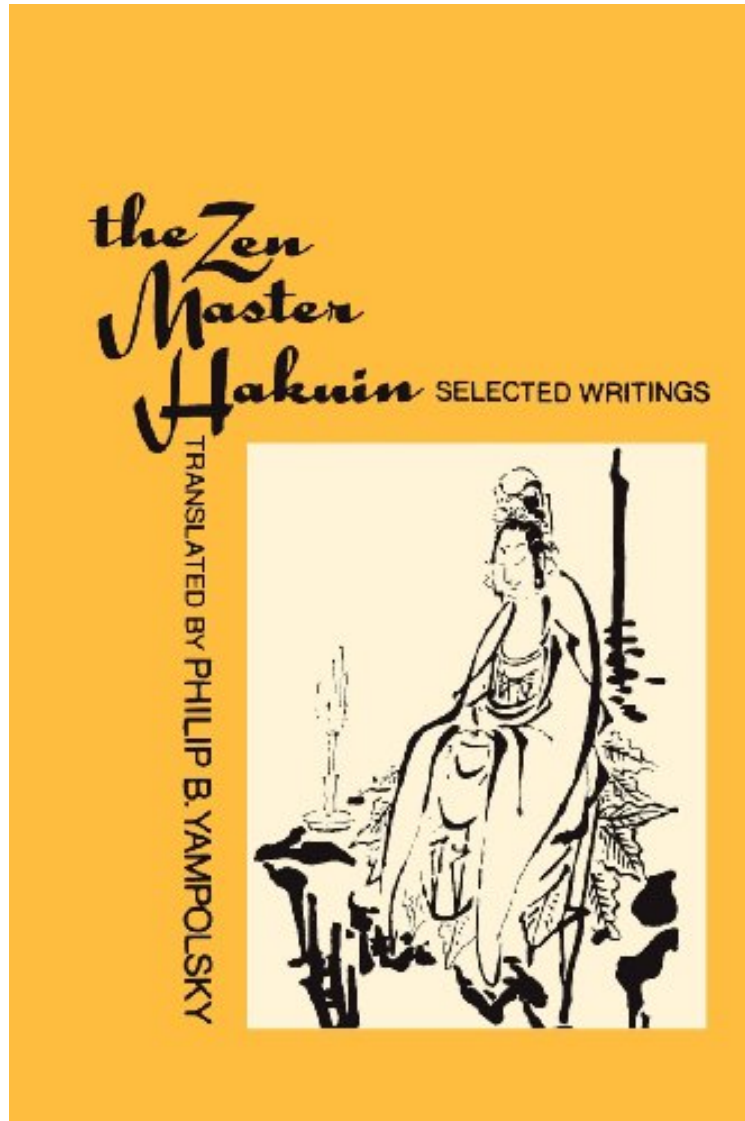


(Ebook free) The Zen Master Hakuin

The Zen Master Hakuin

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From Cosco : The Zen Master Hakuin before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Zen Master Hakuin:

29 of 29 people found the following review helpful. A valuable source of teachings By Hakuyu I'm puzzled why Yampolsky's excellent translation of material from Hakuin (1686-1769) - the eminent reformer of Rinzaï Zen in the

Tokugawa - hasn't merited a review to date. It provides an excellent selection of material and is well worth looking at: Orategama I, II III. Supplement to the Orategama. Orategama Zokusho Appended Material to the above Yabukoji Hebichiigo I II. These Japanese titles won't mean a lot - unless you've read extracts. Suffice it to say that Yampolsky has given us the essential Hakuin. Produced as part of a translation programme for Columbia Uni, one might expect the material here to be a trifle dry. However, Yampolsky has approached his task with a good measure of feeling for the genre, without getting bogged down in academic quibbles. What you get, is an accurate and lively translation, capturing well the spirit of Hakuin's teaching - conveyed in his characteristically trenchant style. Hakuin's words will mean the most to those who have determined to practice Zen. But general readers will also enjoy the book. Hakuin was full of interesting anecdotes. Despite the passage of time - and translation into another tongue, something real and vital comes through of Hakuin's teaching, in this book. Never intrusive, Yampolsky's notes have been devoted to explicating key sources, terms, personages and places - which crop up in Hakuin's remarks. The translation is accompanied by a well informed, readable Introduction, giving insight into the background to Hakuin's career and writings. Yampolsky has provided a useful Appendix, listing Hakuin's main works. An extensive bibliography details cognate Buddhist sources. Orategama (The Embossed Tea Kettle), one of Hakuin's most well known works, in fact comprises a series of texts. It began as a letter to Lord Nabeshima, governor of Settsu, dealing with Zen practice in general, matters of health, good governance etc, according to Hakuin's inter-connected view of life-energy. Orategama is partly autobiographical, detailing key experiences, something comparatively rare from Zen masters ('Itsumadegusa,' written toward end of Hakuin's life, represents his autobiography proper). The second part of Orategama comprises a letter of encouragement and advice, sent to a sick monk. It recapitulates Hakuin's experiences, training with Shoju Rojin, and again touches on the healing methods (nanso-no-ho) that Hakuin had used to cure his own ills. Some of this material duplicates that found in the Yasenkanna (not included here). Part 3 of Orategama contains Hakuin's letter to a Nun, explaining the nuance of the Lotus Sutra, very much in Zen terms. Hakuin retained a life-long veneration for this sutra. The final part of Orategama provides counsel for a former disciple, stressing the need to mature and deepen his insight, without hanging on to partial realization. In Orategama Zokusho - an extensive document, Hakuin gives his account of the relationship between Koan and Nembutsu practice. Contrary to what has often been stated, Hakuin did not condemn the Nembutsu (calling on the Buddha's name). He acknowledged its merits in this letter. What Hakuin did not approve of, was joint-practice of these methods. Yampolsky doesn't say much about the issue, so it is worth pointing out that in post-Kamakura Japan, Nembutsu practice came to be regarded as the way of strict 'tariki' or 'other-power' - giving up all reliance on 'jiriki' or 'self-power' - as found in Zen. For such reasons, Hakuin deemed it uncondusive to Zen practice. Other interpretations of nembutsu (e.g. Yung-ming's, or those used at the Mampukuji Obakuzan) would yield fewer difficulties. What concerned Hakuin, was that his followers should attain 'singleness of mind' - and, if they attained it, pursuing any practice single-mindedly, that was enough for him. (He acknowledged Rennyo and Honen's attainments, Shingon masters such as Myohen Sozu etc. - in this vein). The 'Appended' material follows kindred themes. Hebi-ichigo is a much neglected text - not least, because it was once banned by the authorities. It contains some pretty stiff criticism of the ruling aristocracy and the heavy tax burden falling on Japanese peasant farmers. This is worth noting, in view of the now commonly held notion that the Rinzaï tradition has always been ready to comply with the ruling elite. Sent in reply to a letter from a retainer of Ikeda (Iyo-no-kami), Hakuin's response is decked out with courtesies -but, beneath the surface politeness, it constitutes a veritable diatribe. This certainly made Hakuin an 'engaged' Buddhist, and shows his strong, independence of spirit. I recommend reading Yampolsky's work in conjunction with Norman Waddell's 'Wild Ivy' (Itsumadegusa), a translation of Hakuin's autobiography, plus the extracts from Hakuin's 'Keiso dokuzui' presented by Miura/Sasaki (cf. 'The Zen Koan'). While certainly the chief 'reformer' of Rinzaï Zen in his time -and remembered as such today, the valuable thing about reading the sources noted above, is that Hakuin does not come over as someone obsessed with the narrower bounds of sectarian identity. As his writings show, he had digested the teachings of all the great T'ang and Sung masters. Despite modern-day cliches, Hakuin capped his own training system with the 'Go-I' or 'Five Ranks' of the Soto (Chin. Ts'ao-tung) school. For him - they were one of a piece - and complementary. Hakuin had a broad mind, as befits one of the way. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Sara Holland Erudite and lively.. Very helpful. Ted

Translation of Orategama, Yabukoji, and Hebilichigo.

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