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JOHN STEVENS, a Zen priest, was professor of Buddhist studies and Aikido instructor at Tohoku Fukushi University in Japan, where he lived for 35 years. Stevens is the author of over 40 books on Zen artists, their poetry, painting, and calligraphy, as well as on Aikido, swordsmanship, and other Japanese martial art traditions. Contact: kunimit81@gmail.com

FELIX HESS, born in the Netherlands, has a PhD in physics and mathematics. He spent some years in Australia researching a variety of subjects, including boomerangs and frogs, which led him toward creating art installations based on sound and movement. Often invited to Japan as an artist in the 1990s he became interested in Zen and began collecting Zenga. Contact: fhess@xs4all.nl

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Seeing Zen

Zenga from the Kaeru-An Collection

by John Stevens & Felix Hess



This book presents 127 of the best Zen artworks (Zenga) from over 560 pieces covering the entire spectrum of the genre, both chronologically and thematically. The renowned collection was assembled by Dr. Felix Hess, a scientist and sound artist who researched frog choruses in Australia, later naming his collection *Kaeru-An* (*Frog Hui*), in honor of his original teachers. “The singing frogs,” he writes, “taught me just to sit still in silence and listen.”

Dr. Hess has been assisted with collecting and cataloging by Professor John Stevens, an acknowledged authority on the painting, calligraphy, and poetry of Zen. The two have collaborated in mounting acclaimed exhibits of *Kaeru-An* Zenga at the Museum of East Asian Art in Berlin, the Bochum Museum of Contemporary Art in Germany, and most recently at the Villia Empain in Brussels. Upcoming major exhibitions are planned at the Czech National Museum, Prague (2020), and the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

Each artwork selected for *Seeing Zen* is presented on a full page in full color, with accompanying Japanese text from the artwork, English translation, and a contemplative commentary. The Zenga are organized in sections, each with a brief introduction, based on shared traditional motifs and themes: Enso (Zen circles), Daruma, Patriarchs and Matriarchs, Folk Gods, Zen Practice, etc., and of course, stunning calligraphies.

Seeing Zen conveys the significance of Zenga within the context of both Japanese and world culture. In addition to presenting highlights of the spectacular *Kaeru-An* collection, the book is a tour-de-force of idiosyncratic art and scholarship, and even—since Zenga are meant to instruct and enlighten—a meditation manual.

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