



Zen Sand: The Book of Capping Phrases for Koan Practice (Nanzan Library of Asian Religion and Culture)

Victor Sogen Hori

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Zen Sand is a classic collection of verses aimed at aiding practitioners of kôan meditation to negotiate the difficult relationship between insight and language. As such it represents a major contribution to both Western Zen practice and English-language Zen scholarship.

In Japan the traditional Rinzai Zen kôan curriculum includes the use of *jakugo*, or "capping phrases." Once a monk has successfully replied to a kôan, the Zen master orders the search for a classical verse to express the monk's insight into the kôan. Special collections of these *jakugo* were compiled as handbooks to aid in that search. Until now, Zen students in the West, lacking this important resource, have been severely limited in carrying out this practice. *Zen Sand* combines and translates two standard *jakugo* handbooks and opens the way for incorporating this important tradition fully into Western Zen practice.

For the scholar, *Zen Sand* provides a detailed description of the *jakugo* practice and its place in the overall kôan curriculum, as well as a brief history of the Zen phrase book. This volume also contributes to the understanding of East Asian culture in a broader sense.

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