



Enso: Zen Circles of Enlightenment

By Audrey Yoshiko Seo

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The enso is one of the most prevalent images of Zen art, and it has become a kind of symbol of the clean and strong Japanese aesthetic. It has been subject to a rich variety of interpretations—seen as everything from a rice cake to a symbol of infinity. But regardless of how it is understood, the enso is above all an expression of the mind of the artist who brushes it. It is said that the state of the Zen practitioner can be clearly read in his or her execution of the circle.

Audrey Yoshiko Seo brings together a collection of the best examples of enso art to show the wonderful variety of the form and its variations, from the seventeenth century to the present, each with facing commentary. The commentary focuses on the meaning of the art and its historical context and provides an analysis of each artist's technique. Also included are biographies of the artists, many of whom are important Japanese Zen teachers.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Audrey Yoshiko Seo, PhD, is an independent scholar and consultant on Japanese art. Her areas of research and publication include painting and calligraphy by Japanese Zen masters from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries, and contemporary Japanese fashion. She is the author of several books, including *Zen No Sho: The Calligraphy of Fukushima Keido Roshi*.

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