



# Kensho: The Heart of Zen (Shambhala Dragon Editions)

By Thomas Cleary

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## Kensho: The Heart of Zen (Shambhala Dragon Editions) By Thomas Cleary

Kensho is the transformative glimpse of the true nature of all things. It is an experience so crucial in Zen practice that it is sometimes compared to finding an inexhaustible treasure because it reveals the potential that exists in each moment for pure awareness free from the projections of the ego. Among the traditional Zen works are a number of important texts focusing on the profound subtleties of this essential Zen awakening and the methods used in its realization. The selections here are taken from: Straightforward Explanation of the True Mind, by Korean Zen teacher Chinul (1158-1210), which provides the contextual balance needed to understand kensho by relating it to the broader teachings of the Buddhist scriptures and treatises. Several works by Japanese Zen master Hakuin (1786-1769), whose teachings emphasize the techniques used in the cultivation and application of kensho and the importance of going beyond the experience itself to apply Zen insight to the full range of human endeavors. The Book of Ease, a Chinese koan collection from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, with commentary showing the practical dimension of classical koan practice. The translator provides extensive introductory notes and detailed commentary on each of the selections to help the reader understand the inner meaning of this essential experience of Zen.

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### Editorial Review

#### From Library Journal

An authoritative and prolific translator of and commentator on East Asian religious texts, Cleary tells us that kensho means "Zen insight into the essence of one's own being." To explain this concept in depth, he translates and comments on three Zen texts and divides his book into corresponding parts, which he titles "The True Mind," "Applications," and "Zen Koans." The three Zen texts are Chinul's (Korean, 1158-1210) *Straightforward Explanation of the True Mind*, several works by Hakuin (Japanese Zen master, 1689-1769), and *The Book of Ease*, a Chinese koan collection. Cleary's approach is to state a theme, expound on it, quote several passages from one of the three works to illuminate the concept, show what this contributes to the Zen understanding of true mind, and summarize his presentation. His work is tightly reasoned, complex, and for the advanced student of Zen. Recommended for libraries already having introductory books on Zen, such as D.T. Suzuki's *An Introduction to Zen Buddhism* (Grove Atlantic, 1987).

*David Bourquin, California State Univ., San Bernardino*

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#### Language Notes

Text: English (translation)

Original Language: Chinese, Korean

#### From the Back Cover

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