



Sho: Japanese Calligraphy

C. J. - Terakoya Earnshaw

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Calligraphy, along with poetry and painting, has been for centuries a discipline that all students of culture had to master. Brush writing reflected inner character, and many great masters of calligraphy were respected Zen priests, warriors and emperors. From practical lessons on brushwork to hints about exhibiting finished work, this beautiful volume is the fledgling calligrapher's best reference source. Its meditations on the philosophy of calligraphy will also offer new insights to students of Japanese culture and character. The Chinese system of writing began to be developed more than 4,000 years ago. Since then, tens of thousands of Chinese Characters, called Kanji in Japanese, have been developed and incorporated into Japanese language. Brush and Sumi ink calligraphy using the Kanji and the other phonetic symbols, such as Kana has become an art form much appreciated in Japan. Through the cursive strokes of Kana, the freely flowing gracefulness of Japanese SHO was born. SHO is not a method of neatly writing characters, rather, it is a visual art requiring the harmony of one's body and mind. The brush becomes an extension of one's hand conveying the true feeling of one's soul. It is meant to express one's inner-most self. Circles, triangles or characters executed by distinguished Zen monks are appreciated and admired as fine art forms work in Japan, because in them can be seen the spirit and soul of monks.

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