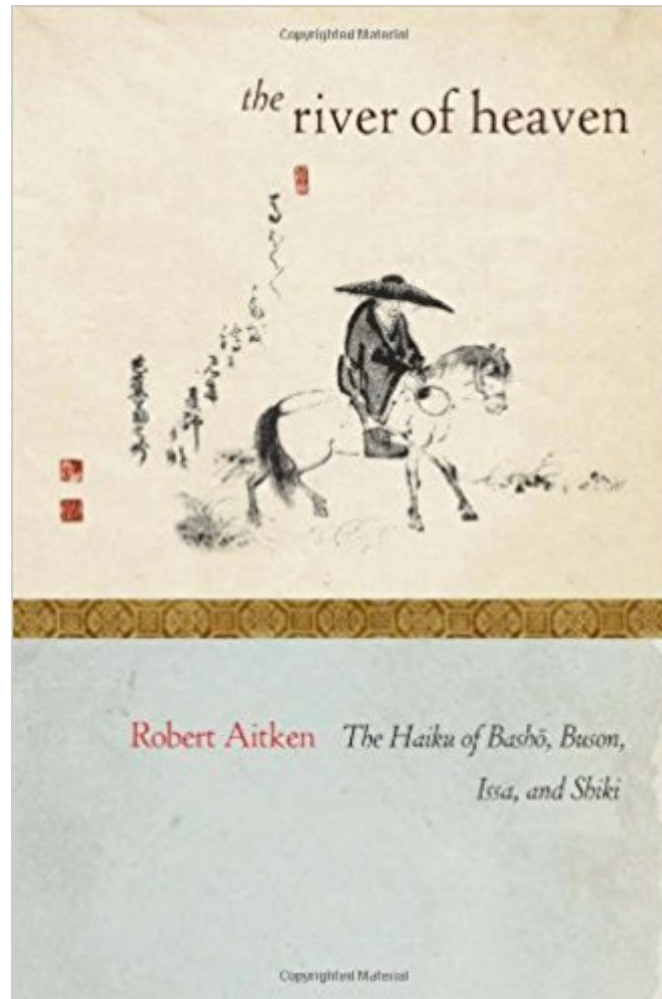


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The River Of Heaven: The Haiku Of Basho, Buson, Issa, And Shiki



Synopsis

Known to many as the study of quiet stillness and introspection, Zen Buddhism distinguishes itself through brilliant flashes of insight and its terseness of expression. In *River of Heaven* these concepts and pillars lend themselves to an exploration of Haiku, one of the most delicate and interpretive poetic forms in the world. The haiku verse form, with its rigid structure and organic description is a superb means of studying Zen modes of thought because its seventeen syllables impose a limitation that confines the poet to vital experience. In Haiku as in Buddhism, the silences are as expressive as the words. In this volume, American Senior Zen Roshi Robert Aitken gives new insight into Haiku by poetic masters Basho, Issa, Buson, and Shiki. In presenting themes from Haiku and from Zen literature, Aitken illuminates the relationship between the two. Readers are certain to find this an invaluable and enjoyable experience for the remarkable revelation it offers.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I wish I could meet Robert Aitken, but he's at "rest in the vast unknown". He did leave imprints on this world; I've been using the web to learn more of his life and teaching. He passed before finishing the final editing, which was done by those who cared for him. The Japanese originals of the haiku are given only in romanization and are not an important part of the book. The sense I have of the man is that he would smile at page 12, where "kaze no oto" - the sound of the wind ? - is given for Bashou's "mizu no oto" - the sound of water.

A Zen Buddhist friend speaking of the the few enlightened. I asked him about the Haiku masters (Basho, Issa, Buson) he replied "Oh they were all enlightened." Obviously. But they need a great translator. Robert Aitken is. Haiku is a way to find the emptiness, eternity of the moment.

I love poetry, especially Haiku. I have tried, in the past, to read some books with explanations attached to the poems, and was sorely disappointed. Robert Aitken gave each poem an explanation, and instead of detracting for the poem, expanded it. For those who just want the haiku, and I know there are some out there, the explanation is below the poem, and easily skipped. Four master poets, one master translator = A terrific book!

For those who love haiku this book is a must to read ... Each poem is explained in detail with a lot of information that one could find to be very interesting.

Fascinating comments on haiku by the greatest haiku poets of Japan, by an American Zen master.

When I buy a haiku book, I want just haiku--not any writing talking about the haiku or discussion or analysis of it. What Robert Aitken does in this book is talk a lot about the few haiku in the book. For this reason, I would not recommend this book. However, if you want to read about someone's thoughts about haiku, you may want to get it.

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