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## Musō Soseki

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# HOLY PEOPLE OF THE WORLD

## *A Cross-Cultural Encyclopedia*

VOLUME 2: ENTRIES H TO P

*Phyllis G. Jestice, Editor*

*Foreword by Lionel Rothkrug*

A B C  C L I O

Santa Barbara, California

Denver, Colorado

Oxford, England

Offerings of gold, feathers, animal skins, and imported shells accompanied the body. Food offerings demonstrate a belief that the body needed sustenance in the afterlife and may have described the deceased as a fertile producer. Imported and hard-won prestige items, such as camelid fiber, shells, a pouch with body paint, and human skulls, demonstrate the power and hierarchy of the deceased. Gravesites were located in the coastal dunes, which are the world's driest coastal desert. This was the main reason that Andean textiles were so well preserved, with some dating back to 3000 B.C.E. Many fabrics were also created for ritual sacrifice and were burned as offerings to the sun, considered the highest of the celestial powers.

The Incas believed in an afterlife, and following the death of an emperor his mummified body was treated as though he were still alive. Servants tended to him in his palace, and he was regularly consulted for advice. On special occasions, the mummies were carried in procession on gilded litters. The mummies of the deceased incas (emperors) were kept in Inca temples and exposed and worshipped on special occasions and religious ceremonies. Mummy bundles containing bodies of probable *amautas* and *quipucamayos* (wise men) have been found with *quipos*, knotted strings that record information, and they are being decoded at this moment.

With the arrival of the Spaniards, the Inca mummy bundles were completely destroyed in the Spanish search for gold. However, most of the pre-Inca mummy bundles, such as those from Paracas, remained untouched until the time of World War I and later excavation in the 1920s. In the past decade, pre-Inca mummy bundles containing children's bodies have been found in the central highlands of Peru. The bodies and artifacts in these bundles have been exceptionally preserved owing to the cold weather in the highlands.

—*Rocío Quispe-Agnoli*

**See also:** Amerindian Religions and Holy People; Ancestors; Incas; Rulers as Holy People

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## Mungo

See **Kentigern**

## Murabit

See **Marabout**

## Musō Sōseki

(1275–1351 C.E.)

*Zen Buddhist scholar*

Musō Sōseki, Zen Buddhist monk, scholar, teacher, poet, and adviser to shoguns and emperors, is revered today as the founder and most representative figure of that quintessential Japanese spiritual creation—the Zen garden.

Born in Ise province in 1275, Musō (whose name means “Dream Window”) began studying Buddhism at the age of six. After some years in Kamakura, the shogun’s capital, Musō returned to Kyoto in 1325 to become abbot of Nanzenji, the powerful head temple of the Rinzai Zen sect. In 1333, the general Ashikaga Takauji (1305–1358) forced the emperor Go-Daigo out of Kyoto, establishing a rival “northern court” with himself as de facto leader. Musō became Takauji’s chief adviser on matters spiritual and secular, and through their dual influence Rinzai Zen emerged as the dominant Buddhist sect of the age. Musō himself was responsible for the establishment of thirteen temples and monasteries and is said to have trained more than 13,000 monks and 52 Zen teachers. In order to pay for these ambitious projects, Musō helped to reestablish the lapsed trade link between Japan and China.

For all of his political and institutional accomplishments, Musō is revered today mainly for his contributions to two more subtle and rarefied fields of human activity: poetry and garden design. His poetry, only a small portion of which has been translated into English, is remarkable for its sharp contrasts and pithy elegance (“One grain of dust in the eye will render the three worlds too small to see”). Musō designed gardens at a number of prominent temples in the Kyoto area, including Saihoji (now known as Kokedera) and Tenryuji. His achievement at Saihoji was such a success that the garden became the model for later Zen temples such as Kinkakuji and Ginkakuji. Musō’s gardens were intended not merely to please the eye but as a vehicle toward, as well as a reflection of, Zen enlightenment (*satori*). His goal, as with the later Zen-influenced arts of haiku, Noh drama, and Zen painting, was to evoke a sense of spontaneous naturalness beyond all artifice and to show that there is no distinction between the sacred and the profane worlds.

—*James Mark Shields*

**See also:** Aesthetics and Holy People; Buddhism and Holy People; Politics and Holy People

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