



The Gospel of Thomas (Shambhala Calligraphy)

Jean-Yves Leloup

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Discovered in 1945 in Upper Egypt, the *Gospel of Thomas* is a collection of 114 sayings or *logia* attributed to Jesus. It differs from the canonical Gospels in that it proclaims nothing and predicts nothing, but instead presents words of Jesus, as purportedly recorded by his disciple Thomas, in brief, sometimes enigmatic, fragments reminiscent of Zen koans. Inspired by his years of intimate study of the text, Jean Yves Leloup has rendered selections from the *Gospel of Thomas* based on the Coptic and Greek alphabets, alternating classical compositions with others influenced by the expressive brushstrokes of Japanese calligraphy. Calligraphy (from the Greek for "beautiful writing") is an art where word and image meet, where the artist strives to give visual expression to the meaning of words in a way that transcends the text while remaining completely faithful to it. It is a discipline that has been invested with spiritual significance wherever it has arisen—and it has arisen throughout the world in every age, in virtually every language, culture, and religion. The Shambhala Calligraphy series is a collection of books devoted to contemporary expressions of this "art of the word," featuring contemporary calligraphers' striking new interpretations of texts that have been traditional subjects for calligraphic interpretation. Whether in Arabic, Greek, Hebrew, Latin, or Chinese pictographs, the characters, words, and sentences are brought to life anew here in a choreography of mind, hand, and heart by which letter and spirit fuse in a single stroke.

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