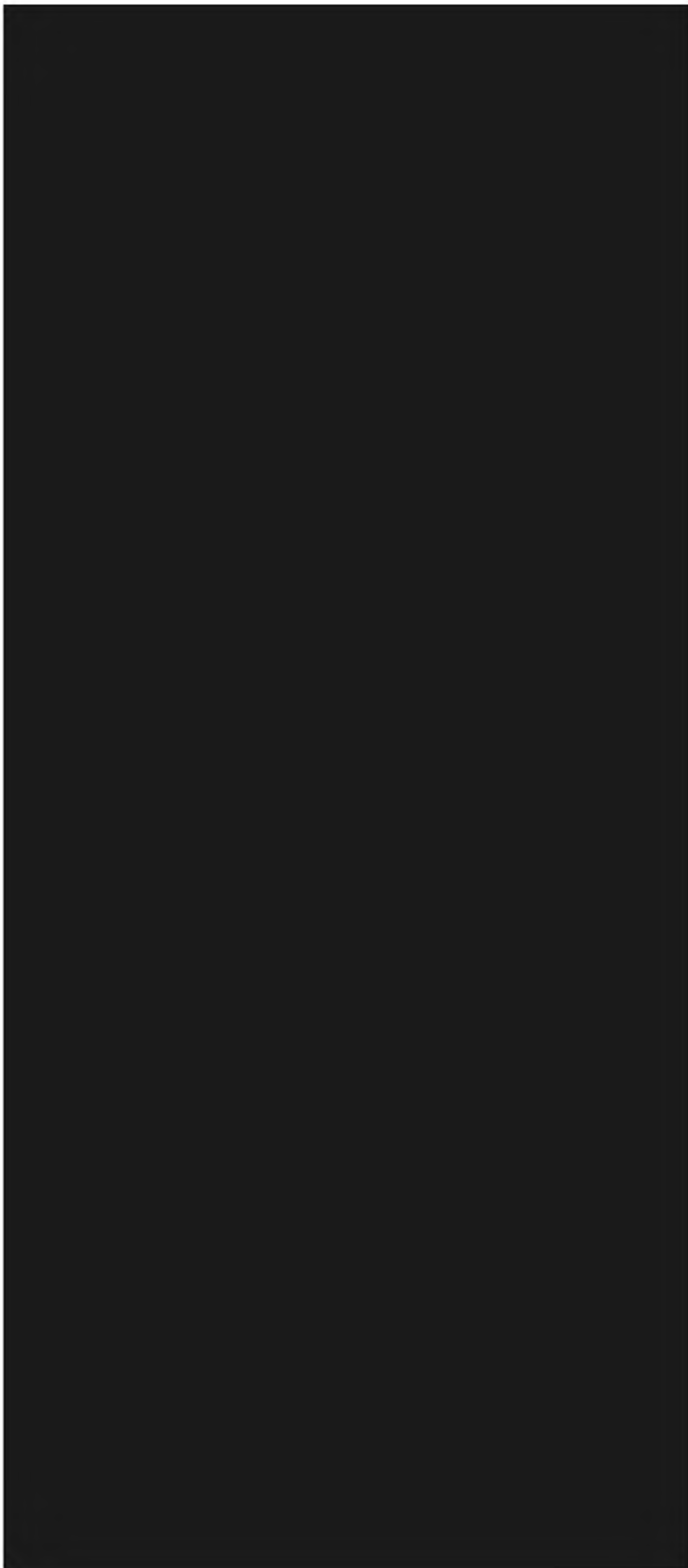


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## SELF-PORTRAIT OF HAKUIN ZENJI

This self-portrait, done in Hakuin's eightieth year, is one of a number of likenesses he painted of himself, most of which date from the latter part of his life. Other Zen masters have made occasional attempts at self-depiction, but none of them has approached Hakuin in either the number of works or the excellence and originality of execution. This one (a close counterpart of which is included in Ruth Sasaki's *Zen Dust*) seems to be drawn closer to life than most, and confirms with particular effect the formidable, challenging personality we associate with Hakuin and his brand of teaching. He is shown wearing his *kesa*, his *hossu* or fly whisk in his right hand, his left clenched fistlike around the ends of the horsehair strands. His face wears a tight smile (or is it a frown?), with a devil-take-care look riveted on the viewer from gimlet eyes.

The words of the colophon above the portrait appear in a number of Hakuin's painting inscriptions as well as in examples of his calligraphy. It reads:

The great teacher Bodhidharma said: 'If a man wishes to assure a long life and master the Buddha Way, he must make it so that his Vital Breath always fills the area of Primal Energy below the navel. To gather the breath there, it is essential that the mind be concentrated. If the mind is concentrated, the Vital Breath will gather. If the Vital Breath gathers, the Cinnabar Elixir will form. If the Cinnabar Elixir forms, the body will be firm and strong. If the body is firm and strong, spiritual power will be totally integrated. If spiritual power is totally integrated, longevity is yours.'

Written at the request of the Zen nun Chigan,  
Autumn, the 9th year of Hōreki (1759)

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