

# Mainichi Shodo Exhibition

## The Mainichi Shodo Exhibition

The Mainichi Shodo (calligraphy) Exhibition is the largest exhibition of its kind in Japan, covering all seven calligraphic categories. It is sponsored by the Mainichi Newspapers and the Mainichi Shodo Association. The first exhibition was held in 1948, when conditions in Japan were still unsettled following the end of World War II, and there were only 686 entries that year. Now, after 65 years, the exhibition attracts 30,000 entries a year and more than 3,900 association members and judges are involved.

The exhibition opens every year at the beginning of July in Tokyo with 15,000 works on display. It then travels to nine major cities: Kyoto, Hiroshima, Matsuyama, Toyama, Nagoya, Sapporo, Sendai, Yamagata and Fukuoka. More than 100,000 people are estimated to see the show every year.

## The Mainichi Newspapers and The Mainichi Shodo Association

The Mainichi Newspapers, which supports the Mainichi Shodo Association, is Japan's oldest newspaper company, having published the first daily newspaper in Japan in 1872. It now has a circulation of 4 million and, in addition to being a leader of public opinion, continues to make significant contributions to the cultural life of the nation.

The Mainichi Shodo Association was set up in 1981 to handle the running of the calligraphy exhibition and operates with the cooperation of the Mainichi Newspapers and calligraphy-related groups and individuals, contributing enormously to the world of calligraphy in Japan.

mai



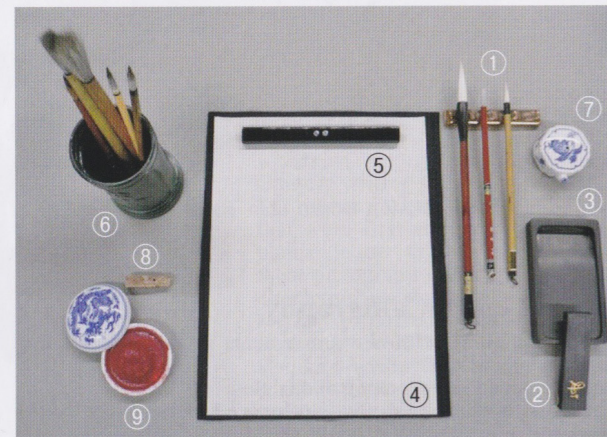
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## The implements of calligraphy

The brush, ink, inkstone and paper traditionally referred to as the "Four treasures of writing," but there are in fact many more items that calligraphers use for the enjoyment of their art.

- ① **fude**...Brushes. Calligraphy brushes are made by bundling together animal hairs. Mainly those of the sheep, the rabbit, or the weasel. A calligrapher chooses the type of brush he or she will use according to the calligraphy to be drawn.
- ② **sumi**...Ink. The ink that is used for Japanese calligraphy is made by taking the soot that forms when vegetable-derived oil or pine wood is burned and adding animal glue to harden it. It is most commonly black, but you can also obtain ink in which red or blue has been mixed, as well as pure gold, silver or cinnabar inks.
- ③ **suzuri**...Ink stone. Water is poured onto the inkstone and the ink stick is rubbed with water to make ink of the desired consistency.
- ④ **kami**...Paper. Hand-made papers developed in China or Japan are used, including decorative papers with printed, painted or transparent designs.
- ⑤ **bunchin**...Heavy objects used to hold the paper down
- ⑥ **hitto**...Stand for the brushes
- ⑦ **suitekki**...Water pouter for making ink
- ⑧ **inzai**...Stones for carved seals
- ⑨ **indei**...Seal ink, made by adding oil and ground mugwort to cinnabar ink



## Exhibitions overseas

The Mainichi Shodo Association held its first overseas exhibition of calligraphy as an art form in 1970 in Paris. Since then it has held similar exhibitions in major cities all over the world, including New York, Milano, São Paulo, Frankfurt, Moscow, Beijing and Shanghai.

## Exhibitions overseas

1970	FRANCE	Paris	Marseilles
1971	USA	New York	Philadelphia
1972	BRAZIL	Rio de Janeiro	
	ITALY	Milano	
	SPAIN	Barcelona	Madrid
		Sevilla	Valencia
1975	BRAZIL	São Paulo	Belo Horizonte

1976	USA	Seattle	
1978	FRANCE	Paris	
1982	SINGAPORE	Singapore	
1988	CHINA	Beijing	Shanghai
	GERMANY	Munich	Offenbach
	AUSTRIA	Wien	
1989	RUSSIA	Moscow	
	BELGIUM	Gent	
1990	GERMANY	Frankfurt	
	DENMARK	Copenhagen	
	CHINA	Beijing	
	SINGAPORE	Singapore	
1991	RUSSIA	Sankt-Peterburg (Leningrad)	
	GERMANY	Munich	Berlin
	U.K.	Dublin	Belfast
1993	U.S.A	Washington D.C.	Little Rock
	CHINA	Beijing	
1997	MALAYSIA	Kuala Lumpur	

1998	CHINA	Beijing
	FRANCE	Paris
	SWEDEN	Stockholm
2000	GERMANY	Berlin
2002	CHINA	Beijing
2003	KOREA	Seoul
	VIETNAM	Hanoi
2004	CHINA	Beijing
2005	UKRAINE	Kyiv
2006	SINGAPORE	Singapore
	CHINA	Lianyungang
2007	CHINA	Beijing
2008	CHINA	Beijing
	CHINESE TAIPEI	Taipei
	BRAZIL	São Paulo
2012	FRANCE	Paris
	MALAYSIA	Kuala Lumpur
2013	FRANCE	Paris
2015	FRANCE	Paris



sho



### The traditional art of calligraphy

Chinese characters were first introduced to Japan from China about 2000 years ago, around the time that Jesus Christ was born. From Chinese characters Japanese eventually formulated their own two phonetic scripts, known collectively as *kana*, which are still used in combination with Chinese characters to write modern Japanese.

Japanese was originally written using a brush and ink, and since the earliest objects of writing were poetry and Buddhist scriptures, the elegance of the brushwork came to be of utmost concern. Men and women who were especially talented at writing came to be known as *shoka*, or writers of *sho* (calligraphy), and before long calligraphy developed into an art form in its own right.

### Seven categories of calligraphic works

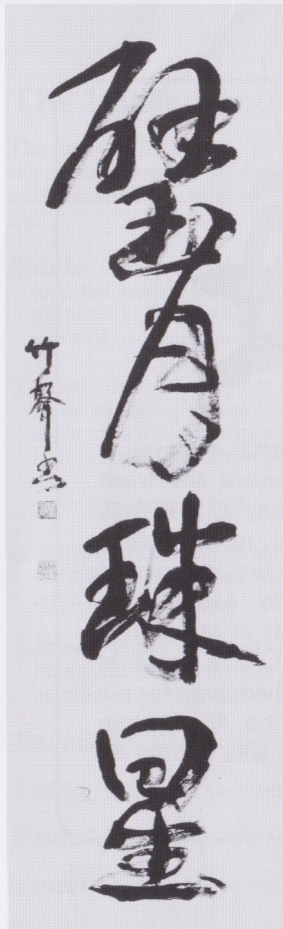
The modernization that followed Japan's defeat in war 70 years ago, ushered in a new era for calligraphy. New forms of writing were sought to replace outdated ones, and modern genres were pioneered in quick succession. We can count seven main calligraphy genres in Japan now.

ISHITOBI Hakkō (*Kanji*)

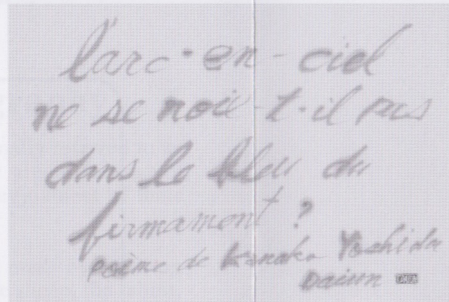


Kanji  
漢字

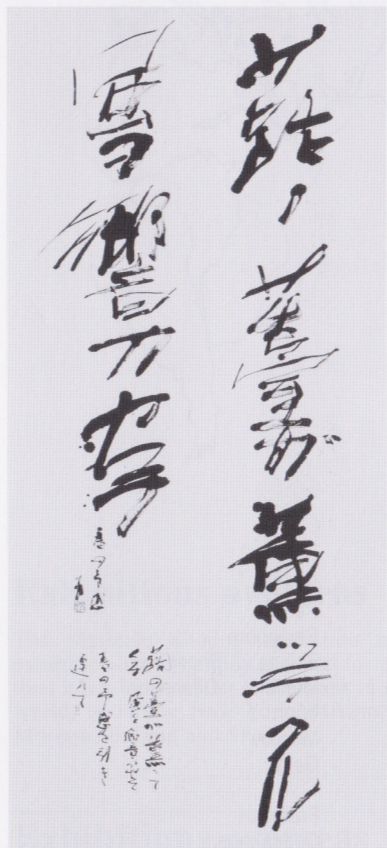
Chinese poetry written in Chinese characters. It retains the influence of ancient Chinese writing styles. The genre includes the pictograms that were first engraved on animal bones, letters that developed from these pictograms called *tensho* ("seal characters"), a revised version called *reisho* ("squared characters"), a further evolved style called *kaisho* ("square writing") and *gyosyo* and *sosho*, which are semi-cursive and cursive scripts using Chinese characters.



HAYASHI Chikusei (*Kanji*)



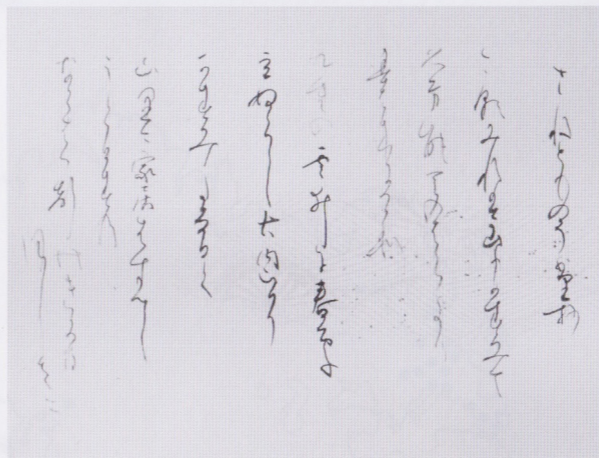
TSUJIMOTO Daiun (*Kindai Sibunsho*)



FUNAMOTO Hōun (*Kindai Sibunsho*)

Kindai Shibunsho  
近代詩文書  
**Modern Poetic Calligraphy**

A calligraphic form employing a mixture of *kanji* and *kana* to write modern poetry or words and phrases of wisdom, plus *haiku* poetry and poetry translated from foreign languages.



MIYAZAKI Shikō (*Kana*)

Kana  
かな

Calligraphy using Japanese *kana*, employed especially for the elegant transcription of the 31-syllable *waka* poem as well as *haiku* and prose. *Kana* was originally used by women, and is still especially popular among women today.



NAKAGAWA Kyōji (*Daijisho*)

Daijisho  
大字書  
**Large Character Calligraphy**

The writing of one or two characters alone, in which the meaning of the character or characters is transmitted as a tableau with a strong pictorial element.



NAKAHARA Bōshū (*Zen eisho*)

Zen eisho  
前衛書

**Avant-Garde Calligraphy**

Developed along with new movements in Japanese art that began 65 years ago. It goes beyond mere writing and is closer to art. The brushwork has, in fact, influenced abstract art in the West.

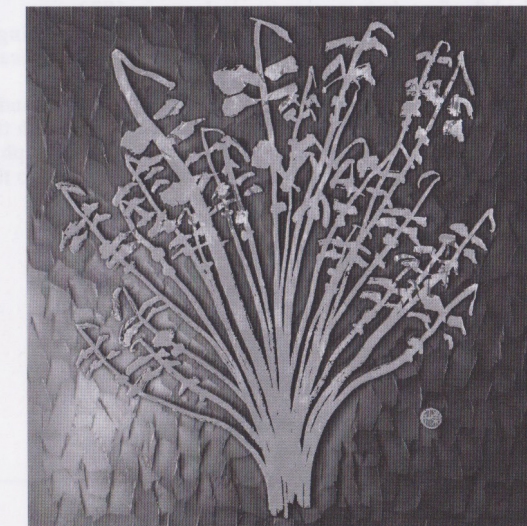


SEKI Masato (*Tenkoku*)

Tenkoku  
篆刻

**Seal Engraving**

Seals were originally used in China to stamp documents with the name or post of an official, but in 14th-19th centuries seal making came to be developed into an art in its own right. Old-style Chinese characters are carved on the flat end of a block of stone, which may have a surface of anything from one to seven square centimeters, and these are used to stamp seals with cinnabar seal ink (*shuniku*).



USUDA Tōsen (*Kokuji*)

Kokuji  
刻字

**Wood Carving**

Letters carved in wood, similar to sculptural relief, which developed from earlier practices of carving calligraphy on wooden boards. The artist first brushes the characters on a board (there are no restrictions on size), and carves them out.