

Inoue Yūichi

Erik Thomsen Gallery





Inoue Yūichi

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In association with Kashima Arts Co., Ltd., Tokyo

Foreword and Acknowledgements

It is with great enthusiasm and pride that I seize this opportunity to put 30 works by Inoue Yūichi, one of the great artists of postwar Japan, before an American public. Yūichi's early experiments were shown in New York six decades ago in the summer of 1954, when the Museum of Modern Art mounted the exhibition *Japanese Calligraphy*. This was one of two special shows (the other featured Japanese pottery) held around the opening of Yoshimura Junzō's Japanese House, an event that ushered in modernist New York's prolonged love affair with all things Japanese. 40 years later Yūichi's searing masterpiece *Ah, Yokokawa National School* (1978), a work inspired by the horrors of wartime bombing, provoked comparison with Picasso's *Guernica* when it was included in the exhibition *Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky*, curated by Alexandra Munroe and held at the Guggenheim Museum SoHo. Another visionary curator, Hasegawa Yūko of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, has recently brought renewed attention to Inoue Yūichi's achievement by including him in the 2013 Sharjah Biennial.

Two decades on from *Scream Against the Sky*, our show offers visitors an opportunity to take a broad view of the master's legacy. We begin with elemental, sometimes hardly legible works dating from the late 1950s and early 1960s, when Yūichi was still resolving his struggle to come to terms with the conflict between pure abstraction and the written word, and was starting to earn widespread recognition in Europe and South America as well as his native Japan. The bulk of the show is taken up with selections from his great series of single-character visual declarations, executed in the later 1960s and 1970s, along with quotations from early classics of Japanese and Chinese literature. We also include touchingly devout, yet still intensely powerful, works from Yūichi's final years, when he retired from more than four decades' diligent labor as an elementary schoolteacher only to find his health failing him.

29 of the featured works are included in the monumental catalogue raisonné compiled by his faithful friend and tireless advocate Unagami Masaomi, published from 1996 to 2000. The one exception is a fascinating pair of hanging scrolls executed on January 1, 1967 and minutely documented by Unagami in a lengthy box inscription. These two paintings—one a portrait of the founder of Zen Buddhism inspired by the great 18th-century master Hakuin, the other a portrait of the artist with an ironic, self-depreciatory text—remind us that while Yūichi was very much a product of the dislocated, disillusioned, revolutionary early-postwar art world, he also remained connected to a more changeless, traditional Japan represented by his father Eiji, a devout Buddhist. Whenever and wherever they are displayed, in both solo and group shows, Yūichi's works never fail to dominate the exhibition space and capture the viewer's total attention.

It has been a great pleasure to work with Kashima Arts Co., Ltd., Tokyo and its president Kashima Shigeyoshi, our Japanese associate in this exciting new venture. I am grateful to Joe Earle for preparing the text of this publication and for his thoughtful essay on Yūichi's life and work. Once again, I pay tribute to our Frankfurt designer Valentin Beinroth without whom this and our earlier publications would not have been possible. As ever, I also wish to thank my wife, Cornelia, for her strong partnership, encouragement, and support.

Erik Thomsen
New York, April 2014

Sho: Utter Foolishness, Wonderful Poverty

Shouting out aloud as he pressed his brush into the paper early each morning, forming his rugged *kanji* (Chinese ideograms) with a few dynamic strokes, tirelessly experimenting, ruthlessly destroying most of the day's work, then setting off patiently to teach at elementary school, Inoue Yūichi embodies the self-discipline and experimentation of Japan's austere early postwar decades. Yūichi (as he is generally known, using his given name rather than his family name of Inoue) originally chose calligraphy as his artistic medium for reasons that were more pragmatic than theoretical: lacking the means to attend art college, he took evening painting classes from the age of 19 but soon turned to calligraphy, which required less formal instruction and less expensive materials. Six years later, in 1941, he started to train under Ueda Sōkyū, a pioneer of 20th-century *sho*.

Sho, the subject of this publication, requires a little explanation. Although we conventionally use the word "calligraphy" to denote the art of writing in China and other countries where the Chinese ideograms (in Japanese, *kanji*) are used, it seems hardly appropriate to the oeuvre of Yūichi and many of his contemporaries. Formed from two Greek words for "beautiful" and "writing," "calligraphy" suggests, even demands, a certain elegance, evenness, and softness. The Japanese term *sho* 書, by contrast, is simpler and blunter. Its original Chinese meaning was "document" or "book" and it can have this sense in Japanese as well, but it is also used for the everyday Japanese verb *kaku* 書く, "write," without any description or prescription as to the beauty or otherwise of the writing.

Ueda Sōkyū's teacher, Hidai Tenrai, had advocated copying from classical Chinese models combined with the study of European aesthetics, but Ueda took the practice of *sho* in a more avant-garde direction and instilled in Yūichi a practice that, after 1945, increasingly involved compositional techniques learned from Western abstract painting.

In the immediate post-war years, Ueda found himself in a difficult position. Like all of his more thoughtful contemporaries he was profoundly mistrustful of the structures, ideologies, and social norms that had led to the disaster of the Pacific War. At the same time, however, he sometimes had no choice but to cooperate with organizations such as the official national exhibition, which restarted in 1946 under the new name of Nitten and in 1948 admitted *sho* for the first time. Ueda agreed to participate and the Nitten was therefore one of the three exhibitions where Yūichi first showed his work in 1950, under his teacher's guidance, but the association was short-lived. The piece Ueda submitted in the following year was rejected by the hidebound exhibition committee and in 1952 Yūichi, by now 36 years old, was ready, along with four other radical practitioners of *sho*, to break away and form his own group, Bokujinkai (Association of Men of Ink).

As the only survivor of more than 1,000 people gathered helplessly for shelter in his school yard during the American firebombing of Tokyo in March 1945, Yūichi was perhaps even more deeply affected than some other artists by the horrors of the war, even more determined to find meaning through art, to reject almost everything that had gone before in *sho*, and to seek out new means of expression. He became an autonomous actor in the Tokyo art world at the very moment when it was at last possible to discover exciting possibilities being opened up by artists outside Japan. Among his earliest sources of information was "News from France and America," an essay by Hasegawa Saburō, a Japanese-born artist who had spent time overseas before the war. The essay was published in 1951 in the first issue of *Bokubi* (Beauty of Ink), a magazine edited by Morita Shiryū, another founding member of the Bokujinkai, and it was from the pages of *Bokubi*, as well as from emissaries like Japanese-American sculptor Isamu Noguchi,

that Yūichi would learn of action painting, abstract expressionism, and the work of such artists as Franz Kline, Mark Tobey, and Jackson Pollock.

The unity of body and brush, action and painting evident in the canvases of these American artists struck a chord with Yūichi and his contemporaries at the cutting edge of *sho*, but another source of revolutionary inspiration was the Gutai Association, co-founded in 1954 by Yoshihara Jirō, whose views on *sho* were characteristically radical. Yoshihara believed that *sho* should liberate itself from all traces of *mojisei* (lexicality, meaningfulness) and Yūichi's private journal during the early Bokujinkai years sometimes expresses a similarly extreme position, an abandonment of all the hallowed conventions of *sho* in favor of a no-holds-barred approach to the use of the brush, a total break with the past, and a determination to sweep away all artificial conventions and restraints. In pursuit of this goal, he abandoned traditional materials and worked for a time with hemp-palm brushes, enamel household paint, and Kent paper (made from chemical pulp providing a hard, brilliant-white, non-absorbent surface), a combination that was deliberately as different as possible from pine-soot ink, flexible animal-hair brush, and soft, absorbent *washi* (Japanese paper).

After two or more years of agonized self-questioning and even a brief experiment with abstract oil painting, Yūichi finally reconciled himself to *mojisei* in time to prepare a masterpiece of *sho* for the Fourth São Paulo Biennale, held in 1957. A two-character work reading *Gutetsu* (Utter Stupidity) and measuring more than five feet square, it caught the attention of British anarchist critic Herbert Read, who judged it worthy of comparison with paintings by artists of the stature of Kline, Tobey, Pollock, and Antoni Tàpies. As Yūichi would later explain, it was only through the experience of discarding *kanji* that he finally understood how

marvelous they really were, how they became a medium through which, in the words Unagami Masaomi, "Yūichi, now free from the tradition of 'calligraphy,' devoted himself to action painting while adhering to the *kanji* ... so that he was to some extent restricted. Regulated in this way, his action would become freer and the gesture more pronounced." (Unagami, Vol. 1, p. 15)

A short note of Yūichi's, jotted down in 1962 when he had grown fully comfortable with his return to *kanji*, clarifies his new position:

I wrote "母" [*haha*, "mother"]. Why did I write "母" in Chinese characters instead of はは in *hiragana* [the Japanese phonetic syllabary] or "Mother" in English? Because "母" in the Chinese character is not only the mark indicating the meaning of mother but also I could see a thousand years of wrinkles in this character, just like my old mother's face ... Here I see the fatal nobleness of Chinese characters. In a word, in my case at least, at this moment *sho* seems to be possessed by the Chinese character. I could say I worship the character. (Unagami, Vol. 1, p. 637).

Interestingly enough, this quotation dates from a period when Yūichi's *sho* begins to become more legible. The giant *Gutetsu* shown at São Paulo would have been unintelligible even to educated Japanese viewers, as would the three earliest works in the present publication dating from 1959 to 1963 (nos. 1, 2, 3). Yūichi's private musings in the early 1960s, as well as his *sho*, suggest that he was bidding farewell to the heady international modernism of the mid-1950s and taking his art in a direction that was more culturally specific, without in any way abandoning his uncompromisingly severe artistic quest. His use of characters during his mature years makes a fascinating contrast

with contemporary Chinese artist Xu Bing, whose meticulously crafted fonts appear authentic but in fact have no meaning at all. Far from ignoring meaning, Yūichi so often brilliantly emphasizes the literal sense of his chosen *kanji*: the unorthodox proportions of *Hin* ("Poverty," no. 12) make the character look poor, *Ran* ("Lazy," no. 13) slides off to the right-hand side in a slovenly manner, while *Yama* ("Mountain," no. 15) is an impressively craggy, cloud-topped peak.

Yūichi's new-found satisfaction with *sho* as a distinctive artistic medium is vividly expressed in another note written in 1969, after he had viewed the landmark exhibition *Contemporary Art: Dialogue Between the East and the West*: "Franz Kline's work is there too, but I'm the only calligraphy artist." Even though numerous critics have commented on the apparent similarity between Kline's paintings and Chinese or Japanese *sho*, the American artist applied both black and white paint, quite unlike *sho*, which consists of black ink on a white paper background, and had no knowledge of *kanji* and therefore no ability or need to apply his brushstrokes in a prescribed order. Further, and crucially, Kline was normally in nearly complete control of the finished work of art, while Yūichi very often left some things to chance, his use of the brush producing splatterings of ink that came to rest somewhat at random. Yūichi's self-identification as "the only calligraphy artist" attests to his pride in having elevated *sho* to a medium that could be hung in a Tokyo museum shoulder to shoulder with foreign masterworks of high modernism.

Yūichi's first *ichijisho* or single-character *sho* was *Hin* ("Poverty"), written in 1953 on an old *fusuma* (sliding wall panel) "as if flinging the brush onto the *fusuma*. It reflected my feelings at the time" (Unagami, Vol. 2, p. 612); he would repeat it on many other occasions in many different ways (see no. 12, a version dating from 1969). Other *kanji*,

chosen later in his career, conveyed quite specific emotions. The character 乃 (*no*), for example, seen frequently in his works of the early 1970s, is normally a grammatical particle in Japanese, but also happened to form part of the name of a younger woman with whom Yūichi was obsessed in his early fifties. *Ippiki-ōkami*, ("Lone Wolf," see no. 16), refers to conflicts within the team of five artists who had founded the Bokujinkai, and especially to Yūichi's disagreements with Morita Shiryū. By the 1970s Morita, a senior artist whose career had started before the war, had come to feel that the group was not doing enough to attract new members and had neglected the practice of copying from respected models, two failings in Morita's eyes which the contrarian Yūichi regarded as strengths. *Hana* ("Flower," see no. 14), on the other hand, covered a far broader range of feelings and could "sometimes look like ten-yen coin and at other times a 10,000-yen banknote." (Unagami, Vol. 2, p. 16).

Late in his career Yūichi wrote:

When I start getting absorbed in writing a single character, I can never forget about this character all day long, though I usually write only in the morning. While pondering how to improve the writing of it I feel as if I have found a solution and thus enthusiastically face a sheet of paper the next morning ... there are rare times when something unexpected suddenly emerges in the middle of such struggles ... when I come to a standstill after trying every approach and idea, the bottom comes off ... to open a new world. (Unagami, Vol. 2, pp. 611-612)

This revealing passage is powerfully reminiscent of earlier accounts, in the writings of Zen masters, of the breakthrough moment that precedes sudden enlightenment, and Yūichi's choice of *kanji* for his

single-character works often shows an unmistakable preference for words commonly encountered in classical Zen art and literature. In the present publication, a pair of scrolls (no. 11) consisting of a portrait of Daruma (Bodhidharma, the founder of Zen) and a self-portrait, refer directly to the work of eighteenth-century Zen master Hakuin Ekaku, but a more general Zen theme runs through much of his later career. *En* ("Cycle," nos. 19, 20), for example, can connote the cycle of death and rebirth; the concept of "completeness," the identity of self and the universe; the clear, enlightening brilliance of the moon; and of course the *ensō*, the circle, hand-drawn with a single stroke of the brush, so beloved of Zen painters and practitioners of *sho*.

Kan ("Barrier," no. 9) reminds us of *Mumonkan* ("Gateless Barrier"), the title of a canonical collection of 48 Zen koan. *Zan* ("A Moment," no. 18) is the first character of *Zanji arazareba shinin ni onaji*, a celebrated injunction to mindfulness: "Lose your concentration for a moment and you are as good as dead." *Ju* ("Tree," no. 21) evokes *saraju*, the *sala* tree under which Queen Maya gave birth to the Enlightened One. *Kanzan* (nos. 10, 22, 23), another favorite of Yūichi's, is the name of a semi-legendary monk who has featured in Japanese art since medieval times and later entered the pantheon of popular gods and demigods. At the end of his career, when he was already gravely ill, Yūichi's religiosity movingly shifts toward more popular, salvationist forms of Buddhism and in 1980 he directly invokes the Bodhisattvas of Mercy and of Hell (nos. 27, 28), mostly using *kana*, the simpler Japanese phonetic script, in place of *kanji*.

Despite all these unmistakably traditional references, which extend also to longer excerpts from classic Japanese and Chinese poetry (nos. 5, 8, 24, 29), it would be quite wrong to characterize Yūichi as a "Zen artist." His achievement above all rests in his success in straddling West and East, in

combining two visual languages, *sho* and abstract expressionism, to convey deeply felt inner conflict and anguish. The strokes of his *kanji*, sometimes so thick that they are more mass than line, explode onto the paper with a primal, visceral energy that cries out for our total attention. Shunning the delicacy and grace conjured up by the word "calligraphy," Inoue Yūichi's utterly eccentric, wonderfully sparse *sho* creates a new world where clarity of meaning and intensity of emotion are fused into an integral whole.

Joe Earle
London, April 2014



1

Kotsu 骨
(Bone)

1959

Panel; ink on Japanese paper
72 ¾ × 70 ¼ (185 × 178.5 cm)

Published: Unagami, *Catalogue Raisonné*, Vol. 1, pp. 142, 680 (no. 59031)



2

Kō 好
(Fondness)

1962

Panel; frozen ink on Japanese paper

47 ½ × 70 ¾ in. (120.5 × 180 cm)

Published: Unagami, *Catalogue Raisonné*, Vol. 1, pp. 259, 686 (no. 62022)

The term "frozen ink" refers to ink dissolved in water with gelatin; the brush is dipped in this mixture and left to freeze overnight.



3

Kei 惠
(Favor)

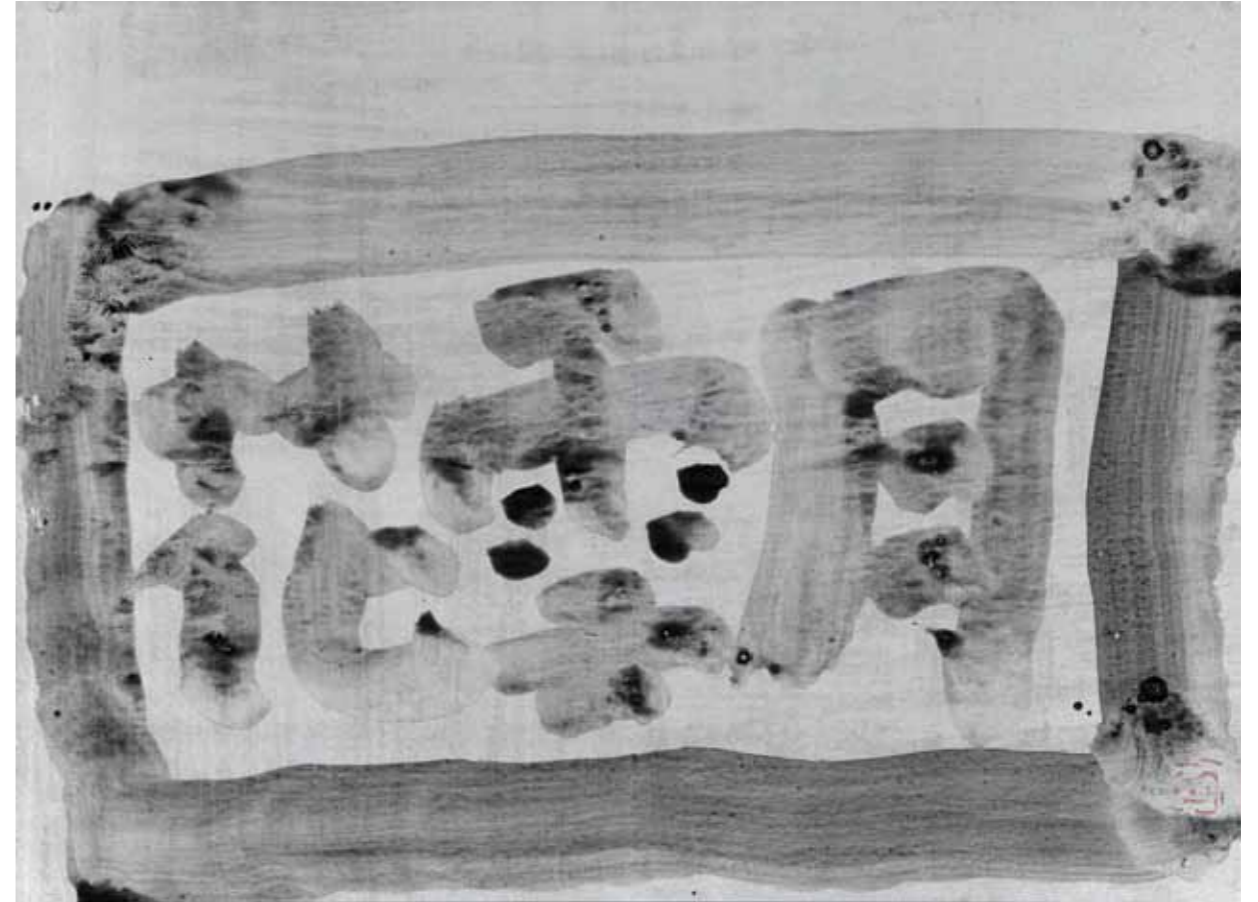
1963

Panel; frozen ink on Japanese paper

47 × 61 ¾ in. (119.5 × 157 cm)

Published: Unagami, *Catalogue Raisonné*, Vol. 1, pp. 293, 688 (no. 63030)

The term "frozen ink" refers to ink dissolved in water with gelatin; the brush is dipped in this mixture and left to freeze overnight.



4

Tsuki yuki hana 月雪花
(Moon, Snow, and Flowers)

1965

Framed panel; ink on paper painted with aluminum powder

Overall: 23 ¼ × 28 ¾ in. (59 × 73 cm)

Image: 15 ¼ × 21 ¼ in. (40 × 54 cm)

Published: Unagami, *Catalogue Raisonné*, Vol. 1, pp. 365, 694 (no. 65064)

The moon, snow, and flowers stand respectively for fall, winter, and spring.



5

Kimi no tame ni hajimete hōmon o hiraku 蓬門為君初開
(My Wicker Gate Opens the First Time for You)

1965

Framed panel; ink on paper painted with aluminum powder

Overall: 25 ½ × 36 in. (65 × 91.5 cm)

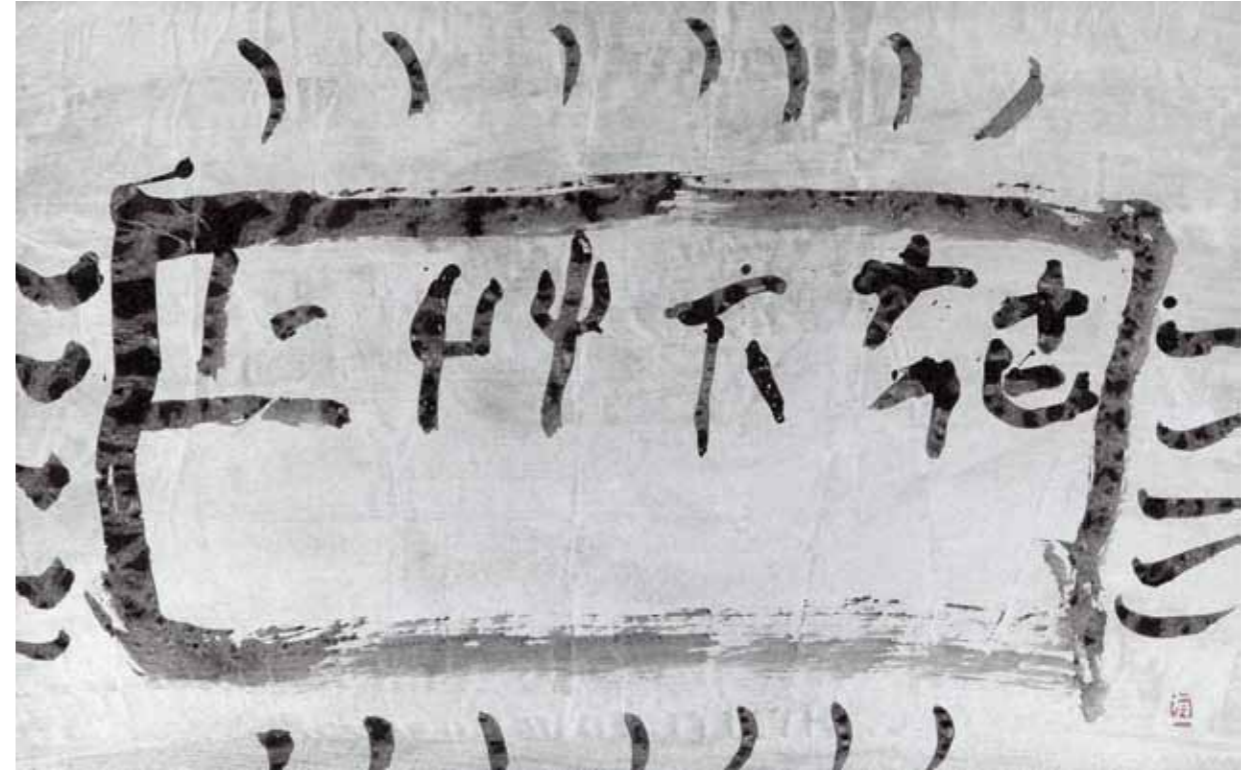
Image: 18 × 28 ½ in. (46 × 72.5 cm)

Published: Unagami, *Catalogue Raisonné*, Vol. 1, pp. 371, 694 (no. 65077)

The text is adapted from a line in *Ke zhi* (Arrival of a Guest), a poem by the Chinese poet Du Fu (712–770).

For the full text and a translation, see David Hawkes,

A Little Primer of Tu Fu. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967, pp. 109–112.



6

Kaka sōjō 花下草上

(Under the Flowers, On the Grass)

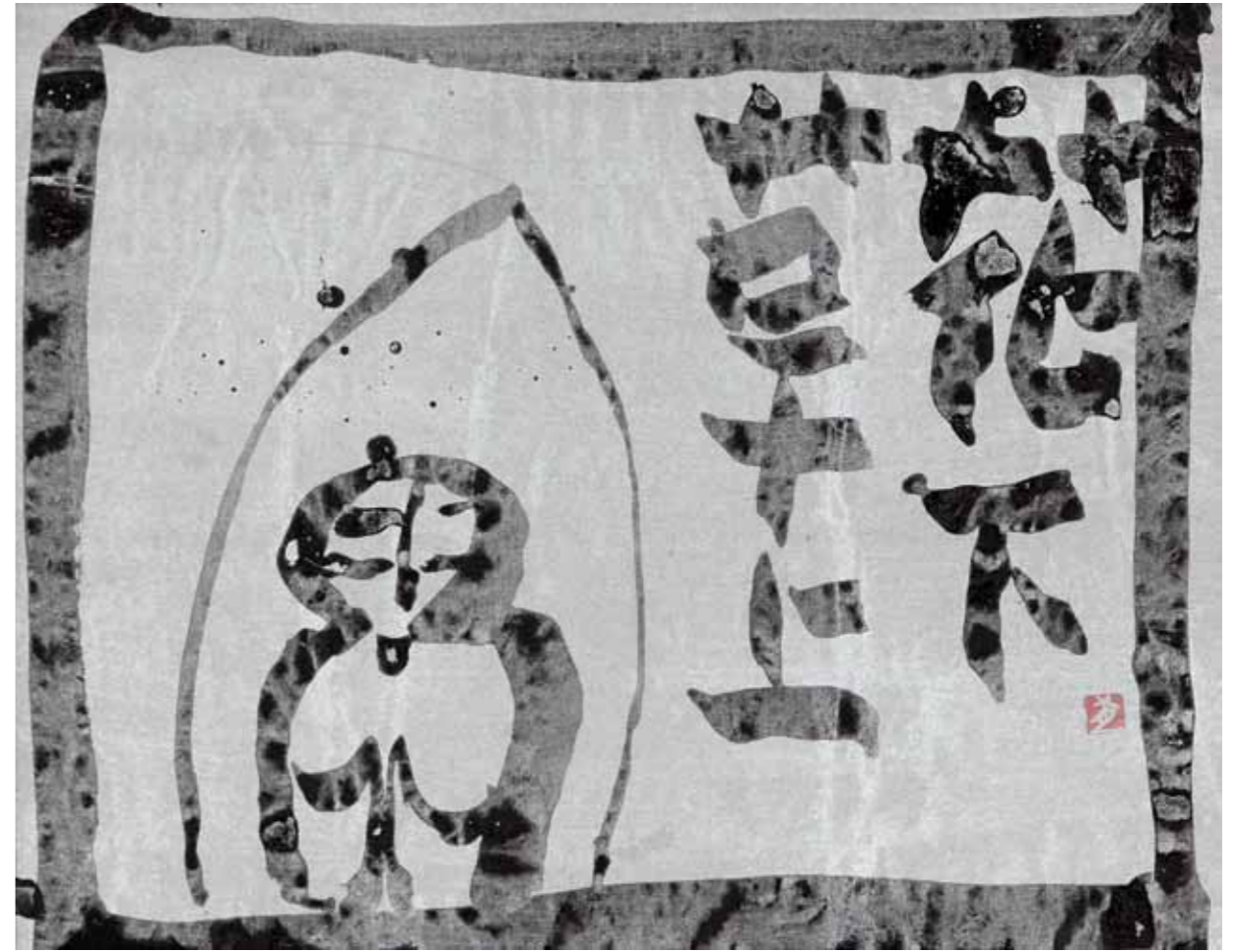
1965

Framed panel; ink on paper painted with aluminum powder

Overall: 25 ½ × 36 ¼ in. (65 × 92 cm)

Image: 18 × 28 ¼ in. (46 × 72 cm)

Published: Unagami, *Catalogue Raisonné*, Vol. 1, pp. 376, 695 (no. 65093)



7

Kaka sōjō 花下草上
(Under the Flowers, On the Grass)

1965

Framed panel; ink on paper painted with aluminum powder

Overall: 21 ¾ × 25 ½ in. (55 × 65 cm)

Image: 14 ¼ × 18 in. (36 × 46 cm)

Published: Unagami, *Catalogue Raisonné*, Vol. 1, pp. 379, 695 (no. 65104)



8

Naru kami no / oto nomi kikishi / maki muku no / hihara no yama o / kyō mitsuru kamo

なるかみのおとのみきゝしまきむくのひはらのやまをけふみつるかも 柿本人麻呂

(Poem by Kakinomoto no Hitomaro)

1965

Framed panel; ink on paper painted with aluminum powder

Overall: 25 ½ × 36 in. (65 × 91.5 cm)

Image: 18 × 28 ¾ in. (46 × 73 cm)

Published: Unagami, *Catalogue Raisonné*, Vol. 1, pp. 392, 696 (no. 65159)

This poem by Kakinomoto no Hitomaro (c. 662-710) may be translated: I had only heard / the roar of the thunder at / Mount Makumuku / but at last today I saw / Hihara with my own eyes.



9

Kan 関
(Frontier Pass)

1966

Panel; ink on Japanese paper

57 × 78 ¼ in. (145 × 198.5 cm)

Published: Unagami, *Catalogue Raisonné*, Vol. 1, pp. 425, 698 (no. 66032)

10

Kanzan 寒山

1966

Panel; ink on Japanese paper
95 × 48 ¾ in. (241 × 124 cm)

Published: Unagami, *Catalogue Raisonné*, Vol. 1, pp. 441, 699 (no. 66069)

Kanzan was an eccentric Tang-dynasty (618–c. 907) Chinese monk who, accompanied by his inseparable companion Jittoku, lived a life of utter poverty and made strange utterances that belied his profound wisdom.





11
Daruma and Menpeki hachinen 達磨 面壁八年
 (Bodhidharma and Eight Years Facing a Wall)

January 1, 1967

Pair of hanging scrolls mounted with Japanese arrowroot fiber; ink on Japanese paper

Overall: Each 70 ½ × 29 ¼ in. (179 × 74 cm)

Image: Each 48 ¾ × 22 ½ in. (124 × 57 cm)

Inscription: *Shōwa yonjūninen ichigatsu tsuitachi Yūichi gojūissai* 昭和四十二年一月一日有一五十一才
 (January 1, 42nd year of Showa [1967], Yūichi, aged 51)

Fitted cypress-wood box inscribed, sealed, and dated by Unagami Masaomi (b.1931)

The right-hand scroll is a copy of a portrait of Bodhidharma painted by the great Zen priest Hakuin Ekaku (1685–1768) toward the end of his life; the original included one of Hakuin's favorite inscriptions *Jikishi ninshin kenshō jōbutsu* 直指人心見性成佛 ("Look directly into your own heart and you will see your true nature and become a Buddha"). The left-hand scroll, a self-portrait with an inscription referring to Bodhidharma sitting for nine years facing a monastery wall in his struggle to attain enlightenment, humorously admits that the artist has so far only managed eight years. A long inscription on the reverse of the box lid by Unagami Masaomi, Yūichi's admirer and cataloguer, relates the story of Yūichi's encounter with the Hakuin scroll. An accompanying handwritten sheet bears impressions of the two ceramic seals Yūichi used on this diptych, that on the right-hand scroll reading *Asahi nyūdo* 朝日入道 and that on the left-hand scroll consisting of the first character *Yū* 有 from his given name, topped with a dragon's horns.





12

Hin nashi
(Poverty)

September 8, 1968

Hanging scroll; ink on Japanese paper

Overall: 64 ¾ × 43 ¾ in. (164.5 × 111 cm)

Image: 45 ¾ × 42 in. (116 × 106.7 cm)

Fitted paulownia-wood box

Published: Unagami, *Catalogue Raisonné*, Vol. 1, pp. 518, 704 (no. 68060)





13

Ran 懶

(Lazy)

June 8, 1969

Hanging scroll; ink on Japanese paper

Overall: 50 × 49 in. (127 × 124.5 cm)

Image: 34 ¼ × 48 ¼ in. (87 × 122.5 cm)

Published: Unagami, *Catalogue Raisonné*, Vol. 1, pp. 542, 705 (no. 69014)





14

Hana 花
(Flower)

October 2, 1970

Framed panel; ink on Japanese paper

Overall: 27 ¼ × 38 ¼ in. (69 × 97 cm)

Image: 20 × 31 ½ in. (51 × 80 cm)

Published: Unagami, *Catalogue Raisonné*, Vol. 2, pp. 123, 654 (no. 70187)



15

Yama 山
(Mountain)

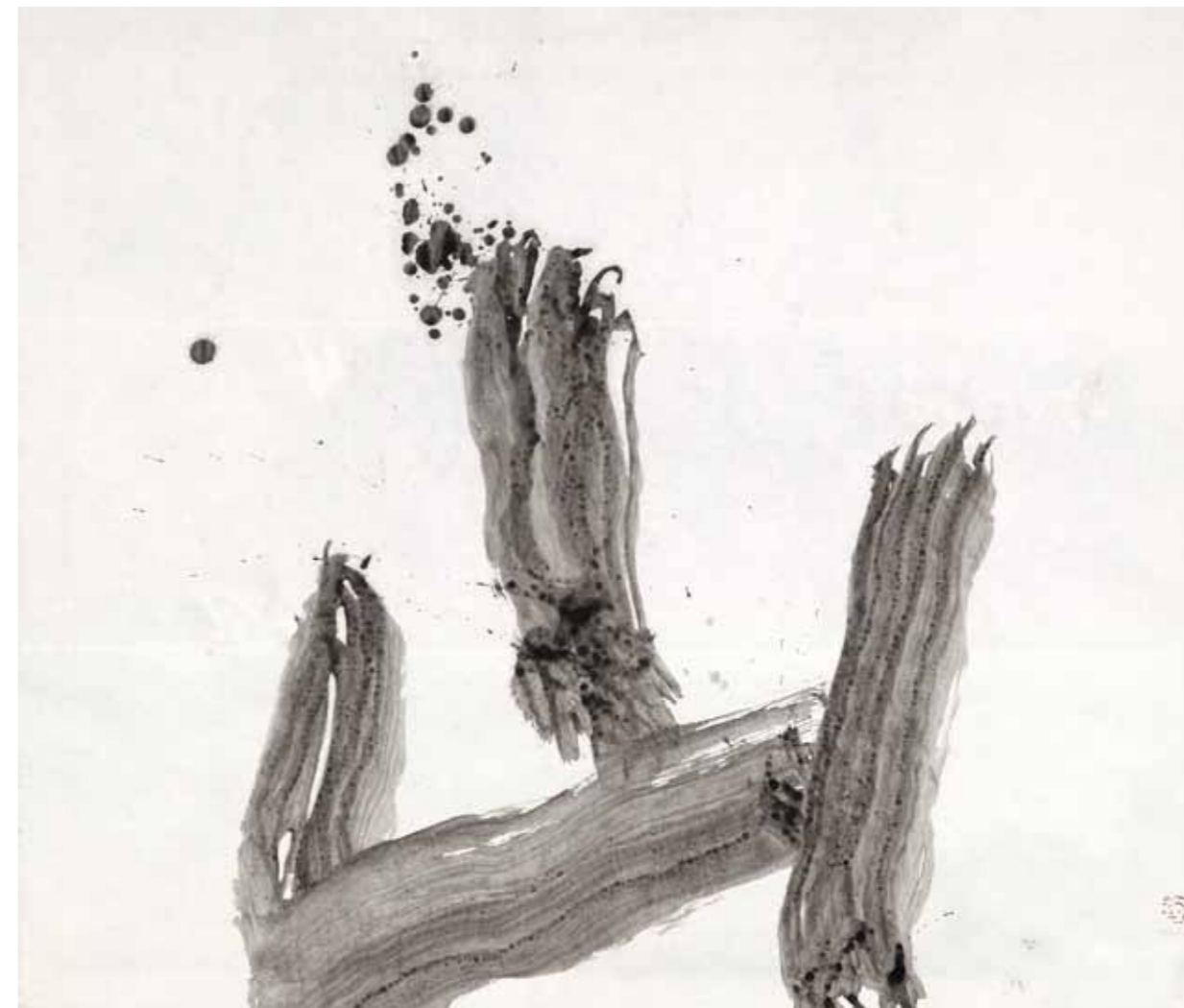
March 25, 1970

Hanging scroll; ink on Japanese paper

Overall: 50 ¾ × 41 ¾ in. (129 × 106 cm)

Image: 35 × 41 in. (89 × 104 cm)

Published: Unagami, *Catalogue Raisonné*, Vol. 2, pp. 145, 656 (no. 70261)





16

Ippiki-ōkami 一匹狼
(Lone Wolf)

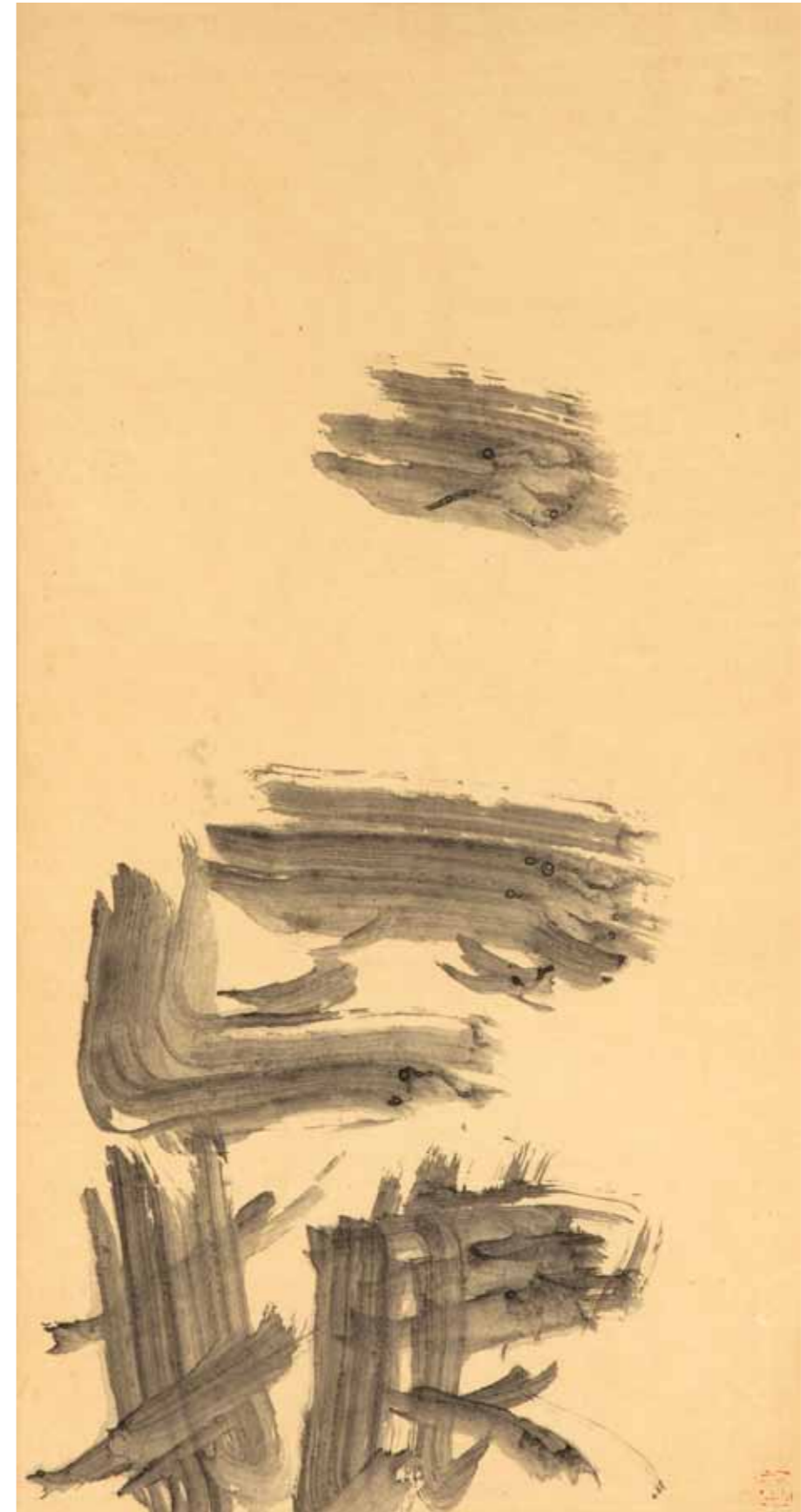
July 8, 1970

Framed panel; ink on Chinese paper

Overall: 48 ¾ × 28 in. (124 × 71 cm)

Image: 40 ¼ × 21 in. (102 × 53.5 cm)

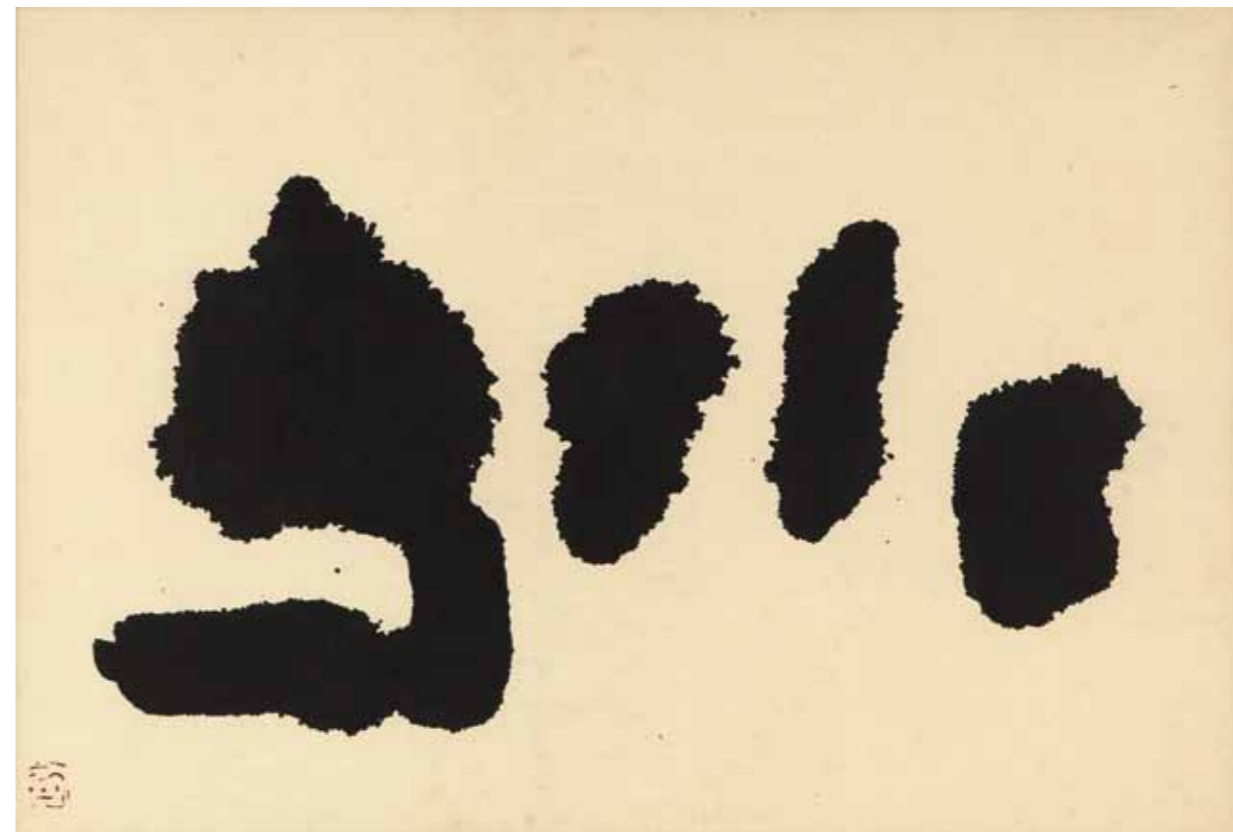
Published: Unagami, *Catalogue Raisonné*, Vol. 2, pp. 161, 656 (no. 70282)





17
Mizutori 水鳥
(Waterfowl)

1972
Framed panel; ink on Chinese paper
Overall: 24 ¾ × 33 in. (63 × 84 cm)
Image: 17 ¼ × 25 ½ in. (44 × 65 cm)
Published: Unagami, *Catalogue Raisonné*, Vol. 2, pp. 285, 664 (no. 72193)





18

Zan 暫
(A Moment)

September 13, 1975

Hanging scroll; ink on Japanese paper

Overall: 46 × 45 ¼ in. (117 × 115 cm)

Image: 30 ½ × 44 ½ in. (77.5 × 113 cm)

Published: Unagami, *Catalogue Raisonné*, Vol. 2, pp. 462–463, 675 (no. 75001)





19
En 圓
(Cycle)

1977
Hanging scroll; ink on Japanese paper
Overall: 48 ¾ × 45 ½ in. (124 × 115.5 cm)
Image: 32 ¼ × 44 ½ in. (82 × 113 cm)
Published: Unagami, *Catalogue Raisonné*, Vol. 3, pp. 38, 587 (no. 77015)





20

En 圓

(Cycle)

1977

Hanging scroll; ink on Japanese paper

Overall: 48 ¾ × 45 ¼ in. (124 × 115 cm)

Image: 32 ½ × 44 ½ in. (82.3 × 113 cm)

Published: Unagami, *Catalogue Raisonné*, Vol. 3, pp. 39, 588 (no. 77016)





21
Ju 樹
(Tree)

1978
Panel; ink on Japanese paper
47 ¼ × 74 ¼ in. (120 × 188.5 cm)
Published: Unagami, *Catalogue Raisonné*, Vol. 3, pp. 162, 593 (no. 78051)



22

Kanzan 寒山

1978

Hanging scroll; ink on Chinese paper

Overall: 36 ¾ × 42 ¼ in. (93.5 × 107.5 cm)

Image: 21 ¼ × 41 ½ in. (54.2 × 105.5 cm)

Published: Unagami, *Catalogue Raisonné*, Vol. 3, pp. 204, 596 (no. 78131)

Kanzan was an eccentric Tang-dynasty (618–c. 907) Chinese monk who, accompanied by his inseparable companion Jittoku, lived a life of utter poverty and made strange utterances that belied his profound wisdom.





23

Kanzan 寒山

1978

Hanging scroll; ink on Chinese paper

Overall: 37 × 42 ¼ in. (94 × 107.5 cm)

Image: 21 ½ × 41 ½ in. (54.5 × 105.5 cm)

Published: Unagami, *Catalogue Raisonné*, Vol. 3, pp. 205, 596 (no. 78134)

Kanzan was an eccentric Tang-dynasty (618–c. 907) Chinese monk who, accompanied by his inseparable companion Jittoku, lived a life of utter poverty and made strange utterances that belied his profound wisdom.





24

Haru no yo no / yume no kakehashi / todae shite / mine ni wakaruru / yokogumo no sora
はるのよのゆめのかげはしとだえしてみねにわかるゝよこぐものそら (Poem by Fujiwara Teika)

1978

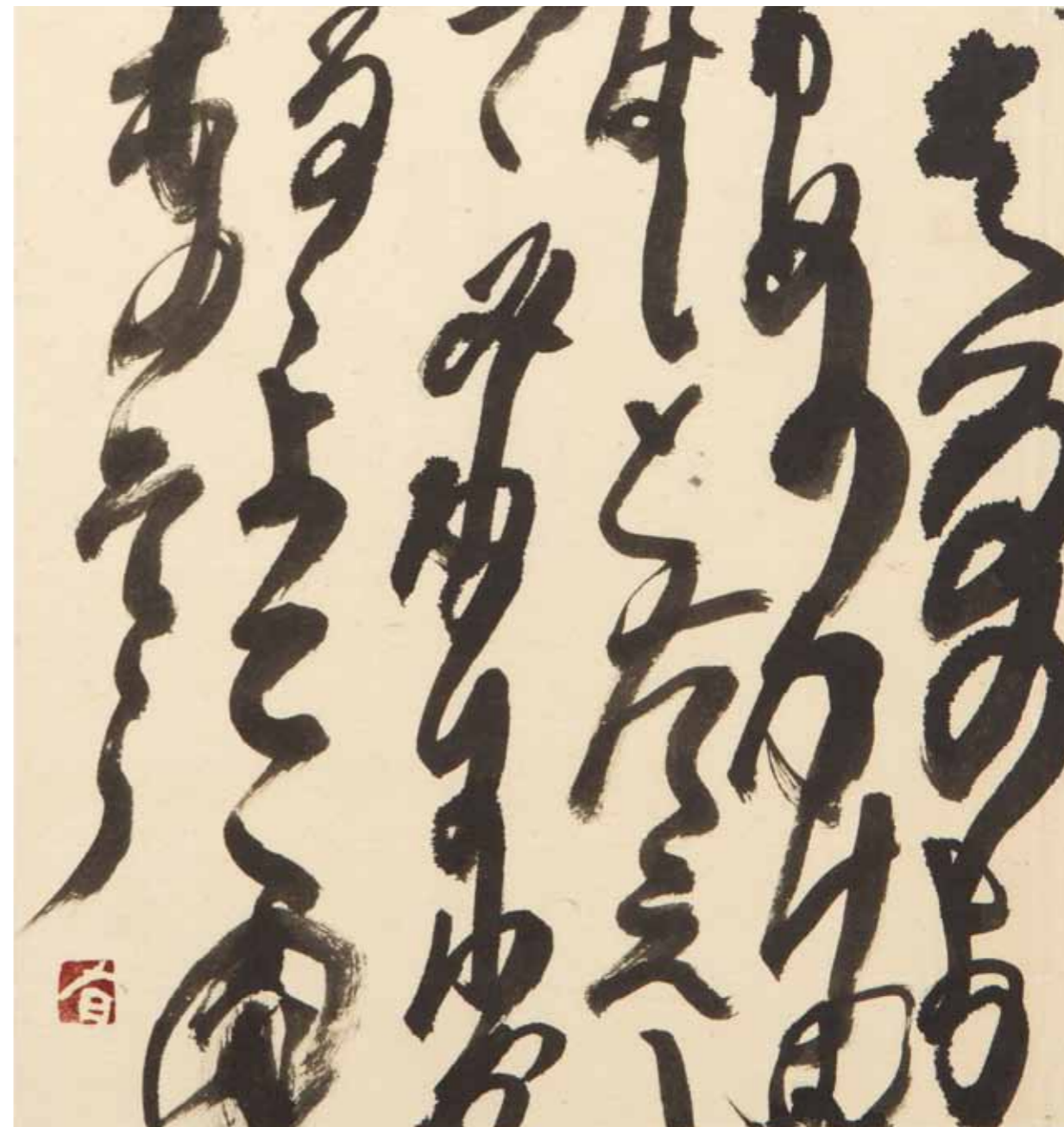
Framed panel; ink on Japanese paper

Overall: 17 ¾ × 17 in. (45 × 43 cm)

Image: 10 ½ × 9 ½ in. (26.5 × 24.5 cm)

Published: Unagami, *Catalogue Raisonné*, Vol. 3, pp. 239, 597 (no. 78203)

The poem by Fujiwara Teika (1162-1241) may be translated: This short springtime night / floating on a bridge of dreams / soon comes to an end / and above me in the sky / banks of cloud part from the peaks.





25

Sei 聖

(Sanctity)

January 6, 1980

Panel; ink on Japanese paper

47 × 84 ½ in. (119.5 × 214.5 cm)

Published: Unagami, *Catalogue Raisonné*, Vol. 3, pp. 288, 599 (no. 80026)

56



26

Genzen 現前
(Here and Now)

1980

Hanging scroll; ink on Japanese paper

Overall: 40 ¼ × 48 ½ in. (102 × 123 cm)

Image: 24 ½ × 47 ½ in. (62.3 × 120.8 cm)

Published: Unagami, *Catalogue Raisonné*, Vol. 3, pp. 305, 600 (no. 80054)



27

Namu Kanzeon なむかんぜおん
(Hail to the Bodhisattva of Mercy)

1980

Hanging scroll; ink on Chinese paper

Overall: 76 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 20 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (195 × 52 cm)

Image: 60 $\frac{1}{2}$ × 19 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (154 × 50 cm)

Published: Unagami, *Catalogue Raisonné*, Vol. 3, pp. 310, 600 (no. 80068)





28

Namu Jigoku Dai Bosatsu なむじごく大ぼさつ
(Hail to the Great Bodhisattva of Hell)

1980

Hanging scroll; ink on Japanese paper

Overall: 72 ½ × 30 ½ in. (184 × 77.5 cm)

Image: 57 × 29 ¾ in. (144.5 × 75.8 cm)

Published: Unagami, *Catalogue Raisonné*, Vol. 3, pp. 311, 600 (no. 80070)





29

Bukkō Kokushi no ge 仏光国師偈 けんこんここうをたくするにちなく 喜びえたり人くうほうまたくう
珍重大元三尺のけん でんこうえいり春風をきる (Buddhist Poem by Bukkō Kokushi)

April 16, 1980

Panel; ink on Japanese paper

55 ¾ × 74 ¼ in. (141.5 × 188.5 cm)

Published: Unagami, *Catalogue Raisonné*, Vol. 3, pp. 321, 601 (no. 80088)

Bukkō Kokushi (1226–1286) was a Chinese Zen monk who settled in Japan. The poem, addressed to Mongol invaders at the gates of his monastery in China, reads as follows in the original Chinese

乾坤無地卓孤筇 喜得人空法亦空 珍重大元三尺劍 電光影裡斬春風

and may be translated: There's no place left in heaven or on earth for me to rest my staff / but it delights me to know that both mankind and the *dharma* are void / may your splendid three-foot Mongol blades / cut through the spring breeze like lightning through shadows.



30

Jō 上

(Above)

1984

Panel; ink on Japanese paper

Overall: 50 ¾ × 73 ½ in. (129 × 187 cm)

Image: 50 × 72 ¾ in. (127 × 185 cm)

Published: Unagami, *Catalogue Raisonné*, Vol. 3, pp. 464, 608 (no. 84004)

Selected Exhibitions and Life Events

Inoue Yūichi 井上有一 (1916-1985)

- 1916 Born in Tokyo on February 14, the son of Inoue Eiji, a dealer in bric-a-brac.
- 1935 Graduates from Tokyo Prefectural Aoyama Normal School; appointed teacher at Yokokawa National School; starts to attend evening painting classes.
- 1941 Begins to study calligraphy under Ueda Sōkyū.
- 1945 On March 10, narrowly escapes death during a U.S. air raid on Tokyo.
- 1948 Continues his study of calligraphy, mainly from the journal *Sho no bi* (Beauty of Calligraphy), edited and published by fellow-calligrapher Morita Shiryū. Marries Hirai Kikue (eldest daughter Hanako born in 1951; eldest son Tōru born in 1953).
- 1950 In early spring, shows his calligraphy at the third Shodō Geijutsuin (Calligraphy Academy) exhibition at Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum; also shows at the official Nitten national exhibition.
- 1952 Along with Morita Shiryū, Eguchi Sōgen, Nakamura Bokushi, and Sekiya Gidō, forms the Bokujinkai (Association of Men of Ink) group and becomes editor of its journal *Bokujin*.
- 1954 Included in the exhibition *Japanese Calligraphy* (Museum of Modern Art, New York).
- 1955 Included in the exhibitions *Abstract Painting: Japan and the U.S.* (National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo) and *L'encre de Chine dans la calligraphie et l'art japonais contemporains* (Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; travels to Basel, Paris, Hamburg, Rome, and Tokyo).
- 1957 Exhibits three works at the Fourth São Paulo Biennale.
- 1958 Included in the exhibition *50 ans d'art moderne* at the Brussels Exposition Universelle.
- 1959 Exhibits at Documenta II, Kassel.
- 1961 Stops using traditional *nerizumi* ink and creates a new medium made from dissolved carbon and water-soluble glue; exhibits at the *International Exhibition of Contemporary Painting and Sculpture* (Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh); participates in the sixth São Paulo Biennale.
- 1962 Included in the exhibition *Sinn und Zeichen: Kalligraphien japanischer Meister der Gegenwart* (Mathildenhöhe, Darmstadt).
- 1963 Included in the exhibition *Schrift und Bild: Kalligraphien japanischer Meister der Gegenwart* (Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; travels to Baden-Baden)
- 1966 Participates in the First Japan Art Festival (Union Carbide Building, New York; travels to Chicago, Los Angeles, and Hawai'i).
- 1969 Included in *Contemporary Art: Dialogue Between the East and the West* (opening exhibition at the new National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo).
- 1971 Publishes *Hana no shochō* (Album of Works with the Character *Hana*, Flower) the first of his calligraphy books; becomes principal of Asahi Elementary School, Samukawa Town, Kanagawa Prefecture.
- 1973 Included in the exhibition *Development of Post-war Japanese Art: Abstract and Non-figurative* (National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo).
- 1976 Retires after more than 41 years as a schoolteacher.
- 1985 Dies on June 15.
- 1989-
1994 *Ōkina Inoue Yūichi ten* (Yu-Ichi Works 1955-85; National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto; travels to Fukuoka, Niigata, Yamaguchi, Ehime, and Fukushima).
- 1993 *Yu-Ichi: Subarashii hin* (Yu-Ichi: Wonderful Poverty; Azabu Museum of Arts and Crafts, Tokyo)
- 1994 Included in the exhibition *Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky* (Yokohama Museum of Art; travels to New York Guggenheim and San Francisco).
- 1995 *Tōkyō daikūshū* (Tokyo Bombing; Sumida Riverside Hall, Tokyo).
Yu-ichi 1916-1985 (Kunsthalle Basel).
- 2000 Publication of final volume of *Yu-ichi (Yu-ichi Inoue): Catalogue Raisonné of the Works, 1949-1985*.
- 2013 Featured at the 2013 Sharjah Biennial, United Arab Emirates, curated by Hasegawa Yūko.

Checklist

No.	Page	Title	Date	Medium	Size	Published in Unagami, <i>Catalogue Raisonné</i>
1	8	Kotsu 骨 (Bone)	1959	Panel; ink on Japanese paper	72 ¾ × 70 ¼ in. (185 × 178.5 cm)	Vol. 1, pp. 142, 680 (no. 59031)
2	10	Kô 好 (Fondness)	1962	Panel; frozen ink on Japanese paper	47 ½ × 70 ¾ in. (120.5 × 180 cm)	Vol. 1, pp. 259, 686 (no. 62022)
3	12	Kei 恵 (Favor)	1963	Panel; frozen ink on Japanese paper	47 × 61 ¾ in. (119.5 × 157 cm)	Vol. 1, pp. 293, 688 (no. 63030)
4	14	Tsuki yuki hana 月雪花 (Moon, Snow, and Flowers)	1965	Framed panel; ink on paper painted with aluminum powder	Overall: 23 ¼ × 28 ¾ in. (59 × 73 cm) Image: 15 ¼ × 21 ¼ in. (40 × 54 cm)	Vol. 1, pp. 365, 694 (no. 65064)
5	16	Kimi no tame ni hajimete hōmon o hiraku 蓬門為君初開	1965	Framed panel; ink on paper painted with aluminum powder	Overall: 25 ½ × 36 in. (65 × 91.5 cm) Image: 18 × 28 ½ in. (46 × 72.5 cm)	Vol. 1, pp. 371, 694 (no. 65077)
6	18	Kaka sōjō 花下草上	1965	Framed panel; ink on paper painted with aluminum powder	Overall: 25 ½ × 36 ¼ in. (65 × 92 cm) Image: 18 × 28 ¼ in. (46 × 72 cm)	Vol. 1, pp. 376, 695 (no. 65093)
7	20	Kaka sōjō 花下草上	1965	Framed panel; ink on paper painted with aluminum powder	Overall: 21 ¾ × 25 ½ in. (55 × 65 cm) Image: 14 ¼ × 18 in. (36 × 46 cm)	Vol. 1, pp. 379, 695 (no. 65104)
8	22	Naru kami no / oto nomi kikishi / maki muku no / hihara no yama o / kyō mitsuru kamo	1965	Framed panel; ink on paper painted with aluminum powder	Overall: 25 ½ × 36 in. (65 × 91.5 cm) Image: 18 × 28 ¾ in. (46 × 73 cm)	Vol. 1, pp. 392, 696 (no. 65159)
9	24	Kan 関 (Frontier Pass)	1966	Panel; ink on Japanese paper	57 × 78 ¼ in. (145 × 198.5 cm)	Vol. 1, pp. 425, 698 (no. 66032)
10	26	Kanzan 寒山	1966	Panel; ink on Japanese paper	95 × 48 ¾ in. (241 × 124 cm)	Vol. 1, pp. 441, 699 (no. 66069)
11	28	Daruma and Menpeki hachinen 達磨 面壁 八年 (Bodhidharma and Eight Years Facing a Wall)	January 1, 1967	Pair of hanging scrolls mounted with Japanese arrowroot fiber; ink on Japanese paper	Overall: Each 70 ½ × 29 ¼ in. (179 × 74 cm) Image: Each 48 ¾ × 22 ½ in. (124 × 57 cm)	
12	30	Hin 貧 (Poverty)	Sept. 8, 1968	Hanging scroll; ink on Japanese paper	Overall: 64 ¾ × 43 ¾ in. (164.5 × 111 cm) Image: 45 ¾ × 42 in. (116 × 106.7 cm)	Vol. 1, pp. 518, 704 (no. 68060)
13	32	Ran 懶 (Lazy)	June 8, 1969	Hanging scroll; ink on Japanese paper	Overall: 50 × 49 in. (127 × 124.5 cm) Image: 34 ¼ × 48 ¼ in. (87 × 122.5 cm)	Vol. 1, pp. 542, 705 (no. 69014)
14	34	Hana 花 (Flower)	October 2, 1970	Framed panel; ink on Japanese paper	Overall: 27 ¼ × 38 ¼ in. (69 × 97 cm) Image: 20 × 31 ½ in. (51 × 80 cm)	Vol. 2, pp. 123, 654 (no. 70187)

No.	Page	Title	Date	Medium	Size	Published in Unagami, <i>Catalogue Raisonné</i>
15	36	Yama 山 (Mountain)	March 25, 1970	Hanging scroll; ink on Japanese paper	Overall: 50 ¾ × 41 ¾ in. (129 × 106 cm) Image: 35 × 41 in. (89 × 104 cm)	Vol. 2, pp. 145, 656 (no. 70261)
16	38	Ippiki-ōkami 一匹狼 (Lone Wolf)	July 8, 1970	Framed panel; ink on Chinese paper	Overall: 48 ¾ × 28 in. (124 × 71 cm) Image: 40 ¼ × 21 in. (102 × 53.5 cm)	Vol. 2, pp. 161, 656 (no. 70282)
17	40	Mizudori 水鳥 (Waterfowl)	1972	Framed panel; ink on Chinese paper	Overall: 24 ¾ × 33 in. (63 × 84 cm) Image: 17 ¼ × 25 ½ in. (44 × 65 cm)	Vol. 2, pp. 285, 664 (no. 72193)
18	42	Zan 暫 (A Moment)	Sept. 13, 1975	Hanging scroll; ink on Japanese paper	Overall: 46 × 45 ¼ in. (117 × 115 cm) Image: 30 ½ × 44 ½ in. (77.5 × 113 cm)	Vol. 2, pp. 462-463, 675 (no. 75001)
19	44	En 圓 (Cycle)	1977	Hanging scroll; ink on Japanese paper	Overall: 48 ¾ × 45 ½ in. (124 × 115.5 cm) Image: 32 ¼ × 44 ½ in. (82 × 113 cm)	Vol. 3, pp. 38, 587 (no. 77015)
20	46	En 圓 (Cycle)	1977	Hanging scroll; ink on Japanese paper	Overall: 48 ¾ × 45 ¼ in. (124 × 115 cm) Image: 32 ½ × 44 ½ in. (82.3 × 113 cm)	Vol. 3, pp. 39, 588 (no. 77016)
21	48	Ju 樹 (Tree)	1978	Panel; ink on Japanese paper	47 ¼ × 74 ¼ in. (120 × 188.5 cm)	Vol. 3, pp. 162, 593 (no. 78051)
22	50	Kanzan 寒山	1978	Hanging scroll; ink on Chinese paper	Overall: 36 ¾ × 42 ¼ in. (93.5 × 107.5 cm) Image: 21 ¼ × 41 ½ in. (54.2 × 105.5 cm)	Vol. 3, pp. 204, 596 (no. 78131)
23	52	Kanzan 寒山	1978	Hanging scroll; ink on Chinese paper	Overall: 37 × 42 ¼ in. (94 × 107.5 cm) Image: 21 ½ × 41 ½ in. (54.5 × 105.5 cm)	Vol. 3, pp. 205, 596 (no. 78134)
24	54	Haru no yo no / yume no kakehashi / todae shite / mine ni wakaruru / yokogumo no sora	1978	Framed panel; ink on Japanese paper	Overall: 17 ¾ × 17 in. (45 × 43 cm) Image: 10 ½ × 9 ½ in. (26.5 × 24.5 cm)	Vol. 3, pp. 239, 597 (no. 78203)
25	56	Sei 聖 (Sanctity)	January 6, 1980	Panel; ink on Japanese paper	47 × 84 ½ in. (119.5 × 214.5 cm)	Vol. 3, pp. 288, 599 (no. 80026)
26	58	Genzen 現前 (Here and Now)	1980	Hanging scroll; ink on Japanese paper	Overall: 40 ¼ × 48 ½ in. (102 × 123 cm) Image: 24 ½ × 47 ½ in. (62.3 × 120.8 cm)	Vol. 3, pp. 305, 600 (no. 80054)
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29	64	Bukkō Kokushi no ge	April 16, 1980	Panel; ink on Japanese paper	55 ¾ × 74 ¼ in. (141.5 × 188.5 cm)	Vol. 3, pp. 321, 601 (no. 80088)
30	66	Jō 上 (Above)	1984	Panel; ink on Japanese paper	Overall: 50 ¾ × 73 ½ in. (129 × 187 cm) Image: 50 × 72 ¾ in. (127 × 185 cm)	Vol. 3, pp. 464, 608 (no. 84004)

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Cover:

Inoue Yūichi, *Ju 樹* (Tree) (no. 21)
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Erik Thomsen

Inoue Yūichi

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