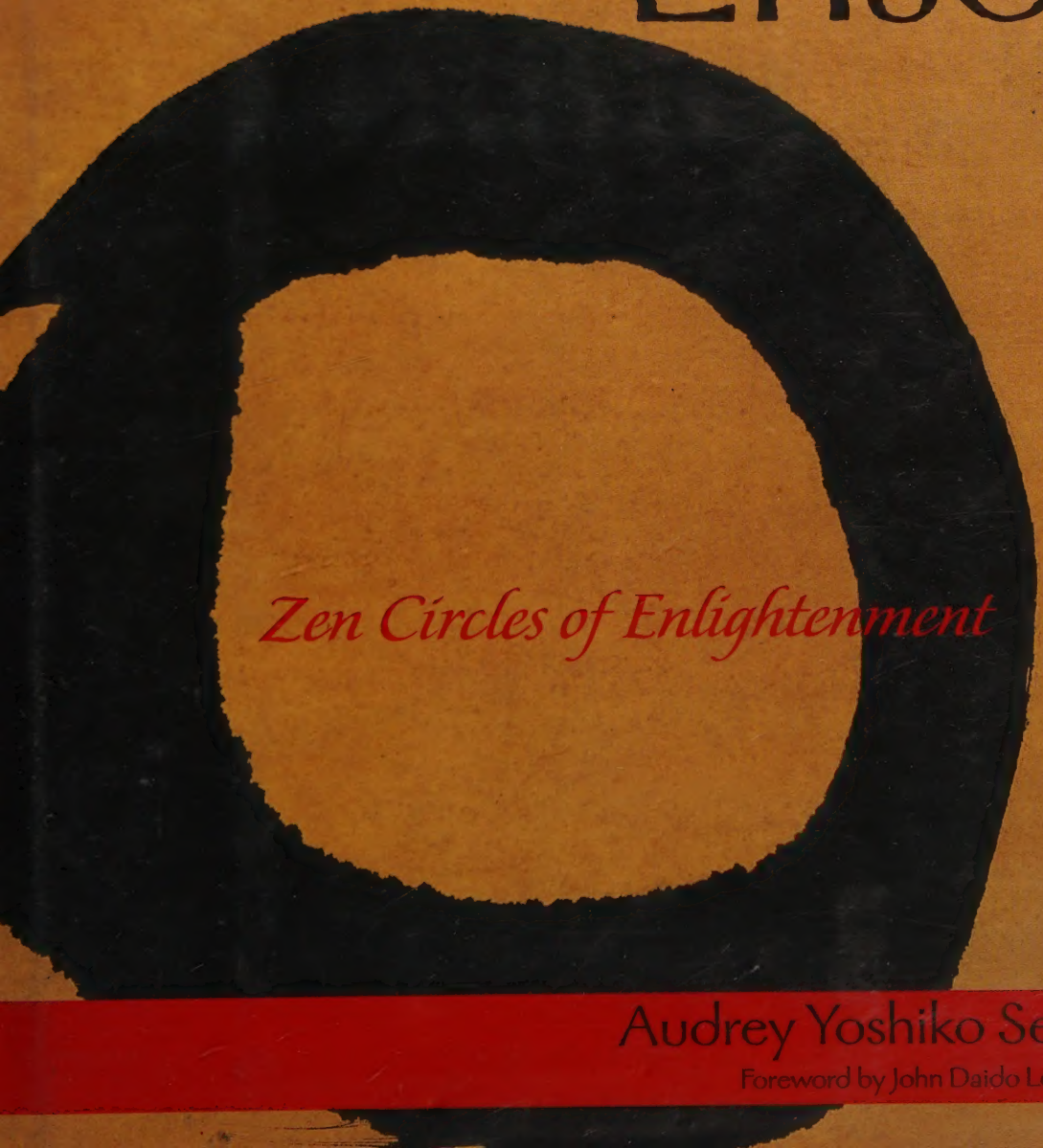
Ensō



Zen Circles of Enlightenment

Audrey Yoshiko Seo

Foreword by John Daido Loori

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THE ENSŌ IS ONE OF THE MOST PREVALENT IMAGES OF ZEN ART, and it has become a kind of symbol of the clean and strong Japanese aesthetic. It has been subject to a rich variety of interpretations—seen as everything from a rice cake to a symbol of infinity. But regardless of how it is understood, the ensō is above all an expression of the mind of the artist who brushes it. It is said that the state of the Zen practitioner can be clearly read in his or her execution of the circle.

Audrey Yoshiko Seo brings together a collection of the best examples of ensō art to show the wonderful variety of the form and its variations, from the seventeenth century to the present, each with commentary facing. The commentary focuses on the meaning of the art and its historical context and provides an analysis of each artist's technique. Also included are biographies of the artists, many of whom are important Zen teachers.

ENSŌ

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For Stephen Addiss,
who patiently weathers the storms.

Contents

Foreword

AS A SYMBOL, the circle expresses the totality of our being. Whether in sun worship ceremonies, in mythological stories, or in religious art, the circle points to the most vital aspect of our existence—its ultimate wholeness. Throughout the ages and in widely differing cultures, from Stone Age communities to technologically advanced societies, the circle has always evoked feelings of calm and completeness. In his commentaries on our collective unconscious, Carl Jung referred to the circle as the "archetype of wholeness."

Our connection to the circle is in some ways obvious. We are embedded in the circularity of the horizon. We live on a sphere that, with other spheres, circles around the sun, in the vast celestial dome. We are enamored with the moon. In art, we highlight an abstract circle's many natural forms—the ring, the sphere, the wheel. We create halos that float above saints' heads, and perform ritual circle dances.

In Buddhism, there are many examples of the use of the circle. The teachings of the Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, are referred to as the turning of the Dharma Wheel, the wheel of reality. In Zen, this metaphor is taken a step further. It is said that when the Dharma Wheel turns, it turns in both directions. In Tibetan Buddhism there is the intricate practice of creating mandalas, circular representations of the universe and all of its aspects, used as a device for concentrating the mind. And there is the Zen *ensō*.

The ensō is perhaps the most common subject of Zen calligraphy. It symbolizes enlightenment, power, and the universe itself. It is a direct expression of

thusness or this-moment-as-it-is. Ensō is considered to be one of the most profound subjects in *zenga* (Zen-inspired painting), and it is believed that the character of the artist is fully exposed in how she or he draws an ensō. Only a person who is mentally and spiritually complete can draw a true one. Some artists practice drawing an ensō daily as a spiritual exercise.

Although the form of the ensō is quite simple, its essence is difficult to grasp or define. On one hand, it is just a circle painted with one brushstroke, in a single breath. On the other hand, it is the representation of the totality of the great void. Some say that the ensō has no fixed meaning. Others insist that it encompasses and conveys a continuing and ceaseless action through all time. When an ensō painting is viewed, it communicates and can be appreciated on various levels, depending upon the spiritual maturity of the viewer.

The ensō ranges in shape from perfectly symmetrical to completely irregular, with brushstrokes either thin and delicate or broad and massive. Many ensō paintings include a short text in prose or verse called *san*. *San* are composed either by the artist or someone commenting on the image as a way of deepening and clarifying the religious or spiritual content of the work. Ensō paintings act as visual and poetic koans—apparently paradoxical statements, questions, or demonstrations that point to or suggest the nature of reality. They reflect the artist's understanding that, at their best, words and images cannot express the truth completely. In attempting to assist others in realizing the true nature of reality, rather than explaining, the masters point, and point as directly as they can.

The importance and vitality of direct pointing within religious practice and training are especially accented and refined in Zen Buddhism. Bodhidharma, the founder of Zen, defined the tradition as follows:

> A special transmission outside the scriptures,
> With no reliance on words and letters,

A direct pointing to the human mind,
And the realization of enlightenment.

Direct pointing takes many forms in Zen. Significant among them, and most relevant to this book, is the way the arts function to bring insight to the traditional koans that form the backbone of much of Zen teaching. For hundreds of years, the ensō has provided monastic and lay practitioners of Zen with guidance into unraveling the intricacies of the knotty questions put forth by the ancient masters. Sometimes, the enso appears in the koan stories themselves.

Master Xuansha saw his student Gushan coming and drew a circle on the ground.
Gushan seeing this said, "People cannot get out of this place."
Xuansha said, "I guess you do things in a donkey's womb and horse's belly."
Gushan said, "Master, what about yourself?"
Xuansha said, "People cannot get out of this place."
Gushan said, "You said so and I said so. So what's wrong with me?"
Xuansha said, "I have got it but you haven't."
Gushan said, "You said so and I said so. So what's wrong with me?"
Xuansha responded, "I have got it but you haven't." What is the *it* that he has and how did he know that Gushan did not have it?

The ancient marriage of art and religion in Zen traces its roots to the birth of Zen tradition in China. When Buddhism first arrived in China from India during the first century C.E., it encountered indigenous Taoism with its deep appreciation of nature and the arts. Taoism's accent on simplicity intermingled with

the complex metaphysics of Indian Buddhism, tempering its philosophical tendencies. The result was a very direct and pragmatic kind of Buddhism—Zen. During this early history, Zen was influenced by the refined practices of Chinese poetry, painting, and calligraphy. *The Tao of Painting,* written around 500 C.E., is a classic canon on the art of painting as a spiritual path. In it, the action of no action is set forth as a cardinal aspect of the true creative process. The mind is silenced, the self gets out of the way, and the work is allowed to express itself.

Unlike the modern approaches of teaching art in schools, the traditional Taoist method led artists to undergo rigorous periods of apprenticeship under renowned masters, spending years learning how to uncover and express the energy, or *chi* (Japanese *ki*) of a mountain, bamboo, or a plum blossom. Zen borrowed freely from these teachings and eventually developed a very particular style of painting, calligraphy, and poetry.

During the Sung dynasty in China (960–1279 C.E.), the Zen arts of painting and poetry reached their highest stage of development with the emergence of a novel phenomena—a new class of painter-priests and poet-priests who were not only accomplished artists but also Zen monastics and even masters of the tradition. At the same time, Zen monasteries became magnets for secular artists who were interested in clarifying the relationship between their deep spiritual yearnings and creativity.

When Chinese Zen first traveled to Japan in the thirteenth century, the arts followed and became quickly integrated into the culture of Zen. During the Kamakura period (1200–1350 C.E.) these arts developed into *chado* (tea ceremony), bamboo flute, landscape gardening, *noh* (drama), ceramics, *kyudo* (archery), and most important, *shodo* (painting and poetry). *Do* means "way," and these arts are referred to as "ways" because they are all-encompassing disciplines of polishing the artist's understanding of him or herself and the nature of reality. Together, these disciplines became known as the "artless arts of Zen." They transcended technique, and were primarily used as tools for communicating the Zen truth.

The Zen arts distinguish themselves from other kinds of Buddhist art in that they are not iconographic. Their aim is not to deepen the devotees' experience of religion. They are not used in worship ceremonies or as part of prayer. They are not even meant to create a sense of openness, awareness, or sensitivity to spiritual teachings. Zen art, as sacred art, is a direct expression of the ineffable. It helps to transform the way we understand ourselves and the universe. It makes visible the invisible.

In the traditional Zen arts, paintings and calligraphy functioned as visual discourses, while poetry with its live words communicated the essential wordlessness of Zen. D. T. Suzuki, in speaking of these unique forms said: "The arts of Zen are not intended for utilitarian purposes, or for purely aesthetic enjoyment, but are meant to train the mind, indeed, to bring it into contact with ultimate reality."

In *Ensō: Zen Circles of Enlightenment,* Audrey Yoshiko Seo has collected some of Zen history's most relevant and admired ensō, to which she has added biographical information on the artists, artistic commentary on the work, and in many cases she has also provided a sketch of the spiritual context that can help readers to appreciate the teachings that the particular piece of art embodies. This collection is another important step in the transmission of the Dharma from East to West, and especially in clarifying the pivotal role the arts played in Zen Buddhism and can continue to play as Buddhism spreads in the West.

There is a rich cultural, literary, and artistic heritage that comes with Zen Buddhism that we have yet to discover. Now that the roots of Buddhist training and practice have been established on these shores, the time has come to appreciate the other aspects of our Dharma legacy. Audrey Yoshiko Seo's book is an important part of this process that promises to further nourish the evolution of the buddhadharma in the West, as well as deepen our understanding of the artless arts of Zen.

All of this notwithstanding, ultimately we should appreciate that the ensō has no reason or point for its existence other than itself. It exists perfectly and

completely, and is aesthetically gratifying for its own sake. The ensō is its own merit and its own reward. It has no cause outside itself and provides no effect other than itself. The fruit of the ensō *is* the ensō.

Encountering two monastics who challenged his understanding, Zen master Yangshan drew a circle in the air, showed it to them, and then threw it over his back, over his shoulders. Then he stretched out his arms and asked them to return the circle. The two monastics were dumbfounded and did not know what to do. Yangshan advised them saying, "The Way is not easy; you should study the buddhadharma diligently." He then bowed and left.

John Daido Loori
Tremper Mountain
Summer 2006

Acknowledgments

IN 1969 THE JAPANESE ZEN MASTER Shibayama Zenkei wrote *Zenga no ensō*, a large-format book with full-page reproductions of ensō by a wide variety of Japanese Zen masters dating back to the fifteenth century. Shibayama Rōshi was a great connoisseur of Zen painting and calligraphy, and was particularly fond of works by the master Hakuin Ekaku, as well as being a skilled calligrapher in his own right. Shibayama Rōshi's appreciation of and enthusiasm for Zen brushwork is readily apparent in his introduction to the book as well the texts that accompany each ensō image. While he was planning his book, his publisher suggested merely having close-up photographs of the circles themselves, cropping out the rest of the composition, including the calligraphic inscriptions which accompanied the ensō. Shibayama Rōshi refused, explaining that the inscriptions were crucial to the meaning and teaching of each circle. It was vital to him that readers encountered the whole experience of the image, which, as a totality, is a reflection of each master's Zen mind.

I am grateful to Shibayama Rōshi for this first exploration into ensō, and to his successor, Fukushima Keidō Rōshi of Tōfuku-ji, for his continued assistance over the past fifteen years in my study of Zen art.

All projects are the result of the collective contributions of many people. This project is no exception. I would like to thank Yoshio Arimura, Eiichi Maezawa, Ishinosuke and Michikazu Mizutani, Daisaburo Tanaka, Shunichi Yabumoto, Takashi Yanagi, Hiroshi and Harumi Yanagi, and Shigehiko Yanagi

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Introduction

Just this one circle,
no monk in the world can jump out.[1]

CIRCLES HAVE FASCINATED us throughout history. They are complete, perfect, and whole, yet at the same time they remain mysterious, indefinable, and haunting. When a courier was sent to the Florentine painter Giotto (1266?–1337) to obtain an example of the painter's work for Pope Benedict, the painter created a perfect circle in red ink.When the courier asked the painter if this was the only example of his work he was to receive, Giotto explained that the image was "enough and too much," and asked that it be sent to the Pope to see if he would understand. The drawing was delivered, and the Pope immediately realized Giotto's talent.

In the hands of Japanese Zen masters, the perfection lies elsewhere. Zen circles, ensō (Ch: *yüan-hsiang*), are symbols of teaching, reality, enlightenment, and a myriad of things in between. Seemingly perfect in their continuity, balance, and sense of completeness, and yet often irregular in execution, ensō are at once the most fundamentally simple and the most complex shape. They seem to leave little room for variation, and yet in the hands of Zen masters, the varieties of personal expression are endless. Ensō evoke power, dynamism, charm, humor, drama, and stillness. How and why is such a simple shape used

to convey the vast meanings and complexities of Zen? As Helmut Brinker explains, "The circle is the symbol of the shapeless, colourless essence of all beings, the 'original countenance before birth', of which is said in the *Gateless Barrier,* 'even when one paints it, it is not painted.'"[2]

Early Buddhism

Circle imagery in Indian philosophy has had many connotations, including representing the sky, the atmosphere, and emptiness. Early Indian culture is also credited with the development of zero as we know it in mathematics, the earliest example of which is found on a Jain cosmo-logical work dated 458 C.E., but evidence suggests the use of zero in Indian culture as early as 200 B.C.E.[3] Although earlier uses of zero are found in Mayan and Babylonian civilizations, they were used merely to mark an absent numeral, but the Indian zero actually served as a numeral in itself and functioned in the processes of addition, subtraction, and multiplication as we know it today. The early Indian zero, which was first represented as a dot, *bindu* (the point from which all things emerged, in other words, the creation of something from nothing), gradually developed into a small empty circle referred to as *sunya,* which also had greater philosophical implications, representing the void. The word *sunya* is only one of many Hindu words for zero. Other Hindu words meaning zero translate as "sky" (*vyant*), "space" (*kha*), "complete" (*pûrna*), and "canopy of heaven" (*gagana*), among others.[4]

Various expressions for space or vacancy seemed to be something that Indian people felt needed great definition and distinction, and the association with the empty circular form has been closely intertwined with them from early on.[5] This circle was eventually transmitted to China as well as absorbed into the Arabic mathematical system where it was translated as *as-sifr,* also meaning

"empty" or "absent," and from which the English word "cipher," meaning "nothing," is derived. Current mathematicians are engrossed in the origins and study of zero, and the issue has even penetrated popular culture including the comic strip *Dilbert.*

Similarly, in ancient China, heaven was represented by a circle that rotated while the earth remained motionless. The sun and moon were associated with the motion of heaven, which remained silent, while the emergence of life was associated with earth. Ancient Chinese shamans used divination to communicate with clan ancestors who circled through the heavens. In Taoism, a perfect circle is used to symbolize the *hunlun,* the "undifferentiated matter out of which the cosmos was formed."[6] These ideas of completeness and natural cycle of birth and death continued to develop and were gradually absorbed into Buddhist thought.

The use of circle imagery in Buddhism goes back to a legend about the historical Buddha Shakyamuni (born circa 563 B.C.E.). According to the Zen Master Yun-men, just after his birth, the Buddha raised his hand, pointed to heaven, and walked seven steps in a circle proclaiming himself the honored one. Circumambulation of holy sites such as stupas was also an early Buddhist practice. Despite these references, early Buddhist ideas were less focused on circular symbols than on the void. This ideal was most fully developed by the thirteenth patriarch of the Indian lineage, Kapimala (second–third century), who is included in the *Denkōroku* of the Japanese master Keizan Jōkin (1268–1325). Keizan's commentary in Kapimala's chapter states, "When you strike space it echoes, and thus all sounds are manifested; transforming emptiness to manifest myriad things is why shapes and forms are so various. Therefore you should not think that emptiness has no form, or that emptiness has no sound. When you furthermore investigate carefully on reaching this point, it cannot be considered void and it cannot be considered existent either."[7]

The thirteenth patriarch passed his teachings on to Nāgārjuna, the Naga King,

who invited the thirteenth patriarch for a visit and presented him with a wish-fulfilling jewel. Nāgārjuna then asked, "This is the ultimate jewel in the world; does it have a form or is it formless?" Kapimala replied, "You only know of having form or not; you do not know that this jewel neither has form nor is formless. And you do not yet know that this jewel is not a jewel." At this, Nāgārjuna became enlightened, and eventually became the Fourteenth Patriarch.[8]

Nāgārjuna is traditionally considered to be the primary author of the Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra (Sūtra of Transcendental Wisdom), the oldest portion of which dates to the first century B.C.E., and on which Mahayana Buddhist thought is based. In this sūtra the idea of the void (Skt.: *shūnyatā*), representing "emptiness" or "nothingness" is developed beyond earlier writings. Further, the text also develops the idea of thusness (Skt.: *tathāgata*), the ultimate state of existence and of being, bringing these two aspects into a perfect state of enlightenment. "Thusness is this matchless, perfect enlightenment. And this thusness neither increases nor decreases."[9] This sūtra also includes the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-hridaya-sūtra (Heart Sūtra), which contains the passage,

> Form is emptiness, emptiness is form;
> Form is nothing but emptiness, emptiness is nothing but form;
> That which is form is emptiness, and that which is emptiness is form.
> The same is true for emotion, conception, activation, and discrimination.[10]

Later, a monk named Kanadeva visited Nāgārjuna and was allowed to share the master's teaching seat in front of a group of faithful. Nāgārjuna manifested the form of the full moon, and Kanadeva told the crowd, "This is the teacher manifesting the essential form of the enlightened nature to show us. How do

we know? Because signless, formless absorption is like the full moon; the meaning of the Buddha nature is wide-open clarity."[11] As Kanadeva finished speaking, the sphere disappeared; as it reappeared, Nāgārjuna stated,

> Body manifests the full moon symbol
> To represent the body of all Buddhas.
> The teaching has no such shape;
> Thereby we discern it is not sound or form.[12]

Kanadeva eventually became the fifteenth patriarch.

In the Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra, Nāgārjuna developed his premise of relativity: that all things exist only by virtue of their opposites, and that all things are only relative and thus without essence, in other words, empty. The ideals set forth in the Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra through Nāgārjuna gradually filtered into Zen. The idea of "thusness" is recognized in Zen as enlightenment in daily life and the appreciation of simple, ordinary experiences and objects, as well as the idea of being in the moment without distractions.

Chinese Zen

> In the "ten directions" there are no images;
> In the "three worlds" all traces have gone.[13]

Bodhidharma (ca. 470–543?; J.: Daruma) was regarded as both the twenty-eighth Indian patriarch following Shakyamuni, and the first patriarch of the East Asian Zen sect. He traveled to the Liang court of Emperor Wu in southern China to expound his teachings, but they were not understood. He then went to Lo-yang in northern China, where he lived in the Shao-lin monastery and

eventually transmitted his teachings to the second patriarch, Hui-k'o (487–593). Bodhidharma was later given the posthumous name Enkaku Daishi, literally "Round Enlightened Great Teacher."[14]

Hui-k'o's own disciple, Chien-chih Seng Ts'an (d. 606), known as the third patriarch, is traditionally viewed as the author of a long poem called *Hsin-hsin Ming,* "Precepts of the True Heart," which includes the well-known lines,

> Round and perfect like vast space,
> nothing lacking, nothing in excess.

The idea of form and no form permeated Zen thought and was fully integrated by the eighth century, as was the existence of teachings based on mysterious symbols such as circles. Although there are no known extant images of circles brushed by early Chinese masters in ink, Zen texts are full of references to masters forming invisible circles in the air, or drawing them on their hands or in the dirt. National Teacher Nan-yang (d. 775) is especially credited with popularizing the use of circles in Zen teaching.

One story, recorded in the *Ching-te Ch'uanteng Lu* (Ching-te Era Record of the Transmission of the Lamp), compiled in 1004, recounts how Nan-yang watched one of his disciples draw a circle on the ground, stand before it, and bow. Nan-yang asked the monk if he wished to become a Buddha. The monk responded, "I cannot rub my eyes." His response suggests that his eyes were still clouded and that he is unable to attain enlightenment represented here by the circle.[15]

Circular figures were used to symbolize the nature of enlightened consciousness or the "original countenance before birth."[16] Nan-yang is said to have received the secret teachings based on sacred symbols directly from the sixth patriarch, Hui-nêng (638–713). Nan-yang's disciple, Tan-yüan (n.d.) later recounted that Nan-yang passed the secret teachings on to him and instructed, "Thirty years after I have died, a young monk will come from the South and

revive this teaching. At that time, pass the teaching on to him; don't let it end. I transmit it to you to uphold and preserve."[17] There are numerous stories of Zen masters in Nan-yang's lineage utilizing these teaching methods.

For example, Nan-yang's disciple, Nan-ch'üan (748–834), also received the meanings of the sacred symbols and utilized them in his teaching. One of these instances is recounted in "Nan-ch'üan Draws a Circle," case 69 of the *Blue Cliff Record.* In the koan Nan-ch'üan accompanied two monks, Kuei-tsung and Ma-yu, to visit Nan-yang. Halfway along their journey, Nan-ch'üan stopped and drew a circle on the ground and stated, "If you can say something, I will continue on with you." Kuei-tsung sat down in the middle of the circle. Ma-yu made a deep bow. Nan-ch'üan said, "I will not go on." Kuei-tsung responded, "What's in your mind?" This famous episode was captured in ink by the Japanese Zen master Sozan Genkyō (1799–1868) (fig. 1).

In another example, case 33 in the *Blue Cliff Record,* Ministry President Ch'en Tsao paid a visit to Tsü-fu. Seeing Ch'en Tsao approaching, Tsü-fu drew a circle (in the air). Ch'en Tsao said, "My coming here like this has already missed the point. Even more so now that you have drawn a circle!" Tsü-fu closed the door to his room.

During this same period, another Chinese Zen master became closely associated with teaching through the use of circles. Ma-tsu (709–788) was a disciple of Nan-yüeh (677–744), the senior pupil of Hui-nêng and a dharma brother to Nan-yang. Ma-tsu left few writings, but he has become one of the most influential Chinese Zen masters through the numerous accounts that reflect his direct Zen training and teaching. He is known for saying, "The Way is formless; how can we see it well?"[18]

One day, a monk went to visit Ma-tsu. Ma-tsu drew a circle with his staff and said, "If you enter here, I will strike you. If you don't enter here, I will strike you." The monk entered the circle. Ma-tsu hit him. The monk said, "Master, you can't hit me." Ma-tsu leaned on his staff and walked away.[19]

"Nan-ch'üan, Kuei-tsung, and Ma-yu Visit National Teacher Nan-yang" by Sozan Genkyō (1799-1868).

In another story, perhaps even more significant because it reveals the use of an ensō brushed in ink on paper, Ma-tsu sent a letter to the monk Kinzan. In the letter he drew an ensō; Kinzan opened the letter, added a painting within the ensō, and sent it back to Ma-tsu. National Teacher Nan-yang heard this story and commented, "The respected servant of the master was bested by Ma-tsu,"[20] implying that Kinzan may have thought he was being clever by adding the image to the ensō, but in essence he was merely filling in the void instead of letting it be empty. Besides teaching his pupil a lesson, Ma-tsu may have given birth to one of the first painted ensō.

Two generations later, the master Kuei-shan (771–853) was asked for a Buddhist verse by Wei Chou. Kuei-shan replied, "To try to express this from person to person is foolish, how much more if you try to put it on paper." Wei Chou then asked Kuei-shan's disciple Yang-shan for a verse, but he drew an ensō on a piece of paper and said, "To understand this with thinking is second best; to understand this without thinking is third best."[21]

Kuei-shan was significant not only for these stories, but also because he was the primary teacher of Yang-shan (807–883 or 814–890), the monk whom National Teacher Nan-yang predicted would appear thirty years after his death, and to whom he entrusted Tan-yüan to transmit the secret teachings.

Tan-yüan gave the teaching to Yang-shan but afterward Yang-shan burned the text, explaining, "After examining it, I fully comprehended its meaning. Then there was no use keeping the text." Tan-yüan replied, "Even so, when transmitting this to disciples, people of future times won't believe it." Yang-shan then offered to make another copy of the text.[22]

A monk later asked Yang-shan, "What was the patriarch's idea?" The master, with his hand, drew a circle in the air within which he wrote the character "Fu" (Buddha). The monk was silent.[23]

Other stories are more mysterious, but testify to the importance of the circle to represent that which is beyond words. In one, a monk came to practice under Yang-shan, and asked, "Does the master recognize written characters?"

Yang-shan said, "I recognize some."

The monk then drew a circle in the air and acted as though he presented it to Yang-shan.

Yang-shan acted as if to use his sleeves to erase it.

The monk then made another circle in the air and presented it to Yang-shan.

Yang-shan received the circle with both hands and then threw it behind him.

The monk then stared at Yang-shan. Yang-shan looked down.

The monk then walked in a circle around Yang-shan. Yang-shan hit the monk with his staff.

The monk then went out.[24]

In a similar encounter, a monk asked Yang-shan, "Do you know written characters?"

Yang-shan said, "Enough."

The monk then circled him once to the right and said, "What character is this?"

Yang-shan drew a cross on the ground.

The monk circled him one to the left and said, "What character is this?"

Yang-shan changed the cross to the mystic infinity symbol of well-being.

The monk drew a circle and held it up with his hands like a titan holding the sun and moon, and said, "What character is this?"

Yang-shan drew a circle surrounding the mystic infinity.

The monk then posed like Rucika [an *asura*, one of the gods of the upper existence].

Yang-shan said, "Right so it is. You keep it well."[25]

During the ninth century, while all forms of Buddhism were under intense persecution in China, only the Zen sect continued to flourish. During the tenth century, Zen developed into five traditions, known as the "Five Houses." The oldest of these "Houses" is Kuei-yang, derived from the names of Kuei-shan and his disciple, Yang-shan.[26] The next two, the Ts'ao-tung (J.: Sōtō) and Lin-chi (J.: Rinzai) eventually emerged to form the two major schools of Zen that

continue to this day. From the Ts'ao-tung sect emerged the doctrine of Five Ranks, which combined the ideas of the Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra with native Chinese philosophy of the *I Ching* to express the fundamental identity of the absolute and the relative. This development is visually represented by a series of five circles, ranging from completely filled to empty, thus reflecting the stages of practice leading to enlightenment.[27]

It should be noted that references to circles in Zen are not limited to male monks. The Chinese Zen nun Yi-k'uei (1625–1679), a dharma heir of Hsing-kang, included this passage in a poem entitled, "Summer Retreat,"

> I watch unmoved as waves recede and Dharma
> gates fall into disrepair,
> I draw a circle on the ground within which
> I will hide myself away.
> Suddenly the summer begins to draw to
> a close, and fall comes again;
> It is only recently that I have mastered the art
> of being a complete fool.[28]

Circles were certainly an important symbol in both Chinese Zen and Taoist thought, but despite the numerous stories of masters using circles in teaching by making them in the air or drawing them on the ground or on paper, so far there are no known extant examples of ensō in ink on paper by early Chinese Zen masters.

When Zen Buddhism was introduced to Japan in the thirteenth century by Myōan Eisai (1141–1215) and Dōgen Kigen (1200–1253), who transmitted the Rinzai and Sōtō sects respectively, the circular symbolism was also transmitted to Japan. However, in Japan not only did the stories of Chinese masters using circles become important, but the concrete image of the ensō became increasingly prominent.

> The round mirror hung high, it clearly reflects all;
> Colored paints in all their beauty cannot depict it completely.[29]

Ensō-zō

The use of circle imagery became increasingly significant in formal portraits of various Zen masters, becoming standard beginning in the fifteenth century, and became known as *ensō-zō* (circle portraits). In these images, the master is shown as if contained within a painted "halo" or round window frame within the larger format of the composition. One of the earliest examples is a set of portraits contained in an album depicting twenty-eight patriarchs, each one shown as a bust portrait contained within a round "frame."[30] The series of portraits begins with the first patrarich, Daruma (Bodhidharma), covered in a red robe. Oddly, none of the portraits is labeled with any kind of identification. Although these painted circular "halo" forms are prevalent in Buddhist paintings, of bodhisattvas, arhats, buddhas, and other holy figures, these "halos" surround only the figure's head and shoulders; the rest of the body appears outside the circle, clearly delineating itself as a "halo." In Zen portraits, however, the entire portion of the represented body is completely contained within the circle.

Another example of an *ensō-zō* from this period depicts three abbots of Tōfuku-ji: Enni Ben'en (1202–1280), Zōzan Junkū (1233–1308), and Daidō Ichi'i (1292–1370). The three masters are shown in half-torso portraiture, grouped together within a painted circle.[31] Compositionally, Enni Ben'en, the founder of Tōfuku-ji, is positioned slightly above the other two masters; Zōzan, Enni Ben'en's own disciple, to his lower right, and Daidō, who was Zōzan's

pupil, to his lower left. Thus, the portrait not only depicts the abbots of the temple, but also the continuation of the lineage from master to disciple. As Helmut Brinker notes, the use of circular symbolism does not end with the frame around the figures, but is a recurrent theme in the use of the term *en* (circle) in the masters' names. Not only is Zōzan referred to by his posthumously given honorary title, *En*kan Zenji, "Master of the Round Mirror," but he was also considered to be an incarnation of *En*zū Daishi, "Great Master of Circular Penetration," one of the names of the Bodhisattva Kannon. *En*ni Ben'*en*'s name can be translated as, "The Differentiating Round of the Encircled You."[32]

Symbolically, there is also a question of whether the Zen masters are simply framed by the circle, or if they are instead reflected in a round mirror. The *Dai'en Kyōchi* ("Great Round Mirror Wisdom") refers to a stage of perfect enlightenment that resembles a clear mirror reflecting all phenomena in their truest, most complete state.[33] Yet what is reflected in a mirror is ultimately not real.

> When a mirror reflects a face, it may be perfectly distinct, but this is an image (lit. a "shadow of the form") manifested in space, and there is not any "thing" within the mirror. . . . One should understand by this detailed consideration that mirror and face fundamentally do not exit or enter or go or come. This is the meaning of *Tathāgata.*[34]

Several portraits of the great Japanese Zen master Ikkyū Sōjun (1394–1481) show his figure enclosed in a circle. On one of these portraits, dated 1471, in which he considers himself a spiritual incarnation of an earlier Chinese Zen master, he inscribed,

> In this great circle
> the whole self is presented
> and Hsu-t'ang's true face is revealed.[35]

Again, the idea of one's true self appearing within the circle or mirror is significant; Ikkyū declares in his inscription that not only does his true nature reveal itself in the reflection, but also that of his revered spiritual ancestor.[36] Portraits of Zen masters and patriarchs painted within circles continued into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Japan, notably portraits and self-portraits of the Zen master Hakuin Ekaku (1685–1768), whose own ensō appears on page 30.

Oxherding Pictures

The use of a circular frame and ultimately an empty circle in painting gained great significance from the depiction of the parable of the Ten Oxherding Images (J.: *jūgyūzu*). In Buddhism, the oxherding theme goes back to Indian traditions. The *Ekottarāgama* (J.: *Zōichi Agongyō*), a Hinayana Buddhist text, describes eleven ways of tending cattle and compares them to the various responsibilities of a Buddhist monk.[37] In Zen, the parable of oxherding seems to have emerged in China as early as the eighth century when, in a koan, the Zen master Pai-chang (720–814) compared the search for enlightenment to searching for an ox while riding on its back.[38] During the eleventh century, illustrations accompanied the texts of the "Ten Oxherding Poems" in woodblock printed books. The first painted images related to the poems also emerged during this time, but it was the woodblock printed examples that were brought back to Japan by Japanese monks during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

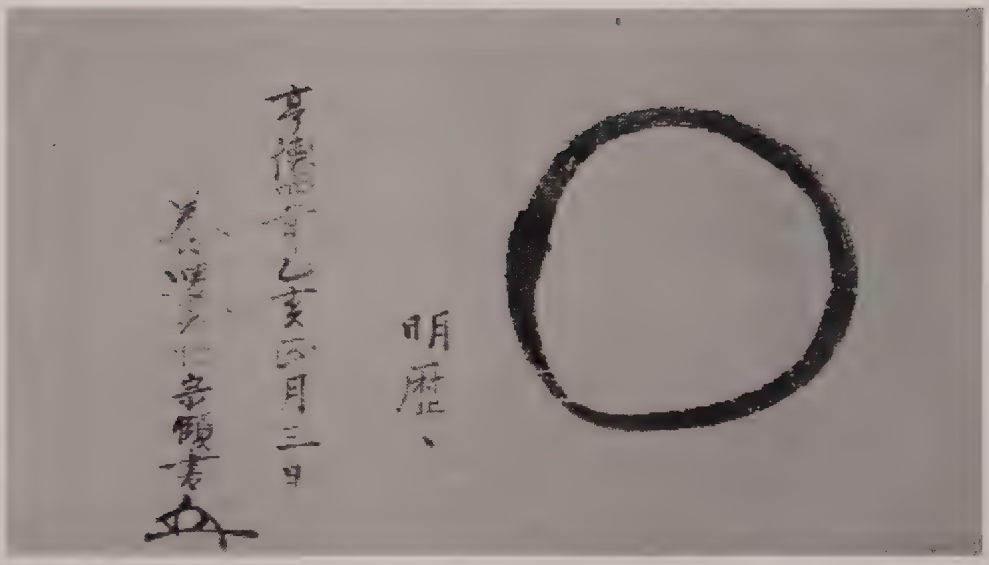
In particular, images associated with the monk Kuo-an (ca. 1150) became increasingly popular in Japan. While some Chinese versions promoted a more "gradual" process to enlightenment, in Kuo-an's version of the parable, the stages of enlightenment are divided into ten distinct steps leading to "sudden" enlightenment (See plate 34 for the stages). Eventually painters of numerous

artistic schools found inspiration in the parable and painted oxherding images, many of which were contained within round compositions similar to the format used in *ensō-zō*. The circular format may have been utilized because, as Helmut Brinker notes, "the circle as a geometric figure without beginning or end includes the elimination of all opposites into absolute unity, i.e., the 'true void', Jp.: *shinkū*. It points to the deep 'insight into one's own essential nature' and symbolizes the fundamental character—devoid of shape and colour—of all living beings, simply but significantly alluded to in Zen painting by the empty ground."[39]

Within the oxherding parable, the eighth stage, in which both the oxherd and the ox are forgotten (all desire is eliminated, all religious thoughts have become void), is traditionally represented by an empty circle. Thus, the circular motif in Zen associated with the void, or an elimination of dualistic logic, not only continued as Zen gained stability in Japan during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, but the idea of an empty circle was visually established and associated with the fully enlightened mind.

The oldest extant set of oxherding images in Japan is attributed to the artist Shūbun (active ca. 1423–1460) and is housed at Shōkoku-ji in Kyoto.[40] Probably not so coincidentally, the earliest known extant ensō in Japan also comes from this period (see fig. 2). Dated 1455 by the Daitoku-ji Zen master Yōsō Sōi (1376–1458),[41] the circle is positioned rather austerely in the composition, slight in presence, but not weak. Yōsō's inscription sits to the circle's lower left reading, *meireki reki* (obvious, obvious) in crisp, easy-to-read script, followed by an extended signature and date. If this was one of the first ensō created in Japan, it is ironic Yōsō chose this phrase to accompany it.

The creation of ensō was continued by Daitoku-ji masters during the early Edo period (1600–1868) such as Takuan Sōhō (1573–1645) and Kōsetsu Sōryū (1595–1666; see plate 19), and then became increasingly popular with Zen masters in the Hakuin lineage such as Tōrei Enji (1721–1792; see plates 1, 2, 29, 30,



Ensō by Yōsō Sōi (1376–1458).

46, 52) and Shunsō Jōshu (1751–1839; see plates 27, 32). As ensō became a standard expression in Japanese Zen art, each Zen master imbued the gesture of the brush with his or her own Zen experience, teachings and Zen mind. As a result, the seemingly simple shape of the circle becomes a fascinating expression of individuality displaying variations in ink tones, brushstroke thickness, shape of the circle, and even the positioning of where the circle begins and ends. The American Zen master Robert Aitken wrote:

> Zen teachers like to draw circles. Sometimes they draw them around from right to left, sometimes around from left to right. These circles can represent emptiness, fullness, or the moon. Or they can represent the practice. The circle that goes around from right to left—against the path

of the sun on the sundial—represents the hard way of practice before any glimmer of understanding appears. When it goes around from left to right, following the path of the sun, it represents the easier way of practice after a glimmer opens the Way. But both before and after the glimmer, the practice requires investment and conscientious diligence.[42]

As the creation of ensō increased, so did the variation of themes and inscriptions accompanying the circles. Although some ensō appear without inscriptions, most include some phrase or verse reflecting an aspect of Zen teaching, sometimes from a Zen koan, sometimes a standard Zen phrase, and sometimes the master's own words. As Shibayama Zenkei wrote, "In that brief expression of an idea, you see the writer's spirit. That is the implicit flavor of Zen. . . . The choice of the inscription comes from that; the choice of the inscription is an expression of spirit. As a Zen person, my heart is pulled ways I can't explain. The flavor of an ensō without an inscription, to me, is like flat beer."[43]

Most broadly, ensō represent the vast qualities of the universe, conjuring up its grandness, limitless power, and natural phenomena. But ensō can just as easily represent the void, the fundamental state in which all distinctions and dualities are removed: "Outside—empty, inside—empty, inside and outside—empty."[44] Very often ensō depict the moon, symbolizing enlightenment, but can also represent the moon's reflection in water, symbolizing the futility of searching for enlightenment outside oneself. Less philosophically, ensō can simply represent everyday objects such as a dumpling, rice cake, or basket. Yet even these seemingly mundane references are meant to cut to the heart of Zen teachings. In the *Blue Cliff Record,* case 77, a monk asks Master Yun-men, "What is a teaching beyond Buddhas and Patriarchs?" Yun-men replies, "A sesame bun."

Whatever the inscription or representation, the Zen master is creating a visual experience and encounter for the viewer—with the circle, the phrase, and

the master's Zen mind. It is also a reflection of the master's lineage and all the teachings that have been transmitted from master to disciple through this simple circular gesture. Shibayama explains, "A circle is a window, it is peace, silence, perfection, and harmony. It is whole and unified. In contrast, angular forms represent conflict, agitation, and excitement. They suggest omission, unevenness, the partial and the particular. The two concepts oppose each other. However, to look at a Zen ensō from this point of view is an absurd mistake. A Zen ensō is drawn round, but the circle's center conceals angles and within a four-sided angle is concealed a circle. The circle and the angle both conceal oneness. Within the center of the ensō, truth reveals the life and soul of the ordinary circle and angle. This is the superior, absolute circle."[45]

Over the centuries, ensō have become an important symbol of Zen itself, a simple ink trace interpreted in myriad ways from deep esoteric meanings to mundane aspects of the everyday. But in this apparent contradiction of interpretations lies the underlying complexity of Zen, from its seemingly enigmatic koans and incomprehensible stories, to its direct, matter-of-fact approach to life.

A monk asked, "What about when there is neither a square nor a circle?"
Chao-chou said, "Neither square nor circle."
The monk said, "When things are like that, what about it?"
The master said, "Either square or circle."[46]

ENSŌ

1. *I Alone Am the Honored One*

TŌREI ENJI • 1721–1792

Tōrei is considered by many to be the king of ensō. He created numerous examples, each visually different and powerful in its own way. Here, the ink of Tōrei's dynamic brushstroke breaks apart as it circles around revealing the paper beneath, a technique called "flying white." This quality enhances the gestural expression of the ensō, imbuing it with a sense of heightened movement and energy as it dominates the compositional space, almost nudging the inscription to one side.

The inscription says, "Tenjo tenka yuiga dokuson," which can be translated as,

> In heaven above and the earth below,
> I alone am the honored one.

These words were spoken by the historical Buddha Sakyamuni at his birth. Tōrei used this phrase on most of his ensō images, in Zen it also refers to a phrase from case 57 in the *Blue Cliff Record* collection of koan in which a monk said to the Zen Master Chao-chou (Jōshū), "The true Way is not difficult, simply refrain from discriminations and distinctions. But, what are discriminations and distinctions?" Chao-chou replied, "In heaven above and the earth below, I alone am the honored one." The monk then stated that this too was a matter of discrimination and distinction, to which Chao-chou replied, "You boor! Where are discrimination and distinction?" The monk could not answer.

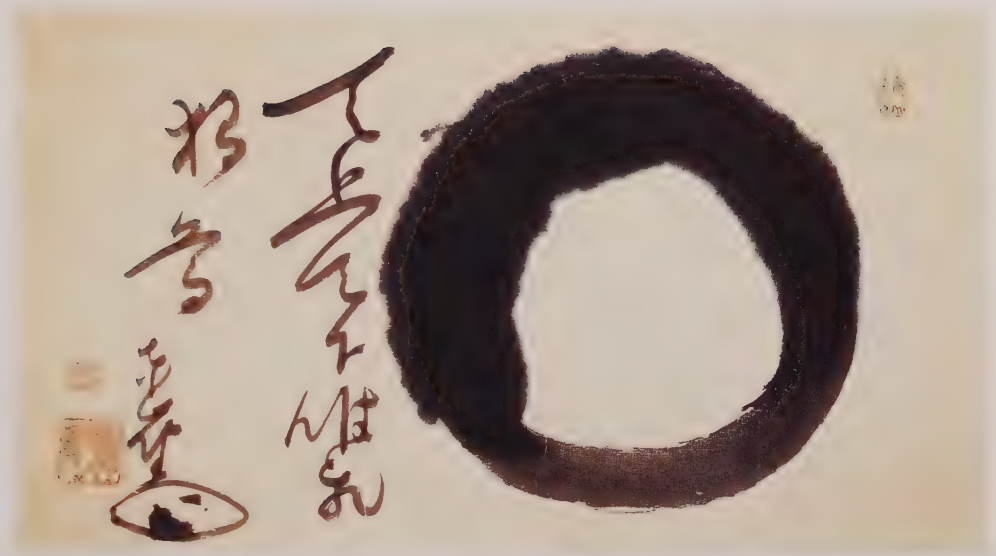
Ink on paper. 13 x 17¾ in. (33 x 45.1 cm). Private Collection.

2. *I Alone Am the Honored One*

TŌREI ENJI • 1721–1792

The fact that Tōrei is known as the "King of Ensō" is due not only to the fact that he did large numbers of them, but more the result of their huge visual variety. No two ensō by Tōrei are the same, as can be seen from the examples in this book. In this case, Tōrei created a dark, lush circle the upper two-thirds of which bleed into the paper, producing a fuzzy, smoky quality, richly dense and mysterious. Next to the image, Tōrei places his familiar inscription, "In heaven above and the earth below, I alone am the honored one."

Ink on paper. 12⅞ x 21⅞ in. (31.5 x 55.5 cm). Gitter-Yelen Collection.



3. *Autumn Moon*

GASAN JITŌ • 1727–1797

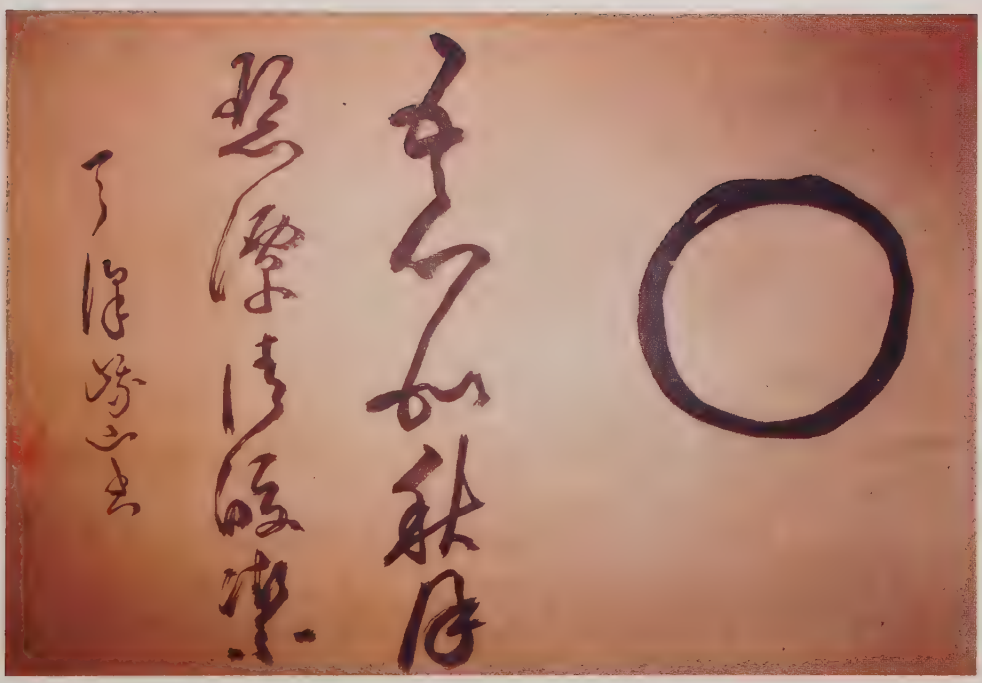
Accompanying his ensō, Gasan's inscribes the first two lines of a poem by the Chinese poet Han-shan. The full poem says,

> My heart is like the autumn moon,
> pure as a blue-green pool.
>
> No, this comparison sucks;
> How can I explain?

Little is known about Han-shan, but it is generally accepted that he lived during the T'ang Dynasty (618–907) as a recluse in the T'ien-t'ai Mountains in southeast China. All the information we have comes from the three hundred-odd poems that have been collected into a volume that bears the name *Han-shan* (Cold Mountain) a reference to the area where he lived. It is unlikely that Han-shan ever became a Buddhist monk officially; however, he was closely associated with the Zen master Feng-kan (J.: Bukan), as well as Shih-te, a kitchen sweeper at a nearby temple. In Zen Buddhism, Han-shan and Shih-te are often used to represent the pure, unfettered nature of Zen.

Gasan's circle sits in the space quietly, almost demurely, somewhat slight in brushstroke. In contrast to the quiet containment of the ensō, Gasan's calligraphy runs in two lines of free running script, the brushstrokes within each character (and often two or three consecutive characters) linked together in fluid, continuous movements of the brush.

Ink on paper. 12½ x 18 in. (31.5 x 46 cm). Private Collection.



4. *Autumn Moon*

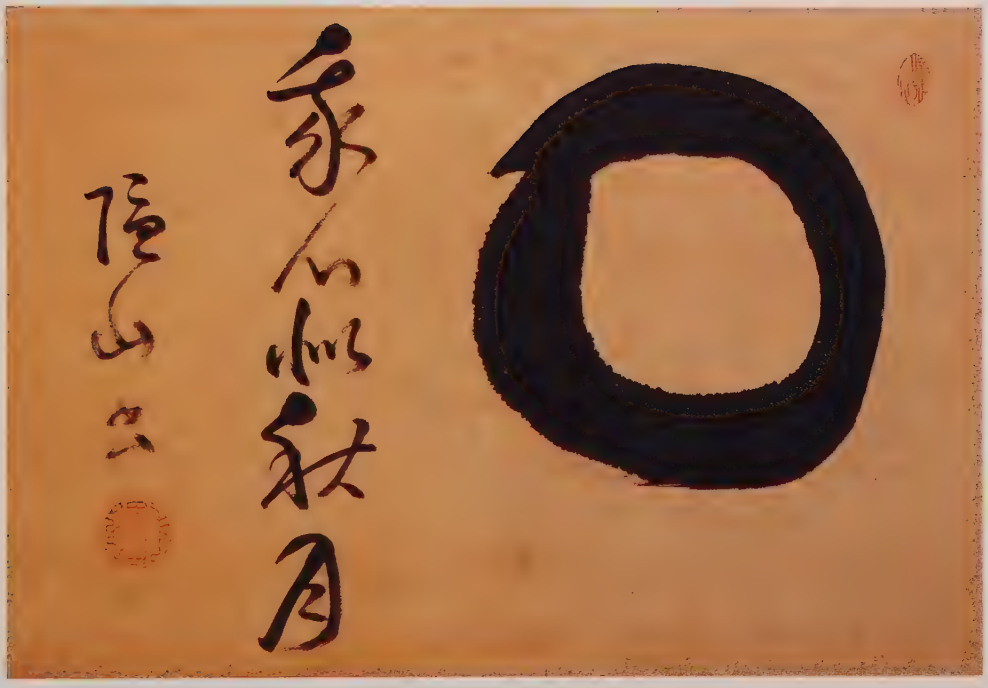
INZAN IEN • 1754–1817

Like Gasan, Inzan borrows the poet Han-shan's famous verse, "My heart is like the autumn moon," however, unlike his teacher, Gasan, Inzan does not include the second line of the poem, "pure as a blue-green pool." Inzan brushed numerous ensō in his lifetime, and often inscribed them with Han-shan's poem.

Visually, the ensō is quite charming. Whereas most Zen masters begin their ensō with the brush in the lower left, Inzan begins this ensō rather high and circles down and around to the right. It is interesting to compare Inzan's work to Gasan's. And whereas Gasan's ensō was slender and refined, Inzan's ensō is thick and fleshy, dominating the composition with its wonderfully robust shape.

It is also interesting to compare how Inzan and Gasan each write this first line of the poem; Inzan's characters each stand independently, and most of his brushstrokes are also distinct. In particular, the character for *moon* at the bottom of the line is intriguing. Gasan links the brushstrokes together in a continuous fluid motion, but maintains the rectangular structure of the written character. Inzan's *moon,* on the other hand, takes on a slight crescent shape, and the curved tip at its top echoes the tip at the beginning of his ensō.

Ink on paper. 13 x 17½ in. (33.1 x 44.4 cm). Belinda Sweet Collection.



5. Katsu

MOKURAI ṢŌEN • 1854–1930

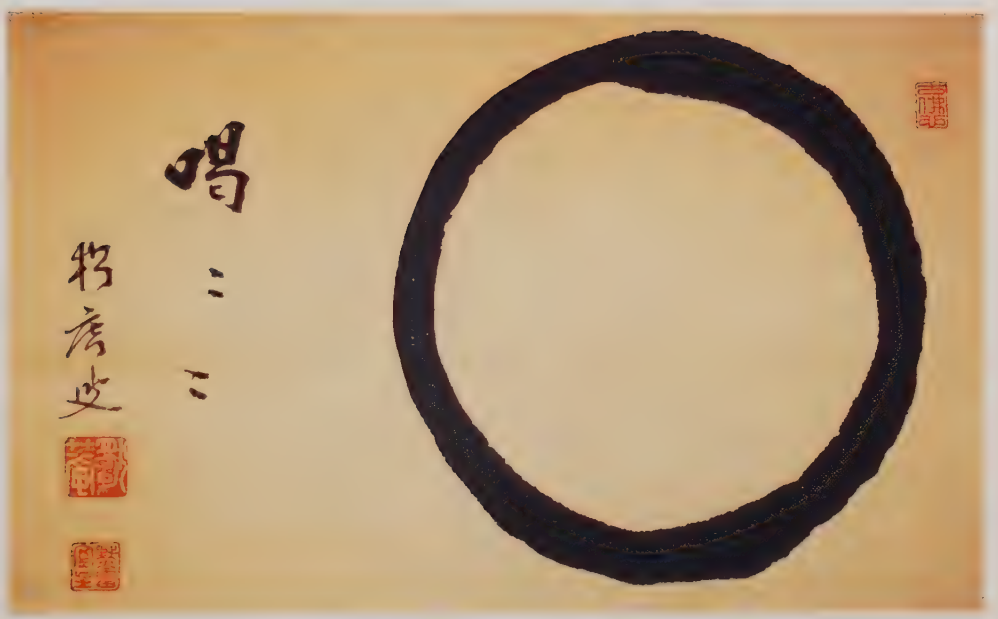
Next to his large circle Mokurai writes the character *katsu* followed by two pairs of terse dashes which serve as repeat marks, thus the phrase reads, *katsu, katsu, katsu*!

Katsu is a Zen shout without any specific meaning, often used by Zen masters to punctuate an exchange or interaction with a disciple. According to Zen tradition, the first use of one these shouts was by the Chinese Zen master Ma-tsu (709–788) who was also known for his unconventional, often very physical, teaching methods such as pinching his disciples' noses or shoving them to the ground. In one famous exchange with his disciple Pai-chang, Ma-tsu gave a loud "*katsu*!" at which Pai-chang experienced a great enlightenment. Pai-chang later said he was deaf for three days from the power of Ma-tsu's shout.[1]

Master Lin-chi, who used these great shouts repeatedly in his teaching, made them famous. *The Record of Lin-chi* opens with a passage in which a monk asks Lin-chi, "What is the essence of Buddhism?" The master gave a "*katsu*!" The monk bowed, and Lin-chi said, "This one can hold his own debate."[2]

Considering the spiritual power and intensity associated with these shouts, it is ironic that Mokurai chose to write his *katsu* in a rather unassuming and modest manner next to the large ensō.

Ink on paper. 11¾ x 19 in. (29.7 x 48.3 cm). Private Collection.


唱
牧唐文

6. *No Space in the Ten Directions*

HAKUIN EKAKU • 1685–1768

Not only is Hakuin considered the most important Zen master of the past five hundred years for his ability to spread Zen throughout Japan both geographically and socially, but also for his prolific production of Zen texts, calligraphy, and painting. Ironically, despite producing thousands of calligraphic and painted works, including innovative subjects which he introduced to the Zen oeuvre, he only painted a few ensō.

Here he inscribes his ensō with the phrase, "No space in the ten directions, not one inch of great earth." The phrase is from a koan in which a monk asks Master Pa-ling, "Are the views of Zen masters the same or different from what is taught in the sūtras?" Pa-ling answered, "When a rooster is cold, it flies up into a tree; when a duck is cold, it dives under the water." In the twelfth century a Chinese monk, Wei-chao, added a verse to this koan,

> A branch of plum blossoms is enshrouded by rain,
> The golden one smiles without speaking.
> A bright moon shines on the Water Dragon Palace,
> While the moon and stars dance and laugh, dance and laugh:
> No space in the ten directions, not one inch of great earth.[3]

Hakuin's ink was rather wet and his brushwork quite loose, causing the calligraphic characters to become solid masses of ink next to his egg-shaped ensō.

Ink on paper. 13 x 21⅝ in. (33 x 54.9 cm). Private Collection.

7. Peace

TAKUJŪ KOSEN • 1760–1833

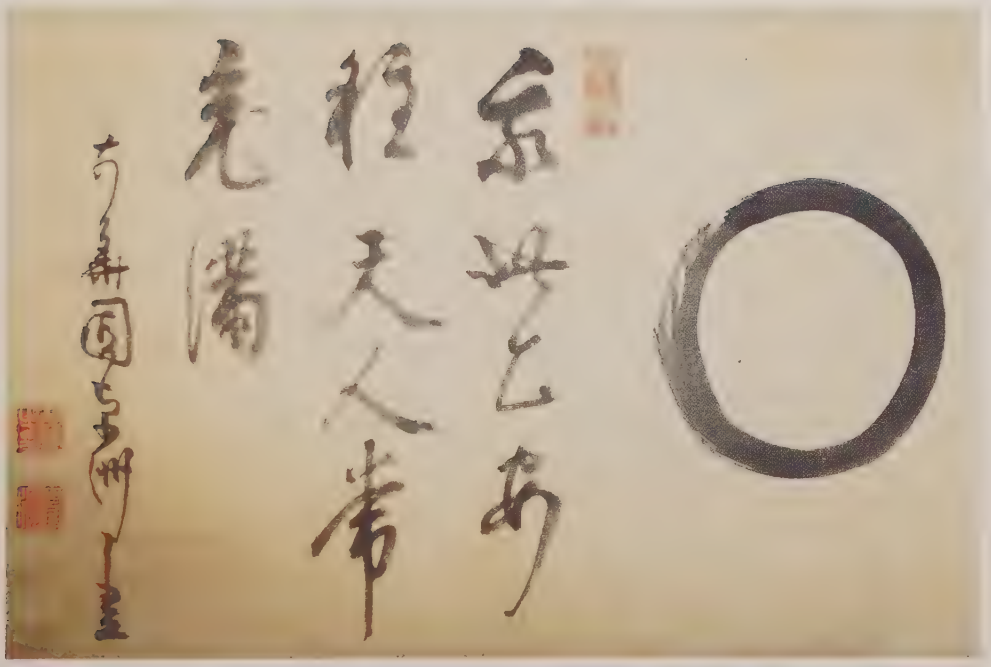
Takujū is one of the most important Japanese Zen masters because today virtually all Japanese Rinzai sect teachers can trace their lineage back to Hakuin through either Takujū or his contemporary Inzan, both disciples of Hakuin's dharma heir Gasan Jitō.

Beside his somewhat diminutive ensō Takujū has written,

> I live in this world in peace
> because the *devas* are always complete in peace.

Devas are celestial beings that live in a heavenly realm, the reward for previous good deeds. Takujū's ensō may reflect the *devas*' sense of completeness, unity, and serenity, but his calligraphy, which dominates the space, is rather contrary with its almost awkward angles and elongated brushstrokes in his favored tone of gray.

Ink on paper. 12¼ x 18½ in. (31 x 47 cm). Private Collection.



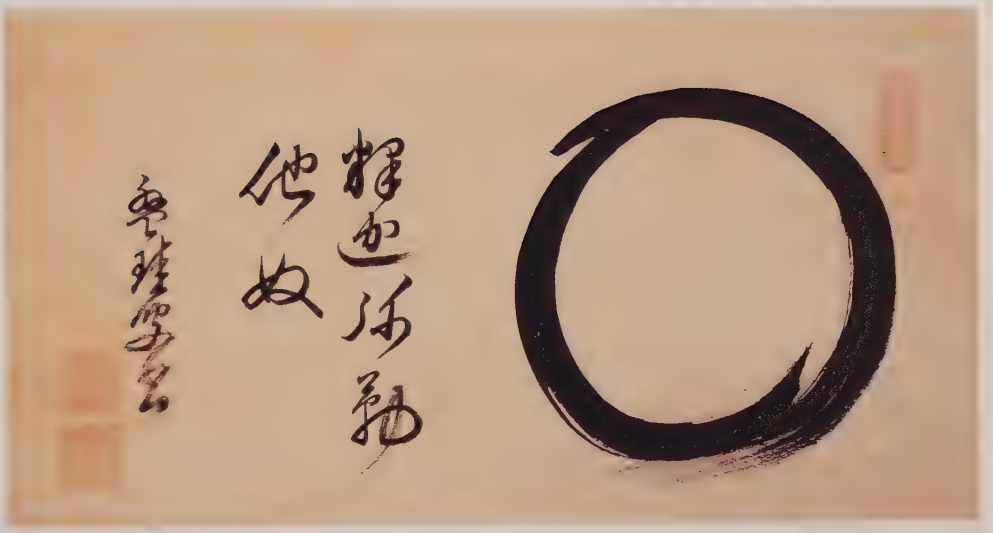
8. Sakyamuni and Maitreya

BANKEI YŌTAKU • 1622–1693

While almost all ensō are created with a single stroke of the brush, the Zen master Bankei was known for his two-stroke circles that provide a variation on the traditional form. The shape is still round and complete, suggesting unity, but now instead of a single stroke circling around to form the whole, two sweeps of the brush must come together from different directions and meet at two points in order to create the sense of completion and absoluteness. The idea of two aspects coming together to serve another is echoed in the inscription, "Sakyamuni and Maitreya Are Servants."

Bankei's inscription mentions two of the most important and revered figures in Buddhism: Sakyamuni, the historical Buddha, and Maitreya, the Buddha of the future. But here they are given a Zen twist and referred to as mere servants of another. The inscription refers to case 45 in the *Gateless Barrier* in which the Zen master Hōen of Tōzan states, "Sakyamuni and Maitreya are servants. But whom do they serve?" In his comments on the koan, Shibayama Zenkei wrote, "You know your own thing best yourself. Nothing can be more certain. If you see, what you see is yourself; if you hear, what you hear is yourself; if you think, what you think is about yourself."[4]

Ink on paper. 11¼ x 21¼ in. (28.5 x 53.3 cm). Private Collection.



9. *Unborn*

YAMADA MUMON • 1900–1988

Mumon was one of the most prominent Zen masters of the later twentieth century, influential through both his teaching and his art. His calligraphy reveals a unique personal style imbued with a playful, charming quality usually represented by thick, fleshy brushstrokes and softly rounded characters.

Here his ensō sits in the center of the composition while the four-character inscription dances playfully around it. The first two characters to the right of the circle read, "Not born"; the second two characters to the left of the ensō read, "Not know." The two phrases reflect the primal core of Zen. "Not born" or "unborn" (*fushō*) is a reference to the Zen master Bankei (1622–1693), who preached that vigorous Zen training would lead to a state of mind/heart in its purely unadulterated form. During an early bout with tuberculosis, Bankei resolved to die. He wrote,

> I felt a strange sensation in my throat. I spat against a wall. A mass of black phlegm, large as a soapberry, rolled down the side. . . . Suddenly just at that instant. . . . I realized what it was that had escaped me until now: *All things are perfectly resolved in the Unborn.*[5]

The second phrase, "Not know" is a reference to the story of the Zen patriarch Daruma's meeting with the Chinese Liang-Dynasty emperor Wu in the year 520. During their encounter, the emperor asked Daruma what merit was gained from endowing temples and monasteries, to which Daruma answered, "no merit." The emperor then inquired about the basic principle of doctrine. Daruma replied, "vast emptiness, nothing sacred." "Who then now stands before me?" asked the emperor. Daruma replied, "*fushiki*" (usually translated as "I don't know," but literally meaning, "not know" or "not knowing").

Ink on paper. Dimensions unknown. Private Collection.


不生
小滅

10. Not One Thing

RYŌNEN GENSŌ • 1646–1711

Hui-nêng was a lay disciple of the Zen fifth patriarch, Hong-jen (601–674), at the monastery on Mount Huang-mei, where he worked in the kitchen chopping wood and operating the rice mill. One day Hong-jen announced that it was time for him to select a successor and ordered everyone to write a poem expressing the Zen mind. The monastery's leading monk, Shen-hsiu (606?–700), wrote a poem comparing the human body to the Bodhi tree and the mind to a mirror that must be continuously cleaned to be free of dust.

One day an acolyte passed through the threshing room talking about this poem. Hui-nêng asked the boy to take him to where the poem was written. He then asked him to write as Hui-nêng composed his own poetic response:

> There is no such thing as a tree of satori,
> No such thing as a clean mirror;
> Originally, *there was not one thing.*
> So where would the dust settle?

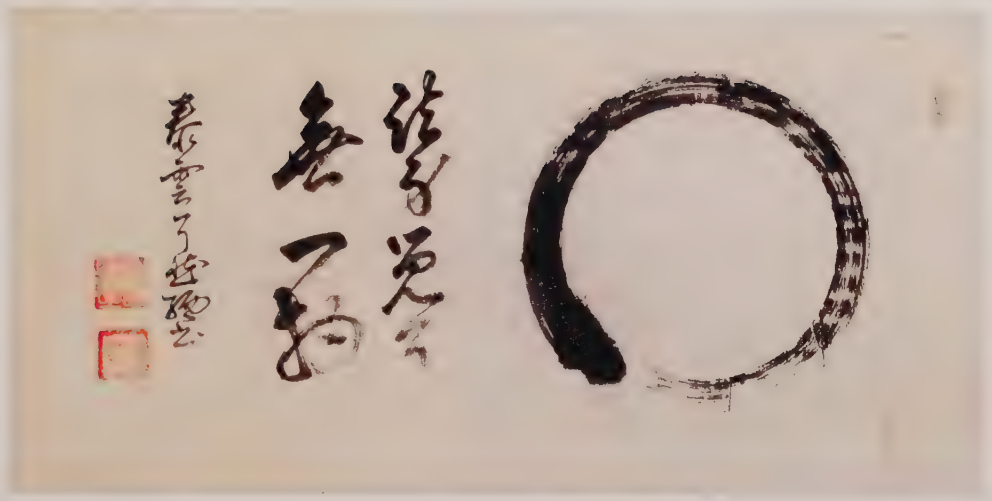
Hong-jen recognized a much deeper understanding of Zen in Hui-nêng's poem, and bestowed upon him a robe and a bowl (the signs of the dharma transmission).

Ryōnen has written,

> When you understand yourself fully,
> there is not one thing.

Ryōnen's ensō is not only a rare example of an ensō by a female Zen master, but also is the earliest known ensō by a master of the Ōbaku sect. The rough quality of the brushstroke is juxtaposed against the almost perfect shape of the circle creating an edgy balance between elegance and energy.

Ink on paper. 11⅜ x 22 in. (29 x 56 cm). Private Collection.



11. Bamboo

DEIRYŪ KUTSU (KANSHŪ SOJUN) • 1895–1954

In this ensō, the Zen master Deiryū paints two dark stalks of bamboo and some heavy leaves that shade his inscription, "Leaf after leaf in the pure wind." Here the dark, rich ink of the bamboo is framed by the beautiful fuzzy gray ink of the ensō, and the wet, irregular nodes of the bamboo contrast with the light shimmering quality of the circle.

The line is borrowed from "Cold Emerald," a Chinese Sung-Dynasty poem on bamboo by the poet Po Yu-ch'an (b. 1194). In Zen, the phrase is often expanded to the couplet:

> As I see you off at the gate, there are tall bamboo.
> Just for you, their leaves are raising a pure wind.

The painting of bamboo has long been highly appreciated within the ink painting tradition, and some artists developed not only a personal affinity for the subject, but also a deep intuitive understanding of its spirit. The Zen scholar D. T. Suzuki wrote of this relationship:

> To become a bamboo and to forget that you are one with it while drawing it—this is the Zen of the bamboo, this is the moving with the "rhythmic movement of the spirit" which resides in the bamboo as well as in the artist himself. What is now required of him is to have a firm hold on the spirit and yet not to be conscious of the fact. This is a very difficult task achieved only after long spiritual training. Zen, in fact, has given expression to it in the following phrase: "One in All and All in One." When this is thoroughly understood, there is creative genius.[6]

Ink on paper. 12¼ x 13 in. (32.4 x 33 cm). Private Collection of Rusty and Lia Rushton.

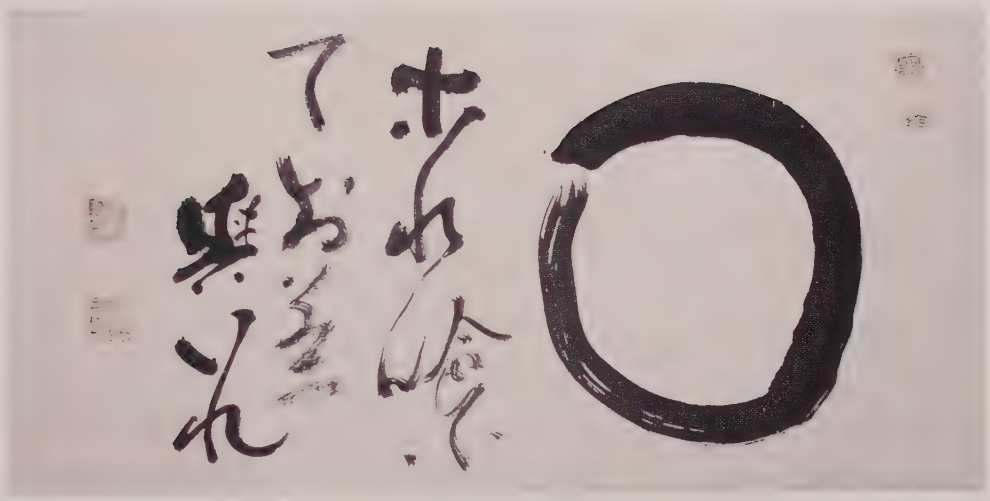
12. *Rice Cake*

RYŌCHŪ NYORYŪ • 1793–1868

The symbolic power of circles has long fascinated people, and in Zen it is no different except for the chance to break away from concrete meanings and overly ambitious speculation. Thus, while Zen ensō have been interpreted as representing the void, the universe, and unity, they can just as easily represent the moon, the rim of a basket or a humble rice cake. Ryōchū here writes, "Eat this and have a cup of tea," asking the viewer not to worry about the philosophical implications of the image, but to merely relax and have a snack.

This down-to-earth, everyday attitude is enhanced by the quirkiness of Ryōchū's lopsided ensō and the accompanying calligraphy, which dances in uneven columns with a delightfully childlike abandon. The two aspects of the ensō's brushwork—solid black on the right, and broken ink on the left—are mirrored in the brushwork of the calligraphy, which switches back and forth from solid to broken, adding to its playful energy. The overall impression of the image is one of being in the moment, having fun and releasing worldly concerns.

Ink on paper. 11⅞ x 24 in. (30.2 x 61 cm). Private Collection.



13. Toilet

SŌ SAIBAI • N.D.

Zen masters often created works of art that they presented to their lay followers in recognition of breaking through a koan or experiencing an enlightenment. In this scroll, Master Saibai explains that a lay follower named Kiriyama has penetrated Hakuin's koan "the sound of one hand," and the sixth patriarch, Hui-nêng's "original face."

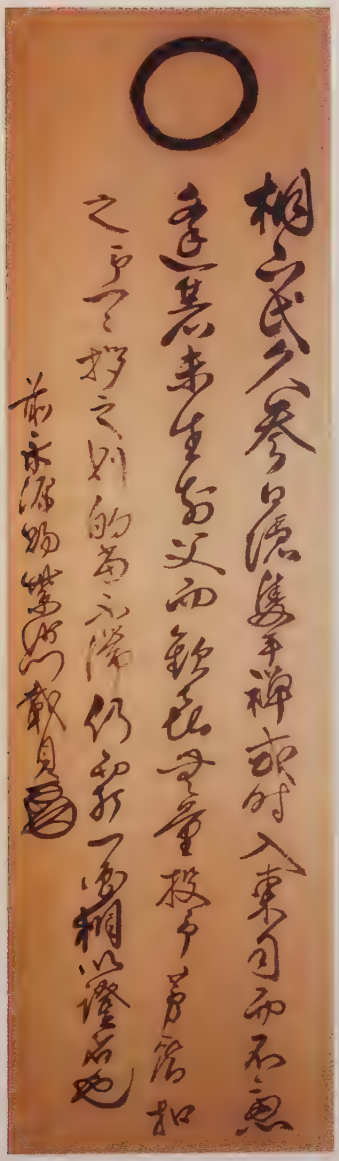
According to the Sūtra of Hui-nêng, the sixth patriarch asked the monk Hui-ming, "When you do not think of good and do not think of bad, what was your original face?" At this, Hui-ming became enlightened. Later, the Japanese Zen master Myōchō Shūhō (Daitō Kokushi, 1281–1337) gave a sermon to the empress Hanazono in which he discussed the idea of one's original face,

> Sitting in either the fully locked position or the half-locked position, with the eyes half-shut, see the original face which was before father or mother was born. This means to see the state before the parents were born, before heaven and earth were parted, before you received human form. What is called the original face will appear. That original face is something without colour or form, like the empty sky in whose clarity there is no form.[7]

The inscription also notes that Kiriyama experienced his enlightenment when he went to the toilet; he then rushed to his master and demonstrated his new understanding, at which point Saibai painted the ensō.

Written recognition of a follower's achievements was not a part of formal monastic training, but Zen masters would often create works such as this for lay followers.

Ink on paper. 36¾ x 10¾ in. (93.4 x 27.3 cm). Private Collection.



14. What Is This?

FUKUSHIMA KEIDŌ • 1933–

Ensō have provided an enormous amount of fascination, allowing people to speculate and ponder their meaning. Although interpreted in many ways—as representing the universe, the void, or a cake, the Zen master Fukushima simply asks, "kore nan zo?" ("What is this?") leaving the viewer to ponder the spiritual or commonplace possibilities. In this radiant ensō the contrast in ink tones, both within the circle itself and in comparison with the calligraphy, create a striking composition. The ensō itself glows from the rich inner brushstroke and the pale gray halo of fuzzy ink that surrounds it.

Ink on paper. 13⅛ x 23 in. (33.5 x 58.5 cm). Private Collection.

15. What Is This?

DAIDŌ BUNKA • 1680–1752

Daidō is known for his bold brushwork, in particular the use of thick, weighty brushstrokes that seem to penetrate into the surface of the composition and infuse the work with a certain dynamic power.

The dynamic gesture of the ensō is carried through to the calligraphy to the left, which basically just says, "What?" a variation on the usual "What is this?" In a sense, the terseness of Daidō's question suggests a directness and straightforwardness in keeping with the boldness of his brushwork.

Ink on paper. 16⅜ x 20¼ in. (41.7 x 51.5 cm). Private Collection.


飞鹿

16. Dog

KASUMI BUNSHŌ • 1905–1998

Bunshō playfully paints an image of a dog carrying a scroll of the Lotus Sūtra as he crosses a bridge. Next to the dog Bunshō has written, "*wan, wan, wan*" (the sound of a dog barking) three different ways. First he uses Chinese characters that mean "peaceful and harmonious fortune," then he uses Japanese *kana* characters, which are pronounced "*wan,*" followed by a pair of repeat marks.

Bunshō often painted images or wrote calligraphy within his ensō, which are known for their variation in ink tones. The dog is an important image in Zen associated with case 1 in the *Gateless Barrier,* "Chao-chou's *Mu,*" in which a monk asks the Zen master Chao-chou, "Does a dog have the Buddha nature?" to which Chao-chou responds, "*mu.*"

Ink on paper (detail). 43⅞ x 12¾ in. (111.5 x 32.4 cm). Private Collection.


和遥

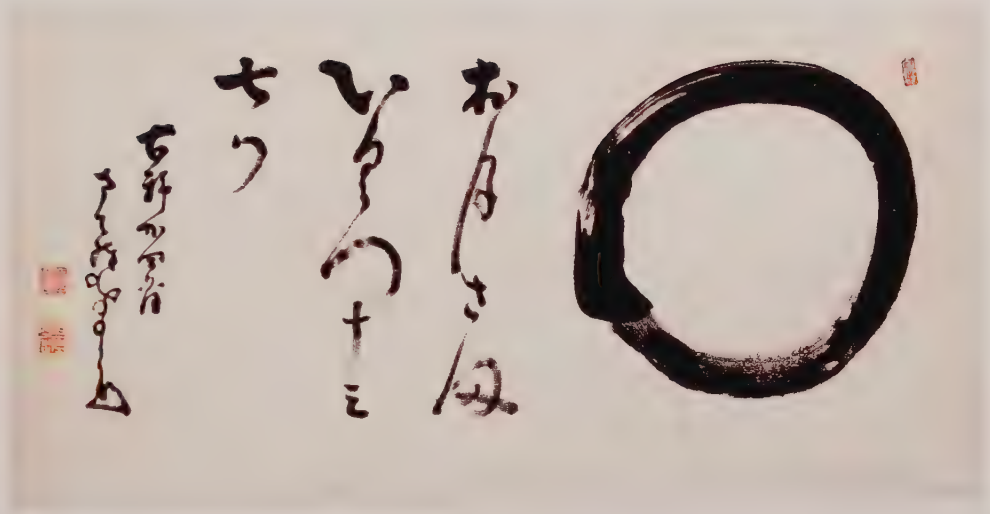
17. Mr. Moon

NANTENBŌ (TŌJŪ ZENCHŪ) • 1839–1925

Nantenbō inscribes this ensō with the phrase, "Otsuki san, ikutsu, jusan nanatsu." This is a verse from a popular children's song asking, "Mr. Moon, how old are you? Thirteen? Seven?" The song is a well-known folk song known throughout the country and mentioned in numerous publications by the Edo period (1600–1868). One publication from 1831 noted that the origins of the song date to the 1400s.

The composition has a wonderfully loose, childlike quality, with the ensō appearing in a slightly wobbly manner and Nantenbō's calligraphy mixing rich dark, strokes with dry strokes of flying white. Particularly striking is the column of the inscription that reads, "ikutsu ju san." The line begins with the bold "*i*" character, composed of two thick but terse strokes of the brush angling out in each direction. The third character, "*tsu*" mimics the round shape of the ensō and slightly frames the following two characters, "*ju san*" which are written with short vertical and horizontal dashes of the brush.

Ink on paper. 12¾ x 24 in. (32.3 x 61 cm). Private Collection.



18. True Emptiness

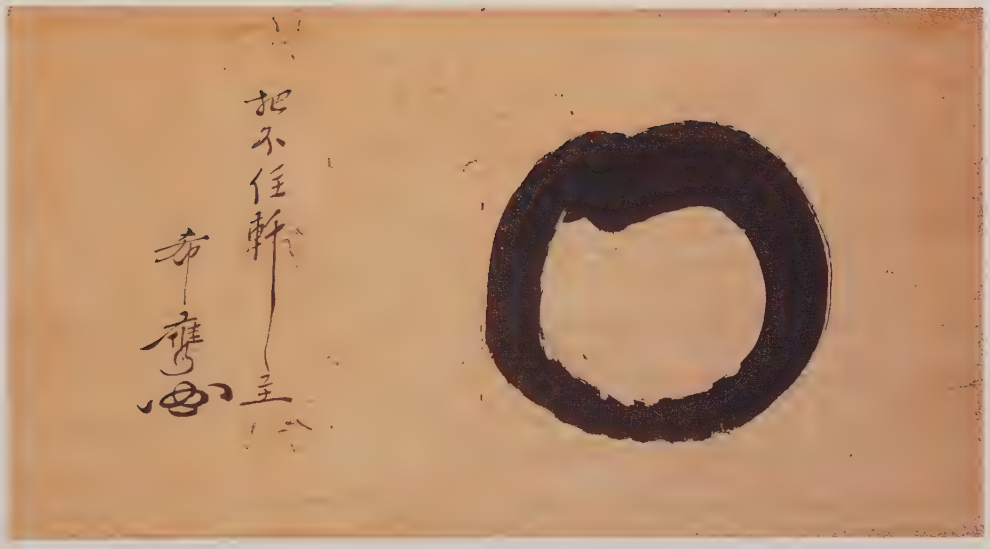
UNGO KIYŌ • 1582–1659

The Zen master Shibayama Zenkei wrote that an ensō without an accompanying inscription was, to him, "like flat beer."[8] While most ensō images include a calligraphic inscription, many do not, including this wonderful example by Ungo Kiyō. Since Zen paintings, including ensō, are representational teachings, a means of conveying a master's Zen mind and experience, a Zen phrase seems fitting alongside an ensō. However, the inscriptions often provide concrete imagery with which to associate the ensō, and as one Zen phrase suggests, this is unnecessary.

> True emptiness is without form,
> mistakenly we create something to grasp.[9]

Ungo allows his ensō—which begins at the top of the circle, swings around, and ends back at the top—creating a little dimple, to speak for itself, including only a two-line signature to the left of the circle.

Ink on paper. 10⅝ x 19¼ in. (27 x 48.8 cm). Private Collection.


把不住軒
主
布袋

19. Board

KŌSETSU SŌRYŪ • 1595–1666

Here the ensō and signature of the Daitoku-ji Zen master Kōsetsu has been carved into a wooden board. After being carved, the ensō and characters were painted white, and over time the board has taken on a rich patina and wonderfully worn quality, possibly from being hung outside in the elements. Kōsetsu included no inscription, but the image suggests the Zen phrase, "Outside of this there is nothing."[10]

Paint on carved wood. 10 x 17 in. (25.4 x 43.2 cm). Private Collection.

20. Wind and Bamboo

SHIBAYAMA ZENKEI • 1894–1974

Wind and bamboo are recurrent themes in Zen poetry and literature. Phrases such as, "Pure wind, bright moon," and "With a plum tree we get also the light of the moon, but without bamboo we lack the sound of autumn," abound in the koan and Zen-phrase collections. Here Shibayama has written,

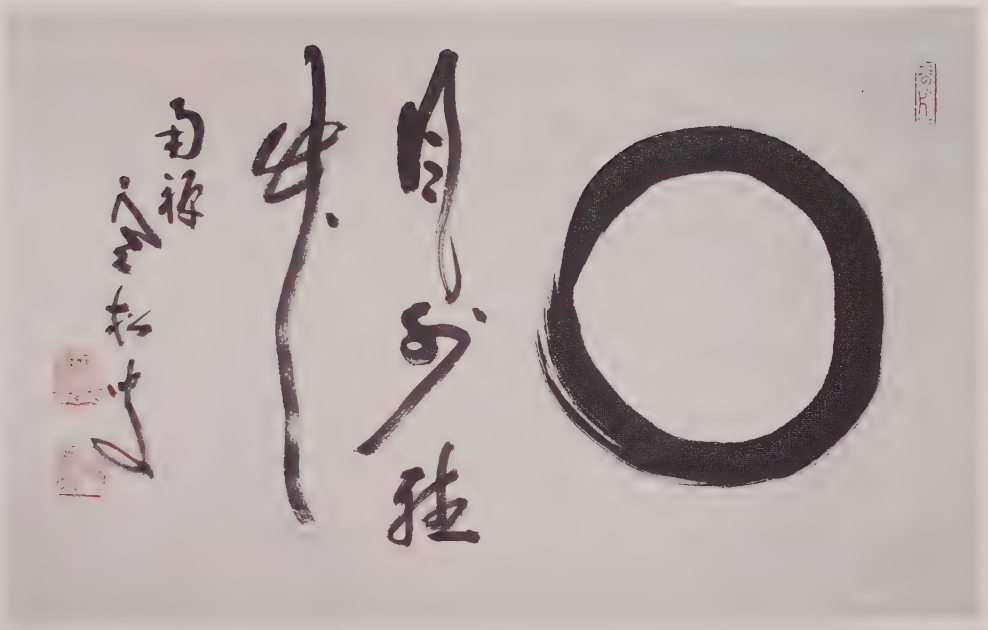
Beyond the wind,
listen to the bamboo.

"Beyond the wind" generally refers to the realm beyond the illusory, material world, while listening to the bamboo is a reference to the fact that some species of bamboo grow so quickly that if one listens carefully, you can actually hear them growing.

Shibayama brushed a simple, understated circle before his four-character inscription. The first three characters are spaced evenly in one column, but Shibayama then elongated the character for "bamboo," drawing it down the length of the second column like a tall stalk of the hardy grass.

In Zen, the bamboo, along with the plum and rock, represent the "Pure Ones" (*sansei*). The three friends are also admired in literati circles for their endurance: the plum is able to bloom even during an early spring snow, the pine remains green through the harshness of winter, and the bamboo is able to spring back into shape from under the weight of snow. They represent the elementary, unbroken forces of nature and thus also symbolize the Zen monk who remains steadfast and determined in his training, unaffected by the temptations and forces of the outside world.[11]

Ink on paper. Dimensions unknown. Private Collection.



21. Barriers

DAIKYŪ EBŌ • 1715–1774

The Zen master Shibayama Zenkei referred to this work as the *yokozuna* (grand champion in sumo wrestling) of ensō.[12] This spectacular circle appears larger than life with its surface of heavy, luminous ink broken by slight uneven patches and small speckles. The rich radiance of the ensō is offset by the rough inner and outer edges of the brushstroke, and is balanced by the elongated, jagged, angular quality of the calligraphy to the left, which says,

If you penetrate one barrier,
there is another.

The inscription is not a traditional Zen phrase, and may be Daikyū's own saying. The phrase reveals the continuous state of Zen training and practice; that one must constantly work to deepen one's understanding. As a result, even if one Zen barrier is penetrated, there is always another, as one koan leads to the next. This ensō represents the ongoing process of training and enlightenment.

Ink on paper. Dimensions unknown. Hōfuku-ji, Okayama.

22. *Barriers*

JIUN SONJA • 1718–1804

Although Jiun was a Shingon monk, he often painted images associated with Zen, including figures seated in meditation. He was also fond of ensō, and brushed them often, inscribing different inscriptions over them. Here he writes, "How many people can pass through?"[13] This phrase refers to the Zen ideal of passing through the numerous barriers that obstruct a practitioner's path to enlightenment. The barriers can be illusions of the material world, which must be broken down, or they can be obstacles established within Zen to help the practitioner break through dualistic distinctions, as a result, koan are sometimes referred to as *kan* (barriers) through which practitioner must penetrate and pass through. There is even a Zen phrase that says, "A square peg passes through a round hole."[14]

Jiun's ensō are usually somewhat wispy in terms of their brushwork, enhanced by their thinness and the abundance of flying white. But this quality imbues the circles with a nervous energy, an agitation and unsettled quality unique to Jiun that often makes the ensō seem like they might fly off the page at any moment.

Ink on paper. 25⅛ x 10½ in. (64.6 x 26.7 cm). Collection of Sylvan Barnet and William Burto.

23. Cultivating Skill

CHŪHŌ SŌU • 1759–1838

With his ensō and inscription the Zen master Chūhō strikes at the heart of Zen. Next to his circle he write two characters, *saku ma,* followed by two repeat marks. "Saku ma saku ma" means to cultivate skill or training, so Chūhō is encouraging viewers to continuously strive to deepen their skill and training, thus ultimately deepening their Zen experience and understanding.

Chūhō was from the long and distinguished line of Daitoku-ji Zen masters, many of which were noted calligraphers, and whose works were often displayed during the tea ceremony. Chūhō studied calligraphy with the Shingon master Jiun Sonja, and his calligraphy here shows some similarity to Jiun's in the terseness of brushstrokes and blunt quality of the characters. This also creates a rather playful, childlike appearance that is enhanced by the smudgy, imperfect quality of the ensō.

Ink on paper. 13¼ x 22½ in. (33.6 x 57.1 cm). Private Collection.

24. Pine

DEIRYŪ KUTSU (KANSHŪ SOJUN) • 1895–1954

The twentieth-century Zen master Deiryū was known for his multitoned gray ensō, within which he often wrote his inscriptions. Here the circle fills the composition and in bold contrasting black ink Deiryū has written "Pine Longevity, Cloud Leisure," perhaps wishing for the viewer a life long like pine trees and leisurely like clouds.

Visually, the terse angular strokes of the first two characters, "pine" and "longevity" suggest a certain stability and fortitude, while the second two characters, "cloud" and "leisure" reflect a softer, gentler curving quality, particularly the "cloud" character, which is allowed to sweep down into the center like a reverse ensō, unifying the space. The composition is also tied together by the fine streak of black ink on the left edge of the ensō, which harmonizes and balances the light and dark tones of the work.

Ink on paper. 12⅜ x 14¼ in. (31.5 x 36.2 cm). Private Collection.

25. Baking Pan

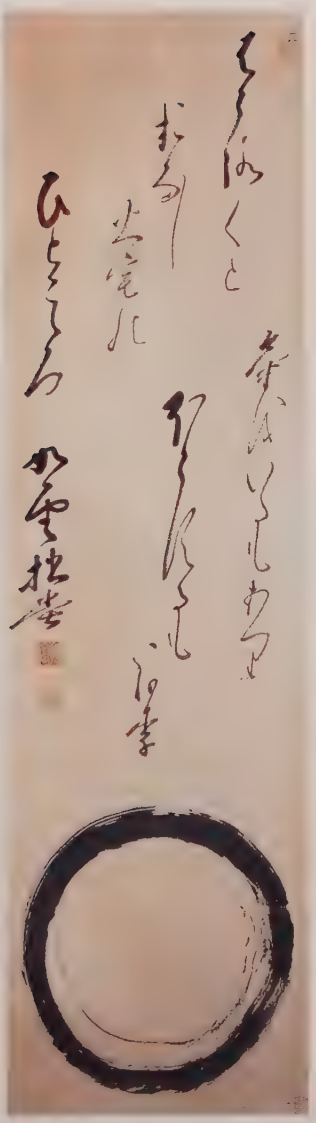
SETSUDŌ NYOUN • 1718–1779

Setsudō was known mainly as a *waka* (Japanese style) poet. Here he applies his elegant calligraphy to an ensō image. The inscription reads,

> Like a baking pan,
> worldly passions
> are consumed by flame.

Although most ensō images are brushed on horizontal formats, some Zen masters utilized long vertical compositions, a format particularly effective in Setsudō's work because it enhances the fine, spidery running brushwork of his calligraphy. He writes his poem in *kana* script, the traditional Japanese syllabary, instead of the Chinese characters that Zen masters traditionally (but not exclusively) use. The light, floating calligraphy is then anchored and contrasted at the bottom by the comparatively rough ensō that adds a sense of restless energy.

Ink on paper 37¼ x 10½ in. (94.5 x 26.7 cm). Private Collection.



26. Every Shape, Every Form

KEIJŪ DŌRIN • 1714–1794

Keijū put so much emphasis and energy into brushing this large ensō that he actually had to compress it slightly on the top and bottom to fit onto the paper. Unusually, there is no inscription aside from the name of his temple, Tenryū-ji, his age of seventy-eight, and his signature, "Keijū wrote this," but perhaps the large circle by itself reveals the essence of Zen. A popular Zen phrase says,

> Every sound is the Buddha's voice,
> every shape is the Buddha-form.[15]

Ink on paper. 16 x 26 in. (40.6 x 66 cm). Dated age 78. Private Collection.

27. Cake

SHUNSŌ JOSHŪ • 1751–1839

In his inscription Shunsō invites the viewer to "eat this and drink some tea" suggesting that the ensō represents a rice cake or some other round snack. Surprisingly, snack foods play a rather large role in Zen writings, and there are numerous references to sesame cakes, dumplings and other treats.

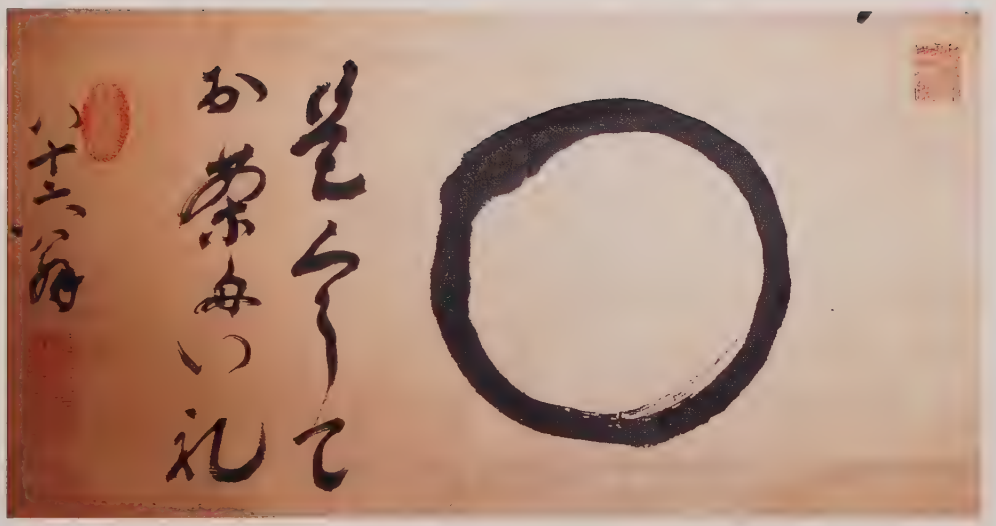
> Over the mountains hangs the moon—Yun-men's dumpling
> Behind the house, steeping in the pines—Chao-chou's tea.[16]

Similarly, there are also numerous references to drinking tea,

> Chao-chou asked a newcomer monk. "Have you just come?" "Yes," replied the monk. "Then have a cup of tea," said Chao-chou. He said to another monk, "Have you come recently too?" "No," said the monk. "Then have a cup of tea," said Chao-chou. The chief monk, Inju, said, "Why do you offer tea to a monk who has come recently, and to one who hasn't in just the same way?" "Inju!" said Chao-chou. "Yes?" said the Inju. "Have a cup of tea!" said Chao-chou.[17]

Dated age eighty-six, this ensō was done relatively late in Shunsō's life, yet the circle and the calligraphy both display great spirit and vitality.

Ink on paper. 11 x 20⅞ in. (28 x 53 cm). Dated age 86. Private Collection.

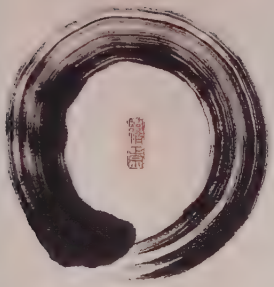

先々で
お茶会の礼
八十二翁

28. Eat This

FUKUSHIMA KEIDŌ • 1932–

Zen transcends cultures and language.

Ink on paper. 48 x 13⅜ in. (122 x 34.1 cm). Private Collection.



Please
eat
this.

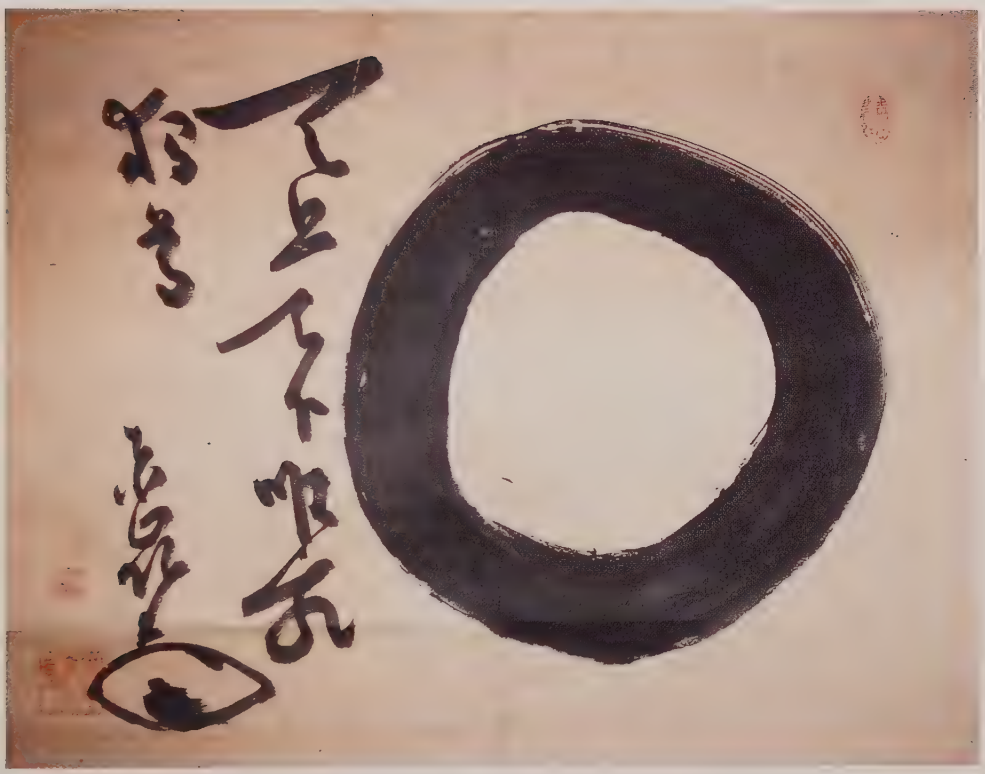
Japan
Keido

29. I Alone Am the Honored One

TŌREI ENJI • 1721–1792

Here Tōrei uses his familiar inscription, "In heaven above and the earth below, I alone am the honored one," placed next to a solid, evenly inked ensō. In contrast to the sense of movement and energy found in other ensō by Tōrei, this one demonstrates its power through a sense of weight and stability. The circle itself is not perfectly round, nor is its outer edge smooth, and this slight variation in shape and break in the ink around the edge keeps the image from becoming stagnant despite its massive presence.

Ink on paper. 16⅞ x 21½ in. (43 x 54.5 cm). Private Collection.



30. I Alone Am the Honored One

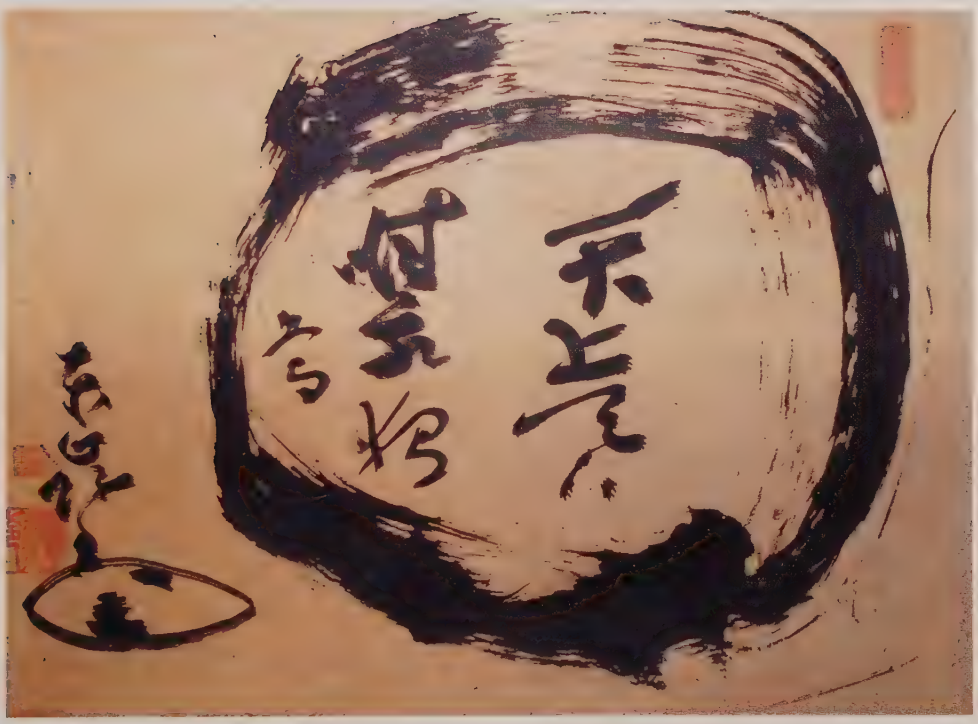
TŌREI ENJI • 1721–1792

Tōrei was a maverick in Zen. Tenacious and determined, he endured physical setbacks during his training and eventually received the dharma transmission from Hakuin, who remarked, "I have more than one hundred pupils, but none is superior to Tōrei."[18] In art, his untrammeled style is bold and individualistic even by Zen standards.

While writing inscriptions within ensō became a popular practice in the twentieth century, during the Edo period it was still quite uncommon. Tōrei was, as often the case, the exception. Here he boldly writes, "In heaven above and the earth below, I alone am the honored one" in the center of the circle. The ensō itself is also quite dramatic and unusual: full of dynamic energy from the twisted strokes of flying white, it appears almost square in shape and may be composed of two brushstrokes instead of the traditional one. This ensō brings to mind the phrase,

> The great square has no outside,
> the great circle has no inside.[19]

Ink on paper. Dimensions unknown. Private Collection.



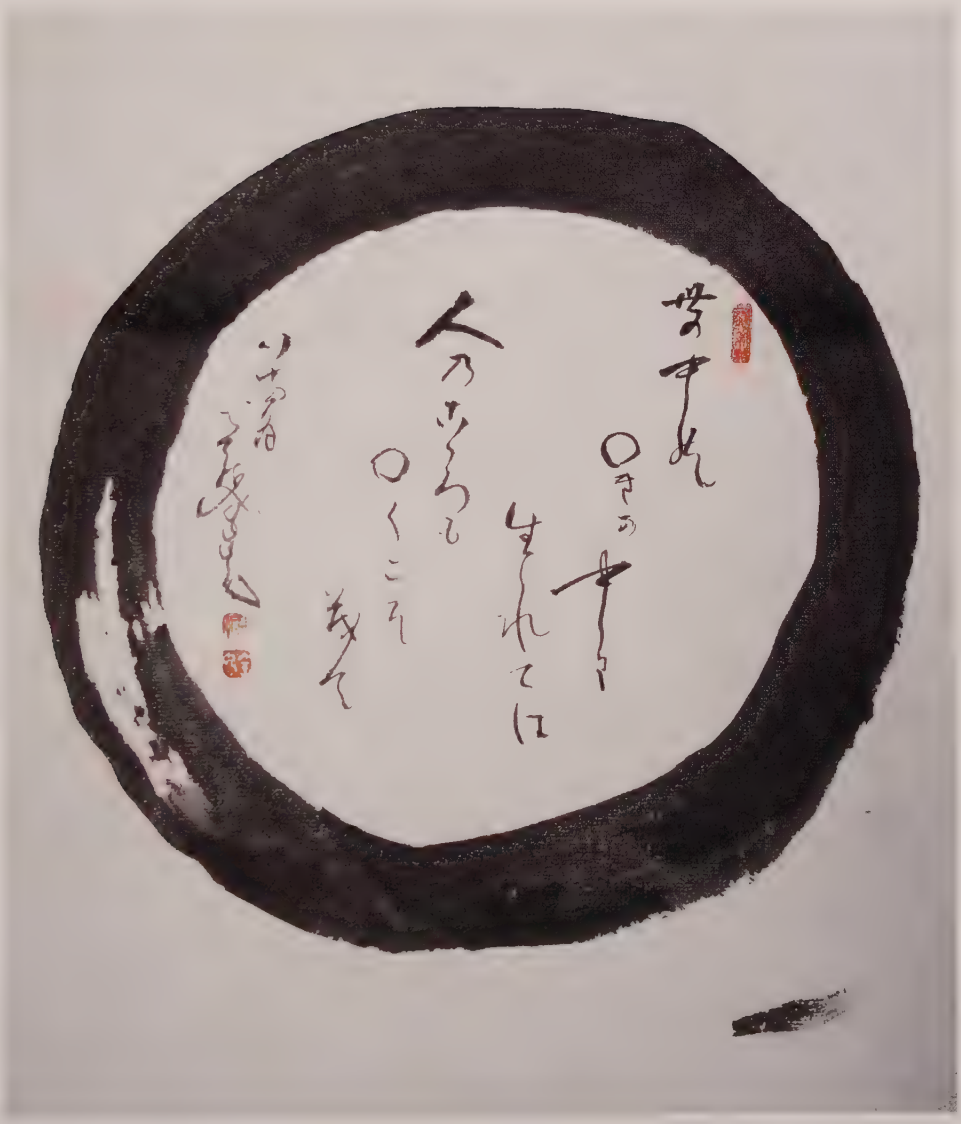
31. Ensō in Ensō

NANTENBŌ (TŌJŪ ZENCHŪ) • 1839–1925

Nantenbō was one of the most influential and innovative Zen masters of the early twentieth century, both in his teachings and his art. In painting, he experimented with new themes and revitalized traditional ones with his original conceptions. In this small ensō, Nantenbō not only playfully places the inscription inside the circle, but also includes two smaller ensō within the inscription, which reads,

> Born within the ensō of the world,
> the human heart must also
> become an ensō.

Ink on paper. 8¼ x 7 in. (20.9 x 17.8 cm). Dated age 84. Hōsei-an Collection.



32. *What Is This?*

SHUNSŌ JŌSHU • 1751–1839

Shunsō received the dharma transmission from Suiō Genro, and thus was a dharma descendent of Hakuin. Like both Hakuin and Suiō, Shunsō was a noted painter, producing powerful images of the Zen patriarch Daruma and other famous Zen teachers. Here Shunsō fills the composition with a large ensō, then to the left, in fine, somewhat jagged brushwork, inscribes, "kore nan zo?" ("what is this?").

By having the ensō dominate the space, Shunsō allows the viewer to concentrate on the image, considering its spiritual, philosophical, or mundane possibilities without having the question, "what is it?" overwhelm the experience.

Ink on paper. 19.5 x 22 in. (49.5 x 55.8 cm). Private Collection.


是什麼
春業

33. Abiraunken

JIUN SONJA • 1718–1804

Jiun has inscribed his ensō with five Sanskrit (J.: *bonji*) characters that read, *a bi ra un ken* (Skt.: *a vi ra hum kham*). The phrase is a mantra associated with Dainichi Nyorai (Mahavairocana), the Great Radiant Buddha, but it is considered to be a universal prayer within Buddhism. The five characters mean earth, water, fire, wind, and the void, but each also represents an important step within the journey to attainment (Skt.: *samādhi*).

A: earth. Represents creativity and growth. *A* is the base syllable for all words; it is the root of all speech and life. It represents the original, unborn nature of the universe, and thus the innate desire for enlightenment.

Bi: water. The washing away of impurities, allowing full concentration in practice.

Ra: fire. The burning or destroying of obstructions to enlightenment.

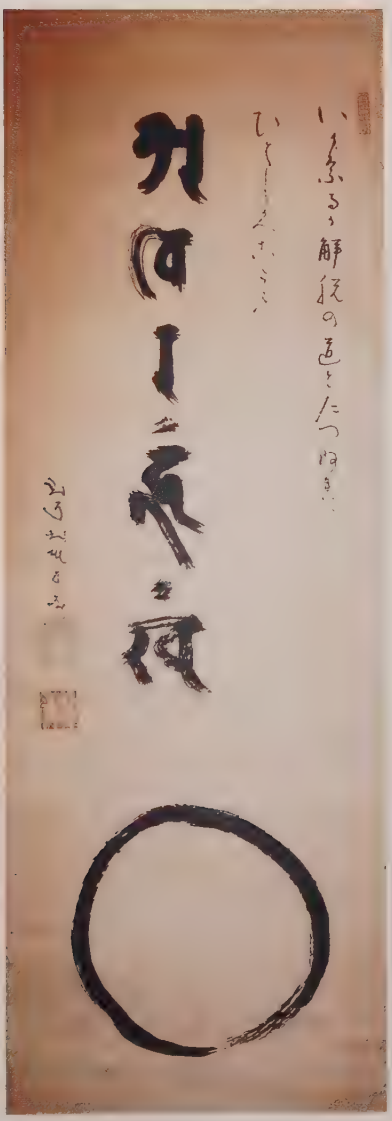
Un: wind. The sweeping away of dust (impurities) and afflictions of the mind.

Ken: sky, space, the void. Represents the dharma realm, the final attainment of enlightenment.

Thus, the mantra as a whole encompasses the practitioner's journey from a desire for enlightenment to the final attainment.[20]

Jiun was a Shingon monk, but he often combined elements of Zen in his work, as is seen here. He was a skilled in *bonji* and utilized it frequently in calligraphic scrolls. His use of this inscription with an ensō here is innovative yet appropriate, considering the mantra's meaning.

Ink on paper. 47¼ x 16½ in. (120 x 41.9 cm). Private Collection.



34. Oxherding

MAMIYA EISHŪ • 1871–1945

Here Eishū depicts a scene from the classic Zen story, the "Ten Oxherding Pictures," which has its origin in eleventh century China. The complete series of images compares the gradual path to enlightenment to a herding boy's search for his missing ox. The ox represents the Buddha nature within all sentient beings, and the boy represents the practitioner seeking enlightenment. The ten stages are as follows:

1. *Jingyū:* Looking for the ox.
2. *Kenseki:* Seeing the tracks of the ox.
3. *Kengyū:* Seeing the ox.
4. *Tokugyū:* Catching the ox.
5. *Bokugyū:* Herding the ox.
6. *Kigyū kika:* Returning home with the ox.
7. *Bōgyū sonjin:* The ox forgotten, the self remains.
8. *Ningyū gubō:* Both the self and the ox are forgotten.
9. *Henpon gengen:* Returning to the fundamental, back to the source.
10. *Nitten suishu:* Entering the city to help others.

In this image, Eishū has depicted the fifth stage, the boy herding his ox, perhaps the most symbolic scene. The inscription says,

> Arriving on the higher plain,
> entering the cloudlike smoke and existing.

The delicate lines of Eishū's painting and use of subtle colors enhance the intimate scene and relationship between the boy and ox. Particularly delightful is the way the boy looks directly at the viewer as the ox looks at the boy. Thus everyone becomes involved in the experience.

Ink and color on silk. 14⅜ x 19⅛ in. (36.5 x 48.5 cm). Private Collection.

35. Nothing Lacking

YAMADA MUMON • 1900–1988

Mumon brushed this ensō on a *shikishi,* the small cardboard poem card that is often inscribed and given away as gifts. Above his almost perfectly round circle he has written, "Nothing lacking, nothing in excess," a phrase from the Chinese text *Hsin-hsin Ming* by the T'ang-Dynasty master Chien-chih Seng-ts'an (d. 606), the third Chinese Zen patriarch.[21]

Within the four-character inscription, the first character on the far right and the third character from the right are both read *Mu* and can be translated as "no," "not," or "nothing." Mumon adds variety to this short inscription by writing the two *Mu* characters differently. In this first example, he simplifies the structure of the character using only two dots and two brushstrokes. In the other example, he transforms the character with a more complicated cursive style.

Ink on paper. 10½ x 9⅜ in. (27.8 x 24.7 cm). Private Collection.

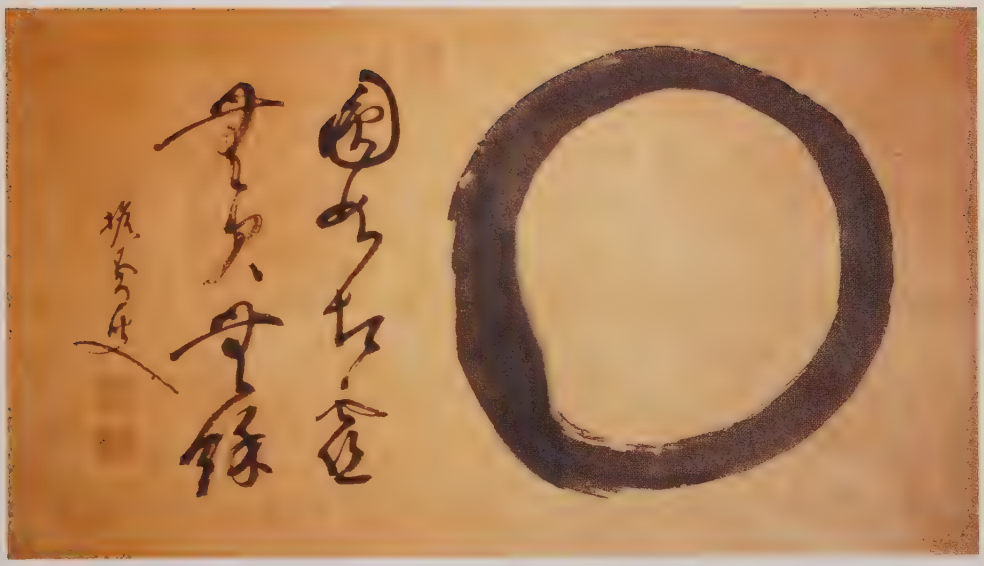
36. Nothing Lacking

TAIKAN MONJU • 1766–1842

Like Yamada Mumon, Taikan uses the phrase from Chien-chih Seng-ts'an's text, *Hsin-hsin Ming*, "Nothing lacking, nothing in excess." However, Taikan includes the previous line of the text,

> Round and perfect like vast space
> Nothing lacking, nothing in excess.

Ink on paper. 12 x 21⅛ in. (30.6 x 53.5 cm). Private Collection.



37. Enter into the Faith

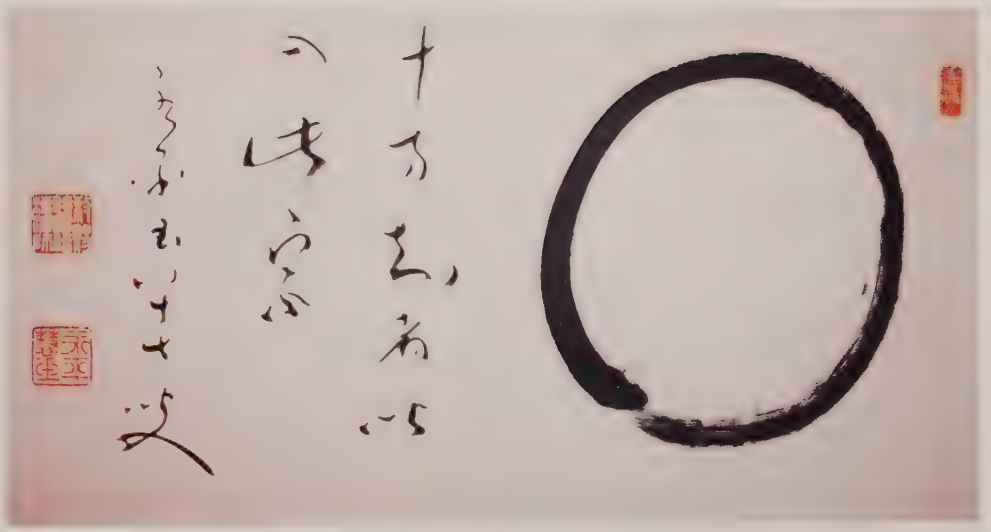
HATA EGYOKU • 1896–1985

Hata Egyoku's light touch with the brush is evident in both ensō and his calligraphy. His circle begins in the lower left and swings around, tilting ever so slightly as it reaches the upper right corner of the composition. Although the streaks of flying white give the ensō a sense of movement, there is a sense of weightlessness to it. The lightness of the circle is enhanced by the crisp brevity of Egyoku's calligraphy, the lines of which seem to dart down the page with a minimum of effort,

> In the ten directions, the knowing person
> Enters into the faith.

The ten directions refer to the four cardinal directions plus their midpoints and up and down, and represent the vastness of the universe.

Ink on paper. 13⅜ x 24¾ in. (34 x 62.8 cm). Dated age 87. Private Collection.



38. Enter from Here

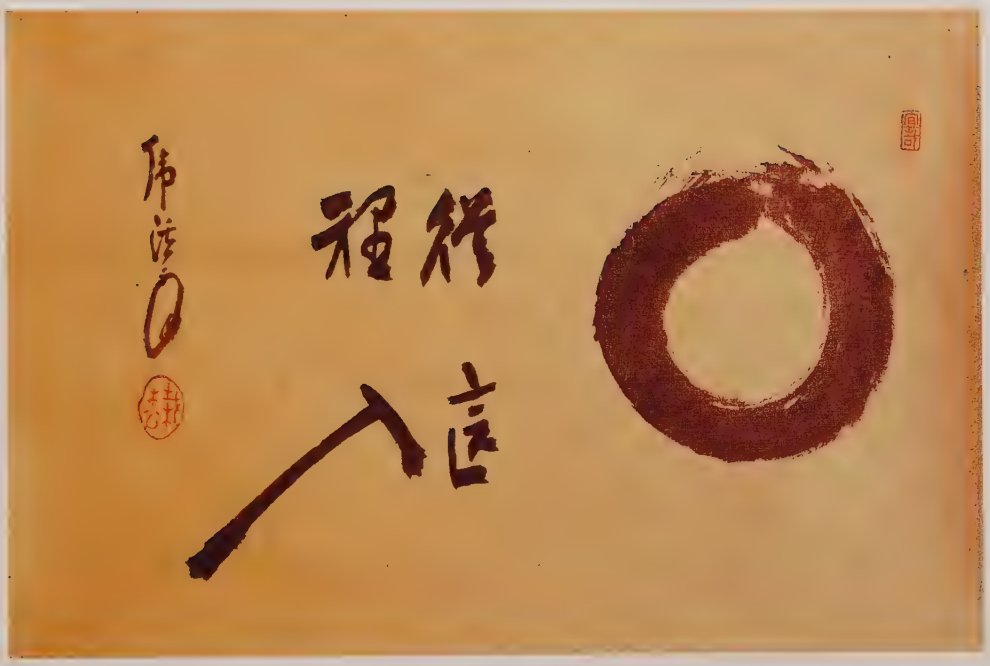
HOSHINO TAIGEN (SAISHOKAN) • 1865–1945

Taigen has brushed a rather tightly compressed, energetic ensō next to which he has written, "Enter from here."[22] Interestingly, Taigen has not written his inscription in the usual vertical columns, but has instead written his characters from right to left in two horizontal lines. Thus, the first two characters are on the top, and the second two below, ending in the character, *ire*, "to enter," which he elongates and drags toward the lower left corner of the composition.

In his preface to the *Gateless Barrier,* Zen master Wu-men wrote,

> Gateless is the great Tao,
> There are thousands of ways to it,
> If you pass through this barrier,
> You may walk freely in the universe.[23]

Ink on paper. 17½ x 11¾ in. (44.5 x 29.8 cm). Girvin Corporate Collection.


祖師西來意

39. Board

CHŪHŌ SŌU • 1759–1838

Calligraphies by Zen masters were often carved into wood signboards, which were then hung on temple structures, sometimes as artwork, but more commonly to designate specific halls or buildings. Here an ensō by Chūhō is carved into a massive wooden board. Other than Chūhō's signature there is no inscription. However, at the center of the board the surface is conspicuously scratched and worn from being hit repeatedly with the small wooden mallet used to call the monks into the dining hall.

Carved wood. 14⅝ x 22⅝ in. (37.2 x 57.4 cm). Private Collection.

40. Catch It!

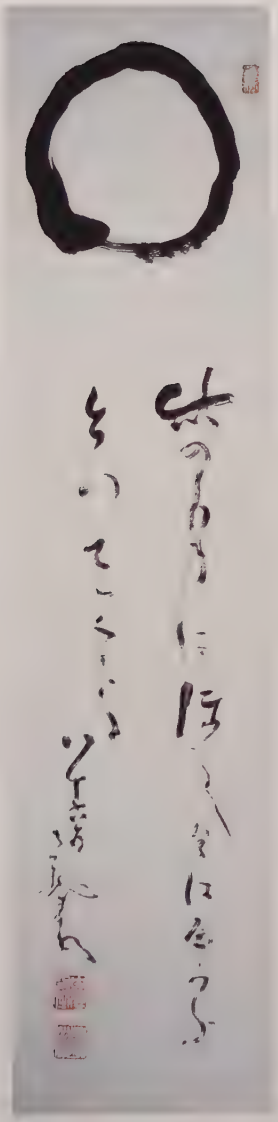
NANTENBŌ (TŌJŪ ZENCHŪ) • 1839–1925

"If you want this moon, I'll give it to you, try to catch it!" This playful haiku, which Nantenbō has written below his ensō, is a reference to the Zen teaching of not seeking truth outside one's own self. Zen masters often refer to a story in the Mahāparinirvāna-sūtra of a monkey who tries to reach for the reflection of the moon in the water. The moon represents truth or enlightenment. The monkey's actions—reaching and grasping—reflect the Zen practitioner's search for truth outside the self, which will never be attained, just as the monkey will never grasp the moon. The monkey, as well as the practitioner, must realize that they are already in the midst of truth; already having within us what we seek outside is a fundamental Zen teaching.

Nantenbō's ensō ripples, appearing like a reflection of the moon rippling in a pool of water. It brings to mind a Zen phrase which states,

Moon reflects in the water,
The water reflects in the moon.[24]

Ink on paper. 51½ x 12⅜ in. (130.9 x 31.5 cm). Dated age 86. Private Collection.



41. Autumn Moon

INZAN IEN • 1754–1817

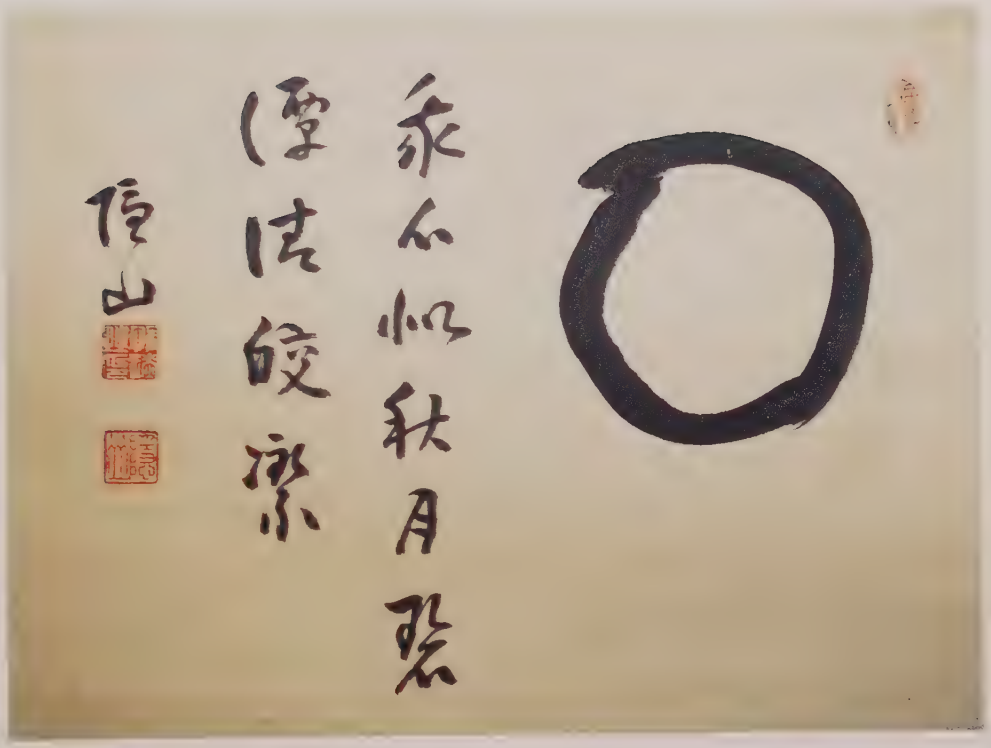
Inzan produced numerous examples of ensō, and stylistically they tend to fall into two categories: thick and fleshy, or rather thin and quirky. While brushing this circle, Inzan's brushstroke seems to have broken slightly in the lower right, and it is unclear whether or not he actually lifted his brush and completed the ensō with a second stroke, or if he merely turned his brush slightly to get back on course. To the left, Inzan inscribed the first two lines of Han-shan's poem,

> My heart is like the autumn moon,
> pure as a blue-green pool.

The Zen master Dōgen also wrote a Chinese-style poem, "Direct Mind Seeing the Moon, Sixteenth Night" in which he makes reference to the autumn moon.

> Contemplate on the sixteenth-night *koan.*
> When the body moon tries for fullness, mind moon starts to fade.
> If you have a clear idea of moon, a moon will be born.
> But how can mid-autumn moon be grasped?[25]

Ink on paper. 13 x 17½ in. (33 x 44.4 cm). Private Collection.


永公心秋月空
澄法皎寒
信山

42. *Rice Cake*

MORITA GOYŪ • 1834–1915

The Sōtō master Goyū has inscribed his ensō with the phrase,

A painted rice-cake
does not satisfy hunger.

This is a well-known saying, but it also refers to a famous sermon first presented in 1243 by the Sōtō patriarch Dōgen. In his lecture, eventually published in the *Shōbōgenzō,* Dōgen states that, "an ancient Buddha said, 'A painted rice cake does not satisfy hunger.'"[26] Dōgen then continues to explain that the materials used to paint a rice cake are the same as those used to paint mountains and waters, and that furthermore, a rice cake is all-inclusive the same way that a painting is all-inclusive and that the dharma is all-inclusive. To search for something beyond is pointless.

> If you say a painting is not real, then the myriad things are not real. If the myriad things are not real, then the buddha-dharma is not real. As buddha-dharma is real, a painted rice-cake is real . . . . The entire phenomenal universe and the empty sky are nothing but a painting. . . . Because the entire world and all phenomena are a painting, human existence appears from a painting, and Buddha ancestors are actualized from a painting. . . . Since this is so, there is no remedy for satisfying hunger other than a painted rice-cake.[27]

Goyū's wonderfully wobbly, lopsided ensō reminds us that not all perfect circles are round, and that the painted imperfection reflects the true nature of all things.

Ink on paper. 31 x 12½ in. (78.7 x 31.7 cm). Private Collection of Rusty and Lia Rushton.


書論不充飢
王伯悟曲

43. Mochi

NANTENBŌ (TŌJŪ ZENCHŪ) • 1839–1925

On a folding fan, Nantenbō has drawn an ensō and written, "Is this *mochi,* is this cake, or the rim of a basket?"

Mochi is a pounded sticky rice cake and, like other Zen masters, Nantenbō here opens the possibilities for the viewer to ponder what the circle might represent. However, everything he suggests is a common everyday object, nothing special, nothing profound. However, at a deeper level, while a basket has a limited capacity, an ensō is unending.

The ensō here is quite pronounced compared to the slivers of calligraphy that are almost hidden within the folds of the fan. The folds also give the circle an unusual sense of depth and dimension.

Ink on paper. 11⅞ x 24 in. (30.2 x 61 cm). Dated age 82. Private Collection.

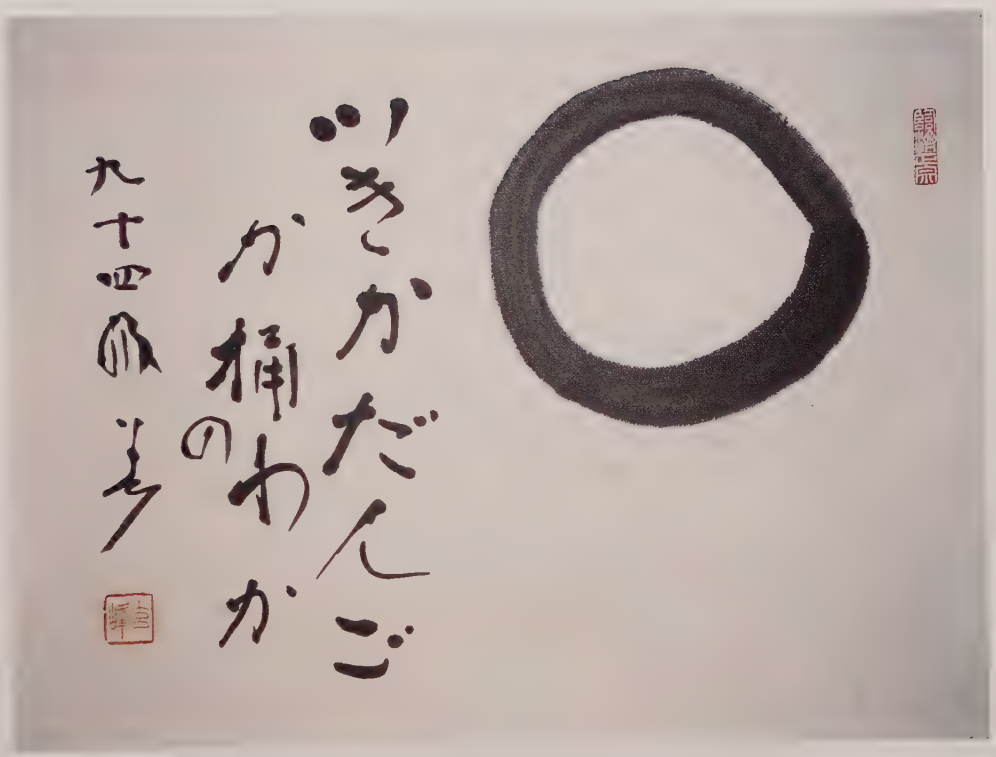
44. Mochi

YAMAMOTO GEMPŌ • 1866–1961

Gempō inscribes his ensō with a phrase similar to the one Nantenbō used on his fan, "Is this *mochi,* is this cake, or the rim of a basket?" However, instead, Gempō writes, "Is this the moon, is this cake, or the rim of a basket?" Gempō uses a playful mix of *kata kana, hira gana,* and *kanji* in his inscription, enhancing the carefree, everyday feeling of his work. Gempō was 94 years old and nearly blind when he created this image, but the joyous quality of the brushwork surpasses any physical limitations he may have felt.

In fact, in the second line of the calligraphy he originally forgot the character *no*; realizing this, he simply squeezed it in between two characters so that it is nestled charmingly between them.

Ink on paper. 16½ x 21¾ in. (42 x 55.2 cm.). Dated age 94. Private Collection.


いきかだんご
か桶のわか
九十四

45. Fancy Words

GŌDŌ SŌKEN • 1761–1835

Although some Zen masters, especially in the twentieth century, wrote inscriptions within their ensō, the placement of a dot in the center of the ensō goes back to at the least the seventeenth century in Japan. The meaning of this dot is unclear, but the Edo-period Zen masters Tōrei Enji and Takuan Sōhō both created ensō with dots. Like Takuan, Gōdō was a master of the Daitoku-ji line and he continued this tradition by placing a dot at the center of his circle. Next to the ensō Gōdō fills the rest of the composition with a four-line phrase that reads, "Fancy words fade like dew."

Ink on paper. 17¼ x 35½ in. (44 x 90.2 cm). Private Collection.

46. Nothing Else

TŌREI ENJI • 1721–1792

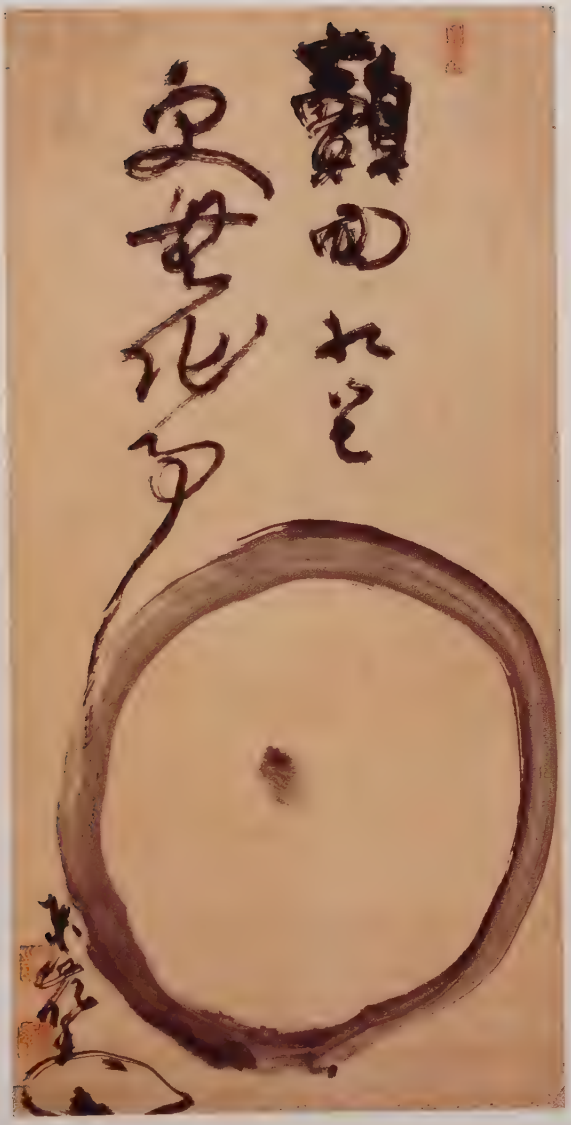
Here Tōrei brushes a large ensō and puts a single dot in its center. The meaning of this dot is unknown; does it transform the ensō into something else? Perhaps it is beyond explanation and intellectualizing, as the inscription states, "The image presents itself—nothing else."

In his diary of the Zen practice, Mr. P. K., an American former businessman, wrote on December 1, 1953,

> At my first *dokusan* [private interview between a Zen master and a disciple] Harada-rōshi drew a circle with a dot in the center. "This dot is you and the circle is the cosmos. Actually, you embrace the whole cosmos, but because you see yourself as this dot, an isolated fragment, you don't experience the universe as inseparable from yourself. . . . You must break out of your self-imprisonment, you must forget philosophy and everything else, you must put your mind in your *hara* [stomach, core] and breathe only *Mu* in and out. . . . The center of the universe is the pit of your belly!"[28]

In this large powerful image, Tōrei contrasts the gray, liquid quality of the ensō with the dark, dry quality of the inscription above. Ever playful and innovative, Tōrei drags the brushstroke of the final character of the inscription down into the side of the ensō leading to his signature below.

Ink on paper. 43½ x 21⅝ in. (109.8 x 55 cm). Gitter-Yelen Collection.



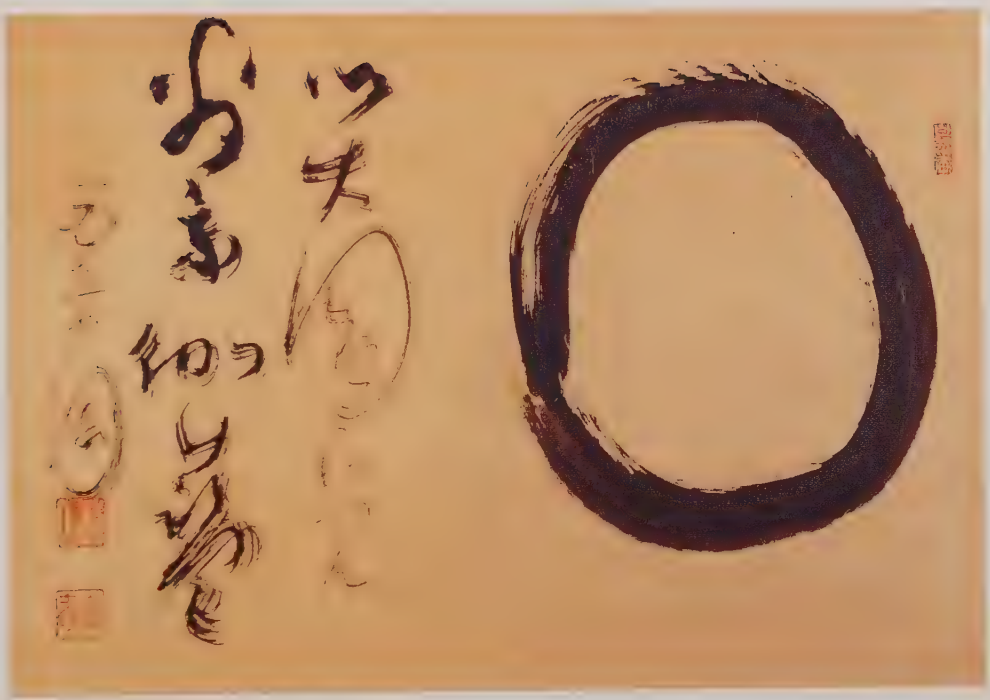
47. Smiling Circle

ISHIKAWA BOKUGYŪ • 1841–1920

In this energetic image, the Sōtō Zen master Bokugyū plays on the form of the ensō by repeating the motif in his calligraphic inscription. Bokugyū rounds the shapes of many of the characters, and also creates a circular shape from the character for "circle" in the first column, which is usually rectangular. The inscription reads,

> Look at this smiling circle,
> it is my monastery.[29]

Ink on paper. 29 x 29¼ in. (73.6 x 74.2 cm). Private Collection of Rusty and Lia Rushton.



48. Dream

DEIRYŪ KUTSU (KANSHŪ SOJUN) • 1895–1954

In this ensō Deiryū writes the single character "Dream" (J.: *Yume*) within a sweep of gray ink that fills the composition. Deiryu's ensō are rarely formed from a single tone of gray or black ink; they are almost always rimmed with a slightly darker shade of gray that gives the circle some dimension and enhances the gestural sweep of the brush. Within these large gray circles Deiryū often placed his inscriptions in rich black ink, occasionally utilizing a large bold single character such as "Dream" or writing a longer four-character Zen phrase such as "Pine longevity; cloud leisure."

The character "Dream" was also a favorite of Deiryū's, as he wrote it, both within ensō and as a single character on a scroll. The use of the character "Dream" by Zen masters is quite common and probably reflects the illusory quality of life that Zen seeks to understand. Ironically, the Chinese pronunciation of the character is "*Mu*," the same as the central concept in Zen. Thus, it is also possible that Zen masters are making a pun that life is not only illusory, but also "*Mu*."

Ink on paper. 12⅝ x 13⅜ in. (32.2 x 34 cm). Ginshū Collection.

49. *Endless Purity*

DAIRYŪ SŌJŌ • 1694–1751

Dairyū was a teacher to the daimyō and tea master Matsudaira Fumai, and his association with tea continued to be strong. This ensō was given to the Urasenke tea master Awakami Fuhaku (1728–1809), to whom Dairyū had also given the Zen name Kohō, which is inscribed on this work. The main inscription reads, "The great circle mirrors the wisdom of endless purity."

Dairyū has playfully impressed his seal in the center of the ensō.

Ink on paper. 10¼ x 18½ in. (26 x 47 cm). Private Collection.


大圓鏡智
性清淨

50. Great Peace

NAKAGAWA SŌEN • 1907–1984

Sōen lived through much of the turbulence of the twentieth century but maintained his sense of humanity, as well as his sense of humor for which he was noted. His many experiences motivated him to find common ground between Eastern and Western philosophies and he spent much of his life traveling between Japan and the West in his efforts.

Within this small but powerful ensō, Sōen simply states, "Under heaven, great peace." The distribution of Sōen 's calligraphy is delightful; he begins with the small character, "*ten*" (heaven), in the upper right, then, instead of moving down vertically, he places the second character, "*ka*" (under), which he has deconstructed into three dots just to the left. He then not only places the third character, "*tai*" (great), prominently in the center of the circle, but also writes it much larger than the previous characters. The final character, "*hei*" (peace), is then placed directly below, and to the left Sōen signs his work.

Curiously, Sōen must not have had his carved stone seals with him when he made this work because instead of making the usual red seal impressions, he has simply made two red ink smudges with his fingertips giving the work an even more personal touch.

Ink on paper. 10¼ x 9½ in. (26 x 23.5 cm). Private Collection.


大

51. What Is This?

KAIZAN SOKAKU • 1769–1846

In Zen texts there are numerous examples of masters asking questions such as "What is this?" "What?" or "Who is it that is asking me?" It is a means of bringing forth the true realization of the practitioner. This is exemplified in the *Blue Cliff Record,* case 51, "Hsüeh-fêng's "What Is This?" In this koan, two monks visit Hsüeh-fêng at his mountain hermitage. Hsüeh-fêng goes out to greet them at the gate and says, "What is this?" The monks simply reply, "What is this?" Hsüeh-fêng turns around and returns to his cottage. In effect, by simply repeating the question, the monks had not demonstrated a full realization, and thus Hsüeh-fêng was disappointed. [30]

While many Zen masters have asked, "What is this?" with their ensō, Kaizan asks not only "What is this?" but also "Where is it?" thereby deepening the viewer's contemplation. If questions such as "What is this?" are meant to bring forth a practitioner's true realization, then asking "Where is it?" turns the experience back to the practitioner's sense of self and true nature.

Ink on paper. 24 x 13⅝ in. (61 x 34.7 cm). Private Collection.

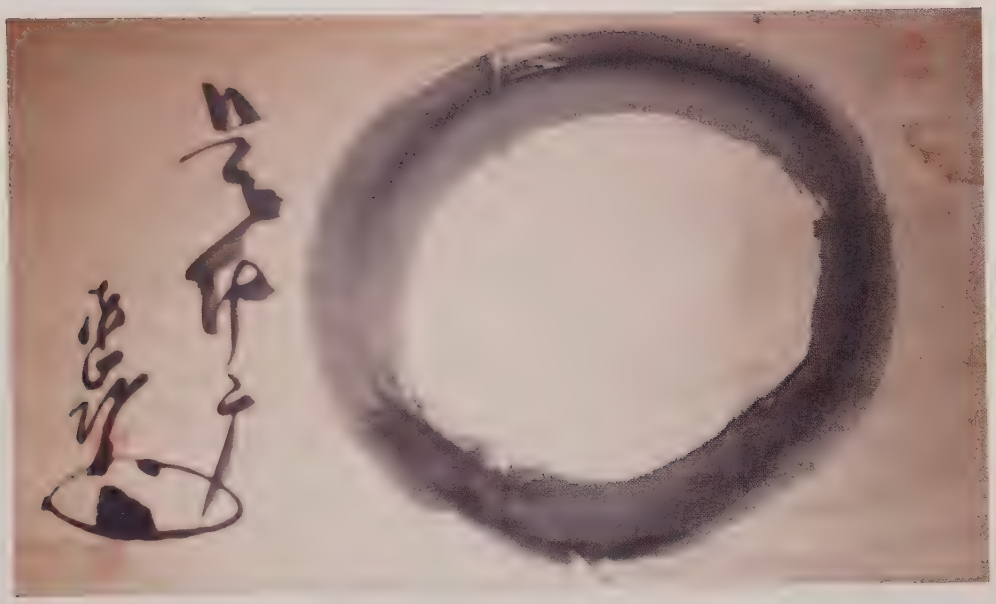
52. *What Is This?*

TŌREI ENJI • 1721–1792

Although Tōrei brushed numerous ensō, all seemingly different in appearance, energy, brush quality, and shape, he usually used the inscription, "In heaven above and the earth below, I am the honored one." However, here Tōrei writes, "What is this?" a phrase traditionally associated with ensō images.

Tōrei's ensō is brushed in gradations of gray ink, broken by bits of flying white. There is a roughness and sense of spontaneity in the circle that carries over into the calligraphy, which is written in a running script that tilts and dances down the side of the ensō. Tōrei then signs the work with his signature, two red seals, and his *kaō*, a personal cipher that resembles a seated meditating figure within a clamshell-shaped frame.

Ink on paper. 12½ x 20¼ in. (31 x 52 cm). Private Collection.



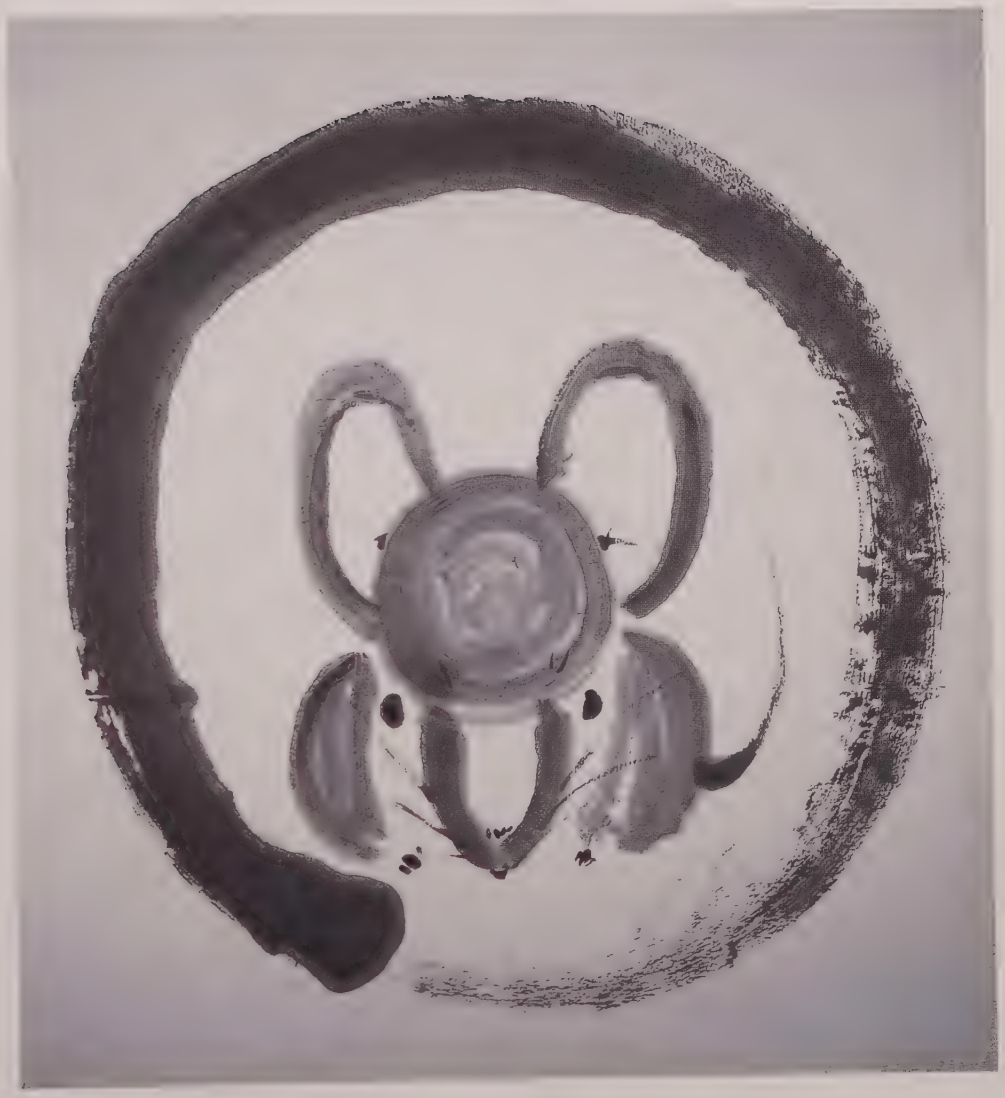
53. Mouse

OKADA KIDŌ • 1902–1988

This large, fuzzy, gray ensō is painted on a freestanding screen at Hōfuku-ji temple in Okayama. The mouse in the center of the circle is a reference to a legend associated with the temple. According to the story, when the painter Tōyō Sesshū (1420–1506) served as a novice at Hōfuku-ji, he had little interest in temple duties or practice, instead preferring to paint. One day the Zen master of the temple took young Sesshū into one of the temple halls and tied him to a large pillar as punishment for neglecting his temple duties. When the master returned later in the day, he found Sesshū crying, with a mouse at his feet. The master assumed Sesshū was crying because of the mouse so he stepped forward to shoo the mouse away. As he moved closer, however, he realized that the mouse was not real; Sesshū had painted it on the floor with his tears. At this realization, the master understood Sesshū's true calling, and allowed him to pursue his painting freely. The temple has since been associated with mice and, as a result, the Zen masters who have resided there have traditionally painted them.

Okada's mouse looks out at us directly—is it curious about us? The mouse's large round features and tones of gray ink wonderfully echo the ensō in which it sits. In particular, the concentric circles of the mouse's head and its prominent ears are visually well suited to the ensō from which it peers.

Ink on paper. 43 x 37½ in. (109.2 x 95.2 cm). Hōfuku-ji, Okayama.



54. *Universe Lingers*

RANZAN SHŌRYŪ • 1713–1792

Ranzan's beautifully full, rich ensō dominates the space. To the left he writes, "The universe lingers, I bow my head." This phrase is a variation on a Zen couplet, which says, "The universe smiles, I bow my head. Human beings come and go, but the reality of Buddha nature remains."[31]

Ranzan begins his circle near the top and moves it carefully down and around, giving it a slightly different sense of balance than most ensō, which usually begin in the lower left portion of the circle. The ensō reveals a great sense of confidence and directness serving to reinforce Ranzan's message of the humble and transient quality of human life compared to the vastness of Buddhist law.

Ink on paper. 21¾ x 14 in. (55.2 x 35.6 cm). Belinda Sweet Collection.

55. *Mu*

KOJIMA KENDŌ • 1898–1995

Here the Zen nun Kojima Kendō brushes a dynamic circle in the center of a *shikiki,* a square poem card. Within the circle she simply writes the character "*Mu*" and to the left she signs the work, "Kendo, 97" referring to her age. She was bedridden and in the final year of her life when she brushed this defiant circle, striking directly at the heart of Zen with a bold form that does not quite join at the end.

"*Mu*" is referred to in the central koan of Zen training, "Chao-chou's *Mu*" in which a monk asks the Zen master Chao-chou if a dog has the Buddha nature, to which Chao-chou simply replies, "*Mu.*" This koan, case 1 in the *Gateless Barrier,* is usually one of the first given to novice monks as they begin their training. For many Zen practitioners "*Mu*" represents the central barrier in Zen practice, and is in fact often referred to as the "gateless barrier of Zen." Zen master Wu-men wrote of "*Mu*" in his koan commentary,

> Those who have passed the barrier will not only see Jōshū [Chao-chou] clearly, but will go hand in hand with all the Masters of the past, see them face to face. . . . Cast away your illusory discriminating knowledge and consciousness accumulated up to now, and keep on working harder. After a while, when your efforts come to fruition, all the oppositions (such as in and out) will naturally be identified.[32]

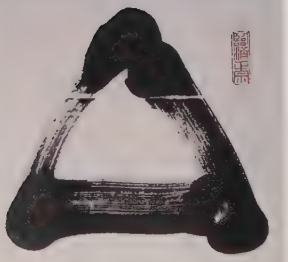
Ink on paper. 10¾ x 9⅜ in. (27.2 x 24 cm). Dated age 97. Private Collection.


無
貫道九十七

56. Triangle

FUKUSHIMA KEIDŌ • 1933–

Ink on paper. 45¾ x 13¼ in. (116.5 x 34 cm). Private Collection.



Even
this
is
a
circle

Japan
Keido

Epilogue

We dance round in a ring and suppose,
But the Secret sits in the middle and knows.

—*Robert Frost*

WHILE THE CIRCLE is deeply imbedded in the philosophical and spiritual beliefs of Asia, we are equally fascinated with this mysterious shape in the West. Artists, philosophers, and mathematicians have pondered, theorized, and manipulated the shape questioning its powerful appeal and searching for hidden secrets. In his 1841 essay "Circles," Ralph Waldo Emerson considered the spiritual connotations of the circle,

> The eye is the first circle; the horizon which it forms is the second; and throughout nature this primary figure is repeated without end. It is the highest emblem in the cipher of the world. St. Augustine described the nature of God as a circle whose center was everywhere, and its circumference nowhere. We are all our lifetime reading the copious sense of this first of forms.

Less philosophically, Sally Levitt Steinberg, author of *The Donut Book: The Whole Story in Words, Pictures and Outrageous Tales,* described the appeal of

doughnuts, "The answer is not in their taste; it's about their shape. The circle is so universal, and the doughnut is very appealing physically and metaphorically. . . . It transcends mere food appeal."[33] Perhaps like Yun-men's dumpling! Whatever the appeal to people throughout the world, only Zen has created a specific genre of art in which a dynamic circular gesture stands as a singular symbol representing more than words can ever say.

Table of Names

THERE IS OFTEN CONFUSION about the names of Chinese Zen masters and texts, since they are sometimes written in Wade-Giles romanization, sometimes in Pinyin spelling, and sometimes in Japanese pronunciation. In the text the names are given in Wade-Giles, and the table below shows the other romanizations.

Chinese (Wade-Giles)	**Chinese** (Pinyin)	**Japanese**
Chao-chou Ts'ung-shen	Zhaozhou Congshen	Joshū Jūshin
Ch'en-tsao	Chenzao	Chinsō
Chien-chih Seng-ts'an	Jianzhi Sengcan	Kanchi Sōsan
Han-shan	Hanshan	Kanzan
Hong-jen	Hungren	Kōnin
Hsüeh-fêng	Xuefeng	Seppō
Hui-k'o	Huike	Eka
Hui-nêng	Huineng	Enō
Kuei-shan Ling-yu	Gueishan Lingyou	Isan Reiyū
Kuei-tsung Chih-ch'ang	Guizong Zhichang	Kisu Chijō
Kuo-an Shih-yuan	Guoan Shiyuan	Kakuan Shien

Chinese (Wade-Giles)	**Chinese** (Pinyin)	**Japanese**
Ma-tsu Tao-i	Mazu Daoyi	Baso Dōitsu
Ma-yu Pao-ch'ê	Mayu Baoche	Mayoku Hōtetsu
Nan-ch'üan P'u-yüan	Nanquan Puyuan	Nansen Fugan
Nan-yang Hui-chung	Nanyang Huizhong	Nan'yō Echū (Chū Kokushi)
Nan-yüeh Huai-jang	Nanyue Huairang	Nangaku Ejō
Pai-chang Huai-hai	Baizhang Huaihai	Hyakujō Ekai
Shen-hsiu	Shenxiu	Jinshū
Shih-te	Shide	Jittoku
Tan-yüan Ying-chên	Danyuan Yingzhen	Tangen Ōshin
Tsü-fu Ju-pao	Zifu Rubao	Shifuku Nyohō
Wu-men Hui-k'ai	Wumen Huikai	Mumon Ekai
Yang-shan Hui-chi	Yangshan Huiji	Kyōzan Ejaku
Yün-men Wen-yen	Yunmen Wenyan	Unmon Bun'en

Table of Significant Texts

Chinese (Wade-Giles)	**Chinese** (Pinyin)	**Japanese**
Pi-yen lu	*Biyan lu*	*Hekiganroku (Blue Cliff Record)*
Hsin-hsin Ming	*Xinxinming*	*Shinjinmei (Precepts of the True Heart)*
Ching-te ch'uanteng lu	*Jingde chuan-deng lu*	*Keitoku dentōroku (Ching-te Era Record Transmission of the Lamp)*
Lin-chi lu	*Linchi lu*	*Rinzairoku (Record of Rinzai)*
Wu-men-kuan	*Wumenguan*	*Mumonkan (Gateless Barrier)*

Biographies of Artists

Bankei Yōtaku (Rinzai sect, 1622-1693). Bankei became a monk at the age of seventeen under Unpo Zenjo of Zuiō-ji in Akō. He traveled, visiting many Zen teachers, and eventually achieved enlightenment at the age of twenty-six. After traveling for several more years, Bankei visited the Chinese monk Dōsha Chōgen at Sōfuku-ji in Nagasaki in 1650 and received his certification. Bankei also received the dharma transmission of the Rinzai teacher Bokuō Sogyu of San'yū-ji in Okayama (Bokuō was an elder disciple of Umpo). In 1672 Bankei was named abbot of Myōshin-ji in Kyoto. Bankei attempted to reach out to as wide an audience as possible, traveling constantly and spreading the tenets of *Fushō Zen* (Unborn Zen), often at large public meetings. *Fushō Zen* was based on the idea that vigorous Zen training would lead to a state that he called the state of the "unborn" (*fushō*). This state was the mind/heart in its purely unadulterated form.

Chūhō Sōu (Rinzai sect, 1759-1838). Chūhō received the dharma transmission from Sokudō Sōki, the 406th abbot of Daitoku-ji. During his youth, Chūhō studied calligraphy with the Shingon monk Jiun Sonja. In 1807, Chūhō became the 418th abbot of Daitoku-ji and head of the Hōshun-in subtemple of Daitoku-ji. The next year he served a term as abbot of Tōkai-ji in Edo (Tokyo). After retiring, Chūhō devoted himself to tea and calligraphy. He died at seventy-nine on the eighth day of the twelfth month of 1838.

Daidō Bunka (Rinzai sect, 1680-1752). The death of his father prompted Daidō to begin studying Buddhism at the age of fifteen. When he was nineteen, he

became a monk, first studying under the Ōbaku monks Chōon and Tetsuun, and then, upon the recommendation of Tetsuun, practicing under Setsugai and Reigen, pupils of Bankei. Daidō then went to Keirin-ji in Kai province (Yamanashi) to study under Master Tōhō. At the age of twenty-five he secluded himself in a small cottage and, after practicing in seclusion for six years, he reached enlightenment. Later, with the monk Yōshun Shudaku, Daidō went to Ōita and studied under Kengan Zen'etsu. Daidō was among those specifically chosen to convey Kengan's teachings. Daidō traveled widely, once visiting Itsuzan, a pupil of Bankei. Eventually, at age forty-one he became head of Hōjō-ji in Tamba province. His teaching methods were so severe that he came to be called "Oni Daidō" (Demon Daidō) of Tamba.

Daikyū Ebō (Rinzai sect, 1715-1774). In the spring of his fifth year, Daikyū began his religious training serving the priest Jikudeno of Shōfuku-an in Kinomura. In the winter of 1720 he took part in a meeting at Tōfuku-ji monastery conducted by Zōkai Etan of Hōfuku-ji in Bitchū. The meeting was attended by more than seventeen hundred monks. From that time, Daikyū became Zōkai's attendant. In 1733, Zōkai died, and Daikyū became the pupil of Zōkai's successor, Itsudō Ekō. At the age of twenty-three, Daikyū traveled to Hyuga in Kyushu to study under Kogetsu Zenzai. After four years with Kogetsu, during which he achieved enlightenment, he left on pilgrimage with his brother monk, Kaigan Chitetsu. While they were staying at Yōgen-ji in Yodo near Osaka, they happened to see a poem by Hakuin hanging on the wall of the temple. The poem impressed them so much that he and Kaigen immediately went to visit him. At first refused entry, Daikyū so admired the teachings of Hakuin that he persevered and eventually was allowed to join Hakuin's assembly. In the following year, Daikyū was appointed Hakuin's attendant, and later received Hakuin's certification of enlightenment. Later Suiō, one of his fellow monks said: "Among our old master Hakuin's disciples, only Tōrei stole all the dharma treasures and

only Daikyū penetrated deeply to the dharma source." Daikyū succeeded Itsudō at Hōfuku-ji at the age of forty-one. During his twenty years at Hōfuku-ji he conducted over thirty meetings to lecture on Zen texts. In the spring of 1774, Daikyū fell ill and passed at the age of sixty.

Dairyū Sōjō (Rinzai sect, 1694-1751). Dairyū became the eighth head of Gyokurin-in and opened Nanmyō-an. In 1741, he became the 341st abbot of Daitoku-ji. Dairyū was a teacher of the daimyō and tea expert, Matsudaira Fumai.

Deiryū Kutsu (Kanshū Sojun; Rinzai sect, 1895-1954). As a teenager, Deiryū was diagnosed with pulmonary tuberculosis and predicted to live only to the age of twenty-five. As a result, he left school and entered Kaisei-ji in Nishinomiya in 1911. At Kaisei-ji he attended the master Nantenbō, always accompanying him on his journeys. In 1913, Deiryū left Kaisei-ji and in 1921 went to Enpuku-ji, where he received the dharma transmission from Kōzuki Tessō. Deiryū became head of Rinzai-ji in Taiwan in 1927 and two years later became the head of Kenshō-ji in Kumamoto Prefecture. In 1932, he returned to Kaisei-ji in Nishinomiya as abbot. From 1937, Deiryū served as master of the Zen training center at Enpuku-ji. He died at Enpuku-ji in 1954.

Fukushima Keidō (Rinzai sect, 1933-). Fukushima entered Hōfuku-ji in Okayama at the age of fourteen, beginning his training under Okada Kidō of the Tōfuku-ji lineage. After high school, Fukushima attended Otani University in Kyoto, studying Indian and Chinese Buddhism. During his graduate studies in Zen Buddhism, Fukushima wanted to gain further firsthand understanding of Zen practice, so he began training at Nanzen-ji temple in Kyoto under Shibayama Zenkei. He trained under Shibayama for ten-and-a-half years. In 1968 Fukushima completed his koan training and the following year accompanied his master to the United States for the first time. In 1970 he returned to Hōfuku-ji to assist his

first master, Okada. Then in 1973 Fukushima spent a year at Claremont College in California as a guest lecturer on Zen. In 1980 Fukushima was appointed Zen master of Tōfuku-ji monastery in Kyoto where he revitalized the training program. In 1991 Fukushima was appointed *kanchō* (abbot) of the Tōfuku-ji sect. In 1990 Fukushima began a series of yearly visits to the United States to spread Zen culture and teachings to American audiences.

Gasan Jitō (Rinzai sect, 1727-1797). Gasan became a monk under Gessen Zenne of Koken-in, Miharu. At the age of sixteen he began a pilgrimage that took him to over a score of Zen teachers including Korei Gyōō of Manju-ji in Oita, Suigan Jushin of Daikō-ji in Miyazaki, and Daidō Bunka of Hōjō-ji in Tamba. All of these teachers, like Gessen, belonged to the teaching line of Kogetsu Zengai. Gasan then returned to Gessen, but later, after an interview with Hakuin Ekaku at Tōrin-ji in Edo, he went to Shōin-ji, where he studied with Hakuin and his disciple Tōrei Enji. He lived for ten years at Rinshō-in in Edo. After the death of Gessen at the Tōki-an in Nagata, Gasan succeeded him as abbot. He was one of the leaders in propagating the Zen of Hakuin. After his death in the first month of 1797, at the age of seventy-one, the emperor gave him the posthumous name Daihō Myōki Zenshi. His disciples included Inzan Ien and Takujū Kosen, known as the "Two Gates" under Gasan because present-day Rinzai priests generally all trace their teaching lineages back to Gasan, and thus to Hakuin, through either Inzan or Takujū.

Gōdō Sōken (Rinzai sect, 1761-1835). Little is known about Gōdō except that he was a Zen master of the Daitoku-ji line.

Hakuin Ekaku (Rinzai sect, 1685-1768). At the age of fifteen, Hakuin became a monk under Tanrei Sōden of Shōin-ji, in Hara, from whom he received the name Ekaku. Soon after he became an attendant of Sokudō Fueki of Daishō-ji

in neighboring Numazu. When Tanrei died two years later, Hakuin stayed a short time at Daishō-ji and Zensō-ji in Shimizu, and then set out on pilgrimage. But he became disappointed at his lack of progress, and decided to study poetry and Chinese literature with Baō at Zuiun-ji in Ōgaki Mino. Later, he resolved once again to devote himself to Zen and resumed his pilgrimage, traveling around Mino, west to Harima province, and also to the northern part of the island of Shikoku. At the age of twenty-four, while he was attending a lecture meeting at the Eigan-ji in Takada, Echigo, he went off by himself to meditate alone in a hall at the back of the temple. In the middle of the night, hearing the sound of a bell from a distant temple, he achieved enlightenment. Another monk visiting Eigan-ji at the time, named Dōju Sōkaku, told Hakuin of his master Dōkyō Etan (also known as Shōju Rōjin), who lived in a small country temple in Iiyama, deep in the mountains of Shinano province. At Sōkaku's urging, Hakuin accompanied him to Shōju's hermitage, the Shōju-an. For eight months, Hakuin was subject to Shōju's severe discipline, after which he received the master's sanction. For several years after, he continued his "post-enlightenment" training. At the age of thirty-one he was sequestered on Mount Iwataki deep in the mountains of Mino, engaged in solitary training, when a servant from his native place arrived to convey to him his father's dying wish that he return to Hara and reside in the Shōin-ji. Hakuin returned to this small, rundown country temple and continued his practice there. In time, monks gathered around the temple, and he began teaching them and lecturing on Zen texts. In 1718, at the age of thirty-four, he was awarded the honorary position of head monk (*dai-ichiza*) at the Myōshin-ji in Kyoto. From that time, he used the name Hakuin. Hakuin propagated Buddhist teachings for more than fifty years and had many excellent disciples, including Tōrei Enji and Suiō Genro. He succeeded in revitalizing Rinzai Zen and made a great effort to propagate Buddhism among the populace, whatever the background of his audience. He wrote numerous books and did thousands of paintings and calligraphies, and

was a tireless scholar and educator. Through these means, he tried to teach Buddhism to everyone, from lords to commoners. In his late years, he reestablished the ruined temple Ryūtaku-ji in Mishima. He thereupon went back and forth between Shōin-ji and Ryūtaku-ji. He died at the age of eighty-four at Shōin-ji.

Hata Egyoku (Sōtō sect, 1896-1985). Hata was born in Kobe and in 1920 Hata graduated from Sōtōshū Daigakurin (present-day Komazawa University). He received the dharma transmission from Hata Eshō. Despite his Sōtō-sect lineage, he also spent time training at Shōgen-ji, a Rinzai sect monastery in Gifu Prefecture. Hata spent many years teaching at Urawa Kōtōgakkō and Komazawa University, and served as abbot of Eihei-ji from 1976 to 1985.

Hoshino Taigen (Rinzai sect, 1865-1945). Hoshino received the dharma transmission from Shidō Mossho and also practiced under Shōzan Echō at Myōshin-ji, and Rozan Egyō (Ekō) at Tokugen-ji. Hoshino moved to the Kokeizan monastery in 1919 where he practiced under Mutei Mutei. He eventually became the Zen master at Kokeizan, and abbot of Nanzen-ji in Kyoto. In 1941 he traveled to China as a representative of Myōshin-ji in Nanking. He is also known by the names Saishō-ken and Master of Mount Kokei.

Inzan Ien (Rinzai sect, 1754-1817). At nine, Inzan entered the priesthood under Rōzan Bengu and attended Rōzan for eight years. When he was seventeen, he began his Zen study under Bankoku, who was spreading the teaching of Bankei Yōtaku. At twenty, Inzan spent seven years studying with Gessen Zenne at the Tōki-an in present-day Yokohama. After leaving Gessen he went on pilgrimage to visit teachers in Edo and Kyoto, and then returned to his first teacher Rōzan, who was now living at Baisen-ji in Horadō, Mino. After living there for ten years, Inzan heard of the success Gasan Jitō was having propagating the Zen of Hakuin at Tōki-an, and went to study with him. Inzan practiced earnestly and eventually

received the dharma transmission from Gasan at the age of thirty-nine. He returned to Baisen-ji, but two years later he again went to practice under Gasan. He worked very hard to gain permission to transmit the teachings of Gasan, finally receiving his certification. Inzan lived at Bairyū-ji for a while, then built a hut on the grounds of Kensō-ji and lived there for eight years. Inzan's lineage became, with that of Takujū, one of the two main branches of Rinzai Zen.

Ishikawa Bokugyū (Sōtō sect, 1841-1920). Bokugyū entered the priesthood in his youth. He became a disciple of Daichō Kaiun of Taizo-ji, and also practiced at Ryūnen-ji, Koken-ji, and Seiryō-ji. He served as Zen master of Saijo-ji in Kanagawa in 1901 and was appointed abbot of Sōji-ji in Noto in 1905. He also served as chief abbot of the entire Sōtō sect.

Jiun Sonja (Shingon sect, 1718-1804). Jiun was born in Osaka and entered the priesthood in his youth at the Hōraku-ji in Sumiyoshi, Osaka. At eighteen, he studied Chinese classics under Itō Tōgai in Kyoto, and then went to Nara to continue his Buddhist studies. In 1739 he became head of Hōraku-ji. Jiun was a monk of Shingon Buddhism. He eventually gave up his post two years later and began full-time Zen training under the Sōtō monk Hōsen Daibai (1682–1757) at Shōan-ji. After about a year, Jiun returned to Hōraku-ji where he lived as a Shingon monk, but continued to practice Zen meditation. Due to its bold, expressive style, Jiun's brushwork is often included in exhibitions and books on Zen painting and calligraphy. Later, at the Chōei-ji, Jiun initiated a new movement that he named *Shōbōritsu,* which combined elements of Shingon, Zen, and Shinto. In 1798, he moved to the Kōki-ji in Kawachi, where he worked to advance the *Shōbōritsu* movement. He was the author of a great many works on Buddhism, among which is a commentary on the *Mumonkan (Gateless Barrier),* a Zen text. He also wrote on Buddhist rituals, precepts for daily living, poetry, and Sanskrit studies.

Kaizan Sōkaku (Rinzai sect, 1769-1846). Kaizan became a monk at the village temple, Shimpuku-ji, and later traveled to various provinces. After practicing under Inzan Ien at Zuiryū-ji in Mino, Kaizan became head of Rinzai-ji in Shizuoka. Several years later, however, he retired from the position and returned to practice under Takujū Kosen at Sōken-ji in Nagoya, eventually receiving Takujū's dharma transmission. Later he became head of Enpuku-ji of Yawata, south of Kyoto, and eventually head of Myōshin-ji.

Kasumi Bunshō (Rinzai sect, 1905-1998). Bunshō was born in Minokami, Gifu Prefecture and became a monk in 1921. In 1933 he began training as a Zen monk at Enpuku-ji, and in 1949 became Zen master and abbot of Kaisei-ji in Nishinomiya. From 1990 to 1994 he served as abbot of Myōshin-ji.

Keijū Dōrin (Rinzai sect, 1714-1794). Keijū became a pupil of Ungai of Enkei-an, in the Saga district of western Kyoto when he was a child. He visited Daidō Bunka at Hōjō-ji in Tamba and studied under him for several years. Later Keijū returned to Tenryū-ji and became head of Enkei-an (now renamed Jizō-in). From around 1753 he traveled extensively, lecturing at temples around the country. In his later years he retired to the Kobaku-an, which he built next to Enkei-an. On the second day of the fourth month of 1794, he died at the age of eighty-one. He was one of the foremost Zen scholars of the age, and highly accomplished at writing, calligraphy, and painting.

Kogetsu Zenzai (Rinzai sect, 1667-1751). At the age of seven, Kogetsu entered the village temple, Zuikō-in, and later became a monk under the guidance of Ichidō Zentō of Shōgan-ji, a branch temple of Zuikō-in. At twenty-one, he accompanied Ichidō to Myōshin-ji in Kyoto, where he studied Zen with Zuido Jōhon at the Chisho-in subtemple of Myōshin-ji, and studied poetry and Chinese with Confucian teachers. He then studied with Ryōgan Shitan and Awa

for two years, and also, in 1691, visited Bankei Yōtaku at the Nyohō-ji in Ōzu, who told him that "his quest for enlightenment was over." He studied under Ichidō for many years, serving as his attendant; later he went to practice under Kengan Zen'etsu of Tafuku-ji in Usuki, and finally received certification from him. At the age of thirty-eight, he returned to Daikō-ji in Hyūga, present-day Kagoshima. At forty-one, he became head of Daitoku-ji upon request of Shimazu Korehisa and established Chiyū-ken within the temple grounds. Later, he renovated Chiyū-ken and changed its name to Jitoku-ji. Upon the request of Arima Yoriyuki, feudal lord of Kurume, he lived at Bairin-ji in Kurume. At the age of seventy-eight he founded Fukuju-ji, also in Kurume, and built Saishō-ken within the temple compound as a place of retirement. He was invited to become head of Myōshin-ji, but he declined. On the twenty-fourth day of the fourth month of 1751, Kogetsu died at the age of eighty-five.

Kojima Kendō (Sōtō sect nun, 1898-1995). While still in grade school Kojima gained an appreciation for Buddhism and aspired to become a nun. Despite initial disapproval, her family finally allowed her to pursue a religious path, and she enrolled in a religious school. After completing six more years of grade school and two years of high school, Kojima entered Nisōdō, a training school for nuns in Nagoya which had been established in 1903 by four Sōtō sect nuns who wanted to create a deeper, more stringent Buddhist training center for women. In 1925 Kojima entered the Sōtō sect's Komazawa University where she studied for three years. Kojima then returned to Nisōdō where she taught for ten years and worked to raise the standards of religious training provided to women. Beginning in 1938 she left Nisōdō and spent four years in Hawaii working at Sōtō temples, teaching Buddhism and working in the community. During the Second World War she returned to Nisōdō and continued to work for women monastics. In 1944 the Sōtō Sect Nuns' Organization was founded, and Kojima was elected president of the organization, a position she held for twenty years. As a result of her efforts and those

of the other nuns in the organization, by 1965 most of the issues of inequality raised by the nuns to the Sōtō sect had been reevaluated and changed. In 1947 Kojima founded the Lumbini-en Orphanage in Toyama as a safe haven for the numerous orphans left in war-ravaged Tokyo. The orphanage continues to function today, run by Sōtō sect nuns under the direction of the Nisōdō. Kojima became ill in 1982 and spent her final years at the Lumbini-en, where she died in 1995.

Kōsetsu Sōryū (Rinzai sect, 1595-1666). From his childhood, Kōsetsu wanted to be a monk. He entered the priesthood at Kyoren-sha in Izumi province. Later he studied under the Daitoku-ji priests Takuan Sōhō and Kōgetsu Sōgan. He became a dharma heir of Kōgetsu and succeeded him as head of the Ryōkō-in subtemple of Daitoku-ji. In 1644, he became the 181st abbot of Daitoku-ji; he served a second term beginning in 1646. During the ninth month of 1651, he went to live in Tōkai-ji in Shinagawa, according to a rotation system. When the feudal lord of Chikuzen province built Koshin-ji within his fief, he asked Kōsetsu to become the abbot. Kōsetsu established Sokushin-an and Tōkō-an in Ohara, north of Kyoto. Also he founded Shōsen-an at Tōkai-ji. On the nineteenth day of the sixth month of 1666, he died at the age of seventy-two.

Mamiya Eishū (Rinzai sect, 1871-1945). Born in Aichi Prefecture, Mamiya Eishū entered the temple Ryūtaku-ji in Mishima at the age of nine under the guidance of the priest Tengan. Eventually, Eishū went to train at Enpuku-ji in Kamakura under Kōgaku Sōen, better known as Shaku Sōen (1858–1919). After four years, Eishū received Sōen's certificate of enlightenment. During the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905), Eishū served as chaplain for General Nogi's troops. Following the end of the war, Eishū continued his own missionary activities and began writing a series of Buddhist books. In 1914 Eishū moved to Rinsen-ji in Kyoto and in 1916 he was appointed chief priest of Hōkō-ji in Shizuoka Prefecture. He continued his active career of lecturing and writing. In January 1945, at the request of the commander of the Shanghai military

force, Eishū went to China to preach. During his visit to Shanghai, Eishū became ill and died at the age of seventy-five.

Mokurai Sōen (Rinzai sect, 1854-1930). At the age of seven, Mokurai studied under Ryōdō at Taiyō-an in Iki. He officially entered Buddhist orders the next year under Dōju at Kokubun-ji in Iki. From the age of fifteen, Mokurai studied under Ranryō at Sōfuku-ji in Hakata and in the following year studied Chinese under Kamei Nanmei in Hakata, as well as under Kondō Mokken in Osaka. In 1873 he also sought teaching from Ekkei Shuken at Myōshin-ji and Tairyū Bun'i at Shōgen-ji in Ibuka, Mino, but became ill and went to recuperate at Shuko-in in Daitoku-ji. There he studied under Gisan Zenrai and also under Shungai Tōsen at Kennin-ji. At the age of twenty-five, Mokurai went to Hirado to the Yuko-ji to study with Chōsō Genkai, staying with him for several years. Mokurai then changed his orientation within the Rinzai sect from the Inzan to the Takujū line. In 1888, he received certification from Yūzen Gentatsu of Bairin-ji in Kurume after ten years of additional training under him. After the death of Ryūkan, Mokurai was appointed his successor as abbot of Kennin-ji.

Morita Goyū (Daikyū Goyū, Sōtō sect, 1834-1915). At the age of seven, Goyū began to study under Taimon of Daikō-in and in the following year, he became a monk. In 1854, he practiced under Sen Danrin of Kichijō-ji in Edo (Tokyo), and two years later, began training under Ekidō of Ryūkai-in in Kozuke, receiving his certificate of enlightenment. In 1860, he studied under Hakuryū of Yōsen-ji in Owari and was allowed to convey this master's teachings. In 1867, he became the head of Ryōtoku-ji in Kaga, and also became head of Gyokuryū-ji and Tentoku-in. In 1891, he became the sixty-fourth abbot of Eihei-ji, one of the central monasteries of the Sōtō sect.

Nakagawa Sōen (Rinzai sect, 1907-1984). Sōen was born the eldest of three sons to a samurai family near Hiroshima. His father was a physician for the army who

died when Sōen was twelve years old. From an early age Sōen was interested in poetry and spirituality. He studied literature at Tokyo University, graduating in 1930; he then pursued Zen training. Sōen received the dharma transmission from Yamamoto Gempō, and succeeded Gempō as Zen master of Ryūtaku-ji in Mishima. In 1948 he traveled to the United States seeking to join Eastern and Western philosophies. He spent the next thirty years traveling between Japan and the West spreading Zen with humor and unconventional methods.

Nantenbō Tōjū (Tōjū Zenchū; Rinzai sect, 1839-1925). Nantenbō began Zen training when he was eleven at the Yūkō-ji on Hirado under the priest Reijū. Between eighteen and twenty, he studied under Banshō at the Enpuku-ji training hall in Yawata, Rannō Bunjō in Awa, and Razan Gemma at Bairin-ji in Kurume, Kyushu. He finally received certification from Razan at the age of twenty-seven. In all, he studied under twenty-four Zen masters around the country in order to achieve a mastery of both the two main teaching traditions of the Myōshin-ji school, the Inzan and Takujū lines. At Bairin-ji, Nantenbō meditated while seated on a plank placed over a well to keep himself from dozing off. During a tour of Kyushu in 1873, he cut a length from an old nandina tree (*nanten*) to use as a *shippei* or Zen training stick; henceforth he was also known by the alternate name Nantenbō or "Nandina Stick." In 1878 he succeeded Ekkei Shuken at Heirin-ji in Tokyo and later Ian Soken at Enpuku-ji in Kyoto; Nantenbō was asked to return to establish the training hall in 1886. In the following year he was asked by Yamaoka Tesshū to become head of the Dōrin-ji in Tokyo, where he instructed such noted military figures as generals Nogi and Kodama. In 1891, he became head of Zuigan-ji at Matsushima in Miyagi, but resigned his position in 1896 and went to live in the dilapidated temple of Daibai-ji in Iwate Prefecture. In 1902, he went to Kaisei-ji in Nishinomiya, Hyogo. In 1908, at the age of seventy, Nantenbō became titular head of Myōshin-ji. Until his death in 1925 at the age of eighty-seven, he devoted his time to traveling, writing, calligraphy, and teaching at thirty-three Zen centers from his base at Kaisei-ji.

Okada Kidō (Rinzai sect, 1902-1988). Okada received the dharma transmission from Nakamura Taiyū of Ko'on-ji monastery. He also practiced under Kōno Mukai at the Nanzen-ji monastery in Kyoto. He was the founder of the Hōfuku-ji monastery in Okayama, and served as the chief abbot of the Nanzen-ji branch in 1981.

Ranzan Shōryū (Rinzai sect, 1713-1792). Ranzan wanted to be a monk from an early age. He entered the priesthood under Daizengaku Oshō of Shōin-ji. He later studied under Gessen Zenne, and then with Daidō Bunka in Tamba for six years, and reached enlightenment on the anniversary of the Buddha's enlightenment. Daidō then sent him to Kogetsu Zenzai (an elder colleague of Daidō) for further training. Ranzan studied with Kogetsu, Suigan Jūshin (a disciple of Kogetsu), and Setsudō Genkei (a disciple of Suigan), eventually receiving Kogetsu's transmission. He became head of Kaizen-ji in Buzen and received the patronage and devotion of Ogasawara Tadafusa. In 1770, he retired and lived in Seitai-in in Buzen. It is said that Ranzan made a great effort to help people at the time of the great Temmei (1781–1789) famine. In his final years, he resided at Ryōan-ji in Kyoto where he died.

Ryōchū Nyoryū (Ōbaku and Rinzai Sects, 1793-1868). At the age of eleven, Ryōchū became a monk under Kanrei of the Saishō-ji within the Ōbaku sect in Fushimi. When Kanrei died soon after, he became a disciple of Sekisen Jūchō of Kenkō-ji in Tottori, who also soon passed away. Ryōchū next practiced under Kachō Bunshū of Shōmyō-ji at Hino in Omi, and then with Raihō Engo of Dainen-ji in Sendai. At the age of twenty-five he went to Hōfuku-ji in Bitchu to study under the Rinzai teacher Myōhō Genjitsu and went with him when he was invited to the Kaizo-ji in Ise. On the way, Ryōchū heard Shunsō Jōshu lecture on the *Daie Buko*, an anecdotal collection of Zen stories with comments by the Sung master Daie Sōkō, and decided to study with him. He stayed with Shunsō for more than ten years, finally attaining enlightenment at the age of

twenty-seven. He continued his studies three more years, and then in 1830, went to practice under Takujū Kosen at Soken-ji in Owari. He studied with Takujū for more than a decade, eventually receiving his certification. While continuing his training he served as abbot and taught at a number of temples including Kenkō-ji and Ryōshun-ji in Tottori. In the ninth month of 1851, he became the thirty-third head of Mampuku-ji, the first Ōbaku head from the Hakuin tra-dition. In 1854 when the appearance of foreign ships off the Japanese coast caused a flood of uncertainty throughout the country, he led a prayer meeting to calm fears. In 1858, he returned to Kenkō-ji. He died on the tenth day of the tenth month of 1868 at the age of seventy-six.

Ryōnen Gensō (Ōbaku sect nun, 1646-1711). Ryōnen was born in Kyoto to a noble family. There is conflicting evidence concerning the dates and some of the details of the events in her life, but it seems that from ages seven to twelve she served Emperor Gomizuno-o's wife, Tōfukumon'in, at court, and then at age sixteen or seventeen she married Matsuda Shigekuni, a Confucian physician with whom she had several children. After about ten years of marriage, Ryōnen became a nun, entering the imperial nunnery Hōkyō-ji in Kyoto near the palace. Six years later, seeking more strenuous training, she traveled to Edo and visited the Ōbaku priest Tetsugyū Doki, who told her that he could not admit her to his temple because she was too beautiful and would distract the other monks. She next visited Hakuō Dōtai at the Daikyū-an in Edo (Tokyo), but he too refused her. Ryōnen then took a hot iron and held it to her face, burning her cheek severely. Hakuō now admitted her. She received his certification in 1682 at the age of thirty-five, the year Hakuō died, and succeeded him as head of the temple. In honor of her teacher, Ryōnen renovated an old temple and renamed it Taiun-ji, making Hakuō the founder; she became the second abbot. Ryōnen was known for good deeds, scholarship, poetry, painting, and calligraphy. She erected a memorial stupa at Taiun-ji when Matsuda Shigekuni died in 1703, and another for Hakuō in 1711, the same year that she died.

Setsudō Nyoun (Ōbaku sect, 1721-1779). Born in Osaka, when Setsudō became an Ōbaku monk in his late thirties, he already had made a name as a writer of *kyōka* ("mad verses") popular at the time. It is not known who his Ōbaku teacher was, and he seems never to have received the dharma transmission; his name is not found in the school's lineage published in the Edo period. There are occasional references to Setsudō in secular works of the time which describe him as traveling as a pilgrim throughout western and eastern Japan, living in a rustic hut in the Osaka area, and teaching his Buddhist disciples by means of *kyōka* poems.

Shibayama Zenkei (Rinzai sect, 1894-1974). Shibayama entered the priesthood at the age of eleven at Kokubun-ji in Aichi Prefecture under the priest Hattori Zenrei. At the age of fourteen Shibayama went to train in Kyoto at Manshō-ji and at Reiun-in, a subtemple of Myōshin-ji. After graduating from high school in 1914, he began studying at Hanazono University, a school affiliated with the Rinzai sect in Kyoto. In 1916 he entered Nanzen-ji in Kyoto, training under Kōno Mukai (1864–1935), completing his training about ten years later. Shibayama then served as head monk at Nanzen-ji while at the same time continuing his intellectual pursuits. (Shibayama had become a leading scholar of Esperanto). Shibayama accepted a teaching position at Hanazono University and eventually married. In 1940 Shibayama took a position at Otani University teaching Zen studies. In 1945 Shibayama's wife and child died and, despite some opposition from within the Nanzen-ji sect, he was allowed to become a Zen master. In 1948 he accepted the position of Zen master at Nanzen-ji, and a year later was appointed *kanchō* (head abbot) of the Nanzen-ji sect. In 1965 the Zen scholar D. T. Suzuki asked Shibayama to travel to the United States to lecture about Zen at various universities and colleges. Although apprehensive at first because of his age, Shibayama eventually accepted, and made the first of what would eventually be eight trips to the United States.

Shunsō Jōshu (Rinzai sect, 1751-1839). Shunsō became a monk at Jizō-ji in his hometown at the age of eleven. When he was eighteen, he began traveling and

visited Ranzan Shōryu, Tengei Egen, Daikyū Ebō, and Reigen Etō. He then studied under Suiō Genro, eventually receiving his certification and becoming his dharma heir. At the age of thirty-five, Shunsō became the ninth abbot of Jikō-ji in Awa, becoming a dharma heir of the previous abbot, Etsuzan Den. Shunsō then took up the vacant position of head of the Training Hall at Enpuku-ji, in Yamato. In 1813 he was made head abbot of Myōshin-ji. He was very generous, but his teaching style was strict. Shunsō died in 1839 at the age of eighty-nine.

Sō Saibai (Rinzai sect, dates unknown). He served at Eigen-ji.

Taikan Monju (Taikan Bunshu; Rinzai sect, 1766-1842). At age nine, Taikan became a monk at Tōkō-ji in Echizen. When he was sixteen, he visited Tōrei Enji at Kaizō-ji and accompanied him when he went to Ryūtaku-ji in Mishima. Taikan swore to himself that he would not raise his head to see Mount Fuji until he reached enlightenment. While he was seated in meditation at Myōkō-ji in Owari, a bird suddenly flew into the hall. As he heard the flapping of its wings, Taikan attained enlightenment. He was nineteen years old at the time. Taikan received certification from Tōrei, but continued post-enlightenment training until he reached the age of twenty-eight. Four years later he became head of Hōjō-ji in Tamba, at the same time, he received the head priests Gōkei's dharma transmission. When he was fifty-five, Taikan moved to the training hall of Nanzen-ji, Kyoto. In his last years, Taikan lived at Gyokuzō-in in Kyoto. He returned to the training hall of Nanzen-ji and died there in the third month of 1842 at the age of seventy-seven.

Takujū Kosen (Rinzai sect, 1760-1833). Takujū became a monk at the age of fifteen under Shōhō Zenzui at Sōken-ji in Nagoya. He set out on pilgrimage at the age of nineteen. He studied under Kaigan of Fun'yō-ji, in Taniguchi, Mino and Reigen Etō at Rokuō-in in Kyoto, and then became a pupil of Gasan Jitō at

Tōki-an in Nagata. After fourteen years with Gasan, he received his dharma transmission. At thirty-seven he returned to Sōken-ji as abbot, and in 1813 was appointed head priest of Myōshin-ji. After that, Takujū traveled widely to teach and give Zen lectures at temples around the country. The Rinzai Zen of modern Japan follows the Hakuin line; both Inzan and his contemporary Takujū were disciples of Hakuin's heir Gazan Jitō, so that now virtually all Rinzai sect teachers are affiliated to either the Takujū line or the Inzan line. "Sharp Inzan, scrupulous Takujū" is a common evaluation of the difference in these two teaching traditions.

Tōrei Enji (Rinzai sect, 1721-1792). At the age of nine, Tōrei became a monk under the priest Kōzan near his home. When he was seventeen, he went to Hyūga in Kyushu and studied under Kogetsu Zenzai and Suigan Jūshi, a disciple of Kogetsu. After visiting Daidō Bunka at Hōjō-ji in Tamba, Tōrei returned to Kanzaki and lived in a hut practicing *zazen* day and night. In 1743, he went to Shōin-ji to study with Hakuin. While there, Tōrei contracted a serious illness. Convinced that death was near, he wrote a work based on his own Zen practice, and presented it to Hakuin; Hakuin was greatly impressed and suggested that it be published (it was eventually published under the title *Shūmon Mujintōron*). When Tōrei recovered, he went to live in Shirakawa-mura in eastern Kyoto where he suddenly awakened to the oneness of life and death. On his return to Shōin-ji, he received dharma transmission from Hakuin. Tōrei continued to help Hakuin propagate Zen and is considered one of Hakuin's two main disciples along with Suiō Genro. Tōrei became the second abbot of Ryūtaku-ji in Mishima, which he had officially established by Hakuin, and lived there for twenty years. In 1791, he rebuilt Kitō-an in Owari. Tōrei then returned to his home in Omi and lived at Reisen-ji. He died in 1792 at the age of seventy-two.

Ungo Kiyō (Rinzai sect, 1582-1659). Ungo was born in 1582, the son of Obama Sakyo, a retainer of the Ichijō family of Tosa. At the age of nine, he became a

pupil of Shinsei at Taihei-ji in Nakamura, Tosa. At nineteen, he went to Kyoto and studied under several teachers, finally becoming an attendant of Itchū Tōmoku of Hantō-in at Myōshin-ji. Ungo remained at Myōshin-ji for about six years, then left on pilgrimage in a group that included Gudō Tōshoku, Daigū Sōchiku, and five or six other monks of Myōshin-ji. They went to northern Honshu, Suruga, and then Ungo returned to Kyoto. In 1614, at the age of thirty-three, he received Itchū's certification. Upon the request of Lord Katō Shigeaki of Iyo, Ungo became the founder of the newly rebuilt Hōju-ji in Matsuyama, the family temple of the Katō clan. In 1621, at the age of forty, he was appointed head abbot of Myōshin-ji and became a dharma heir of Itchū the same year. In 1628, he accompanied Lord Katō to Aizu and stayed at Kōzei-in, but in 1630 he was forced to leave because of a serious dispute with the chief patron of the temple, and went to Kōzen-ji in Atami. Later, at the age of fifty-one, while sequestered on Mount Ochi in Echizen, he attained his decisive enlightenment. In 1636, at the age of fifty-five, he was invited to assume the abbotship of Zuigan-ji in Matsushima, Sendai, a temple rebuilt by Lord Date of Sendai. He remained abbot of Zuigan-ji until his death, teaching people of all ranks and walks of life. He also established Zuiryū-ji in Mino and Ishiba-ji in Omi. He was a strict teacher to his Zen students but in order to open Buddhist teaching among the common people, Ungo composed a large number of easy vernacular verses that advocated reciting the *nembutsu*, a practice of the Pure Land sects. He was criticized for this by some of his fellow Myōshin-ji priests.

Yamada Mumon (Taishitsu Mumon; Rinzai sect, 1900-1988). Mumon was born in Aichi Prefecture and began his training under the priest Setsuzan Seiseki. He then continued his training at Myōshin-ji in Kyoto, and also trained at Tenryū-ji in Kyoto where he received the dharma transmission from Seki Seisetsu. He lived at the Reiun-in subtemple of Myōshin-ji in 1949, and was then appointed Zen master and abbot of Shōfuku-ji in Kobe in 1953. In 1978 he became the

twenty-sixth chief abbot of Myōshin-ji and the 639th abbot of the Myōshin-ji line. He also served as president of Hanazono University, a Rinzai-sect school affiliated with Myōshin-ji.

Yamamoto Gempō (Rinzai sect, 1866-1961). Gempō was born in 1866 to a poverty-stricken family in Shingû, Wakayama. In his youth Gempō started down a path of dereliction, and in an attempt to curb Gempō's delinquent behavior, his father arranged an early marriage when Gempō was nineteen years old. However, a year into the marriage, Gempō was diagnosed with an eye disease, and doctors confirmed that he would eventually go blind. In 1889, Gempō visited the temple Sekkei-ji in Tosa where he encountered the priest Yamamoto Taigen who encouraged him to become a Buddhist priest.

In 1890 Gempō divorced his wife and entered Sekkei-ji as a monk, taking the name Yamamoto Gempō. In 1895 he moved on to Hōfuku-ji in Okayama, where he encountered Kyūhō Issei (1833–1916), a small but fierce Zen master. Despite his determination and dedication to training, Gempō faced unusual difficulties because of his lack of education, which was compounded by his increasingly poor eyesight.

In 1902 Taigen became ill and Gempō returned to Sekkei-ji to tend to his master. In June 1903 Taigen died, and Gempō succeeded him as chief priest of Sekkei-ji. At this time Gempō was also invited to pay his respects to Shōun (Sōhan Gempō) at Enpuku-ji during a meeting on national defense. He formed an immediate affinity for the master and decided to resign from his position at Sekkei-ji and deepen his Zen training under Shōun. Gempō trained at Enpuku-ji under Shōun from 1908 until 1915 when he received Shōun's certificate of enlightenment at the age of forty-nine.

In the spring of 1915 the temple Ryūtaku-ji in Mishima was in need of a resident priest, Gempō was recommended for the position. His gentle and virtuous nature quickly attracted many monks and lay followers, and the temple

began to prosper. Beginning in 1923, Gempō made several trips abroad, including visits to the United States, England, India, and China.

Gempō finally turned over the position of resident priest of Ryūtaku-ji in 1951 to his dharma heir, Nakagawa Sōen (1907–1984), and retired at the age of eighty-six. In December 1960 Gempō suffered a heart attack and was confined to bed; he passed away on June 3, 1961.

Notes

Introduction

1. Victor Sōgen Hori, *Zen Sand* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2003), p. 469.
2. Helmut Brinker, *Zen: Masters of Meditation in Images and Writings* (Zurich: Artibus Asiae, 1996), p. 47.
3. John D. Barrow, *The Book of Nothing* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000), p. 34.
4. Ibid., pp. 36–37.
5. Ibid., pp. 32–48.
6. See painting by Chu Te-jun, *Hunlun tu* (Primordial Chaos), 1349, in Richard Barnhart and James Cahill, et al., *Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), p. 163.
7. Thomas Cleary, *Transmission of Light* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 2002), pp. 51–52.
8. Ibid., p. 53.
9. Heinrich Dumoulin, *A History of Zen Buddhism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1963), p. 36.
10. Translation by Stephen Addiss.
11. Cleary, *Transmission of Light*, p. 60.
12. Ibid.
13. Hori, p. 401.

14. Shibayama Zenkei, *Zenga no Ensō* (Tokyo: Shunshūsha, 1969), p. 8.
15. John Rosenfield, *Extraordinary Persons,* vol. 1 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Art Museum, 1999), p. 264.
16. Dumoulin, p. 108.
17. Based on translation by Andy Ferguson, *Zen's Chinese Heritage* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2000), p. 167.
18. R. H. Blyth, *Zen and Zen Classics,* vol., 3 (Tokyo: Hokuseidō Press, 1976), p. 20.
19. Shōshun Kato and Seizan Yanagida. *Ensō: Zen no kyūkoku* (Tokyo: Mainichi Shinbunsha, 1986), p. 19.
20. Ibid., p. 21.
21. Shibayama, p. 8.
22. Ferguson, pp. 166–67.
23. From the *Ching-te ch'uanteng lu* (Ching-te Era Record Transmission of the Lamp), in Charles Luk, *Zen and Zen Teachings* (London: Rider & Co., 1961), p. 74.
24. Ferguson, p. 169.
25. Thomas Cleary, *Book of Serenity: One Hundred Zen Dialogues* (Hudson, N.Y.: Lindisfarne Press, 1990), p. 324.
26. For Kuei-shan texts including a text on circular symbols by Sun-chi, a Korean successor to Yang-shan, see Thomas Cleary, *The Five Houses of Zen* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1997).
27. See Dumoulin, pp. 112–18, or Luk, pp. 158–80.
28. Beata Grant, *Daughters of Emptiness: Poems of Chinese Buddhist Nuns* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2003), p. 81.
29. Cleary, *Transmission of Light,* p. 167.
30. The work is attributed to the artist Mincho and is in the collection of the Seikado Bunko Art Museum. See *Painters of Zen Temple* (Yamaguchi Prefectural Museum of Art, 1998), p. 60–61.

31. This painting is in the collection of Tōfuku-ji in Kyoto and is illustrated in Brinker, p. 257.
32. Brinker, p. 256.
33. Ibid., p. 49
34. Ibid., p. 50.
35. Hsu-t'ang refers to Hsü-t'ang Chih-yü (1185–1269, Jp.: Kidō Chigu), the Chinese patriarch of the Daitoku-ji lineage.
36. There is another portrait of Ikkyū within a circle at the Yamato Bunkakan, Nara. See Brinker, fig. 21.
37. Brinker, p. 172.
38. Contained in Ta-chu'an Ling-yin P'u-chi's (1179–1253) *Wuteng huiyuan* (Compendium of Five Flames), 1252.
39. Brinker, p. 234.
40. See Sylvan Barnet and William Burto, *Zen Ink Paintings* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1982), p. 82–85.
41. Yōsō is probably best known as the target of Ikkyū's intense criticism over which of them was the chief heir of their master Kasō.
42. Robert Aitken, *The Morning Star: New and Selected Writings* (Honolulu: Shoemaker and Hoard, 2003), p. 82.
43. Shibayama, p. 7.
44. Hori, p. 271.
45. Shibayama, p. 7.
46. James Green, *The Recorded Sayings of Zen Master Joshū* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1998), p. 94.

Ensō

1. *Mumonkan, case* 30. See Katsuki Sekida, *Two Zen Classics: Mumonkan and Hekiganroku* (New York: Weatherhill, 1977), p. 99.

2. Irmgard Schloegl, *The Zen Teaching of Rinzai* (Berkeley, Calif.: Shambhala Publications, 1976), p. 13.
3. Stephen Addiss, *Art of Zen* (New York: Abrams: 1989), p. 124.
4. Shibayama Zenkei, *Zen Comments on the Mumonkan,* trans. Sumiko Kudō (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1974), p. 309.
5. Norman Waddell, trans., *The Unborn: The Life and Teaching of Zen Master Bankei, 1622-1693* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1984), p. 10.
6. D. T. Suzuki. *Zen and Japanese Culture* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1959), p. 31.
7. Trevor Leggett, *A First Zen Reader* (Rutland, Vt.: Charles Tuttle, 1986), p. 21.
8. Shibayama *Zenkei, Zenga no Ensō* (Tokyo: Shunshūsha: 1969), p. 7.
9. Hori, p. 339.
10. Hori, p. 191.
11. Brinker, p. 296.
12. Shibayama, p. 82.
13. Translation by Tadayuki Kasashima. See *The Written Image: Japanese Calligraphy and Painting from the Sylvan Barnet and William Burto Collection* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2002), p. 156.
14. Hori, p. 216.
15. Hori, p. 459. This phrase is referenced in numerous Buddhist texts including case 79 of the *Hekiganroku* and number 164 in "Essential Sayings from the Master's Room" by Yunmen. See Urs App, trans. and ed., *Master Yunmen: From the Record of the Chan Teacher "Gate of the Clouds"* (New York: Kodansha America, 1994).
16. Hori, p. 524.
17. Blyth, p. 76.
18. *Tōrei Zenshi Ten,* (Mishima, Japan: Mishima Insatsujō, 1986), p. 81.
19. Hori, p. 345.

20. Fabio Rambelli, "Lecture Five: A Semiotic Soteriology," pp. 21–30. www.chass.utoronto.ca/epc/srb/cyber/ram5.pdf
21. The original text of the *Hsin-hsin Ming* is contained in the *Ching-te Ch'uan-teng lu.* See D. T. Suzuki, *Manual of Zen Buddhism* (New York: Grove Press, 1960), pp. 76–82 for a translation of the full text.
22. Translation by John Stevens.
23. Shibayama, p. 10.
24. Hori, p. 245.
25. Kazuaki Tanahashi, ed., *Moon in a Dewdrop: Writings of Zen Master Dōgen* (New York: North Point Press, 1985), p. 218.
26. Hsiang-yen Chih-hsien (d. 898) from the *Wuteng Huiyuan* (Compendium of Five Lamps) compiled by Ta-ch'uan Ling-yin P'u-chi (1179–1253).
27. Tanahashi, p. 137.
28. Philip Kapleau, ed., *The Three Pillars of Zen: Teaching, Practice, Enlightenment* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), p. 216.
29. Translation by John Stevens.
30. Katsuki Sekida, *Two Zen Classics: Mumonkan and Hekiganroku* (New York: Weatherhill, 1977), pp. 287–91.
31. Translation by John Stevens.
32. Shibayama, pp. 19–20.
33. Shawn Sell, "Defiant Doughnut Survives Diet Trends," *USA Today,* 5D, March 11, 2005.

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