

Endless Journey

The Haiga of Kaji Aso



“Endless Journey”
the Haiga of Kaji Aso
Printed by Kaji Aso Studio
\$20.00 all proceeds to benefit the
Kaji Aso memorial fund

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An Introduction to Kaji Aso

Mr. Kaji Aso was a well established and respected artist in Japan and the United States. His works are in the permanent collection of the Prime Minister of Japan's official residence, the National Museum of Modern Art in Tokyo, the Modern Museum of Art (New York), the Museum of Fine Arts (Boston), Padua Museum of Art (Italy), the State Pushkin Art Museum (Moscow) and others. In Japan thirteen of his works are registered as National Property, the highest honor an artist can receive. When the National Living Treasures Tour came to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, Mr. Aso performed the final calligraphy and sumi painting demonstration.

He is remembered for dedicating himself to raising the quality of life by strengthening the connection between artists and the society they live in. His many awards and honors include Distinguished Bostonian (1980); Honorary Citizen of New Orleans (1983); Certificate of Recognition from Mayor Menino of Boston (1995, 1998); Medal of Honor from Mayor of Padua, Italy (1995); Medal of Honor from the Mayor of Lisbon, Portugal (1997) and others. In 1996 Kaji Aso was named one of the most important international calligraphers of the world by the Beijing Art Academy.

For over thirty years Mr. Kaji Aso was a Professor of Art at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts and in

1998 received a certificate of appreciation from Mr. Malcolm Rogers, Director of the Museum of Fine Arts. A gifted teacher, Mr. Aso has inspired hundreds of students. At the request of his students Mr. Aso founded

Kaji Aso Studio, Institute for the Arts in 1973 as a center which offers an interdisciplinary approach to art. The gallery holds exhibitions, poetry readings and concerts. Kaji Aso Studio continues its programs of classes and events to strive for the excellence of Mr. Aso's beautiful, gentle and generous vision.

In 2007 after Mr. Aso's passing Boston's Mayor Menno named April 25th Kaji Aso Appreciation Day and there is a beautiful Japanese Mountain Cherry Tree dedicated to Mr. Aso in the Boston Public Garden. At the base of the tree there is a plaque with a haiku by Mr. Aso.

*End of day
still,
cherry petals are flying*



Professor Kaji Aso 1998

The Japanese Art of Haiga

The term haiga literally means "haiku painting": "hai" comes from haiku and "ga" is the word for painting. Haiku poetry was firmly established in the 17th century when its first great master, Matsuo Basho, made it his goal to elevate the form to a highly artistic, inventive genre. Haiku and haiga emphasize directness of expression and unpretentious observations of everyday things.

In a haiga the poem does not simply explain the painting nor does the painting illustrate the poem. Instead each adds layers of meaning to the other. Works by some of the earliest haiga masters Yosa Buson, Matsumura Goshun, Inoue Shiro, and Kobayashi Issa-show how a few strokes of the brush were all that is needed to convey the suggestion of the subject, the season, or the emotions they arouse.

Composing haiku, and painting accompanying pictures, was a common pastime of Edo period aesthetes, who would pursue these activities in their spare time, or at friendly gatherings as a communal form of entertainment.

The Haiga of Kaji Aso.

Mr. Kaji Aso worked in a variety of media over the course of his career. Aware of modern painting in Japan, Europe, and America, he had a high regard for the tradition of painting both in the east and west. He sought to communicate the strengths and weaknesses of each so that his students and public understood the universal values of painting and art in general. Successful as a modern painter, he continued to practice Japanese Calligraphy on a daily basis.

Mr. Aso often performed calligraphy by the masters of haiku including Basho, Issa, and Buson. He also composed many of his own haiku that he performed as haiga. As was his custom Mr. Aso very often performed his own haiga during Calligraphy demonstrations, Japan Festivals and receptions.

The works included in this book are taken from the years 1985 – 2005. Some of the paintings are based on poems by other poets such as Basho, Issa and Buson as well as haiga written by Mr. Aso. Attempts were made to show the variety of Mr. Aso's favorite subjects and his wide range of styles- from the sublime to the humorous. Once Mr. Aso was asked where he found inspiration for his poetry. He replied, "I find inspiration from my daily life".

This is the first of a series of books presenting the full scope of Mr. Aso's art work. Future books will present the calligraphy, oil paintings, watercolor paintings, etchings, poetry, and philosophical essays by Kaji Aso.

Pohn!
crocus opens

poem by Kaji Aso

sumi painting and calligraphy by Kaji Aso

ボン

クロツカス

咲いた

花は



*scent of lilacs
remaining
passing butterfly*

poem by Kaji Aso

sumi painting and calligraphy by Kaji Aso

蝶が
過ぐ



リラの香
をみすかに

残り

花光

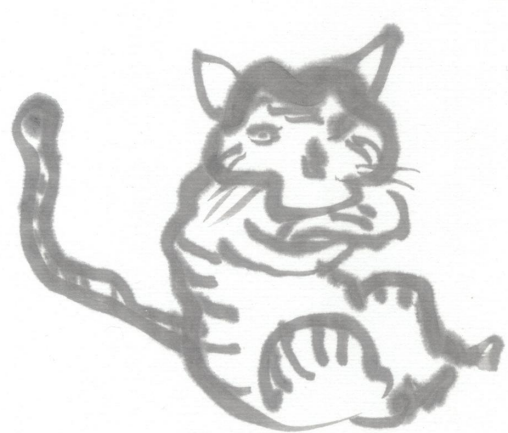


*old cat
doesn't bother
to catch the mouse*

poem by Kaji Aso

sumi painting and calligraphy by Kaji Aso

年光しを徒
猫はねずみ
やり
通し



firefly
how can you see this world?
your light is behind

poem by Kaji Aso
sumi painting and calligraphy by Kaji Aso

暗を飛ぶ

螢光

尻

に

在り



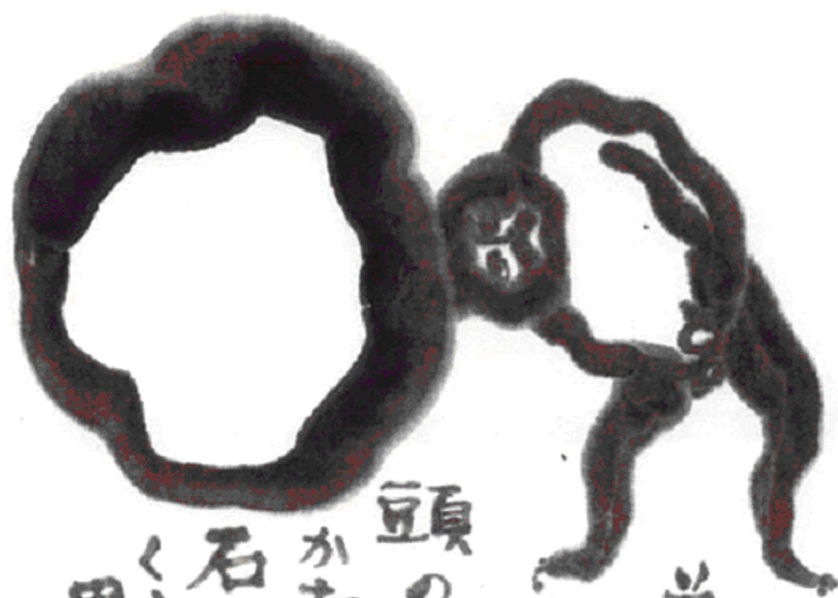
花火



*man testing
the hardness
of head*

part of “Primitive Man Series”

sumi painting and calligraphy by Kaji Aso



頭の
かたさをも
石と
くらべる
男

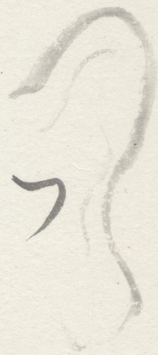
花見



*do you too think I am old?
mosquito buzzing
near my ear*

poem by Issa

sumi painting and calligraphy by Kaji Aso



年より

凡てか

鳴く

蚊も

耳の
そば



花
凡

*old dog
chasing firefly
never catches it*

poem by Kaji Aso

sumi painting and calligraphy by Kaji Aso

老犬の
螢を追
つかまへす



花丸

*the man who fell
trying to catch stars*

poem by Kaji Aso

sumi painting and calligraphy by Kaji Aso

流水星に
当て倒れた

男



花児



*dance crabs
under the moon
until you become skeleton*

poem by Kaji Aso

sumi painting and calligraphy by Kaji Aso



蟹

おどれ

月夜に

骨と

はる

まで



花見



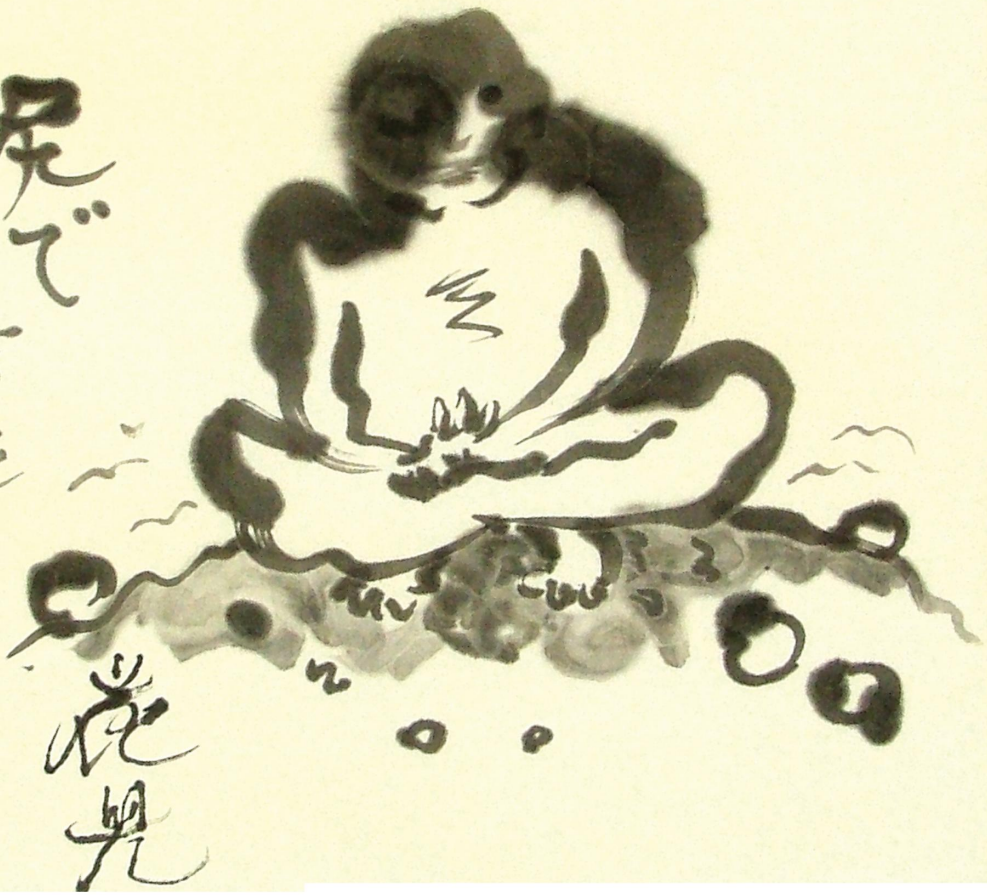
*man listening
to sounds
through his bottom*

part of “Primitive Man Series”

sumi painting and calligraphy by Kaji Aso

い

尾で
音を
く男



花
児

*nowhere to throw
the bath water
voice of cricket*

poem by Onitsura

sumi painting and calligraphy by Kaji Aso

行ねに

花鳥

ちてとこ

ね

ちうき

鬼貫歌



*old pond
frog jumps in
sound of water*

poem by Basho

sumi painting and calligraphy by Kaji Aso

古池や
蛙と云ふ
水の音



花見



*The months and days are the travelers of eternity
The years that come and go are also voyagers
Those who float away their lives on ships or
Who grow old leading horses are forever journeying
and their home is wherever their travels take them.
Many of the men of old died on the road
And I too for years past have been stirred by the
Sight of a solitary cloud drifting with the wind
to ceaseless thoughts of roaming...*

poem by Basho

sumi painting and calligraphy by Kaji Aso

月日は百代

燭臺に

行ふ年も々旅を

舟の上に生涯を

馬の足跡を

老を迎ふる物は

日々旅に

旅を

栖る

旅



Kaji Aso Studio

In 1967 Mr. Aso came to Boston to teach at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts. He founded Kaji Aso Studio in 1973 at the request of his students to have a place whose environment fit to his way of teaching; which included an appreciation of nature and a universal awareness of the arts, music and poetry. Mr. Aso passed away in 2006 and now his long term students continue the Studio with the same spirit. The Studio



continues as a place where people come to study art and culture. The Studio is an established center in Japanese cultural arts offering courses in Japanese Calligraphy, Haiku, ceramics, and Tea Ceremony. With a rich offering of concerts, exhibitions, and other special events presented at our Gallery, the Kaji Aso Studio continues to make a valuable contribution to the culture of Boston.

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