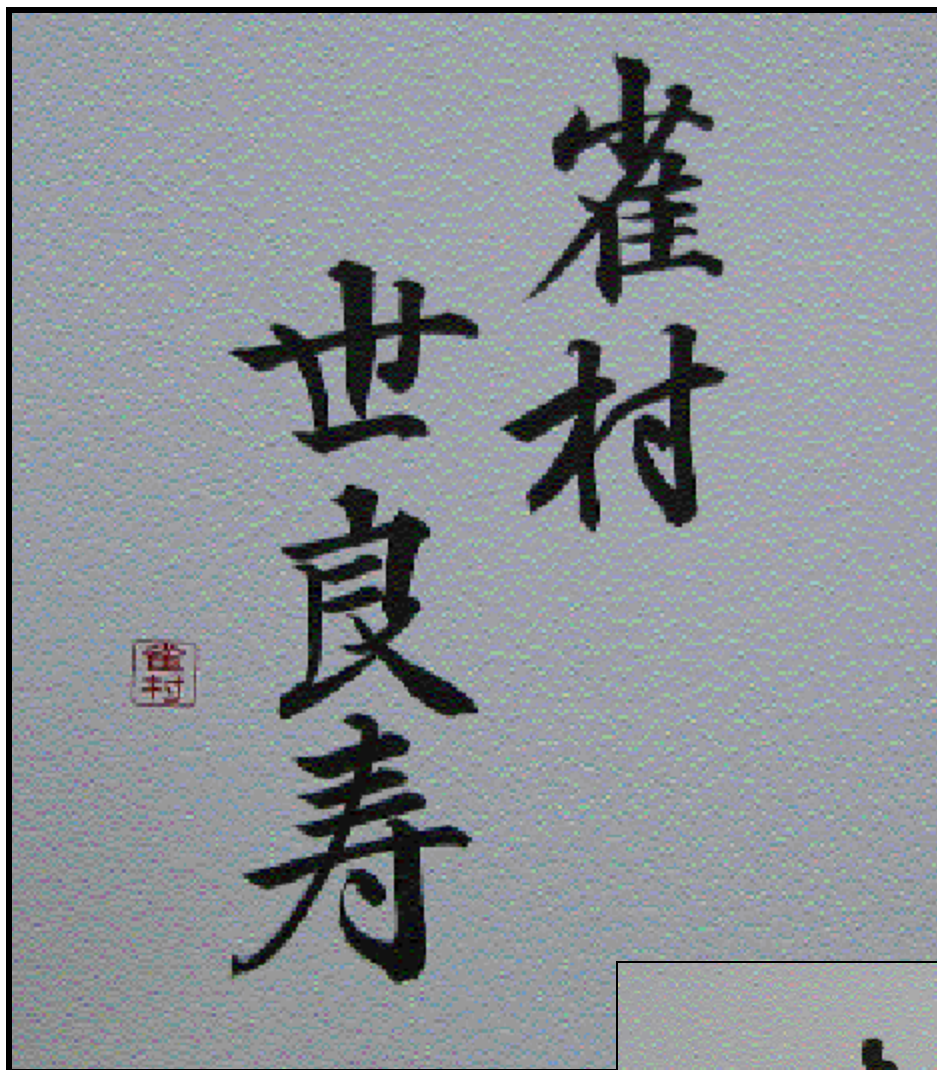


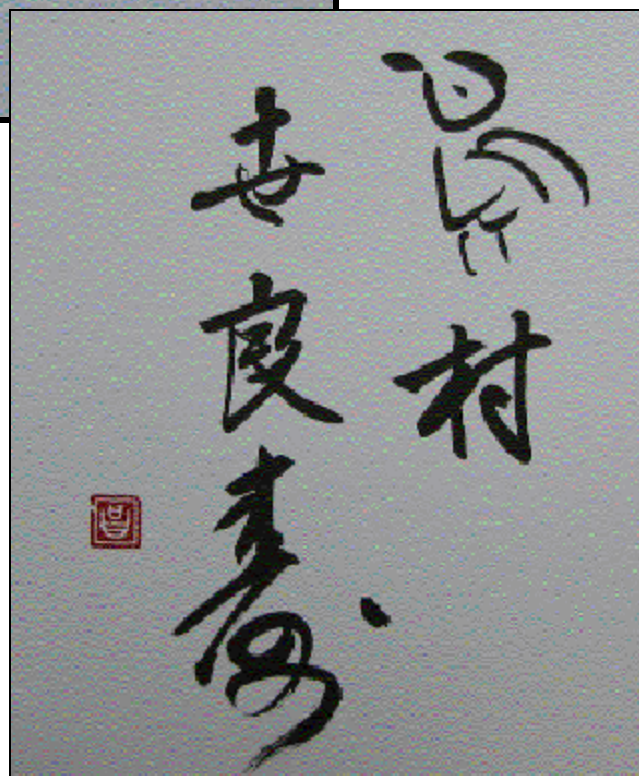
Shikishi

This is narcissism masquerading as art. So what? Actually, I don't love myself excessively, but I do love my name, which has served me well as a by-line for decades. At left is my name in cursive *Gyosho*-style Japanese characters, brushed on fine *shikishi* rice paper by Masahiro Endou, a noted Tokyo calligrapher. The ideographs for "Jackson" (pronounced *Jyaku-son*) and "Sellers" (*Se-raa-su*) were chosen respectively by Fusako Usami of California's San Juan Capistrano and Yutaka Katayama of Tokyo's Setagaya. "Mr. K," now 94 years old, is famous as the father of the Datsun and Nissan Z cars.



What Does It All Mean?

Mr. K's three *kanji* for "Sellers," loosely translated, mean "Seeking a Better World." Fusako's *kanji* pair for "Jackson," at upper right above, means "Sparrow Village," suggesting an artist of some kind, perhaps a poet. The companion *shikishi* calligraphy at right shows Mr. Endou's charming playfulness. In a few deft strokes, he turns the "Sparrow" ideograph into a sparrow. These artworks are gifts from Japanese friends who insist on seeing me as something special. Masataka and Shozu Usami, brothers separated by an ocean, colluded in seeking Mr. Endou's artistry. I am so very pleased.





Mr. Endou Applies Finishing Touches

The “Jyakuson Seraasu” *shikishi*, one on gold rice paper and the other on white, are finished, and they are awaiting *rakkan* stamping in red ink. Mr. Endou, the calligrapher, removes an L-shaped jig from his bag. Below, he uses the jig to position the *rakkan*, a seal that was made for me at the same time. I am a little puzzled here. The gold and white *shikishi* are displayed proudly today in my *Times* office and my home workshop, but each shows my *rakkan*, not Mr. Endou’s. I had always thought that a *rakkan* represented the signature of the artist, not the patron. Two additional *shikishi*, in which the “Jyaku” ideograph is rendered as a sparrow on one and a couple of sparrows on the other, also hang in my office and home. Both of the sparrow *shikishi* carry Mr. Endou’s *rakkan*, not mine. The subtleties here escape me. Perhaps my generous Japanese friends, or even Mr. Endou himself, can enlighten me.

Shozo Usami of Komazawa Women’s University in Tokyo videoed Mr. Endou at work, then converted these two images to static JPG files.

October 2003

