

The “Naked Festival,” considered one of the three strangest festivals in Japan.

**Saidaiji Eyo.**

During the festival, a woman handles with ease a brush as tall as she is.

The character she writes is “**Life.**”

She is **Yoshida Ryoshu**, a calligrapher living in the Naka district of Okayama.

Mrs. Yoshida discovered calligraphy at the age of 44.

She was captivated by “**avant-garde calligraphy**,” which transcends traditional techniques and is expressed with great freedom of spirit.

(Work: “*Foetus in Motion*”)

(Work: “*Dragon*”)

She has created many works based on classical Chinese characters.

Sometimes, her works transcend the boundaries between calligraphy and painting.

(Work: “*Manyoshu, Sakaue no Iratsume*”)

**Yoshida**

“I want to express what moves me.

To do that, it is essential that my rhythm and breathing be synchronized as I draw a line.”

“This synchronization creates an incredibly pleasant sensation.”

**‘Flying Dragon’, written in 2017.**

(Work: “*Flying Dragon*”)

This work, highly acclaimed around the world, will be exhibited next year in New York at a calligraphy exhibition. (Summer 2026)

It represents the character ‘**𪛗**’ (**ku**), engraved on bronze objects from the Zhou dynasty in China.

She poured into it her desire to be reborn in a new form.

**Yoshida**

“Yes! I am different from who I was before! That is what I felt when I wrote the character 𪛗.”

“From the very first stroke, everything clicked, and it all went smoothly.”

“I had so much fun writing, and I felt that I was changing.”

Mrs. Yoshida studied in India during her university years.

After her marriage, she lived for four years in Russia to follow her husband, acquiring extensive experience abroad.

She participated in events promoting friendship between Japan and Russia and even performed with the **Bolshoi**, one of the world’s three greatest ballet companies—making her background quite unique.

After 25 years of practicing calligraphy, Mrs. Yoshida has devoted herself to training the next generation and now has eight disciples.

Four of them are foreigners. On that day, her French disciple, **Bruno Bréchemier**, came with three friends.

Mrs. Yoshida taught these three calligraphy novices how to use the brush and draw lines.

**Yoshida with one of the disciples**

“Place the brush, open it at a 45-degree angle, feel that it opens, then lift it again at 45 degrees.”

Drawing lines while following one’s breathing and rhythm.

Thanks to Mrs. Yoshida’s teachings, they managed to write characters after about two hours of practice.

*(Works, from left to right: “bear”, “joy”, “harmony”, “hypnosis”, “bear”)*

**A disciple**

“It’s fascinating. It was my first calligraphy experience, but I felt as if I were meditating while moving the brush. At the same time, I felt my emotions being expressed.”

Bruno, one of the disciples, is a hypnotherapist — a specialist who works on the subconscious through hypnotherapy to reduce psychological issues and stress.

He has also written a specialized book explaining the connection between calligraphy and hypnotherapy.

**Bruno**

“As a hypnotherapist, I studied medicine, but I had never studied art.

At first, it was difficult, but thanks to my teacher, I gradually learned and eventually came to love calligraphy.”

**Bruno** “Yes.”

**Yoshida** “Look here, this is the center. You have to look carefully.”

Usually, lessons are held remotely on a tablet, but that day, he was able to receive direct guidance from his master.

**Reporter** “Is it easy?”

**Bruno** “No, it’s difficult.”

His insatiable thirst for discovering calligraphy — an art that allows one’s emotions and way of living to be reflected in characters — never diminishes.

**Yoshida**

“I believe that as human beings, we all share common points that connect us to one another unconsciously. I think true art is about expressing that.”

“I feel it is important to express what I feel at every moment, whether sadness or joy.”