

events & information

Calligraphy workshop lets attendees ‘*sho* off’

The Dokuritsu Shojoindan Foundation celebrated the beginning of 2025 by holding its annual *sho* (Japanese calligraphy) exhibition in the National Art Center, Tokyo, in Minato Ward from Jan. 15 to 20.

The 73rd Dokuritsu Sho Exhibition showcased some 1,823 expressive works created by the foundation's members and other *sho* enthusiasts, attracting 17,823 visitors, including 3,116 from overseas.

As the word *dokuritsu* (independent) suggests, the organization's works are characterized by free and contemporary expression and abundant individuality and creativity.

The foundation, established in 1952, has about 1,800 members who appreciate the foundation's characteristics and deeply respect the philosophy of founder Yuhkei Teshima, a highly distinguished calligrapher who made great contributions to promoting *sho* worldwide.

Teshima emphasized the expression of powerful emotions via *sho*, elevating the activity from a presentation of disciplined,

formal beauty to a form of modern art.

The works spanned all sizes — with some covering entire walls — creating a world of emotional messages in black and white. Visitors took in the impressive dynamics and passion expressed only by brushes and ink.

The exhibition also offered a calligraphy workshop on Jan. 19 to give participants from overseas a chance to learn about *sho* and try it themselves. Some 80 people from 18 countries participated under the guidance of foundation members.

With brushes in hand, the participants got to select and draw either one kanji or a set from 13 examples prepared by the foundation. They were also shown how to express their names in katakana.

Three boys from Darwin, Australia, who were on holiday with their parents said they enjoyed the workshop.

“I chose the characters for Mount Fuji because I liked the mountain so much when I saw it from shinkansen during this trip,” James Douglas, 11, said. His elder brother



Exhibition visitors try their hands at *sho*.

TOMONORI SUGIYAMA

Harry, 12, chose *kazan* (volcano) and said, “Learning how to hold the brush and turn the brush smoothly was challenging.”

The youngest, Patrick, 7, spent more time concentrating on his *sho* than his brothers did, controlling the brush carefully for each stroke. He said he would try his hand at calligraphy again if the chance came up.

For more information, visit <https://www.dokuritsu.or.jp> or email dokuritsushojindan@gmail.com