



## Postdoctoral Research

**Research Title:** Philosophical Dimensions of Tang Calligraphic Treatises (7th-8th Centuries)

**Advisor:** Prof. Dr. Sarah E. Fraser

**Researcher:** Dr. Jingqing Xiang



## Abstract

This study discusses and explores Tang calligraphic theories from the 7th to 8th centuries in China from three perspectives: the definition of calligraphy's position from the perspective of Confucianism, aesthetical concepts originating from *Yi Jing*, and major formulae provided by Taoist thinking. The purpose of this project is to study how Chinese traditional cultures influenced Tang calligraphic theories, and therefore to aid understanding of the profound implications of the Tang calligraphic treatises. The far-reaching aim of this proposal is to arrive at a historical understanding of the significance of traditional culture in the field of art practice and theory, to reveal the dominant paradigm of aesthetic norms and artistic conventions, and ultimately to constitute a scientific theoretical framework of Chinese aesthetics.

The Confucian school had recovered and began to flourish at the beginning of Tang particularly when *Five Confucian Classics and their Annotations* were issued in 653 A.D. They were treated by the court as the imperial examination compendiums. The majority of artists and theorists in calligraphy were Confucian scholars in Tang, the same as other types of arts, for example literature, music and painting. Calligraphy was an important means to assess moral calibre; theorists believed calligraphy had an equal status with rituals and music. It seems that calligraphy served as a didactic tool for influencing ethics and desirable virtues, which also promoted the formation of the concept of harmony in calligraphic aesthetics.

*Yi Jing*, the first Classic among *Five Classics* or *Thirteen Classics*, played a more significant role in calligraphic aesthetics than in painting, presumably because calligraphy has more abstraction in dots and lines than painting. Theorists regarded trigram and hexagram as a root of calligraphy based on the fact that calligraphy had an affinity with *Yi Jing*'s images

and its symbols. People could see the features of change in the strokes, structures, layout and stylistic forms of calligraphy through trigram and hexagram. One especially admires eminent calligraphers in the way they broke away from the constraints of conventional techniques and styles. This notion of change from *Yi Jing* embraces the reconciliation of hardness and softness in terms of calligraphy aesthetics as well.

Calligraphy appears very abstract. Tang calligraphy theorists shed light on the dark (xuan) feature from the perspective of Taoism. They defined calligraphy as Shu Dao implicitly or explicitly. Calligraphy had some characteristics such as equable (yi), inaudible (xi), subtle (wei), dark (xuan), deep (shen) and inactive (wuwei), which the Dao also had. Taoism supplied major formulae, i.e. methodological ideas, through which one can see the abstraction (abstract nature) of calligraphy. The notion of Shu Dao as it pertains to Daoism implies calligraphy should follow the law of nature, thus it was thought to be better to practice in a natural way rather than a forced way, i.e. in naturalness, non-purposefulness or even spontaneity. According to Neo-Taoism, each individual had his own innate tendencies (innate nature), which was preordained, unchangeable, and could not be supplemented. As a result, one should follow their own innate tendencies while practising calligraphy. It was suggested that one could develop and perfect one's own personal style by following their own inborn nature.

Among the aforementioned, some viewpoints are debateable, such as the relationship between calligraphy and morality; the concepts of harmony, change, reconciliation of hardness and softness, taking the law from nature, following one's innate tendencies and so forth are meaningful in the history of Chinese calligraphy.

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## Introduction

### i. Overview of Tang Calligraphic Treatises

During the Tang Dynasty, calligraphy theories and practices came to their climax in history. Tang calligraphic treatises are of vital importance in discussions of Chinese calligraphic aesthetics. In addition to plenty of analyses for calligraphic techniques, the most prominent topics are concerning criticism and aesthetics. It was the first time Confucianism and Taoism were widely and extensively integrated into the formulation of aesthetic theories in calligraphy.

There are some calligraphy treatises attributed to famous calligraphers such as Ouyang Xun 歐陽詢 (557-641), Yu Shinan 虞世南 (558-638) and Li Shimin 李世民 (598-649) in the beginning of Tang. Treatises attributed to Ouyang involved mainly writing skills, e.g. *Eight Pithy Formulas* 八訣 demonstrating eight models of dots and lines 永字八法,<sup>1</sup> *Thirty-six Approaches* 三十六法 clarifying thirty-six kinds of structures of characters,<sup>2</sup> *Formulas of Transmission* 傳授訣 declaring the magic codes of calligraphy,<sup>3</sup> and *on Brush Usage* 用筆論 stating some abstract principles of brush handling.<sup>4</sup> Two treatises *On Pith of Employing of*

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<sup>1</sup> Chen Si 陳思 (fl. 13th c.) ed., *Shuyuan jinghua* 書苑菁華 (Song keben 宋刻本), vol. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Wang Yuanqi 王原祁 (1642-1715) and Sun Yueban 孫嶽頒 (1639-1708) et al. ed., *Peiwenzhai shuhua pu* 佩文齋書畫譜 (Qing wenyuange sikuquanshu ben 清文淵閣四庫全書本), vol. 3: Lunshu 論書 3.

<sup>3</sup> Zhu Changwen 朱長文 (1039-1098) ed., *Mochi bian* 墨池編 (Qing wenyuange sikuquanshu ben 清文淵閣四庫全書本), vol. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

*Brush* 筆髓論<sup>5</sup> and *Statement of Objectives of Calligraphy* 書旨述<sup>6</sup> are attributed to Yu Shinan. *On Pith of Employing of Brush* discussed chirographies, relationship between hands and heart, methods of using fingers, explanations of characteristics of regular, cursive and running scripts (semi-cursive script), and the concept of marvelousness very briefly. *Statement of Objectives of Calligraphy* stated the long history of writings and the objectives of characters. There are at least four essays reportedly written by Li Shimin. The first one, *Formulas of Employing of Brush* 筆法訣,<sup>7</sup> has similarities in wordings compared to *On Pith of Employing of Brush* by Yu Shinan.<sup>8</sup> The second one, *Methods of Using Fingers* 指意, named as same as the sub-title of one part in *On Pith of Employing of Brush* by Yu Shinan, has also very similar contents in comparison to Yu Shinan's. The third one, *on Calligraphy* 論書,<sup>9</sup> describes calligraphy in the terms of battle in 200 words. The fourth one, the *Biography and Discussions of Wang Xizhi*, recorded in *Jin Shu*,<sup>10</sup> appreciated the calligraphy works of Wang Xizhi and regarded Wang as the only person, who reached the acme of perfection in history.

The treatises attributed to famous calligraphers especially in Tang and concerning mainly writings techniques, such as eight models of dots and lines, are criticised as fake ones.<sup>11</sup> Most

<sup>5</sup> Wei Xu 韋續 (active in Late Tang), *Mo sou* 墨藪 (Qiang shiwanjuanlou congshu ben 清十萬卷樓叢書本).

<sup>6</sup> Zhang Yanyuan 張彥遠 (ca.815-ca.877) ed., *Fashu yaolu* 法書要錄, Mao Jin 毛晉 (1599-1659) emend. (Jindai mishu ben 津逮秘書本), vol. 3.

<sup>7</sup> *Shuyuan jinghua*, vol. 19.

<sup>8</sup> Specifically, the first paragraph of *Formulas of Employing of Brush* seems to be same as the part of "Marvelousness" in *On Pith of Employing of Brush*.

<sup>9</sup> *Mochi bian*, vol. 1.

<sup>10</sup> Fang Xuanling 房玄齡 (579-648) et al., ed., *Jin shu* 晉書 (Qing Qianlong wuyingdian keben 清乾隆武英殿刻本), vol. 80: Collected Biographies 50.

<sup>11</sup> Cong Sifei 叢思飛, "A Study on the Calligraphy Literature of the Tang Dynasty 唐代書法文獻研究" (Ph. D. diss., Jilin University, 2013), 103-53. There was a colophon written after the title of *Thirty-Six Approaches* in

of them began to circulate in late Tang or early Song. The purpose of attributing these treatises written about techniques to famous calligraphers at that time was to circulate them more widely, for people can easily accept them if they carry the name of famous calligraphers. Among the treatises mentioned above, there were only two, which were deemed to be authentic: *Statement of Objectives of Calligraphy* by Yu Shinan, which was compiled in *Fashu yaolu* 法書要錄, and the *Biography and Discussions of Wang Xizhi* by Li Shimin, which was recorded in *Jin Shu*. The first one just repeated the history of characters and handwritings very briefly, and the second mainly concerned appreciations of Wang Xizhi.

The first one discussing calligraphy theories in a systematical and extensive way was Sun Guoting 孫過庭 (ca.646-ca.690) in the beginning of Tang.<sup>12</sup> His calligraphy work *Treatise on Calligraphy* (Shu Pu 書譜) written in cursive script in 687, was a great calligraphy treatise with great historic significance. *Shu Pu* elucidated writing skills, relationship between hands and heart, chirographies, the position of calligraphy in cultural terms, art aesthetics, and methodologies and so on. Sun Guoting initiated a new model to discuss calligraphy through combining calligraphic and philosophical thoughts and had great influences on practices and theories in the history of Chinese calligraphy. After Sun Guoting, the theorist Li Sizhen 李嗣真 (? -696) wrote a treatise named *Sequel to Criticism of Calligraphy* 書後品, which narrated roughly the history of calligraphy and classified calligraphy works with ten ranks for judging and criticizing calligraphy, based on nine ranks

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*Peiwenzhai Shuhuapu* by the editor: “these essays were attributed to Ouyang Xun. However, there are some statements in these essays regarding Gaozong’s calligraphy and some words from Ou’s followers such as Dongpo and others. These were not from Tang, so I attached them here after Song’s essays.”

<sup>12</sup> There is a debate as the dates of Sun Guoting. Qi Gong estimated ca.627- ca.687, see Qi Gong 啟功 (1912-2005), *Collection of Qigong’s Essays: Volume of These* 啟功叢稿: 論文卷 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1999), 82-4. De Laurentis debates ca.646- ca.690, see Pietro De Laurentis, “Sun Guoting shengping kao 孫過庭生平考,” *Shufa Congkan* 書法叢刊 108 (2009.2), 73-81.

of *Criticism of Calligraphy* 書品 by Yu Jianwu 庾肩吾 (487-551). Li invented the first rank “yi pin 逸品”, other nine were same as Yu: top, middle and low in top-rank; top, middle and low in middle-rank; top, middle and low in low rank. Li concentrated more on naturalness than Yu.

From the middle to late Tang, there were many calligraphy theorists: Zhang Huaiguan 張懷瓘 (before 690- after 760),<sup>13</sup> Dou Ji 竇焜 (?-?, political life 742-755), Cai Xi-zong 蔡希綜 (?-?, active in Tiaobao times, 742-756), Xu Hao 徐浩 (703-783), Yan Zhen-qing 顏真卿 (709-784), Han Fang-ming 韓方明 (?-?, active in Zhenyuan times, 785-805), Lin Yun 林蘊 (?-?, active in Yuanhe times 806-820) and Han Yu 韓愈 (768-824) and so on. They wrote many calligraphy treatises, among which, with exception of Zhang Huaiguan and Dou Ji’s, other calligraphers’ treatises seemed to be too short to discuss calligraphy extensively. Furthermore, most of them usually focused more on the appreciation of calligraphy rather than theoretical analyses.

Zhang Huaiguan had seven undoubted articles:<sup>14</sup>

*Judgements on Calligraphy* 書斷 (written in 724-727),<sup>15</sup>

*on Characters* 文字論 (726-730),

*Calligraphy Treatises on Six Chirographies* 六體書論 (723-727),

*Value Estimation of Calligraphy* 書估 (754)

*Discussions of Calligraphy* 書議 (758),

<sup>13</sup> See my dissertation, “Textual Research on Ideology Origin of Sun Guoting and Zhang Huaiguan” (Ph.D. diss., Renmin University of China, 2016), 249-50.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 254.

<sup>15</sup> Writing dates, see my dissertation, “Textual Research on Ideology Origin of Sun Guoting and Zhang Huaiguan,” 251-4.

*Calligraphy Criticism in the Way of Medicine Therapy and Stone Acupuncture* 評書藥石論 (in late life but not definite),  
and *the Catalogue of Two Wang's Calligraphy* 二王等書錄 (760).<sup>16</sup>

Zhang Huaiguan not only narrated calligraphy's entire history and criticized calligraphy works in chirographies, but he also assumed that calligraphy could be elevated to an abstract level akin to Taoism. He combined Confucianism and Taoism together with calligraphy and discussed it in a Neo-Taoism (Xuanxue 玄學) way.

Dou Ji's treatise *Rhapsody of Calligraphy* 述書賦 interpreted calligraphic history through people and criticized calligraphy with Taoist thoughts. He objected to solid conventional techniques and advocated freedom and spontaneity in writings.

In conclusion, this study will discuss *Shu Pu* by Sun Guoting, *Sequel to Criticism of Calligraphy* by Li Sizhen, *Judgements on Calligraphy, on Characters, Calligraphy Treatises on Six Chirographies, Discussions of Calligraphy, Calligraphy Criticism in the Way of Medicine Therapy and Stone Acupuncture* by Zhang Huaiguan, and *Rhapsody of Calligraphy* by Dou Ji.

There is a debate that Tang calligraphic treatises especially by Sun Guoting are scattered, suddenly jumping around from one point to another. Moreover, they are not truly specific and concrete, unlike the subsequent treatises, such as *Sequel to the Treatise on Calligraphy* (published in 1208) by Jiang Kui 姜夔 (1154-1221).<sup>17</sup> I bear in mind that ancient theorists seemed to express their abstract philosophical thinking in literature-esque style. That is one

<sup>16</sup>, *Judgements on Calligraphy, On Character, Value Estimation of Calligraphy, Discussion of Calligraphy, and the Catalogue of Two Wang's Calligraphy* edited in *Fashu yaolu; Calligraphy Treatises on Six Chirographies, and Calligraphy Criticism in the Way of Medicine Therapy and Stone Acupuncture* in *Shuyuan jinghua*.

<sup>17</sup> See Chang Ch'ung-ho and Hans H. Frankel, *Two Chinese Treatises on Calligraphy* (Yale University Press, 1995), xiii.

reason why this study aims to philosophical dimensions of Tang calligraphic treatises. In terms of the depth and width in philosophical thinking, treatises from Sun and Zhang will be the core of discussions.

## ii. Philosophical Thoughts of Tang Calligraphic Treatises

On the one hand, Sun Guoting presented many writing techniques such as reconciliation of hands and heart, holding, moving, turning and employing of brush etc. On the other hand, he elevated the position of calligraphy to a high level which has equal status with ritual and music in Confucian classics (Jingxue 經學), consequently he employed the notion of filial piety to assess calligraphy works and emphasized appropriateness and harmony in the aesthetic judgement, which was derived from Confucianism. According to Zhang Huaiguan's authentic treatises, he had seldom discussed detailed techniques, although in his view, profound skills were a basic requisite for the Class of Superb 神品. Zhang indicated that calligraphy had a very high status, and he thought calligraphy could constitute essays to convey the truth (Dao 道). In the same style as Sun, Zhang applied filial piety to assess the quality of dots and lines as well.

Both Sun and Zhang adopted the thoughts of *Zhou Yi* 周易, the first Classic amongst the *Five Classics* in Confucianism 群經之首, to construct their concepts of aesthetics. In their view, trigrams and hexagrams were at the root of calligraphy; therefore, calligraphy also incorporates the characteristics of change. In the same style as trigrams and hexagrams, there were many changes among dots and lines; furthermore, from ancient to present, practices and aesthetics of calligraphy developed with great changes rather than with invariability and stability. Sun applied *Yi Jing*'s concepts "yin 陰, yang 陽, xiao 消 and xi 息" in his theory

framework, in order to demonstrate the changing styles of the dots and lines of calligraphy. Diversified situations, as Sun demonstrated, referred to various forms, such as differences of suspended needle (xuan zhen 懸針) and hanging dewdrop (chui lu 垂露), marvels of rolling thunder (ben lei 奔雷) and toppling rocks (zhui shi 墜石), postures of flying wild geese (hong fei 鴻飛) and frightened beasts (shou hei 獸駭), attitudes of dancing phoenixes (luan wu 鸞舞) and startled snakes (she jing 蛇驚) and power of sheer cliffs (jue an 絕岸) and crumbling peaks (tui feng 頽峰) and so on.<sup>18</sup> Hence, he attached a great importance to the reconciliation of hardness 剛 and softness 柔 and demonstrated that this kind of reconciliation was a basic element of calligraphy. There were two apexes of hardness and softness: heavy clouds (zhong yun 重雲) and cicada wings (chan yi 蟬翼).

Zhang Huaiguan held that hexagrams and images were the first ancestors of characters. Calligraphy tended to change. He proposed in *Calligraphy Criticism in the Way of Medicine Therapy* that the calligraphy in his time should return to a plain status. He stated that the reason why Zhang Zhi 張芝 (? -192), Wang Xizhi 王羲之 (303-361) and Wang Xianzhi 王獻之 (344-386) became historical masters,<sup>19</sup> was that they broke away from the constraints of traditional techniques and created new models in their scripts. Zhang Zhi learned the techniques from Du Du 杜度 (? -? active in East Han 25-220) and Cui Yuan 崔瑗 (77-142), but he surpassed them and developed a new stylistic form of cursive script. Wang Xizhi and Wang Xianzhi created new forms of cursive and running scripts separately as well. The conception of change led to their eminent performance. Following Sun, Zhang highlighted the importance of the reconciliation of hardness and softness. He cited many statements from

<sup>18</sup> See Chang, and Frankel, *Two Chinese Treatises on Calligraphy*, 3.

<sup>19</sup> There are some controversial points regarding the death and birth years of Wang Xizhi, see Lothar Ledderose, "Some Taoist Elements in the Calligraphy of the Six Dynasties," *T'oung Pao*, Second Series, vol. 70, Livr. 4/5 (1984), 246-78.

*Zhou Yi* to back up his viewpoints. The nature of earth was the alternation of yieldingness (softness) and firmness (hardness) 立地之道曰柔與剛.<sup>20</sup> “When the firm lines (hardness) and yielding lines (softness) alternate and vary in combination, the philosophy of change is embodied in them 剛柔相推，變在其中也.”<sup>21</sup> Thus, the way of calligraphy implies the alternation of hardness and softness.

In Chinese traditional culture, Confucianism and Taoism are complementary. It is noteworthy that Taoism here refers to an early school or lineage “Daojia (道家)” began with Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi, instead of the religious form of Taoism teaching “Daojiao (道教).”<sup>22</sup> Taoism played an important role in the mentality of literati in ancient times because it could give guidance to their behavior and thoughts, producing a state of mind suitable for the practice of calligraphy. Behaviors including practicing calligraphy should take the law from nature and conform to naturalness. Sun Guoting indicated that calligraphy had the characteristics of Taoism: equable (yi 夷), inaudible (xi 希) and subtle (wei 微). Common people had the difficulty to appreciate calligraphy works, since “Scholars of the lowest class, when they have heard about it, laughed greatly at it. If it were not (thus) laughed at, it would not be fit to be the Tao 下士聞道，大笑之，不笑，不足以為道.”<sup>23</sup> From Sun Guoting’s viewpoint, calligraphy was one kind of Dao, Zhang Huaiguan directly used the terminology “Shu Dao”, which implies calligraphy had the features of Taoism such as dark (xuan 玄), vacant (xu 虛), deep (shen 深), dim (yao 杳), dusky (ming 冥) and subtle (wei 微) and so on.

<sup>20</sup> Zhang Shanwen, trans. to modern Chinese, and Fu Huisheng, trans. to English, *The Zhou Book of Change* (Changsha: Hunan renmin chubanshe, 2008), 454-5.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 406-7.

<sup>22</sup> More details see Fabrizio Pregadio ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism* (London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group), 5-8.

<sup>23</sup> James Legge trans., *The Tao Teh King*, (Oxford University Press, 1891), 84.

Sun stated that the calligraphy has sublime existence as same as nature and one can reach marvelous sphere of calligraphy in a natural way rather than in it being forced. Since nature was full of infinite variety, when calligraphy follows the phenomena of nature, it had the feature of infinite variety as well, same as sculpted clay figures and like smelting metal 猶挺埴之罔窮, 與工爐而並運. Zhang declared that calligraphy had the characteristics of nature and nothing would limit it. Furthermore, techniques had no boundaries; it was advisable to integrate all skills of dots and lines into an organic one.

According to the theory of innate nature from Weijin Neo-Taoism 魏晉玄學, to take the law from nature referred to following one's innate nature, i.e. a priori characteristics. As Zhang Huaiguan pointed out, just as individual faces differ, so too do one's innate nature. There was only one principle, i.e. Shu Dao 書道, one calligrapher should conform to his own innate nature. One of main tasks for calligraphers was to figure out and build up their own stylistic form from their own inborn nature. With this argument, Zhang considered that the level of cursive script by Wang Xizhi was lower than that by Zhang Zhi 張芝 (? -192), Ji Kang 嵇康 (ca.224-ca.263), Wang Xianzhi 王獻之 (344-386), Wang Dun 王敦 (beginning of 4<sup>th</sup> century), Wang Yi 王廙 (276-322), Wei Dan 韋誕 (179-253) and Zhong Hui 鍾會 (255-264). His assessment was surprising because Wang Xizhi's works were always considered the best of all chirographies.

Sun Guoting suggested concealing the regulations of dots and lines when writing squareness and roundness 泯規矩於方圓. Then, if the integration of hands and heart was done well, even one ignoring Wang Xizhi and Wang Xianzhi and departing from Zhong You and Zhang Zhi, could make no mistakes and become successful to reach the ideal sphere of artistry. The notions of squareness and roundness were derived from Wang Bi 王弼 (226-

249), a Neo-Taoist in Wei times.<sup>24</sup> He declared that taking the law of nature meant to take squareness as model when among squares and to take roundness as model when among round ones,<sup>25</sup> thus nothing deviated from taking the law of nature. The discussion concerning the theory of squareness and roundness models was an application of the concepts of inborn nature.

### iii. Tang Calligraphic Treatises in comparison to those in Pre-Tang Times

In the pre-Tang times, there were many prominent treatises as well. *A Pox on Cursive Script* 非草書,<sup>26</sup> written by Zhao Yi 趙壹 (late second century C.E.) in the Eastern Han (25-220),<sup>27</sup> described and criticized the phenomena of people's passion for the cursive script in his times, and he negated the validity of applications in politics and society management. Zhao Yi stated:

<sup>24</sup> Wang Bi 王弼 (226-249) annot., Lou Yulie 樓宇烈 emend., annot., *Emendation and Explanation of Daode Jing* 老子道德經注校釋 (Beijihng: Zhonghua shuju, 2008), 64.

<sup>25</sup> Rudolf G. Wagner, *A Chinese Reading of the Daodejing: Wang Bi's Commentary on the Laozi with Critical Text and Translation* (State University of New York Press, 2003), 203.

<sup>26</sup> For the English name of the title of *Fei caoshu*, See Sarah E. Fraser, *Performing the Visual: the Practice of Buddhist Wall Painting in China and Central Asia, 618-960* (Stanford University Press, 2004), 200.

Richard Barnhart translated it as *A Pox on the Grass Style*, Amy McNair as *Against the Cursive Script*.

William R.B. Acker did that as *Polemic against the Grass Script*, James F. Cahill as *Polemic against the cursive script*. They are not accurate, because the word Fei 非 implies surely negation, but not merely a controversial argument.

See Richard Barnhart, "Wei Fu-jen's Pi-chen T'u and the Early Texts," *Archives of the Chinese Art Society of America*, 18(1964), 13-25. Amy McNair, "Fa shu yao lu, a Ninth-Century Compendium of Texts on Calligraphy," *Tang Studies*, 1987:5, 69-86. William R.B. Acker, *Some Tang and Pre-Tang Texts on Chinese Painting* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1954), LIV. James F. Cahill, "Confucian Elements in the Theory of Painting," in A. F. Wright, ed., *The Confucian Persuasions* (Stanford, 1960), 126.

<sup>27</sup> See *Fashu yaolu*, vol. 1.

“For counties and towns do not grade people according to ability by (their skill in) this (script); the Imperial Court does not classify officials by (their proficiency in) it; Doctors of Literature do not use it in their examinations; no one strives for perfection in the Four Branches (of Confucian Learning) by (the use of) it; when Emperors honour scholars by ceremoniously inviting them to come to Court to ask for their services they do not have this in mind; and when they inquire concerning the meritorious services of officials they do not grade them by their skill in these characters. Since, then, merely to have mastered these characters does not get one ahead in the government, and being unskillful in the grass script does not impede one in one’s official career, reasoning from this, how should it not be a thing of slight importance!”<sup>28</sup>

鄉邑不以此較能，朝廷不以此科吏，博士不以此講試，四科不以此求備，徵聘不問此意，考績不課此字。善既不達於政，而拙無損於治，推斯言之，豈不細哉？<sup>29</sup>

One could not apply cursive script to the state imperial examination and to academic discourses held by the Doctors of Literature (Classics Boshi 經學博士) of the Emperor’s court, according to Zhao Yi, which implied that cursive script could not benefit the governance of the state at all. Contemporary researchers do not agree Zhao Yi’s understanding of the cursive script: “It is, however, a historical document rather than a treatise on art, important for the light it sheds on early attitudes toward the growing art of calligraphy in the ts’ao style.”<sup>30</sup> Tang calligraphy theorists, on the other hand, elevated the position of calligraphy to equal rituals and music, which served to rule the state in the notions of Confucian classics in Sun Guoting’s view, or from the perspective of Zhang Huaiguan,

<sup>28</sup> William R.B. Acker, *Some Tang and Pre-Tang Texts on Chinese Painting* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1954), LVII. The Four Branches are the practice of moral power 德行, the study of language 言語, government 政事 and literature 文學, see the footnote by Acker from same page.

<sup>29</sup> *Fa shu yaolu*, vol. 1.

<sup>30</sup> Richard Barnhart, “Wei Fu-jen’s Pi-chen T’u and the Early Texts”, *Archives of the Chinese Art Society of America*, 18(1964), 13-25, quote from 19.

being one sort of vehicle to convey the governing truth (Dao 道). The doubt for the artistry of sinuous, clean strokes of cursive script had been removed completely in Tang.

*Calligraphical Postuer of Four Chirographies* 四體書勢 by Wei Heng 衛恒 (252-291) in the Western Jin (266-316) narrated the history of four chirographies development: archaic script 古文, seal script 篆書, clerical script 隸書 and cursive script 草書.<sup>31</sup> This treatise focused mainly on the development of characters, the history of writing and calligraphy, which thereafter became public materials for subsequent theorists, such as Yang Xin, Wang Sengqain, Yu Jianwu, Zhang Huaiguan and so forth. Wei Heng utilized the word “image 象” to connect the abstraction of calligraphy to concreteness of natural things. He stated: “(The calligrapher) observes the images of things to convey his thoughts; these are things such as cannot be expressed in words.”<sup>32</sup> James Cahill understood the concept of image in a symbolic way to be analogous to the hexagram of *Yi Jing*.<sup>33</sup> Actually, the statement “image” by Wei Heng originated from Neo-Taoism, when images were mentioned together with wordings 言 and meanings 意, they referred to concepts from Neo-Taoism rather than from *Yi Jing*.

*Index of Calligraphers from Ancients* 采古來能書人名 by Yang Xin 羊欣 (370-442) in the Song of Southern Dynasties (420-479) listed over fifty calligraphers including Li Si, Du Du, Cui Yuan, Wang Xizhi, Wang Xianzhi and Ji Kang etc, from Qin to the Southern Dynasties.<sup>34</sup> Yang Xin commented on their merits and demerits. *Memorial to the Throne on Calligraphy* 論書表 by Yu He 虞龢 (? -?) in the Song of Southern Dynasties (420-479) also

<sup>31</sup> See “the Biography of Wei Heng 衛恒傳,” *Jinshu* 晉書, vol. 36: Collected Biographies 6.

<sup>32</sup> Chinese version, see the previous note. English version, see James F. Cahill, “Confucian Elements in the Theory of Painting,” in A.F. Wright ed., *The Confucian Persuasion* (Stanford University Press, 1960), 126.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> In *Fashu yaolu*, vol. 1.

commented on four eminent calligraphers 四賢: Zhong You, Zhang Zhi, Wang Xizhi and Wang Xianzhi. Afterwards, the above contents became materials for Sun Guoting, through which he discussed the topics of elegance 文 and substance 質 and criticized Wang Xianzhi. In this treatise, Yu He presented the circulating of handwritings of the Two Wangs, especially Wang Xizhi. Most of the literary quotations regarding Wang Xizhi in *Shu Pu* were derived from this treatise. *Comments on Calligraphy* 書品 by Yu Jian-wu 庾肩吾 (487-551) in the Liang of Southern Dynasties (502-557) was the first treatise to classify calligraphy using the nine rankings as mentioned above,<sup>35</sup> which led to the conception of the three ranks of *Judgements on Calligraphy* by Zhang Huaiguan. *On Calligraphy* 論書 by Yu Yuanwei 庾元威 (? -?) in the Liang of Southern Dynasties (502-557) described hundreds of chirographies, which later became objects of criticism for Sun Guoting.<sup>36</sup> These chirographies were not real artistic works of calligraphy but merely decorations for buildings. *On Calligraphy* 論書 by Wang Sengqian 王僧虔 (426-485) in the Qi of Southern Dynasties (479-502), similar to *Index of Calligraphers from Ancients* by Yang Xin, listed and commented on over 30 calligraphers.<sup>37</sup>

*Observing the Twelve Implications of Zhong You's Calligraphy* 觀鍾繇書法十二意 by Xiao Yan 蕭衍 (464-549) in the Liang of Southern Dynasties (502-557) presented twelve writing techniques.<sup>38</sup> Another treatise of his *Descriptions of Cursive Script* 草書狀 depicted the shapes and images of cursive script with many metaphors e.g. beasts, birds, clouds and stars,<sup>39</sup> which had a great influence on Sun Guoting. In *On Calligraphy to Answer Taoyinju*

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., vol. 2.

<sup>36</sup> In *Fashu yaolu*, vol. 2.

<sup>37</sup> In *Shuyuan jinghua*, vol. 11.

<sup>38</sup> In *Fashu yaolu*, vol. 2.

<sup>39</sup> Zhang Yanyuan did not edit this treatise in his *Fashu yaolu*. Zhang Hauiguan cited one section regarding the

答陶隱居論書,<sup>40</sup> Xiao Yan discussed the relationship between employing brush and shapes of dots and lines; furthermore he attached a great importance to naturalness. Nonetheless, the notion of naturalness from these periods was subconscious. It was not until Tang that naturalness became a methodological concept in practicing calligraphy.

There were some treatises circulated in the beginning of Tang: *Diagram of the Battle Formation of the Brush* 筆陣圖, attributed to Madam Wei 衛夫人 (272-349) in the Eastern Jin (317-420), and *Colophon to Diagram of the Battle Formation of the Brush* 題〈筆陣圖〉後, attributed to Wang Xizhi 王羲之 (303-361) in the Eastern Jin (317-420). According to Sun Guoting's opinions, there was one version for *Diagram of the Battle Formation of the Brush* that was handed down to Tang, but it was a pity that this version was not an authentic work by Wang Xizhi.

In Summary, some of the calligraphy treatises in Pre-Tang narrated the history of how characters and writing developed, some even began to criticize calligraphers by listing or ranking calligraphy and some sporadically had philosophical dimensions. Based on Pre-Tang treatises, Sun and Zhang discussed and criticized calligraphy in a new way of thinking and gave a new perspective, in which calligraphy was regarded as equal to the Ritual, Music or Shu Dao. Filial piety and personality were used as criteria to judge the quality of calligraphy. Moreover, the circumstances of Confucianism, appropriateness and harmony, which originally belonged to the concepts of Jingxue 經學, played a significant role in the practice of calligraphy in Tang calligraphic treatises, when considering the exercise of body and mind.

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definition of cursive script in his *Judgements on Calligraphy*, which implies that this treatise is authentic by Xiao Yan. See *Shuyuan jinghua*, vol. 3.

<sup>40</sup> In *Fashu yaolu*, vol. 2.

In addition, there were more applications of ideas from *Yi Jing* and Taoism to calligraphy in Tang than before. For instance, hexagrams were deemed as a root of calligraphy, conceptions of change; reconciliation of hardness and softness became a vital issue in analysing a calligraphic work. The theories of taking the law of nature and following one's innate nature were widely and extensively accepted. Tang's Calligraphic theories had surpassed those of Pre-Tang due to its philosophical profundity.

#### iv. Influences on Subsequent Calligraphic Theories after Tang

In the Southern Song, there was a famous treatise *Sequel to Shu Pu* 續書譜 written by the calligrapher Jiang Kui 姜夔 (1154-1221). In referencing the name *Shu Pu*, he planned to introduce detailed techniques with respect to the method of producing a calligraphy work, some of which he considered to be in need of further explanation. In addition to *General Remarks*, this treatise explained the following seventeen theories:

*Regular Script and its Use of Brush, Cursive Script, its Use of Brush and Use of Ink, Running Script, Copying and Tracing, Squareness and Roundness, Face to Face and Back to Back, Balance, Looseness and Tightness, Bearing, Speed, Movement of Brush, Feeling and Temperament, Circulation of the Blood and Writing with Cinnabar.*<sup>41</sup>

Most of them were full of technic knowledge. Jiang Kui thought that a treatise named *Shu Pu* should concern such kinds of technical theme.

Xiang Mu 項穆 (ca.1550-ca.1600), a son of the great connoisseur Xiang Yuanbian 項元汴, developed Sun Guoting's aesthetic notions in his famous treatise *Earnest Advice on Calligraphy* 書法雅言.<sup>42</sup> He negated the calligraphy of Song Dynasties, especially by Su Shi

<sup>41</sup> Chang, and Frankel, *Two Chinese Treatises on Calligraphy*, 17-29.

<sup>42</sup> Xiang Mu 項穆 (ca.1550-ca.1600), *Earnest Advice on Calligraphy* 書法雅言 (Qing Wenyuange sikuquanshu

and Mi Fu, and held that calligraphy should return to the techniques in Tang and to the stylistic form of Wang Xizhi. He had the similar thoughts as Sun Guoting that calligraphy had the function of ethicization. From ancient to modern times, calligraphy has always alternated between elegance and substance. He attached the great importance to appropriateness 宜 and harmony 和 in calligraphy. Compared to Jiang Kui, Xiang Mu discussed more about the deeper meanings of *Shu Pu*'s concepts, rather than detailed requirements of writing techniques. A typical feature of *Earnest Advice on Calligraphy* was to emphasize the uprightness of mind, which was a tendency of Confucianism.<sup>43</sup>

By imitating Zhang Huaiguan, the theorist Zhu Changwen 朱長文 (1039-1098) composed *Sequel to Judgements on Calligraphy* 續書斷.<sup>44</sup> In *Judgements on Calligraphy*, Zhang criticised and ranked using three levels: Marvelous 神, Splendid 妙 and Capable 能 for calligraphers and works from ancient times to the beginning of Tang; then Zhu did this for those from the beginning of Tang to the Northern Song with the same systems as three levels as Zhang. The way of *Sequel to Judgements on Calligraphy* in interpreting the reasons of rankings followed that of *Judgements on Calligraphy*. An interesting thing is that Sun Guoting and Zhang Huaiguan belonged to the rank Capable according to Zhu.

Later theorists of calligraphy after Tang not only imitated the style of writing from Sun and Zhang, but also accepted the notion of naturalness. In Song Dynasty, calligrapher Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037-1101) suggested to write with spontaneity and occasionality, rather than rigidly following the conventional fixed techniques. Su Shi led a stylistic form in Song, named

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ben 清文淵閣四庫全書本), vol. 113: Zibu 子部 23.

<sup>43</sup> More detailed information regarding post-Shu Pu theories, see Hong Wenxiong 洪文雄, "A Study of Commentaries and Interpretations to Sun Guoting's *Shu Pu* in Ancient China 論中國歷代對孫過庭《書譜》的評價與詮釋," *Fengjia renwen shehui xuebao* 逢甲人文社會學報, vol. 20 (2010-6), 143-185.

<sup>44</sup> In *Mochi bian*, vol. 3.

School of Respecting the Idea 尚意書風.<sup>45</sup> The concepts of taking the law of nature and following inborn nature in Tang had great influences on Song calligraphy theories and practicing.

Tang treatises dominated in the theory history of calligraphy; post-Tang Calligraphy theories followed them under the conceptual framework of Tang's treatises. When Stele School Movement 碑學運動 initiated during Qian Jia times 乾嘉 (1735-1796, 1796-1820), calligraphy theories turned to a new direction toward steles. There was a sharp transition in both calligraphy aesthetic judgement and practice.

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<sup>45</sup> See Liang Yan 梁璣 (1710-1788), "Ping Shu Tie 評書帖," in Gui Dizi 桂第子 trans. and annot., *Early Qing Calligraphy Treatises* 清前期書論 (Changsha: Hunan meishu chubanshe, 2003), 176.

## Chapter 1 The Background of Tang Calligraphic Treatises

The Tang Period saw the climax of calligraphic practice. The techniques of regular script such as that of Yu Shinan, Chu Suiliang, Ouyang Xun, Yan Zhenqing and Liu Gongquan reached the highest development in regards to the rhythm, fluidity of movement, bilateral symmetry, tensile strength and tightly structured interactional relationships, as aesthetic norms of visual configuration in artistic conventions. Their works constituted a historical peak in terms of quality and skill and served as a standard of calligraphic perfection for subsequent calligraphers in history. With canonical stylistic forms and textual content memorializing imperial undertakings, calligraphy had both aesthetic and sociopolitical dimensions in Tang, benefited society and encouraged virtue with didactic and ideological implications from the Confucian view.<sup>46</sup>

It is noteworthy that techniques of cursive script from Sun Guoting, Zhang Xu and Huai Su, and of running script from Yan Zhenqing afterward tended to be utterly beyond competition, which indicates the pure aesthetic dimension of the script rather than the pragmatic function of regular script. Calligraphy treatises also reached their highest development due to the flourishing of calligraphy in the Tang Dynasty. Without the prosperity of calligraphy practices in Tang, it is hard to envision how Tang calligraphy theories would have advanced to such a dominant position in the history of Chinese calligraphy theory.

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<sup>46</sup> See Stephen J. Goldberg, "Court Calligraphy of the Early Tang Dynasty," *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 49, No. 3/4 (1988-1989), 189-237, quote from 232.

As previously analyzed, pre-Tang calligraphic treatises supplied Tang theorists with the fundamental content of calligraphy history, analytic perspectives concerning techniques of writings, aesthetic notions, and criteria canon of appreciation and assessment. Theorists in Tang, such as Sun Guoting, Li Sizhen and Zhang Huaiguan, started to summarize and systematize those theories of calligraphy derived from pre-Tang, which were undoubtedly based on the assimilation of the pre-Tang treatises. The core and essential themes include the relationship between ancient and modern times, the interconversion between the spirit of elegance 文 and substance 質, the issue of techniques of holding, moving, turning and employing of brush, the relationship between heart and hands, and the classification and criterion of calligraphy ranks and so forth.

Therefore, for the theorists of calligraphy in Tang, when they faced the booming and prosperity of calligraphy practice, the question was to which direction they would face. On the one hand, it was necessary to shed light on the principles of writing techniques in a more transparent and systematic way. On the other, to declare the elevated position of calligraphy toward the sociopolitical pragmatic functions and to reveal calligraphic conceptions toward pure aesthetic dimensions became certain autonomous tasks of art theorists, under the conditions of Confucianism and Taoism. The assumed prerequisites reside in the assimilation of pre-Tang treatises, for there were basic inheritable theoretical components. Tang theorists set about constructing a form of reflective thinking to further develop the pure theory of calligraphy. They were not satisfied with summarizing and systematizing pre-Tang treatises, and vice versa they headed in a very abstract direction: a philosophical dimension. Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism were well integrated both in the imperial court and among literati in the Tang Dynasty. As literati, intellectuals, or consultants of the emperors, they took a wide view of the whole nation and its culture, not merely limited to calligraphy or painting, which were regarded as minor techniques 彫蟲小技 when compared to state

governance. Hence, when they discussed the artistry of calligraphy, there was a preference to connect theories with Confucianism and Taoism to demonstrate that they had had great aspirations and ambitions in leading the art and culture trend and even in governing the county through the fields of artistry and culture.

However, some viewpoints with respect to ethicized functions or moral traits of calligraphy are not rational from today's perspective. What we should do instead, is to reveal the relationship between calligraphy treatises and Chinese traditional culture, which I would here call the philosophical dimension. Even though, there was no European metaphysics in ancient China, philosophical thoughts at least flourished, which allows us to investigate the philosophical dimension through analyzing Chinese traditional art theories from the perspective of aesthetics.

### § 1.1 The Practice of Tang Calligraphy

When Tang Taizong 唐太宗 (Li Shimin) (598-649) organized Fang Xuanling 房玄齡 (579-648) and other twenty scholars to compile the historical book *Jinshu* 晉書 at the beginning of Tang Dynasty, Tang Taizong wrote *the Biography of Wang Xizhi* in person. He attached great significance to both calligraphy and literature, and appreciated the calligraphy works of Wang Xizhi highly, which was rare at that time. He collected the calligraphy works of Wang Xizhi by means of the imperial authority, and there was a legend said that he earned *Lanting Xu* 蘭亭序, the first running hand script all over the world 天下第一行書, by cheating a monk named Bian Cai. *Lanting Xu* was buried with the dead of Tang Taizong and then disappeared without any trace at the end. Tang Taizong was a skilled expert in calligraphy with some famous calligraphy works handed down, e.g. a work of cursive script Pingfeng Tie 屏風帖 (**Figure 16**) and a work of running hand Wenquanming 溫泉銘 (**Figure 17**) etc. His

writing skills and art style were influenced by Wang Xizhi's own cursive script and running hand. There is a statement in *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書, that demonstrated his enthusiasm about calligraphy practice:

Taizong was adept in Wang Xizhi's Style, especial the chirography Fei Bai. While eating in Xuan Wu Gate with officials above level three, the emperor wrote Fei Bai to give to officials, and some drunken officials quarreled with each other in order to obtain calligraphy works from the emperor, only Si Only impressed the emperor and won the fruits of his labour.

太宗工王羲之書,尤善飛白,嘗宴三品已上於玄武門,帝操筆作飛白字賜群臣,或乘酒爭取於帝手,洎登御座引手得之。<sup>47</sup>

This record implies that he was so inclined towards calligraphy practice, that even during a banquet he would write some calligraphy works in order to make merry and share happiness with other people such as family members and his courtiers.

In addition, Tang Taizong not only requested Feng Chengsu 馮承素 (617-672) to trace (mo 摹) the calligraphy work *Lanting Xu* with double lines 雙鉤 (Figure 22),<sup>48</sup> certainly to preserve calligraphy works of Wang Xizhi through different ways, but he also ordered some courtiers to copy (lin 臨) *Lanting Xu* freehand. Today, the reproduced copies of *Lanting Xu* from Yu Shinan 虞世南 (558-638) (Figure 19) and Chu Suiliang 褚遂良 (596-659) (Figure 23) are our classical normative samples, used to study subtle techniques of calligraphy works from Jin and Tang, following established visual coherence, equilibrium and harmony.

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<sup>47</sup> Liu Xu 劉昫 (887-946) et al., ed., *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書 (Qing Qianlong Wuyingdian keben 清乾隆武英殿刻本), vol. 77: Collected Biographies 24: Biography of Liu Si 劉洎傳.

<sup>48</sup> The terminology “mo” is to copy by tracing; “lin” is to copy in a freehand manner. See Shen F.Y. Fu in collaboration with Marilyn W. Fu, Mary G. Neill and Mary Jane Clark, *Traces of the Brush* (Yale University Art Gallery, 1977), 3.

In Tang, the four capabilities and three holdings 四才三實 were the necessary standards in the selection system of courtiers 職官選拔制度. “The four capabilities are body (good appearance), speaking (be proper when talking), writing (beautiful standard of calligraphy) and judgement (judging well in court verdict). The court would grant one, who is excellent in these four fields, as an official under level six 六品 (after imperial examination). The three holdings are being virtuous 德行, being talented 才用 and being willing to contribute to the empire 勞效, these three are also the criteria to promote or demote officials.”<sup>49</sup> In the evaluation of the quality of candidates’ calligraphy, firm and beautiful brush-strokes 楷法遒美<sup>50</sup> in regular script were the standard. This was the basis for the development and prosperity of regular script in Tang Dynasty.

There were some renowned courtiers in the history of calligraphy practice. People regarded four artists: Ouyang Xun 歐陽詢 (557-641) (**Figure 18**), Yu Shinan 虞世南 (558-638) (**Figure 19**), Chu Suiliang 褚遂良 (596-659) (**Figure 20**) and Xue Ji 薛稷 (649-713) (**Figure 21**) as Four Masters at the beginning of Tang 唐初四大家. Afterwards, their works served as the baseline in evaluation and as conventional norms, at least in the regular script.

Achieving a structural synthesis including a reasonable rhythm, the fluidity of movement, bilateral symmetry, tensile strength and so forth, Tang regular script represented the dominant model of appropriateness and harmony. This expressed ideological implications or even conveyed political messages when combined with certain texts. “The public function of calligraphy was to commemorate imperial undertakings (e.g. the Kongzi Miaotan bei) and

<sup>49</sup> Liu Xu 劉昫 (887-946) et al., ed., *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書, vol. 47: Zhi 志 23: Zhiguan 職官 2.

<sup>50</sup> Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007-1072) et al. ed., *Xin Tang shu* 新唐書 (Qing Qianlong Wuyingdian keben 清乾隆武英殿刻本), vol. 45: Zhi 志 35: Xuanju zhi 選舉志, second part.

auspicious occurrences (e.g. Jiucheng gong Liqian ming) and to memorialize and eulogize loyal officials (e.g. Huangfu Tan bei) and members of the Buddhist clergy (e.g. Yanta Shengjiao xu).”<sup>51</sup> In other words, there are two aspects, i.e. specific stylistic aesthetic form with the dominant visual model and the content written in canonical calligraphic characters, supporting Confucian persuasion. The concepts of appropriateness and harmony derived from Confucianism, constitute an ideal aesthetic form of calligraphy, which resulted in Sun Guoting and Zhang Huaiguang discussing them in a wide and extensive way, and even resulted in calligraphy being elevated to a high position in the world of Confucianism.

Other than the four calligraphers, Sun Guoting was the most famous calligrapher in cursive script at the beginning of Tang. His renowned work *Shu Pu* 書譜 (Figure 25) is not only a significant cursive script work, but also an important treatise in the calligraphy theory history.

Another cursive script calligrapher Zhang Xu 張旭 (675? -759) was well known for his manic stylistic form in cursive script writing. Du Fu 杜甫 (712-770) praised him in *Song of Eight Drinking Immortals* 飲中八仙歌:

“After three cups Zhang Xu is bruited “Draft Script Sage, his cap fallen off, with bare head he stands before princes and dukes, from the brush he wields paper drops like clouds and mist.”<sup>52</sup>

“張旭三杯草聖傳，脫帽露頂王公前，揮毫落紙如雲煙。”<sup>53</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Stephen J. Goldberg, “Court Calligraphy of the Early Tang Dynasty,” *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 49, No. 3/4 (1988-1989), 189-237, quote from 232.

<sup>52</sup> Stephan Owen trans., ed., *The Poetry of Du Fu* (Boston/Berlin: Walter De Gruyter Inc., 2016), 56.

<sup>53</sup> Du Fu 杜甫 (712-770), *Dugongbu ji* 杜工部集 (Xu Guyicongshu ying Songben Maoshi Jiguge ben 續古逸叢書景宋本配毛氏汲古閣本), vol. 1: poems 50.

Han Yu 韓愈 (768-824) stated in *Preface Seeing Off the Monk Kaohsien* 送高閑上人序:

“In former times, Chang Hsu excelled at calligraphy in the grass style and perfected no other art.<sup>54</sup> Whenever his mind was moved by joy or anger, by despair, by sorrow or delight, was resentful or lustful, full of wine or of ennui or of injustice, he would always express these in his calligraphy. Whatever he saw in the world—mountains and streams, peaks and valleys, birds, animals, insects, and fish, flowers and fruits, the sun, the moon, or the stars, the wind, the rain, flood and fire, thunder and lightning, song and dance or warfare and contention, all the transformations of heaven and earth joyous or troubling—all these he lodged in his calligraphy. Therefore, the permutations of his writings are like those of ghosts and spirits and cannot be fathomed. He practiced in this way to the end of his life and so became famous in later ages.”<sup>54</sup>

“時張旭善草書，不治他技。喜怒炯窮，憂悲愉佚，怨恨思慕，酣醉、無聊、不平，有動於心，必於草書焉發之。觀於物……日月列星，風雨水火，雷霆霹靂，歌舞戰鬥，天地事物之變，可喜可愕，一寓於書。故旭之書變動猶鬼神，不可端倪。以此終其身，而名後世。”<sup>55</sup>

Today one transmitted calligraphy work from Zhang Xu, *Four Rubbings of Ancient Poems* 古詩四帖 (**Figure 26**) in cursive script, is authentically written in ink, another is *Dutong Tie* 肚痛帖, a rubbing version 拓本. Both these Ties are classic samples for cursive script. Besides cursive draft scripts Zhang Xu also had regular scripts to hand down, e.g. *Langguan Shiji Xu* 郎官石記序, *Yanren Zhi* 嚴仁志. Both his cursive script and regular script demonstrate his superior position in the history of calligraphy.

<sup>54</sup> Charles Hartman, *Han Yu and the Tang search for Unity* (Princeton University Press, 1986), 222-3.

<sup>55</sup> Han Yu 韓愈 (768-824), *Changli xiansheng wenji* 昌黎先生文集 (Song Shu ben 宋蜀本), vol. 21.

Zhang Xu's mother is the niece of Lu Jianzhi 陸柬之 (583-638), a calligrapher at the beginning of Tang, who is a nephew of Yu Shinan. During Kaiyuan 開元 periods (713-741), Zhang Xu from Kunshan 昆山, He Zhizhang 賀知章 (ca. 659-ca.744) from Kuaiji 會稽, Bao Rong 包融 (ca.695-ca.764) from Runzhou 潤州, Zhang Ruoxu 張若虛 (ca.647-ca.730) from Yangzhou 揚州 were called the Four Literati in Wu 吳中四士, due to the fresh style and naturalness of their poems and prose etc., in the areas of Jiangsu 江蘇 and Zhejiang 浙江 province.<sup>56</sup> They wrote not merely perfect poems, but also excellent calligraphy works, e.g. *Xiaojing* 孝經 in Zhang Cao 章草 from He Zhizhang (**Figure 27**). Bao Rong 包融 (ca.695-ca.764) is an excellent theorist in calligraphy, whom Zhang Huaiguan mentioned in the essay *On Character* 文字論, but unfortunately, no calligraphy works by Bao Rong have been handed down.

Huai Su 懷素 (ca.737-?) and Zhang Xu were often referred to in conjunction with each other using the name Dian Zhang Kuang Su 顛張狂素 (Dian means mania, Kuang is crazy).<sup>57</sup> Huai Su was a monk since he was very young and was very interested in art and literature, especially in cursive script. He indulged himself in drink and cursive script, and with the nickname Drunk Monk or Crazy Monk, he became very famous for cursive script when was young. He had learned cursive script from Cao Wutong 曹鄴彤, who was a student of Zhang Xu, which means that he inherited important techniques indirectly from Zhang Xu. He was open minded to learn from other people when he went on a sightseeing tour around Hunan and Guangdong Province etc. There were over thirty-severn poems to eulogize him from such as Li Bai 李白, Lu Xiang 盧象, Zhang Wei 張謂, Ren Hua 任華, Su Huan 蘇煥, Dai Shulun

<sup>56</sup> Zhu Guantian 朱關田, *History of Chinese Calligraphy: Volume of Sui and Tang* 中國書法史: 隋唐卷 (Nanjing: Jiangsu jiaoyu chushe, 1999), 109.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*, 119.

戴叔倫, Qian Qi 錢起 and so on.<sup>58</sup> Huai Su's representative calligraphy works are *Zixu Tie* 自敘帖 (**Figure 28**), *Kusun Tie* 苦筍帖, *Cangzhen Tie* 藏真帖 and Xiaocao Qianziwen 小草千字文 (**Figure 29**).<sup>59</sup>

Yan Zhenqing 顏真卿 (709-785) was one of the best calligraphers from the Tang Dynasty due to his outstanding performance in regular script and running script. People called Yan Zhenqing, Ouyang Xun 歐陽詢 (557-641), Liu Gongquan 柳公權 (778-865) and Zhao Mengfu 趙孟頫 (1254-1322) the Four Masters in Regular Script. Yan Zhenqing was an officer in resisting the rebel army, who lost his life in the end so he has been regarded as a faithful and righteous person in history. His calligraphy works in regular script and running script are held in high esteem and regarded as being full of faithful and righteous spirit. Many of his works are the classic samples even upto today, e.g. *Yan Qinli Stele* 顏勤禮碑, *Yan Ji Miao Stele* 顏家廟碑, *Ji Zhi Gao* 祭侄稿 and so on. Thereof *Ji Zhi Gao* (**Figure 30**) was so called as the Second Running Script 天下第二行書 following *Lan Ting Xu*.<sup>60</sup>

With the inheritance of Yan Zhenqing's calligraphy style in regular script, Liu Gongquan developed an art style, close to Yan Zhenqing, but with new bony and powerful strokes, which later people called as Liu Gu 柳骨. In a well-known statement, Yan Jin Liu Gu 顏筋柳骨, describes two typical kinds of strength derived from Yan and Liu: Yan Jin, a strength of introverted and soft tension, and Liu Gu, a strength of extroverted and hard tension.

<sup>58</sup> Zhu, *History of Chinese Calligraphy: Volume of Sui and Tang*, 116.

<sup>59</sup> Cangzhen is Huai Su's second name as Zi 字. In ancient China, Ming 名 was given by family, and after being-adult Zi 字 would be granted by the family or himself according to the meaning of first given name.

<sup>60</sup> The third one is *Haungzhou hanshi tie* 黃州寒食帖 by Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037-1101), who was a literatus and calligrapher in the Song Dynasty.

During the Late Tang, techniques of calligraphy were not as they were at the beginning or middle of the dynasty, strictly abiding by the regular law, which was handed down from the earlier generation to next. On the contrary, the trend of calligraphy development moved towards free handling not merely in strokes, but also in character structures and forms of whole calligraphy works. In fact, Liu Gongquan's running script (**Figure 31**) already demonstrates that the regular law shifted towards a freer style, even though he was regarded as a master in regular script. Thoughts of freedom came to a climax during the Late Tang and Wu Dai; Yang Ningshi 楊凝式 (873-954) was a representative of this period. His works *Rules of Celestial Being's Lives, Shenxian Qiju Fa* 神仙起居法 (**Figure 32**), and *Inscriptive Writings for Painting of Lu Hong Cao Tang Shi Zhi* 盧鴻草堂十志圖跋 were full of free form brush handling. Of course, he has also a very normative work *Jiu Hua Tie* 韭花帖, which indicates that he intended to break through the traditional technic norms to create a new, free handling style.

Tang calligraphic treatises developed based on the prosperity of calligraphy practices at that time. Techniques are the basic points and common understanding for calligraphy theorists to discuss sophisticated topics in philosophical dimensions. The theorists have eminent knowledge to reveal abstract principles.

## § 1.2 The Heritage of Previous Calligraphy Theories

### 1.3.1 Literature Review of Previous Calligraphy Treatises

A relatively complete and the earliest calligraphy theory work is *Fashu yaolu* from Zhang Yanyuan 張彥遠 (ca.815-ca.877), who was a calligrapher (**Figure 33**), painter and theorist in calligraphy and painting. Another important theory work from him is the *Lidai*

*minghua ji* 歷代名畫記.<sup>61</sup> People speculated that he worked on both simultaneously for the sheer enthusiasm of these arts.<sup>62</sup>

*Fashu yaolu* is the most important collection in the calligraphy theory history, for it records calligraphy treatises from the Eastern Han 東漢 to the Middle of Tang 中唐. The first treatise is *A Pox on Cursive Script* 非草書 by Zhao Yi 趙壹 (late second century C.E.),<sup>63</sup> the last one is *the Rhapsody of Calligraphy* 述書賦 by Dou Ji 竇叟 (? -787),<sup>64</sup> which lasts more than 600 years. Treatises list as follows:

*Volume I*

*A Pox on Cursive Script* 非草書, by Zhao Yi 趙壹 (late second century C.E.), East Han 東漢 (25-220)

*On Calligraphy* 論書, by Wang Xizhi 王羲之 (303-361), East Jin 東晉 (317-420)<sup>65</sup>

*Diagram of the Battle Formation of the Brush* 筆陣圖, by Madam Wei 衛夫人 (272-349), East Jin 東晉 (317-420)<sup>66</sup>

*Colophon to Diagram of the Battle Formation of the Brush* 題筆陣圖後, by Wang Xizhi 王羲之 (303-361), East Jin 東晉 (317-420)<sup>67</sup>

<sup>61</sup> *Lidai minghua ji* 歷代名畫記 (*Record of Famous Paintings of Successive Dynasties*) was an encyclopedia at that time elucidating the development history of painting, theories, connoisseurship and collection, and a general history book of painting.

<sup>62</sup> See William R.B. Acker, *Some Tang and Pre-Tang Texts on Chinese Painting* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1954), 214-215. In addition, see also Richard Barnhart, "Wei Fu-jen's Pi-chen T'u and the Early Texts", *Archives of the Chinese Art Society of America*, 18(1964), 13-25, quote from 13.

<sup>63</sup> Zhao Yi lived approximately from Han Shundi Yong jian 漢順帝永建 (126-131) to Han Lingdi Zhongping 漢靈帝中平 (184-188).

<sup>64</sup> His brother Dou Meng 竇蒙 wrote *Annotation to Rhapsody of Calligraphy* 述書賦注.

<sup>65</sup> There is doubt that it was authentically written by Wang Xizhi.

<sup>66</sup> Doubted not by Madam Wei.

<sup>67</sup> Doubted not by Wang Xizhi.

*Index of Calligraphers from Ancient* 采古來能人書名, by Yang Xin 羊欣 (370-442),

Song 宋 (420-479)

*Letters of Answer to Taizu* 答太祖書, by Wang Sengqian 王僧虔 (426-485), Qi 齊 (479-502)

*On Calligraphy* 論書, by Wang Sengqian 王僧虔 (426-485), Qi 齊 (479-502)

*Wen Zi Zhi Mu* 文字志目, by Wang Yin 王愔 (? -?), Song 宋 (420-479)

*Lun Qi* 論啓, by Xiao Ziyun 蕭子雲 (487-549), Qi 齊 (479-502)

## Volume II

*Lun Shu Biao* 論書表, by Yu He 虞穌 (? -?), Liang 梁 (502-557)

*Observing the Twelve Implications of Zhong You's Calligraphy* 論鍾書十二意, by

Liang Wu Di 梁武帝 (464-549), Liang 梁 (502-557)

*Yu Tao Yinju Lun Shu Qi Jiu Shou* 與陶隱居論書啓九首, by Liang Wu Di 梁武帝 (464-549), Liang 梁 (502-557)

*On Calligraphy* 論書, by Yu Yuanwei 庾元威 (? -?), Liang 梁 (502-557)

*Comments on Calligraphy* 書品, by Yu Jianwu 庾肩吾 (487-551), Liang 梁 (502-557)

*Critiques of Calligraphy Past and Present* 古今書品, by Yuan An 袁昂 (461-540), Liang 梁 (502-557)

*Inscription for Yue Yi Lun of You Jun* 題右軍樂毅論後, by Shi Zhiyong 釋智永 (? -?), Chen 陳 (557-589)

*On Calligraphy* 論書, by Jiang Shi 江式 (? -523), Houwei 後魏 (386-534)

## Volume III

*Statement of Objectives of Calligraphy* 書旨述, by Yu Shi Nan 虞世南 (558-638), Tang  
唐 (618-907)<sup>68</sup>

*You Jun Shu Mu* 右軍書目, by Chu Sui Liang 褚遂良 (596-659), Tang

*Sequel to Criticism of Calligraphy* 書後品, by Li Sizhen 李嗣真 (? -696), Tang

*Xu Shi Fa Shu Ji* 徐氏法書記, by Wu Ping Yi 武平一 (? -?), Tang

*On Calligraphy* 論書, by Xu Hao 徐浩 (703-782), Tang

*Gu Ji Ji* 古跡記, by Xu Hao 徐浩 (703-782), Tang

*Lan Ting Ji* 蘭亭記, by He Yanzhi 何延之 (? -?), Tang

*Ta Ben Yue Yi Lun Ji* 榻本樂毅論記, by Chu Sui Liang 褚遂良 (596-659), Tang

*Bi Shu Fei Bei Xiao Zi Ji* 壁書飛白蕭字記, by Cui Bei 崔備 (? -?), Tang

*Bi Shu Fei Bei Xiao Zi Ji* 壁書飛白蕭字記, by Li Yue 李約 (? -?), Tang

*Xiao Zhai Ji* 蕭齋記, by Gao Pinggong 高平公 (? -?), Tang

#### Volume IV

*Value Estimation of Calligraphy* 書詁, by Zhang Huaiguan 張懷瓘 (before 690- after  
760), Tang

*The Catalogue of Two Wang's Calligraphy* 二書等書錄, by Zhang Huaiguan 張懷瓘  
(before 690- after 760), Tang

*Discussions of Calligraphy* 書議, by Zhang Huaiguan 張懷瓘 (before 690- after 760), Tang

*On Character* 文字論, by Zhang Huaiguan 張懷瓘 (before 690- after 760), Tang

*Tang Chao Xu Shu Lu* 唐朝敍書錄

*Xu Shu Lu* 敍書錄, by Wei Shu 韋述 (? -?), Tang

*Fa Shu Lu* 法書錄, by Lu Yuan Qing 盧元卿 (? -?), Tang

<sup>68</sup> Doubtful not by Yu Shinan.

## Volume V and VI

*The Rhapsody of Calligraphy* 述書賦 from Dou Ji 竇泉 (? -787), Tang

## Volume VII, VIII, VIII

*Judgements on Calligraphy* 書斷, by Zhang Huaiguan 張懷瓘 (before 690- after 760), Tang

## Volume X

*You Jun Shu Ji* 右軍書記

Zhang Yanyuan (ca.815-ca.877), the Author of *Fashu yaolu*, lived after Sun Guoting (ca.627-ca.687), Li Sizhen (? -696) and Zhang Huaiguan (before 690- after 760). Nevertheless, one could find many literary sources and key statements both agreeing and disagreeing with calligraphy techniques and aesthetics, Sun, Li and Zhang have been cited, in those treatises in Pre-Tang, compiled in *Fashu yaolu*. This seems that they had seen or circulated similar or identical written books regarding ancient calligraphy treatises, handed down from pre-Tang times. Indeed, we can call these kinds of books public materials, which calligraphy theorists utilized in their compositions.

Some treatises, not recorded in *Fashu yaolu*, instead in History Books, are the sources for Tang calligraphy theorists as well. E.g. *Lishu Ti* 隸書體 from Cheng Gongsui 成公綏 (231-273), who was a literatus in Xi Jin 西晉 (266-316), was collected in *Chu Xue Ji* 初學記,<sup>69</sup> edited by Xu Jian 徐堅 (660-729) in the middle of Tang.<sup>70</sup> *Si Ti Shu Shi* 四體書勢 from

<sup>69</sup> Xu Jian 徐堅 (660-729), *Chu Xue Ji* 初學記 (Qing Guangxu Kongshi sanshisan wanjuan tangben 清光緒孔氏三十三萬卷堂本), vol. 21: wenbu 文部.

<sup>70</sup> In Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) this treatise was edited into Zhang Pu 張溥 (1602-1641) *Collection of Cheng Gong Zi'an* 成公子安集 in *Hanwei Liuchao baisanjia ji* 漢魏六朝百三家集 (Guangxu jimao Xia Xinshutang

Wei Heng 衛恒 (? -291)<sup>71</sup> and *Cao Shu Shi* 草書勢 by Suo Jing 索靖 (239-303)<sup>72</sup> were taken down in *Jin shu* 晉書. Another important treatise is *Fei Bei Shu Shi Ming* 飛白書勢銘 by Bao Zhao 鮑照 (414-466), compiled in *Collection of Bao Mingyuan* 鮑明遠集,<sup>73</sup> was cited by Sun Guoting.

### 1.3.2 Inheritances by Sun Guoting

One can trace many of the thoughts and viewpoints of Sun Guoting back to pre-Tang calligraphic treatises. The comparison between Wang Xizhi (303-361) and Wang Xianzhi (344-386) seemed to be a popular topic both in the Pre-Tang and in the Tang Dynasty. Sun Guoting quoted many statements in previous treatises from Pre-Tang times in direct or indirect ways, and illustrated the same opinion, following the general consensus at the beginning of Tang, that the calligraphy works of Wang Xizhi surpassed those of Wang Xianzhi. In his view, Wang Xianzhi lacked the connection between techniques and emotions 神情懸隔.<sup>74</sup> At least the following treatises had stated the comparison between Wang Xizhi and Wang Xianzhi:

*Index of Calligraphers from Ancient*, by Yang Xin (370-442), Song (420-479)

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chongkan 光緒己卯夏信述堂重刊), vol. 52.

<sup>71</sup> *Jin shu*, vol. 60: Collected Biographies 30.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Bao Zhao 鮑照 (414-466), *Collection of Bao Mingyuan* 鮑明遠集 (Sibu congkan ying songben 四部叢刊景宋本), vol. 10.

<sup>74</sup> Before Tang, normally Wang Xizhi and Wang Xianzhi were respected at the same level based on different cultures. However, later on, Xiao Yan 蕭衍 (464-549) (in *Observing the Twelve Implications of Zhong You's Calligraphy* 觀鐘繇書法十二意) and Xiao Ziyun 蕭子雲 (487-549) (in *Xiao Ziyun Qi* 蕭子雲) stated: "Zijing 子敬 (Wang Xianzhi)'s works are not prominent as those of Wang Xizhi." At the beginning of Tang, Tang Taizong appreciated Wang Xizhi highly; Sun Guoting thought Wang Xianzhi was not better than Wang Xizhi based on his Confucian ethic notions as criteria, which resulted in a controversial point and needed to be clarified in detail.

*Lun Shu Biao*, by Yu He (?-?), Liang (502-557)

*Shu Pin*, by Yu Jianwu (487-551), Liang (502-557)

*On Calligraphy, Lun Shu*, by Wang Sengqian (426-485), Qi (479-502)

*Lun Zhong Shu Shi Er Yi*, by Liang Wu Di (464-549), Liang (502-557)

*Lun Qi*, by Xiao Ziyun (487-549), Qi (479-502)

The second inherited point lies in the topics regarding techniques: holding 執, moving 使, turning 轉 and employing 用 of brush.<sup>75</sup> He stated:

“I shall now set down the calligraphic principles of holding, moving, turning and employing the brush in order to drive out misunderstanding. Holding involves such matters as depth and shallowness, length and shortness. Moving involves such matters as verticality and horizontality, connecting and checking. Turning involves such matters as hooks and circles, twists and turns. Employing involves such matters as dots and lines, face to face and back to back.”<sup>76</sup>

今撰執使轉用之由，以祛未悟。執謂深淺長短之類是也；使謂縱橫牽掣之類是也；轉謂鉤環盤紆之類是也；用謂點畫向背之類是也。

These four techniques with respect to the uses of brush were not conceptualised by Sun Guoting but inherited by him from previous calligraphy treatises. The holding was explained in *Diagram of the Battle Formation of the Brush*, by Mrs. Wei (272-349) and in *Colophon to Diagram of the Battle Formation of the Brush* by Wang Xizhi (303-361).<sup>77</sup> Discussions

<sup>75</sup> Actually, only the brush hairs were turned rather than brush holder.

<sup>76</sup> Chang, and Frankel, *Two Chinese Treatises on Calligraphy*, 9. All corresponding Chinese version see the same book, 81-99.

<sup>77</sup> Even these two treatises were doubted not truly written by Wei and Wang, nonetheless Sun Guoting had cited some statements indirectly. This indicated he had seen some paragraphs from these two treatises, which we could not confirm whether they are the same. This implies that there were such kinds of treatises handed down from pre-Tang to Sun Guoting's times; moreover, these kinds of treatises influenced Sun Guoting's thoughts. He criticized: “For some time there has existed a work called *Diagram of the Battle Formation of the Brush*, with a

about moving cannot be found in *Lishu Ti* by Cheng Gongsui (231-273), *Lun Zhong Shu Shi Er Yi* by Liang Wu Di (464-549), *Shu Pin* by Yu Jianwu (487-551), *Yu Tao Yinju Lun Shu Qi Jiu Shou* by Liang Wu Di (464-549) and so on. Regarding the turning of the brush, there are some statements in *Cao Shu Shi* from Suo Jing (239-303); and the employing in *On Calligraphy* by Wang Xizhi (303-361) and *Diagram of the Battle Formation of the Brush* by Mrs. Wei. What Sun Guoting had done was combined the four techniques to discern the principles of strokes; nevertheless, the detailed meanings of the four techniques, cannot only be concluded from the extant calligraphy work *Shu Pu*.<sup>78</sup> Another significant technique mentioned by Sun is the relationship between heart and hands, for which we could find the literary sources from *Critique of Cursive Script Fei Cao Shu* by Zhao Yi (late second century C.E.), *Lishu Ti* by Cheng Gongsui (231-273), and *Diagram of the Battle Formation of the Brush* by Mrs. Wei (272-349), and so on.

The third assimilated point by Sun Guoting is the discussion regarding the judgement of work as art or non-art. Sun Guoting wrote:

The six classes of characters go back to Xuan Yuan; the eight styles of calligraphy arose under the First Emperor of Qin. The history of this art is long, its application wide. But its present and past are different, its beauty and substance separate. Because I am unfamiliar with these matters, I will pass over them.<sup>79</sup>

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total of seven lines. It contains three pictures of hands, illustrating different positions of holding the brush. The drawing are distorted, the dots and lines unclear and wrong.” See, Chang, and Frankel, *Two Chinese Treatises on Calligraphy*, 7.

<sup>78</sup> What today we could see in Taipei Museum is called *Shu Pu*, in fact it is not complete, so that many people deems it only as the *preface to Shu Pu* 書譜序, for there should be some genealogical trees inside for the genre “Pu”. See my dissertation, “Textual Research on Ideology Origin of Sun Guoting and Zhang Huaiguan,” 236-7.

Regarding the Character Pu, please see Pietro De Laurentis, *The Manual of Calligraphy by Sun Guoting of the Tang* (Napoli, 2011), 64-9.

<sup>79</sup> Chang, and Frankel, *Two Chinese Treatises on Calligraphy*, 8.

且六文之作,肇自軒轅;八體之興,始於嬴政.其來尚矣,厥用斯弘,但今古不同,妍質懸隔,既非所習,又亦略諸.

Then there are calligraphic styles, such as “dragons” and “snakes”, “clouds” and “dew”, “tortoises” and “cranes”, “flowers” and “blossoms”, that arise when a writer roughly depicts a real object or records a lucky omen that has just been sighted.<sup>80</sup>

復有龍蛇雲露之流,龜鶴花英之類,乍圖真於率爾,或寫瑞於當年,巧涉丹青,工虧翰墨,異夫楷式,非所詳焉.

Six classes of characters 六文 and eight styles of calligraphy 八體 were useful during the process of conveying the truth widely and extensively 弘道, to cultivate and indoctrinate people with the appropriate writing practices.<sup>81</sup> In that time calligraphy had a larger function than simply art, but since then the situation has changed with calligraphy now being considered to be pure art. One could find these notions in *On Calligraphy* by Jiang Shi (? - 523) and *Si Ti Shu Shi* by Wei Heng (? -291). Calligraphic stylistic forms, such as “dragons” and “snakes”, “clouds” and “dew”, “tortoises” and “cranes”, “flowers” and “blossoms”, originated from *Wen Zi Zhi Mu* by Wang Yin (? -?),<sup>82</sup> were of course not artistic forms of calligraphy from the viewpoint of Sun Guoting, the same as the statement in *Shu Pin* from Yu Jianwu (487-551). Nevertheless, Yu Yuanwei (? -?) deemed them as kinds of artistry in *On Calligraphy*.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Six classes of characters 六文 refers to the six methods of creation of Chinese characters: Pictograms (xiang xing) 象形, Simple Indicatives (zhi shi) 指事, Compound Indicatives (hui yi) 會意, Phono-semantic Compound Characters (xing sheng) 形聲, Derived Characters (zhuan zhu) 轉注 and Borrowed Characters (jia jie) 假借. Eight styles of calligraphy 八體 consist of Da Zhuang 大篆, Xiao Zhuan 小篆, Ke Fu 刻符, Chong Shu 蟲書, Mo Yin 摹印, Shu Shu 署書, Shu Shu 殳書, Li Shu 隸書. See Zheng Xiaohua 鄭曉華, *Shu Pu* 書譜 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2012), 123.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 124.

Other than three points mentioned above, one finds nearly all legends referred to by Sun Guoting in literary sources in Pre-Tang calligraphic treatises:

“Falsely claiming to have received calligraphy techniques from immortals 假託神仙” originated from *Lun Shu Biao* 論書表 by Wang Xianzhi (344-386), according to Ma Guoquan;<sup>83</sup>

“Writing an inscription on a wall before went to the capital 臨行題壁,”<sup>84</sup> and “Marquis Hui’s loving of forgeries 惠侯好偽” from *Lun shu biao* by Yu He (? -?),<sup>85</sup>

“A disciple procuring a table on which Wang Xizhi had written 門生獲書幾” from *Lun shu biao* by Yu He and *the Biography of Wang Xizhi* (303-361) by Tang Taizong (597-649);

“(Wang Xizhi’s) meeting an old woman and inscribing a fan for her 老姥題扇” from *Lun shu biao* by Yu He (? -?) and *the Biography of Wang Xizhi* 王羲之傳 (303-361) by Tang Taizong.

Some statements depicting the shapes and brush feelings of the dots and lines of calligraphy tend to be traceable to pre-Tang treatises:

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<sup>83</sup> Ma Guoquan 馬國權 (1931-2002), *Annotation and Translation of Shupu* 書譜譯注 (Beijing: Zijincheng chubanshe, 2011), 50. I have not found this literary quotation, as Ma mentioned, in *Lun shu biao* 論書表 by Wang Xianzhi 王獻之 (344-386), which Chen Si 陳思 (1225? -1264?) edited in *Shuyuan jinghua* 書苑菁華. I have also not found it in *Jin Wang Xianzhi zilun shu* 晉王獻之自論書 from *Pewenzhai shuhua pu* 佩文齋書畫譜, instead, I have only found it in “*Jin shu jue biao* 進書訣表” from Li Rihua 李日華 (1565-1635) *Weishuixuan riji* 味水軒日記, and in Yan Kejun 嚴可均 (1762-1843) *Quan Jin wen* 全晉文, vol. 27.

<sup>84</sup> It was quoted in *Sequel to Criticism of Calligraphy* 書後品 by Li Sizhen 李嗣真, who lived in the same years as Sun Guoting. This indicates that they had same public materials. Together with above literary quotation, we could speculate that Tang theorists hold some materials, today no longer extant.

<sup>85</sup> *Fashu yaolu*, vol. 2.

The difference between suspended needle and hanging dewdrop 懸針垂露之異 from *Wen Zi Zhi Mu* by Wang Yin (? -?);

The marvels of rolling thunder and toppling rocks 奔雷墜石之奇 from *Diagram of the Battle Formation of the Brush* by Mrs. Wei (272-349);

The postures of wild gees in flight and beasts in fright 鴻飛獸駭之姿 from *Si Ti Shu Shi* by Wei Heng (?-291) and *Cao Shu Shi* by Cui Yuan (contained in *Cao Shu Shi* by Wei Heng);

The attitudes of phoenixes dancing and snakes startled 鸞舞蛇驚之態 from *Cao Shu Shi* by Suo Jing (239-303);

The power of sheer cliffs and crumbling peaks 絕岸頹峰之勢 from *Critiques of Calligraphy Past and Present* by Yuan An (461-540);

The shapes of facing danger and holding on to rotten wood 臨危據槁之形 from *Si Ti Shu Shi* by Wei Heng (? - 291);

Heavy like threatening clouds and sometime light like cicada wings 重若崩雲與輕如蟬翼 from *Fei Bei Shu Shi Ming* by Bao Zhao (414-466).<sup>86</sup>

In conclusion, most of the techniques, aesthetic images and symbols of calligraphy had been dealt with in a sporadic manner by Pre-Tang theorists, however, Sun was the first to gather these theories into a comprehensive method of calligraphy writing. Sun contributed to the compilation in an organic and systematic way, and afterwards led readers to recognize the shapes and feelings of strokes in images more clearly.

### 1.3.3 Inheritances by Zhang Huaiguan

Zhang Huaiguan wrote a very long explanation for the creation and development trends of characters, which is mostly regarding writing and has little to do with calligraphy itself.

<sup>86</sup> Chang, and Frankel, *Two Chinese Treatises on Calligraphy*, 3.

However, these observations originated from pre-Tang treatises as well. He thought that Cang Jie 倉頡 was the person who created Chinese characters, which was from *Si Ti Shu Shi* by Wei Heng (? -291) and *Cao Shu Shi* by Cui Yuan (included in *Cao Shu Shi* by Wei Heng). In order to explain the development processes of characters, he directly cited the statements from *Shuowen Jiezi* 說文解字 by Xu Shen 許慎 (58? -147?):

Cang Jie created characters by resembling the shapes of certain objects at the beginning, ones called such kinds of writings as Wen 文. After this, ones created Zi 字 with the combination of Shapes and Pronunciations. Wen is based on shapes of objects. Zi is reproduced and reprocessed. Those, what were written on bamboo and silks, were called as Calligraphy; Calligraphy is such things.<sup>87</sup>

倉頡之初作書，蓋依類象形，故謂之文。後形聲相益即謂之字。文者，物象之本。字者言孳乳而浸多也。著之竹帛，謂之書；書者，如也。<sup>88</sup>

His narrative and complimentary theories on Ancient Characters 古文字, Seal Script 篆書, Clerical Script 隸書, Cursive Script 草書 were derived from literary sources in *Si Ti Shu Shi* by Wei Heng (? -291).

Zhang Huaiguan had listed many source materials regarding the commentaries on calligraphers in the history, especially before he had access to the calligraphy and painting works preserved in imperial storehouse, when he wrote his treatises such as *Judgements on*

<sup>87</sup> Translation referred to Timothy O'Neill, "Xu Shen's Scholarly Agenda: A New Interpretation of the Postface of the Shuowen jiezi," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 133, No. 3 (July-September 2013), 413-440.

<sup>88</sup> Duan Yucai 段玉裁 (1735-1815), *Annotations to Shuowen Jiezi* 說文解字注 (Qing Jiaqing ershinian Jingyunlou keben 清嘉慶二十年經韻樓刻本), vol. 15.

*Calligraphy* 書斷;<sup>89</sup> it was very common that these kinds of source materials stemmed from calligraphy treatises that were handed down, as listed above. He used them as source materials, no doubt, to build up his own theoretical mansion in the system of taste and assessment theory, which are classified as Marvelous 神、Splendid 妙、Capable 能 these three levels. Zhang Huaiguan summarized and explained the ancient theories comprehensively. Furthermore, one can trace the theory of classification of calligraphy back to *Shu Pin* by Yu Jianwu (487-551), who suggested nine levels in the categorizing of taste and appreciation of calligraphy works.

The third assimilated point by Zhang Huaiguan is notions of techniques. He paid significant attention to the relationship between heart and hands, citing the statement “innermost satori and hands following close behind 心悟手從” from *Shu Pu* 書譜 by Sun Guoting, to appraise Zhong You 鍾繇 (151-230) and Zhang Zhi 張芝 (? -192). In addition, the profound mastery 精熟論 was a criterion in the level of Marvelous 神. When Zhang assigned someone to the level Marvelous 神, he would focus on the escalating process from mastery to organic naturalness, where a more philosophically-minded -way came forth.

The fourth point is in relation to the ideas of art aesthetics, where Zhang Huaiguan had discussed many times the relationship between ancient and modern times, and the same between elegance 文 and substance 質. After he analyzed those statements from ancient times, he thought that, “Do not learn techniques from ancient 不師古法”, seemed in fact to be a method, which means learn from nature, in the natural way as per the persuasion of Taoism.

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<sup>89</sup> Zhang Huaiguan composed most of his treatises such as *Judgements on Calligraphy* before he saw the calligraphy and painting works in the imperial collection. With respect to the analysis of periodization of Zhang Huaiguan’s treatises, see my dissertation, “Textual Research on Ideology Origin of Sun Guoting and Zhang Huaiguan,” 251-5.

Another topic is Jin 筋 and Gu 骨, a popular theme in history as well, discussed in *Critique of Cursive Script* Fei Cao Shu by Zhao Yi (late second century C.E.), in *Shu Pu* by Sun Guoting (ca.627-ca.687), and in *Shu Hou Pin* by Li Sizhen (? -696).

Calligraphy treatises by Li Sizhen 李嗣真 (? -696) and Dou Ji Dou Ji 竇泉 (? -787) stated their theories like ones from Zhang Huaiguan as well: they quoted many source materials from Pre-Tang treatises to fuel discussions and form their own opinions in Taoism, but not as systematically as Zhang Huaiguan. The treatises from Dou Ji tend to be full of literary style. This project will mention their treatises, but not focus on them principally.

### § 1.3 Cultures of Tang Dynasty

The Culture of Tang (618-907) recovered and flourished since the splitting periods of Weijin, Southern and Northern Dynasties (220-589), which had lasted nearly 400 years. Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (574-648) and other culture officers edited, revised (638? -642)<sup>90</sup> and issued in 653(永徽四年) Five Classics 五經 including *The Book of Songs* 詩經, *Collection of Ancient Texts* 尚書, *Book of Rites* 禮經 (禮記), *Book of Changes* 周易, and *Spring and Autumn Annals* 春秋 (Annotation from Zuo Qiuming 春秋左傳) under the order of imperial King. Later, the court compiled and issued other two ritual books: *Rites of Zhou* 周禮, and *Etiquette and Ceremonial* 儀禮 and other two Annotation of Spring and Autumn Annals 春秋傳: *Annotation by Guliang* 穀梁傳 and *Annotation by Gongyang* 公羊傳. Since then, the Nine Classics 九經 has become the standard for scholars and the main subjects of the imperial examination 科舉考試 startingd from the beginning of the Tang Dynasty, which made

<sup>90</sup> Jiang Guanghui 姜廣輝, *Ideology History of Chinese Jinxue II* 中國經學思想史 (Beijing: Chinese Social and Science Press, 2003), 733.

ancient scholars 士人 regard Jingxue 經學, the Study of Confucian Classics, as essential knowledge in order to learn and to cultivate their characters 修身治學. Thus, the ideology of traditional Jingxue would be integrated into peoples' behavior, writing language and judgements of value, which naturally affected aesthetic judgement in the art field, both in practice and in theory.<sup>91</sup>

Towards the end of the Tang Dynasty (833-837), the court compiled *Analects* 論語 together with *Classic of Filial Piety* 孝經 and *Er Ya* 爾雅 into Confucian Classics, then the *Twelve Classics* formed (*Thirteen Classics* was initially formed in Southern Song, when *Book of Mencius* was added). However, from the statements of *Shu Pu* by Sun Guoting, we can see that the thoughts of *Analects* deeply influenced scholars, including Sun in the beginning of Tang.

Other than Confucian Classics, Taoism and Buddhism played an important role also in the initial period of Tang, which means the Tang culture was full of diversified dimensions. These three doctrines had their individual positions in the society and developed in parallel with the Tang Dynasty. Lu Deming 陸德明 (550? -630), the author of *the Annotation to Classics* 經典釋文, stated: “when Gaozu 高祖 (Li Yuan 李淵, 566-635) came to the Rituals of Shidian 釋奠禮,<sup>92</sup> at that time Xu Wenyan 徐文遠 interpreted *Classic of Filial Piety*, Hui Sheng 惠乘 from Shramana interpreted *Sutra of Prajna Paramita* 波若經, Liu Jinxi 劉進喜 from Taoism interpreted *Laozi* 老子. Lu Deming reproached these three people, and they explained logically the reasons with their own purposes and objectives to establish the

<sup>91</sup> Sun Tao 孫燾, *Chinese Aesthetic History: Pre-Qin* 中國美學史·先秦卷, Ye Lang 葉朗 Chief Editor, Zhu Liangzhi 朱良志 vice Chief Editor (Nanjing: Jiangsu People Press, 2014), 64.

<sup>92</sup> Rituals of Shidian 釋奠禮 is the national Worship Ceremony of traditional Chinese Empire to act worship of Confucius.

corresponding standpoints. Gaozu thought that Deming was talented and granted him fifty pieces of silk cloth as reward.”<sup>93</sup> Three dimensions of culture in Tang show that people in those periods were open to accepting different kinds of culture or even religions. After that in the time of Tang Taizong 唐太宗 (597-649) Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism all strived for the favor of the Empire, “Nowadays Taoism takes the Priority, followed by Confucianism and Buddhism. They watched each other and did not dare to refute this argument.”<sup>94</sup> The recorder is Daoxuan 道宣 (596-667) from Buddhism, which neatly shows that the three kinds of culture developed in parallel within the one society.

However, since Tang Xuanzong 玄宗 (685-762) had ascended the throne, Taoism dominated the mainstream of culture. In fact, before Tang, Taoism had reached the peak in Wei 魏 (220-266) and Jin 晉 (266-420), the representative works are *Commentary of Laozi* 老子注 by Wang Bi 王弼 (226-249) *Commentary of Zhuangzi* 莊子注 by Guo Xiang 郭象 (252-312). In the history of Chinese philosophical thoughts, people call these kinds of ideology Neo-Taoism (Xuanxue 玄學), which is actually focused on Taoism but deeply influenced by Buddhism.<sup>95</sup> Taoism had a significant influence on the culture of the Tang period culture in the middle of Tang. During Xuanzong Times, Taoism also became a necessary course in the imperial examination. From then, similar to Confucianism, Taoism also affected the ideology of ancient scholars, especially from the the height of the Tang dynasty.

<sup>93</sup> *Jiu Tang shu*, vol. 196: Collected Biographies 139: Confucius Book 1: Lu Deming 陸德明.

<sup>94</sup> Daoxuan 道宣 (596-667), *Collected Essays of Buddhism and Taoism including from ancient to modern* 集古今佛道論衡·高祖幸國學當集三教問僧道是佛師事第二 (*Taisho-pitaka* 大正藏), vol. 52. This dispute event happened in 8th year of Wude 武德 (625).

<sup>95</sup> Wing-Tsit Chan trans. and compil., *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton University Press, 1963), 314-35.

In ancient times, knowledge and common understanding of literati came from Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. In the terms of calligraphy theories in Tang, the thoughts of Confucian classics, *Lao Zi*, *Zhuang Zi* and even Neo-Taoism texts played a significant role in the formation of both pragmatic sociopolitical functions and pure aesthetic dimensions.

## Chapter 2 The Confucian Definition of Calligraphy

A text has not only aesthetic but also political or religious functions.<sup>96</sup> Chinese calligraphy, writing texts in a special kind of character, shapes “the fabric of Chinese society.”<sup>97</sup> In ancient China, calligraphy served not only as a standard of artistic perfection but simulatenously as an extra-aesthetic or pragmatic instrument. At the beginning of Tang, calligraphy flourished based on the sponsorship of the imperial court. “The imperial patronage of calligraphy was demonstrably motivated by ideological considerations, chief among them, the desire to effect an image of legitimacy for the ruling house.”<sup>98</sup>

There was a specific relationship between calligraphy aesthetics and sociopolitical dimensions. The classical idea of calligraphy technical requisites ultimately aimed towards “great harmony in government, characterized by ideal ruler-minister relationships and the absence of partisan politics.”<sup>99</sup> Then it was inevitable that theoreticians would elevate calligraphy to a very high position akin to the ritual and music of Confucianism, in order to emphasise the ideological implications. In other words, calligraphy was of central importance when considering its pragmatic and didactic Confucian purpose, which tends to be more than just aesthetic.

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<sup>96</sup> See Jurij Lotman, *The Structure of the Artistic Text*, trans. from the Russian by Gail Lenhoff and Ronald Vroon (The University of Michigan, 1977), 69.

<sup>97</sup> Lothar Leddrose, *Ten Thousand Things: Module and Mass Production in Chinese Art* (Princeton University Press, 2000), 4.

<sup>98</sup> Stephen J. Goldberg, “Court Calligraphy of the Early Tang Dynasty,” *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 49, No. 3/4 (1988-1989), 189-237, quote from 189.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 233.

Under the conceptual framework of Confucian persuasive functions of calligraphy, it is easy to understand that theoreticians in the Tang Dynasty assessed calligraphy quality through the application of ethics e.g. filial piety. Harmony appears to be a key figure in the connection of calligraphy aesthetics and social relations. All social behaviors including calligraphy practicing without embodying ethics, e.g. filial piety, would violate the harmony of social relationships. Precisely because of Confucian persuasive requisites, harmony became a normative convention of calligraphy later on when discussing technique requirements, e.g. the writing rhythm, fluidity of movement, tensile strength, tightly structured interactional relationships and bilateral symmetry. Writing calligraphy, as if behaving in public, in an appropriate means, is the way of achieving the status of harmony.

## § 2.1 The Elevated Position of Calligraphy equal to Ritual and Music

When Sun Guoting defined the position of calligraphy, he pointed out that calligraphy “can be considered on a par as ritual and music, which are made when undertakings are accomplished, and it is as marvelous as immortals 功定禮樂, 妙擬神仙.”<sup>100</sup> The ritual and music in Confucianism became Confucian classics with significant meaning in the Han Dynasty. The analogy to ritual and music indicates that calligraphy seemed to be a Confucian classic. Calligraphy enjoyed a highly elevated position from the perspective of Sun, which is very different from the notions of Pre-Tang, as noted earlier in this study.

Sun’s statement mentioned above derived from *Music Book* (Yue Shu 樂書) of *Shi Ji* 史記 by Si Maqian 司馬遷 (145-?): “When the great undertaking succeeds, ritual and music would be prosperous 治定功成, 禮樂乃興,” “when the ancient King had accomplished their undertakings, they made their music (to commemorate them); when they had established their

<sup>100</sup> Translation referred to the version of Chang, and Frankel, see *Two Chinese Treatises on Calligraphy*, 5.

government, they framed their ceremonies 王者功成作樂, 治定制禮.”<sup>101</sup> By adducing the function of ritual and music in the word of Jingxue, Sun Guoting considered that calligraphy was not just a minor technique; instead, it should also be useful in social organization, the regime of nations and the governing of nations as well. Therefore, the connection between ritual music 禮樂 and nations exists between calligraphy and the governance of a state as well.

Since calligraphy had a highly elevated position, when making judgements on calligraphy works or calligraphy treatises in the process of compilation of *Shu Pu*, Sun Guoting stated: “The work has neither the quality of exhortation nor the authority of a classic. We must reject it 非訓非經, 宜從棄擇”.<sup>102</sup> Such kinds of ideas were deeply influenced by the thoughts of Jingxue subconsciously; exhortation 訓 and classic 經 were the two classifications from following traditional types of literatures: History 春秋, Genealogy 世, Poems 詩, Ritual 禮, Music 樂, Decree 令, Fine Language 語, Ancient Recordation 故志, Exhortation 訓典.<sup>103</sup> Among above, History 春秋, Poems 詩, Ritual 禮 and Music 樂 were later elevated up to the position of Classics 經 in Han Dynasty.

According to Sun Guoting, one function of calligraphy was “to reach its emotion (qing 情) and disposition (xing 性) and form its sadness and happiness 達其情性, 形其哀樂.”<sup>104</sup> In general, the expression of sadness and happiness was often used to describe music, Sun

<sup>101</sup> James Legge trans., *The Li Ki* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1885), 92.

<sup>102</sup> Chang, and Frankel, *Two Chinese Treatises on Calligraphy*, 9.

<sup>103</sup> Xu Yuanhao 徐元浩 (1878-1955) ed., Wang Shumin 王樹民 and Shen Changyun 沈長雲 emend., punct., *Collected Annotation of Guo Yu* 國語集解 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2002), 485-96.

<sup>104</sup> Chang, and Hans translated: “Thus it could express their dispositions, giving shape to their sadness and happiness.” See *Two Chinese Treatises on Calligraphy*, 6.

likened calligraphy to music, and one can trace it back to *Music Record* 樂記 of *Ritual Record* 禮記 in literary sources:

All the modulations of the voice arise from the mind, and the various affections of the mind are produced by things (external to it). The affections thus produced are manifested in the sounds that are uttered. Changes are produced by the way in which those sounds respond to one another; and those changes constitute what we call the modulations of the voice. The combination of those modulated sounds, so as to give pleasure, and the (direction in harmony with them of the) shields and axes, and of the plumes and ox-tails, constitutes what we call music.<sup>105</sup>

凡音之起,由人心生也。人心之動,物使之然也。感於物而動,故形於聲。聲相應,故生變,變成方,謂之音。比音而樂之,及干戚,羽旄,謂之樂。

In ancient times, sound (sheng 聲), tone (yin 音) and music (yue 樂) were different concepts. They had a sequence, by which they went forward one by one: sound was from nature, tone corresponded and was produced through the reflection of the heart, moving those who listened to it. Music made people dance happily and move gracefully. The goal of music was to move people emotionally in order to give their emotions some structure. Music could guide people in a positive direction and a negative one, as could calligraphy. Therefore, the emotive sentiment and persuasive education like that of music or calligraphy should be correctly and appropriately directed. This was supported by another statement from *Music Book of Shi Ji*:

Now, in the nature of men there are both the energy of their physical powers and the intelligence of the mind; but for their (affections of) grief, pleasure, joy, and anger there are

<sup>105</sup> James Legge trans., *The Li Ki*, 92.

no invariable rules. They are moved according to the external objects which excite them, and then there ensues the manifestation of the various faculties of the mind.<sup>106</sup>

夫民有血氣心知之性，而無哀樂喜怒之常，應感起物而動，然後心術形焉。

Hence, when a (ruler's) aims are small, notes that quickly die away characterize the music, and the people's thoughts are sad; when he is generous, harmonious, and of a placid and easy temper, the notes are varied and elegant, with frequent changes, and the people are satisfied and pleased; when he is coarse, violent, and excitable, the notes, vehement at first and distinct in the end, are full and bold throughout the piece, and the people are resolute and daring; when he is pure and straightforward, strong and correct, the notes are grave and expressive of sincerity, and the people are self-controlled and respectful; when he is magnanimous, placid, and kind, the notes are natural, full, and harmonious, and the people are affectionate and loving; when he is careless, disorderly, perverse, and dissipated, the notes are tedious and ill-regulated, and the people proceed to excesses and disorder.<sup>107</sup>

是故志微焦衰之音作，而民思憂；擘緩慢易繁文簡節之音作，而民康樂；粗厲猛起奮末廣賁之音作，而民剛毅；廉直經正，莊誠之音作，而民肅敬；寬裕肉好，順成和動之音作，而民慈愛；流辟邪散狄成滌濫之音作，而民淫亂。

One was moved by external objects, and the direction of moving could be negative, when aims of music were small, or when the composer or player was careless, disorderly, perverse and dissipated. On the contrary the direction could be positive when the composer or player was generous, harmonious, and of a placid and easy temper, or when he was pure and straightforward, strong and correct, or when he was magnanimous, placid and kind. Therefore, the indoctrination of Confucianism lay in the contents of composition. In ancient times, the role of arts, including music and calligraphy (rituals and painting as well) was to cultivate

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 107.

<sup>107</sup> James Legge trans., *The Li Ki*, 108.

people's physical and mental status and to make people submissive, which was assumed to be helpful for a better governance of communities. This is the reason why Sun Guoting compared calligraphy to ritual and music. In his views, calligraphy, when practiced in harmony, was akin to rituals and music and can settle the heart down, edify the people and shape personalities toward goodness.

The representative statement of the similarity between calligraphy and music tend to be relaxed refinement (xianya 閒雅), chanhuan 擘緩 and harmony (he 和), as mentioned above. Chan 擘 is to act in a leisurely manner, according to the annotation from Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127-200) in *Music Record* (Yue Ji 樂記) in *Li Ji* 禮記. Actually many of adjective words used to describe the ideal sphere and characteristics of calligraphy derived from *Music Record* 樂記 or relate to music. Harmony (he 和) played a key role in the practicing of calligraphy based on Sun Guoting.

Zhang Huaiguan held that characters (wenzi 文字) and calligraphy could write articles as applied instruments and hence play an important role on the road to the enduring prosperity and stability of the nation. He stated: “Treatises are written definitely by calligraphy, and calligraphy is expected to conform to Dao (truth of governing) when being employed. What can develop and give play to the function of articles is nothing else but calligraphy 文章之為用, 必假乎書, 書之為征, 期合乎道, 故能發揮文者, 莫近乎書.”<sup>108</sup> Characters and calligraphy were reportedly initially created to build the system of indoctrination in Huang Di 黃帝 times (a legend), “all officials used them (calligraphy) in administration and millions of people recorded trivialities of life with them 百官以治, 萬民

<sup>108</sup> See the preface of *Judgements on Calligraphy*, in *Fashu yaolu*.

以察。”<sup>109</sup> Zhang Huaiguan also mentioned: “What could elucidate the principle of national main truth such as Dian 典 and Wen 墳 and finally realize the main truth is nothing else but calligraphy”.<sup>110</sup> The main truth, the Dao, of governing the state relied on calligraphy was propagated, since calligraphy served as a basis to write books, a vehicle of conveying Dao (the national main truth), and a means of achieving national success that was the maintaining prolonged stability of the nation, in the views of ancient literati such as Zhang Huaiguan.

There is no big difference between calligraphy and writing in ancient China when discussing issues regarding the vehicle of spreading Confucian classics including the main truth of governance (Figure 47). Calligraphy might be akin to ritual and music in the process of cleansing people's physical and mental status and play a role in social governance. This is why Confucian scholars have elevated calligraphy to such a high social position.

## § 2.2 The Ethicized Criteria to Judge Calligraphy

With the conception of Jingxue, when Sun Guoting criticized Wang Xianzhi's calligraphy, he referred to the thoughts of *Classic of Filial Piety* 孝經. He believed that Wang Xianzhi could not be compared to his father Wang Xizhi, precisely due to the fact that Wang Xianzhi had breached the core teaching of *Classic of Filial Piety* by thinking he was better than his father Wang Xizhi. Therefore, Sun Guoting wrote: “True, Establishing oneself and enhancing one's reputation serve to reflect honor on one's parent, Zeng Shen refused to enter the street named Better Than Mother 立身揚名, 事資尊顯, 勝母之裡, 曾參不入.”<sup>111</sup> From this, Sun Guoting concluded that due to *the Classic of Filial Piety*, Wang Xianzhi had surely gone too far by

<sup>109</sup> Zhang trans. from ancient to Madarin, Fu trans. to English, *The Zhou Book of Change*, 415.

<sup>110</sup> See *On Character* 文字論, in *Fashu yaolu*.

<sup>111</sup> Chang, Frankel, *Two Chinese Treatises on Calligraphy*, 2.

claiming to surpass his father and that this had had a deeply negative influence on his calligraphy level. . An ethicized concept for the criticism of calligraphy thus formed based on the notions of filial piety.

His announcement: “True, establishing oneself and enhancing one’s reputation serve to reflect honor on one’s parent 立身揚名, 事資尊顯,” regarding the requisite of calligraphy, derived from *Classic of Filial Piety*:

Sit down again, I will explain the subject to you: “our bodies– to every hair and bit of skin – are received by us from our parents, and we must not presume to injure or wound them: this is the beginning of filial piety. When we have established our character by the practice of the filial course, so as to make our name famous in the future ages, and thereby glorify our parents: – this is the end of filial piety.”<sup>112</sup>

復坐,吾語女: “身體髮膚,受之父母,不敢毀傷,孝之始也.立身行道,揚名於後世,以顯父母,孝之終也.”<sup>113</sup>

The second statement: “Zeng Shen refused to enter the street named Better Than Mother 勝母之裡, 曾參不入,” tends to be a popular saying in Chinese traditional culture. One can trace it in literary sources back to many classics such as in *Yan Tie Lun* 鹽鐵論, *Huainan Zi* 淮南子, *Collected Biographies of Lu Zhonglian and Zou Yang* 魯仲連鄒陽列傳 in *Shi Ji* 史記.

Filial piety plays a fundamental and vitally important role in Confucianism:

<sup>112</sup> James Legge trans., *The Shu King, the Religious Portions of the Shih King, the Hsiao King* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879), 466.

<sup>113</sup> Pi Xirui 皮錫瑞 (1850-1908), *Xiaojing Zhengzhu shu* 孝經鄭注疏 (Guangxu yiwei Shifutang kan 光緒乙未師伏堂刊本).

Yew the philosopher said, “They are few who, being filial and fraternal, are fond of offending against their superiors. They have been none, who, not liking to offend against their superiors, have been fond of stirring up confusion. The superior man bends his attention to what is radical. That being established, all right practical courses naturally grow up. Filial piety and fraternal submission! — are they not the root of all benevolent actions?”<sup>114</sup>

有子曰：“其為人也孝弟，而好犯上者，鮮矣；不好犯上，而好作亂者，未之有也。君子務本，本立而道生。孝弟也者，其為仁之本與！”<sup>115</sup>

From the perspective of traditional Confucianism, when everyone in society is filial and fraternal, then the relationship between upper and lower level is clearly settled, so that nobody will be fond of stirring up confusion, and consequently the society will run in order and harmony.

The typical traditional Confucian thoughts quoted by Sun Guoting, such as notions of filial piety, which are full of ethical characteristics, are used as criteria to judge calligraphy works. Furthermore, he commented that Wang Xianzhi’s spiritual content had fallen short 神情懸隔 and he missed the emotional and cosmic connections, also his reasoning was at odds with real substance 既失其情，理乖其實. Obviously, Sun Guoting assumed that filial piety played a key role in the art aesthetics, which is not easy for us to understand and accept now.

Zhang Huaiguan presented a similar proposition with the following statement: “When strokes of calligraphy moving and turning, one should make them adequate in variable density, just like the heart of dutiful son following his parents and being careful attention to perform the funeral rites to parents when they pass away 矩折規轉，卻密就疏，有似夫孝子

<sup>114</sup> James Legge trans., *The Life and Teachings of Confucius* (London: N. Trübner, 1869), 117.

<sup>115</sup> *Analects* 論語 is the sacred book of Confucius, which was written by Confucius and his disciples. See James Legge trans., *The Life and Teachings of Confucius*.

承順慎終思遠之心也。”<sup>116</sup> The statement: “Being careful attention to perform the funeral rites to parents when they pass away 慎終思 (Analects 追) 遠”, derived from *Analects* 論語 and was brought up by Zeng Zi.<sup>117</sup> In addition, Zhang Huaiguan took a metaphor to depict a status of strokes: “With the twists and turns, skeleton strength and complement of longer or shorter, strokes have the moral courage, which is like unswervingly loyal ministers have to admonish with risk, help and assist his majesty to correct errors 至若磔髦竦骨,裨短截長,有似夫忠臣抗直補過匡主之節也”.<sup>118</sup>

In *Calligraphy Criticism in the Way of Medicine Therapy and Stone Acupuncture* 評書藥石論, Zhang Huaiguan stated the relationship between calligraphy quality and moral trait directly: “the base person is sweet but debased, and the superior is insipid but arise to succeed. The sparkling and vulgar calligraphy is sweet and easy to handle, but full of grossness at glance. It is easy to make people happy, as if they are listening to Songs from State Zheng 故小人甘以壞,君子淡以成,耀俗之書,甘而易入,乍觀肥滿,則悅心開目,亦猶鄭聲之在聽也.”<sup>119</sup> This literary quotation with respect to Songs from State Zheng, initially from *Shi Jing* 詩經 and later on also in *Analects*, implies licentious, decadence, deterioration and vulgar custom. Confucius said: “Banish the songs of Zheng and keep from special (crafty) talkers. The Songs of Zheng are licentious; specious (crafty) talkers are dangerous 放鄭聲,遠佞人,鄭聲淫,佞人殆.”<sup>120</sup> “I hate the manner in which purple (people) takes away the lustre of

<sup>116</sup> Zhang Huaiguan, *Judgements on Calligraphy*, in *Fashu yaolu*.

<sup>117</sup> Zeng Zi is a disciple of Confucius. In detailed, see James Legge trans., *The Life and Teachings of Confucius*, 119.

<sup>118</sup> Zhang Huaiguan, *Judgements on Calligraphy*, in *Fashu yaolu*.

<sup>119</sup> Zhang Huaiguan, *Calligraphy Critic in the Way of Medicine Therapy and Stone Acupuncture*, in *Shuyuan jinghua*.

<sup>120</sup> James Legge trans., *The Life and Teachings of Confucius*, 224.

vermillion (ruling class); I hate the way in which the songs of Zheng confound the music of *Ya*; I hate those who with their sharp mouths overthrow (the) kingdoms and families 紫之奪朱也，惡鄭聲之亂雅樂也，惡利口之覆邦家者。”<sup>121</sup> From the point of view of Zhang Huaiguan, the sparkling and vulgar calligraphy was analogous to the Songs of Zheng with the characteristics of being licentious, decadence and so on; therefore, we should banish the “songs of Zheng” and keep far away from them, e.g. vulgar calligraphy. As a superior man, a calligrapher with good virtue would be insipid and easily succeed in writing calligraphy works of high quality.

Hence, Zhang Huaiguan attached importance to the value of morality when making art, e.g. he asserted: “The success of morality is more valuable than art’s 藝成而下，德成而上。”<sup>122</sup> He quite appreciated the works by Ji Kang 嵇康 (ca.224-ca.263), who had a spiritual demeanor of Wei Jin (Weijin fenggu 魏晉風骨) times 魏晉 (220-420).<sup>123</sup> In Zhang’s view, Ji was filial, fraternal and possessed both humility and modesty; therefore, his calligraphic works were more naturally written. When Zhang was asked to give up the famous work *The Letter of Breaking off Relations with Shan Tao* 與山巨源絕交書 by Ji Kang collected by Zhang,<sup>124</sup> even with an offer of compensation with a work by Wang Xizhi, Zhang rejected flatly to do so. Zhang Huaiguan worshiped Ji Kang’s behaviors written in this calligraphy

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 244.

<sup>122</sup> Zhang Huaiguan, *Judgements on Calligraphy*, in *Fashu yaolu*.

<sup>123</sup> Weijin times 魏晉 (220-420) were special times in Chinese culture history, in which neo-Taoism developed upon the heavy influence of Buddhism but against Confucianism. The controversy between the Confucian ethical code “Mingjiao 名教” and Taoism freedom “Natur 自然” became increasingly fierce. Therefore, a spirit of natural behavior among literati unfolded, a man behaving in a natural way would be called natural spiritual demeanor—Ziran fenggu 自然風骨. This had great affect in literature, calligraphy or painting whenever in Southern and Norther Times or in Tang. Zhang Huaiguan’s criteria on calligraphy contained this kind of contents. In detailed see Wing-Tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, 314-6.

<sup>124</sup> See Xiao Tong 蕭統 (501-531) ed., Li Shan 李善 (630-689) annot., *Wen Xuan* 文選, 1923-30.

work: detached feelings similar as seven unbearable and two disallowed “七不堪”與“二不可”的超脫情懷,<sup>125</sup> in which there were some traditional moral traits expounded, including filial and fraternal piety, humility and modesty.

In order to set out the moral traits, one would ethicize calligraphic art aesthetics in the process of art learning. In *Judgements on Calligraphy* 書斷, Zhang Huaiguan explained: “Wang Sengqin said: ‘Deceased grandfather’s brother Zhong Shu Ling (Wang Min 王璿), his strokes were stronger than Zi Jing’s (Wang Xianzhi 王獻之). This kind of comment only results from that the superior person is catholic and no partisan, are there partisans as well? 王僧虔雲: ‘亡從祖中書令, 筆力過子敬’者, 君子周而不比, 乃有黨乎?’”<sup>126</sup> The standpoint, the superior is catholic and no partisan, stemmed from *Analects*: “The superior man is catholic and not partisan. The mean man is a partisan and not catholic 君子周而不比, 小人比而不周.”<sup>127</sup> Having a catholic and not partisan view of the world is a kind of virtue requirement not only for the superior man but is also effective for calligraphers. On the account of being a portion of the society, calligraphers or artists should actively and energetically take part in the national management and contribute their efforts in their own professional fields. Furthermore, in ancient times every chamberlain was a literatus (educated elite) and an artist simultaneously, thus we could better understand why the literati and artists laid this very importance on the virtue requirements with these high standards. This means, however, these kinds of requirements eventually affected the physical and mental status of courtiers.

In *Sequel to Criticism of Calligraphy* 書後品, Li Sizhen 李嗣真 raised a similar viewpoint: “the success of morality is regarded as the superior worth—so called as

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Zhang Huaiguan, *Judgements on Calligraphy*, in *Fashu yaolu*.

<sup>127</sup> James Legge trans., *The Life and Teachings of Confucius*, 124.

Benevolence, Righteousness, Principles, Intelligence, Trustworthiness; the success of arts is thought as inferior worth—Ritual, Music, Archery, Chariot-riding, Calligraphy and Mathematics. 蓋德成而上, 謂仁、義、禮、智、信也; 藝成而下, 謂禮、樂、射、禦、書、數也。”<sup>128</sup> Same as Li Sizhen, Zhang Huaiguan also held the viewpoint: “The success of morality is more valuable than art’s 德成而上, 藝成而下,”<sup>129</sup> which Zhang Yanyuan 張彥遠 (815–907) cited in his *Record of Famous Paintings of Successive Dynasties* 歷代名畫記 as well,<sup>130</sup> stemmed from *Record of Music* (Yue Ji 樂記) of *Li Ji* 禮記.<sup>131</sup> In *Record of Music*, the form of art referred to music, but the theorists from Tang ascribed it to calligraphy or painting, due to the fact that calligraphy and painting are analogous to music as an indoctrination instrument in the thoughts of Confucianism.

The reason that people centered attention more on the success of morality than art itself lies in that, in traditional society, people deemed music, painting or calligraphy as nothing else but the appearance of virtue or moral traits, in other words: “Virtue is the strong stem of (man’s) nature, and music is the blossoming of virtue 德者, 性之端也. 樂者, 德之華也.”<sup>132</sup> So people would attach more importance to virtue—the root, but not on arts itself—the appearance. According to a *Confucian classic*: “To go to the very root (of our feelings) and know the changes (which they undergo) is the substance of music; to display sincerity and put away all that is hypocritical is the grand law of ceremonies. Rituals and music resemble

<sup>128</sup> Li Sizhen, *Sequel to Criticism of Calligraphy*, in *Fashu yaolu*.

<sup>129</sup> Zhang Huaiguan, *Judgements on Calligraphy*, in *Fashu yaolu*.

<sup>130</sup> Translation from William R.B. Acker: “Where moral power (te) is perfected, it is (something) higher, and where an art is perfected it is (something) lower.” see William R.B. Acker, *Some Tang and Pre-Tang Texts on Chinese Paintings*, Volume II (Leiden E.J. Brill, 1974), 188.

<sup>131</sup> Translation from James Legge: “The practice of virtue is held to be of superior worth, and the practice of any art of inferi.” See James Legge tran., *Yue Ji--Record of Music, Li Ji--a Collection of Treatises on the Rules of Propriety or Ceremonial Usages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1885), 116.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

the nature of heaven and earth, penetrate to the virtue of the spiritual intelligences, bring down the spirit from above and raise up those whose seat is below.”<sup>133</sup> “窮本知變, 樂之情也. 著誠去偽, 禮之經也. 禮樂負 天地之情, 達神明之德, 降興上下之神.”<sup>134</sup> Therefore, arts’ function is to integrate virtue inside and to raise the spiritual intelligences of the uneducated person as well.

In summary, arts are not merely art but had been regarded as moral activities in society; thereof they have an appearance and reflection of virtue. One should therefore pay more attention to the roots (virtue) that can be gleaned from the appearance (surface level) of the art.

Zhang Yanyuan 張彥遠 (ca.815-ca.877), a famous connoisseur and artist on painting and calligraphy (**Figure 33**) in Tang, declared: “Painting is a thing which perfects the civilizing teachings (of the Sages) and helps (to maintain) the social relationships 成教化, 助人倫.”<sup>135</sup> This indicates that, from the perspective of ancient literati, art had the function of indoctrination similar to Confucian classics.

## § 2.3 Harmony and Appropriateness

Since calligraphy is akin to ritual and music and enjoys a highly elevated position in Confucianism, when one of the representative characteristics of ritual and music embodies harmony, then this harmony is also featured in calligraphy. The realization of harmony

<sup>133</sup> James Legge trans., *Yue Ji--Record of Music, Li Ji--a Collection of Treatises on the Rules of Propriety or Ceremonial Usages*, 114-115.

<sup>134</sup> Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (574-648) annot., *Liji zhengyi* 禮記正義 (Peking University Press, 1999), 1301.

<sup>135</sup> William R.B. Acker, *Some Tang and Pre-Tang Texts on Chinese Painting* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1954), 61. There were five ethic laws (ren lun 人倫) between father and son, emperor and courtiers, wife and husband, older and younger and friends. See *Teng Wengong in Mencius*, and also Zhang Yanyuan, Yu Jianhua 俞劍華 annot., *Lidai minghua ji* 歷代名畫記 (Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe 上海人民美術出版社, 1964), 1.

proceeds through appropriateness in the process of practicing (imitating and creating) a calligraphy work.

There are five harmonies and five discords in calligraphic practice according to the statement from Sun Guoting:

Five harmonies:

1. Being happy in spirit and free from other duties 神怡務閑,
2. Having a feeling favorable to quick apprehension 感惠徇知,
3. Genial weather with the right amount of moisture in the air 時和氣潤,
4. A perfect match between paper and ink 紙墨相發,
5. A sudden and unsolicited desire to write 偶然欲書;

Five discords are:

1. A restless mind and a sluggish body 心遽體留,
2. An opposed will and constricted energy 意違勢屈,
3. Dry wind and a hot sun 風燥日炎,
4. A poor match between paper and ink 紙墨不稱,
5. Exhausted emotions and a tired hand 情怠手闌.<sup>136</sup>

The Five discords are fading and scattering things, but the five harmonies are fit charmingly to the writing. On a superficial level, we could notice that these five discords and five harmonies are the theories on practicing calligraphy. Actually, there are some conceptions of

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<sup>136</sup> Chang, and Hans H. Frankel, *Two Chinese Treatises on Calligraphy*, 6-7.

appropriateness behind, which could also mean equilibrium and harmony (the doctrine of mean 中庸), a kind of mean state of mind (internal) and atmosphere (external).<sup>137</sup>

In *Kao Gong Ji* 考工記 of *Rites of Zhou* 周禮, there also are four harmonies: “Timing which the heaven has, Air which the earth has, Beauty which raw materials have, and Ingeniousness which craftsman has. Only when the four are combined, then products can be perfect and classical.”<sup>138</sup> Among them the first, second harmony is similar like the third of the five harmonies in Sun Guoting’s ideology, and the third in *Kao Gong Ji* akin to the fourth from Sun Guoting, since they both discussed issues in terms of tools for specific techniques. Other than these external circumstances, Sun Guoting understood that the internal status of mind played a more important role when writing calligraphy, which means the first, second and fifth harmonies from Sun Guoting. He declared: “to catch the right moment is less important than to have right tools; to have the right tools is less important than to have right mental disposition.”<sup>139</sup> These three statuses of mind orientated only one goal: to reach the condition of equilibrium and harmony in the mental state. If we lose these three statuses of harmony, then we turn into the opposite direction three discords: a restless mind and a sluggish body, an opposed will and constricted energy, and exhausted emotions and a tired hand. These three discords imply the heart does not calm down, mind is strained and feeling is exhausted. These kinds of statuses could not provide relatively subtle, energetic and free emotions to hands to convey writers’ equilibrium and harmony.

Correspondingly, Sun Guoting took one instance from Confucius to elucidate appropriateness: “Confucius said: ‘at fifty I knew the decree of Heaven; at seventy I could

<sup>137</sup> James Legge trans., *Zong Yong—the state of equilibrium and harmony, Li Ji—a Collection of Treatises on the Rules of Propriety or Ceremonial Usages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1885), 300-329

<sup>138</sup> Jai Gongyan 賈公彥 (? -? fl.650-655) annot., *Zhouli zhengyi* 周禮正義 (Peking University Press, 2000), 1242.

<sup>139</sup> Chang, Frankel, *Two Chinese Treatises on Calligraphy*, 7.

follow what my heart desired (without transgressing what was right).”<sup>140</sup> To follow the heart does not mean that a man could do whatever he will do, on the contrary, he recognizes that each behavior should be within a limit or a border (Ritual or with Benevolence etc.), so he behaved based on the appropriateness or righteousness. As Sun Guoting wrote: “Thus, when one understands what is level and what is precipitous, then one comprehends the rational of change; when one first plans and then moves, the movements do not lose their proper place; when one speaks only at the right time, the words hit the mark 故以達夷險之情,體權變之道,亦猶謀而後動,動不失宜;時然後言,言必中理矣.”<sup>141</sup> The statement: “What is the level, what is precipitous and the rational of change” means being under the framework of rituals. When planning and moving, people can say everything and do not lose the proper place, which embodies appropriateness or righteousness. This is similar to Confucius’s statement:

Appropriateness is in fact a psychological process that one person adjusts himself to society in the direction of moral appropriateness. Confucius said: “The superior man in everything considers righteousness (Yi 義) to be essential. He performs it according to the rule of propriety (li 禮). He brings it forth in humility. He completes it with sincerity. This is indeed a superior man.”<sup>142</sup> Yi 義 means Yi 宜, i.e. right, fitting or suitable.<sup>143</sup> One should practice art with appropriateness in the sense of Yi. Sun thought that: “His thoughts were well considered and his intent and breath in perfect harmony and balance. Never agitated, never

<sup>140</sup> James Legge trans., *The Life and Teachings of Confucius*, 122.

<sup>141</sup> Chang, and Frankel, *Two Chinese Treatises on Calligraphy*, 12.

<sup>142</sup> James Legge trans., *The Life and Teachings of Confucius*, 225.

<sup>143</sup> Eric C. Mullis, “The Ethics of Confucian Artistry,” in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol.65, No.1, Special Issue: Global Theory of the Arts and Aesthetics (Winter 2007), 100.

sharp, (his) style and demeanor naturally resonate far 思慮通審, 志氣和平, 不激不厲, 而風規自遠.”<sup>144</sup>

Zhang Huaiguan mentioned also Yi 宜: “the important thing is appropriateness and righteousness between hardness and softness, Yin 陰 growing and Yang 陽 growing 剛柔消息, 貴乎適宜.”<sup>145</sup> I will address Yin growing and Yang growing in next chapter. In the view of Zhang, Yi indicates a status to achieve the equilibrium between hardness and softness. One interesting thing is that when Zhang Huaiguan criticized the calligraphy works by Sun Guoting in *Judgements on Calligraphy*, he declared that Sun’s writings tended to be too fast 傷於急速 and he suffered from too heavy and breakable strokes 雋拔剛斷. In other words, Sun highly appreciated the equilibrium status of harmony and appropriateness, whereas Zhang thought that Sun did not balance hardness and softness.

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<sup>144</sup> Translation adapted from Chang, and Frankel, see *Two Chinese Treatises on Calligraphy*, 27.

<sup>145</sup> Zhang Huaiguan, *Judgements on Calligraphy*, in *Fashu yaolu*.

### Chapter 3 Key Aesthetical Categories Originating from *Yi Jing*

Amongst the five Classic Books in Confucianism, *Yi Jing* or *the Book of Change* was the First Classic in the view of Chinese literati, the educated elite, in ancient China. The sixty-four Hexagrams of *Yi Jing* helps to understand the world by mirroring the unity of nature. Through the interactions of Yin 陰 and Yang 陽 in Hexagrams people could see an engine that drives the world.

Unlike European classical philosophies, which centered mainly on how humans, as a subject, know the natural world, the object, Chinese philosophies especially of *Yi Jing* aid people to refer to the dynamic life regulated by the order from unseen cosmos.<sup>146</sup> In the conceptual framework of *Yi Jing*, there are always two polarities analogous to Yin and Yang, e.g. heaven and earth, hardness and softness, male and female, odd and even numbers, positive and negative energies, fire and water, light and dark, and hot and cold etc., which are polar and complementary. These paired opposite categories can exist in harmony but will interact and transmute into each other when triggered by an outside stimulus. This interaction and transmutation kept the cosmos in balance.

Tang calligraphy theorists, as the educated elite in ancient China, thought calligraphy was also based on the fore-mentioned Yin-Yang theories from *Yi Jing*. Sun Guoting saw many manifestations of change aspects in the processing of Yin and Yang advancing or

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<sup>146</sup> Carol K. Anthony, *The Philosophy of the I Ching* (Massachusetts: Anthony Publishing Company, 1998), vii-viii.

declining in good calligraphy works; further Zhang Huaiguan stated explicitly that the images of trigram and hexagram were the ancestors of calligraphy.

The Chinese term “Yi 易” originally in etymology implies one sort of chameleon, which is easily changeable. According to traditional explanations on the term Yi in ancient Chinese, there were three meanings: easy 簡易, change 變易 and constancy 不易.<sup>147</sup> The “easy,” as a starting point to understand the world, seems to be an uncomplicated simplicity of mind to perceive it.<sup>148</sup> The “change” means a dynamic concept through which the world runs by means of above-mentioned paired opposite categories such Yin and Yang, hardness and softness, positive and negative energies and so on. The third one “constancy” suggests a person who maintains a constant mind to be accord with the cosmic harmony laws.

Tang calligraphy theorists discussed all of the three concepts of Yi. Particularly, Zhang Huaiguan declared: “In literature several words are necessary to express a meaning; in calligraphy one character is sufficient to show the writer’s mind 文則數言乃成其意, 書則一字已見其心.”<sup>149</sup> “Thus we could call it attaining the simplicity of Dao 可謂得簡易之道.”<sup>150</sup> He laid stress upon the uncomplicated simplicity to perceive the subtle things of calligraphy. On the other side, in his viewpoint, the “constancy” in calligraphy implied that calligraphers should inherit the preponderant conventional techniques or aesthetic conceptions. For instance, small seal script by Li Si 李斯 (ca.284 BCE-ca.208 BCE) and cursive script from Zhang Zhi 張芝 (?-192 AD) were the unchanged paradigm for us, as the constant skills.

<sup>147</sup> Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (574-648) annot., *Zhouyi zhengyi* 周易正義 (Peking University Press, 2000), 4-7. Kong quoted them from Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127-200)’s “Yizan 易贊” and “Yilun 易論.”

<sup>148</sup> Carol K. Anthony, *The Philosophy of the I Ching*, 7.

<sup>149</sup> Susan Bush, *The Chinese Literati on Painting: Su Shih (1037-1101) to Tung Ch’i-ch’ang (1555-1636)* (Hong Kong University Press, 2012), 21.

<sup>150</sup> See on Characters, in *Fashu yaolu*.

Both Sun Guoting and Zhang Huaiguan held that the concept of change was the meaningfulness, because calligraphy was composed of Yin and Yang, hardness and softness or positive and negative energies, which were the engine of the universe to drive ahead. “To resist movement, to barricade ourselves against the natural flow, is to miss the opportunity to free ourselves from the domination of the ego, thereby to develop and bring to maturity our true selves.”<sup>151</sup>

In the concept of change, two paired opposite categories, i.e. hardness and softness, were the key discussion in the application of conceptions of *Yi Jing* in Tang calligraphic treatises. Only with the reconciliation of hardness and softness, could calligraphy reach the sphere of harmony. According to cosmic law, just like “in an electrical circle,”<sup>152</sup> when it reaches an apex or maximum, positive energy akin to Yang or hardness, will turn back to negative, i.e. Yin or softness. The universe runs under the combination of positive and negative energies, calligraphy drives with the reconciliation of hardness and softness.

### § 3.1 The Foundation of Calligraphic Aesthetics: Trigrams

#### 3.1.1 Natural Instincts (xing 性) and Substances (qing 情)

Sun Guoting cited *Yi Jing* to explain the characteristics of changes of calligraphy:

*Yi Jing* says: “when you contemplate the natural patterns of Heaven, you can examine the vicissitudes of successive periods; when you contemplate the cultural patterns of men, you can transform the whole world.”<sup>153</sup>

<sup>151</sup> See Carol K. Anthony, *The Philosophy of the I Ching*, 8.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 196.

<sup>153</sup> Commentary 象傳 on Bi 賁卦 after hexagram-records 卦辭, see Richard Wilhelm trans., Cary. F. Baynes not., *The I Ching or Book of Change* (Princeton University Press, 1977), 495. See translation from Chang, and Frankel, *Two Chinese Treatises on Calligraphy*, 13.

《易》曰：“乎天文，以察時變；觀乎人文，以化成天下。”

The purpose of quoting this commentary on Hexagram Bi 賁 is to reveal that there are many variable changes, which Hexagrams have. Calligraphy was considered to be based on trigrams 爻 and hexagrams 卦 from the perspectives of Sun Guoting.<sup>154</sup> He argued that:

“We should understand (reveal 旁通) the nature (substance 情) of dots and lines and makes a broad study of the beginning and ending reasons.”<sup>155</sup>

必能傍通點畫之情，博究始終之理。

The statement: “To understand (reveal) the nature of dots and lines 傍通點畫之情，”<sup>156</sup> is derived from *Wen Yan Zhuan* 文言傳 of Qian 乾卦:

“Its six yang lines change, develop, and reveal extensively nature (substance 情) of all things of creation.”<sup>157</sup>

六爻發揮，旁通情也。

<sup>154</sup> Trigrams 爻 have two types: Yang 陽 with the symbol “—” and Yin 陰 with “- -”. Originally One Hexagram 卦 consists of three trigrams, and there are eight basic Hexagrams: ☰ Qian 乾, ☱ Dui 兌, ☲ Li 離, ☳ Zhen 震, ☴ Xun 巽, ☵ Kan 坎, ☶ Gen 艮 and ☷ Kun 坤, with the Mnemonics “乾三連，坤六斷，震仰盂，艮覆碗，離中虛，坎中滿，兌上缺，巽下斷。” These are basic categories in traditional Chinese culture. Through the permutation and combination of any two Hexagrams from these eight, sixty-four (eight \* eight = sixty-four) Hexagrams are deduced thus, e.g. twelve Xiao Xi Hexagrams: Fu 復卦 ☱☵, Lin 臨 Hexagram ☱☳, Tai 泰 ☱☲, Da Zhuang 大壯 ☱☳, Guai 夬 ☱☳, Qian 乾 ☰, Gou 遁 ☱☷, Dun 遯 ☶☷, Pi 否 ☷☷, Guan 觀 ☱☵, Bo 剝 ☶☵ and Kun 坤 ☷. With regard to the sixty-four Hexagram, see the List of Figures.

<sup>155</sup> Translation from Chang, and Hans adapted, see *Two Chinese Treatises on Calligraphy*, 14.

<sup>156</sup> Both Qing 情 mentioned here and that from 性情多方 means substance rather than emotion or feeling.

<sup>157</sup> Zhang, and Fu trans., *The Zhou Book of Change*, 13.

“To make a broad study of the beginning and ending reasons 博究始終之理,” from *Tuan Zhuan* 象傳 of Qian 乾卦:

“The sun shines all the time (from beginning and ending),<sup>158</sup> and the six yang lines of the hexagram mark six different phases of change just as if yang qi (陽氣) rode on six dragons to harness heaven through changes of seasons.”<sup>159</sup>

大明終始, 六位始成, 時乘六龍以禦天.

Sun Guoting must be very familiar with original context and content of *Yi Jing*, the First Classics of Confucius Classic. Clearly, “to understand (reveal) the nature of dots and lines of calligraphy” is similar to the phrase, “to reveal extensively nature or substance of all things of creation in Qian Hexagram”; “to make a broad study of the beginning and ending in calligraphy” is comparable to “to understand all the time from beginning and ending in Qian Hexagram”. In summary, the changed ones in calligraphy are dots and lines, in analogous to that the changed things in Hexagram are six lines, so that we could conclude that Sun Guoting had compared calligraphy to hexagrams and trigrams, dots and lines are in analogy with trigrams in hexagrams. Hexagrams reflect the endless changes from heaven and earth, calligraphy changes in dots and lines also do so.

Based precisely on this thought, Sun Guoting discussed two theoretical circumstances in calligraphy: natural traits (xing 性) and substances (qing 情), which played a very important role in the conceptual framework of Sun Guoting. By using the two words Xing and Qing 性情, Sun Guoting referred to some specific meanings profoundly. Xing and Qing 性情 were in *Wen Yan Zhuan* 文言傳 of Hexagram Qian 乾卦 used at the first time:

<sup>158</sup> The translation for “大明終始” “the sun shines all the time” is wrong, “大明” means “to understand completely and clearly” rather than “the sun shines”.

<sup>159</sup> Zhang, and Fu trans., *The Zhou Book of Change*, 5.

“The Qian Hexagram symbolizes heaven, which has the attributes of origination and prosperity, and benignancy and perseverance are its true nature (xing qing 性情).”<sup>160</sup>

“乾元者，始而亨者也；利貞者，性情也。”<sup>161</sup>

Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (574-648), who made or collected annotations to *Yi Jing*,<sup>162</sup> divided Xing Qing 性情 into two words Xing 性 and Qing 情, and he added:

“Xing means nature in born, with integrity and not licentiousness; Qing means desire of Xing. What *Yi Jing* means is that if a man could not control Qing by using Xing to make it seem like Xing, otherwise man cannot go through with integrity in long time.”<sup>163</sup>

性者，天生之質，正而不邪；情者，性之欲也。言若不能以性制情，使其情如性，則不能久行其正。

Kong stated that Xing was exactly hard and soft, fast and slow.<sup>164</sup>

Sun assimilated Kong’s thoughts on *Yi Jing*. In his view, Xing implied hard and soft, fast and slow, Qing signified the substances of dots and lines 點畫之情, along with the nature of dots and lines from beginning to ending 始終之理. Based on this theoretical framework, Sun unfolded his intentions of argument regarding the requisites of practicing (xing, hard and soft, fast and slow) and substances (qing, circumstances with changes) of dots and lines in *Shu Pu*.

<sup>160</sup> Translation from Fu Huisheng adapted. See Zhang, and Fu trans., *The Zhou Book of Change*, 13.

<sup>161</sup> Wang Bi 王弼 (226-249) annot., Lou Yulie 樓宇烈 colla., annot., *Commentary on Zhou Yi 周易注* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2011), 6.

<sup>162</sup> Kong Yingda participated in the compilation and Correction of *Five Confucian Classics and their Annotations (Wujing zhengyi 五經正義)* as the leader, compilation of Five Classics succeeded in 642 and issued in 653 after Kong Yingda died in 648.

<sup>163</sup> Kong Yingda annot., *Zhouyi zhengyi 周易正義*, 24. Li Daoping 李道平 (1788-1844) thought that this sentence was a commentary of Wang Bi 王弼 (226-249). See Li, *Zhouyi jijie zuanshu 周易集解纂疏* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1994), 60.

<sup>164</sup> Kong annot., *Zhouyi zhengyi 周易正義*, 9.

## 3.1.2 Xiao 消 and Xi 息

In addition to Xing and Qing, Sun Guoting used other two counter-notions Xiao 消 and Xi 息: “消息多方, 性情不一 (Translation followed later).” Xiao and Xi, originated from *Yi Jing* as well, indicate that things grow and decline dynamically, and imply alternated situations of Xing and Qing in dots and lines. Xiao 消 means Yin 陰 grows and Yang 陽 declines; Xi 息 means Yang 陽 grows and Yin 陰 declines. One can clearly understand with the example of the twelve Xiao Xi Hexagrams 十二消息卦, which prevailed in the Han Dynasty (202 BCE – 220 CE).<sup>165</sup>

In the twelve Xiao Xi Hexagrams, there is a Hexagram Fu 復卦 , the first line (bottom, the first trigram) is Yang 陽 Trigram, but second, third, fourth, fifth and up to sixth lines are Yin 陰 Trigram. The image (xiang 象) of Fu implies that Yang qi 陽氣 grows up and Yin qi 陰氣 declines; when the second line changes to Yang 陽 Trigram, the overall image turns toward Lin 臨 Hexagram ; by the same reason, the following Hexagrams are Tai 泰 , Da Zhuang 大壯 , Guai 夬 , Qian 乾 . After all lines arise up to the sixth, the overall image is Qian 乾. Then from bottom to upward, the lines alternate from Yang 陽 to Yin 陰 one by one, when first line changes, Hexagram Gou 遁  appears following Hexagram Qian; by the same reason as well, the sequences are Dun 遯 , Pi 否 , Guan 觀 , Bo 剝  and Kun 坤 , until the overall image changes to Kun 坤.

<sup>165</sup> Zhu Bokun 朱伯崑, *Philosophical History of Yi-ology 易學哲學史* (Beijing: Kunlun chubanshe, 2005), 130.

Sun Guoting mentioned the concepts of growing and declining of Yin-Yang when discussing the images of calligraphy:

“豈知情動形言, 取會風騷之意; 陽舒陰慘, 本乎天地之心。”

Chang, and Frankel improperly translated as follows:

“They do not know that as emotions stir, so words are shaped—that is how one can understand *Shi Jing* (the Classic of Songs 詩經) and the *Chu Ci* (the Songs of Chu 楚辭).

They do not know that the associations of brightness with joy and of darkness with sorrow are rooted in basic nature of Heaven and Earth.”<sup>166</sup>

In this context, Yang Shu 陽舒 means Yang grows, and Yin Chan 陰慘 means Yin declines, which are mutual contexts and indicate the changed situations (substances) in the twelve Xiao Xi Hexagrams 十二消息卦 and do not mean any joy or sorrow, any brightness or darkness, which are mistakes from the translators of Su Pu.<sup>167</sup> So in the second part, that Sun Guoting cited originated from the *Tuan Zhuan* 彖傳 of Hexagram Fu 復卦, “It means that the firm yang qi (陽氣) becomes increasingly powerful. Return is a manifestation of benevolence (basic nature) of heaven and earth 利有攸往, 剛長也. 復見其天地之心.”<sup>168</sup> From this point, we observe that Sun Guoting compared subconsciously calligraphy to Trigram and Hexagram of *Yi Jing*, based on that trigram and hexagram are the basis of calligraphy aesthetics.

Through reading twelve Xiao Xi Hexagrams 十二消息卦 (i.e. twelve Pi Hexagrams 十二辟卦), one can understand the meaningful concepts Xiao 消 and Xi 息 used not only in

<sup>166</sup> Chang, and Frankel, *Two Chinese Treatises on Calligraphy*, 11.

<sup>167</sup> Pietro De Laurentis has translated this as: “the openness of yang and the sadness of yin draw their origins from nature”, which was also far away from the original meaning of Sun Guoting. See De Laurentis, *The Manual of Calligraphy by Sun Guoting of the Tang*, 55.

<sup>168</sup> Zhang, and Fu trans., *The Zhou Book of Change*, 142-3.

hexagrams but also in calligraphy treatises. It was Sun Guoting who first applied these notions in calligraphy theories

Regarding the translation for “然消息多方, 性情不一, 乍剛柔以合體, 忽勞逸而分驅,” the version from Chang and Frankel states: “Many different situations exist. Sometimes hard and soft are brought together in one style, or diligence and relaxation unexpectedly lead to separate styles.”<sup>169</sup> Pietro’s version is: “In addition, changes have different aspects and one’s emotional attitude is never the same. Some compose the body (of character) according to the (sole categories) of hardness and softness, underrate the (modulations) of labor and rest, and differentiate themselves accordingly.”<sup>170</sup> As regards the interpretation of the above, a better translation for “然消息多方, 性情不一” would be: “In addition, many different situations exist such as Yin growing and Yang declining, or Yang growing and Yin declining; there are different natural traits and change features (for dots and lines).”

In summary, Sun Guoting had not explicitly pointed out that trigram and hexagram were bases of calligraphy, however we could deduce this amongst the words or in comparison with the corresponding words and statements of *Yi Jing* or the interpretations of *Yi Jing* by Kong Yingda. Whereas, Zhang Huaiguan directly revealed that trigrams are the ancestors of Chinese characters and calligraphy, through which he developed his discussion concerning characters and calligraphy.

Zhang Huaiguan thought that Chinese characters developed from being undistinguishable to being obvious and recognisable, just like spring as the beginning of summer, autumn as the beginning of winter. The blurring status of trigrams and their images

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<sup>169</sup> Chang, and Frankel, *Two Chinese Treatises on Calligraphy*, 12.

<sup>170</sup> De Laurentis, *The Manual of Calligraphy by Sun Guoting of the Tang*, 57.

are the premonition of characters 爻畫則文字之兆朕.<sup>171</sup> Moreover, he wrote: “So we know that hexagram and images are the ancestors of characters and accordingly the roots of ten thousand things on the earth 是知卦象者, 文字之祖, 萬物之根.”<sup>172</sup>

### § 3.2 The Concept of Change

Since trigrams and hexagrams form the foundation of calligraphy, and since trigrams and hexagrams are changeable based on the three kinds of changes implied in *Yi Jing*: Change 變易, Easy Change 簡易 and No Change 不易, then calligraphy should also be changeable. Some critics commented on Zhang Zhi (? -192), Zhong You (151-230), Wang Xizhi (303-361) and Wang Xianzhi (344-386), they demonstrated that ancient masters’ works were better than present. Sun Guoting quoted this statement in *Shu Pu*:

“These four masters stand out as unsurpassed in ancient and modern times, but the modern ones (Wang Xizhi and Wang Xianzhi) are not up to the level of the ancient ones (Zhong You and Zhang Zhi): the ancient ones have the substance, whereas the modern ones have elegance.”<sup>173</sup>

彼之四賢, 古今特絕; 而今不逮古, 古質而今妍.

Sun objected to these thoughts, he held that substance (raw artistic skill) developed from one generation to another with change features, instead of being fixed and stable, and elegance also shifted with the trend of popular fashion but was not unchangeable. Then, he elaborated:

<sup>171</sup> Zhang Huaiguan, *Judgements on Calligraphy*, in *Fashu yaolu*.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> Chang, and Frankel, *Two Chinese Treatises on Calligraphy*, 1.

“Although in the beginning, writings were fit just to record language, (later) it was modified to become lighter, and with galloping speed the proportions of substance and elegance changed in three stages in continuous development: this is a constant principle of all matter.”<sup>174</sup>

雖書契之作，適以記言；而淳醜一遷，質文三變，馳騫沿革，物理常然。

The statement, “Shu qi zhi zuo 書契之作”, which was not translated directly above, originated from *the Survey of Yi Jing* 繫辭:

“People of remote ages knotted on ropes to record their experiences they dealt with and the sages of later times carved characters instead. All officials used them in administration and millions of people recorded trivialities of life with them. They possibly received inspiration from the Guai hexagram.”<sup>175</sup>

上古結繩而治，後世聖人易之以書契，百官以治，萬民以察，蓋取諸夬。

At the very beginning in ancient times when characters were created, carved characters were mainly used to record languages, at that time aesthetic attitude and meanings were very different from today, which means that substance and elegance alternated. This is a constant principle from nature. Therefore, it is vital, when a calligrapher inherits ancient techniques, that he keeps a clear-mind without following the similar shortcomings from that time.<sup>176</sup>

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Zhang, and Fu trans., *The Zhou Book of Change*, 415.

<sup>176</sup> Actually, the statement: “貴能古不乖時，今不同弊” does not mean “to write in ancient style,” which implies that the reading punctuation is “貴” “能古” “不乖時.” See Chang, and Frankel, *Two Chinese Treatises on Calligraphy*, P2.

It should be “貴能” “古不乖時”, which demonstrates “古”, here, is a verb, not a noun. In ancient, a noun could be often used as a verb. Then, “貴能古不乖時” means: “It is precious that, when a calligrapher inherits ancient techniques, he could keep not being in discord with his own time”.

According to *Yi Jing*, only change could last for a long time. Then “the principles of *Zhou Book of Change* stress that the end of any development usually gives rise to changes, changes open ways for development, and continuous development can of course last long 易窮則變, 變則通, 通則久.”<sup>177</sup> Daily renewal could lead to the boundless virtue (advantages) 日新之謂盛德.<sup>178</sup>

Therefore, the categories of changes play a quite important role in calligraphy, which Sun Guoting had emphasized as well: “why should one change back from carved palaces to carve dwellings? Why go back from jade-ornamented carriages to ox carts with spokeless wheels 何必易雕宮於穴處, 反玉輅於椎輪者乎?”<sup>179</sup> He employed *Yi Jing*’s literary quotation: “People of remote ages lived in caves and in wilderness, however, the sages of later times built houses with beams at the upper part and eaves at the lower part to shield against wind and rain 上古穴居而野處, 後世聖人易之以宮室.”<sup>180</sup>

With this concept of change, “Only when elegance and substance are balanced can human perfection be attained 文質彬彬, 然後君子.”<sup>181</sup> He attached great importance to this, there are differences between ancient times and the present, whose particular substances and elegances are separated with a large gap 今古不同, 妍質懸隔.

From the perspective of Zhang Huaiguan, the calligraphic style from his times was vulgar or licentious, so when he expostulated to the emperor, he proposed that calligraphy should turn back to plain status 樸實, which is similar to the substance that Sun Guoting

<sup>177</sup> Zhang, and Fu trans., *The Zhou Book of Change*, 413.

<sup>178</sup> Kong Yingda annot., *Zhouyi zhengyi*, 319.

<sup>179</sup> Chang, and Frankel, *Two Chinese Treatises on Calligraphy*, 2.

<sup>180</sup> Zhang, and Fu trans., *The Zhou Book of Change*, 412-5.

<sup>181</sup> Chang, and Frankel, *Two Chinese Treatises on Calligraphy*, 2.

mentioned.<sup>182</sup> The proof, he had adduced, derived from *Yi Jing* as well, and he suggested that things would go to the opposite direction when they arrived at one ultimate to some extent, specifically, things would turn to Yang 陽 when they developed to the apex of Yin 陰.<sup>183</sup> Zhang Huaiguan also cited one statement from *Yi Jing*: “The end of any development usually gives rise to changes, changes open ways for development, and continuous development can of course last long 易窮則變, 變則通, 通則久.”<sup>184</sup> He thought that calligraphy could turn back to substance and plain status only through the concept of change.

Some great calligraphers in the history, from the perspective of Zhang Huaiguan, had broken through the ancient techniques or fixed regulations, e.g. Zhang Zhi (?-192), who learned calligraphy rules from Du Du 杜度 (active in the Eastern Han 25-220) and Cui Yuan (77-142), produced his changes, just like dragon changed his spots.<sup>185</sup> Hence, Zhang Zhi as students did better than teachers,<sup>186</sup> it seems like that “blue dye comes from the indigo plant,

<sup>182</sup> In *Calligraphy Criticism in the Way of Medicine Therapy and Stone Acupuncture*, Zhang Huaiguan said: “In secularity the atmosphere has already returned to plain substance (unadulterated influence), but calligraphy not yet 俗且還淳·書未返樸.”

<sup>183</sup> In the twelve Xiao Xi Hexagrams, following Fu 復  is Lin 臨 , by parity of reasoning, the following Hexagrams are Tai 泰 , Da Zhuang 大壯 , Guai 夬 , Qian 乾 , Gou 遁 , Dun 遯 , Pi 否 , Guan 觀 , Bo 剝  and Kun 坤 .

The first line (bottom, the first Trigram) is Yang 陽 Trigram, the second, third, fourth, fifth and up to sixth line are Yin 陰 Trigram. In Lin 臨 Hexagram, the first and second lines are Yang; in Qian 乾, six lines are all Yang, which are the ultimate of Yang; According to above mentioned laws, they would turn to Yin. So in terms of Gou 遁, we could see that the first line changed to Yin; in terms of Dun 遯, the first and second lines are Yin; till Kun 坤, all of six lines all changed Yin, this is the ultimate of Yin; in terms of Fu 復, the first line changed to Yang.

<sup>184</sup> Zhang, and Fu trans., *The Zhou Book of Change*, 413.

<sup>185</sup> James Legge trans., *The I Ching* (New York: Dover Publication, Inc., 1963), 328-9.

<sup>186</sup> Zhang Huaiguan, *Judgements on Calligraphy*, in *Fashu yaolu*.

it is bluer than indigo 青出於藍.”<sup>187</sup> The statement, that man produced his changes like dragon when he changed his spots 龍驤豹變, is derived from *Yi Jing*. The essay on the symbolism of the fifth line from the forty-ninth Hexagram Ge 革 says: “The great man produces his changes as the tiger does when he changes his stripes—their beauty becomes more brilliant,”<sup>188</sup> and the sixth line says: “The superior man produces his changes as the leopard does when he changes his spots—their beauty becomes more elegant.”<sup>189</sup> The character Ge 革 in Chinese means change as well. Zhang Huaiguan cited many statements from *Yi Jing* in order to stress the concept of change.

Change in Zhang Huaiguan’s opinion implies breaking through the constraint of conventional techniques or aesthetics. Zhang Zhi (? -192) did exactly this when he created a new cursive script from his own natural and innate tendencies, with a renewed and different style, undisciplined form and extraordinary refinement. 創為今草, 天縱穎異, 率意超曠, 無惜是非.<sup>190</sup> Then, Wang Xizhi changed conventional regulations, developed techniques either by increasing or decreasing techniques and cut to form a new style 增損古法, 裁成今體.<sup>191</sup> With such cases, Zhang Huaiguan indicated that most ancient eminent masters succeeded in calligraphy due to the fact that they changed a portion of conventional techniques and developed a new style, partly due to their natural innate endowments.

Furthermore, as far as Ancient (Gu 古) was concerned, its meaning varied with times according to Zhang Huaiguan. There are three kinds of Gu both for cursive script and clerical

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<sup>187</sup> This was from *Xun Zi*, cited by Zhang Huaiguan. See John Knoblock trans., *Xun Zi* (Stanford University Press, 2003), 135.

<sup>188</sup> James Legge trans., *The I Ching*, 328.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, 329.

<sup>190</sup> Zhang Huaiguan, *Judgements on Calligraphy*, in *Fashu yaolu*.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*

script, calligraphy from Du Du (active in Eastern Han 25-220) was in upper level Gu, Zhong You (151-230) and Zhang Zhi (?-192) in Middle level, Wang Xizhi (303-361) and Wang Xianzhi (344-386) in lower level.<sup>192</sup> Zhang Huaiguan took the same metaphor as Sun Guoting regarding Gu and Jin (modern): Gu akin to ox carts with spokeless wheels, Jin akin to Jade-ornamented carriages. We should not go back from jade-ornamented carriages times to ox carts with spokeless wheels,<sup>193</sup> which indicates that it is not necessary to insist on certain kind of Gu and we would better change our techniques and notions of aesthetics by following our time, not to be constrained within ancient (conventional) canonical forms.

With respect to the concept of change, both Sun Guoting and Zhang Huaiguan agreed we should be learning the rules and techniques from previous masters, but we do not need to follow them stiffly or rigidly. Sun Guoting wrote:

“Let there be no divergence between your mind and your hand; forget all the rules. Then you can ignore Wang Xizhi and Wang Xianzhi and yet make no mistake; you can depart from Zhong You and Zhang Zhi and yet be successful.”<sup>194</sup>

無間心手，忘懷楷則；自可背羲獻而無失，違鍾張而尚工。

Zhang Huaiguan hoped his emperor could show them the calligraphy works of the imperial collection. Then each courtier could understand, comprehend them, or even discuss whether the ancient techniques satisfied or dissatisfied them, therefore one could produce a greater change (as a tiger changed his spots) after inheriting the conventional techniques. Consequently, we could surpass ancient masters such as Zhong You, Zhang Zhi, Wang Xizhi and Wang Xianzhi. The question was, why was it that the four masters were so prominent in

<sup>192</sup> Zhang Huaiguan, *Judgements on Calligraphy*, in *Fashu yaolu*.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

<sup>194</sup> Chang, and Frankel, *Two Chinese Treatises on Calligraphy*, P14.

the history of calligraphy?<sup>195</sup> By contrast with Sun Guoting, who debased Wang Xianzhi greatly due to his behaviors violating the regulations of filial piety in Confucianism, Zhang Huaiguan regarded Wang Xianzhi as a great creator in the history of calligraphy. In Zhang's view, Wang Xianzhi changed conventional techniques and forms including those from Wang Xizhi, in creating a new style so called cursive and running script 行草書, and his calligraphy had broken through traditional regulations therefore regarding it as a great change from the ancient to the modern times.<sup>196</sup>

### § 3.3 The Reconciliation of Hardness and Softness

Calligraphy aesthetics developed based on trigram and hexagram in Tang. The law of hexagram development demonstrates the alternation between Yin and Yang, Yin indicates soft, Yang hard. Consequently, the alternation between yin and yang implies changes between softness and hardness. Calligraphy changes in analogous to hexagram and therefore embodies the shift between softness and hardness as well. Furthermore, the ideal combination of hardness and softness would be an organic combination. On the one hand, the interchange of hardness and softness is necessary; on the other, the reconciliation between them is appreciated, instead of being toward one apex either of hardness or of softness without returning.

In *On the Trigrams* 說卦傳 of *Yi Jing*, there is a statement with respect to yin and yang, hardness and softness:

<sup>195</sup> The original full sentence in Chinese is: “伏願每季之間一兩度，悉召諸王，遍示古跡，商榷諸家工拙，必大開悟心靈，習其所便，從此豹變，冰寒于水，昔有誠言，況復天人神縱者哉，豈可許鍾、張、二王獨高於往日也？” see Zhang Huaiguan, *On Calligraphy in six Styles*, in *Shuyuan jinghua*.

<sup>196</sup> See Zhang Huaiguan, *Discussion of Calligraphy*, in *Fashu yaolu*.

“They (the sages) set alternation (aspects) of Yin and Yang as the way of heaven, alternation of yieldingness (softness) and firmness (hardness) as the way of earth and benevolence and righteousness as the way of man.”<sup>197</sup>

立天之道曰陰與陽，立地之道曰柔與剛，立人之道曰仁與義。

In terms of ideology of *Yi Jing*, Yang means hardness or masculine, Yin means softness or feminine. In summary, the world consists of hardness and softness, “when the firm lines (hardness) and yielding lines (softness) alternate and vary in combination, the philosophy of change is embodied in them 剛柔相推，變在其中也。”<sup>198</sup> In the conception world of *Yi Jing*, a firm line (hardness) and a yielding line (softness) are basic components of hexagrams (or even the world) 剛柔立本，<sup>199</sup> thus the nature of change philosophy appears when they alternate.

Sun Guoting stated: “In addition, many different situations exist just as Yin growing and Yang declining, and Yang growing and Yin declining; there are different natural traits and substances (for dots and lines). Sometimes hardness and softness are combined together to form one entity, or unexpectedly separated with diligence and relaxation 然消息多方，性情不一。乍剛柔以合體，忽勞逸而分驅。”<sup>200</sup> The combination of two opposing aspects to form

<sup>197</sup> Zhang, and Fu trans., *The Zhou Book of Change*, 454-5.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid., 406-7.

<sup>199</sup> Zhang, and Fu trans., *The Zhou Book of Change*, 406-7.

<sup>200</sup> The author translates. As mentioned above, either the translation by Chang and Frankel or by De Laurentis for “然消息多方，性情不一。乍剛柔以合體，忽勞逸而分驅” is not precise as the ideology of *Yi Jing* is not applied in the translation. For instance, “乍剛柔以合體” does not really mean: “Hard and soft are brought together in one style,” (Chang, and Frankel’s version) but “hardness and softness are combined together.” “忽勞逸而分驅” does not mean: “Or diligence and relaxation unexpectedly lead to separate styles,” (Chang, and Frankel’s version) but “divided by diligence and relaxation unexpectedly.” Regarding the second half of the sentence, the translation from De Laurentis, is: “Some compose the body (of character) according to the (sole categories) of hardness and softness, underrate the (modulations) of labor and rest, and differentiate themselves

one entity (aesthetic approach) means hardness and softness are the basic components of calligraphy in terms of aesthetics.

Sun Guoting explained the combination in a very long argument. Hardness, in his view, especially referred to inner strength (strength of character) 骨氣, while softness referred to life-giving elements (elegance) 適潤.<sup>201</sup> He stated: “When inner strength is preserved, life-giving elements will be added.”<sup>202</sup> This means inner strength and life-giving elements should be combined; either inner strength or life-giving elements cannot be ignored in the practice of calligraphy. “If inner strength predominated disproportionately,” then “vigorous beauty will be diminished,”<sup>203</sup> or if vigorous beauty is too outstanding, then inner strength is in shortage, so both sides should be balanced or reconciled, one-side success is easy to achieve, but the perfect balance is hard to come by.

During this argument, Sun took many metaphors: existence of both inner strength and life-giving elements is like the branches and trunk of a tree, strength increasing when hit by frost and snow, splendors (live-giving elements) presenting when having blossoms and leaves. When inner strength dominated in an art work, it would seem like a strong dried branch of a

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accordingly.”

See Chang, and Frankel, *Two Chinese Treatises on Calligraphy*, 12. De Laurentis, *The Manual of Calligraphy by Sun Guoting of the Tang*, 57.

<sup>201</sup> The statement 骨氣 (inner strength, strength of character), as a kind of masculine or hardness (Gang 剛, Yang 陽), is a key word since the Southern and Northern Times, because the Neo-Taoism ideology had great influences on literature, calligraphy and so on. “骨氣” was often combined together with “風神”, to as “風神骨氣,” which Zhang Huaiguan applied to assess calligraphy works. The word 適潤 is difficult to define and translate, here taking the version from Chang, and Frankel. It reflects feminine or softness (Rou 柔, Yin 陰) according to Sun Guoting’s notion.

<sup>202</sup> Chang, and Frankel, *Two Chinese Treatises on Calligraphy*, 13.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

tree or a huge rock on the road, and when life-giving element dominated, like a fragrant grove with falling blossoms without support strength or like an orchid pond without roots.<sup>204</sup>

In Zhang Huaiguan's view, as noted before, hexagram and its symbolism were the ancestors of characters and roots of ten thousand things.<sup>205</sup> Then characters and calligraphy implied hardness and softness, and he cited from *Yi Jing*: "When the firm lines (hardness) and yielding lines (softness) alternate and vary in combination, the philosophy of change is embodied in them 剛柔相推,變在其中也."<sup>206</sup> "The sages set hexagram when he observed the changes between Yin and Yang, and produced six trigrams by the developing and changing of Hardness and Softness 觀變於陰陽而立卦,發揮於剛柔而生爻."<sup>207</sup> "They (the sages) set alternation (aspects) of Yin and Yang as the way of heaven, alternation of yieldingness (softness) and firmness (hardness) as the way of earth and benevolence and righteousness as the way of man 立天之道曰陰與陽,立地之道曰柔與剛,立人之道曰仁與義."<sup>208</sup> He thought that calligraphy shows sparkling substance and has inner beauty, either softness or hardness.<sup>209</sup>

Zhang Huaiguan criticized Sun Guoting: "He has the shortcoming of too quickness, moreover with forcefulness and hardness 此公傷於急速,僞拔剛斷."<sup>210</sup> Zhang thought Sun should combine spaciousness and fierceness 寬猛相濟, if he could; where spaciousness

<sup>204</sup> The key words are taken from Chang, and Frankel's translation.

<sup>205</sup> "是知卦象者,文字之祖,萬物之根,眾學分鑣,馳騫不息." See Zhang Huaiguan, *Judgements on Calligraphy*, in *Fashu yaolu*.

<sup>206</sup> Zhang, and Fu trans., *The Zhou Book of Change*, 406-7.

<sup>207</sup> See Zhang Huaiguan, *Judgements on Calligraphy*, in *Fashu yaolu*.

<sup>208</sup> Zhang, and Fu trans., *The Zhou Book of Change*, 454-5.

<sup>209</sup> "耀質含章,或柔或剛,有似夫哲人行藏知進知退之行也." See Zhang Huaiguan, *Judgements on Calligraphy*, in *Fashu yaolu*.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid.

means softness and fierceness means hardness, then Sun needed to combine softness and fierceness better, instead of only centering on hardness (forcefulness, fierceness). Furthermore, when he compared the calligraphy works from Yu Shinan (558-638) to Ouyang Xun (557-641), he commented that, Yu's works combined hardness and softness in organic form, but Ou's tended to have too much tendons and bones exposed outside in terms of feeling. In Zhang's view, Yu's works were better than Ou's, because the superior man would like to hide and hold on his instruments.<sup>211</sup> Zhang Huaiguan appreciated Zhong You as well, Zhong's regular script reconciled hardness and softness, and there was so much unusual taste and interesting elements in his works; thus Zhong was the first master since Qin-Han times, his style being far-reaching with boundlessness, classic beauty and in elegant taste.<sup>212</sup>

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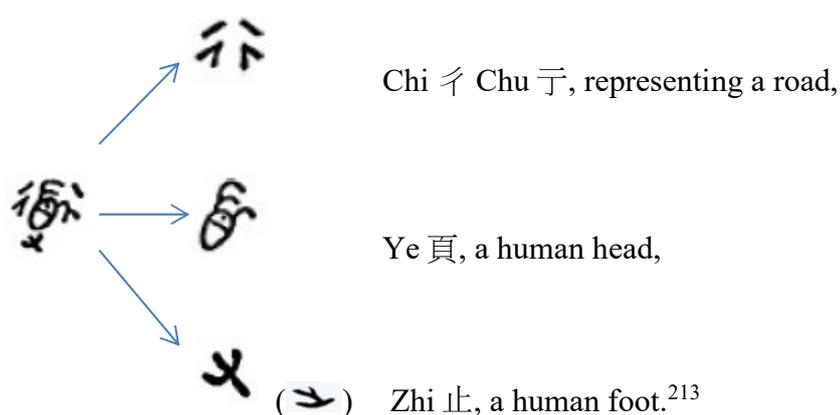
<sup>211</sup> “虞則內含剛柔，歐則外露筋骨，君子藏器，以虞為優。” See Zhang Huaiguan, *Judgements on Calligraphy*, in *Fashu yaolu*.

<sup>212</sup> “繇善書……真書絕世，剛柔備焉，點畫之間，多有異趣，可謂幽深無際，古雅有餘，秦漢以來，一人而已。” Ibid.

## Chapter 4 Major Formulae Provided by Taoist Thinking

In addition to the influence of Confucianism, including *Yi Jing* on Tang calligraphy theories, Taoism (Daojia 道家) played an influential role in the world of Tang calligraphy theorists as well. As noted before, thoughts of Taoism prevailed both in the court and among literati, which made art theorists take Taoism thinking as methods. The knowledge of Taoism philosophy aids theorists' intellect and intuition in understanding how they could develop theories based on current prominent calligraphy practice and extant predecessor's narrative theories.

Indeed, the word "Dao" in Taoism School seems to be a so abstract conception that it is not simple for us to comprehend and accept. One earlier character form for the word "Dao 道" from bronze inscription in big seal script (Dazhuan 大篆) shows as followed:



<sup>213</sup> See Chungyuan Chang, *Creativity and Taoism: A Study of Chinese Philosophy, Art and Poetry* (London and Philadelphia: The Julian Press, Inc., 1963), 52.

It could be written also as , which indicates that a man goes through a crossroad.<sup>214</sup> The character “道” developed toward a simplification direction as following table listed.

Jia 甲 598	Sanshi pan 散 氏盘	Sanshi pan 散氏 盘	Hezi You 貉子卣	Guo, Six, (State Chu) 郭 六 26 (楚)	Shui, Wei, (State Qin) 睡 为 10(秦)	Yishan bei 峰山碑, Li Si 李斯 Qin 秦	Cuanbaoz i bei 爨宝 子碑
Shang	Late West Zhou	Late West Zhou	Early West Zhou	4th century BCE	3rd century BCE	219 BCE	405 CE
							

Based on pictographic analyzed above, one can trace the original meaning of Dao back to a road or a way in etymology. Dao supplies us a method when we think of things. There was a statement to connect Dao and the way of thinking: “If we take Tao as the method or conscious way by which to unite what is separated, we have probably come quite close to the psychological content of the concept.”<sup>215</sup> In the view of Tang calligraphy theorists, Dao was a road or method to tune the mind towards calligraphic thinking.

<sup>214</sup> Yan Yiping 嚴一萍, “Shi Dao 釋道,” in Li Fu 李圃 ed., *Guwenzi gulin* 古文字詁林 (Shanghai jiaoyu chubanshe, 2004), 458.

<sup>215</sup> Referred to an introduction from C. G. Jung. See Richard Wilhelm trans. into German, Cary P. Baynes trans. into English, *The Secret of the Golden Flower* (repr. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1962), 95-96. See also Chang, *Creativity and Taoism: A Study of Chinese Philosophy, Art and Poetry*, 11.

Thus, Calligraphy followed Dao's regulation, such as taking the law from nature. As a result, the name Shu Dao 書道 was used widely and extensively in Tang to describe calligraphy abstraction, which implies certain abstract meanings. The concept Shu Dao suggests that calligraphy pertains to Dao, thus it owned some specific features that Dao had, for instance Equable (yi 夷), Inaudible (xi 希), Subtle (wei 微), Dark (xuan 玄), Non-existence (wu 無) and so forth. Such statements served as a supplementary for the characteristics of Dao, demonstrating the difficulty of revelation of the laws in the nature and the indefinitum of expressions as well. It is just as Lao Zi said: "Way-making (dao 道) that can be put into words is not really way-making. And naming (ming 名) that can assign fixed reference to things is not really naming."<sup>216</sup> Among the features of Dao, Dark and Non-existence derived from Neo-Taoism (Xuanxue 玄學), a renewed school of Taoism emerged in the Six Dynasties (2nd to 6th Century).

On the bases of these kinds of ideas from Taoism and Neo-Taoism, Tang calligraphy theorists developed a "Dark" (xuan 玄) way to interpret the conception of Shu Dao. Dao takes the law from nature 道法自然, Shu Dao pertains to Dao, and then Shu Dao will follow the law of nature as well, which implies that the performance of calligraphy proceeds in a natural way, and not in a forced way. In the conceptual world of Taoism, taking the law from nature indicated initially taking samples from the nature (the real-world objects), and later on, the concept of taking the law gradually advanced from real nature upward to humanism nature. In art theories and practicing, taking the law from nature centers mainly on humanism nature, which refers to a natural way or not forced.

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<sup>216</sup> Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall, *Daodejing "Making This Life Significant": A Philosophical Translation* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2003), 77.

Taking the law from nature acted its role as a way of abstraction; nonetheless, it is helpful because calligraphy is somewhat a kind of abstraction, although as a visual art format of characters. Taking the law from nature provides calligraphers with a methodological notion, which means that the performance of calligraphy in a natural way rather than in a forced way would be advised and appreciated.

Consider that man belongs to nature, one's innate nature (inborn nature) is a portion of the law of nature, consequently taking the law from nature implies to follow one's innate nature. Following one's innate nature was a notion derived from Neo-Taoism. Guo Xiang 郭象 (252-312), as a representative of Neo-Taoism, stressed the importance of following one's innate nature, to settle down inside one's own heart based on ascertaining one's status in society from the aspects of fame and fortune, living in peace, and going on with one's appropriate pursuit corresponding to one's own social identity. In Guo Xiang's view, one's inborn and innate nature remained unchangeable. This notion was a profound influence of Tang calligraphy theories, particularly on Zhang Huaiguan's treatises. Zhang advocated the idea of following one's nature, considering that each person, as a calligrapher, bore his own face and inborn personality, as different from others and unchangeable, just as birds and beasts are differentiated in nature. The significance of Zhang Huaiguan's notions regarding following one's innate nature is that he proposed an issue concerning the relationship between conventional techniques and one's own preference. Apparently, Zhang thought that following one's innate nature, i.e. employing his own preference, was highly appreciated. He objected to abide by conventional skills rigidly and unchangeably. If one planned to be eminent, he must create a new stylistic form that was fit to his innate nature. "The subtlety of the calligraphist's stroke, we may say, corresponds to the water and the roundness and the

squareness of the water in the vase corresponds to the form of the characters.”<sup>217</sup> The notion of following one’s own nature advanced to a specific school of mental formation named School of Respecting for Idea 尚意書風 in the Song Dynasty.

#### § 4.1 The Conception of Shu Dao

When Sun Guo-ting discussed the difficulty of appreciating calligraphy, he cited two literary quotations regarding Wang Xizhi: A disciple procured a table with Wang Xizhi’s inscription on it 門生獲書幾, (Wang Xizhi) Met an old woman and inscribed words on a fan for her 老姥題扇. The two literary sources indicate that common people could not fully understand the subtle distinction and profound meaning of calligraphy; in addition, he quoted another two statements, one from *Zhuang Zi*:

“The mushroom of a morning does not know (what takes place between) the beginning and end of a month; the short-lived cicada does not know (what takes place between) the spring and autumn.”<sup>218</sup>

朝菌不知晦朔, 蟪蛄不知春秋.

Another one from *Lao Zi*:

“Scholars of the lowest class, when they have heard about it, laugh greatly at it. If it were not (thus) laughed at, it would not be fit to be the Tao.”<sup>219</sup>

下士聞道, 大笑之, 不笑, 不足以為道.

In the world of calligraphic ideology of Sun Guoting, calligraphy had been escalated to the level of Shu Dao 書道, which seems to be an abstract category.

<sup>217</sup> Yu Shinan, *Bi Sui Lun*, ed. in *Mo sou*. See Chungyuan Chang, *Creativity and Taoism: A Study of Chinese Philosophy, Art and Poetry*, 261.

<sup>218</sup> James Legge trans., *The Writings of Kwang 3ze* (Oxford University Press, 1891), 166.

<sup>219</sup> James Legge trans., *The Tao Teh King*, 84.

Calligraphy, as Shu Dao 書道, has the characteristics, which Dao also has. According to *Lao Zi*, “The Tao (Dao) that can be trodden (uttered) is not the enduring and unchanging Tao. The name that can be named is not the enduring and unchanging name 道可道, 非常道, 名可名, 非常名.”<sup>220</sup> The difficulty of describing Dao then extends to calligraphy, as a saying described, that has been reached in the heart-mind cannot be easily uttered in words 心之所達, 不易盡于名言. This indicates that the principle of calligraphy was difficult to expound, even there was somebody to designate reluctantly different names to diversified types (for dots or lines) 強名為體. The statement, “designating reluctantly”, originates also from *Lao Zi*, “I don’t know its name, and I give it the designation of the Tao (reluctantly). Making an effort to give it a name I call it The Great 吾不知其名, 字之曰道, 強為之名曰大”.<sup>221</sup> Therefore, even one person could see the existence of a Way (Dao) at first glance, but his mind sometimes went astray and he made mistakes 雖目擊道存, 尚或心迷議舛.

Sun Guoting believed calligraphy pertained to a certain kind of Dao, thus it has some kind of similarity with Dao, they are Equable 夷, Inaudible 希, or Subtle 微 and so forth. Sun declared: “I aspire to consider what I have seen and heard only vaguely (equable and inaudible) and to gather the most exquisite aspects of the art 冀酌希夷, 取會佳境.”<sup>222</sup> Conceptions of Equable 夷, Inaudible 希 and Subtle 微 derived from *Lao Zi*:

“We look at it, and we do not see it, and we name it the Equable. We listen to it, and we do not hear it, and we name it the Inaudible. We try to grasp it, and do not get hold of it, and we

<sup>220</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>221</sup> James Legge trans., *The Tao Teh King*, 67.

<sup>222</sup> Chang, and Frankel, *Two Chinese Treatises on Calligraphy*, P9.

name it the Subtle. With these three qualities, it cannot be made the subject of description; and hence we blend them together and obtain The One.”<sup>223</sup>

視之不見曰夷, 聽之不聞曰希, 搏之不得曰微. 此三者不可致詰, 故混而為一.

Sun Guoting had not directly used the words Shu Dao, but based on what he had stated, calligraphy was promoted to the level of Dao. The concept Shu Dao was raised up for the first time in the treatise *Diagram of the Battle Formation of the Brush* 筆陣圖 that reportedly written by Madam Wei (272-349) in Eastern Jin. Surely, there must be one kind of version of *Diagram of the Battle Formation of the Brush* handed down from earlier dynasties to the beginning of Tang; as Sun Guoting mentioned, people could read one version of *Diagram of the Battle Formation of the Brush*, which could be a different one from what has been currently preserved.

It was Zhang Huaiguan who first introduced the concept Shu Dao widely and extensively with eleven times in his treatises. Typically, he stated in *Discussions of Calligraphy* 書議:

“When Yao and Shun governed the world, graphs and marks (Wen 文& Zhang 章) resplended, when they developed by themselves, the art of hand script (Shu Dao 書道) would be honored (advocated).”<sup>224</sup>

堯, 舜王天下, 煥乎有文章, 文章發揮, 書道尚矣.

Zhang thought that Shu Dao tended to be “mysteriously (xuan 玄) moving over darkness 玄猷冥運”, “pursuing vacancy (xu 虛) and subtle (wei 微) 追虛捕微” and “leading to the

<sup>223</sup> James Legge trans., *The Tao Teh King*, 57.

<sup>224</sup> English translation referred to French version from Yolaine Escande, *Traité chinois de peinture et de calligraphie: Tome 2, Les textes fondateurs (les Tang et les Cinq dynasties)* (Klincksieck, 2010), 444.

subtle with changing if necessary 通微應變。” We could observe from these words that the notions including Xuan 玄, Xu 虛 and Wei 微 originated from Neo-Taoism.

In *the Structure of the Laozi's Pointers* Wang Bi wrote:

“Dao” is taken for [its aspect] of being that on which the ten thousand kinds of entities are based. “Dark” is taken for [its aspect] of being that which lets the Recondite emanate. “Deep” is taken for [its aspect] that, [even] when “delving into the abstruse” [in which according to the *Xici* the yarrow stalks and tortoise shells excel] it is impossible to get to [the] bottom of it. “Great” is taken for [its] aspect] that, [even if] one “fills it in and rounds it out [ever more],” [as the *Xici* says that the *Yi* 易 does concerning the Way of Heaven and Earth], it is [still] impossible to get to the ultimate point. “Distant” is taken for [its aspect] that it is so wide and remote that it is impossible to reach it. “Fine” is taken for [its aspect] that it is so recondite and fine that it is impossible to perceive it.<sup>225</sup>

“夫‘道’也者，取乎萬物之所由也；‘玄’也者，取乎幽冥之所出也；‘深’也者，取乎探蹟而不可究也；‘大’也者，取乎彌綸而不可極也；‘遠’也者，取乎綿邈而不可及也；‘微’也者，取乎幽微而不可觀也。”<sup>226</sup>

From the perspective of Wang Bi, Dao could be described with Xuan 玄 (dark, mysterious), Shen 深 (deep), Da 大 (great), Yuan 遠 (distant) or Wei (fine, subtle) 微, i.e. Dao's name, according to *Lao Zi*, “can be named is not the enduring and unchanging name.”

Zhang Huaiguan believed in the traditional “common understanding” of Dao by using Xuan, Xu 虛 (vacant) or Wei to describe Shu Dao. In *On Character*, he stated:” Ten thousand things have the subtle principles, let alone Shu 在萬事皆有細微之理，而況乎書？” In

<sup>225</sup> Rudolf G. Wagner, *A Chinese Reading of the Daodejing: Wang Bi's Commentary on the Laozi with Critical Text and Translation* (State University of New York Press, 2003), 88.

<sup>226</sup> Lou Yulie, *Emendation and Explanation of Daode Jing*, 196.

*Discussions of Calligraphy*: “Something mysterious (xuan 玄) and marvelous (miao 妙) originate from the surface of things, tranquil and deep principle hide behind the dim (yao 杳) and dusky (ming 冥) 玄妙之意, 出於物類之表, 幽深之理, 伏於杳冥之間.” These kinds of statement could be traced in *Judgements on Calligraphy*, *Calligraphy Treatises on Six Chirographies*, and *Calligraphy Criticism in the Way of Medicine Therapy and Stone Acupuncture* as well.

#### § 4.2 Taking the Law from Nature

According to Sun Guoting: “Calligraphy has sublime existence same as nature, which can be reached in a natural way but not in forced 同自然之妙有, 非力運之能成.”<sup>227</sup> The statement: “Calligraphy has sublime existence same as nature”, is similar as one in *Lao Zi*: “The way imitates her natural self 道法自然”.<sup>228</sup> Calligraphy should take the law from nature, includes at least two meanings. One is imitating nature, getting aspirations and images of concrete forms from it, another one is writing in a natural way, not mannered and without overly concentrating. The former one is to imitate the rule of the world (nature), while the latter is to follow one’s own way naturally.

Sun Guoting applied many natural things to make an analogy to calligraphy dots and lines, the structure of one character and one section, or the whole paragraph of works:

suspended needle (xuan zhen 懸針), hanging dewdrop (chui lu 垂露), rolling thunder (ben lei 奔雷), toppling rocks (zhui shi 墜石), flying wild geese (hong fei 鴻飛),

<sup>227</sup> The Author translates. The version translated from Chang, and Frankel: “These are the same as the subtle mysteries of nature; they cannot be forced”, is not sufficient to understand the whole meaning. See Chang, and Frankel, *Two Chinese Treatises on Calligraphy*, 3.

<sup>228</sup> Edmund Ryden trans., *Lao Zi Daodejing* (Oxford university press, 2008), 53, quote from Ch25.

frightened beasts (shou hei 獸駭), dancing phoenixes (luan wu 鸞舞), startled snakes (she jing 蛇驚), sheer cliffs (jue an 絕岸), crumbling peaks (tui feng 頹峰) and so forth.<sup>229</sup>

He thought calligraphy had various difference, marvels, postures, attitudes, power and shapes. As two apexes, heavy clouds (zhong yun 重雲) and cicada wings (chan yi 蟬翼) tended be stressed and appreciated in certain circumstances. Analogues to nature imply the methodological supply of Taoism, i.e. taking the law from nature. This is nothing else but a metaphor. Thus, one can transform feelings of dots and lines from concrete nature to an abstraction; consequently, he lodges his emotion in the process of practicing calligraphy.<sup>230</sup>

As previously discussed: “calligraphy can be reached in a natural way, but not through force 非力運之能成”, that is, the shapes of dots and lines, structure of characters and paragraphs, layout of a whole work, and the holding 執, moving 使, turning 轉 and employing 用 of brush, should all be in natural way. According to Sun Guoting, writing in natural way could allow a person to reach the joint excellence of wisdom and skill 智巧雙優, and the harmony of using both mind and hand 心手雙暢 (Figure 36). Otherwise, in an unnatural way, only running the brush wild in attention 任筆為體 and amassing splotches of ink 聚墨成形 can lead to a confused mind 心昏 and a strayed hand 手謎, and it would be wrong to expect beauty and perfection (Figure 46).

<sup>229</sup> See Chang, and Frankel, *Two Chinese Treatises on Calligraphy*, 3.

<sup>230</sup> The statement “lodge one’s emotion,” see James F. Cahill, “Confucian Elements in the Theory of Painting,” in A.F. Wright ed., *The Confucian Persuasion* (Stanford, 1960), 131-2. This statement means that he gives shape and form to his emotions in the process of practicing calligraphy.

The declaration: “Calligraphy has sublime existence same as nature 同自然之妙有,” directly derived from *Rhapsody on Roaming the Celestial Terrace Mountains* 遊天臺山記 by Sun Chuo 孫綽 (314-371):

“The Grand Void, vast and wide, unhindered, propels sublime existence, which is naturally so.”<sup>231</sup>

太虛遼廓而無闕, 運自然之妙有.

Based on the explanation from Li Shan 李善 (630-689), the Grand Void (Taixu 太虛) referred to Heaven, nature referred to Dao, and sublime existence to one (existence). “Grand Dao propels the sublime existence of nature and produces ten thousand things 太虛, 謂天也. 自然, 謂道也. …… 妙有, 謂一也. 言大道運彼自然之妙一而生萬物也.”<sup>232</sup> He also mentioned that: “One wishes to speak of Existence (you 有) but cannot see its form. Since it is not (true) Existence (you 有), one calls it sublime Existence. One wishes to speak of things being produced by it. Since it is not Non-existence (wu 無), one calls it Existence. This is none other than Existence within Non-existence.”<sup>233</sup> What Li Shan elucidated demonstrates that he was greatly influenced by Neo-Taoism,<sup>234</sup> whose believers often used Non-existence (wu 無) to construct their ideal world. This explanation of Dao as Non-existence could still represent a kind of traditional development, which even shaped the mind of calligraphy theoreticians down to the Tang Dynasty. Sun Guoting quoted it indirectly to support his

<sup>231</sup> Xiao Tong 蕭統 (501-531) ed., David R. Knechtges trans., *Wen Xuan or Selections of Refined Literature*, Volume II (Princeton University Press, 1987), 245.

<sup>232</sup> Xiao Tong 蕭統 (501-531) ed., Li Shan 李善 (630-689) annot., *Wen Xuan* 文選 (Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1986), 494-5.

<sup>233</sup> Xiao Tong 蕭統 (501-531) ed., David R. Knechtges trans., *Wen Xuan or Selections of Refined Literature*, 244.

<sup>234</sup> See Wing-Tsit Chan trans. comp., *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, 314-316.

viewpoint that calligraphy propels a similar principle as nature and the sublime existence of calligraphy could only be reached in a natural way but not forced.

Taking the law from nature (imitating the image or shapes of nature) implies infinite variety, which is a kind of Grand Void 太虛 (vast, wide and unhindered). Sun Guoting considered that, calligraphy “has infinite variety, like sculpted clay figures, and practical use, like smelting metal 猶挺埴之罔窮, 與工爐而並運,” a conversion of the statement from *Wen Fu* 文賦 by Lu Ji 陸機 (261-303): “As infinite as space, good work joins earth and heaven, it comes from nothing like air through a bellows 同橐籥之罔窮, 與天地乎並育.”<sup>235</sup> The objects of the metaphors used by Sun Guoting and Lu Ji are different: Sun used the words sculpted clay figures (shan zhi 挺埴) while Lu used bellows (tuo yue 橐籥), both of them suggest Grand Void or Non-existence. Sculpted clay figures derived from Chapter Eleven of *Lao Zi*, where also targeted to Emptiness or Non-existence. Metaphors “smelting metal 工爐” from Sun and “earth and heaven 天地” from Lu could be traced back to *Zhuang Zi*: “When we once understand that heaven and earth are a great melting-pot, and the Creator a great founder 以天地為大爐, 以造化為大冶.”<sup>236</sup> From the perspective of *Zhuang Zi*, “heaven and earth” is a great melting pot, so we could figure out Sun Guoting used the metaphor from *Zhuang Zi* and transformed the expression “earth and heaven” of Lu Ji to “smelting metal” of his own. In summary, calligraphy or even literature has infinite variety, like “sculpted clay figures” and “bellows”, and works or propels usage like “smelting metal” or “heaven and earth.” “Sculpted clay figures” and “bellow” cover infinite characteristics, “smelting metal” or “heaven and earth” are unlimited, so that is the reason why Sun Guoting or Lu Ji made the

<sup>235</sup> Zhang Zongyou trans. into modern Chinese, Sam Hamill trans. into English, *the Art of Writing* (Wen fu 文賦) (Nanjing: Yilin Presss, 2012), 52-53.

<sup>236</sup> James Legge trans., *The Writings Of Kwang-3ze*, 250.

analogy between art and the natural things. In short, calligraphy is infinite and unlimited by taking the law from nature.

Similar to Sun Guoting, Zhang Huaiguan stated in *Calligraphy Criticism in the Way of Medicine Therapy and Stone Acupuncture*: “Shu Dao has the characteristics of nature, and nothing could limit and constrain it 道本自然，誰其限約，” showing that calligraphy is unlimited or indefinitum. Compared to Sun, Zhang’s theory directly inherited the notions of Neo-Taoism. Except taking the law from of nature, Zhang put more importance on Non-existence or Inactivity (wu wei 無為).<sup>237</sup>

In *Discussions of Calligraphy*, he mentioned:

“It’s effective only on the hand of on Non-existence, similar as the work of the nature.”<sup>238</sup>

是以無為而用，同自然之功。

“Calligraphy is a sound of silence (Non-sound), an appearance of intangibility (Non-existence).”<sup>239</sup>

無聲之音，無形之相。

In *Calligraphy Criticism in the Way of Medicine Therapy and Stone Acupuncture*:

“To observe the Non-existence is the requisite to obtain the appearance.”<sup>240</sup>

察無形而得相。

<sup>237</sup> To let things take their own course or take no actions.

<sup>238</sup> Translation refers to the French version by Yolaine Escande.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid.

<sup>240</sup> Full Chinese texts “察無形而得相，隨變恍惚，窮探杳冥”，see from Laozi Ch21: “惚兮恍兮，其中有象；恍兮惚兮，其中有物，窈兮冥兮，其中有精。”

In *On Character*:

“The person (connoisseur), who deeply discerns the calligraphy, only observes the spirit and gaiety instead of shapes (Non-existence).”

深識書者,惟觀神彩,不見字形.

Non-existence implies non-purposefulness or spontaneity, instead of nothing to do. As Zhang Huaiguan wrote, calligraphy has the characteristics of nature, takes the law from nature, and then consequently the ideal creative performing of art tends to be more successful when in a natural way, without willfulness.<sup>241</sup> Zhang centered the attention more on spirit than the shapes of dots and lines; he spurred the connoisseur to focus on the living vitality and to discard the concrete forms. As he wrote in *Calligraphy Treatises on Six Chirographies*:

“Planning by synthesis, adapting (to new styles) through changing, techniques have primitively no boundaries, the valuable point is mastering and integrating thoroughly.”

合而裁成,隨變所適,法本無體,貴乎會通.

In terms of methodology, taking the law from nature, Zhang suggested calligraphers to break away from the constraints of conventional techniques. Among educated elites in ancient times specifically in the Tang Dynasty, fixed techniques of regular script were the first thing to be learnt in handwriting while growing and being educated. Excessively indulging in the rigid techniques of regular script would bring more difficulties to create a new style (**Figure 31**). When talking about aesthetics, new forms are highly appreciated.

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<sup>241</sup> James F. Cahill, “Confucian Elements in the Theory of Painting,” in A.F. Wright ed., *The Confucian Persuasion* (ed.), 135.

### § 4.3 Following One's Innate Tendencies

One should take the law from nature when writing calligraphy. Nature refers not only to the natural world but also to a natural way, with the artists acting as social agents. The natural way implies being in accord with one's innate tendencies (innate nature), from the point of view of Neo-Taoists or calligraphy theoreticians such as Sun Guoting or Zhang Huaiguan. One's innate nature is inborn, a priori personality (tian xing 天性). Following one's innate tendencies is required in artistry.

One's innate nature consists of Nature (xing 性) and Special Endowment (fen 分), according to Neo-Taoism (Xuanxue 玄學), later on people called this theory "Xingfen Lun 性分論". When commenting on *Nourishing the Lord of Life* (Yangsheng Zhu 養生主) of *Zhuang Zi*, Guo Xiang 郭象 (252-312), a Neo-Taoist, stated: "One's personality follows his innate nature, diversified, unavoidable and not able to supplement 天性所受, 各有本分, 不可逃, 亦不可加."<sup>242</sup> In summary, people should follow their own natures and will then feel contentment. However, generally the natures (personalities) of different people are diversified, differentiated and of course a priori. If people take the law from their own nature, then they follow the law of nature accordingly. In other words, one should appreciate individual personality. This notion has had great influences on artistry ideology later on after Tang in the art history.

Zhang Huaiguan wrote: "It is just like that people have different faces, nature and special endowments. Although there is only one Shu Dao (calligraphic way), but one should be in accord with his own natural (various) tendency 如人面不同, 性分各異, 書道雖一, 各有所

<sup>242</sup> Guo Xiang 郭象 (252-312) annot., Cheng Xuanying 成玄英 (608-669) expla. (shu 疏), Cao Chuji 曹礎基 and Huang Falan 黃蘭發 colla., punct., *Nan Hua Zhen Jing Zhu Shu* 南華真經注疏 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1998), 71.

便.”<sup>243</sup> Zhang applied the idea of Neo-Taoism in calligraphy and considered that “since grasses and trees have their vitality without covering up by other things, let alone beasts and birds, let alone human beings? Beasts and birds own spirit and gaiety differently, which Shu Dao can follow 夫草木各務生氣，不自埋沒，況禽獸乎？況人倫乎？猛獸鷲鳥，神彩各異，書道法此.”<sup>244</sup> Since different people have different spirit and gaiety just like grasses, beasts or birds in nature, then calligraphy works from different people should be diversified and differentiated.

By following Guo Xiang, Zhang Huaiguan thought that nature and special endowment are inborn, diversified and differentiated, and that they could not be supplemented or changed. This is the reason why in *Discussions of Calligraphy* Zhang debated that the cursive script calligraphy works from Wang Xizhi were not better than others in the collection catalogue he compiled. In this catalogue,

the first one is Bo Ying 伯英 (Zhang Zhi 張芝) (? -192),

second Shu Ye 叔夜 (Ji Kang 嵇康) (ca.224-ca.263),

third Zi Jing 子敬 (Wang Xianzhi 王獻之) (344-386),

fourth Chu Chong 處沖 (Wang Dun 王敦) (active beginning of 4th century),

fifth Shi Jiang 世將 (Wang Yi 王廙) (276-322),

sixth Zhonag Jiang 仲將 (Wei Dan 韋誕) (179-253),

seventh Shi Ji 士季 (Zhong Hui 鍾會) (255-264),

and eighth Yi Shao 逸少 (Wang Xizhi 王羲之) (303-361).

<sup>243</sup> See Zhang Huaiguan, *Calligraphy Treatises on Six Chirographies*, in *Shuyuan jinghua*.

<sup>244</sup> See Zhang Huaiguan, *Discussion of Calligraphy*, in *Fashu yaolu*.

In Zhang Huaiguan's assessment, people had differentiated talents. This demonstrates that someone is adept at one aspect, but not adept at the other aspect.<sup>245</sup> Wang Xizhi's cursive script was in lowest level, it lacked of hard workmanship in the view of Zhang. Although it was full, generous and beautiful, it was still short of spiritual vigorous. Because of these Wang Xizhi's cursive script was treated as worse than others'.<sup>246</sup> This "revealed" that Wang Xizhi's talent in cursive script could not be compared to others' edited in the catalogue. Zhang Huaiguan's assumption, argument and conclusion oppose the common understanding, where the calligraphy works of Wang Xizhi were always in the first place, in spite of his ratiocination being acceptable from the perspective of Neo-Taoism i.e. the idea of Nature (xing 性) and Special Endowment (fen 分).

With respect to the theory of Nature (xing 性) and Special Endowment (fen 分), Sun Guoting explained these notions not as explicitly as Zhang Huaiguan, but to the extent of expansibility. According to Sun Guoting, in the process of art learning, people exerted themselves by experiencing three kinds of learning situations. The art learning level will elevate to upper occasionally to reach the apex of Endowment.<sup>247</sup> Here Endowment (fen 分) indicates a priori nature in born.

<sup>245</sup> “寸有所長，自古大有佳手，各稟異氣，亦可參詳。” See, *Calligraphy Treatises on Six Chirographies*, in *Shuyuan jinghua*.

<sup>246</sup> “逸少則格律非高，工夫又少，雖圓豐妍美，乃乏神氣，無戈戟銛銳可畏，無物象生動可奇，是以劣於諸子。” See, *Discussion of Calligraphy*, in *Fashu yaolu*.

<sup>247</sup> “勉之不已，抑有三時；時然一變，極其分矣。” Chang Frankel translated as: “When students exert themselves without stopping, they pass through three stages. Each stage changes to the next as its potential exhausted.” See Chang, and Frankel, *Two Chinese Treatises on Calligraphy*, 11-12. As traditional understanding, “san shi 三時” means three stages or periods: the balance and stability (ping zheng 平正), steepness and boldness (xian jue 險絕), and again balance and stability (ping zheng 平正) (English statements for these three groups of phrases trans. refers to De Laurentis).

But based on *Explanation to Analects* by Huang Kai 皇侃 (488-545), “san shi 三時” means three kinds of

Taking the law from nature and following one's endowment, calligraphers were suggested to give up or conceal normal regulations of dots and lines, shapes of characters or layout of one piece of work and such kinds of techniques and skills, which they have learned conventionally, adopted and cultivated before, to reach the sphere of free handling, creating and practicing. Sun declared: "When making square and round shapes of dots and lines, eliminate the regulations from compasses and rulers; when making curved and straight lines, conceal rules of hook and rope 泯規矩於方圓，遁鉤繩之曲直."<sup>248</sup> Escaping from the constraints of regulations, once reach a status there is no divergence between heart-mind and hand, all rules are forgotten. Then even keeping a distance from Wang Xizhi and Wang Xianzhi, or departing from Zhong You and Zhang Zhi, the calligraphy work and also could compare them with different substance but equally beautiful sense, being skillful and without mistakes (**Figure 43**).

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learning situations, the first one is referred to the life, second to the year, third to the day, which encourages people to arrange the learning schedule by day, year and whole life. "凡學有三時，一是就人身中為時，二就年中為時，三就日中為時也。" See Huang Kai 皇侃 (488-545), *Explanation to Analects* 論語義疏, Gao Shangju 高尚榘 emend., punct. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2013), 2.

Sun Guoting's judgement: "For understanding basic ideas and principle, the young are inferior to the old 學成規矩，老不如少", is similar as what Huang Kai annotated to the first Article of Chapter 1 of *Analects*: "Is it not pleasant to learn with a constant perseverance and application?" "When understanding the time in young is the best, learning should start from young, so to do it in young is the priority, 明學者幼少之時也。學從幼起，故以幼為先也。" In addition, we could see similar standpoint in *Xue Ji* in *Li Ji* 禮記·學記: "When growing up to adults, people would constrain new things to come into mind. After the best time for learning, it is difficult to achieve to a good status although through diligent. 發然後禁，則捍格而不勝時，過然後學，勤苦而難成。"

The word Fen 分 was not translated well either in the version Chang-Frankel or by De Laurentis. Fen 分 means special Endowment or a priori natur inborn, in Chinese Tian Fen 天分。

<sup>248</sup> Tranlation referred to both of Chang-Frankel and Pietro. This literary source is from *Huananzi* 淮南子: "規矩不能方圓，鉤繩不能曲直", see Liu An 劉安(BC179-BC122) edit., He Ning 何寧 annot., *Huananzi* 淮南子 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1998), 80.

## Chapter 5 From Philosophical Dimensions to the Practice of Calligraphy

### § 5.1 Ethics and the Practice of Calligraphy

Calligraphic theorists in the Tang Dynasty elevated calligraphy to the height of Confucian classics and compared the function of calligraphy to those of rituals and music. Their criteria for judging calligraphy was ethicized, such as being full of filial piety to one's parents and fidelity to one's Empire. As McNair commented, "This equation between style and personality is emphasized when Sun warns students that even if they model their styles on a master, they should be careful not to let their own personality defects warp their calligraphy."<sup>249</sup> At the same time, it was believed that calligraphy had the function of indoctrination, which implied that arts including calligraphy helped to cultivate one's virtue and to integrate oneself into the social organization, in order for the individual to be in accord with his social role in the community. "Art (yi 藝), within this Confucian context, is thus conceived as a personal means of appropriateness of conduct in deference to the circumstances that occasion it."<sup>250</sup> Therefore, it is understandable that the key point in practicing art lies in virtue development. Confucian thought held that virtue achievement surpassed art achievement, which dominated the art ideology in Tang Dynasty. Indeed, such

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<sup>249</sup> Amy McNair, "Review on Two Chinese Treatises on Calligraphy," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 58, No. 3 (Aug. 1999), 793-795, quote from 794.

<sup>250</sup> Stephen J. Goldberg, "Philosophical Reflection and Visual Art in Traditional China," in David Jones & E.R. Klein ed., *Asian Texts--Asian Contexts: Encounters with Asian Philosophies and Religions* (State University of New York, 2010), 229.

views are not only in the Tang Dynasty, in calligraphy, but also in other times and in painting. Ethical standards of judging calligraphy and painting remain questionable to this day.

By comparing calligraphy to rituals and music, people attached significant importance to the dynamic process of practicing calligraphy. In this dynamic process, Confucians called for adapting to official rituals when carrying out the propriety (li 禮), beneficial to constrain behaviors, to beautify heart-minds, to cultivate good personality and ultimately to achieve the so-called ethical behavior. For example, Confucius said:

“The student of virtue has no contentions. If it be said he cannot avoid them, shall this be in archery? But he bows complaisantly to his competitors; thus, he ascends the platform, descends, and exacts the forfeit of drinking. In his contention, he is still the Keun-tsze.”<sup>251</sup>

“君子無所爭 一一必也射乎! 揖讓而升, 下而飲. 其爭也君子.”

Even an action like archery tended to have the function of propriety cultivation both in physical body and in mentality. The purposes of cultivation were to attain etiquette and benevolence. According to Confucian, if a man was lacking benevolence, what had he to do with rites of propriety and music?<sup>252</sup> Behavior of ritual and music, surely extending to calligraphy and painting, should reveal benevolence; benevolence was the ultimate purpose of all practicing. “In this respect, the Confucian notion of art is fundamentally performative.”

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Therefore, what people attached the greatest importance to is the practicing and the behavior, instead of the physical calligraphy works. One might improve his status of mind and attitudes of behavior in the process of attaining propriety and benevolence by writing,

<sup>251</sup> James Legge trans., not., *The Life and Teachings of Confucius*, 129.

<sup>252</sup> “人而不仁, 如禮何? 人而不仁, 如樂何?” Ibid., Book III, Chapter III, 128.

<sup>253</sup> Stephen J. Goldberg, “Philosophical Reflection and Visual Art in Traditional China”, in David Jones & E.R. Klein ed., *Asian Texts--Asian Contexts: Encounters with Asian Philosophies and Religions*, 229.

according to Confucian artistry theorists. That is the reason why they elevated an art such as calligraphy to a height of scripture (Confucian classics). Through morally appropriating in artistry, the harmony status (living sphere) including right, fitting and suitable will be feasible to attain.<sup>254</sup>

Nonetheless, the harmony sphere refers still to the practicing activity itself, rather than the results (art works). There is a big gap to bridge from practicing activity to eventual works. People often mix the function of cultivation and indoctrination function in artistry practicing processes with the aesthetic viewpoints held in artistry works appreciation and judgement. Finally, they accepted this saying: “The success of morality is more valuable than art’s 德成而上, 藝成而下.”<sup>255</sup> The art activity surely has the function of cultivating one’s personality in the pursuit of being in accord with social propriety, since art activity pertains to social activities. This is the form of artistry; we neglect the “Aesthetics” content.

The relationship between ethics and aesthetics is doubtful. The beauty of things is free from ethics, instead of adhering to it. People are accustomed to imposing ethics on art. Indeed, it was hopeful that self-cultivation would be realized in the creation process of calligraphy and painting, in order to form a moderate humanistic character and to achieve harmony governance of society, which are actually the tasks of Confucian classics. In other words, the content “Aesthetics” cannot provide the function, which ethics and morality have.

According to Kant (1724-1804), there are four moments with respect to pure beauty:

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<sup>254</sup> From harmony to right, fitting, or suitable sphere, see Eric C. Mullis, “The Ethics of Confucian Artistry,” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol.65, No.1, Special Issue: Global Theory of the Arts and Aesthetics (Winter 2007), 100.

<sup>255</sup> Zhang Huaiguan, *Judgements on Calligraphy*, in *Fashu yaolu*.

“Ohne Interesse” (interests or preference) (quality),<sup>256</sup>

“Ohne Begriffe” (without concepts) (quantity),

“Zweckmäßigkeit überhaupt” (on purposiveness in general) (relationship),

and “Notwendigkeit” (necessity) (modality).

What Kant understood was that beautiful taste was independent from the concept of perfection.<sup>257</sup> The judgement of taste is merely formal purposiveness, without considering the content. Beauty is free from the concept of aesthetic cultivation or ethics.

The evaluation criterion of Sun Guoting by employing filial piety to assess Wang Xizhi's Calligraphy are questionable and worth discussing. Sun Guoting criticized Wang Xizhi's behavior in that it did not conform to the ritual laws; consequently, his calligraphy work, as a behavior result, lacked of emotions and was far from marvelousness. Sun Guoting did not differentiate between behavior in ordinary life and art practicing result; when he made this deduction, he had a fallacy of four concepts in formal logic, in which the behavior result was the same as the behavior. Zhang Huaiguan's admiring of Ji Kang also brings controversial points. The formative quality of calligraphy works is not connected to one's virtue; however, contents of one work somehow convey the spiritual temperament, which shapes the viewer and their behavior or mentality. Of course, it is easy to mix the formative quality with the contents of works in ancient times, even today. In addition, one's behavior cultivates his characteristics of mentality; consequently, characteristics have certain influences on the selection of the stylistic forms, which is also difficult to define.

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<sup>256</sup> The German word “Interesse”, which Kant used, means a kind of “Neigung,” preference or tendency in English, either in *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft* or *Kritik der Urteilskraft*. See Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (Felix Meiner Verlag, 2009), 49, AA (Akademieausgabe), 226. *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft* (Felix Meiner Verlag, 2003), 565-76, AA, 322-330.

<sup>257</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews trans. into English (Cambridge University Press, 2000), 111.

In the history of calligraphy, there were several cases to demonstrate that one's virtue could be considered controversial, even though their calligraphy works showed technical prowess. Cai Jing 蔡京 (1047-1126), a famous courtier in the Northern Song Dynasty, was treated as a treacherous court official as *Song shi* 宋史 recorded.<sup>258</sup>

Despite the fact that there was such crucial criticizing to him, he still enjoyed a historical reputation positively from his art performances. His calligraphy work demonstrates one kind of freedom from conventional styles (**Figure 35**). Initially, there are four calligraphy masters “Song Sijia 宋四家” in Song: Cai Jing 蔡京 (1047-1126), Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037-1101), Mi Fu 米芾 (1051-1107) and Huang Tingjian 黃庭堅 (1045-1105). Later on, Cai Jing was replaced by Cai Xiang 蔡襄 (1012-1067) because of Cai Jing’s poor fame in virtues. When people talked about Song Sijia, they often related it to Cai Xiang, Su Shi, Mi Fu and Huang Tingjian. Cai Xiang’s calligraphy had formerly been accepted greatly. People removed Cai Jing’s name from Song Sijia only due to the issue of his virtue. A similar situation happened to Zhang Ruitu 張瑞圖 (1570-1644), a calligrapher in Late Ming, who wrote calligraphy works with very high quality in terms of creativity upon conventional styles (**Figure 45**), but didn’t enjoy great fame, lacking of perceived virtue as well.

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<sup>258</sup> “京天資凶譎，舞智禦人，在人主前，顛狙伺爲固位計，始終一說，謂當越拘攣之俗，竭四海九州之力以自奉。帝亦知其姦，屢罷屢起，且擇與京不合者執政以梏之。京每聞將退免，輒入見祈哀，蒲伏叩頭，無復廉恥。燕山之役，京送攸以詩，陽寓不可之意，冀事不成得以自解。見利忘義，至於兄弟爲參商。父子如秦越。暮年卽家爲府，營進之徒，舉集其門。輸貨僮隸得美官，棄紀綱法度爲虛器。患失之心無所不至，根株結盤，牢不可脫。卒致宗社之禍，雖譴死道路，天下猶以不正典刑爲恨。” See Tuotuo 脫脫 (1314-1356) et al., ed., *Song shi* 宋史 (Qainlong Wuyingdian keben 乾隆武英殿刻本), vol. 472: Collected Biographies 231.

## § 5.2 Appropriateness and Harmony in Practicing

It is questionable that literati connected the quality of calligraphy to ethics or virtue, even when they elevated the position of calligraphy equal to rituals and music based on the thoughts of Confucian classics. In spite of that controversial point, Confucianism supplied artists with the concepts of appropriateness and harmony, which are exactly appropriate for the nature of calligraphy. Appropriateness and harmony were the features of rituals and music originally; calligraphy shared them as well, which propelled the development and prosperity of calligraphy in practicing and aesthetics.

According to Sun Guoting and Zhang Huaiguan, appropriateness and harmony played a greatly important role in the practicing process of calligraphy. Sun stated: “When one first plans and then moves, the movements do not lose their proper place 謀而後動, 動不失宜.”<sup>259</sup> Not losing the proper place indicates a kind of appropriateness. Furthermore, he held that there were five harmonies, which includes interior mental status and exterior atmosphere e.g. climate and instruments. Whereas Zhang Huaiguan criticized Sun Guoting for writing too fast and not reconciling hardness and softness, demonstrating another aspect of harmony connotation. Harmony tended to be a detailed requirement in calligraphy writing.

Harmony means also the reconciliation between hardness and softness, just as what Zhang Huaiguan indicated when he criticized Sun Guoting. Sun’s work seemed to be too hard according to Zhang, one can experience that when comparing his *Shu Pu* (Figure 25) to Yan Zhenqing’s 顏真卿 (709-784) *Ji Zhi Gao* 祭侄稿 (Figure 30). One can perceive the reconciliation status of hardness and softness not only among dots and lines, but also in structures of characters, or even a whole work. When one performs a calligraphy or painting work, hardness and softness should be the focused points to make the work adequate,

<sup>259</sup> Chang, and Frankel, *Two Chinese Treatises on Calligraphy*, 12.

appropriated and harmonic. Yang 陽 and Yin 陰, or Emptiness (xu 虛) and Realness (shi 實) are regularly employed as the corresponding categories for hardness and softness.

Liu Gongquan 柳公權 (778-875) thought that the employment of the brush lies in the mind, if the mind is straight up, then the employing of brush (i.e. dots and lines) will be straight up 用筆在心, 心正則筆正.<sup>260</sup> However, when we read his calligraphy works, they seem to be too hard (**Figure 31**), lacking of organic combination of hardness and softness. The reason is that he overemphasized the quality of dots and lines with straight up features. On the contrary, the works from Yan Zhenqing are appropriate to combine hardness and softness and reaches a harmonic sphere (**Figure 30**).

Heart-mind should not be neglected. According to Sun Guoting, the five harmonies can be grouped into three types: statuses of mind, external atmosphere and writing instruments. A status of mind refers to the following three harmonies: being happy in spirit and free from other duties 神怡務閑, having a feeling favorable to quick apprehension and a sudden 感惠徇知 and unsolicited desire to write 偶然欲書. With respect to the priority of three types in five harmonies, Sun Guoting wrote:

“To catch the right moment is less important than to have the right tools; to have the right tools is less important than to have the right mental disposition.”<sup>261</sup>

得時不如得器, 得器不如得志.

Sun attached great importance to mental disposition. Only with the right disposition, extended to liberal thoughts and affection, could the vitality be harmonic and moderate, with

<sup>260</sup> Liu Xu (887-946) et al., ed., *Jiu Tang shu*, vol. 165: Collected Biographies 115.

<sup>261</sup> Chang, and Frankel, *Two Chinese Treatises on Calligraphy*, 7.

tranquil and far dissociated mentality in stylistic forms 思慮通審, 志氣和平, 不激不厲, 風規自遠.

The status of mentality relies upon formative techniques, so the study and improvement of calligraphic techniques are very important. Techniques are the prerequisites for everything. The correct and effective use of calligraphic techniques helps to form what one wants to express. Once one has mastered the handling of the brush correctly and effectively, one can then freely express himself by reasonably changing some techniques. Without correct and effective application of techniques, one cannot control the brush and establish a regulative form whether of dots and lines, the structure of a character, a paragraph or a whole work (**Figure 40**). Relying upon the correct and effective application of brush, one could reach the sphere of appropriateness and harmony. Appropriateness and harmony refer not only to the status of mind and one kind of sphere of a work, but also to the concrete technical requirements of calligraphy (**Figure 39**). The status of mind, while practicing a work, will influence the handling of brush and furthermore the quality of dots and lines, compositions of characters, or even a paragraph and a whole work. There are other factors influencing on the quality of dots and lines, such as inborn nature, selection of learning samples, occasionally individual preference and emotions and so forth. Following one's inborn nature, i.e. taking the law from his own, will be unfolded later on when discussing the idea from Taoism to the calligraphy practices of the Song Dynasty. Emotion, which is an important aspect in Tang calligraphic treatises and not a typical topic from the perspectives of Confucianism or Taoism, will be discussed in the future since it is a pure aesthetic subject.

### § 5.3 Application of the Concept of Change

Sun Guoting held that there was a significant difference between ancient and modern calligraphies, because ancient people laid emphasis on substance (zhi 質), whereas modern on

elegance (yan 妍). He suggested, when we assess calligraphy works from ancient and modern times, we should not appreciate ancient and depreciate modern. The judging criteria were connected to varied aesthetic standpoints, which relied upon the law of change. The key point is the role of the concept of change; the aesthetic notions are susceptible to change from ancient to modern times.

In Zhang Huaiguan's view, the current stylistic forms appeared to be too vulgar and licentious. As a connoisseur and counselor of imperial collection of painting and calligraphy (Hanlin gong feng 翰林供奉), Zhang proposed to his emperor that the stylistic form of calligraphy should return to plain, a status of substance similar as Sun Guoting advocated. This notion was directing at the tendency of Zhang's times. When Zhang praised the contribution of Zhang Zhi (?-192), Wang Xizhi (303-361) and Wang Xianzhi (344-386) to the calligraphy history, he always emphasized that they had broken away from conventional techniques and formed a new stylistic form with innovations. This praise was objective, because these three calligraphers introduced new formative styles and therefore were dominant throughout the calligraphy history.

The concept of change is the core point of the thoughts of *Yi Jing*. The development of trigrams and hexagrams depends on the changing concept, "the end of any development usually gives rise to changes, changes open ways for development, and continuous development can of course last long 易窮則變, 變則通, 通則久."<sup>262</sup> Change hence becomes the key point of Chinese culture; daily renewal could lead to the boundless virtue 日新之謂盛德 in Confucian thought.<sup>263</sup>

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<sup>262</sup> Zhang, and Fu trans., *The Zhou Book of Change*, 413.

<sup>263</sup> Kong Yingda annot., *Zhouyi zhengyi*, 319.

The development of calligraphy demonstrates that elegance (wen 文) and substance (zhi 質) alternated conservatism (tradition) and creativity (modern) as well. Calligraphy developed with the ways of changing. In the Tang Dynasty Sun Guoting and Zhang Huaiguan had already elucidated to this phenomenon: in Song Dynasty (960-1279) the works by Mi Fu 米芾 (1051-1107) seemed to be more traditional in techniques (**Figure 37**), on the contrary Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037-1101) was more flexible and free handled with following his inborn nature (**Figure 36**). Huang Tingjian (1045-1105), as Su Shi's follower, inherited the techniques from Su Shi and developed a wild handling method for brush employment, i.e. long spears and halberds (chang qian da ji 長槍大戟). Huang's style has influenced subsequent calligraphers, such as Wen Zhengming 文徵明 (1470-1559) (**Figure 42**) and Zhang Daqian 張大千 (1899-1983) (**Figure 49**). Similar to Mi Fu, Zhao Mengfu 趙孟頫 (1254-1322) (**Figure 41**) and Dong Qichang 董其昌 (1555—1636) (**Figure 44**) also kept relatively close to Wang Xizhi and Wang Xianzhi in traditional forms.

With the maturity of bronze and epigraphy school 金石學 in Qian Jia 乾嘉 times (1736-1796, 1796-1820), stele school 碑學 had appeal to literati and calligraphers. Thus, the traditional rubbing school 帖學 was fading and more and more calligraphers attached increased importance to the inscriptions of steles. People call this change the Stele School Movement 碑學運動 in the calligraphy history. Kang Youwei 康有為 (1858-1927) was a representative calligrapher, who advocated stele study (**Figure 48**), following Bao Shichen 包世臣 (1775-1855) and Ruan Yuan 阮元 (1764-1849). In Kang's viewpoint, Wei steles 魏碑 enjoyed a perfect position with highly appraisal (**Figure 11**).

“There are no dissatisfying works in Wei steles. Although some statues come from far away villages, they are still full of hard feeling and their fluctuated lines have skeleton and blood.

There are variable postures in addition to clumsily and thick. Their structures are also extraordinary tight. Are Jin's calligraphy only the stylistic canon? How exquisite Wei steles are! ”

魏碑無不佳者，雖窮鄉兒女造像，而骨血峻宕，拙厚中皆有異態，構字亦緊密非常，豈與晉世皆當書之會邪？何其工也！<sup>264</sup>

The calligraphy since from middle of Qing (ca. 1736) to Mingguo (1911-1949) tends to be different from traditional orthodox, because calligraphers during these times wrote works not in conventional way as traditional rubbings stipulated but simulated the forms of steles or epitaphs. They preferred to get inspiration from the inscriptions of stele and epitaphs, whose styles are relatively more attractive than conservative rubbings. In addition to Wei steles, the inscriptions of oracle bone (**Figure 5**) and bronze ware (**Figure 6**) became the objects to learn as well.

The development of rubbing school demonstrates calligraphy changed with the times based on inheritance of conventional orthodox, as does the transition from rubbing school to steles.

#### § 5.4 Taking the Law from Nature and Calligraphy from late Tang to Song

To take the law from nature for paintings is understandable, because paintings should correspond to the object, which means the depicting of forms of nature (ying wu xiang xing 應物象形).<sup>265</sup> However, for calligraphy one cannot directly follow the example of nature to depict its objects similar as nature or paintings. What Sun Guoting explained: “Calligraphy has sublime existence same as nature, which can be reached in a natural way but not in forced

<sup>264</sup> Kang Youwei 康有為 (1858-1927), *Guan yizhou shuangji* 廣藝舟雙楫 (Qing Guangxu keben 清光緒刻本), vol. 4.

<sup>265</sup> See William R.B. Acker, *Some Tang and Pre-Tang Texts on Chinese Painting* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1954), 148.

同自然之妙有，非力運之能成，”<sup>266</sup> it implies that writing calligraphy is a kind of natural practicing. In order to elucidate various forms of dots and lines, such as difference 異, marvels 奇, postures 資, attitudes 態, power 勢 and shapes 形, as noted before, he used many metaphors:

suspended needle (xuan zhen 懸針), hanging dewdrop (chui lu 垂露), rolling thunder (ben lei 奔雷), toppling rocks (zhui shi 墜石), flying wild geese (hong fei 鴻飛), frightened beasts (shou hei 獸駭), dancing phoenixes (luan wu 鸞舞), startled snakes (she jing 蛇驚), sheer cliffs (jue an 絕岸) and crumbling peaks (tui feng 頽峰) and so on.<sup>267</sup>

In the view of Zhang Huaiguan, calligraphy had the characteristics of nature, and nothing could limit it. He attached great importance to the application of Neo-Taoism to calligraphy using the concepts of Non-existence (wu 無) and Inactivity (wu wei 無為): calligraphy is a kind of sound of silence and appearance of intangibility 無聲之音, 無形之相.

Taoism was the thought source of methodology in terms of calligraphy development of technique and spheres of work. However, this kind of methodology is too abstract to calligraphers. Sun Guoting’s calligraphy work *Shu Pu*, a historical cursive script, demonstrates surely some kinds of marvels, postures, attitudes, power and shapes, to some extent. Nevertheless, how to take the law from nature is still an open topic for the practicing of calligraphy. What a pity it is that Zhang Huaiguan had no calligraphic works handed down

<sup>266</sup> Chang, and Frankel translated: “These are the same as the subtle mysteries of nature; they cannot be forced”, which is not sufficient to understand the whole meaning, so that I translated by myself as seen above. See Chang, and Frankel, *Two Chinese Treatises on Calligraphy*, 3.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid.

today in spite of his splendid and marvelous interpretations on calligraphy from the perspectives of Taoism.

The methodology of Taoism indeed objected to the constraints in traditional techniques. Another calligraphic theorist Dou Ji 竇景 (? -787) at the height of Tang developed this kind of notions to an apex, he emphasized freedom in general and criticized rigid regulations such as from Ouyang Xun (557-641) and Yu Shinan (558-638).

Therefore, the important meaning to be taken from the following of nature is the breaking away from fixed conventional techniques. The notion of nature had no big influence on calligraphic practice until late Tang and Song. For instance, Liu Gongquan (778-865), who was famous for his regular script, as one of four calligraphers for regular script, wrote running script freely and did not conform to constraint of techniques rigidly (**Figure 31**), compared to his regular script. Yang Ningshi 楊凝式 (873-954), a calligrapher lived Late Tang, who was commonly called a crazy man (Yang Fengzi 楊風子), wrote a kind of creative chirography (**Figure 32**) by following his own inborn nature.<sup>268</sup> Compared to the typical style of rigorous and precise techniques at the beginning or middle of Tang, Yang Ningshi's works seems to be more relaxed, looser and more natural. Starting from late Tang a natural way in following inborn nature instead of rigid techniques became more attractive.

Liang Yan 梁巘 (1710-1788), a calligraphy theorist in the Qing Dynasty, wrote:

“Calligraphers in Jin advocates vitality, in Tang techniques, in Song artistic idea (naturalness) and Yuan and Ming form and structure.”

<sup>268</sup> Zhu Guantian 朱關田, *Chinese Calligraphy History: Sui, Tang and Wudai* 中國書法史: 隋唐五代卷, (Nanjing: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe, 1999), 283.

晉人尚韻, 唐人尚法, 宋人尚意, 元明尚態.<sup>269</sup>

This statement has been accepted widely and extensively. There was a transition from “advocating techniques” (shang fa 尚法) in Tang to “respect for the idea” (shang yi 尚意) in Song. For example, Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037-1101) disregarded traditional techniques, advocated creativity, the inborn nature and marvelous status (ru shen 入神).<sup>270</sup> He stated:

In spite of that my calligraphy seems not be prominent, but it comes up with my new idea (spontaneity), not following the footsteps of the ancients. This is a delightful thing.<sup>271</sup>

吾書雖不甚佳, 然自出新意, 不踐古人, 是一快也.<sup>272</sup>

Although I do not excel in calligraphy,

no one better understand it better than I.

If one can apprehend the idea (of calligraphy),

Ignorance (of brush method) is permissible.<sup>273</sup>

吾雖不善書, 曉書莫如我.

苟能通其意, 常謂不可學.<sup>274</sup>

<sup>269</sup> See Liang Yan (1710-1788), “Ping Shu Tie,” in Gui Dizi trans. and annot., *Early Qing Calligraphy Treatise*, 176.

<sup>270</sup> Cao Baolin 曹寶麟, *Chinese Calligraphy History: Song, Liao and Jin* 中國書法史: 宋遼金卷 (Nanking: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe, 1999), 110-29.

<sup>271</sup> Translation adapted from Thomas E. Smith in “an Examination of Zhao Mengfu’s Sutra on the Lotus of the Sublime Dharma (Miaofa lianhua jing) in Small Standar Script,” in Michael Knight and Joseph Z. Chang ed., *Out of Character: Decoding Chinese Calligraphy* (Guanyuan Shanzhuang Press/ Los Altos Hills, California, 2014) p78.

<sup>272</sup> Ye Mengde 葉夢得 (1077-1148), *Shilin yanyu* 石林燕語 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984), vol.8.

<sup>273</sup> Bai Qianshen, “Fu Shan and the Transformation of Chinese Calligraphy in the Seventeenth Century” (Ph. D. diss., Yale University, 1996), 276.

<sup>274</sup> Su Shi 蘇軾, *Complementary Set of Su Wenzhonggong* 蘇文忠公全集 (Ming chenghua ben 明成化本), vol. 1.

Su Shi regarded the creative artistic idea and inborn nature as of great importance. His work demonstrates one kind of spiritual vitality but doesn't conform to rigorous, rigid and fixed techniques. On the contrary, dots and lines, structure of characters and whole works are flexible when following the spontaneity and occasionality (**Figure 36**). Su Shi played a key role in calligraphy in the Song Dynasty, due to his historical position in culture and calligraphy. One viewpoint to think that Dong Qichang's theory of rawness (sheng 生) and Fu Shan's awkwardness (zhuo 拙) "can be safely traced, at the earliest, back to Song Dynasty," such as Su Shi, because Dong and Fu had "the similar theoretical ground: the avoidance of skillfulness as a way to achieve naturalness."<sup>275</sup> Whereas, I argue that we can trace the thought sources of Su Shi's concept "respect for idea" in Zhang Huaiguan's calligraphy theories. Zhang Huaiguan resisted the conventional skillfulness and advocated writing in a natural way and upon following one's innate nature, which was a beginning for the ideological trend "respect for idea".

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<sup>275</sup> Bai Qianshen, "Fu Shan and the Transformation of Chinese Calligraphy in the Seventeenth Century", 275-6.

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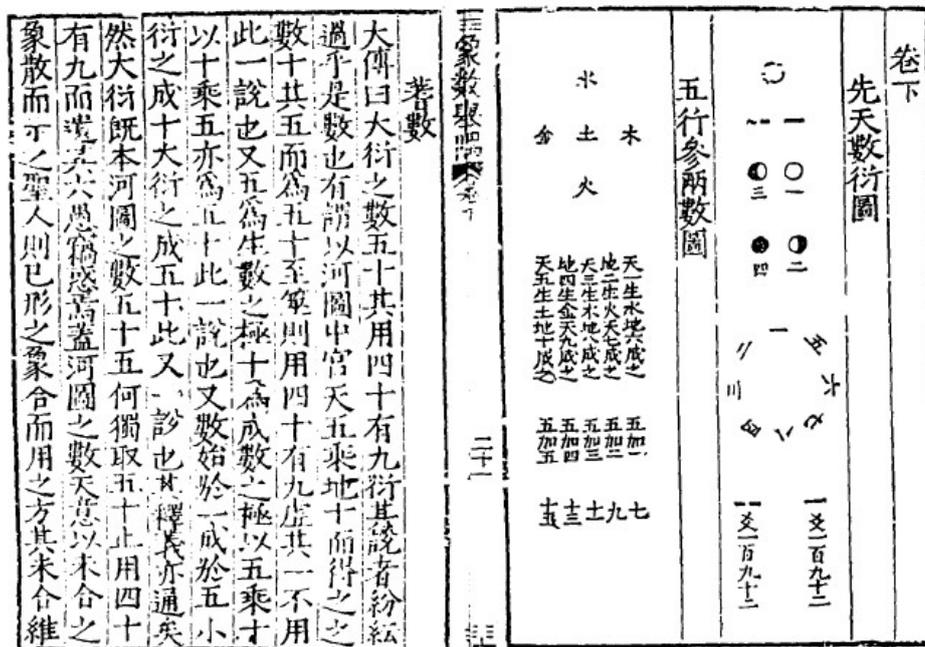
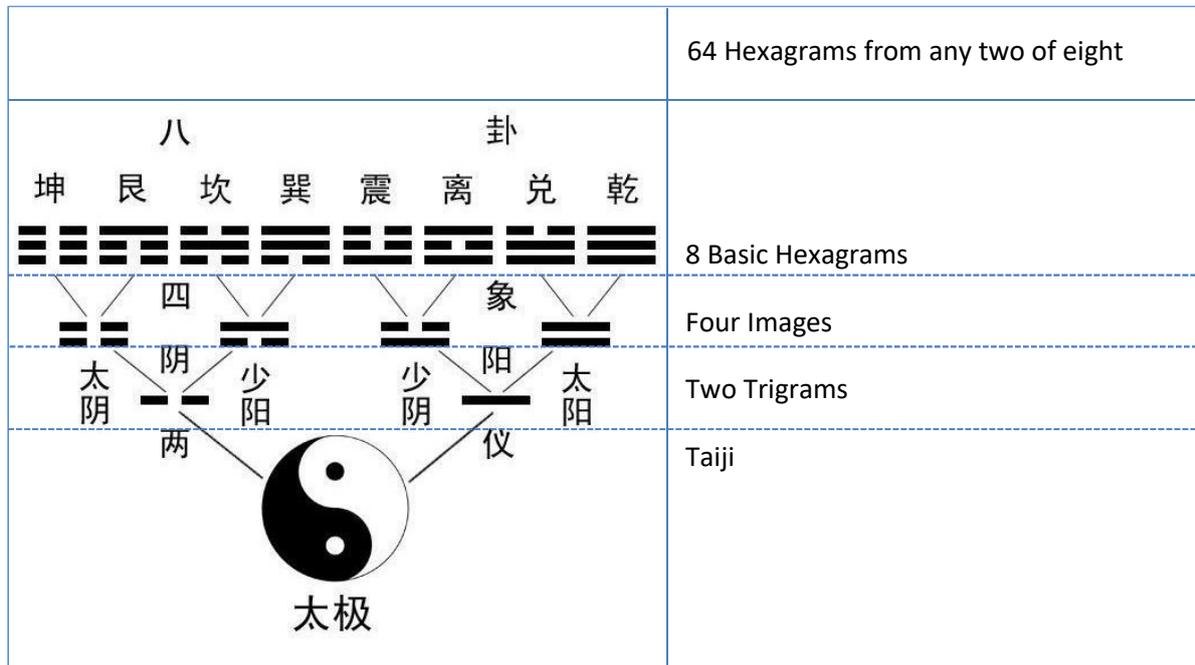
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Wang Jing 汪敬 (active in Jiaqing 1796-1820). *Yixue Xiangshu juyu* 易學象數舉隅. Xuxiu sikuquanshu 續修四庫全書: Jingbu Yilei 經部易類, p351.

**Figure 2 Hexagrams in Numbers.**

Above: Trigrams and Hexagrams from Shang and Zhou. Below: Chinese ancient number characters.

1 ☰	2 ☱	3 ☲	7 ☰☰	8 ☰☰	9 ☰☰	10 ☰☰	11 ☰☰
4 ☱☱	5 ☱☱	6 ☱☱	☱☱	☱☱	☱☱	☱☱	☱☱
☱☱	☱☱	☱☱	☱☱	☱☱	☱☱	☱☱	☱☱

图6 考古发现的商周卦符

- 1, 父戊卣 2, 商方卣 3, 敎父簋 4, 中游父鼎  
 5, 董伯簋 6, 召卣 7, 中卣 8, 殷墟陶器  
 9, 殷墟四盘磨出土 10, 11, 丰镐出土

一 二 三 四 五 (六) 七 八  
 一 二 三 四 五 六 七 八

Zhan Yinxin 詹鄞鑫. *Hanzi Shuolue* 汉字说略.

Shenyang: Liaoning jiaoyu chubanshe, 1991. pp37-38.

Figure 3 64 Hexagrams.

	☰ Qian Heaven	☳ Zhen Thunder	☵ Kan Water	☶ Gen Mountain	☷ Kun Earth	☴ Xun Wind	☲ Li Fire	☱ Dui Lake	
Lower Trigram	☰ Qian Heaven	1	34	5	26	11	9	14	43
	☳ Zhen Thunder	25	51	3	27	24	42	21	17
	☵ Kan Water	6	40	29	4	7	59	64	47
	☶ Gen Mountain	33	62	39	52	15	53	56	31
	☷ Kun Earth	12	16	8	23	2	20	35	45
	☴ Xun Wind	44	32	48	18	46	57	50	28
	☲ Li Fire	13	55	63	22	36	37	30	49
	☱ Dui Lake	10	54	60	41	19	61	38	58

Chih-hsu Ou-i, trans. by Thomas Cleary. *The Buddhist I Ching*.

Boston & London: Shambhala, 1994. p237.

Figure 4 Twelve Xiao Xi Hexagrams.

Solar Terms in 24 Points 二十四節氣	winter begins	snows a bit	snows a lot	winter maximum (solstice)	a bit frigid	most frigid	spring begins	more rain than snow	hibernating insects awaken	spring center (equinox)	clear and bright	wheat rain	summer begins	creatures plentiful	seeding millet	summer maximum	a bit sweltering	most sweltering	autumn begins	heat withdraws	dews	autumn center (equinox)	cold dews	frost		
	立冬	小雪	大雪	冬至	小寒	大寒	立春	雨水	驚蟄	春分	清明	穀雨	立夏	小滿	芒種	夏至	小暑	大暑	立秋	處暑	白露	秋分	寒露	霜降		
Sun's Ecliptical Longitude	225°	240°	255°	270°	285°	300°	315°	330°	345°	0°	15°	30°	45°	60°	75°	90°	105°	120°	135°	150°	165°	180°	195°	210°		
Chinese Month 中国月份	Oct		Nov		Dec		Jan		Feb		Mar		Apr		May		Jun		Jul		Aug		Sep			
Hexagram Name 卦名	Kun 坤		Fu 復		Lin 臨		Tai 泰		Dazhuang 大壯		Guai 夬		Qian 乾		Gou 姤		Dun 遯		Pi 否		Guan 觀		Bo 剝			
Hexagram Symbol 卦象																										

**Figure 5** Inscription of oracle bone Heji 37986.



Ca. 12th Century BCE Rubbing, ca.20 X 5 cm.

Hu Houxuan 胡厚宣 ed. *Jiaguwen heji* 甲骨文合集.

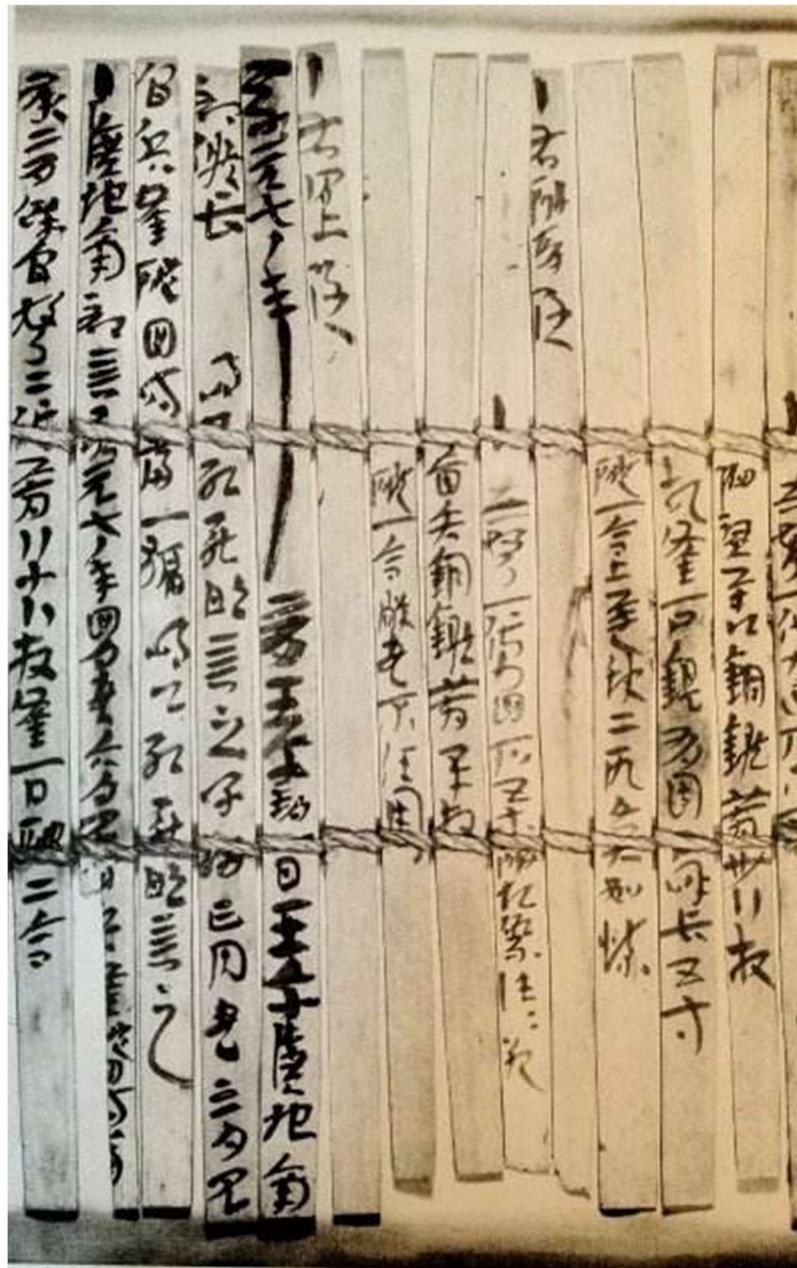
Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982. volume 12, nr. 37986. p4718.

Figure 6 Inscription of bronze ware *Maogong Ding*.



*Maogong Ding* 毛公鼎. Ca. 8th Century BCE. Rubbing. ca. 45 X 25cm. National Museum, Taipei.

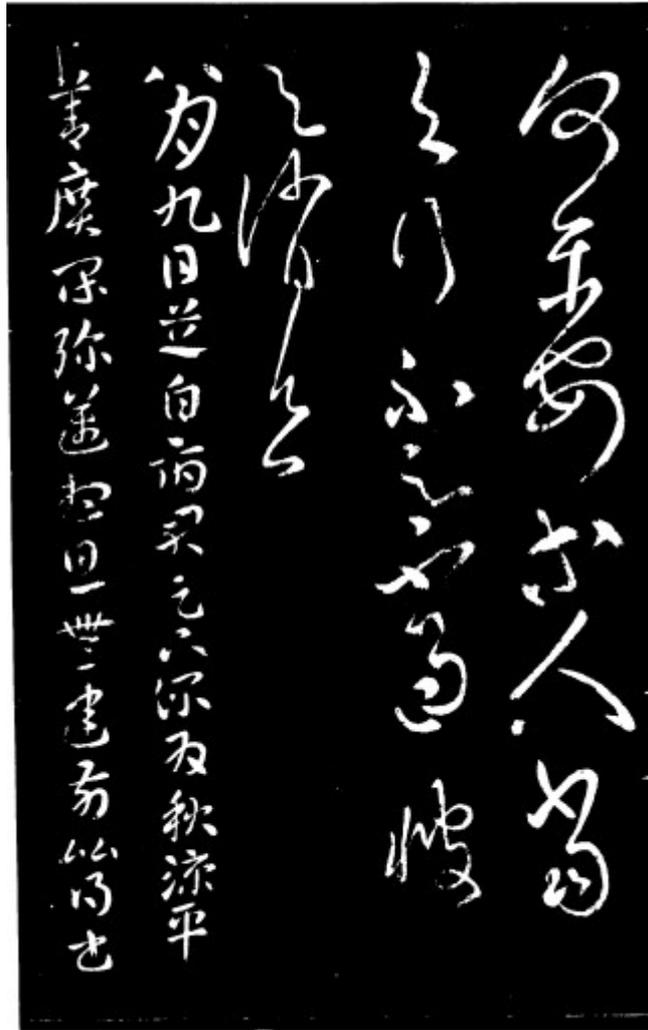
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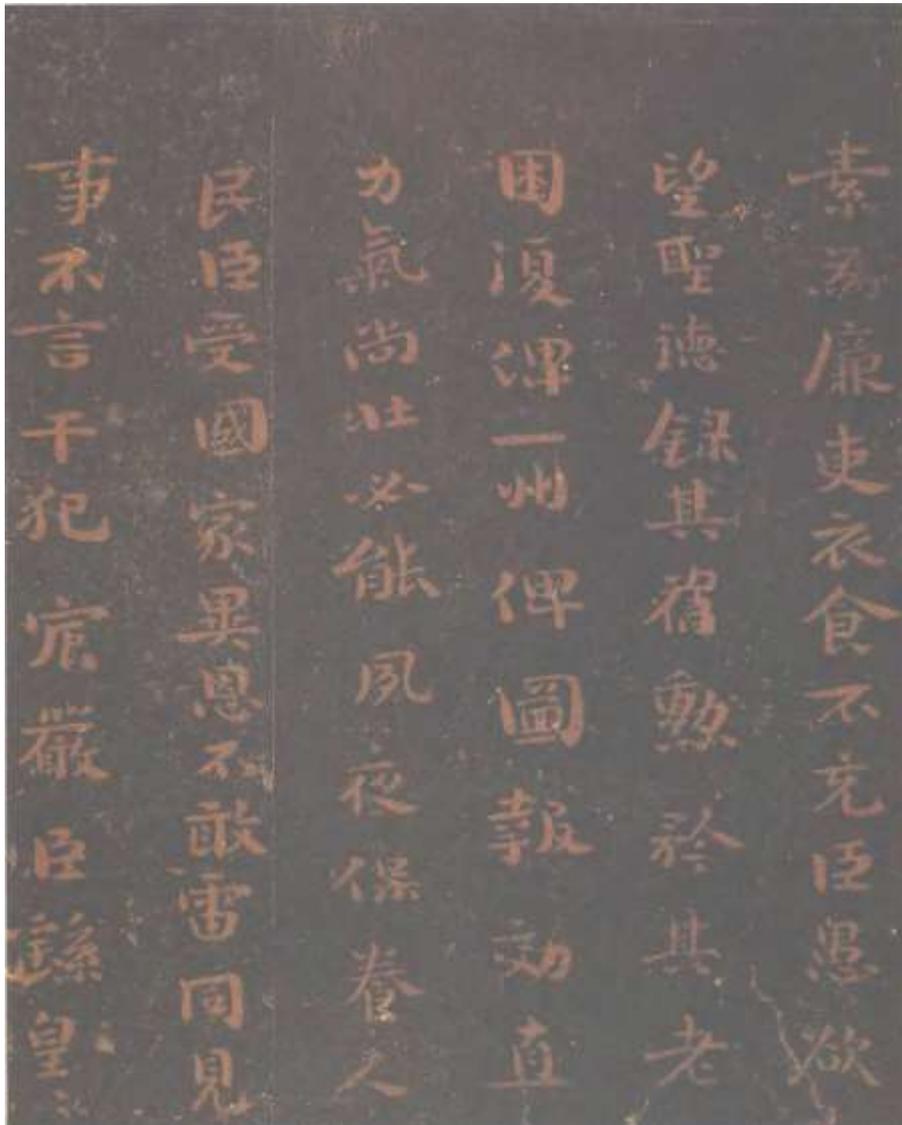
Recording Books for Soldiers and Belongs 兵物簿. A.D. 95. Bamboo Slips. 23 X 1.2cm per slip.

Academia Sinica, Taipei.

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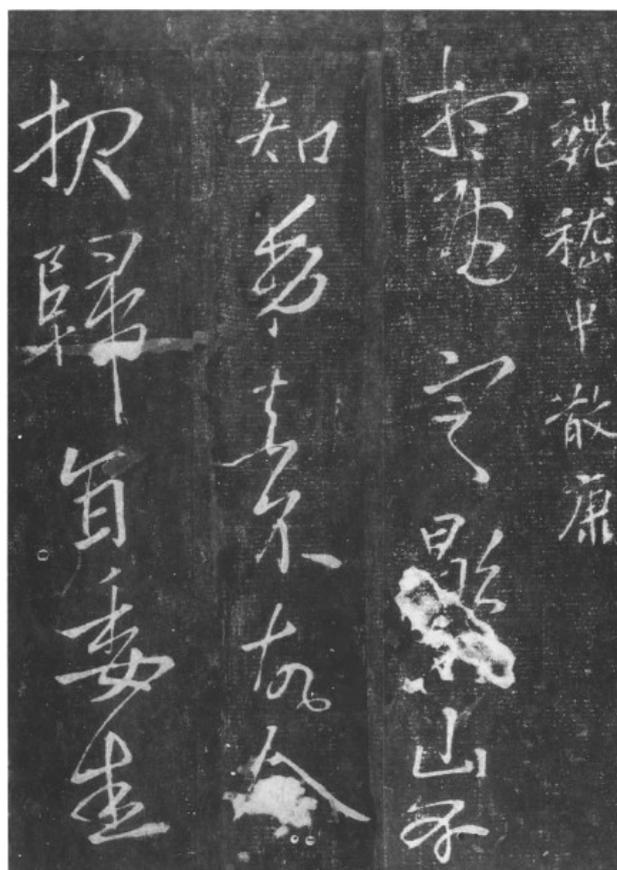


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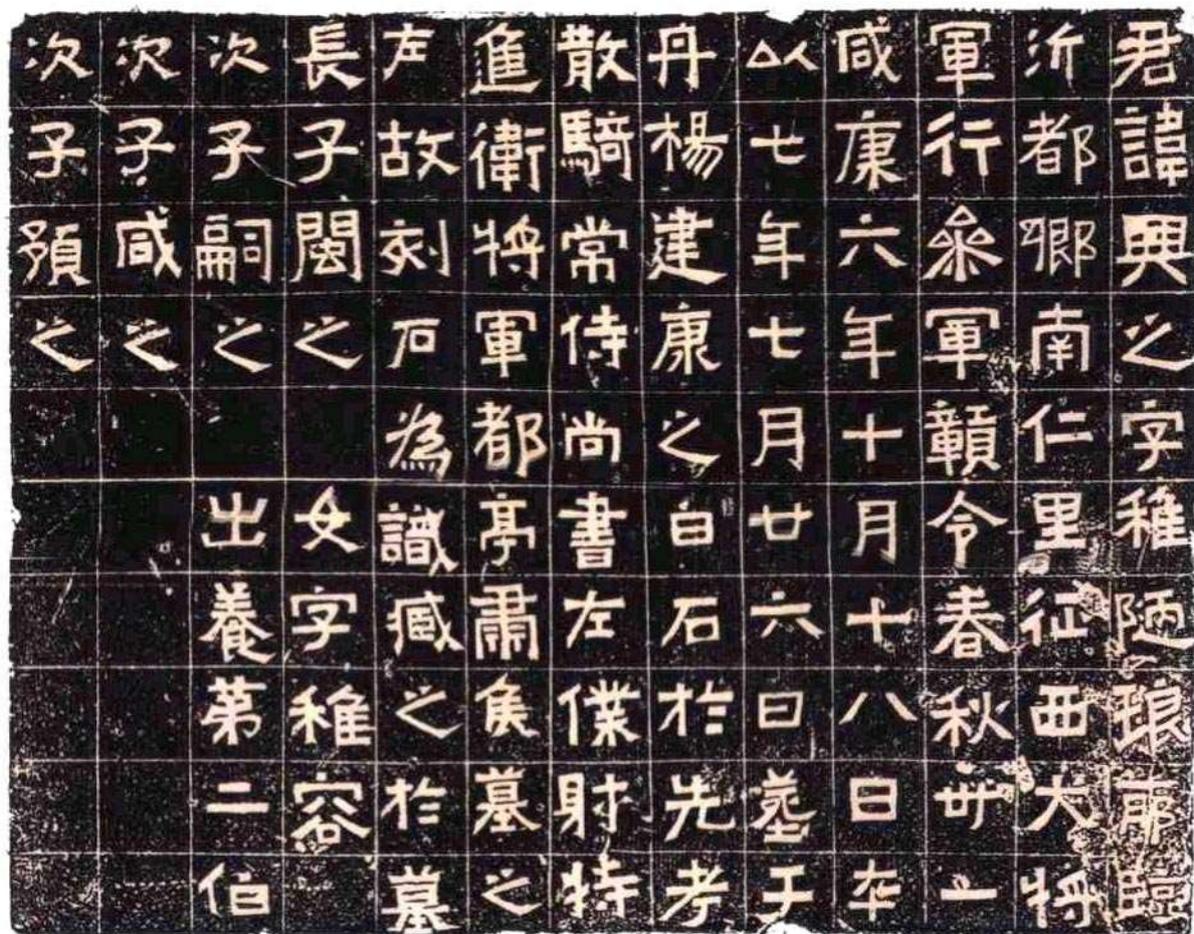
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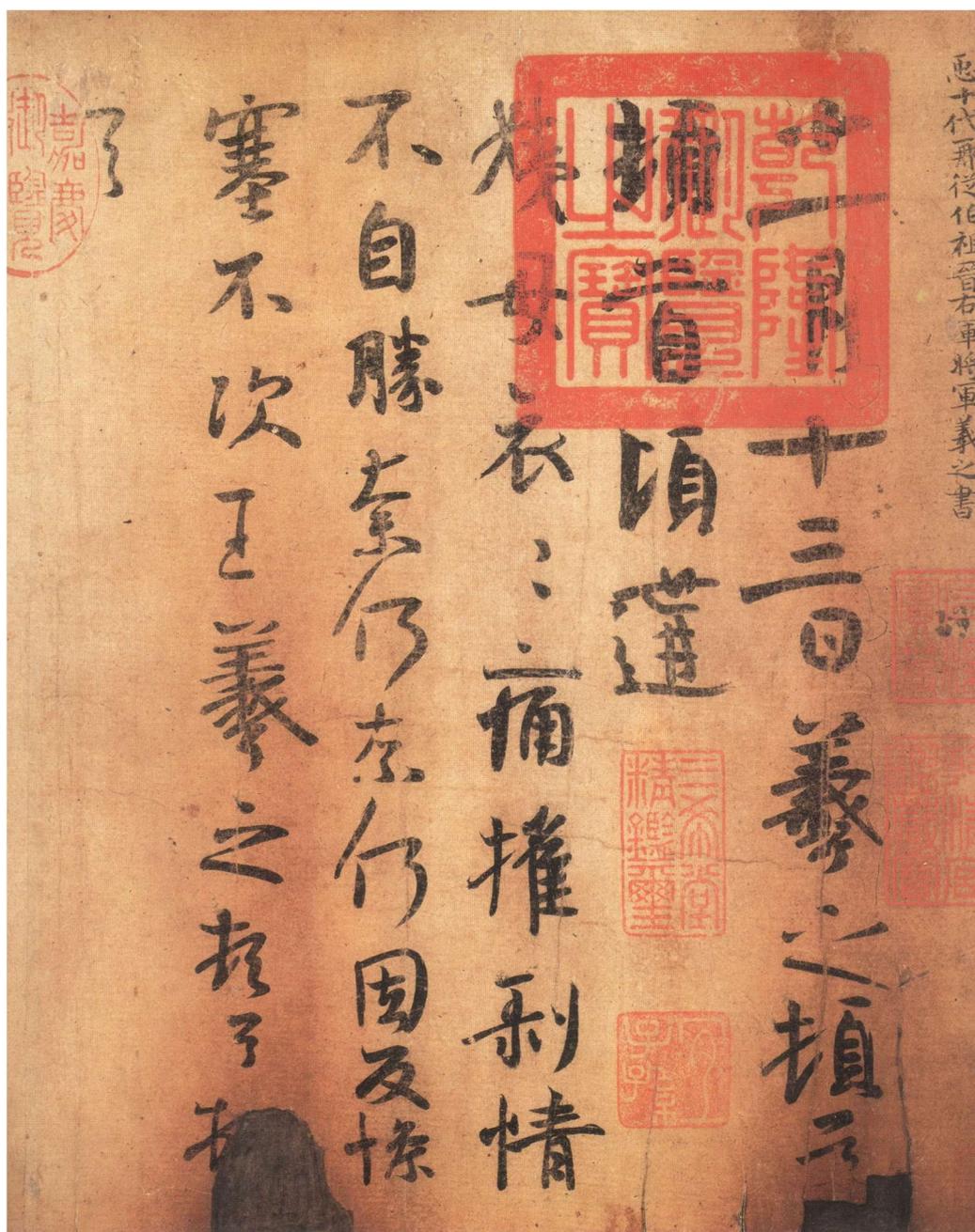


Ji Kang 嵇康, *Xiang yu tie* 想雨帖, detail of the ending section. Rubbing. Gugong Song ta Rutie ben 故宫宋拓汝帖本, Beijing Palace Museum.

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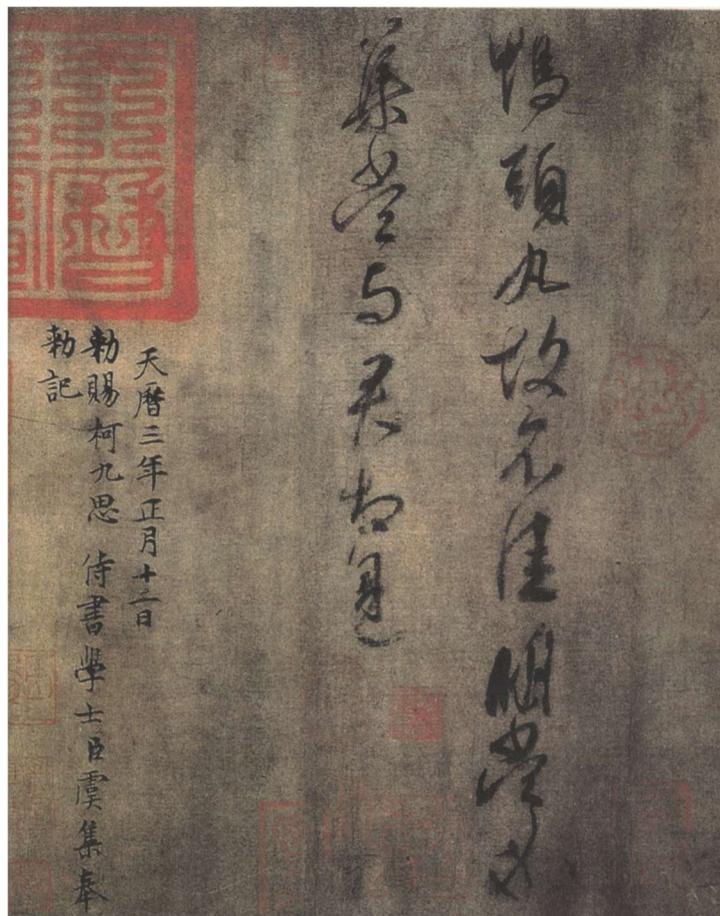
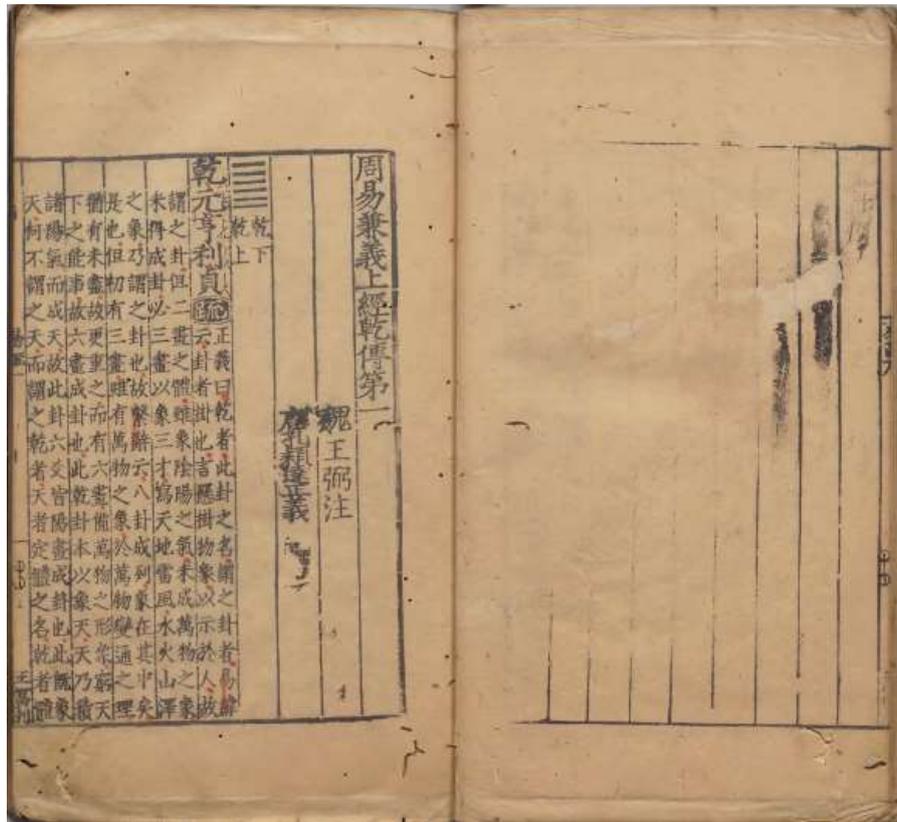
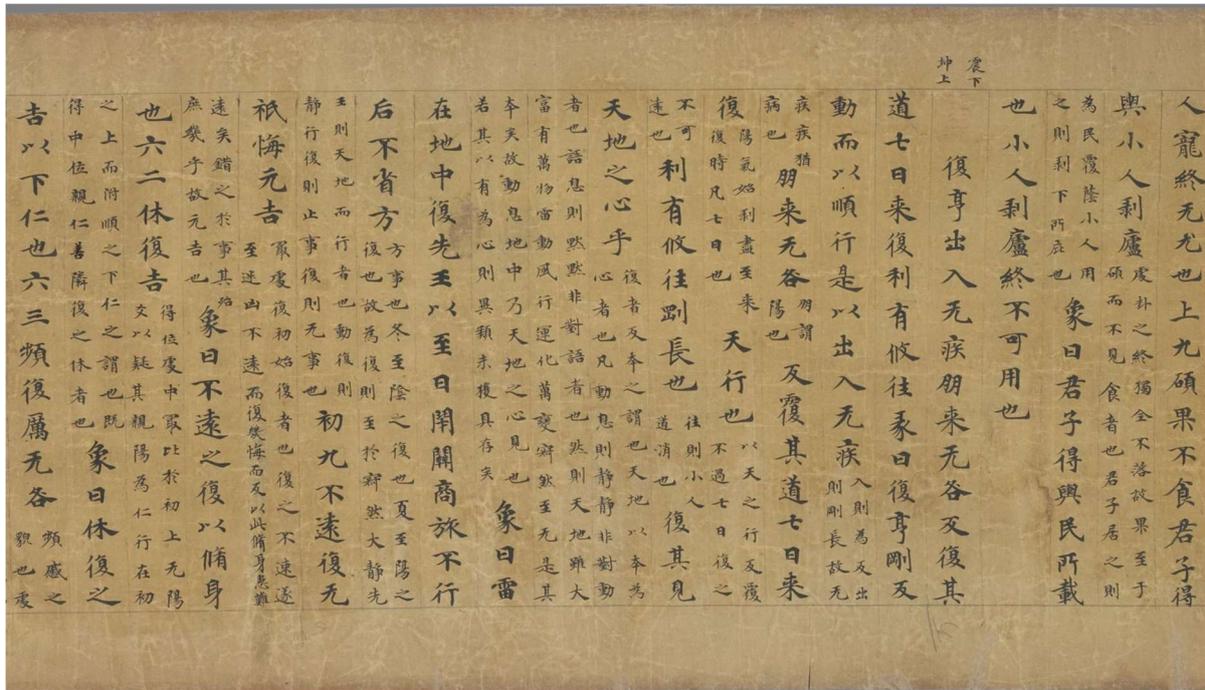
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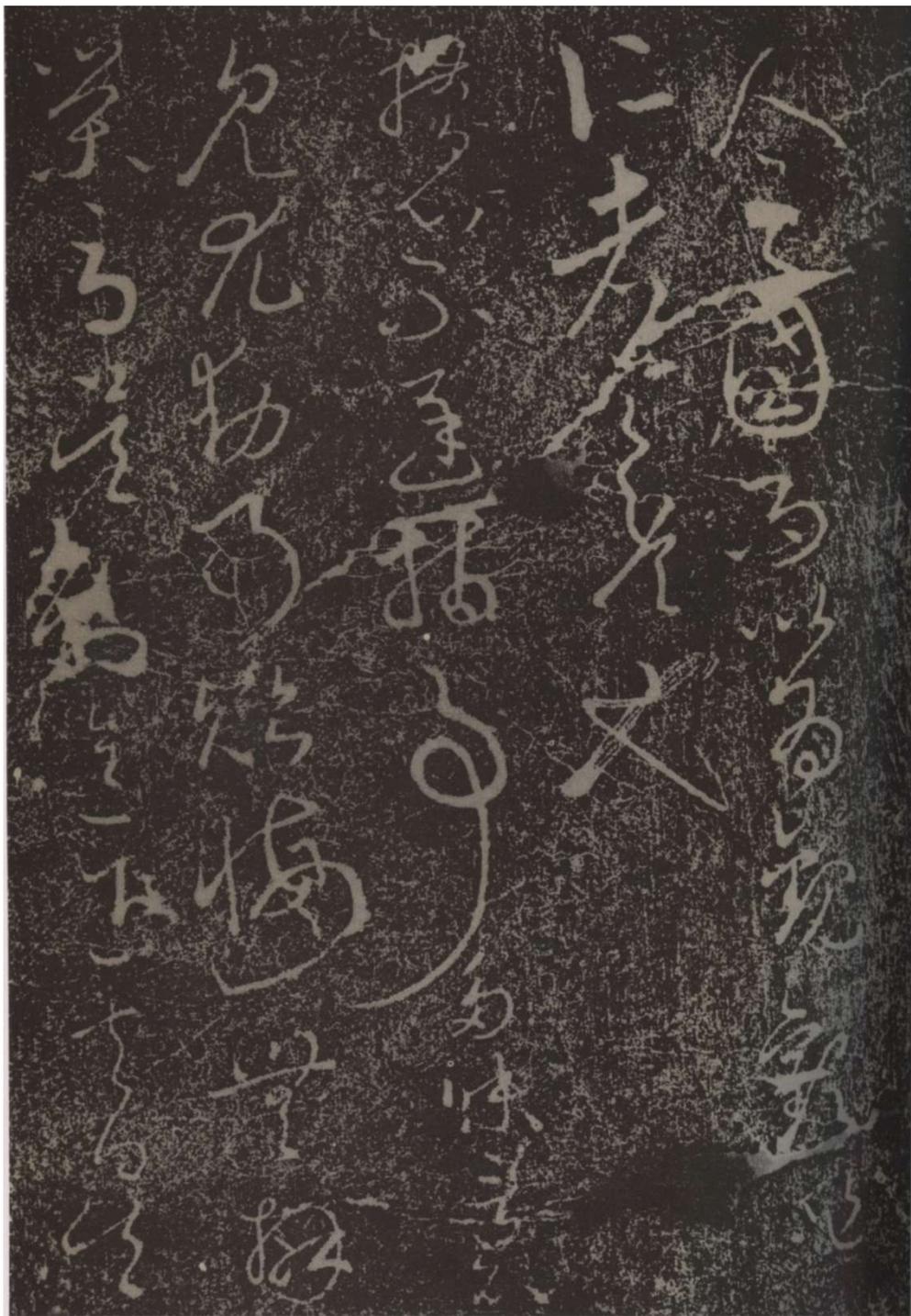
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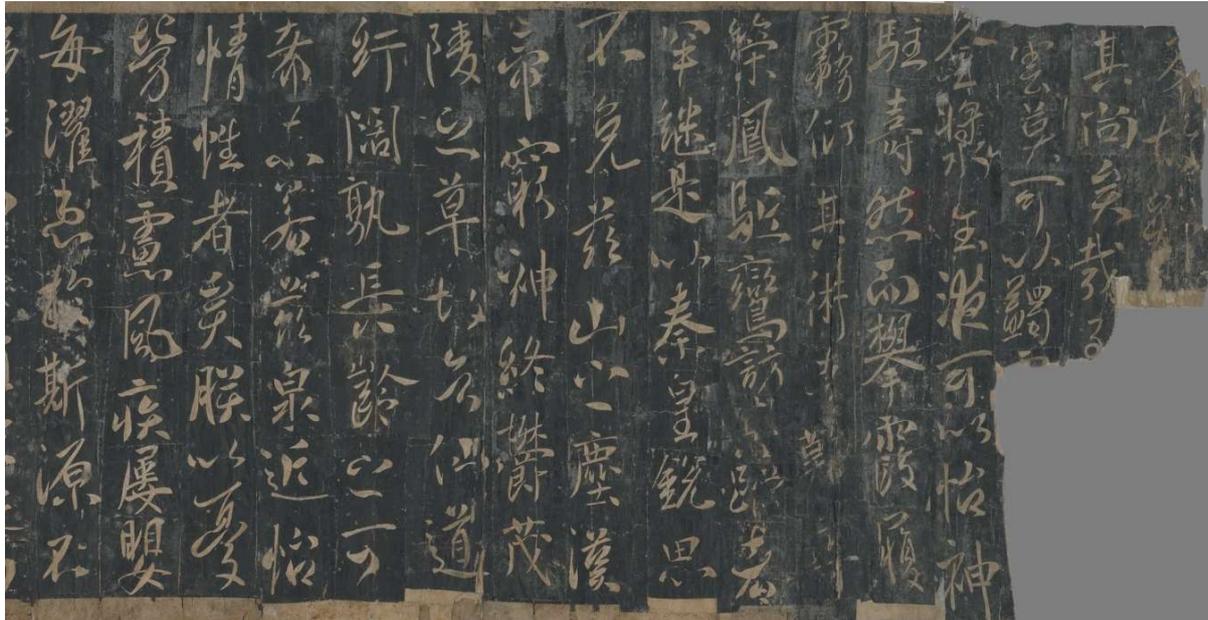


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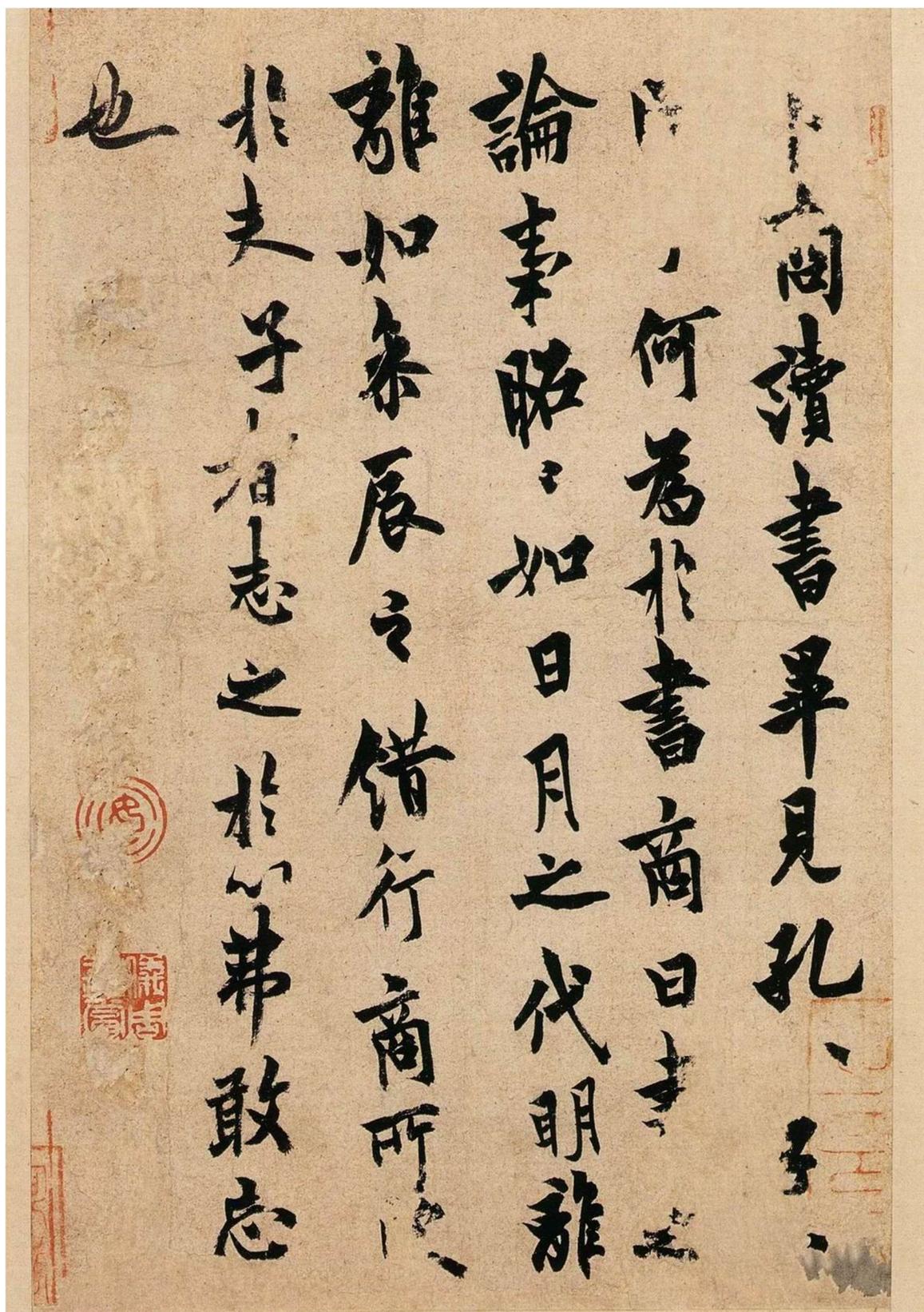


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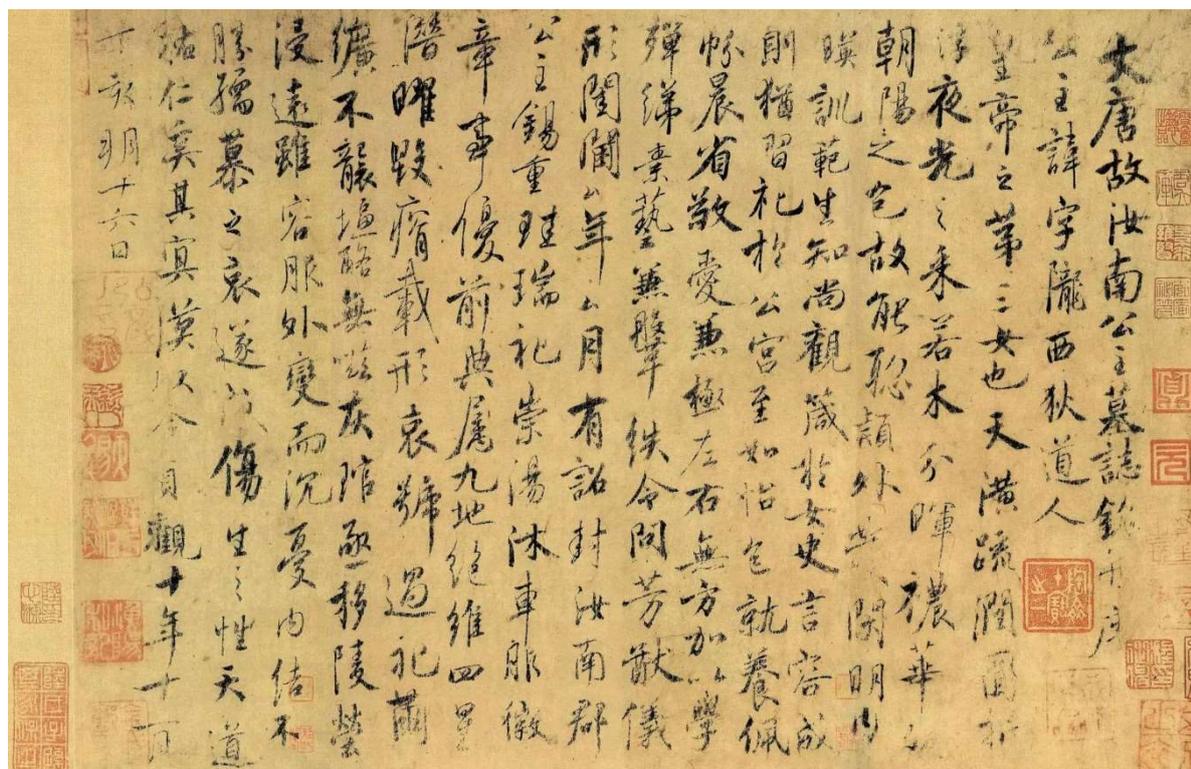
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National Library of France.

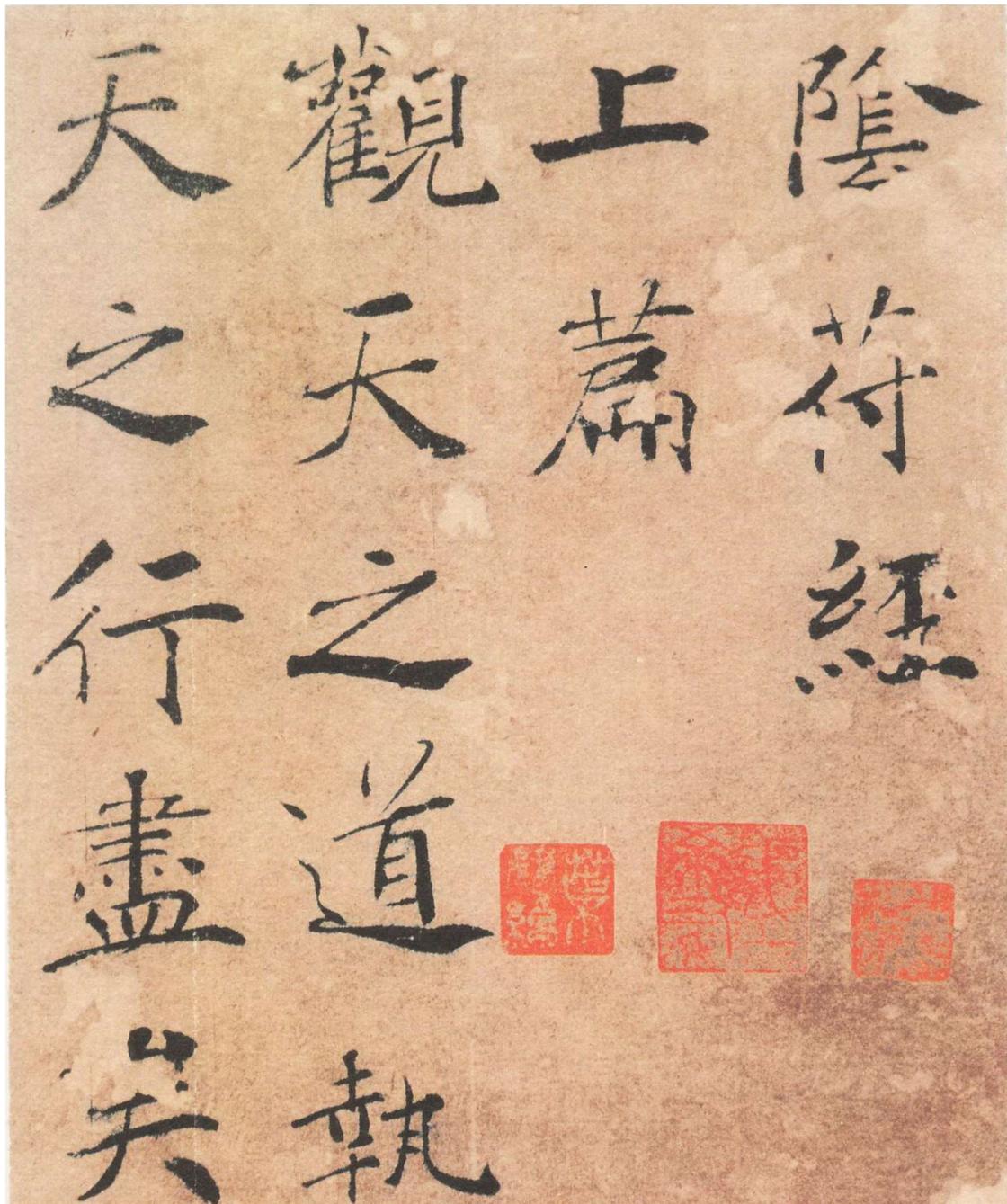
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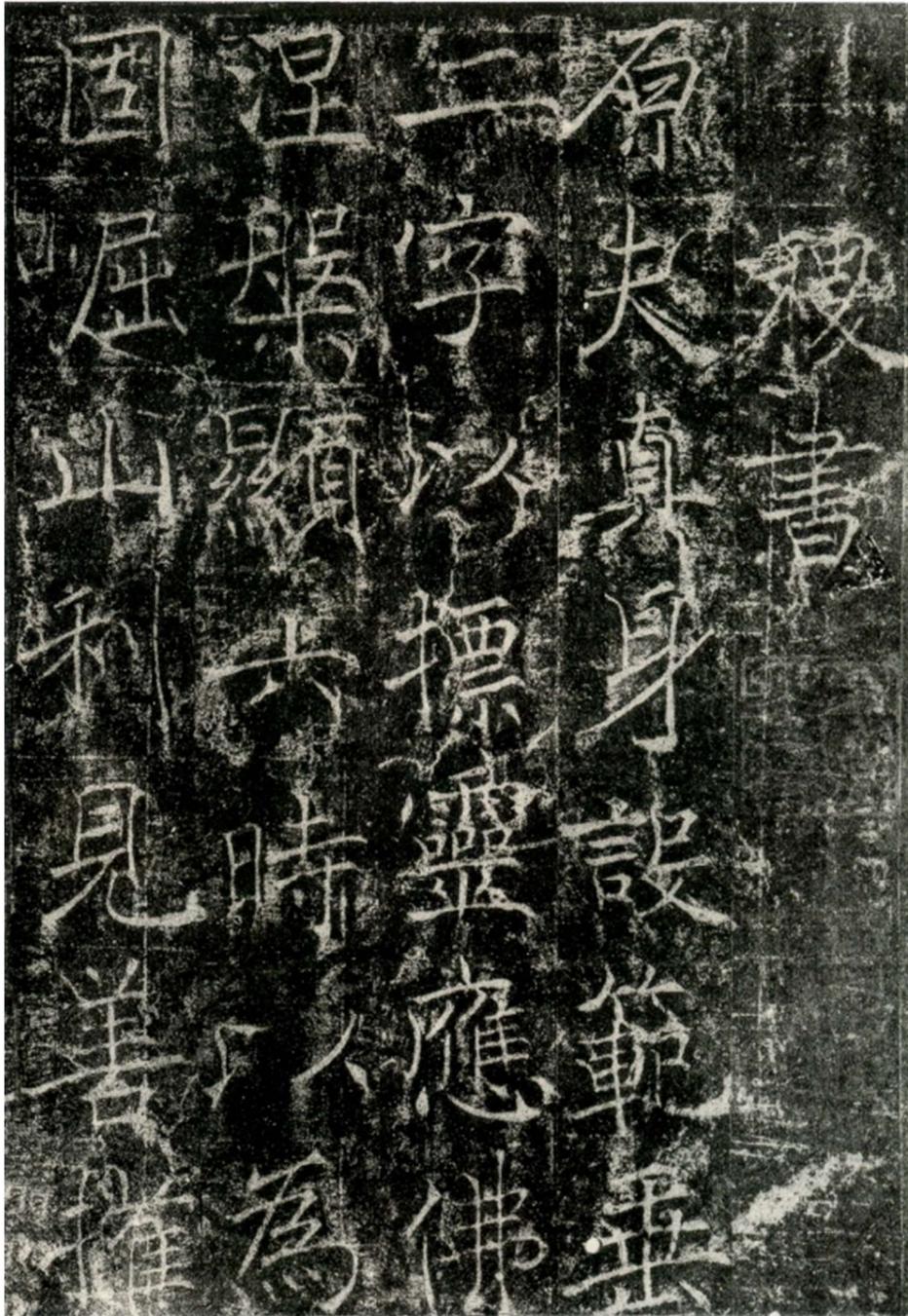
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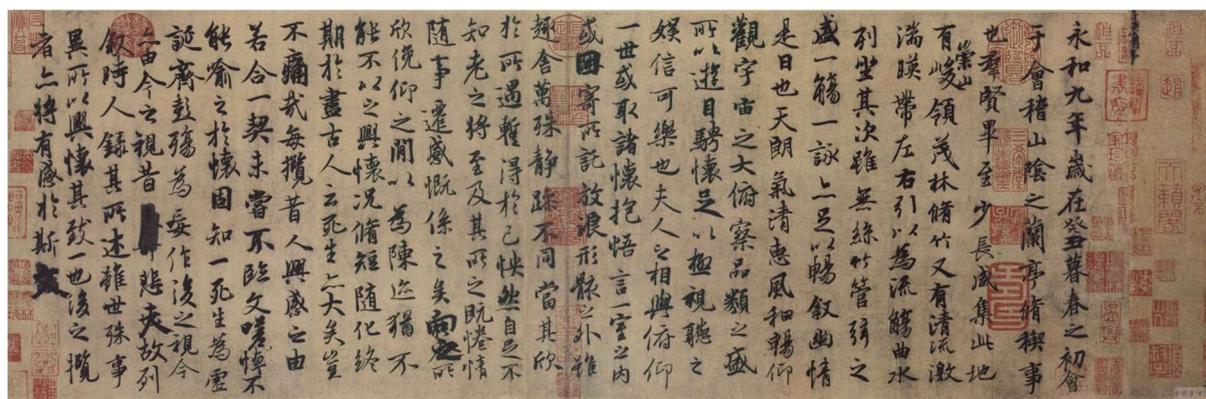
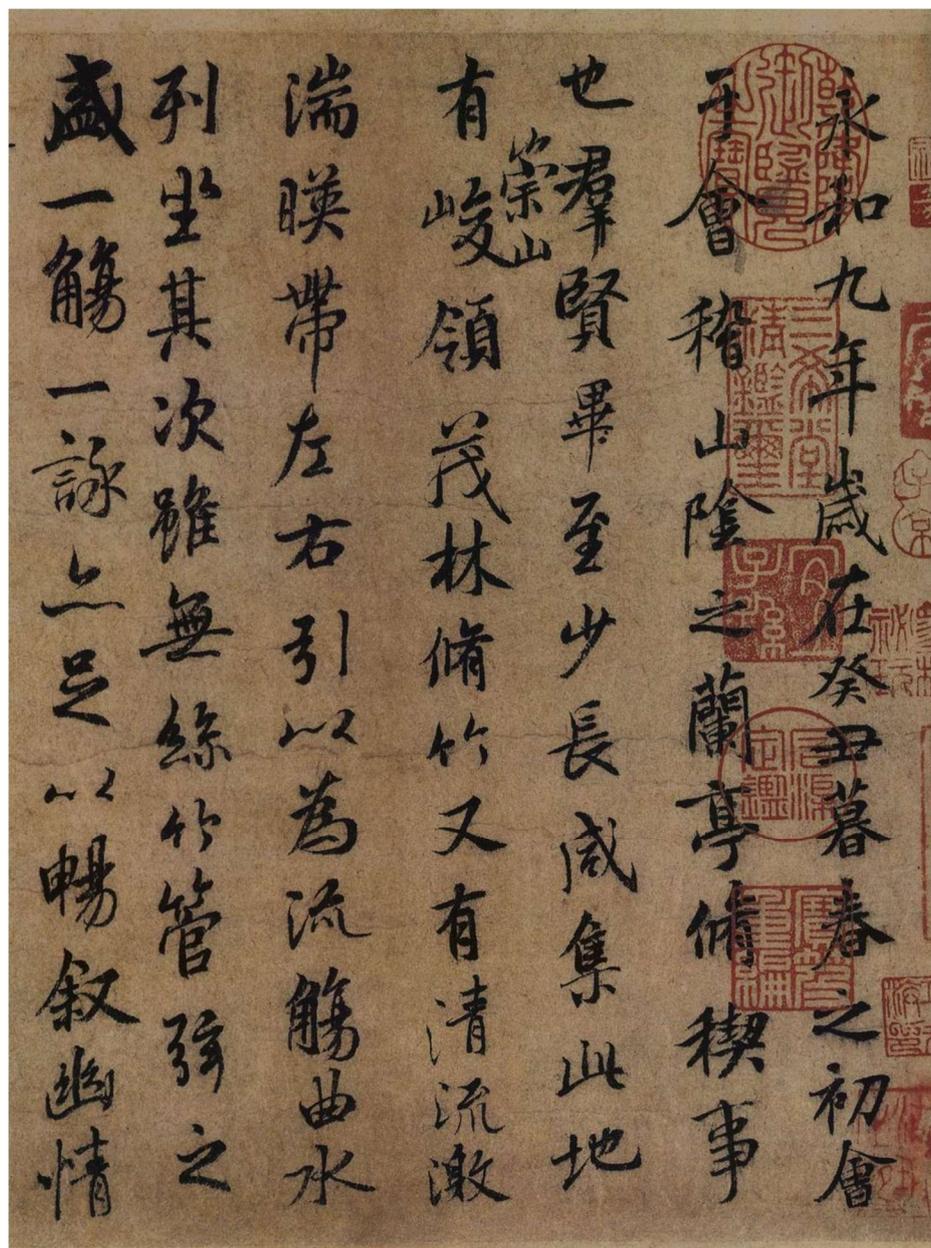
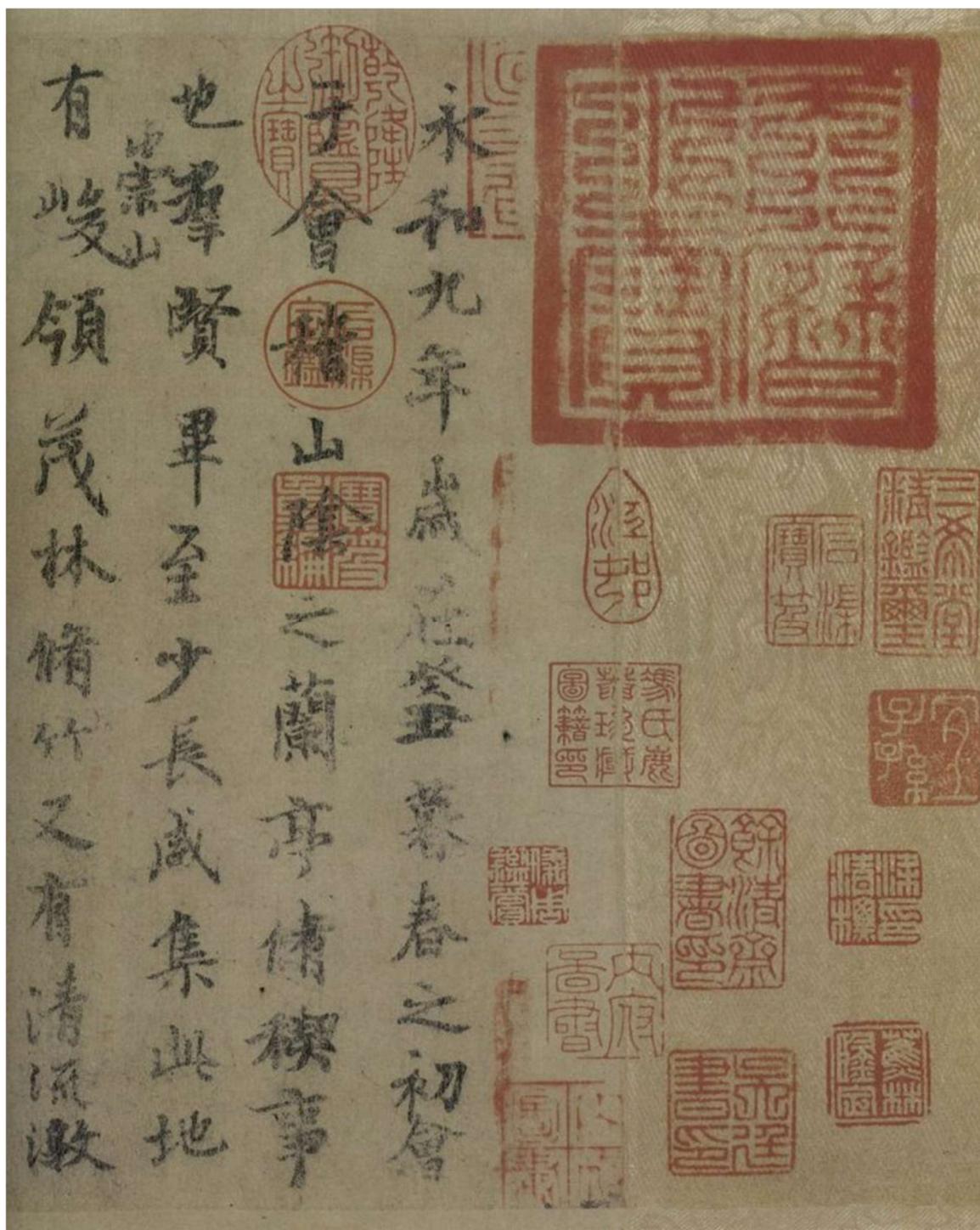
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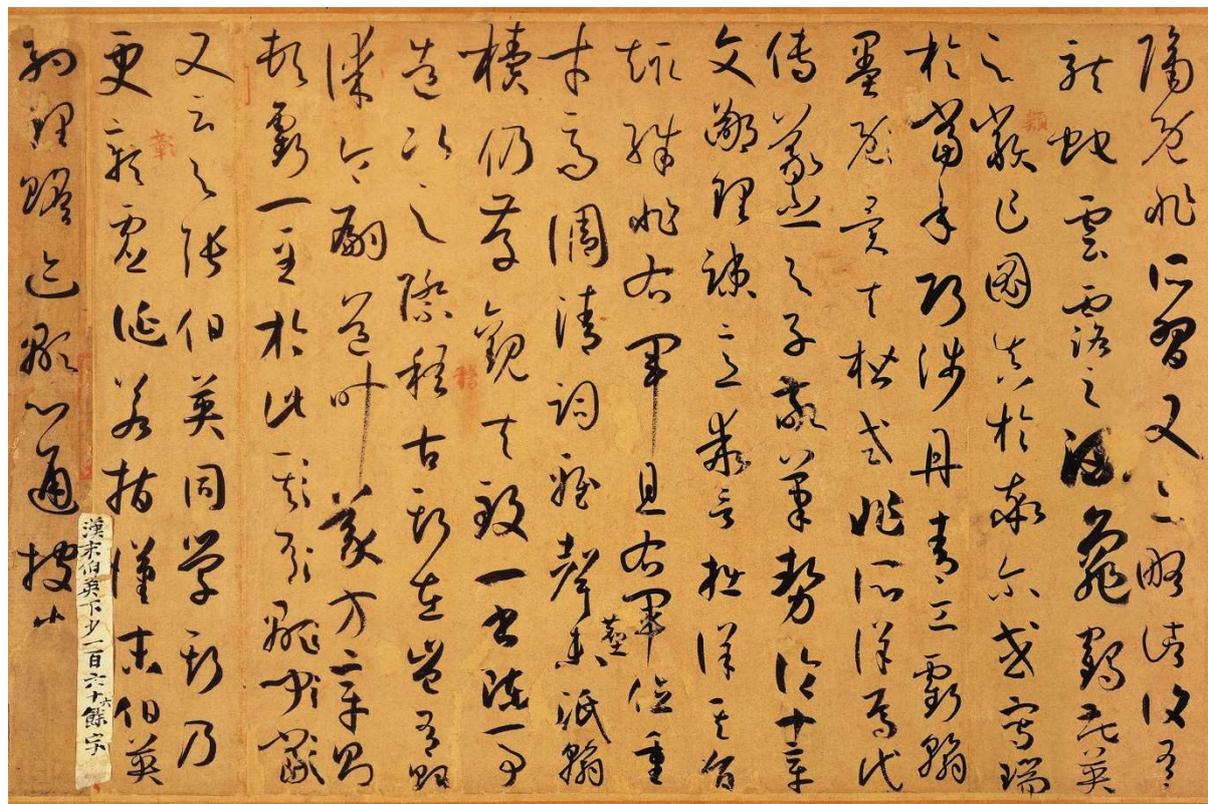
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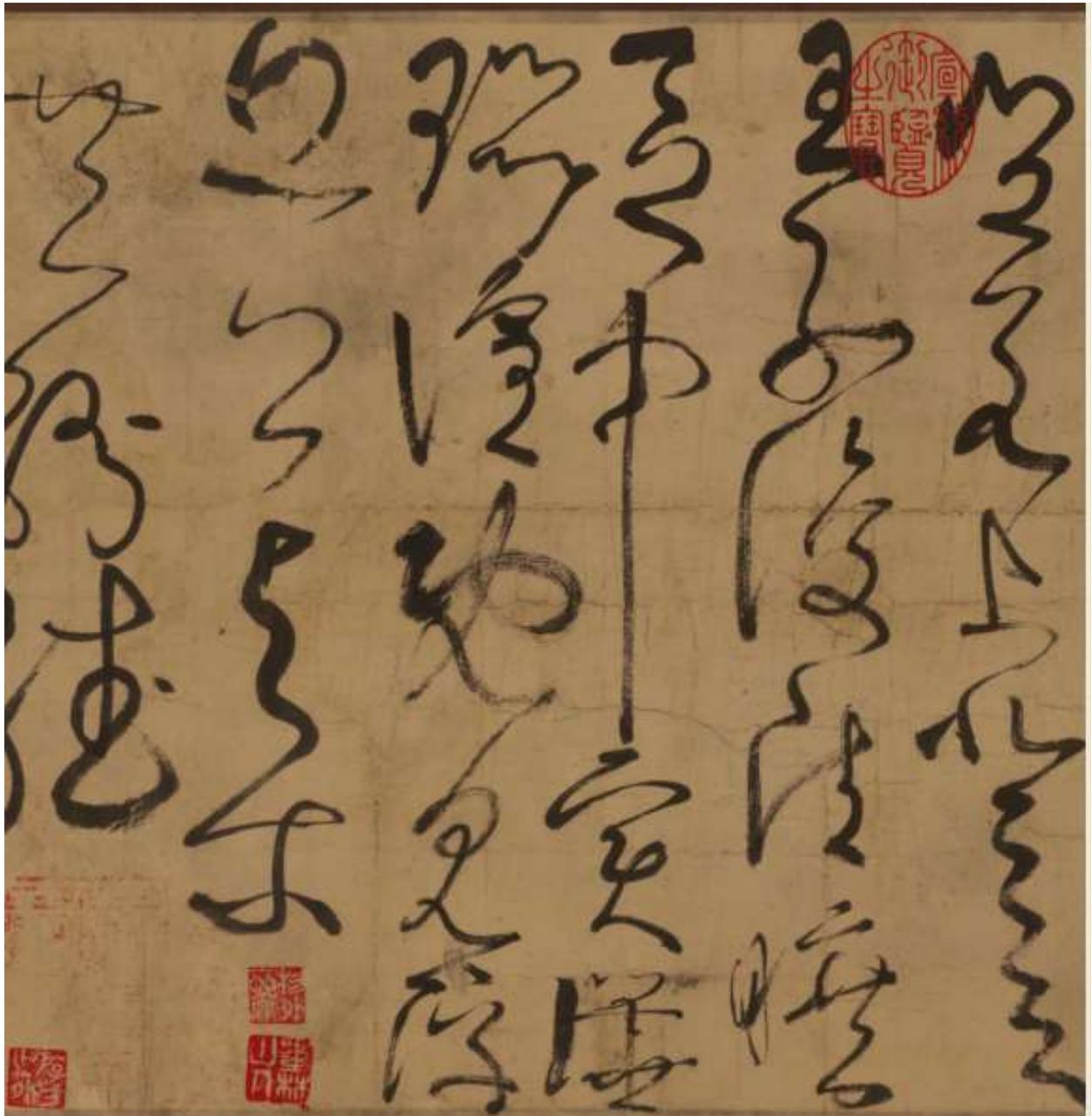
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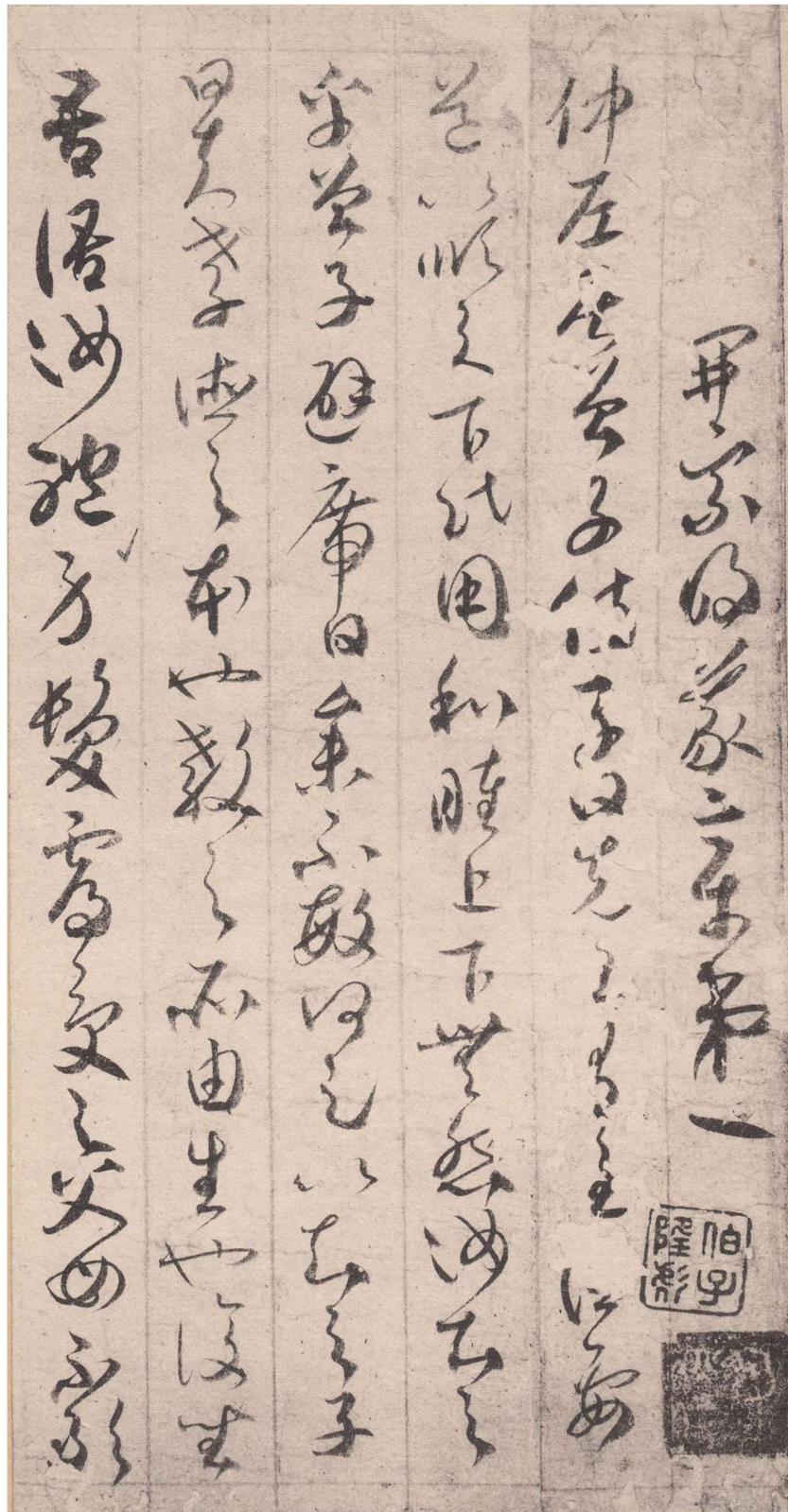
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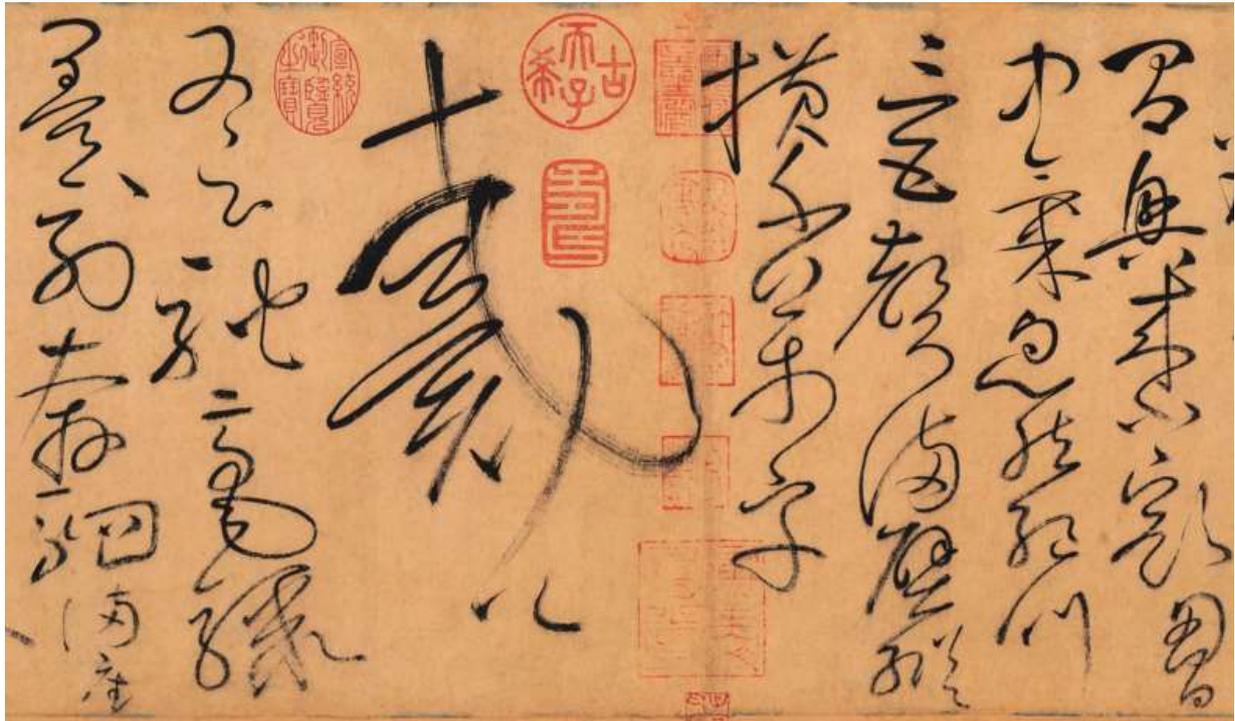


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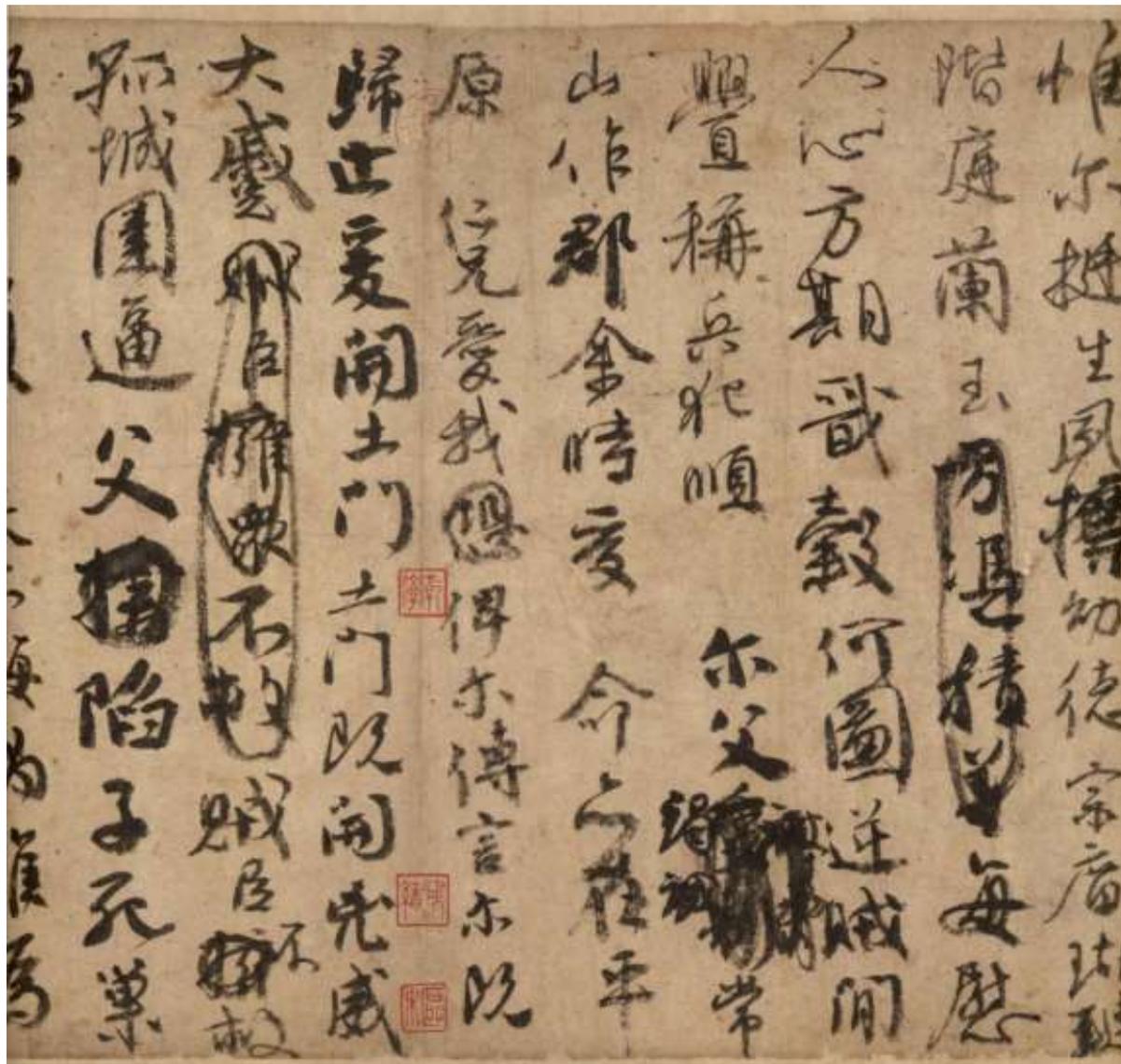


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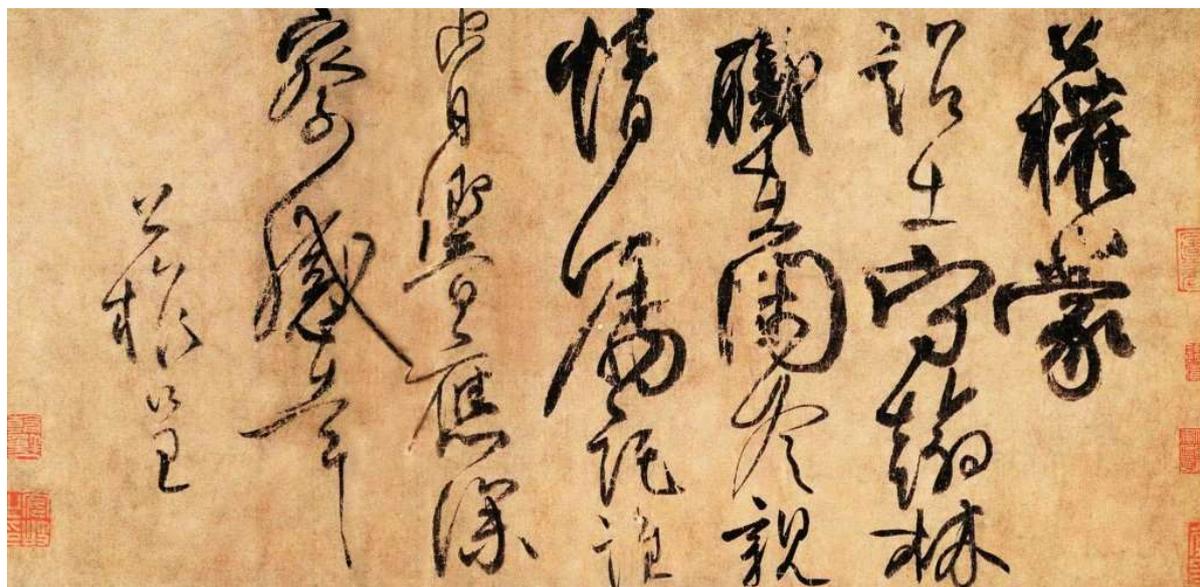
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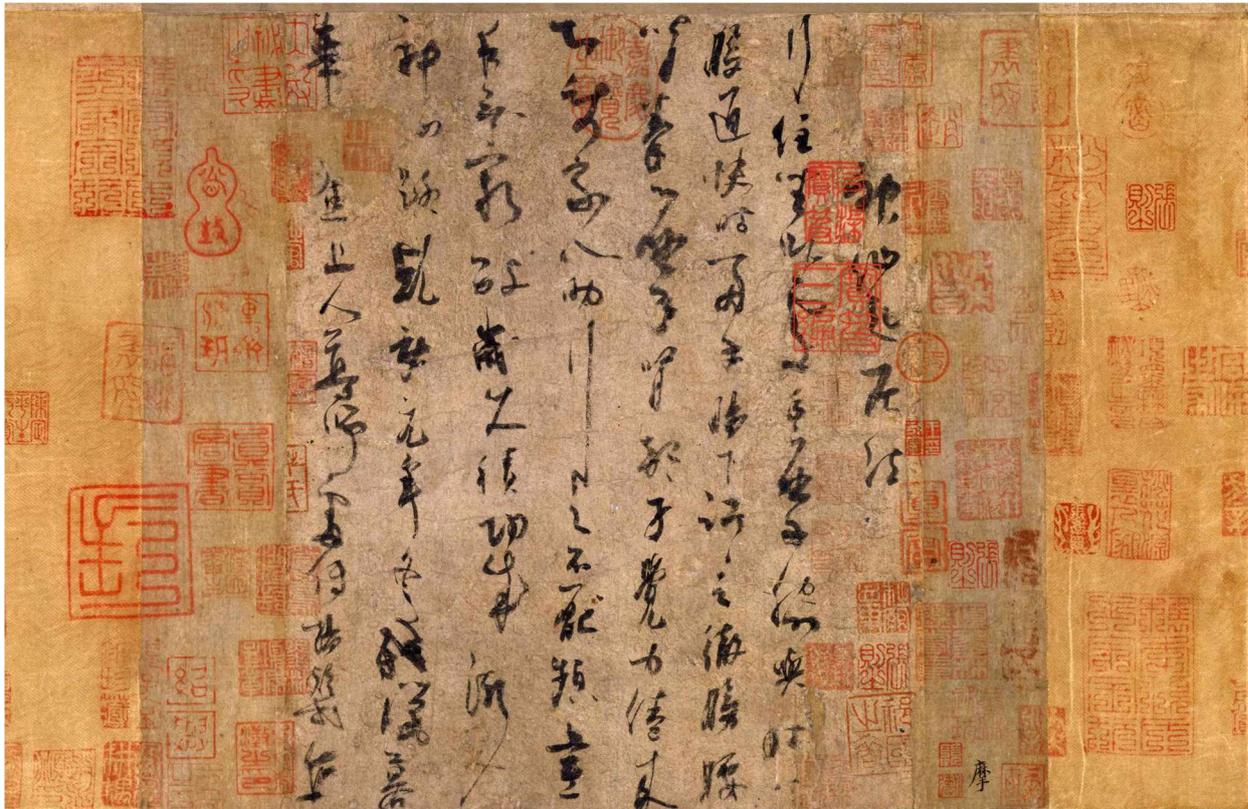
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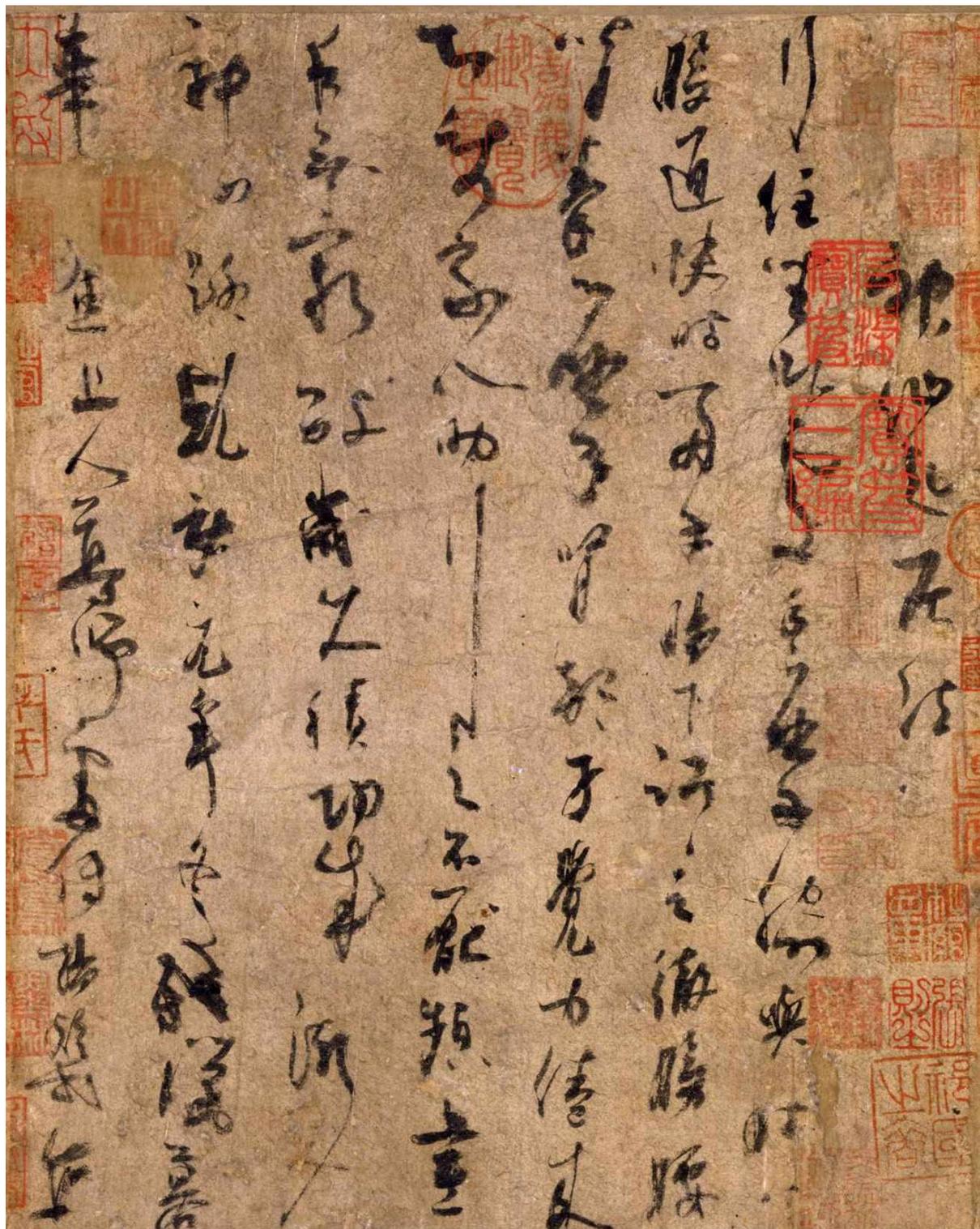
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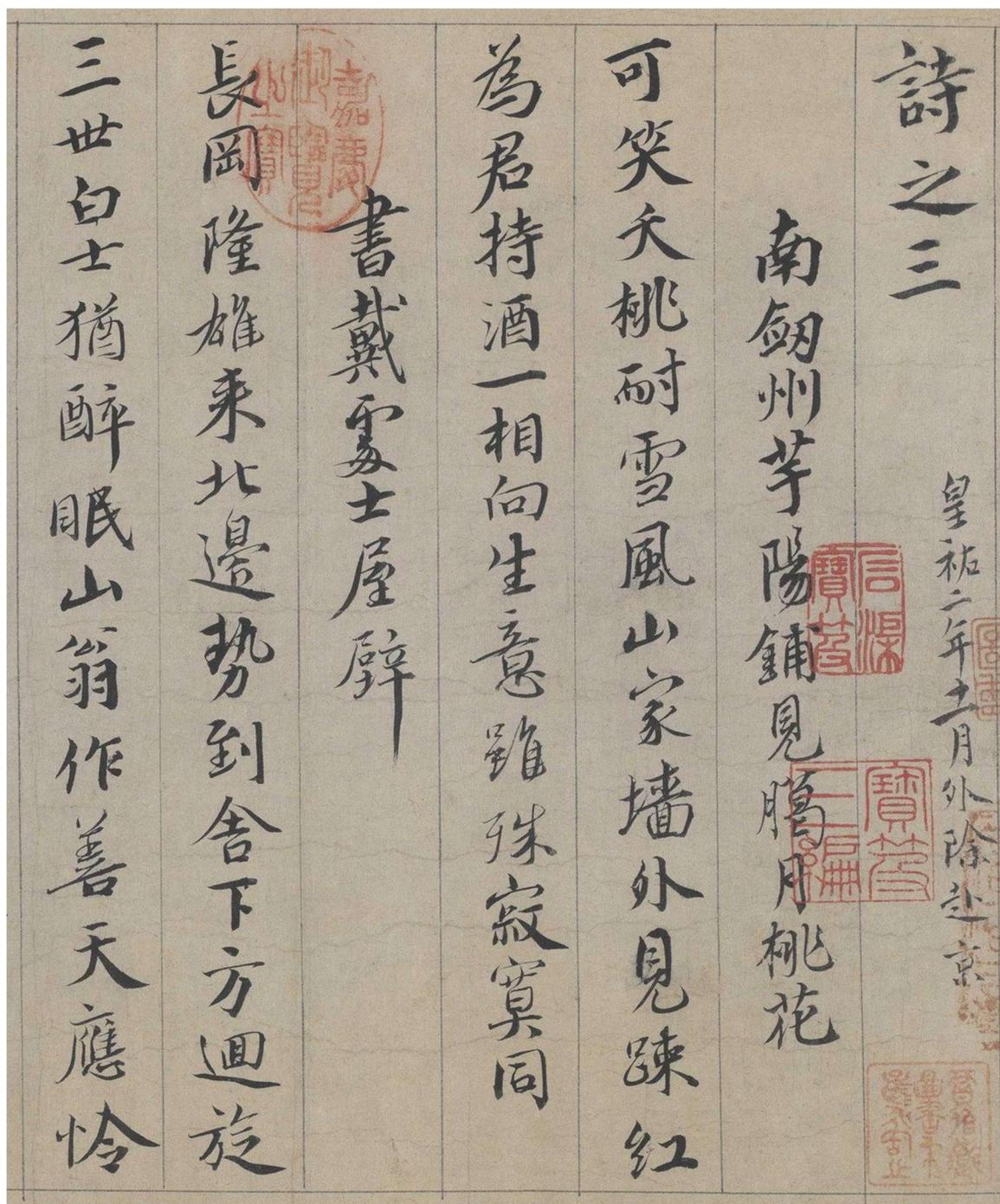


Detail of Yang Ningshi, *Shenxian qiju fa*.

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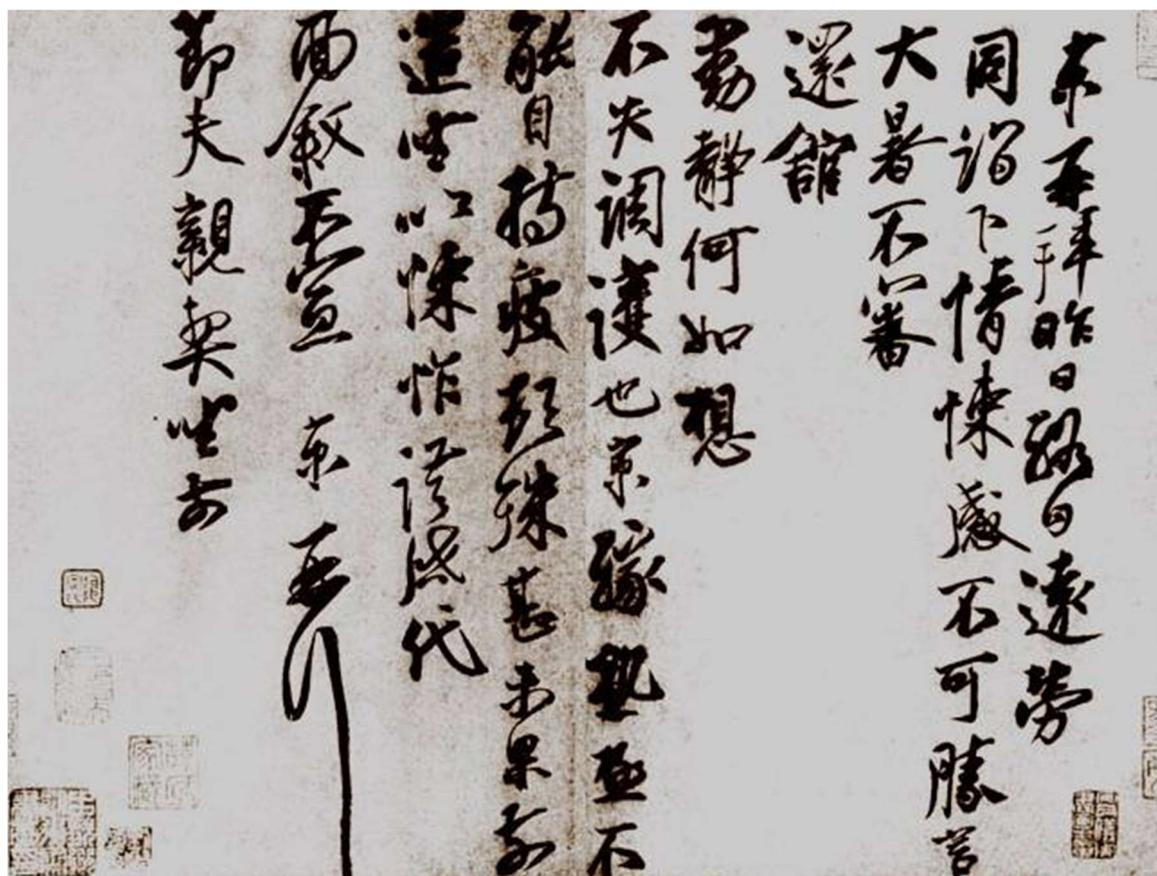


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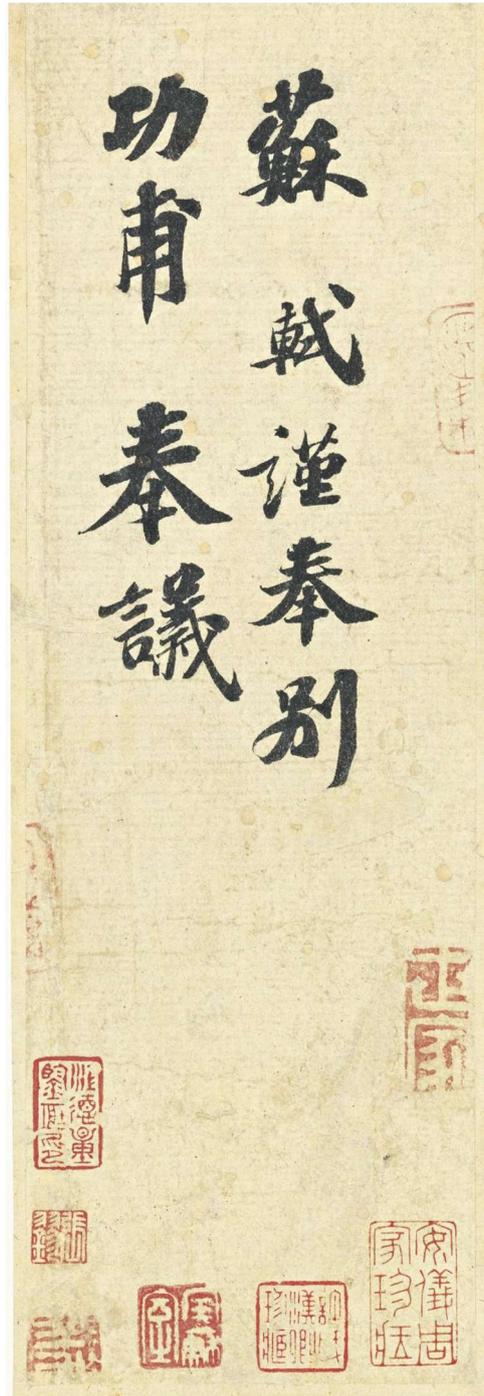
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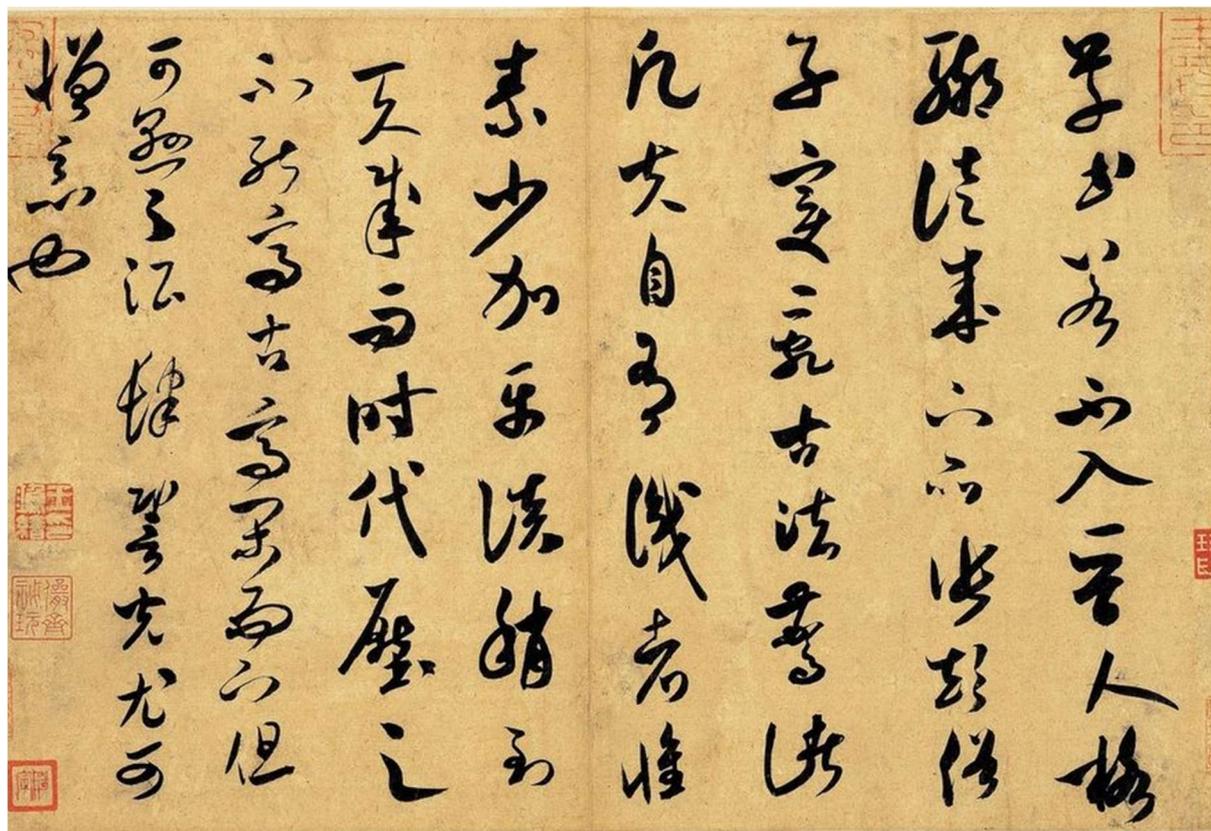
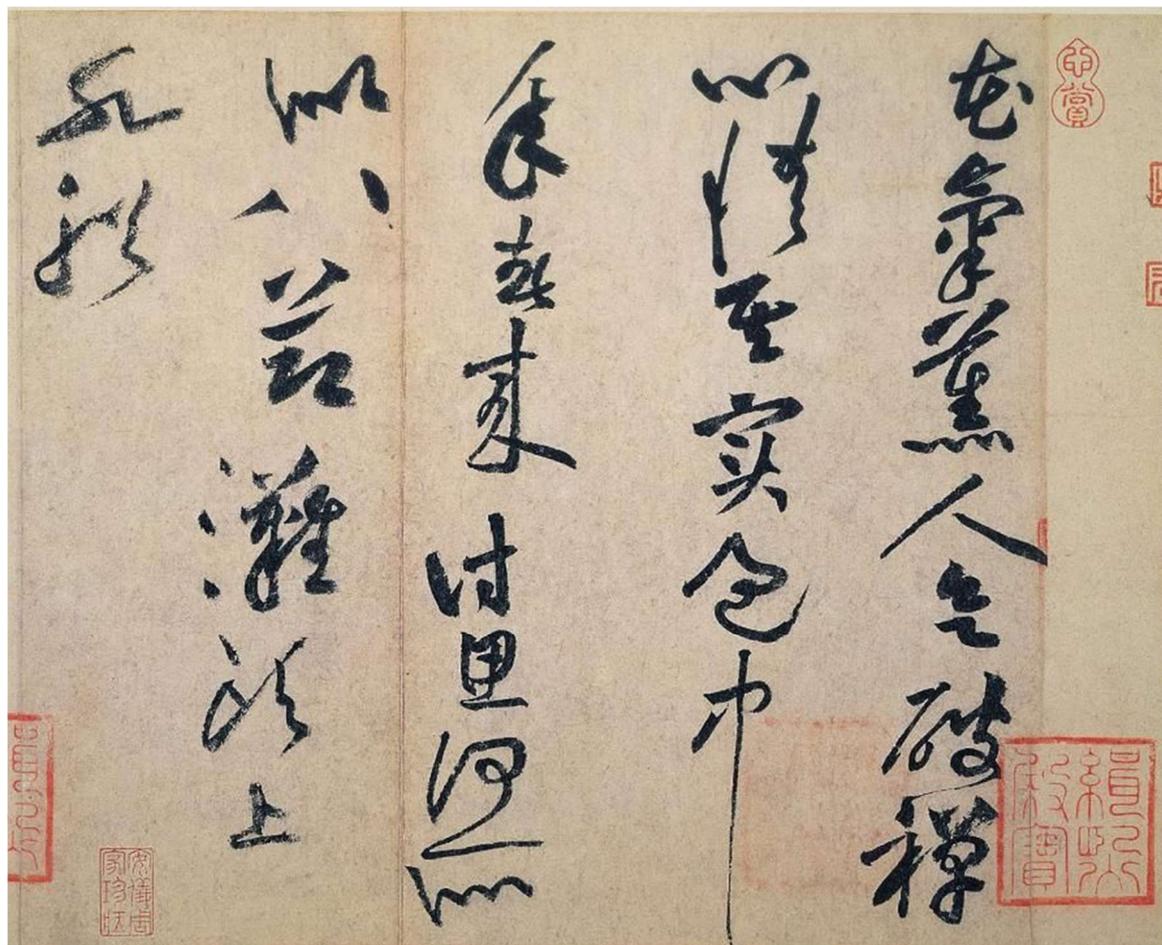
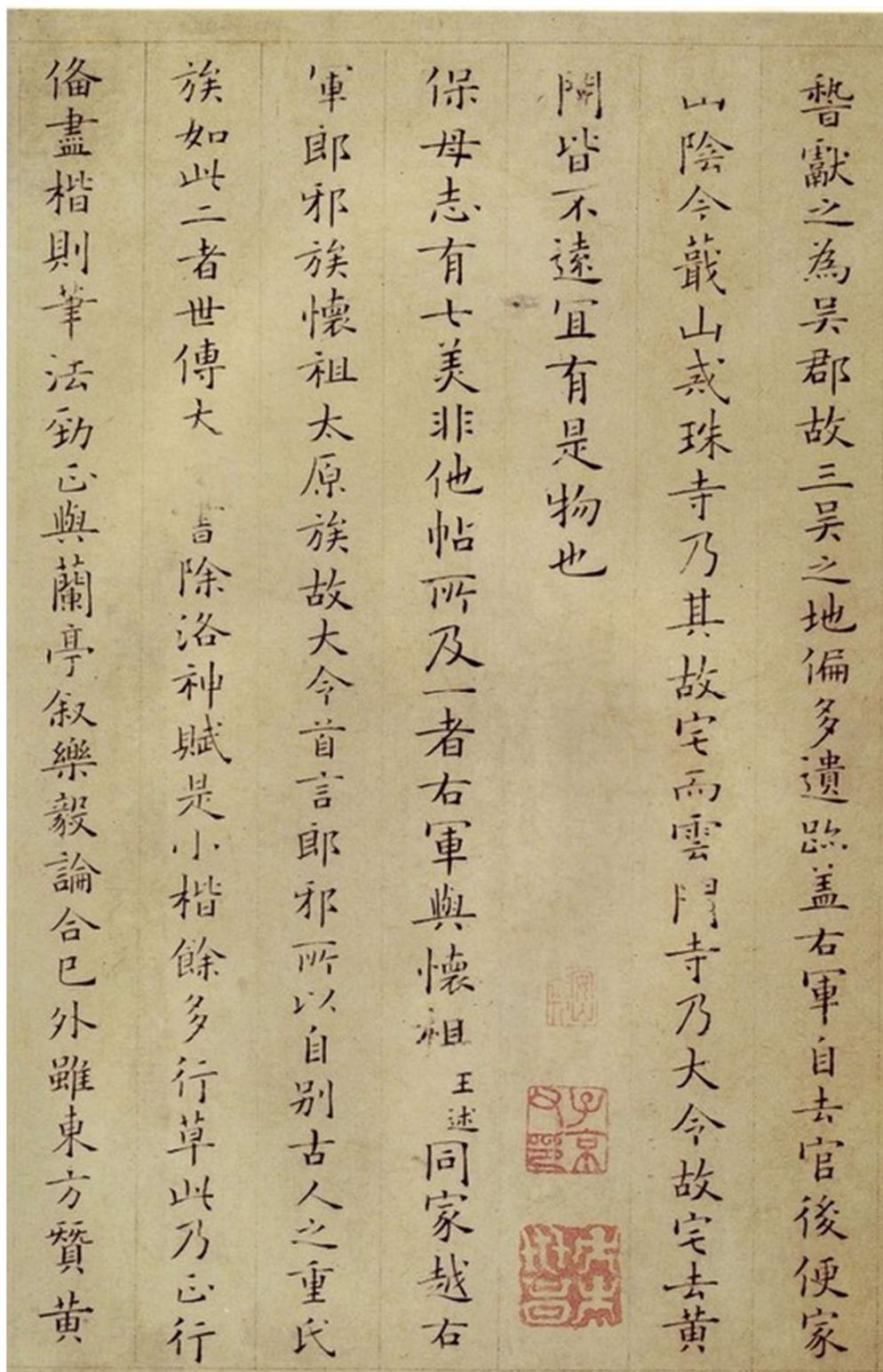
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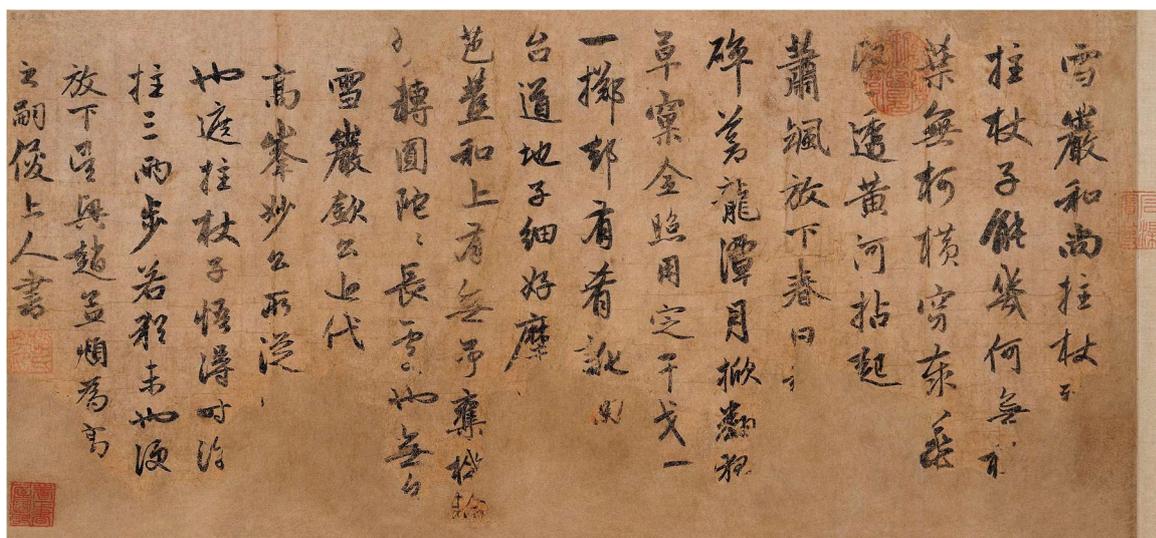
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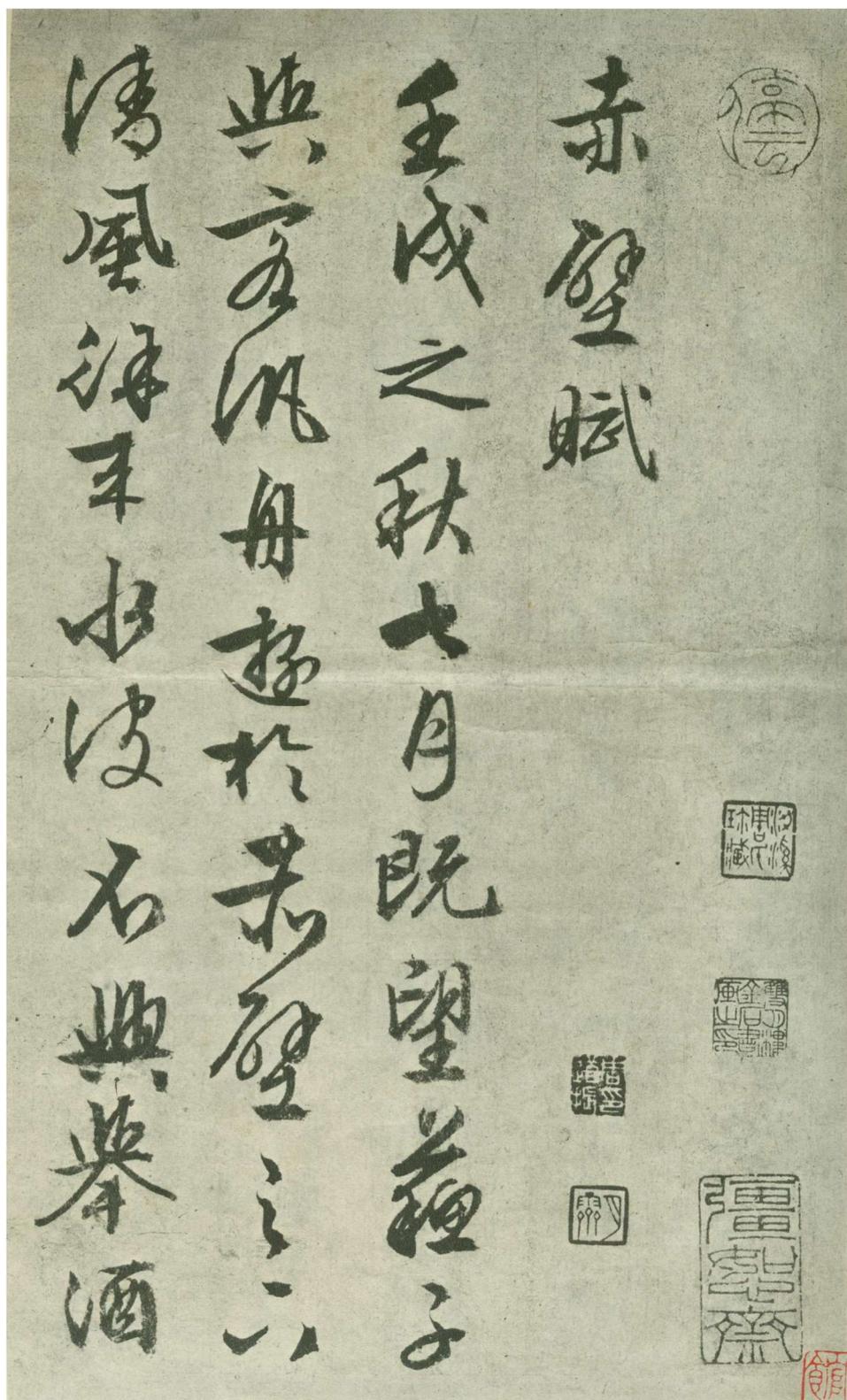
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Jiang Kui 薑夔, *Colophon to Wang Xianzhi Baomu tie* 跋王獻之保母帖, detail. Ink paper, L. 31.6 cm, 101 columns. Beijing Palace Museum.

Figure 41 *Xueyan Heshang Zhuzhangge Juan* by Zhao Mengfu (1254-1322).

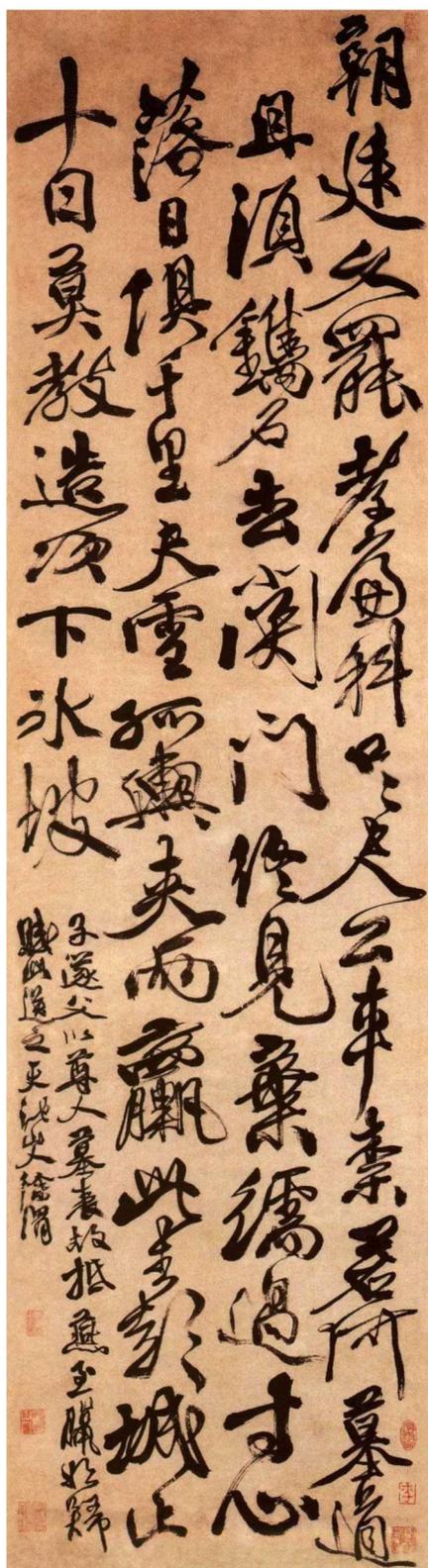
Zhao Mengfu 趙孟頫, *Xueyan heshang zhuzhangge juan* 雪岩和尚拄杖歌卷. Ink paper, 25 X 50.5 cm. Shanghai Museum.

Figure 42 Detail of *Chibi Fu* by Wen Zhengming (1470-1559).



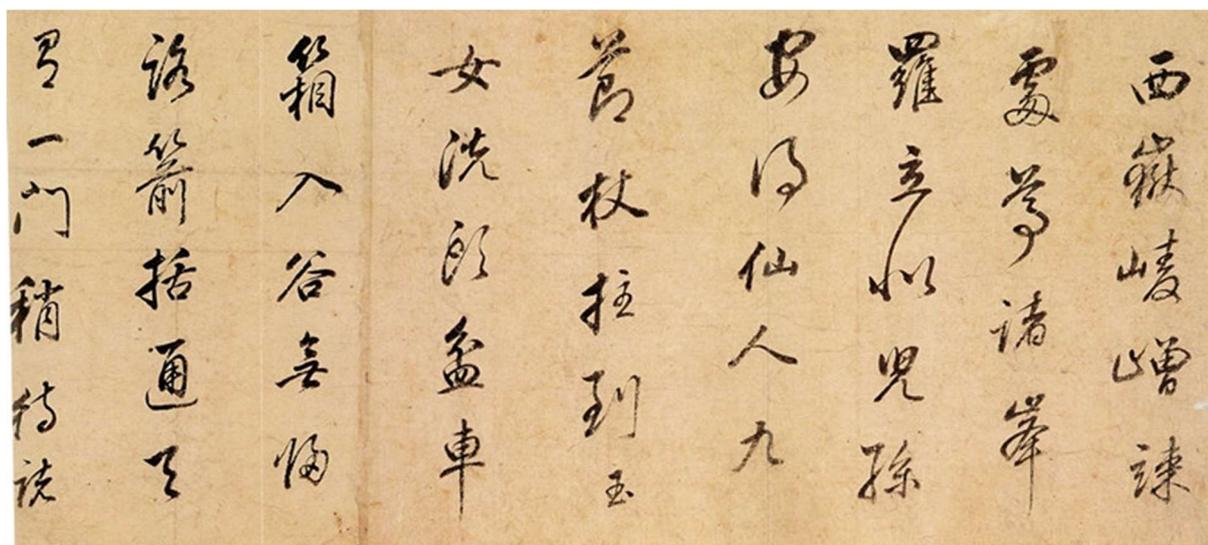
Wen Zhengming 文徵明, *Chibi fu* 赤壁賦, detail, A.D.1558. Ink paper, 23.9 X 258 cm. Palace Museum, Taipei.

Figure 43 *Mubiao Fu* by Xu Wei (1521-1593).

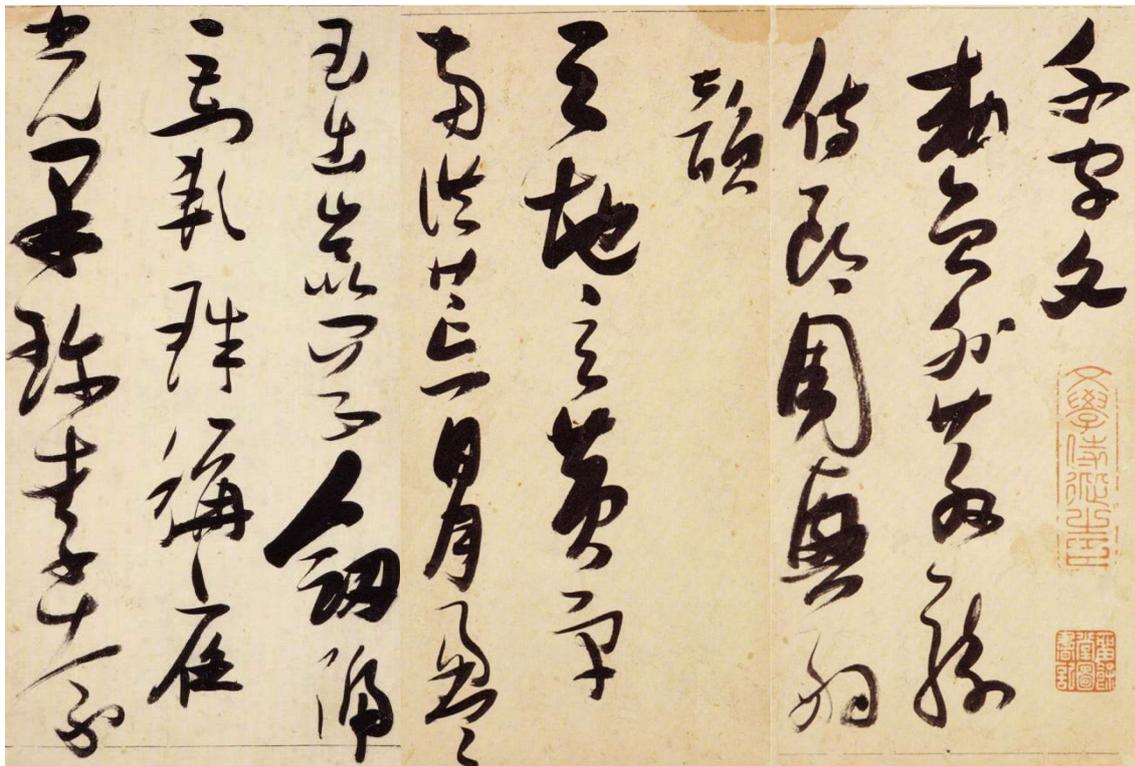


Xu Wei 徐渭, *Mubiao fu* 墓表賦. Ink paper, 163.7 X 43 cm. Beijing Palace Museum.

Figure 44 Detail of *Wangyue Shijuan* by Dong Qichang (1555—1636).

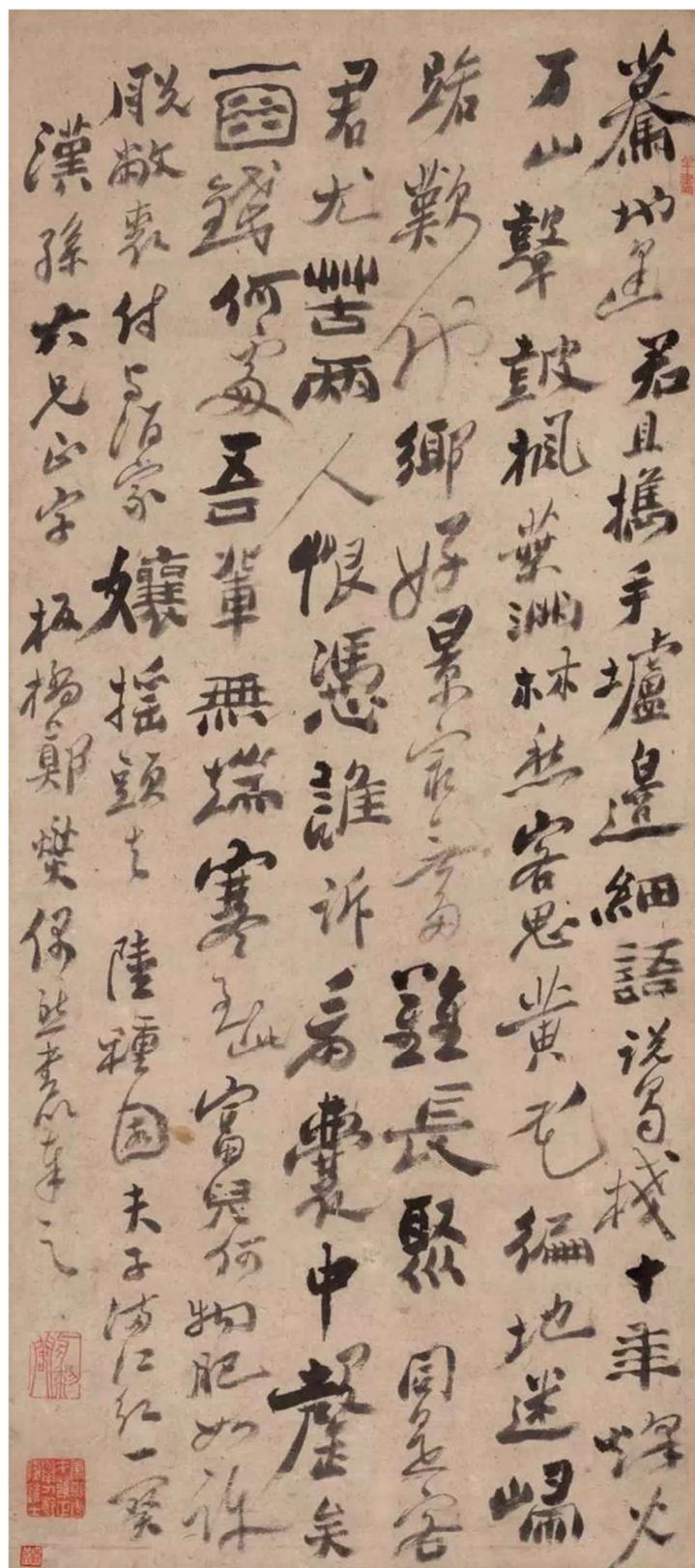


Dong Qichang 董其昌, *Wangyue shijuan* 望嶽詩卷, detail, ca. A.D. 1636. Ink paper, 26.5 X 126.3 cm. Private Collection.

Figure 45 Detail of *Thousand Characters in Cursive Script* by Zhang Ruitu (1570-1644).

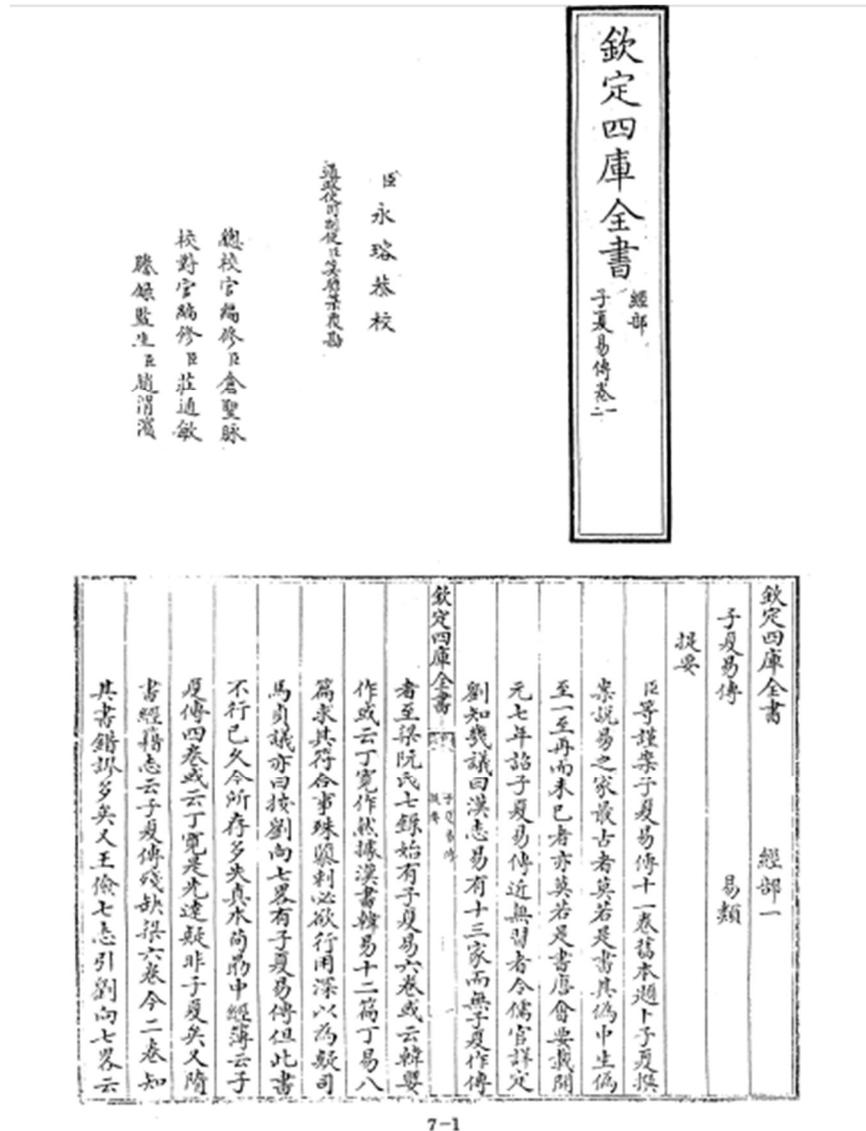
Zhang Ruitu 張瑞圖, *Thousand characters in cursive script* 草書千字文, detail, A.D. 1623. Ink paper, 27 X 993 cm. Private Collection.

Figure 46 *Manjiang Hong* by Zheng Banqiao (1693-1765).



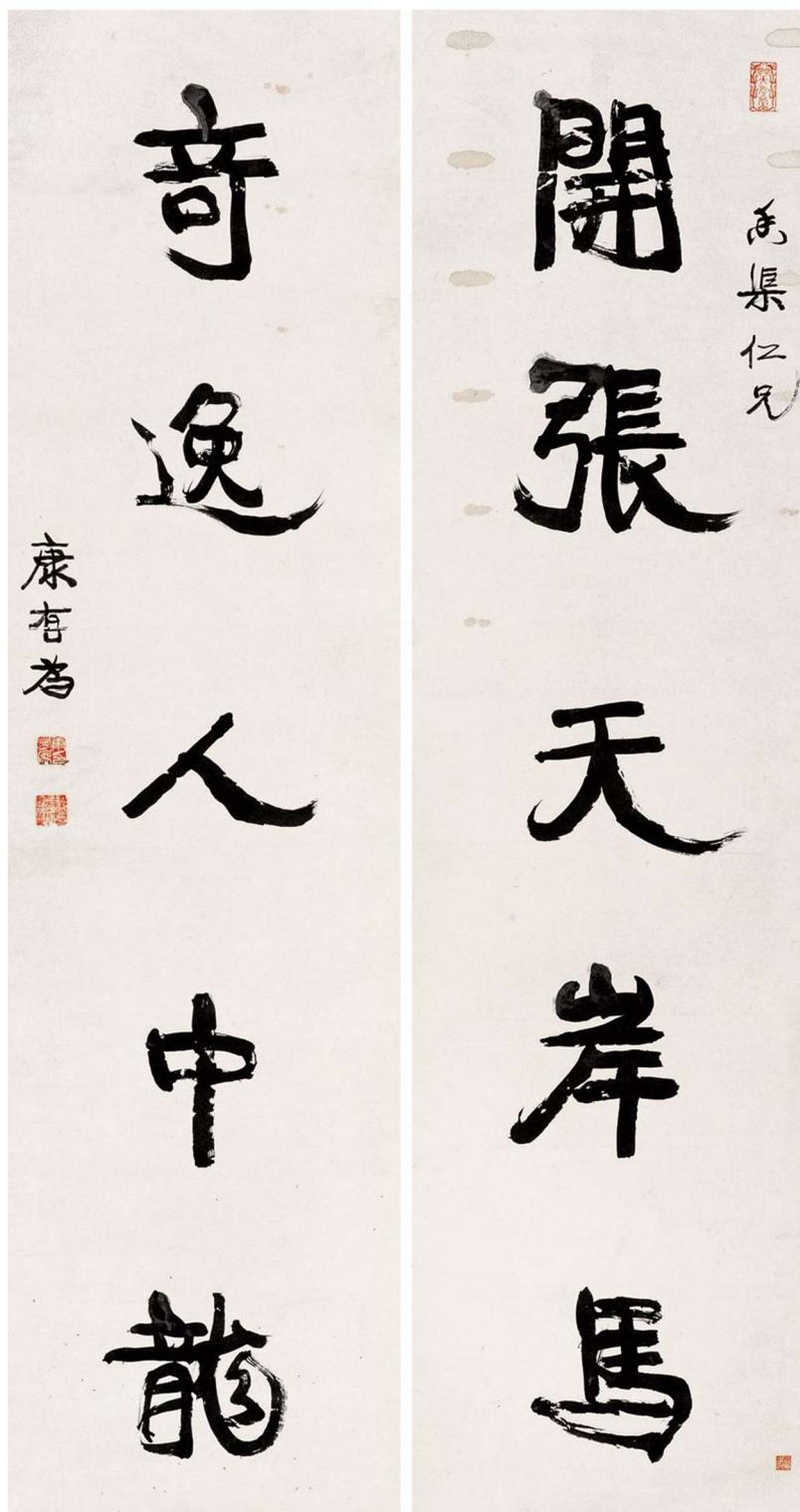
Zheng Banqiao 鄭板橋, *Manjiang hong* 滿江紅. Ink paper, 109.7 X 48.3 cm. Private Collection.

Figure 47 Manuscript of *Zixia Yizhuan* in *Siku quanshu*.



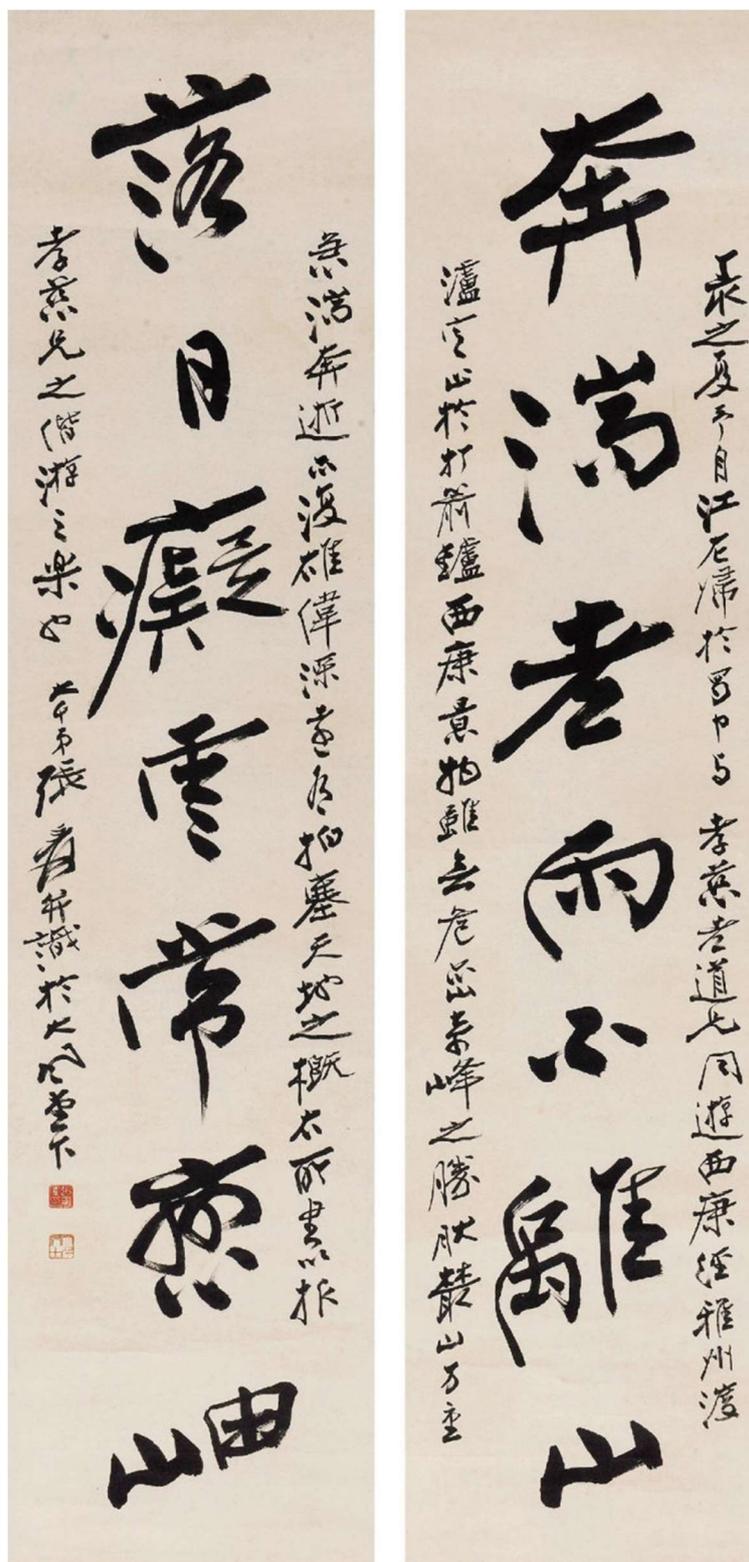
*Siku quanshu* 四庫全書, *Zixia yizhuan* 子夏易傳, ca. A.D. 1781. Manuscript copy, ca.22 X 16 cm. from the version of Wenyuange 文淵閣本, Palace Museum, Taipei.

Figure 48 Couplet by Kang Youwei (1858-1927).



Kang Youwei 康有為, Couplet 對聯, ca.1922. Ink paper, 165 X 44 cm X 2. Private Collection.

Figure 49 Couplet by Zhang Daqian (1899-1983).



Zhang Daqian 張大千, Couplet 對聯, 1947. Ink paper, 113 X 30 cm X 2. Private Collection.