

The Art of Chinese Calligraphy: Protection and Inheritance of Cultural Wisdom

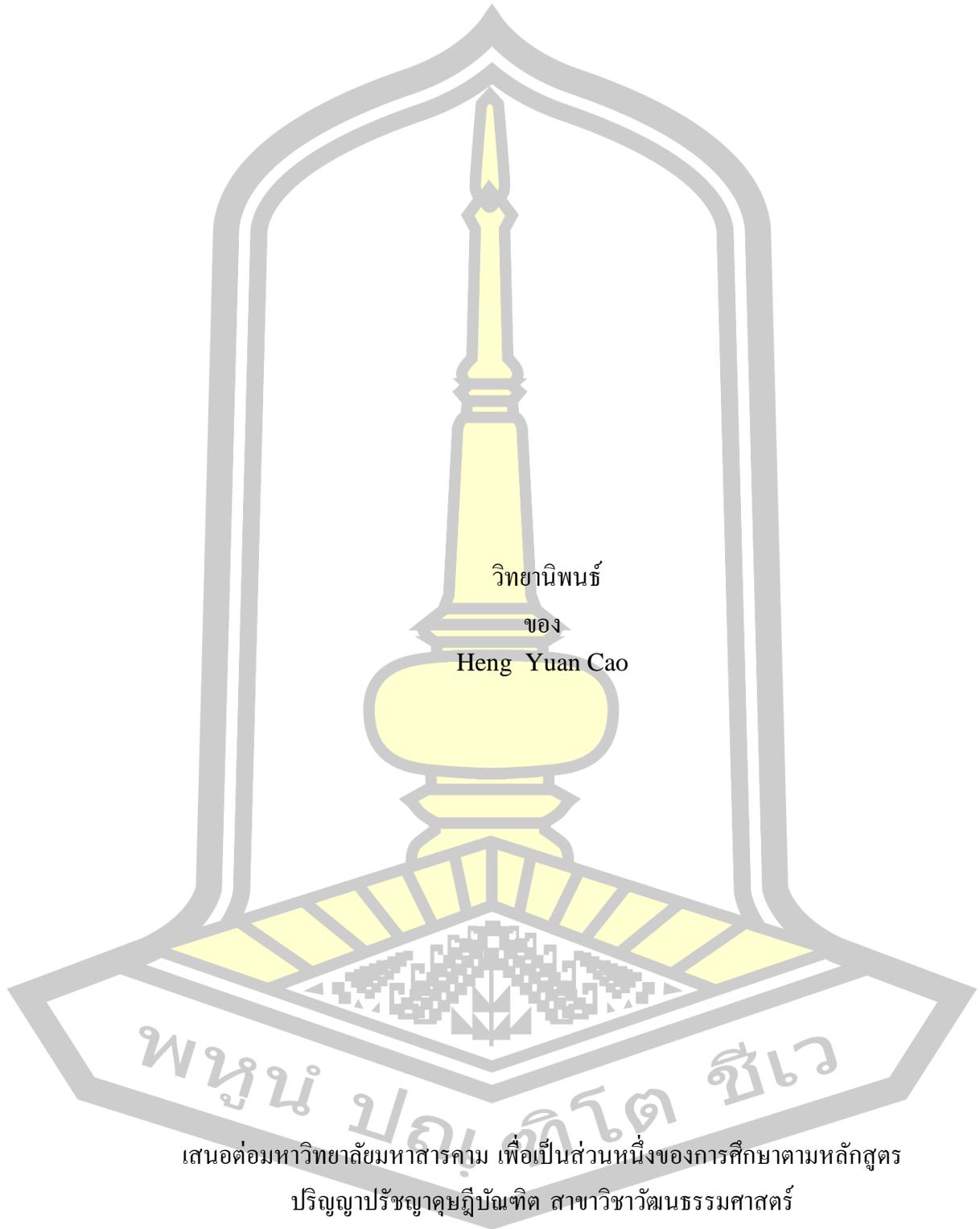
Heng Yaun Cao

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for  
degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Cultural Science

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ของ  
Heng Yuan Cao

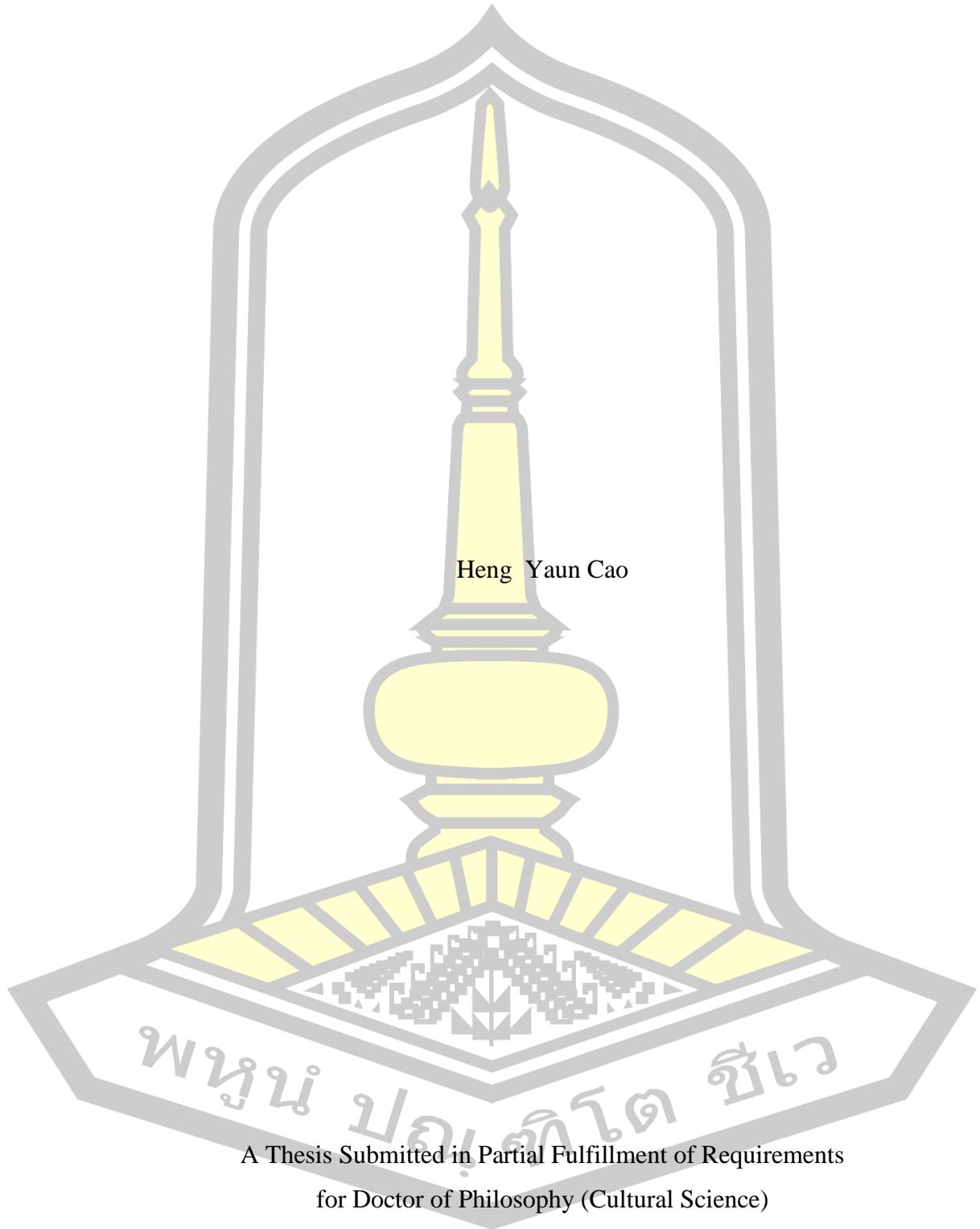
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ลิขสิทธิ์เป็นของมหาวิทยาลัยมหาสารคาม

The Art of Chinese Calligraphy: Protection and Inheritance of Cultural Wisdom



Heng Yaun Cao

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements  
for Doctor of Philosophy (Cultural Science)

June 2024

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The examining committee has unanimously approved this Thesis, submitted by Mr. Heng Yaun Cao , as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy Cultural Science at Mahasarakham University

Examining Committee

Chairman

(Asst. Prof. Kittisan Sriruksa ,  
Ph.D.)

Advisor

(Assoc. Prof. Sitthisak  
Champadaeng , Ph.D.)

Committee

(Assoc. Prof. Sastra Laoakka ,  
Ph.D.)

Committee

( Boonsom Yodmalee , Ph.D.)

Committee

( Thitisak Wechkama , Ph.D.)

Mahasarakham University has granted approval to accept this Thesis as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy Cultural Science

(Asst. Prof. Peera Phanlukthao , Ph.D.)  
Dean of Faculty of Fine - Applied Arts  
and Cultural Science

(Assoc. Prof. Krit Chaimoon , Ph.D.)  
Dean of Graduate School

มหาวิทยาลัยราชภัฏสุราษฎร์ธานี

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**AUTHOR** Heng Yaun Cao

**ADVISORS** Associate Professor Sitthisak Champadaeng , Ph.D.

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### ABSTRACT

The objectives of this study were to: 1) study the historical development and artistic value of Chinese calligraphy; 2) current situation and issues of Chinese calligraphy and 3) guidelines for the protection and inheritance of Chinese calligraphy art. This research adopts qualitative research methods, collecting field data through document research, surveys, interviews, observations, group discussions. Analysis was conducted based on the research objectives from a group of 30 individuals, and the results were presented in a descriptive analytical manner. The research findings are as follows: 1) The development of Chinese calligraphy is closely related to history and culture, with its own aesthetic value primarily manifested in the evolution of script and calligraphic styles. This section showcases a large number of calligraphic works and employs formalist aesthetics and semiotics analysis to elaborate on the artistic value of ancient calligraphy. 2) The abolition of the imperial examination system in 1905 marked the complete disappearance of the practicality of Chinese calligraphy, with artistic expression becoming the main feature of calligraphy. Currently, Chinese calligraphy is undergoing a transition from practical value to artistic value, which is also a major issue in the construction of calligraphy disciplines. 3) Based on the research on the artistic value of Chinese calligraphy, guidelines for the protection and inheritance of Chinese calligraphy art are proposed.

Keyword : Chinese Calligraphy, Art Protection, Inheritance, Cultural Wisdom



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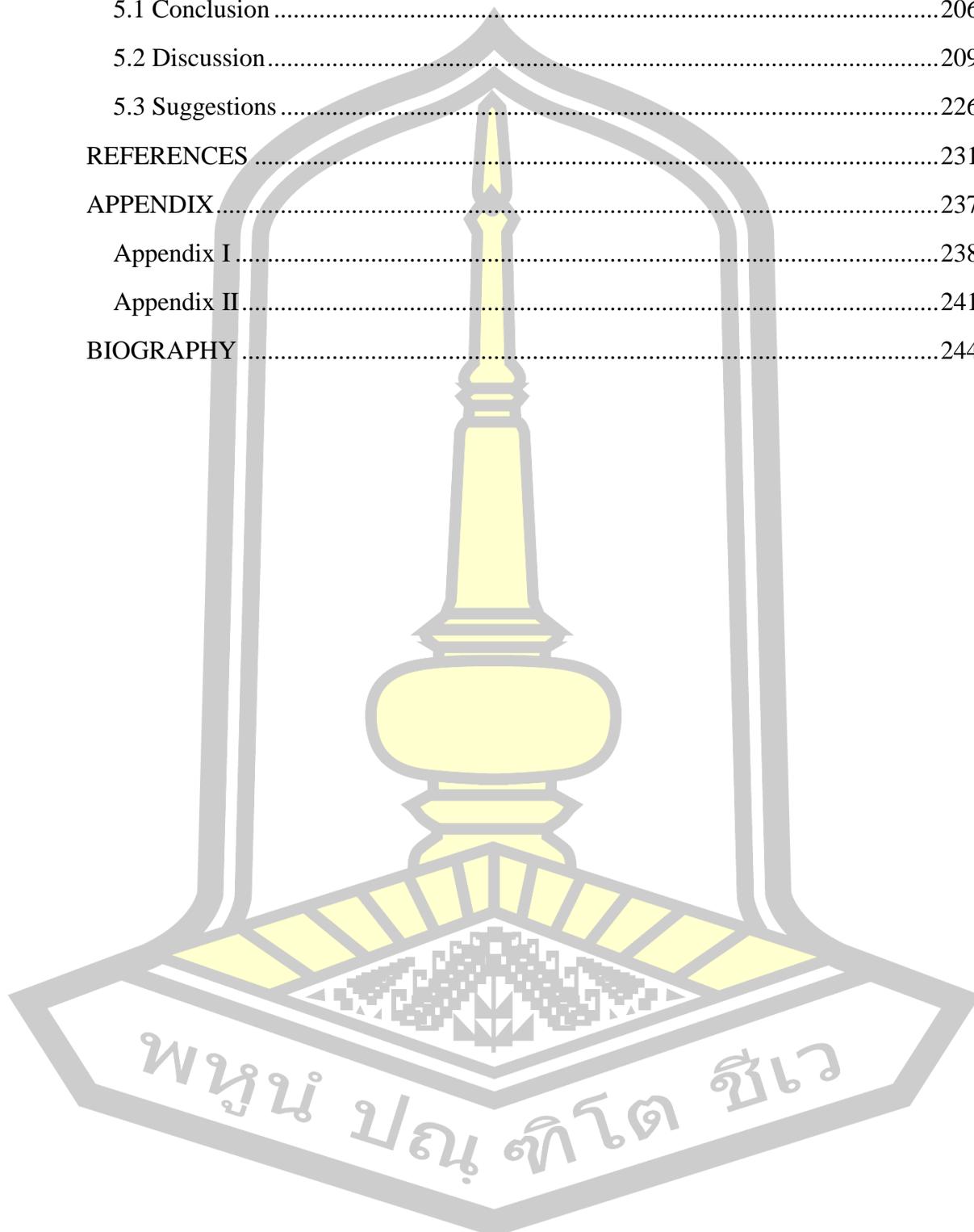
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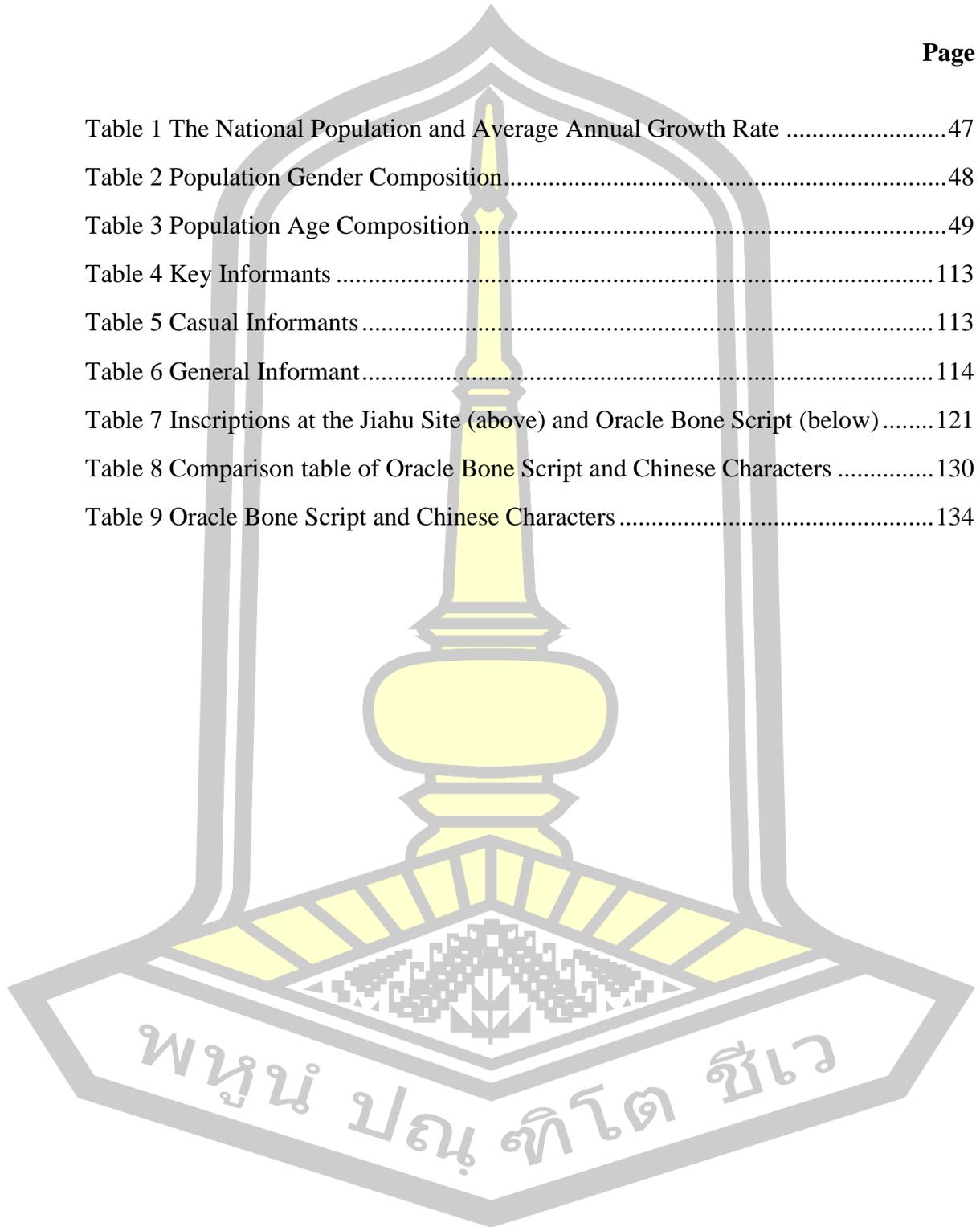
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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Research Background

Since the birth of humanity, there have been many different languages and scripts in the world, such as English, Thai, Mongolian, Arabic, and so on. These languages and scripts have evolved over time, eventually tending towards a more aesthetically pleasing decoration to facilitate people's reading and communication. Chinese language similarly possesses this functionality, namely practicality. However, what sets Chinese characters apart is that from their inception, they naturally acquired an artistic function, which became increasingly prominent in their usage over time. "A path based on daily writing as a foundation, with the goal of fully expressing human beings" (Qiu Zhenzhong, 2021). Chinese calligraphy has a long history, dating back to ancient times, the very beginning of human history. Although archaeological materials are limited before the Shang Dynasty, early humans left behind a large number of carved symbols - "meaningful forms."

By the late Shang Dynasty, the Chinese characters represented by oracle bone inscriptions had already established the basic configuration of characters, and the configuration system had gradually matured. From aspects such as the formation of characters, the degree of symbolization, the writing form, and the functional use, it can be seen that the oracle bone inscriptions of the late Shang Dynasty are a system of complete characters that has undergone a long period of development, matured in structure, and complete in function. It is a complete textual sample of the mature stage of Chinese characters (Yuan Guangkuo, 2021).

The appearance of oracle bone inscriptions provided the basis for the evolution of Chinese characters. After the Spring and Autumn Period, the Qin Dynasty, and the Han Dynasty, over two thousand years of development, Chinese characters evolved into five forms: seal script, clerical script, regular script, running script, and cursive script. Later, during the Wei, Jin, Northern and Southern Dynasties, Tang Dynasty, Song Dynasty, Yuan Dynasty, Ming Dynasty, and Qing Dynasty, each historical period nurtured the artistic peaks of each script style. Oracle bone inscriptions evolved into

seal script, represented by the Qin Dynasty; seal script evolved into clerical script, represented by the Han Dynasty; during the clerical script stage, significant changes occurred, and regular script, running script, and cursive script successively appeared. In terms of artistic achievement, Tang Dynasty regular script pursued strict rules, Song Dynasty running script pursued subjective interest, and Ming and Qing Dynasty cursive script pursued the diversity of Chinese characters.

Why can Chinese calligraphy become an art? Scholars have offered many explanations. In summary, there are mainly two points: first, Chinese characters have a complex structure and rich variations, and the evolution has produced various structural features of different script styles, allowing Chinese calligraphy to potentially produce endless variations visually; second, the writing tool for Chinese calligraphy, the brush, is a special writing instrument in China. Its brush head is made of soft animal hair, and the depth of touching the paper and the twisting in different directions during writing create endless variations in brushstrokes. The complexity of the structure brings complexity to writing. In terms of usage, it increases the difficulty of writing, but for an art form, it is a potential for graphic expression (any text can also be seen as graphics). This structural complexity is closely combined with the richness of movement variations in Chinese character writing (Qiu Zhenzhong, 2022).

Chinese calligraphy is an art that expresses Chinese characters, with specialized brushstrokes and aesthetics, and rich humanistic connotations. Chinese characters are the foundation of calligraphy art, and the transmission of character books and the development of calligraphy art are closely related. In ancient times, literacy and calligraphy enlightenment education went hand in hand, with textbooks combining character education and the aesthetic beauty of Chinese character writing. During the pre-Qin and Han dynasties, character books were often written by scholars and calligraphers, and by the Han and Wei periods, the status of calligraphers rose, marking the division of labor between scholars and calligraphers (Zhu Tianshu, 2023). During the Sui and Tang dynasties, the formal establishment of the imperial examination system made calligraphy a necessary condition for ancient scholars to obtain official positions. At this time, the artistic and practical aspects of calligraphy were intertwined and developed together.

The establishment of the imperial examination system to replace the recommendation system is a product of the development of feudal society in China and a qualitative change in the selection method. From the late period of the Northern and Southern Dynasties, the imperial examination system had gradually emerged, but three characteristics were basically present, and the formal formation of the system should be during the Tang Dynasty (He Zhongli, 1983). This system persisted until the end of the Qing Dynasty.

In the 26th year of Guangxu's reign, i.e., 1900, the Eight-Nation Alliance invaded China, Beijing fell, Empress Dowager Cixi took Emperor Guangxu on the road to escape, and the lesson of failure finally made the Qing government determined to implement the New Policy for self-rescue. In the 27th year of Guangxu's reign, i.e., 1901, the New Education Movement began with the opening of schools and the establishment of new-style education. In the 29th year of Guangxu's reign, i.e., 1903, Yuan Shikai and Zhang Zhidong requested the abolition of the imperial examination system. In the 31st year of Guangxu's reign, i.e., 1905, the Qing government formally announced, "Starting from the next year (1906), all provincial, and metropolitan examinations will be suspended" (Jin Zheng, 1990). Thus, the imperial examination system that had been in use in China for more than 1,300 years finally came to an end.

After the abolition of the imperial examination system, Chinese society posed a question of life and death for Chinese calligraphy, namely the problem of contemporary paradigm shifts. Before the abolition of the imperial examination system, the writing brush was an indispensable writing tool in Chinese society, recording human history, politics, economics, literature, art, religion, and other aspects. It can be said that the writing brush was omnipresent. After the abolition of the imperial examination system, the writing brush exited the historical stage, and the popularity of the hard pen and the arrival of the keyboard era brought unprecedented pressure to Chinese calligraphy. In fact, after breaking free from the constraints of practical functions, Chinese calligraphy not only did not disappear but instead showed strong vitality, flourishing towards the direction of art in contemporary times, leaving behind exquisite works one after another. Why did Chinese calligraphy end up in this situation? The researcher will first list the viewpoints of two scholars in the 20th century:

The purpose of this system is to continuously select outstanding individuals in society using an objective examination standard, allowing them to participate in national politics. Another advantage of this system is that it enables examinees to hold themselves accountable and openly campaign, eliminating the need for local political powers to make selections as in the Han Dynasty's recruitment system. Under this system, social class distinctions can be fundamentally eliminated. It can promote the cultural advancement of the entire society. It can cultivate the people's interest in politics and enhance their patriotism. It can unite various regions of the country under central governance (Qian Mu, 2010).

The imperial examination system during the Ming and Qing Dynasties, lasting for five to six hundred years, committed great wrongs in the history of Chinese culture and academic development. It bound people's intelligence, hindered scientific development, suppressed thoughts, disconnected people from reality, production, focused solely on rote learning, rigid patterns, and empty rhetoric, causing harm and even death, with countless sins and endless ramifications (Wu Han, 2006). Qian Mu, born in 1895 and died in 1990. Wu Han, born in 1909 and died in 1969. From their ages, they are both renowned scholars of the 20th century. Qian Mu was born before the abolition of the imperial examination system, received education under the examination system, and was deeply influenced by it.

His viewpoint is based on the political, economic, and cultural history of ancient feudal society, as well as the advantages of the imperial examination system, concluding the practical value of Chinese calligraphy. Wu Han was born after the abolition of the imperial examination system, received education in new-style schools, and lived in a time of order reconstruction. At this time, the shortcomings of the old imperial examination system became apparent and no longer adapted to social development. For calligraphy, abandoning its practical value pointed towards its artistic value. the researcher believe Qian Mu summarized history, while Wu Han speculated about the future. History is the precursor of the future, and the future is the continuation of history. To answer the question just now: Chinese calligraphy is experiencing unprecedented development in contemporary times, thanks to its artistic charm.

In summary, from the unconscious creation of humanity in ancient times to the initial formation of the script system during the Shang and Zhou Dynasties; from the

formal establishment of the imperial examination system during the Sui and Tang Dynasties, the dual development of practicality and artistry, to the abolition of the imperial examination system in 1905, leading Chinese calligraphy towards a path of pure artistry; from the artistic value of calligraphy in the modern Republic of China period to the establishment of aesthetic theories of contemporary Chinese calligraphy... Chinese calligraphy has undergone one transformation after another. Obviously, the most significant transformation of Chinese calligraphy in the 20th century was the contemporary transformation, with the abolition of the imperial examination system in 1905 as the turning point.

From the 1940s to the present, for Chinese calligraphy, it is in a historical stage of transition between old and new (the decline of national strength at the end of the Qing Dynasty - the salvation and survival of the Republic of China period - the great rejuvenation of the People's Republic of China), although only a hundred years have passed, it is an indispensable link in the chain of Chinese calligraphy history, playing an important role in carrying forward the past and opening up the future. This paper discusses the contemporary issues of Chinese calligraphy, focusing on studying the historical development and artistic value of Chinese calligraphy, the current situation and problems of contemporary Chinese calligraphy, and the guiding principles for the protection and inheritance of Chinese calligraphy art.

## **1.2 Research Objectives**

1.2.1 To study the historical development and artistic value of Chinese calligraphy.

1.2.2 To study the current situation and problems of contemporary Chinese calligraphy.

1.2.3 To study guidelines for the protection and inheritance of Chinese calligraphy art.

## **1.3 Research Questions**

1.3.1 What is the historical development and artistic value of Chinese calligraphy?

1.3.2 What are the current status and problems of contemporary Chinese calligraphy?

1.3.3 What are the guidelines for the protection and inheritance of Chinese calligraphy art?

#### **1.4 Importance of Research**

1.4.1 The Significance of Studying the Historical Development and Artistic Value of Chinese Calligraphy

Studying the historical development and artistic value of Chinese calligraphy not only helps in promoting Chinese culture but also fosters the development of Chinese calligraphy. This research involves revisiting rich historical materials and making new discoveries and insights. These new findings and knowledge, combined with ancient Chinese calligraphy, form the Chinese calligraphy cultural system. Additionally, this work is crucial in addressing contemporary issues in Chinese calligraphy, including preservation, inheritance, artistic aspects, cultural dissemination, and public aesthetics. Therefore, studying the historical development and artistic value of Chinese calligraphy holds significant importance.

1.4.2 The Significance of Studying the Current Status and Issues of Chinese Calligraphy

Studying the current status and issues of Chinese calligraphy essentially involves examining the paradigm shift in Chinese calligraphy. This part mainly focuses on modern and contemporary Chinese calligraphy, which is crucial for understanding the past and present of Chinese calligraphy and projecting its future. The past represents traditional models, while the future symbolizes innovative trends. From the current status, social, cultural, and educational issues can be identified, and from historical experiences, directions for inheritance, innovation, and cultivation can be found. Therefore, studying the current status and issues of Chinese calligraphy is an indispensable part of its preservation and inheritance.

1.4.3 The Significance of Studying the Protection and Inheritance of Chinese Calligraphy

The protection and inheritance of Chinese calligraphy are both cultural and social necessities. As a treasure of Chinese culture and a unique art form, protecting and

inheriting Chinese calligraphy helps in spreading excellent historical culture and enhancing social aesthetic and moral standards. In contemporary times, there is a need for this traditional art to rejuvenate in modern society and contribute to the diverse prosperity of world art. Therefore, promoting the innovation and development of Chinese calligraphy and studying its protection and inheritance are of great significance.

## **1.5 Definition of Terms**

### **1.5.1 Chinese Calligraphy**

Calligraphy is a unique form of artistic expression in China, using Chinese characters as its medium and adhering to strict rules of writing. The four commonly used tools in calligraphy creation are the brush, ink, rice paper, and inkstone. Narrowly speaking, it not only includes ink-written characters but also stone-carved ones, all of which must adhere to aesthetic standards such as the beauty of line strength, ink color variations, structural forms, and the personal style of the calligrapher. Broadly speaking, it encompasses both official and folk calligraphy. In this article, Chinese calligraphy is a concept within the realm of aesthetics.

### **1.5.2 Calligraphy Art**

In disciplinary classification, there are slight differences between the East and the West, which are reflected in the definition of calligraphy. In the West, because calligraphy is not a national art and writing tools do not possess the conditions for artistic expression, there is no place for calligraphy art in Western art history. In China, with the abolition of the imperial examination system at the end of the Qing Dynasty and the influence of Western aesthetics during the Republic of China period, disciplinary thinking emerged, and the discipline of calligraphy was incorporated into the realm of art research. Therefore, this article mainly discusses the artistic value of ancient calligraphy and the artistic expression forms of contemporary calligraphy.

Calligraphy art undoubtedly possesses aesthetic characteristics of abstract art, which are determined both by the pictographic nature of calligraphy as the basis of its art and by calligraphy art itself. From strokes to structure, from structure to composition, it includes many artistic elements such as the modeling of points, lines, planes, groups, rows, arrangement of space and ink color, adding layers of ambiguity

and complexity to calligraphy art, thus superimposing its abstract meaning. Moreover, from the perspective of actual appreciation experience, the abstract meaning of calligraphy works often becomes the path and bridge for cross-cultural audiences to interpret calligraphy art. (Yong Wenmao, 2017)

### 1.5.3 Script Styles

Pictograms are a form of writing that directly depicts the shapes of objects or conveys ideas in the form of pictures. In pictograms, each symbol represents a specific object or concept, with its shape directly associated with the object or concept it represents. Pictograms were commonly used in ancient civilizations' writing systems, such as ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs and Chinese oracle bone scripts.

**Oracle Bone Script:** Oracle bone script is a form of writing from the ancient Chinese Shang Dynasty, primarily inscribed on turtle shells and animal bones for divination and recording information related to rituals, politics, and society. Oracle bone script features various forms, including pictographs, ideographs, and compound ideographs, making it one of the earliest forms of Chinese writing and a significant milestone in the development of Chinese script.

**Bronze Inscriptions:** Bronze inscriptions are inscriptions carved on bronze objects during the ancient Chinese Shang and Zhou Dynasties, primarily used to record information about rituals, family genealogies, and political declarations. Known for their bold and elegant fonts and rich textual content, bronze inscriptions are important historical documents for studying ancient Chinese politics, economy, and culture.

In the long history of Chinese calligraphy, it has evolved from oracle bone inscriptions and bronze inscriptions into five script styles: seal script, clerical script, regular script, running script, and cursive script.

Seal script was the official script style of the Qin Dynasty. It originated in the Shang and Zhou Dynasties as a rudimentary form and became a unified form of writing during the Qin Dynasty. The characters are elongated and were often inscribed on stone monuments, such as the "Yishan Inscription" and "Taishan Inscription."

Clerical script evolved from seal script and became the official script style of the Han Dynasty. The characters are relatively wide and different from seal script. There are two forms: ink-written and inscribed. Ink-written clerical script is commonly found on bamboo slips, while inscribed clerical script is often seen on stone monuments, such

as the "Mawangdui Silk Texts," "Qin bamboo slips," "Cao Quan Stele," and "Yiyong Stele."

Running script has a faster writing speed with continuous and smooth strokes, emphasizing the starting and ending points of each stroke. The Wei and Jin Dynasties were the mature period of running script, mainly referring to the calligraphic works of Wang Xizhi and Wang Xianzhi.

Cursive script further simplifies clerical script and running script for continuous writing, with characters flowing seamlessly into one another. Its characteristics include bold strokes, smooth lines, and varied and twisting strokes, displaying a free and unrestrained artistic style. Representative works of cursive script from the Wei and Jin Dynasties include Zhang Zhi's "Champion Tie" and the "Seventeen Tie" by the "Two Wangs." In the Tang Dynasty, cursive script works include Zhang Xu's "Four Poems of Antiquity," and in the Ming Dynasty, representative figures of cursive script include Fu Shan, Zhang Ruitu, and Wang Duo.

Regular script is a fundamental script style in Chinese calligraphy, and it is the most standardized. The characters are upright and well-proportioned, with straight and neat strokes. The writing style is dignified and steady, commonly used for formal documents and writings. The Tang Dynasty was the pinnacle of regular script, with masterpieces such as Ouyang Xun's "Inscription on the Nine Casks of the Imperial Palace Spring" and Yan Zhenqing's "Duo Bao Tower Stele," as well as Liu Gongquan's "Xuanmi Tower Stele."

#### 1.5.4 Paradigm

Paradigm theory is a theoretical framework aimed at explaining and understanding the changes and developments in human society and culture. The theory posits that social and cultural changes are not isolated events but are driven by a series of interconnected paradigm shifts. Paradigm theory emphasizes that the evolution of society and culture can be seen as transitions between paradigms, which can bring about fundamental changes and influences within a given historical and social context.

#### 1.5.5 Formalism

Formalism aesthetics is an aesthetic theory that emphasizes the significance and value of the form, structure, and organization of artworks. In formalism aesthetics, the focus is placed on the intrinsic formal characteristics of artworks rather than their

themes, content, or social background. The theory highlights the importance of visual elements such as line, color, shape, etc., in artworks, as well as the unique visual effects and sensations produced by artworks.

#### 1.5.6 Iconology

Iconology is the study of symbols and symbol systems, aimed at understanding the use and significance of symbols in human culture and society. Iconology holds that symbols are symbolic forms that convey information, ideas, and meanings, and images are an important form of symbols. The discipline explores the processes of symbol generation, dissemination, understanding, and interpretation, as well as the relationship between symbols and human thought, culture, society, and history.

#### 1.5.7 Protection

Protection refers to taking measures to maintain, preserve, and safeguard specific cultural heritage, artworks, or traditions to ensure their continued existence, avoidance of harm, or destruction. The purpose of protection is to safeguard and pass on the uniqueness and value of culture, enabling future generations to continue benefiting and understanding its significance and historical background.

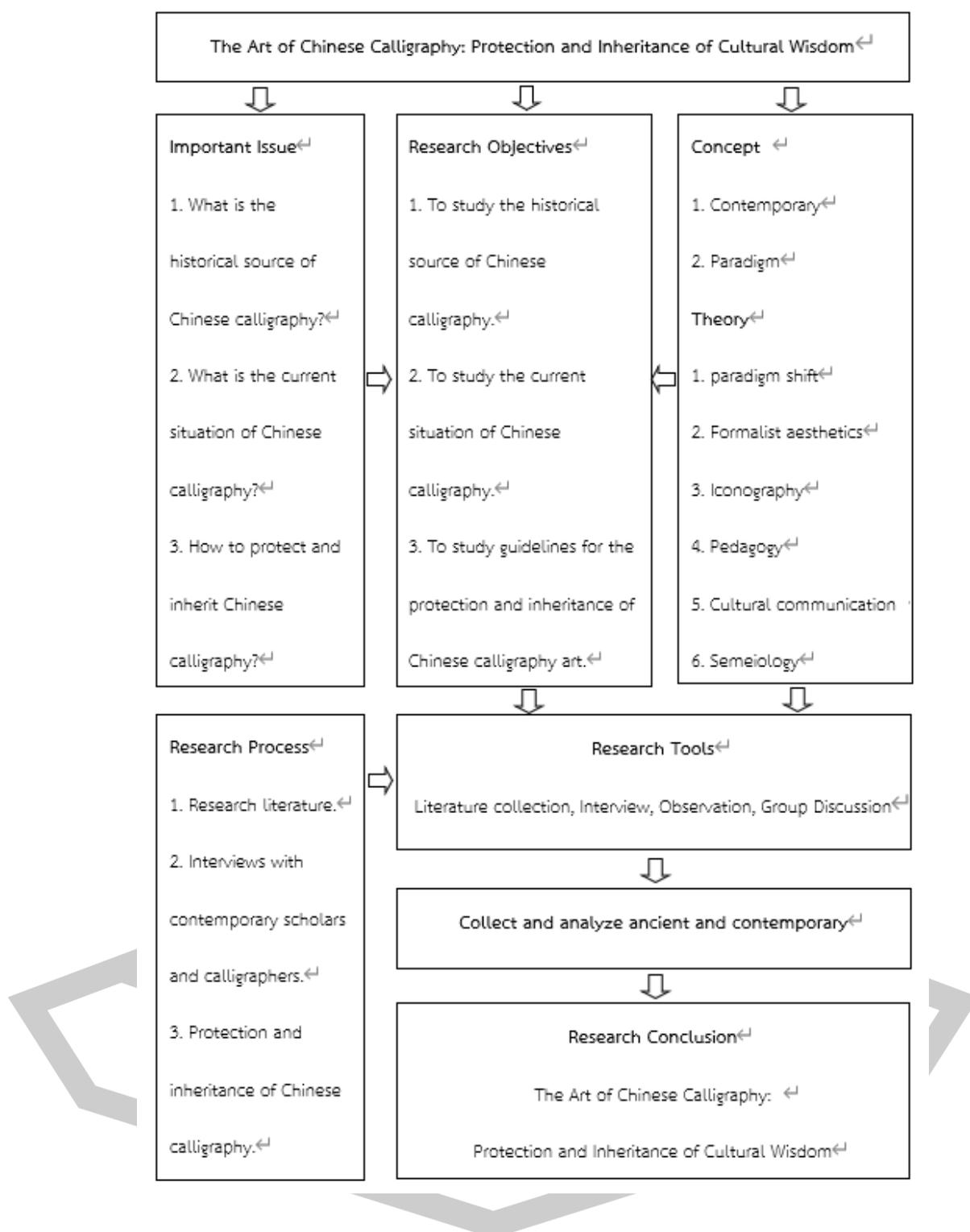
#### 1.5.8 Inheritance

Inheritance refers to the process of transmitting culture, arts, knowledge, or skills from one era or group to another. The aim of inheritance is to maintain and develop the traditions, values, and techniques of specific cultural heritage, enabling their continuation and adaptation to different eras and environments, thus achieving the ongoing vitality and richness of culture.

#### 1.5.9 Cultural Wisdom

Cultural wisdom refers to the wisdom and understanding accumulated by a society or group over a long period of development regarding culture, values, traditions, and ways of life. Cultural wisdom encompasses understanding and respect for aspects such as history, traditions, folklore, beliefs, as well as contemplation and practices regarding the survival, development, and harmonious coexistence of the human community. Cultural wisdom is a precious asset for a society or group, playing a significant role in preserving cultural traditions, promoting social progress, and human development.

## 1.6 Conceptual Framework



## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEWS

This chapter primarily introduces the basic situation of Chinese calligraphy, providing a detailed literature review of relevant topics including the social background, cultural ecology, educational system, historical evolution, and the current research status of contemporary calligraphy. Specifically, formalist aesthetics, semiotics analysis methods, and paradigm theory are employed to describe the formal transformation and artistic value of Chinese calligraphy, as well as its evolution under different cultural backgrounds. These calligraphy literature reviews provide a solid historical foundation for studying contemporary calligraphy, and these artistic theories also offer comprehensive academic support for contemporary calligraphy.

#### 2.1 Contemporary Chinese Society and Calligraphy Culture

##### 2.1.1 Contemporary Chinese Society

##### 2.1.2 Chinese Calligraphy Culture

#### 2.2 The ancient imperial examination system and contemporary calligraphy education

##### 2.2.1 The Imperial Examination System

##### 2.2.2 Contemporary Calligraphy Education

#### 2.3 The Historical Transformation of Chinese Calligraphy

##### 2.3.1 Wei-Jin New Style

##### 2.3.2 The Transition from The Wei and Jin Dynasties to The Tang dynasty

##### 2.3.3 The Transition During The Song Dynasty

##### 2.3.4 The Retrogression and Transformation of the Yuan Dynasty

##### 2.3.5 The Mass Transformation in the Ming Dynasty

##### 2.3.6 The Stele Study Movement in the Qing Dynasty

##### 2.3.7 The Modernity Transition

#### 2.4 Overview of Conceptual Theory

##### 2.4.1 The Concept and Theory of Paradigms

##### 2.4.2 Formalistic Aesthetics

##### 2.4.3 Iconology

2.4.4 Pedagogy

2.4.5 Cultural communication

2.4.6 Semeiology

2.5 Chinese Calligraphy Literature

2.5.1 Ancient Calligraphy Literature

2.5.2 Contemporary Calligraphy Literature

2.5.3 Case Study: Enjoying Criticism: Collection of Papers from the National Representative Middle-aged and Young Calligraphers Case Study Association

The details of each section were elaborated as follows:

## **2.1 Chinese Society and Calligraphy Culture**

2.1.1 Chinese Society

2.1.1.1 The Concept of Contemporary

In 2016, the Commercial Press published the seventh edition of the "Modern Chinese Dictionary," edited by the Dictionary Editing Office of the Institute of Linguistics at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. It includes the term "contemporary," referring to the current era. For China, it primarily denotes the period after the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949.

The National Planning Textbook for Higher Education during the Eleventh Five-Year Plan period defines it as:

In the usual sense, contemporary refers to a qualitative delineation of the period in human developmental history. Globally, contemporary should refer to the period after the Third World Science and Technology Revolution. The Third Technological Revolution is mainly characterized by the widespread application of atomic energy, electronic computers, and space technology, involving a technological revolution in information control technology in various fields such as information technology, new energy technology, new materials technology, biotechnology, space technology, and ocean technology. The contemporary period should be generally defined as the period after the 1940s and 1950s. (Guo Dajun, 2011)

Regarding this article, the above two viewpoints have defined "contemporary," but they cannot accurately pinpoint the time boundary for "contemporary calligraphy." The researcher believe it should be delineated based on disciplinary significance,

specifically from the abolition of the imperial examination system in 1905 to the present, including a future period.

#### 2.1.1.2 The Etymology and Meaning of China



Figure 1 "He Zun" bronze vessel

Source: The Baoji Bronze Museum in China, Cao Hengyuan, 2022



Figure 2 "宅兹中国" Bronze Inscription

Source: The Baoji Bronze Museum in China, Cao Hengyuan, 2022

The image above depicts the "He Zun" bronze vessel unearthed in 1963 in Jiacun Town, Baoji County, Shaanxi Province. It represents early Western Zhou period (11th century BC - 771 BC) bronze ware, standing at 39 centimeters tall with a diameter of 28.6 centimeters. The bottom is inscribed with 122 characters and is currently housed in the Baoji Bronze Museum (the largest bronze museum in China). According to the inscription, this is the earliest record of the term "中国" ("Zhōngguó"), meaning the central state of the world. Because the capital of the Zhou Dynasty was established in Chengzhou (modern-day Luoyang, Henan Province), adjacent to the Yellow River, the term "中国" broadly referred to the Central Plains region, centered around the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River (present-day Henan Province).

Professor Hu Axian from Nanjing University, in his project "Research on Ancient and Modern Titles and Dynastic Names in China," points out that the study of national titles is an important subject in history, geography, ethnology, cultural history, and onomastics. The term "中国古今称谓" ("Zhōngguó Gǔjīn Chēngwèi") refers to the appellations of the region of China from ancient times to the present, including self-designations and appellations by others. In toponymy, these appellations belong to the category of spatial names, that is, the names of this human geographical entity known as China. (Hu Axiang, 2000).

According to the "Brief Chronology of Chinese History" published by the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, the sequence of Chinese dynasties is as follows:

Xia Dynasty. Approximately 2070 BC - approximately 1600 BC.

Shang Dynasty. Approximately 1600 BC - 1046 BC.

Zhou Dynasty. 1046 BC - 221 BC.

- Western Zhou Dynasty. 1046 BC - 771 BC.

- Eastern Zhou Dynasty. 770 BC - 256 BC.

- Spring and Autumn Period. 770 BC - 476 BC.

- Warring States Period. 475 BC - 221 BC.

Qin Dynasty. 221 BC - 207 BC.

Han Dynasty. 202 BC - AD 220.

- Western Han Dynasty. 202 BC - AD 8.

- Eastern Han Dynasty. AD 25 - 220.

Three Kingdoms Period. AD 220 - 280.

- Wei Dynasty. AD 220 - 265.

- Shu Han Dynasty. AD 221 - 263.

- Wu Dynasty. AD 222 - 280.

Jin Dynasty. AD 265 - 420.

- Western Jin Dynasty. AD 265 - 316.

- Eastern Jin Dynasty. AD 317 - 420.

Sixteen Kingdoms. AD 304 - 439.

Northern and Southern Dynasties. AD 386 - 589.

- Northern Dynasties. AD 386 - 581.

- Southern Dynasties. AD 420 - 589.

Sui Dynasty. AD 581 - 618.

Tang Dynasty. AD 618 - 907.

Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms Period. AD 907 - 979.

Song Dynasty. AD 960 - 1276.

- Northern Song Dynasty. AD 960 - 1127.

- Southern Song Dynasty. AD 1127 - 1276.

Liao Dynasty. AD 916 - 1125.

Western Xia Dynasty. AD 1038 - 1227.

Jin Dynasty. AD 1115 - 1234.

Yuan Dynasty. AD 1271 - 1368.

Ming Dynasty. AD 1368 - 1644.

Qing Dynasty. AD 1644 - 1911.

Republic of China (ROC). AD 1912 - 1949.

People's Republic of China (PRC). Established on October 1, 1949. (The Yearbook Society of the People's Republic of China, 2022)

The evolution of the meaning of the name "China" fully reflects the fact that Chinese history is created collectively by various ethnic groups within China, regardless of cultural level or geographical distance, whether Han or non-Han; China's territory is composed of both the Central Plains and the borderlands; modern China is the inheritance and development of historical China. (Hu Axiang, 2002)

### 2.1.1.3 The Etymology and Meaning of Society

The article "The Evolution of the Concept of 'Society' and Marx's New Interpretation of 'Society'" points out that in the West, "society" is a rather ancient concept, with the English word "society" and the French word "société" both originating from the Latin word "socius," meaning ally or partner. In the 1st century, Cicero translated Aristotle's "koinōnia politikē" from Greek into Latin as "societas civilis," referring to an urban community distinct from tribes and villages, occupying a certain space, having a certain organization, and reflecting the developed economic, political, and moral-cultural life of the city-state. Here, the word "societas" continued the meaning of Aristotle's "social group," indicating an association or alliance for commercial or political purposes. (Xia Xue, 2016)

According to Williams's research on the etymology of "society" in "Keywords," the term "Society" appeared in English in the 14th century, with its closest etymology being the Old French "société" and the Latin form "societas," with the earliest Latin word "socius" meaning "companion." By the mid-16th century, "Society" shifted from "general rules of friendship or acquaintance" to "special rules constituting a particular society." This trajectory of transformation gave rise to the modern concept of "Society," where by the late 18th century, the term had a universal and abstract connotation: "Man is a Social Creature." By the 19th century, "Society" could be seen as a "concrete object," leading to expressions such as "Social Reformer." Williams emphasizes that when society can be regarded as an "object," the issues of the relationship between "Man and Society" or "The Individual and Society" may be clarified and defined using new methods. (Simon Williams, 2016)

Actually, after Aristotle proposed the concept of "Civic Society" in the 16th century, the term "society" gradually evolved from "individual" to "nation" or from "emotion" to "legal system."

In China, the concept of "society" first appeared in works such as the "Old Book of Tang" from the Five Dynasties period (945 AD) and the "Record of Reflections at Leisure" from the Song Dynasty (1176 AD), referring to groups with similar aspirations. Later, this concept was introduced to Japan. In 1870, Kato Hiroyuki's "The Essence of True Politics" and the "Bai Xue Lian Huan" from the Western Zhou Dynasty first introduced the content of "Socialism" and "Communism," but there were no

corresponding Chinese translations. In 1875, Fukuchi Genichiro translated "社会" into "society" in English based on the Western Zhou Dynasty's transliteration, and in 1878, he created the Chinese term "社会主义" to translate "socialism" in English. This process led to the tendency of the term "society" towards the concept of "nation."

"The Formation of Modern Chinese Vocabulary" directly points out that the meaning of "society" in China has been deeply influenced by Japan (Massini, 1997).

The latest edition of the "Modern Chinese Dictionary" (Seventh Edition) offers two interpretations of the term "society": firstly, it refers to a whole formed by a certain economic foundation and superstructure, including primitive society, slave society, feudal society, capitalist society, communist society, etc.; secondly, it broadly refers to groups of people interconnected by common material conditions (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, 2016).

In summary, in a narrow sense, "society," also called "social groups," refers to "companions," referring to groups with similar aspirations. In a broad sense, "society" encompasses the sum of relationships formed by living beings and their environment, including human production and consumption, politics and economics, culture and religion, entertainment and games, and various other social activities. Karl Marx explained the concept of "society" in "Wage Labour and Capital," arguing that the sum of production relations constitutes social relations, which in turn constitutes a society with unique characteristics, with each historical stage having its own special sum of production relations (Marx, Selected Works of Marx and Engels, 1995).

#### 2.1.1.4 Overview of Chinese Society

##### 2.1.1.4.1 Five Forms of Development of Chinese Society

Karl Marx proposed based on the mode of production: "The modes of production of the Asiatic, ancient, feudal, and modern bourgeois society can be regarded as several epochs in the economic development of society." He foresaw and elaborated on the emergence of communist society. (Marx, Engels, Selected Works, 1995)

Friedrich Engels, in "The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State," identified five stages of human historical development: primitive tribal society,

ancient slave society, medieval feudal society, modern capitalist society, and the future communist society. (Friedrich Engels, 2022)

Later, Marxist theorists further developed this theory, summarizing the basic forms of society as follows:

- (1) Primitive society
- (2) Slave society
- (3) Feudal society
- (4) Capitalist society
- (5) Communist society

In fact, the evolution of Chinese social history, from primitive society to slave society, from slave society to feudal society, aligns with the Marxist theory of social forms. However, after the end of feudal society, China did not embark on the path of capitalist society but entered socialist society, the primary stage of communism.

According to the "Chronological Table of Chinese History" published by the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, the historical stages of Chinese society are as follows:

Ancient Chinese history began around 1.7 million years ago with the Yuanmou Man and lasted until before the Opium War in 1840. It encompasses the history of primitive, slave, and feudal societies in China. The period of modern Chinese history spans from the Opium War in 1840 to the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, representing the era of China as a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society. The founding of the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949, marked the beginning of the socialist revolution and construction period in China. (The Yearbook Society of the People's Republic of China, 2022)

It can be observed that the development of Chinese society has gone through various stages, including the primitive society (from the Old Stone Age to the establishment of the Xia Dynasty, approximately 2.5 million to 2070 BCE), slave society (from the establishment of the Xia Dynasty to the end of the Spring and Autumn Period, 2070 BCE to 476 BCE), feudal society (from the early Warring States period to the end of the Qing Dynasty, 475 BCE to 1911 CE), and entering into a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society (from the beginning of the Opium War in 1840 to 1949). On

October 1, 1949, the People's Republic of China was established, marking the entry of China into the socialist society.

#### 2.1.1.4.2 Social System of Contemporary China

##### 2.1.1.4.2.1 Semi-Colonial and Semi-Feudal Society

###### 2.1.1.4.2.1.1 Formation Stage

Under the feudal system, China was an independent country where a natural economy prevailed. Whether in the Central Plains with its agrarian population, the southern regions with fishing and hunting communities, or the northern areas with nomadic tribes, people could largely sustain themselves. The Qing government also adhered to a policy of "closed-door isolation." However, with the progress of the First Industrial Revolution, Western countries rapidly developed their social productive forces and expanded their colonial reach worldwide to gain more resources.

In the 1830s, Britain used opium to force open China's doors, leading to significant financial losses, erosion of the ruling institutions, weakening of military capabilities, and severe physical and mental harm to the Chinese populace. In June 1839, Lin Zexu, with the support of Emperor Daoguang, launched a large-scale anti-opium campaign known as the "Humen Opium Destruction." This campaign became the root cause of Britain's invasion of China.

According to the "Modern History" published by the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, the Qing government signed a series of unequal treaties with Western powers, including:

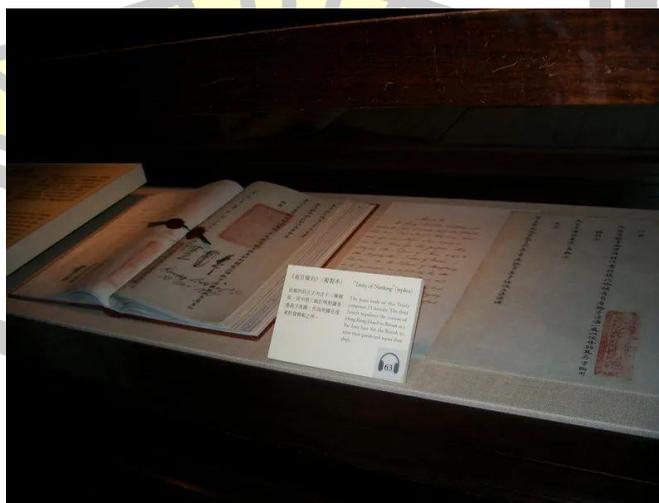


Figure 3 Treaty of Perpetual Peace and Friendship between China and Great Britain

Source: The British Museum, 2022

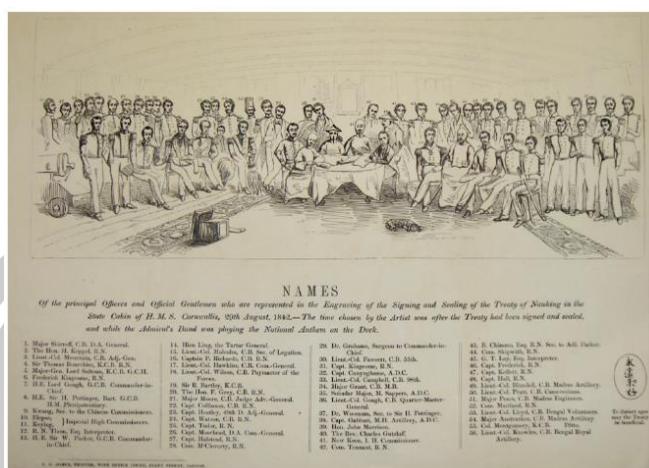


Figure 4 Diagram of Attendee Names

Source: The British Museum, 2022

In 1840, Britain launched the aggressive Opium War against China. During the war, patriotic officials and soldiers, along with the people of Sanyuanli, bravely fought against the invaders. However, due to the compromising policy of the Qing government, the war ultimately ended in failure. In 1842, Britain forced the Qing government to sign the "Treaty of Perpetual Peace and Friendship between China and Great Britain," marking the beginning of the erosion of China's independence and territorial integrity, transitioning from a feudal society to a semi-colonial and semi-feudal one.

The Second Opium War from 1856 to 1860 was initiated by Britain and France to expand their aggressive interests in China, while the United States and Russia benefitted without direct involvement. The treaties coerced upon the Qing government by the four nations, such as the "Treaty of Tianjin" and the "Treaty of Beijing," resulted in China losing more territory and sovereignty, with foreign aggression extending to coastal provinces and the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze River. The semi-colonial status of Chinese society was further deepened.

In the latter half of the 19th century, as capitalism transitioned into imperialism globally, imperialism intensified its aggression against China. The Sino-French War in 1883 and the First Sino-Japanese War in 1894 broke out successively. The signing of the "Traité de Paix, d'amitié et de commerce entre la Chine et la France" allowed France to further open up southwestern China, while the "Treaty of

Shimonoseki" between China and Japan significantly increased China's semi-colonial status. Subsequently, various imperialist powers fiercely competed for capital export to China, seized "leased territories," delineated "spheres of influence," and incited a frenzy of dividing China, leading to an unprecedented national crisis.



Figure 5 Austria-Hungary, Belgium, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, Netherland, Russia, Spain, United States and China —Final Protocol for the Settlement of the Disturbances of 1900

Source: <https://baike.baidu.com/item/辛丑条约#4>, 2022

In the summer of 1900, the Eight-Nation Alliance, consisting of Britain, Russia, Japan, France, Germany, the United States, Italy, and Austria-Hungary, invaded China. In 1901, the Qing government was forced to sign the humiliating "Final Protocol for the Settlement of the Disturbances of 1900" with the Eight Nations, as well as Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain, and other eleven countries. This marked the formation of China's semi-colonial and semi-feudal society. (The Yearbook Society of the People's Republic of China, 2022)

In addition, there is also recorded a peasant uprising:

Following the Opium War, internal class contradictions in the Qing Dynasty intensified, and peasant uprisings surged. In 1851, Hong Xiuquan launched the Taiping Rebellion and established the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom regime. In 1853, the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom made Tianjing its capital and promulgated the "Land

System of the Heavenly Dynasty." By 1856, the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom had reached its zenith militarily. The Tianjing Incident, triggered by intensified internal conflicts within the leadership group, greatly weakened the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. In 1864, the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom movement failed. The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom movement, led by Hong Xiuquan, reflected the characteristics of a new era of peasant warfare. Some leaders of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom began to seek truth from the West, exploring paths for China's independence and prosperity, bravely undertaking the tasks of anti-feudalism and anti-aggression. The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom movement represented the peak of China's peasant warfare. (The Yearbook Society of the People's Republic of China, 2022)

It can be seen that from 1840 to 1901, China transitioned from a feudal society to a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society in just 60 years. On the one hand, the Qing government's policy of isolationism led to China's disconnection from the world, and the deeply entrenched feudal ideology over thousands of years inevitably resulted in backwardness. On the other hand, China's capitalist economy was severely suppressed under the conditions of self-sufficient natural economy, and Western countries did not allow China's capitalist economy to grow strong and threaten their own interests. Moreover, the first industrial revolution of the 1860s to the mid-19th century was coming to an end, transitioning to the second industrial revolution of the 1870s, during which Western countries further invaded and plundered resources for better development.

#### 2.1.1.4.2.1.2 Concluding Stage

The end phase of the Qing Dynasty witnessed the aggression of imperialism against the nation, plunging the Chinese people into deep turmoil. Finally, in 1911, the Xinhai Revolution erupted, overthrowing the rule of the Qing government and bringing an end to the millennia-old monarchy. In 1912, with the aim of establishing a bourgeois republic, the Republic of China was founded.

The Republic of China, abbreviated as ROC, was established following the Xinhai Revolution when the Revolutionary Party established a provisional government in Nanjing, with Sun Yat-sen elected as the provisional president by various provinces. The Republic of China was formally established in January 1912. In March 1912, Yuan Shikai seized the fruits of the Xinhai Revolution

and assumed the position of provisional president of the Republic of China, with the provisional government relocating to Beijing. After the provisional government officially moved to Beijing, the warlord regime of the Beiyang government, led by Yuan Shikai, was established. Yuan Shikai suppressed the Kuomintang internally and sold off national sovereignty externally, prompting Sun Yat-sen to call for armed resistance against Yuan, leading to the Second Revolution. Due to the disunity within the Kuomintang and the strong military forces of the Beiyang government, the Second Revolution quickly failed. After suppressing the Second Revolution, Yuan Shikai initiated efforts to restore the monarchy. Sun Yat-sen once again organized armed resistance against Yuan, leading to the Protect the Nation Movement. Yuan Shikai was forced to abandon the monarchy and died in despair. (The Yearbook Society of the People's Republic of China, 2022)

Internationally, the Republic of China refers to the period from 1912 to 1949 in China, with the Nationalist government considered the legitimate authority. From the perspective of Chinese history, this period is an important component of modern and contemporary history, roughly divided into three stages:

First stage: From the establishment of the provisional government in Nanjing in January 1912 to March 12, it was the period of the provisional government, during which Sun Yat-sen and Yuan Shikai served as presidents.

Second stage: From March 12, 1912, to 1928, it was the period of the Beiyang government, which was successively ruled by Yuan Shikai (1912-1916), Duan Qirui of the Anhui clique (1916-1920), the Zhili clique (1920-1924), and the Fengtian clique (1924-1928), producing five presidents: Yuan Shikai, Li Yuanhong, Feng Guozhang, Xu Shichang, and Cao Kun.

After Yuan Shikai's death, warlordism prevailed in China. Warlord Zhang Xun of Xuzhou entered Beijing under the pretext of mediating the "palace cabinet conflict" and supported the restoration of Puyi, but the restoration farce lasted only a short 12 days. After Duan Qirui returned to power, he refused to restore the "Provisional Constitution" and convene the National Assembly. To uphold the republican system, Sun Yat-sen advocated the Constitutional Protection Movement, which, however, soon failed. (The Yearbook Society of the People's Republic of China, 2022)

The third phase: The period of the Nanjing Nationalist Government, from 1928 to 1949, saw the presidency of Chiang Kai-shek and Li Zongren.

The Republic of China was a turbulent era, with major wars listed chronologically as follows:

**Revolution of 1911:** From 1911 to 1912, the revolutionaries overthrew the rule of the Qing Dynasty and established the government of the Republic of China. The victory of the Revolution of 1911 propelled the transformation of modern Chinese society and represented a complete nationalist democratic revolution, exploring a path forward for the development of the Chinese nation.

**Second Revolution:** In 1913, an attempt to suppress Yuan Shikai's restoration of the monarchy ended in failure.

**Zhang Xun's Restoration War:** From July 1, 1917, to July 12, 1917, Zhang Xun initiated a coup in Beijing after a prolonged period of conspiracy, supporting Puyi's return to power, but the regime lasted only 12 days before being overthrown by government forces.

**War of the Zhili-Anhui cliques:** From July 14, 1920, to July 19, 1920, the Zhili clique led by Duan Qirui was defeated by a coalition of the Fengtian and Anhui cliques. The Zhili clique led by Cao Kun and the Fengtian clique led by Zhang Zuolin gained control of the Beijing regime.

**First Zhili-Fengtian War:** In 1922, the Zhili clique, led by Wu Peifu, controlled the Beijing regime.

**Second Zhili-Fengtian War:** In 1924, the Zhili clique was decisively defeated, and Wu Peifu was forced to flee south. The Fengtian clique, led by Zhang Zuolin, replaced the Zhili clique and began to take control of the Beijing regime.

**Northern Expedition:** From 1926 to 1928, led by the Kuomintang (KMT), the National Revolutionary Army, under the command of Chiang Kai-shek, conducted a campaign for national unification, defeating the warlord regimes and establishing the Nanjing Nationalist Government.

**Land Reform War:** From August 1927 to 1937, led by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army fought against the reactionary rule of the Kuomintang, aiming to abolish the feudal land system and establish a democratic regime for workers and peasants. This revolutionary war, led by

figures such as Mao Zedong, gradually shifted the focus of CCP activities from urban to rural areas, establishing revolutionary bases in the countryside, initiating land reform, developing revolutionary armed forces and workers' and peasants' regimes, and opening up a new path for the Chinese revolution, characterized by rural encirclement of cities and armed seizure of power.

**Jiang-Gui War:** In March 1929, tensions escalated between Chiang Kai-shek and the warlords of the Gui clique, led by Li Zongren, resulting in a war that ended with the defeat of the Gui clique.

**Central Plains War:** From May 1930 to October 1930, this war mainly took place in the Central Plains region, where Chiang Kai-shek defeated the anti-Chiang coalition led by Feng Yuxiang and Yan Xishan, achieving temporary and nominal unity in China.

**Second Sino-Japanese War:** From September 18, 1931, to August 15, 1945, China fought a war against Japanese aggression for eight years, which was an integral part of World War II. Japan unconditionally surrendered on August 15, 1945.

**Chinese Civil War:** From June 1946 to September 1949, the Chinese People's Liberation Army, under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, fought to overthrow the rule of the Kuomintang and liberate all of China. In July 1947, the PLA, led by the CCP, transitioned from strategic defense to strategic offense, launching the Liaoshen Campaign, the Huaihai Campaign, and the Pingjin Campaign, which essentially annihilated the main forces of the Kuomintang. In April 1949, the PLA crossed the Yangtze River, liberated Nanjing, and declared the overthrow of Kuomintang rule. On October 1, 1949, the People's Republic of China was proclaimed in Beijing. In 1951, Tibet was peacefully liberated.

After 1840, feudal China gradually transformed into a semi-colonial and semi-feudal country. The Chinese people have bravely struggled for national independence, liberation, and democratic freedom. In the 20th century, China underwent tremendous historical changes. In 1911, Dr. Sun Yat-sen led the Revolution of 1911, abolishing the feudal monarchy and founding the Republic of China. However, the historical task of the Chinese people to oppose imperialism and feudalism was not yet completed. (The Constitution of the People's Republic of China, 2004)

From this, it can be seen that the Republic of China, from 1912 to 1949, under the leadership of the bourgeoisie, represented a transitional period from feudal rule to modern China. The warlords of the Beiyang clique, backed by imperialism, seized power, leading to frequent conflicts, and attempts to restore the feudal monarchy were out of step with the historical trend of development. The bourgeois-led Nationalist government only achieved nominal national unity, as the northeastern region of China remained under Japanese influence, failing to change the semi-colonial and semi-feudal nature of Chinese society.

#### 2.1.1.4.2.1.3 Social System

Before 1840, China was a completely independent feudal country, practicing a feudal social system.

From 1840 to 1949, China was in a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society, which was a distorted social form formed by the invasion of foreign capitalist forces and collusion with Chinese feudal forces. The social system mainly includes the following:

(1) In 1851, the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom movement was a peasant class uprising to seize power, and in 1853, it promulgated the "Heavenly Kingdom Land System," attempting to establish an "egalitarian" ideal society, but ultimately ended in failure.

(2) Colonial system: The colonial system pervaded the entire semi-colonial and semi-feudal society, mainly referring to the invasion and plunder of China by Western countries, and forcing the Qing government to sign a series of unequal treaties to obtain special privileges within China.

(3) Feudalism has a history of more than two thousand years in China, and feudal forces are deeply rooted. The landlord class's Westernization faction advocated learning from Western countries to enhance their own strength, represented by Zeng Guofan and Li Hongzhang. The bureaucratic class's conservative faction was hostile to all foreign things and unwilling to make any changes, represented by Wo Ren. They, on the one hand, sought to maintain their ruling status and learn from Western countries for institutional reforms; on the other hand, they suppressed the development of capitalist economy to prevent threats to their own interests.

(4) Capitalist system: The bourgeoisie survived and developed in the midst of feudal and imperialist forces. The reformist faction opposed feudal autocracy, advocated the establishment of a parliament, promoted political reforms, advocated civil rights, and implemented constitutional monarchy, represented by Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao. The bourgeois revolutionary faction advocated a democratic republic system, attempting to establish a capitalist society, represented by Sun Yat-sen. In the New Culture Movement, there emerged a radical bourgeois faction that advocated science and democracy, disseminated socialist ideas, and had a profound impact on future generations.

In summary, the social system of semi-colonial and semi-feudal society mainly includes the feudal system, colonial system, and capitalist system, which are intertwined, interdependent, and mutually restrictive.

#### 2.1.1.4.2.2 Socialist Society

##### 2.1.1.4.2.2.1 The May Fourth Movement and the Founding of the Communist Party of China

Modern Chinese history can be divided into two stages: the stage of the old-democratic revolution from the Opium War in 1840 to the eve of the May Fourth Movement in 1919, and the stage of the new-democratic revolution from the May Fourth Movement in 1919 to the eve of the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. (The Yearbook Society of the People's Republic of China, 2022)

During the First World War, as China's capitalist economy further developed, the bourgeoisie strongly advocated for bourgeois democratic politics in China, opposing the rule of feudal warlords, leading to the emergence of the New Culture Movement. In 1915, Chen Duxiu founded "New Youth" in Shanghai, marking the rise of the New Culture Movement. "Democracy" and "Science" were the slogans put forward by the New Culture Movement, sparking a wave of intellectual liberation in society. After the victory of the October Socialist Revolution in Russia, Li Dazhao promoted the October Revolution, raising the banner of socialism in China for the first time, giving new impetus to the New Culture Movement.

The refusal of the Paris Peace Conference to address China's rightful demands aroused strong indignation among the Chinese people. The May Fourth Movement erupted in Beijing in 1919. By early June, the movement developed into a

nationwide patriotic movement led by the working class, achieving initial success. The May Fourth Movement was of great historical significance, marking the beginning of the new-democratic revolution in China.

After the May Fourth Movement, Marxism spread in China and became the mainstream of new ideological trends. A group of advanced individuals initially combined Marxism with the Chinese workers' movement. In 1920, communist groups were established in various places, and in 1921, the First National Congress of the Communist Party of China was held, marking the birth of the great Communist Party of China. In 1922, the Second National Congress of the Communist Party of China formulated the program for the democratic revolution, guiding the direction of the Chinese revolution. (The Yearbook Society of the People's Republic of China, 2022)

The Communist Party of China is the vanguard of the Chinese working class and the Chinese people, as well as the leading core of the socialist cause with Chinese characteristics. It represents the development requirements of China's advanced productive forces, the progressive direction of Chinese culture, and the fundamental interests of the broadest masses of the Chinese people. The Party's highest ideal and ultimate goal is to achieve communism. (Constitution of the Communist Party of China, 2017)

#### 2.1.1.4.2.2.2 The Victory of the New Democratic Revolution

The victory of the New Democratic Revolution is led by the proletariat and primarily aims at opposing imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucratic capitalism through a people's democratic revolution. Its goal is for the proletariat to firmly grasp the leadership of the revolution, thoroughly accomplish the historical tasks of anti-imperialism and anti-feudalism, and timely transition from the New Democratic stage to socialism. The establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949 marked the fundamental victory of the New Democratic Revolution in our country, and the basic completion of the socialist transformation by 1956 signaled the end of the New Democratic stage in China and the beginning of the primary stage of socialism.

The New Democratic Revolution has four stages:

(1) The first stage (1919-1927): Known as the "Great Revolution" period, with the years 1924-1927 being the National Revolutionary period, and 1926-1927 being the period of the Northern Expedition War.

(2) The second stage (1927-1937): Known as the period of the Agrarian Revolution.

(3) The third stage (1937-1945): Known as the period of the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression.

(4) The fourth stage (1945-1949): Known as the period of the Liberation War.

The Three Major Transformations to socialism refer to the socialist transformation led by the Communist Party of China after the establishment of the People's Republic of China, which targeted agriculture, handicrafts, and capitalist industry. It involved two aspects: the main one being the realization of socialist industrialization, and the gradual transformation of the production relations, including the collectivization of agriculture and handicrafts, and the establishment of public-private partnerships in capitalist industry. From the latter half of 1952 to 1956, within just four years, the private ownership of the means of production was transformed into socialist public ownership, leading China from the New Democratic stage to the socialist stage, and establishing the basic system of socialism. Since then, China has entered the primary stage of socialism.

The announcement from the State Council of the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China is as follows:

In 1949, under the leadership of Chairman Mao Zedong, the Communist Party of China led the people of all ethnic groups in China. After experiencing prolonged and arduous armed struggles and other forms of struggle, they finally overthrew the rule of imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucratic capitalism, and achieved the great victory of the New Democratic Revolution, establishing the People's Republic of China. Since then, the Chinese people have wielded state power and become the masters of the country.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, our country gradually realized the transition from New Democracy to socialism. The socialist transformation of the private ownership of the means of production has been completed,

the system of exploitation of man by man has been eliminated, and the socialist system has been established. The people's democratic dictatorship led by the working class and based on the alliance of workers and peasants, essentially the dictatorship of the proletariat, has been consolidated and developed. The Chinese people and the People's Liberation Army have defeated the aggression, sabotage, and armed provocations of imperialism and hegemonism, safeguarding the independence and security of the country and strengthening national defense. Significant achievements have been made in economic construction, with an independent and relatively complete socialist industrial system basically formed and agricultural production significantly improved. Education, science, culture, and other undertakings have seen great development, and socialist ideological education has achieved obvious results. The lives of the vast majority of the people have been greatly improved. (The Constitution of the People's Republic of China, 2004)

Comrade Mao Zedong's "On New Democracy" scientifically analyzed the situation in China and the world, accurately divided the entire historical period, clearly pointed out the issue of the leadership of the proletariat, correctly indicated the prospects and direction of the national revolution, and proposed the strategic thinking that the Chinese revolution should proceed in two steps: first, carry out the New Democratic Revolution, and second, proceed with the socialist revolution. There are four reasons for such a division: First, the semi-feudal and semi-colonial nature of Chinese society determines that the Chinese revolution must proceed in two steps; Second, the second stage of the socialist revolution requires the first stage of the New Democratic Revolution to provide sufficient social and economic conditions and material preparation; Third, revolutions of different natures have their own specific tasks and timing, and one revolution can only lead to another revolution; Fourth, anti-imperialism and anti-feudalism require the active participation of the Chinese national bourgeoisie. The first step is to establish a new China that combines a political system of New Democracy, a new democratic economy, and a new democratic culture. The second step is to build a socialist and even communist society. As Comrade Mao Zedong pointed out, in the stage of New Democratic Revolution, it is necessary to establish a New Democratic society under the leadership of the Chinese proletariat and

the joint dictatorship of various revolutionary classes in China, and the ultimate goal is socialism and communism. (Wei Ziliang, People's Daily Online, 2013)

#### 2.1.1.4.2.2.3 The Establishment and Significance of The Socialist System

The basic completion of socialist transformation marks the establishment of the socialist system in China, achieving the deepest and greatest social change in Chinese history, laying the foundation for the socialist modernization construction in China. Its significance is as follows:

(1) The victory of socialist transformation, in a populous country like China, successfully achieved the complex, difficult, and profound social change of eliminating private ownership. Instead of causing damage to productive forces, it promoted the development of industry, agriculture, and the entire national economy. Moreover, it received widespread support from the masses without causing significant social turmoil, making it a truly great historical victory.

(2) With the basic completion of socialist transformation, the economic structure of Chinese society has undergone fundamental changes. The class exploitation system based on private ownership of the means of production, which had existed for thousands of years, has been basically eliminated. Socialist economy has become the dominant component of the national economy, and the socialist economic system has been established in China. Together with the socialist political system established at the First National People's Congress in 1954, it completed the deepest and greatest social change in history, transitioning China from a new democratic society to the primary stage of socialism.

(3) In practice, the Communist Party of China has creatively opened up a path of socialist transformation suitable for China's characteristics by integrating the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism with the specific realities of socialist revolution in China. This enriched the scientific socialist theory of Marxism with new experiences and thoughts.

(4) The victory of socialist transformation has greatly liberated the social productive forces in China, promoted the development of productive forces, and opened up broad prospects for the development of socialist construction and the improvement of people's living standards.

In summary, the founding of the People's Republic of China and the establishment of the socialist system represent the second historic upheaval in 20th-century Chinese history. This marks an unprecedented victory in the people's revolution in China, creating the prerequisites and laying the foundation for China's socialist modernization construction. (Sogou Encyclopedia, 2022)

The victory of the Chinese New Democratic Revolution and the achievements of the socialist cause are the results of the leadership of the Communist Party of China over the people of all ethnic groups in China, guided by Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought. Despite facing numerous difficulties and obstacles, the Chinese people, under the guidance of these ideologies, have adhered to truth, corrected mistakes, and achieved success. China will remain in the primary stage of socialism for a long time. The fundamental task of the state is to concentrate its efforts on socialist modernization along the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics. The people of all ethnic groups in China will continue, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China and guided by Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, and the important thought of Three Represents, to uphold the people's democratic dictatorship, adhere to the socialist path, uphold reform and opening up, continuously improve socialist institutions, develop the socialist market economy, promote socialist democracy, improve socialist legal systems, rely on their own efforts, work hard, gradually achieve modernization in industry, agriculture, national defense, and science and technology, promote the coordinated development of material, political, and spiritual civilizations, and build China into a prosperous, democratic, civilized socialist country. (Constitution of the People's Republic of China, 2004)

#### 2.1.1.4.3 Contemporary China's Physical Geography

##### 2.1.1.4.3.1 Regional Planning

China is located in the eastern part of Asia, on the west coast of the Pacific Ocean. It has a land area of approximately 9.6 million square kilometers, with over 18,000 kilometers of coastline along the eastern and southern mainland and an area of approximately 4.7 million square kilometers of inland and marginal seas. There are more than 7,600 islands distributed in its waters, with Taiwan being the largest, covering an area of 35,798 square kilometers. China shares borders with 14 countries

and is adjacent to 8 countries by sea. Its administrative divisions include 4 municipalities directly under the central government, 23 provinces, 5 autonomous regions, and 2 special administrative regions, with Beijing as the capital. (Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, 2005)

As shown in the map:

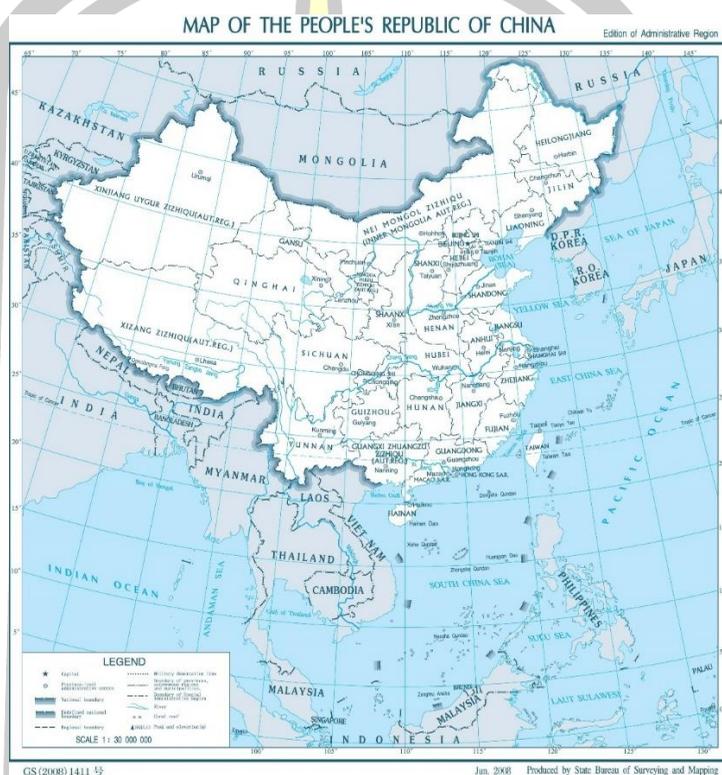


Figure 6 Map of The People's Republic of China

Source: <http://www.gissky.net>, 2008

As of the end of 2019, China has a total of 34 provincial-level administrative regions, including 23 provinces, 5 autonomous regions, 4 municipalities directly under the central government, and 2 special administrative regions. The 23 provinces are Shandong, Shanxi, Henan, Hebei, Hunan, Hubei, Liaoning, Jilin, Heilongjiang, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Anhui, Fujian, Jiangxi, Taiwan, Guangdong, Hainan, Sichuan, Guizhou, Yunnan, Shaanxi, Gansu, and Qinghai. The 5 autonomous regions are Inner Mongolia, Guangxi Zhuang, Tibet, Ningxia Hui, and Xinjiang Uygur. The 4 municipalities directly under the central government are Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, and Chongqing. The 2 special administrative regions are Hong Kong and Macau.

China stretches about 5,200 kilometers from east to west across 5 time zones and over 60 degrees of longitude, and about 5,500 kilometers from north to south across nearly 50 degrees of latitude.

The easternmost point is the city of Fuyuan in Heilongjiang Province, known as the "Eastern First City." It is located in the triangle area where the Heilongjiang and Ussuri rivers meet, with Russia across the Heilongjiang and Ussuri rivers to the east and north, adjacent to Raohe to the south, and connected to Tongjiang to the west.

The northernmost point is Mohe City in Heilongjiang Province, located in the northwest of Heilongjiang Province, at the northern foot of the Greater Khingan Mountains. It borders the city of Ergun in Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region to the west, and it shares borders with Genhe City in Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region and the Huzhong District of the Daxing'anling area to the south. To the east, it borders Tahe County, and to the north, it is separated from the Russian Republic of Buryatia (formerly Chita Oblast) and Amur Oblast by the Heilongjiang River.

The westernmost point is Kashgar City in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, located in the southwest of Xinjiang. It is bordered by the Taklamakan Desert to the east, connected to the Kizilsu Kirghiz Autonomous Prefecture to the northwest, and adjacent to the Hotan Prefecture to the southeast. It shares borders with Tajikistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. Surrounded by mountains on the west, south, and east sides, the terrain slopes from southwest to northeast.

The southernmost point is the Zengmu Ansha in the Nansha Islands, located in the GMT+8 time zone at 3 degrees 52 minutes north latitude. Although it is impossible to station troops on the submerged shoal, Chinese warships and coast guard vessels conduct law enforcement patrols irregularly, making its strategic position extremely important. Specifically, Zengmu Ansha is a submerged shoal located in the South China Sea and is part of the Nansha Islands. In a broader sense, Zengmu Ansha consists of the Zengmu Reef, the Baxian Ansha, and the Lidi Ansha, forming a group of reefs.

According to the "Regional Geography" issued by the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, China can be divided into four regions as follows:

On the vast land of China, due to differences in geographical location and natural conditions in various regions, there are also distinct characteristics in terms of humanities and economics. The country can be divided into three natural regions: the Eastern Monsoon Region, the Northwestern Arid and Semi-arid Region, and the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. Among them, the Eastern Monsoon Region, due to significant differences in latitude between the north and south, is divided by the Qinling-Huaihe line into the Northern Region and the Southern Region. Therefore, the country can be divided into four major parts: the Northern Region, the Southern Region, the Northwestern Region, and the Qinghai-Tibet Region.

The Northern Region refers to the northern part of the Eastern Monsoon Region in China, mainly north of the Qinling-Huaihe line, east of the Greater Khingan Range and the Wusuli River, and facing the Bohai Sea and the Yellow Sea to the east. It includes all or most of the three northeastern provinces, five provinces and two municipalities along the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River, as well as parts of southeastern Gansu, Inner Mongolia, Jiangsu, and northern Anhui. It covers approximately 20% of the total area of the country and is home to about 40% of the population, with the Han ethnic group comprising the vast majority. Among the ethnic minorities, the Manchu and Korean ethnic groups in the northeast have relatively large populations.

The Southern Region refers to the southern part of the Eastern Monsoon Region in China, mainly south of the Qinling-Huaihe line, bordered by the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau to the west and facing the East China Sea and the South China Sea to the east and south. It includes the six provinces and one municipality along the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze River, as well as most parts of the coastal areas in the south and southwestern provinces. It covers approximately 25% of the total area of the country and is home to about 55% of the population, with the Han ethnic group being the majority. There are over 30 ethnic minorities in this region, with a population of over 50 million, mainly distributed in Guangxi, Yunnan, Guizhou, Sichuan, Hunan, and Hainan, among which the Zhuang, Miao, Yi, Tujia, Buyi, Dong, Bai, Hani, Dai, and Li ethnic groups have relatively large populations.

The Northwestern Region is located deep inland, west of the Greater Khingan Range, north of the Kunlun Mountains, Altai Mountains, Qilian Mountains,

and the Great Wall. It includes the northwestern parts of Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, and Gansu Province. This region has a long border with neighboring countries such as Russia, Mongolia, and Kazakhstan. It covers a vast area, accounting for approximately 30% of the total area of the country, with a population of about 4%, making it sparsely populated. The Northwestern Region is one of the areas where ethnic minorities in China are concentrated, with ethnic minorities accounting for about one-third of the total population, including Mongolian, Hui, Uygur, and Kazakh ethnic groups.

The Qinghai-Tibet Region is located in the southwestern part of China, west of the Hengduan Mountains, north of the Himalayas, and south of the Kunlun Mountains, Altai Mountains, and Qilian Mountains. It includes Qinghai, Tibet, and the western parts of Sichuan. It covers approximately 25% of the total area of the country, with a population of less than 1% of the national total. This is the region where Tibetan ethnic groups are concentrated in China. The Tibet Autonomous Region shares borders with neighboring countries such as Myanmar, India, Bhutan, and Nepal.

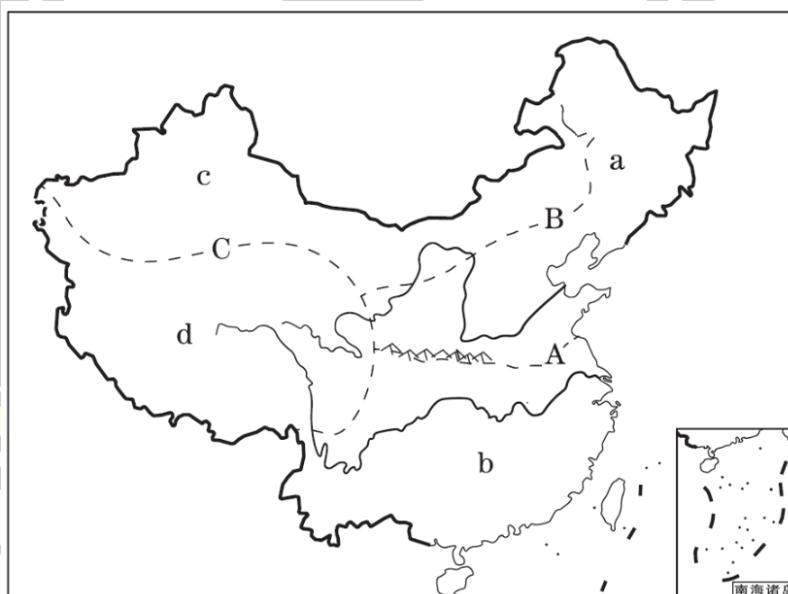


Figure 7 The four major geographical regions of China

Source: Cao Hengyuan, 2023

"a" represents the Northern Region, "b" represents the Southern Region, "c" represents the Northwestern Region, and "d" represents the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau Region. Boundary A is the dividing line between the Northern and Southern Regions,

defined by the Qinling Mountains-Huaihe River line. Boundary B is the dividing line between the Northern and Northwestern Regions, delineated by the Greater Khingan Range-Yin Mountains-Helanshan Mountains line. Boundary C is the dividing line between the Northwestern and Qinghai-Tibet Plateau Regions, marked by the Kunlun Mountains-Qilian Mountains-Hengduan Mountains line.

In addition, according to provincial-level administrative units, seven regions are further delineated as follows:

North China Region: Beijing, Tianjin, Hebei Province, Shanxi Province, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region.

Northeast China Region: Liaoning Province, Jilin Province, Heilongjiang Province.

East China Region: Shanghai, Jiangsu Province, Zhejiang Province, Anhui Province, Fujian Province, Jiangxi Province, Shandong Province, Taiwan Province.

Central China Region: Henan Province, Hubei Province, Hunan Province.

South China Region: Guangdong Province, Hainan Province, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Macau Special Administrative Region.

Southwest China Region: Chongqing, Sichuan Province, Guizhou Province, Yunnan Province, Tibet Autonomous Region.

Northwest China Region: Shaanxi Province, Gansu Province, Qinghai Province, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.

#### 2.1.1.4.3.2 Ecological Resources

China's natural resources mainly include land resources, water resources, biological resources, mineral resources, etc. According to the information released by the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China on natural resources, the situation of China's natural resources is as follows:

##### (1) Land Resources:

China's land resources have four basic characteristics: large absolute quantity but low per capita possession; complex and diverse types with a small proportion of arable land; complex utilization situation with significant regional

productivity differences; uneven distribution with prominent issues in protection and development.

#### Large Absolute Quantity but Low Per Capita Possession:

China's land area is 9.6 million square kilometers, with a sea area of 4.73 million square kilometers. While China ranks third in the world in terms of land area, in terms of per capita possession of land resources among the top 12 countries in terms of land area, China ranks eleventh. Various types of land resources in China also have the characteristic of large absolute quantity but low per capita possession.

#### Complex and Diverse Types with a Small Proportion of Arable Land:

China's complex terrain and climate result in diverse types of land, providing favorable conditions for various forms of agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, sideline industries, and comprehensive development. However, it should be noted that some types of land are difficult to develop and utilize. For example, China's sandy deserts and deserts account for over 12% of the total land area, posing significant challenges in terms of transformation and utilization. Additionally, the proportion of arable land, which is crucial for agricultural production in China, is only slightly over 10%.

#### Complex Utilization Situation with Significant Regional Productivity Differences:

The development and utilization of land resources constitute a long-term historical process. Due to the complexity of China's natural conditions and the uniqueness of historical development processes in various regions, the utilization of land resources in China is extremely complex. For example, in the vast plains of Northeast China, the Han ethnic group primarily utilizes arable land to grow sorghum, maize, and other coarse grains, while the Korean ethnic group predominantly cultivates rice. Farmers in Shandong Province have extensive experience in cultivating peanuts, resulting in high yields, whereas farmers in Henan and Hubei provinces cultivate sesame, which brings good returns. Under similar natural conditions, certain areas, such as the Taihu Lake Basin, the Pearl River Delta, and parts of the Sichuan Basin, have become national centers for sericulture and silkworm breeding, and so on.

Different utilization methods lead to varying degrees of land resource development, resulting in significant differences in land productivity levels. For

example, in the same subtropical mountainous areas, managing tea gardens, orchards, and economic forests can yield higher economic and social benefits compared to allowing natural forests to grow unchecked, leading to not only lower economic benefits but also land resource degradation.

Uneven Distribution with Prominent Issues in Protection and Development:

The uneven distribution referred to here mainly pertains to two aspects: Firstly, the uneven distribution of specific types of land resources. For instance, limited arable land is mainly concentrated in the plain areas of China's eastern monsoon region, while grassland resources are more abundant in the eastern part of the Inner Mongolian Plateau. Secondly, the uneven distribution of land resources per capita.

Different regions face different land resource challenges. China has a shortage of forest land, resulting in insufficient forest resources. However, while efforts are made to achieve a balance in afforestation in the northeastern forest region, the southwestern forest region faces issues such as a high proportion of mature forests and wastage of timber resources. China's vast grassland resources are underutilized, and the level of livestock production is not high. However, certain grassland areas face problems such as overgrazing and grassland degradation.

#### (2) Water Resources:

Rivers and lakes are the main sources of freshwater in China. Therefore, the distribution of rivers and lakes and the amount of water directly impact the lives and production activities of people in various regions. China's per capita runoff is 2,200 cubic meters, accounting for 24.7% of the world's per capita runoff. Among the major river basins, the Pearl River Basin has the highest per capita water resources, with an average runoff of about 4,000 cubic meters per person. The Yangtze River Basin is slightly higher than the national average, ranging from 2,300 to 2,500 cubic meters per person. The Haihe River Basin is the most water-stressed area in China, with per capita runoff of less than 250 cubic meters.

The distribution of water resources in China is characterized by abundance in the south and scarcity in the north, while the distribution of arable land is the opposite, with more land in the north and less in the south. For example, in the North China Plain, the main production area for wheat and cotton in China, arable land

accounts for about 40% of the national total, while water resources only account for around 6%. The poor coordination between water and land resources further exacerbates the water scarcity in northern China.

China's hydropower resources have a total potential capacity of 680 million kilowatts, ranking first in the world. 70% of these resources are distributed in the four southwestern provinces, municipalities, and the Tibet Autonomous Region, with the Yangtze River basin having the most, followed by the Yarlung Zangbo River basin. The Yellow River basin and Pearl River basin also have significant hydropower potential. Currently, the developed areas are concentrated in the upper reaches of the Yangtze River, Yellow River, and Pearl River.

### (3) Biological Resources:

Plant resources. China, with its vast territory, complex terrain, and diverse climate, boasts a rich variety of vegetation distributed in a complex pattern. In the eastern monsoon region, there are tropical rainforests, tropical seasonal rainforests, subtropical evergreen broad-leaved forests, temperate deciduous broad-leaved forests, temperate coniferous forests, and subalpine coniferous forests, as well as temperate forest grasslands and other vegetation types. In the northwest and Qinghai-Tibet Plateau regions, there are dry grasslands, semi-desert grasslands and shrubs, dry desert grasslands and shrubs, alpine deserts, alpine meadows, and shrublands, among other vegetation types. There is a wide variety of plant species, with statistics showing 300 families, 2,980 genera, and 24,600 species of seed plants. Among them, angiosperms account for 2,946 genera (23.6% of the total angiosperm genera in the world). Comparatively ancient plants make up about 62% of the world's total genera. Some plants, such as metasequoia and ginkgo biloba, which are now extinct in other parts of the world, are "living fossils" preserved in China. China is home to seed plants from temperate, temperate, and tropical zones, with many more species than all of Europe. Additionally, there is a diverse array of cultivated plants. In terms of use, there are over 1,000 species of timber trees, more than 4,000 species of medicinal plants, over 300 species of fruit plants, over 500 species of fiber plants, over 300 species of starch plants, over 600 species of oil plants, and no fewer than 80 species of vegetable plants, making it one of the countries with the richest plant resources in the world.

**Animal Resources:** China is one of the countries with the richest animal resources in the world. According to statistics, there are approximately 2,070 species of terrestrial vertebrates in China, accounting for 9.8% of the world's terrestrial vertebrates. Among them, there are over 1,170 species of birds, more than 400 species of mammals, and 184 species of amphibians, accounting for 13.5%, 11.3%, and 7.3% of their respective global counterparts. In the northern regions, spanning from the Himalayas to the northern areas of the Hengduan Mountains, Qinling Mountains, Funiu Mountains, between the Huai River and the Yangtze River, temperate and cold-temperate animal groups are dominant, belonging to the Palearctic realm, while in the southern regions, tropical animals prevail, belonging to the Oriental realm. In fact, due to the flat terrain in the eastern regions and the north-south orientation of the Hengduan Mountains in the western regions, the phenomenon of intermingling and infiltration of animals from both realms is quite evident.

**(4) Mineral Resources:**

China, with its vast territory and diverse geological conditions, possesses abundant mineral resources, totaling 171 types. Among them, 157 types have been confirmed with reserves. China has the world's largest confirmed reserves of tungsten, antimony, rare earths, molybdenum, vanadium, titanium, and others. The reserves of coal, iron, lead-zinc, copper, silver, mercury, tin, nickel, phosphate rock, asbestos, and others rank among the top in the world.

The main characteristic of China's mineral resources distribution is its uneven geographical distribution. For example, iron ore is mainly distributed in Liaoning, eastern Hebei, and western Sichuan, while it is scarce in the northwest. Coal is mainly distributed in North China, Northwest China, Northeast China, and Southwest China, with Shanxi, Inner Mongolia, and Xinjiang being the most concentrated provinces and regions, while provinces along the southeastern coast have relatively little. This uneven distribution has led to significant concentration of some minerals. For instance, tungsten deposits are found in 19 provinces and regions, with reserves mainly concentrated in southeastern Hunan, southern Jiangxi, northern Guangdong, western Fujian, and eastern and central Guangxi. While this concentration is conducive to large-scale mining, it also poses significant transportation challenges. To effectively allocate and utilize resources unevenly distributed across the country, it is necessary to

strengthen transportation infrastructure construction. (The Yearbook Society of the People's Republic of China, 2022)

#### 2.1.1.4.3.3 Topography and Terrain

According to the "Overall Land Use Plan of China (2006-2020)", the terrain of China mainly includes:

##### (1) Mountain Ranges

Mountain ranges are formed when mountains extend in a continuous line. They form the backbone of China's topography and often serve as boundaries between different geographical regions. The direction in which mountain ranges extend is referred to as their trend. The distribution of mountain ranges in China can be categorized into five main types based on their trends.

**East-West Trend:** There are primarily three columns (comprising five mountain ranges):

- Northern Column: Tian Shan - Yin Mountains
- Central Column: Kunlun Mountains - Qin Mountains
- Southern Column: Nanling Mountains

**Northeast-Southwest Trend:** Mountain ranges with this orientation are mostly located in eastern China, and there are also three main columns (comprising seven mountain ranges):

- Western Column: Greater Khingan Mountains - Taihang Mountains
- Wushan Mountains - Xuefeng Mountains
- Central Column: Changbai Mountains - Wuyi Mountains
- Eastern Column: Taiwan Mountains

**Northwest-Southeast Trend:** Mountain ranges with this orientation are mainly found in western China, with two prominent ranges: Altai Mountains and Qilian Mountains.

**North-South Trend:** There are two main mountain ranges distributed in the southwest and northwest respectively: Hengduan Mountains and Helan Mountains.

**Arc-shaped Mountain Systems:** These consist of several parallel mountain ranges that transition from an east-west direction to a north-south direction, connecting with the Hengduan Mountains. The most famous mountain range in this category is the Himalayas, which stretches over 2400 kilometers along the borders of

China, India, Nepal, and other countries. It has an average elevation of 6000 meters, with its highest peak, Mount Everest, reaching 8844.43 meters above sea level, making it the tallest peak in the world.

#### (2) Plateaus

China has four major plateaus, namely the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, Inner Mongolia Plateau, Loess Plateau, and Yungui Plateau. They are concentrated on the first and second level terraces of the terrain. Due to differences in elevation, location, formation, and erosion by external forces, each plateau exhibits unique physical features.

#### (3) Basins

China has four major basins, namely the Tarim Basin, Junggar Basin, Qaidam Basin, and Sichuan Basin. They are mostly located on the second-level terraces of the terrain, and their characteristics vary depending on their specific locations.

In addition, the renowned Turpan Basin is also situated on the second-level terrace of the terrain, and it is the lowest basin in China (-155 meters).

#### (4) Plains

China has three major plains, namely the Northeast Plain, North China Plain, and the Yangtze River Plain. They are situated on the third level terraces of the terrain in eastern China. Due to differences in location, formation, climate conditions, etc., each plain has its own unique characteristics.

These three major plains are connected north to south, with fertile soil, making them the most important agricultural regions in China. Apart from these, China also has other significant agricultural regions such as the Chengdu Plain, Fenwei Plain, Pearl River Delta, and the western plains of Taiwan.

The characteristics of the terrain and topography are as follows:

พหุภูมิ ปณภูมิ โทชีวะ

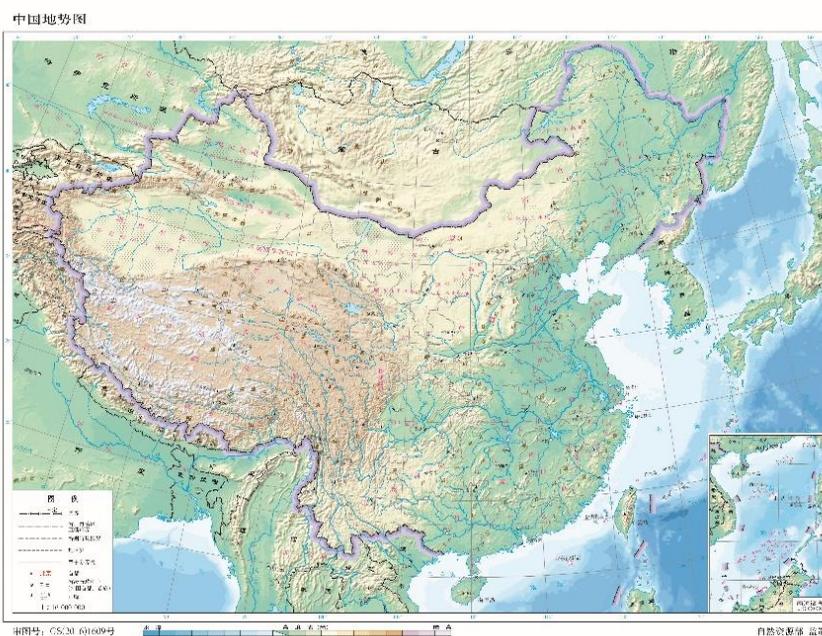


Figure 8 Topographical map of China

Source: WeChat Official Account - Internet - Map Group, 2021

### (1) Diverse Terrain

Across the vast expanse of China, there are majestic plateaus, undulating mountains, expansive plains, gentle hills, as well as basins surrounded by mountains with a flat interior. China encompasses all five basic types of landforms, providing diverse conditions for the development of industry and agriculture.

### (2) Extensive Mountainous Areas

Mountainous regions, hills, and rugged plateaus are commonly referred to as mountainous areas. These areas cover two-thirds of China's total land area, representing another significant feature of China's topography. While the extensive mountainous terrain presents challenges for transportation and agricultural development, it also offers abundant forest, mineral, hydroelectric, and tourism resources, ensuring the foundation for economic development and environmental conservation in these regions.

### (3) Generally Rising Terrain from West to East

The terrain in China generally rises from west to east, displaying a step-like distribution pattern.

The first step is the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, with an average elevation of over 4,000 meters. This plateau is demarcated by the Kunlun Mountains, Qilian Mountains, and Hengduan Mountains to the north and east.

The second step features large basins and plateaus with elevations ranging from 1,000 to 2,000 meters. The Greater Khingan Mountains, Taihang Mountains, Wushan Mountains, and Xuefeng Mountains mark the boundary between the second and third steps to the east.

The third step consists of vast plains, interspersed with hills and low mountains, with elevations mostly below 500 meters.

If we were to draw a cross-sectional diagram of China's terrain along the 32nd parallel north latitude, from the western plateau to the central basin, and then to the eastern plains, the west-to-east rising trend, resembling steps descending gradually, would be prominently evident.

Continuing beyond the third step of China's land to below sea level, we encounter the shallow continental shelf, an extension of the continent into the ocean. Generally characterized by shallow depths and gentle slopes, this area boasts rich marine resources. (Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, 2008)

#### 2.1.1.4.4 Climate Types in China

China falls under the East Asian monsoon climate, with annual precipitation gradually decreasing from the southeastern coast to the northwest inland. In southern regions, precipitation is concentrated in the summer and autumn seasons, often leading to floods, while areas in North China and Northwest China receive less precipitation. Overuse of land for farming and excessive grazing exacerbate water scarcity issues in these regions, adversely affecting local livelihoods and agriculture.

Since the establishment of the People's Republic of China, under the leadership and care of the Party Central Committee and the State Council, extensive field surveys and measurements by scientists and engineers have led to the formulation of the basic plan for the "South-to-North Water Diversion" project. This project aims to achieve a rational allocation of China's water resources between the north and the south, facilitating mutual assistance between the east and the west.

According to the climate classification released by the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, the climate types in China are as follows:

In terms of climate types, the eastern regions have a monsoon climate, which can be further classified into subtropical, temperate, and tropical monsoon climates. The northwest belongs to a temperate continental climate, while the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau has a highland frigid climate. Based on temperature zones, there are tropical, subtropical, warm temperate, temperate, cold temperate, and Qinghai-Tibet Plateau zones. In terms of dryness and humidity, there are distinctions between humid regions, semi-humid regions, semi-arid regions, and arid regions. Furthermore, within the same temperature zone, there can be variations in dryness and humidity, and within the same dryness and humidity region, there can be variations in temperature zones. Therefore, within the same climate type, differences in temperature and dryness/humidity levels may exist. The diverse and complex terrain also contributes to the complexity and diversity of climates. (The Yearbook Society of the People's Republic of China, 2022)

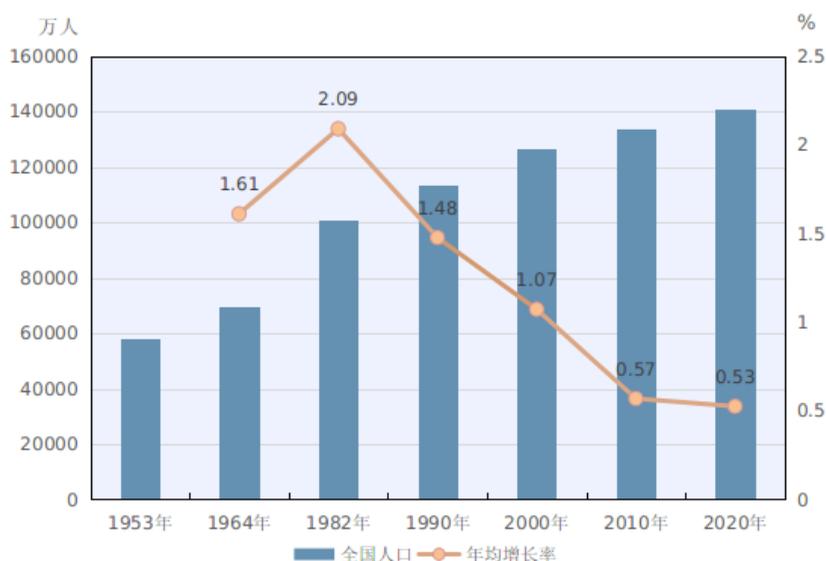
Generally, northern regions consist mostly of plains and plateaus and are influenced by temperate monsoon climates, experiencing significant seasonal variations with hot, rainy summers and mild, humid winters. Southern regions, characterized by a mix of plains, basins, and plateaus, are influenced by subtropical and tropical monsoon climates, with higher temperatures and more precipitation due to their low latitude and proximity to the sea. Northwest China, located deep inland and featuring plateaus and hills, experiences a temperate continental climate as it is shielded from maritime warm and humid airflows by mountain ranges. The Qinghai-Tibet region, dominated by plateaus and basins, experiences a winter-like climate throughout the year due to its high altitude, with abundant snowfall covering the area in all seasons.

#### 2.1.1.4.5 Population Situation in China

According to the results of the seventh national population census, the basic situation of China's population as of November 1, 2020, is hereby announced as follows:

##### (1) Total Population

Table 1 The National Population and Average Annual Growth Rate

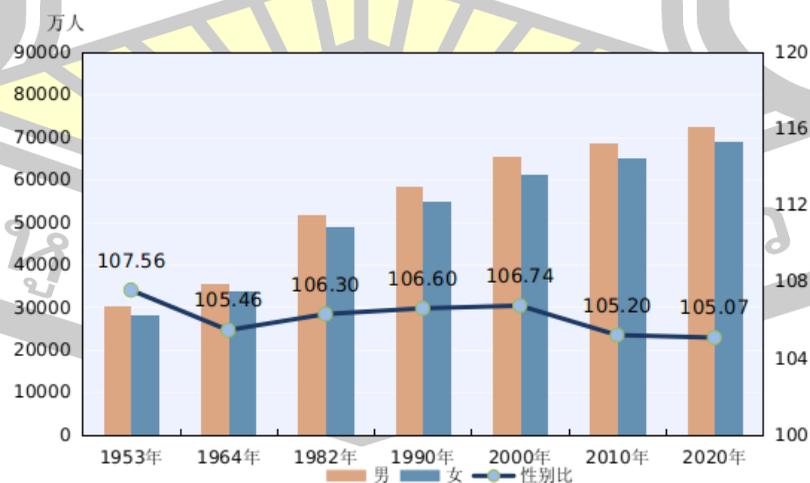


Source: National Bureau of Statistics

The total population of the country is 1,443,497,378 people. Among them: the population registered in the 31 provinces, autonomous regions, municipalities directly under the Central Government, and active servicemen is 1,411,778,724 people; the population of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is 7,474,200 people; the population of the Macao Special Administrative Region is 683,218 people; and the population of Taiwan Province is 23,561,236 people.

(2) Population Gender Composition

Table 2 Population Gender Composition



Source: National Bureau of Statistics

In the national population, the male population is 723,339,956, accounting for 51.24%; the female population is 688,438,768, accounting for 48.76%. The sex ratio of the total population (with females as 100 and males per 100 females) is 105.07, which is basically consistent with the sixth national population census in 2010.

### (3) Population Age Composition

Table 3 Population Age Composition

单位：人、%

年龄	人口数	比重
总计	1411778724	100.00
0-14岁	253383938	17.95
15-59岁	894376020	63.35
60岁及以上	264018766	18.70
其中：65岁及以上	190635280	13.50

Source: National Bureau of Statistics

In the national population, the population aged 0-14 is 253,383,938, accounting for 17.95%; the population aged 15-59 is 894,376,020, accounting for 63.35%; the population aged 60 and above is 264,018,766, accounting for 18.70%, among which the population aged 65 and above is 190,635,280, accounting for 13.50%. Compared with the sixth national population census in 2010, the proportion of the population aged 0-14 has increased by 1.35 percentage points, the proportion of the population aged 15-59 has decreased by 6.79 percentage points, the proportion of the population aged 60 and above has increased by 5.44 percentage points, and the proportion of the population aged 65 and above has increased by 4.63 percentage points.

### (4) Ethnic Population

In the national population, the Han population is 1,286,311,334, accounting for 91.11%; the population of various ethnic minorities is 125,467,390, accounting for 8.89%. Compared with the sixth national population census in 2010, the Han population has increased by 60,378,693, an increase of 4.93%; the population of various ethnic minorities has increased by 11,675,179, an increase of 10.26%. (National Bureau of Statistics, 2021)

## 2.1.2 Chinese Calligraphy Culture

### 2.1.2.1 Etymology and Meaning of Culture

In the West, the term "culture" originates from the Latin word "Colere," which originally encompassed meanings such as cultivation, habitation, practice, attention, and reverence for gods. The ancient Roman politician Cicero extended it to "Cultura mentis." In the 15th century, the meaning of "culture" gradually expanded to include cultivation, education, development, and respect. In the 17th century, German jurist Pufendorf first proposed the concept of "culture," defining it as the sum of things created by human activity and things that exist dependent on human and social life. In the 18th century, German Enlightenment thinker Herder defined culture in his "Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man": firstly, culture is a pattern of social life; secondly, culture represents the essence of a nation; thirdly, culture has clear boundaries and distinguishes itself from the cultures of other regions. In the mid-19th century, British anthropologist Taylor further elucidated the concept of culture in "Primitive Culture": "Culture or civilization is a complex whole that includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, ethics, laws, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society through learning." (Lin Jian, 2013)

From this, it can be seen that the concept of "culture" has undergone several significant transformations, from "the process of human cultivation" to "a certain state or habit of the mind," from "the general state of knowledge development in a society as a whole" to "the totality of various arts," from "a holistic way of life in material, intellectual, and spiritual aspects" to "human spiritual phenomena." (Wei Sen, 2003)

With the development of society and the progress of the times, the concept of "culture" has evolved according to the trend of "individual and reality" - "region and status" - "world and spirit."

In 1952, American anthropologists A. Kroeber and Kluckhohn provided a comprehensive definition in "Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts": "Culture exists in various implicit and explicit patterns, is learned and transmitted through the use of symbols, and constitutes the unique achievements of human groups, including various specific forms of their creations. The basic elements of culture are traditional ideas and values (derived from history and selected), among which values are the most important." This definition has been accepted by many modern scholars.

In China, the term "culture" first appeared in the "Book of Changes" (traditionally considered a product of ancient civilization): "The interplay of hardness

and softness is the astronomical aspect; the harmony of propriety and civility is the human aspect. Observe the astronomical aspect to investigate changes over time; observe the human aspect to cultivate and transform the world." This means that the intricate and complex natural world is formed by the interaction of phenomena such as yin and yang, hardness and softness, positive and negative, male and female, which is astronomy; natural phenomena undergo human activities of discovery, understanding, transformation, and reorganization, which is humanities; the civilization achievements obtained by humans through this process are spread throughout the world, reaching moral and spiritual heights, which is culture.

For China, the formation and evolution of the concept of "culture" over thousands of years have been based on this point, summarizing all human activities and behaviors in an extremely comprehensive manner. Especially in modern times, the development of comprehensive disciplinary systems has made "culture" a common practice in every field of study.

In 1920, Cai Yuanpei proposed in his lecture "What is Culture" that "culture is the state of development of human life," and listed items such as clothing, food, housing, transportation, medical care, health, politics, economy, morality, education, and science one by one. (Cai Yuanpei, 1963)

In 1920, the renowned philosopher Liang Shuming explained in "Eastern and Western Cultures and Their Philosophy": "Culture is nothing more than various aspects of a nation's life. In summary, there are three aspects: (1) Spiritual life, such as religion, philosophy, art, etc. Literature and art are more emotional, while philosophy and science are more rational. (2) Social life, including our ways of life with people around us - family, friends, society, country, world - belong to the social aspect, such as social organization, ethical habits, political systems, and economic relations. (3) Material life, such as diet, clothing, housing, and transportation, and various ways in which humans seek survival in the natural world." (Liang Shuming, 1989)

In conclusion, the West values the future, while China values history. Therefore, two different development paths of culture emerge. In the West, the connotation of culture is gradually expanding; in China, the connotation of culture is gradually becoming refined.

#### 2.1.2.2 Han Ethnic Group and Chinese Characters

### 2.1.2.2.1 The Overview of The Han Ethnic Group

According to the "Encyclopedia of China (Second Edition)," the overview of the Han ethnic group in China is as follows:

The Han ethnic group is the main ethnic group in China. The population of the Han ethnic group is 1,225,932,641, accounting for 91.51% (2010, excluding data from the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Macao Special Administrative Region, and Taiwan Province), or 91.51% of the total population of the country. The ancient ancestors of the Han ethnic group generally inhabited the area from the west of the Long Mountains to the east of Mount Tai in the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River. After the 21st century BC, several dynasties such as Xia, Shang, and Western Zhou emerged in the Central Plains region. Although they all claimed to be descendants of the Yellow Emperor, they actually came from different tribal groups. Through long historical periods of closeness, interaction, struggle, and integration, they formed a common ethnic entity. During the Western Zhou period, the ethnic name "Hua" or "Xia" alone or "Huaxia" combined was already in use to distinguish them from other ethnic groups such as "Man," "Yi," "Rong," and "Di." By the Warring States period, the states of Qin, Chu, Qi, Yan, Han, Zhao, and Wei collectively referred to themselves as the "Zhuxia" (variously translated as "various Xia"). After successive mergers and wars, there was a trend towards the unification of the Zhuxia. By the time of the Qin Dynasty, the Rong, Di, Yi, and Man tribes that had migrated to the Central Plains had also integrated with the Huaxia, and the Huaxia became a stable ethnic entity. Their distribution area had expanded to include the middle and lower reaches of the Liao River in the northeast, the Tao River basin in the northwest, the Ba-Shu area in the southwest, and the regions of Hu-Han in the southeast, covering vast areas. In 221 BC, Qin unified the six states, unified the Zhuxia, and established the first unified feudal state with a centralized monarchy in Chinese history. The Han ethnic group, with the pre-Qin Huaxia as its core, formed a unified nation during the Qin and Han periods.

The ethnic name of the Han people was established during the formation and development of a unified multi-ethnic country in China. The Han dynasty emerged in 206 BC after the collapse of the Qin dynasty, marking over 400 years of new developments in economy, culture, and national unity. The original inhabitants of the Central Plains, formerly known as Huaxia, were called the Han people. In the

subsequent historical development, the Han people became the ethnic name of the dominant nationality in China, accounting for the vast majority of the population and holding a leading position in all aspects of development. Over the course of history, the Han people have undergone coexistence, migration, and integration with various ethnic groups, forming a distribution pattern characterized by concentrated agricultural development in regions such as the Songliao Plain and the areas along the Yellow River, Huai River, Yangtze River, and Pearl River, as well as urban centers, and interspersed cohabitation with local ethnic groups in border areas. Additionally, a considerable number of Han people migrated overseas during historical development, forming local Chinese communities or overseas Chinese. Since the 1950s, especially after the reform and opening-up policy, China has achieved great success in politics, economy, science and technology, culture, education, healthcare, sports, and other fields. The Han people and various ethnic minorities have closely united, worked hard, and made great contributions to the prosperity and strength of the motherland. (National Ethnic Affairs Commission of the People's Republic of China, 2009)

#### 2.1.2.2.2 Customs and Festivals of The Han Nationality

According to the "Encyclopedia of China (Second Edition)" in the "Ethnicity Volume," the customs and festivals of the Han people are as follows:

The Han people adhere to monogamous marriage, and family marriages are known for their stability and solidity. After the establishment of the People's Republic of China, the feudal patriarchal system was abolished, and the status of women was elevated, granting them equal rights with men. They emphasize etiquette, filial piety, and respect for elders as virtues. Traditionally, burial was conducted through earth burial, but nowadays cremation is practiced in major cities, gradually being adopted in small and medium-sized cities and some rural areas as well. Their diet mainly consists of rice and noodles, supplemented with vegetables, and they enjoy meat, fish, and eggs, emphasizing culinary techniques. In urban areas, housing mostly comprises high-rise buildings, with some brick-and-tile or adobe houses, while in rural areas, especially in the northern regions, brick-and-tile or adobe houses are common, often organized into single households or compounds shared by two or three households. Clothing styles have undergone significant changes over the centuries, with men and women typically

wearing buttoned or wrapped jackets and trousers until the late 1940s, favoring light-colored clothes in summer and dark-colored clothes in winter.

The major festivals include the Spring Festival, which is the most grandiose, as well as the Qingming Festival, Dragon Boat Festival, Mid-Autumn Festival, among others. Some of these festivals have become shared celebrations among the Han people and some ethnic minorities. (National Ethnic Affairs Commission of the People's Republic of China, 2009)

#### 2.1.2.2.3 Traditional Ideas and Religious Beliefs of The Han Nationality

According to the "Ethnic Volume" of the "Encyclopedia of China (Second Edition)," the traditional concepts and religious beliefs of the Han people are as follows:

In Han society, the concept of clan is deeply ingrained, and until 1949, the idea of same surname and same clan was still a strong bond among the Han people. According to the Qing Dynasty scholar Qian Daxin's research, during the Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties, "men did not use surnames as names," and "before the three dynasties, surnames and clans were separate, but after the Han and Wei dynasties, surnames and clans merged." In fact, since the Han and Wei dynasties, among the thousands of surnames of the Han people, some originated from ancient clans, some from pre-Qin feudal states, or from ancestors' places of residence, official positions, and names. There is also a considerable number that came from the integration of ethnic minorities. Even with the same surname, there are cases where Han surnames were adopted due to enfeoffment or the integration of other ethnic minorities, which does not imply the same bloodline origin. Under the ancestral system, Han relatives are ranked based on paternal lineage. The continuation of the paternal lineage is considered crucial. Ancestor worship, offering sacrifices, and carrying on the family line are regarded as top priorities for every household, and having no descendants is considered the greatest act of unfilial conduct. This concept greatly influenced the ancient population views of the Han people, with the belief in the saying "more children, more blessings."

The ancient national concept of the Han people was also connected to the concept of family, as the idea of "one family, one surname" essentially expanded the paternal lineage concept infinitely. The emperor was revered as the "Son of Heaven" and the "Father of the People," while the people were seen as "subjects." Under this system of morality, filial piety was considered the basis of loyalty, and loyalty was the

highest demand of filial piety. Moreover, all ethical theories were based on the philosophical foundation of the "mandate of heaven," maintaining the order of imperial power, wealth, and social hierarchy as manifestations of the mandate of heaven. Dong Zhongshu, a thinker from the Han Dynasty (179-104 BCE), based on the theological perspective of "heaven and humanity being interconnected," developed Confucian teachings from Confucius and Mencius, summarizing them into the "Three Cardinal Guides" and "Five Constant Virtues," which became important foundations of ethical and legal norms in ancient Han society. (National Ethnic Affairs Commission of the People's Republic of China, 2009)

#### 2.1.2.2.4 Culture and Art of Han Nationality

According to the "Ethnic Volume" of the "Encyclopedia of China (Second Edition)," the cultural and artistic achievements of the Han people in ancient times are as follows:

The Han people created brilliant cultural and artistic achievements in ancient times, characterized by distinctive features. In various fields such as politics, military affairs, philosophy, economy, historiography, natural sciences, literature, and arts, there were numerous influential figures and works. During the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, there was a lively scene of contention among the hundred schools of thought, with achievements in various ideological and academic schools, shining brightly alongside the contemporaneous ancient Greek civilization. During the reign of Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty (141-87 BCE), the policy of "suppressing the hundred schools and honoring Confucianism alone" was implemented. As a result, Confucian thought represented by Confucius and Mencius became the dominant ideology, governing the ideological and cultural realms of the Han people for nearly 2000 years. Simultaneously, it also influenced other ethnic minorities to varying degrees, and even neighboring countries of China. In ancient military theory, the military classic "The Art of War" by Sun Tzu appeared as early as the end of the Spring and Autumn Period. In the early Western Han Dynasty, 182 military classics were compiled. Especially since the Song Dynasty, "The Seven Military Classics of Ancient China," which has been regarded as essential reading in martial arts, concentrated the essence of ancient military writings. Emphasizing historiography is also a prominent feature of Han culture. Since Sima Qian wrote "Records of the Grand Historian," there

have been annalistic and biographical histories in each dynasty, culminating in the famous "Twenty-Four Histories" in the Qing Dynasty. Chronological histories represented by "Spring and Autumn Annals," "Zuo Zhuan," and "Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government"; various other records, chronological histories, local histories, and historiographical theories compiled by official and private scholars made China the country with the richest ancient historical documents in the world, with the vast majority written by Han scholars. In terms of natural sciences, achievements in astronomy and mathematics have always been admired by people worldwide. Figures like Zhang Heng (78-139), Zu Chongzhi (429-500), Yi Xing (also known as Zhang Sui, 683-727), and Guo Shoujing (1231-1316) are recognized as world-renowned cultural figures. Ancient agriculture often encompassed various achievements in ancient science and technology. According to incomplete statistics, over the course of more than 2000 years, there were over 370 agricultural texts, including both extant and lost works. Among them, works like "Essentials of Farming" by Wang Zhen and "Complete Book of Agriculture" are representative works of ancient agricultural writings.

In the development of ancient Chinese literature, poetry holds a prominent position. Works such as the "Chu Ci," "Yuefu," Tang poetry, and Song lyrics have produced many highly accomplished writers and works. Figures like Qu Yuan (around 340–278 BCE), Li Bai (701–762), Du Fu (712–770), Liu Yong (birth and death dates unknown), Su Shi (1037–1101), Lu You (1125–1210), and Xin Qiji (1140–1207) not only shine brightly in Chinese literary history but are also recognized as masters in world literary history. Prose also plays a significant role, with famous ancient prose from the Qin and Han dynasties. By the late Tang Dynasty, advocates such as Han Yu (768–824) and Liu Zongyuan (773–819) led the revival of ancient prose. This movement reached its peak during the Song Dynasty, known as the "Eight Masters of Tang and Song" period, with figures like Ouyang Xiu (1007–1072), Su Xun (1009–1066), Zeng Gong (1019–1083), Wang Anshi (1021–1086), Su Shi, and Su Zhe (1039–1112). The novel genre saw significant development during the Ming and Qing Dynasties, producing monumental works like "Romance of the Three Kingdoms," "Journey to the West," "Water Margin," and "The Scholars." Short story collections like "Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio" also gained great fame. Many ethnic minority writers also utilized the Chinese language for their works, producing

numerous masterpieces. Among them, "Dream of the Red Chamber" stands out as the most outstanding representative. In fields such as painting, calligraphy, arts and crafts, music, dance, drama, and storytelling, there are many renowned masters whose artistic achievements are admirable. In the development of these arts, it particularly demonstrates the Han people's aptitude for learning and absorbing the strengths of other ethnic groups to develop their own artistic style. The compilation of encyclopedic works has a long history. Works like the "Catalogue of the Imperial Library" during the Tang and Song Dynasties, and especially the "Yongle Encyclopedia" and the "Comprehensive Mirror to Aid in Government" during the Ming and Qing Dynasties, are world-renowned ancient encyclopedias. They not only showcase the splendid achievements of Chinese ancient culture with the Han culture as the mainstay but also demonstrate the spirit of cooperation and mutual learning between ancient Han scholars and scholars from ethnic minorities. (National Ethnic Affairs Commission of the People's Republic of China, 2009)

#### 2.1.2.2.5 The Language and Script of The Han Ethnic Group

Our country has 56 ethnic groups, making it a nation with diverse ethnicities, languages, dialects, and scripts. Standard Mandarin and standardized Chinese characters are the national common language and script, used universally by the Chinese nation. Chinese characters formed a complete writing system during the Yin and Shang periods (around the 16th to 17th centuries BCE), with a history of approximately 6000 years. The evolution of Chinese characters has gone through stages such as oracle bone script, bronze script, seal script, clerical script, and regular script. Chinese characters have been continuously used to this day. (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2021)

According to the "National Volume" of the "Encyclopedia of China (Second Edition)", the language and script of the Han ethnic group are as follows:

The language commonly known as Mandarin belongs to the Sino-Tibetan language family and is one of the oldest and richest languages in the world. The major dialects are divided into seven categories: Northern dialects, Wu dialects, Xiang dialects, Gan dialects, Hakka dialects, Min dialects, and Yue dialects. Modern Han common language is based on Northern dialects with the Beijing phonology as the standard. Chinese characters originated in ancient times and the prevalent square

characters evolved from the oracle bone script of the Yin and Shang dynasties and the bronze script of the Zhou dynasty. Emperor Qin Shi Huang unified the six states and implemented the policy of "one script for all", making the small seal script used by Qin popular nationwide. The unification of characters during the Qin dynasty was successful in a short period, indicating that the original scripts of the six states were just regional variations of the same language in written form. In addition to the small seal script, there was also clerical script during the Qin dynasty, and during the Han dynasty, there emerged regular script derived from clerical script, known as kaishu, which became prevalent during the Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern dynasties and has been used until now. Despite the wide geographical distribution of the Han ethnic group and significant differences in local dialects, the unification of Chinese characters had already taken shape during the Qin and Han dynasties. This unity of written language played a significant role in the development of Han culture, cultural exchanges among various ethnic groups, and the unity of the country. (Source: National Ethnic Affairs Commission of the People's Republic of China, 2009)

### 2.1.2.3 Knowledge of calligraphy

#### 2.1.2.3.1 Writing Tools

##### (1) Writing Brush

A brush made of wool, weasel hair, etc., used for writing and painting.

(Institute of Linguistics, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, 2016)



Figure 9 Excavation site of the Warring States Chu tomb at Zuojia Gongshan

Source: <https://zhuanlan.zhihu.com/p/48666186>, 2018



Figure 10 Brushes and bamboo tubes

Source: <https://zhuanlan.zhihu.com/p/48666186>, 2018

In 1954, in the Zuojia Gongshan area of Changsha City, Hunan Province, a Chu tomb dating back to the late Warring States period (around 300 BC) was discovered. Precious cultural relics such as writing brushes, bronze weights, weapons, lacquerware, etc., were unearthed. This is the earliest physical evidence of a writing brush discovered to date.

(2) Ink

A black pigment used for calligraphy and painting, made from materials such as pine soot. (Chao Feng, 2016)

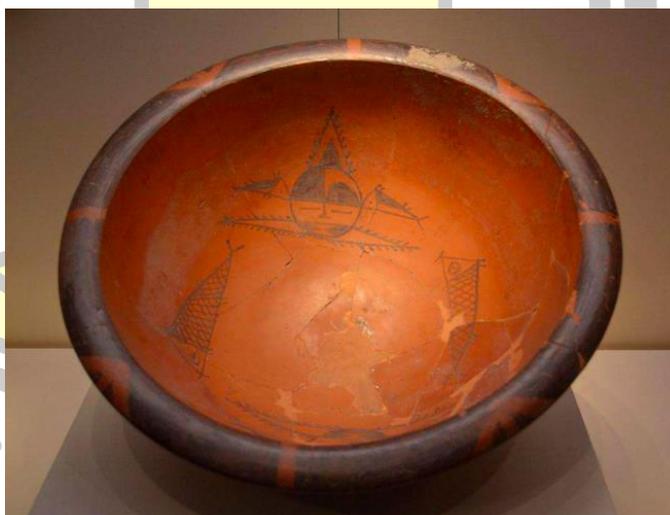


Figure 11 A Human-Faced Fish-Patterned Colored Pottery Basin

Source: The National Museum of China, Cao Hengyuan, 2023



Figure 12 Ink ingot of Ming Dynasty

Source: The History of Ink, 2023

Before the invention of Chinese ink, people generally used natural materials for writing and painting. The invention of Chinese ink occurred after that of the brush. Traces of primitive ink usage can be found in prehistoric colored pottery decorations, oracle bone inscriptions from the Shang and Zhou dynasties, and bamboo or wooden slips.

Usually, ink sticks are ground with an appropriate amount of water on an inkstone to produce liquid ink for writing with a brush.

### (3) Xuan paper

A high-quality paper produced in places like Xuancheng, Anhui Province, absorbs ink evenly and can be stored for a long time. (Institute of Linguistics, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, 2020)



Figure 13 The Production Site of Giant Xuan Paper Measuring Three Zhang  
(About 10 Meters) in Length

Source: Red Star Xuan Paper Factory, Cao Hengyuan, 2023

Papermaking is one of the four great inventions of ancient China, and Xuan paper is the most outstanding representative of traditional handmade paper. Originating from the Tang Dynasty and produced in Jing County, it has a history of over 1,500 years. Located in Jing County, Anhui Province, the climate is mild with abundant rainfall. The unique karst mountain terrain is suitable for the growth of tung trees, while the alluvial plains are ideal for the production of tall rice stalks. Both tung trees and rice stalks provide high-quality raw materials for Xuan paper production. There are several rivers in Jing County, especially two tributaries of the Wuxi River. One has a slightly alkaline nature, suitable for raw material processing, while the other is slightly acidic, suitable for papermaking water. (Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage Website, Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage Digital Museum, 2006)



Figure 14 Ink Inscription Oracle Bone Script of The Shang Dynasty

Source: The Anyang Museum of Yin Ruins, 2023

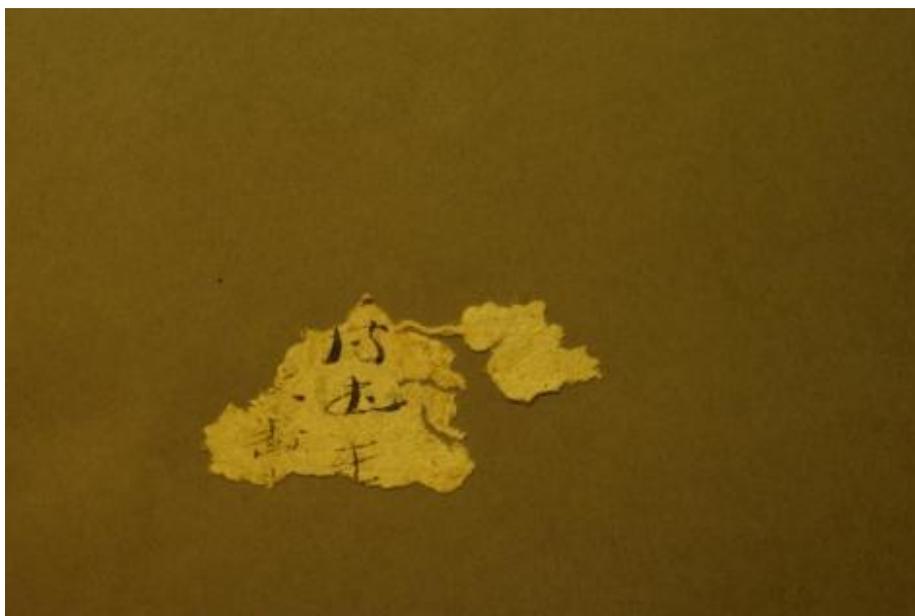


Figure 15 Calligraphy of The Western Han Dynasty

Source: Dunhuang, 2023

In primitive society, humans often painted on stone walls and colored pottery (when writing and painting were not yet separated). During the Shang and Zhou dynasties, people mostly wrote on ox bones and turtle shells. In the Spring and Autumn periods and the Warring States period, people wrote on wooden tablets, bamboo slips, and silk fabrics. During the Qin and Han dynasties, papermaking technology emerged, commonly attributed to Cai Lun, using materials such as tree bark, hemp, old cloth, and fishing nets, which were inexpensive. Based on excavated artifacts, paper appeared during the Western Han Dynasty, about 170 years before Cai Lun's papermaking technology. In addition, a large number of inscriptions appeared during the Han Dynasty. After the Tang Dynasty, Xuan paper gradually became popular.

(4) Inkstone

A stationary item used for grinding ink. (Institute of Linguistics, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences., 2016)



Figure 16 Han Dynasty Tomb Site  
Source: Yixian County, Hebei, 2006



Figure 17 Excavation Site  
Source: Yixian County, Hebei, 2006

In 2006, during the excavation of Tomb No. 13 in the Yi County section of the North-South Water Diversion Project's central route in Hebei Province, dating back approximately 1800 years, relics of Han Dynasty inkstones were unearthed. They were identified by experts as one of the earliest tangible artifacts, and also one of the oldest

types of inkstones unearthed in China to date, pushing the history of stone ink slabs back to the Eastern Han Dynasty.

The four famous inkstones of China are:

Duan inkstone, named after the Duanxi area around Lankeshan in Zhaoqing City, Guangdong Province. It was first mined during the Tang Dynasty (618 AD) and has a history of over 1300 years.

She inkstone, produced in the Longwei Mountain area (also known as Luowenshan) on the border of Wuyuan County in Jiangxi Province and Shexian County in Anhui Province. She inkstone began to be mined during the Tang Dynasty, between the years 713 and 741, and flourished during the Southern Tang period.

Taohe inkstone, named after the Tao River within the territory of Lintan County, Gansu Province. It has a history of over 1000 years. Taohe inkstone is extremely rare as it is sourced from deep water, making it one of the precious materials for inkstones.

Chengni inkstone, originally produced in Jiangzhou, Shanxi Province. It originated in the Han Dynasty, flourished during the Tang Dynasty, and reached its peak during the Song Dynasty. By the Ming Dynasty, it had achieved perfection, thus becoming one of the four famous inkstones in China.

#### 2.1.2.3.2 Basic Rules

##### (1) Using the brush method

During the Wei and Jin dynasties, it is said that Lady Wei's "Diagram of Brush Techniques" elucidated the method of using the brush as follows:

- Like distant clouds in the sky, faintly revealing their tangible form.
- 、 Like a tall peak collapsing rocks, appearing rough as if about to crumble.
- 丿 Like a rhinoceros horn severed.
- ㇇ Like a powerful crossbow releasing bolts.
- | Like withered vines lasting for ten thousand years.
- ㇏ Like surging waves thundering forth.
- ㇏ Like the strong sinews and joints of a powerful crossbow.

(Wei Shuo, 2013)

In the Tang Dynasty, Ouyang Xun's "Eight Principles" also recorded:

- ∖ Like rocks falling from a high peak.
- ⌒ Resembling the first moon in the vast sky.
- Like clouds in the sky stretching for thousands of miles.
- | Like withered vines lasting for ten thousand years.
- 戈 Strong pines bend and fold, hanging over rocky cliffs.
- ↖ Like the release of a powerful crossbow.
- 丿 A sharp sword cuts off the horn of a rhinoceros.
- ↘ A single stroke often passes through the brush three times.

(Ouyang Xun, 2013)

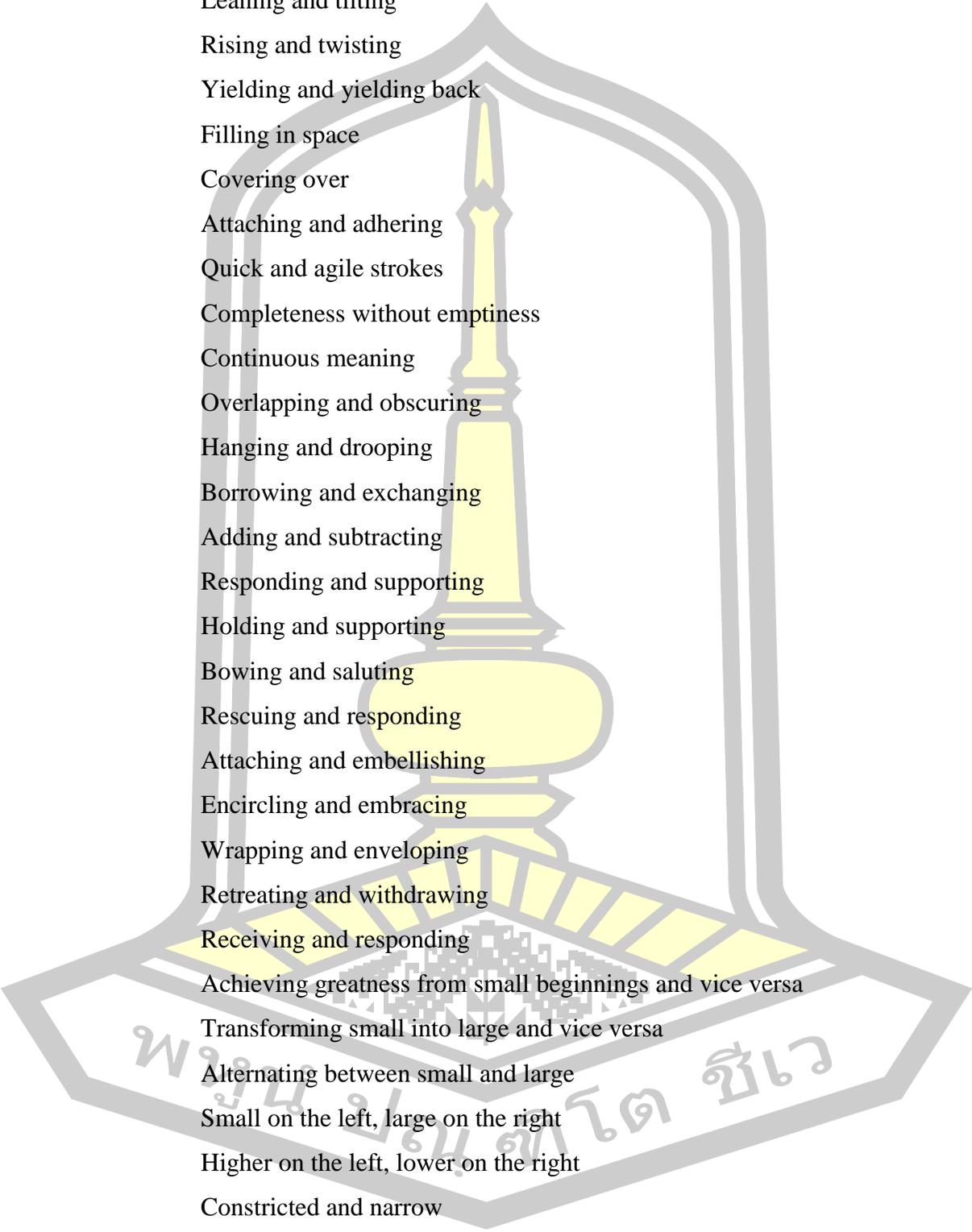
They decompose Chinese characters into 7-8 strokes and provide specific interpretations of their forms.

Later theorists of calligraphy supplemented and refined this viewpoint. For instance, in the Jin Dynasty, Wang Xizhi's "Shu Lun" (Theory of Calligraphy), in the Tang Dynasty, Ouyang Xun's "Yong Bi Lun" (On the Use of the Brush), and Zhang Huai Guan's "Shu Duan" (Critique of Calligraphy), in the Song Dynasty, Jiang Kui's "Xu Shu Pu" (Continuation of the Calligraphy Manual), in the Yuan Dynasty, Zhao Mengfu's "Song Xue Zhai Shu Lun" (Calligraphy Theory from the Pine and Snow Studio), in the Ming Dynasty, Dong Qichang's "Hua Chan Shi Sui Bi" (Random Notes from the Studio of Chan Painting), in the Qing Dynasty, Bao Shichen's "Yi Zhou Shuang Ji" (Double Paddles of the Art Boat), and Kang Youwei's "Guang Yi Zhou Shuang Ji" (Expanded Double Paddles of the Art Boat), among others.

## (2) Methods of Character Formation

In his work "Jiu Shi" (Nine Types), Cai Yong provides a simple introduction to the formation of characters. Based on this, Ouyang Xun of the Tang Dynasty compiled the "San Shi Liu Fa" (Thirty-Six Methods) in which he outlined thirty-six methods of character formation. These methods can be summarized as follows:

- Arrangement and layering
- Avoidance and accommodation
- Topping and crowning
- Interweaving and interlocking



Facing and turning away  
 Leaning and tilting  
 Rising and twisting  
 Yielding and yielding back  
 Filling in space  
 Covering over  
 Attaching and adhering  
 Quick and agile strokes  
 Completeness without emptiness  
 Continuous meaning  
 Overlapping and obscuring  
 Hanging and drooping  
 Borrowing and exchanging  
 Adding and subtracting  
 Responding and supporting  
 Holding and supporting  
 Bowing and saluting  
 Rescuing and responding  
 Attaching and embellishing  
 Encircling and embracing  
 Wrapping and enveloping  
 Retreating and withdrawing  
 Receiving and responding  
 Achieving greatness from small beginnings and vice versa  
 Transforming small into large and vice versa  
 Alternating between small and large  
 Small on the left, large on the right  
 Higher on the left, lower on the right  
 Constricted and narrow  
 Each one forming its own shape  
 Guiding and leading each other  
 .....

(Ouyang Xun, 2013)

These thirty-six methods of character formation became the rules followed by later calligraphers.

### 2.1.2.3.3 Evolution of Calligraphy Styles

Evolution of writing went through the following five stages:

Stage One: From Primitive Pictographs to Logographic Writing.

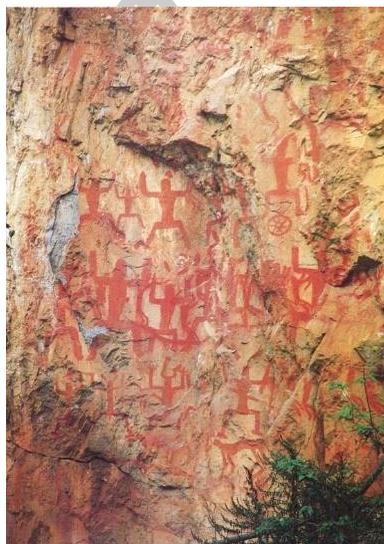


Figure 18 Neolithic Rock Paintings

Source: Hua Shan, Ningming, Guangxi, Cao Hengyuan, 2023



Figure 19 Oracle Bone Inscriptions of the Shang and Zhou Dynasties

Source: The Anyang Museum of Yin Ruins, 2023



Figure 20 Oracle Bone Script and Chinese Characters

Source: The Anyang Museum of Yin Ruins, 2023

The formation of writing. During the Stone Age, humans expressed and recorded certain human activities by painting on stone walls and objects. These symbols did not form a complete writing system—the researcher refer to this as natural pictography. In the Shang and Zhou dynasties, humans carved and wrote on ox bones and tortoise shells, which had a complete structure and meaning in writing, known as oracle bone script, the earliest form of pictographic writing. The formation of writing was a long process of evolution.

The second stage: From pictographs to seal script.



Figure 21 The Inscriptions on The Western Zhou Dynasty's Dayu Ding

Source: The National Museum of China, Cao Hengyuan, 2023

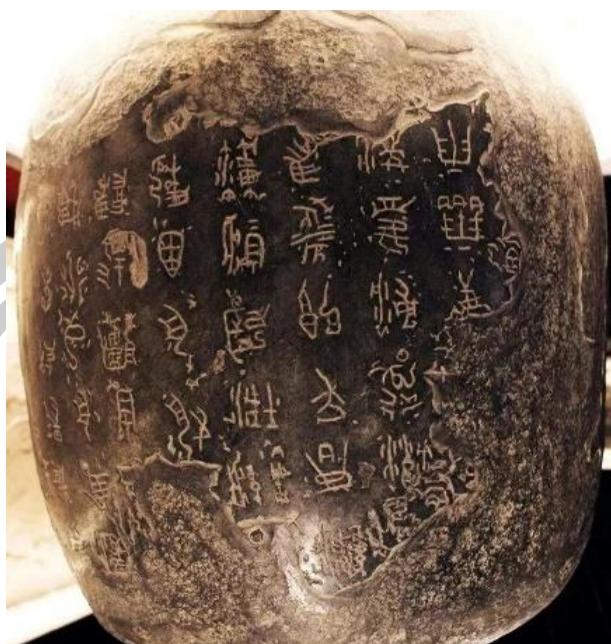


Figure 22 Inscriptions on Stone Drums of The Warring States Period

Source: The Stone Drum Gallery of The Palace Museum (Beijing), Cao Hengyuan, 2023



Figure 23 Warring States Period Scripts:

(Left) Qin State Script, (Middle) Chu State Script, (Right) Qi State Script

Source: Cao Hengyuan, 2023



Figure 24 The Yishan Stele in Seal Script by Li Si of the Qin Dynasty

Source: The Stone Steles Museum in Xi'an, Cao Hengyuan, 2023

The developmental period of writing. The transition from pictographic characters in the Shang and Zhou dynasties to seal script in the Qin Dynasty marked the shift from figurative symbols to standardized characters. This transition passed through various regional scripts during the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States period until the Qin Dynasty unified the nation and adopted seal script as the official script.

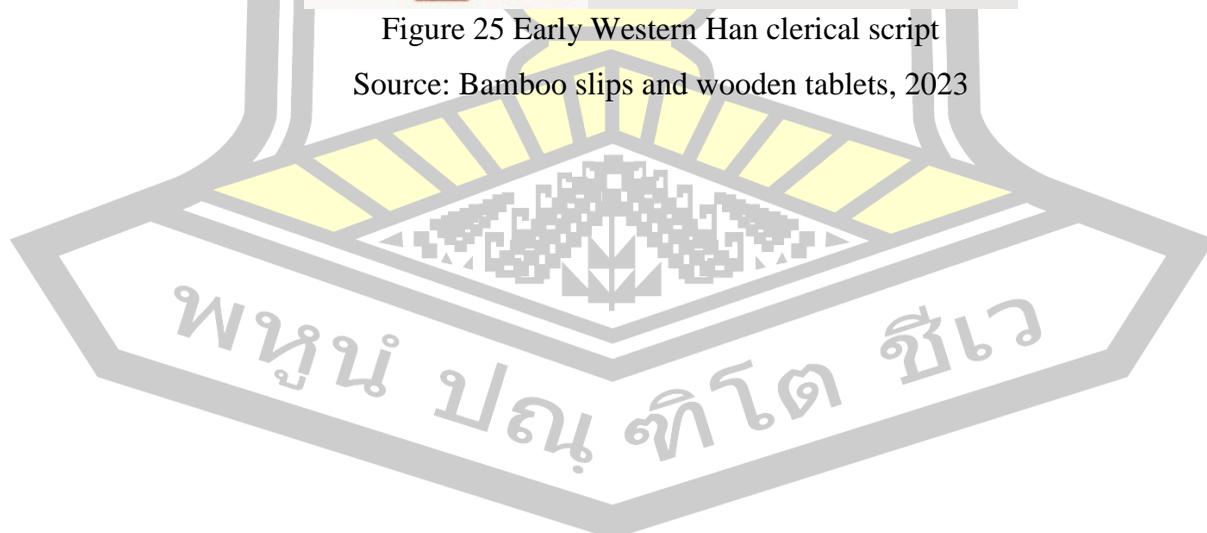
The third stage: From seal script to clerical script.

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Figure 25 Early Western Han clerical script

Source: Bamboo slips and wooden tablets, 2023



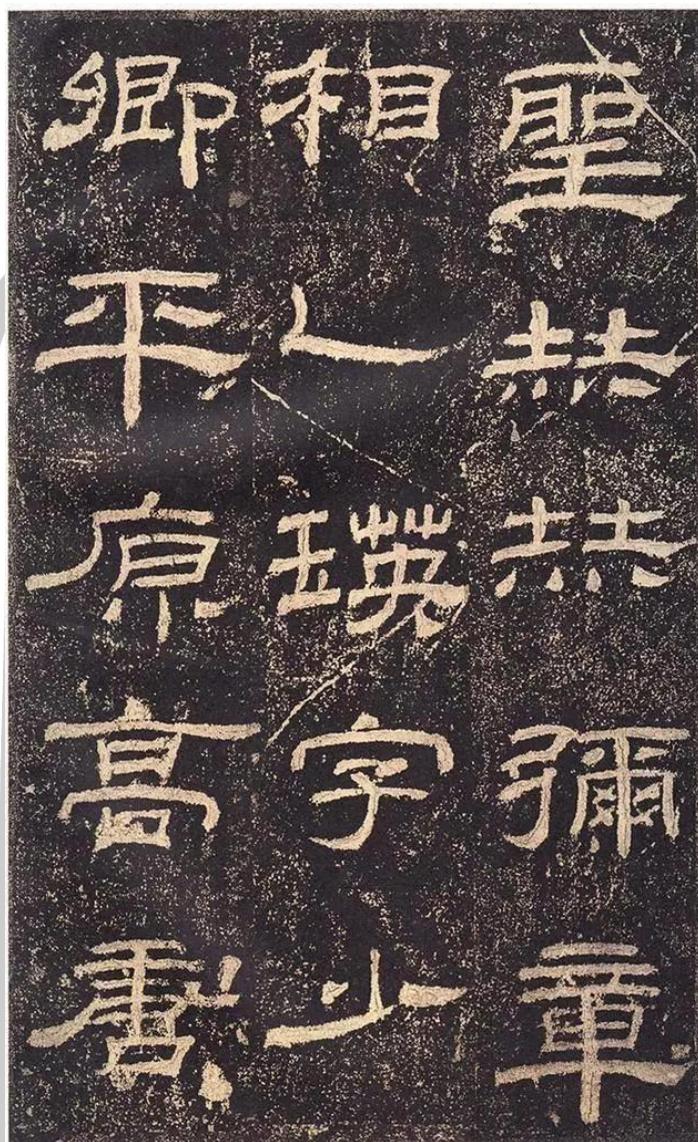


Figure 26 Mature Clerical Script of The Eastern Han Dynasty: The "Yi Ying Stele"

Source: Confucius Temple in Qufu, Shandong, 2023

The maturity of writing. The transition from seal script to clerical script marks the shift from complex writing to convenient writing. Clerical script originated in the Qin Dynasty and flourished in the Han Dynasty. In the early Western Han Dynasty, clerical script was in a transitional stage, with its style still influenced by seal script. By the Eastern Han Dynasty, clerical script became the official script, and its lines, structures, and arrangements were further standardized.

The fourth stage: Evolution of clerical script into cursive script, semi-cursive script, and regular script.

This stage represents the flourishing of writing, marking the transition from text reading to aesthetic appreciation. From clerical script to cursive script, semi-cursive script, and regular script, it signifies a transformation in how writing is perceived and appreciated.

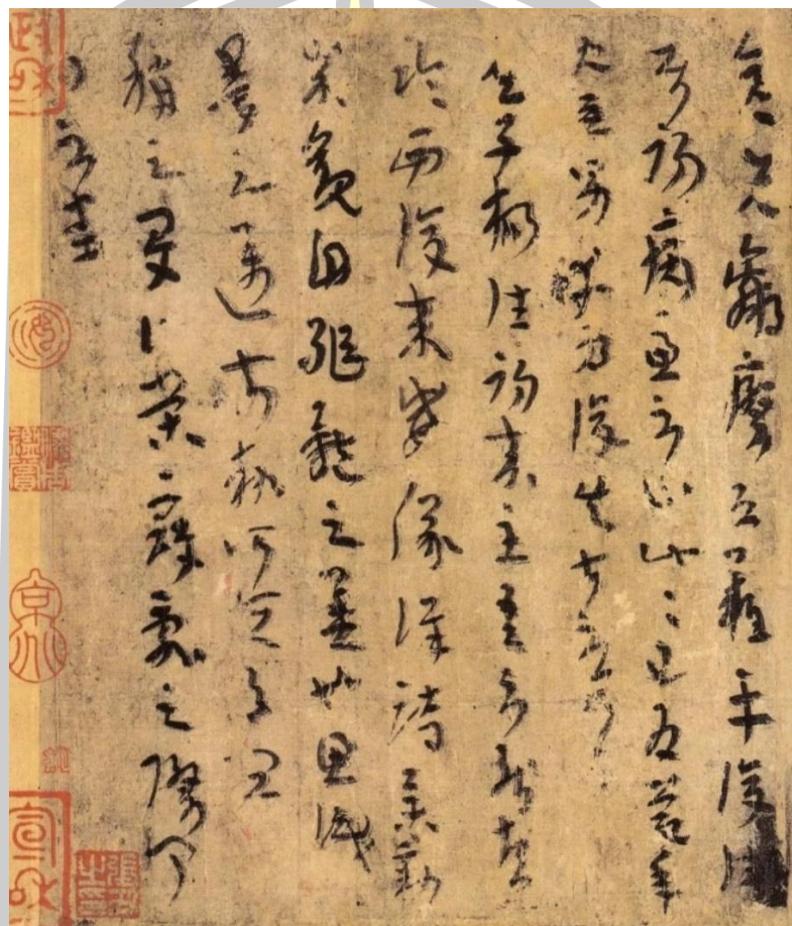


Figure 27 The Ancient Cursive Script Work "Pingfu Tie" by Lu Ji of The Jin Dynasty

Source: The Palace Museum (Bei Jing), 2023

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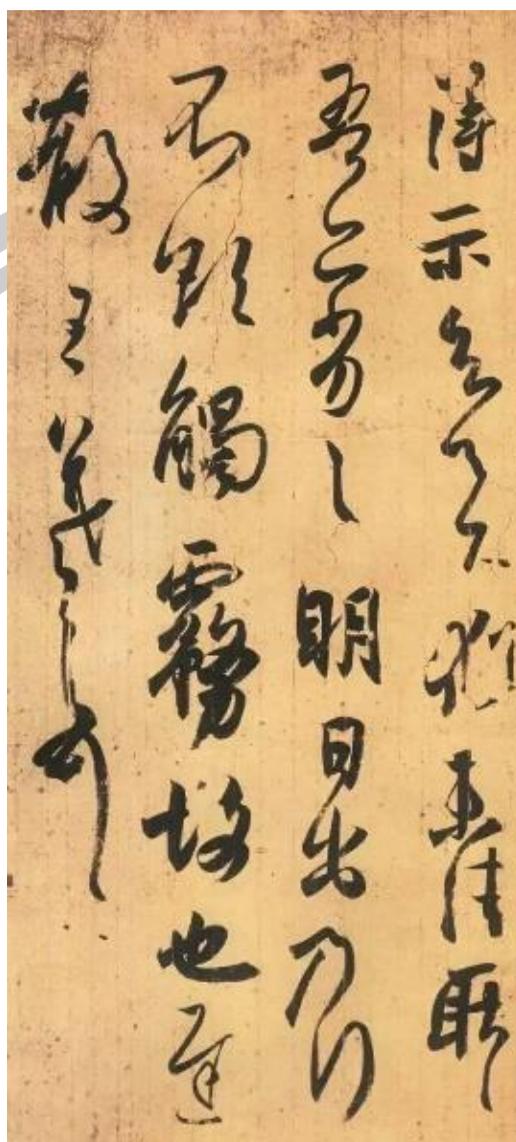


Figure 28 The New Cursive Script Work "De Shi Tie" by Wang Xizhi of The Jin Dynasty

Source: The Sannomaru Shozokan Museum of The Imperial Household Agency in Japan, 2023

From the development of cursive script, during the early Han Dynasty, hurried writing gave rise to cursive script. During this period, the transformation from seal script to clerical script had not yet been completed, resulting in a mixture of the characteristics of seal script and clerical script in the writing, which we refer to as ancient cursive script. The hastily written ancient cursive script can still be deciphered. In the new cursive script, strokes flow continuously, swaying from left to right, and the

form of the characters is full of imagination, reflecting the calligrapher's rich emotions. Its aesthetic value far surpasses its practical utility.

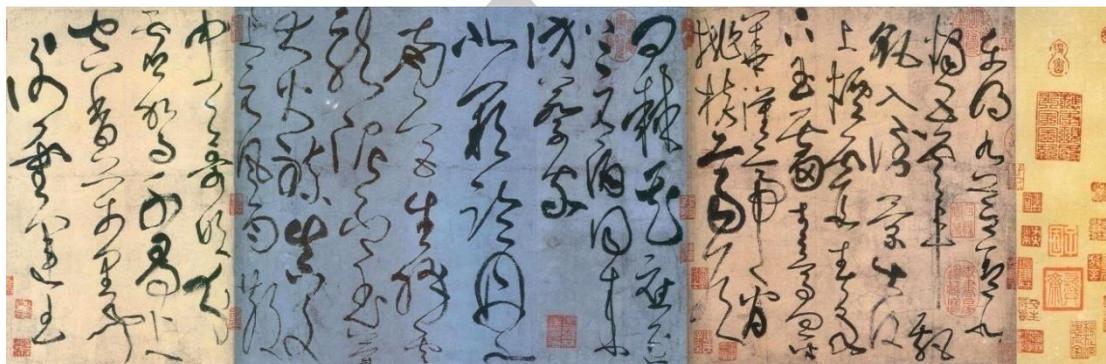


Figure 29 Tang Dynasty Zhang Xu's Wild Cursive Script Four Pieces of Ancient Poetry

Source: Liaoning Provincial Museum, 2023

Ancient cursive script is commonly found on bamboo slips and wooden tablets, with representative works including Huang Xiang's "Wenwu Tie" and Lu Ji's "Pingfu Tie." Representative works of new cursive script include Wang Xizhi's "De Shi Tie." During the Tang Dynasty, Zhang Xu's wild cursive script reached the pinnacle of artistic expression.

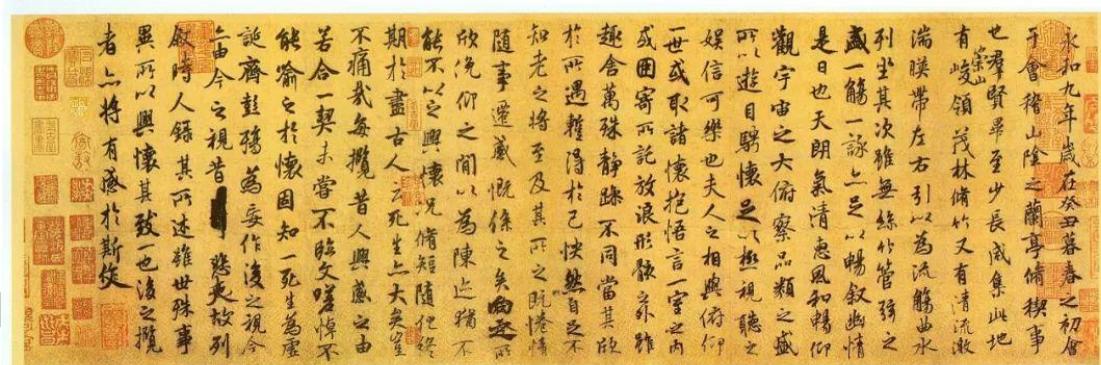


Figure 30 Wang Xizhi's Semi-Cursive Script work "Preface to The Orchid Pavilion"

Source: The Palace Museum (Beijing), 2023

From the development of semi-cursive script, it began in the late Han Dynasty and matured during the Wei and Jin Dynasties, with Wang Xizhi's "Preface to the Orchid Pavilion" as a representative example. In the Tang Dynasty, Yan Zhenqing's representative work was the "Draft for Nephew's Memorial", and in the Song Dynasty,

Su Dongpo's representative work was the "Cold Food Observance at Huangzhou". These three artifacts are renowned as the "Three Great Masterpieces of Semi-Cursive Script".

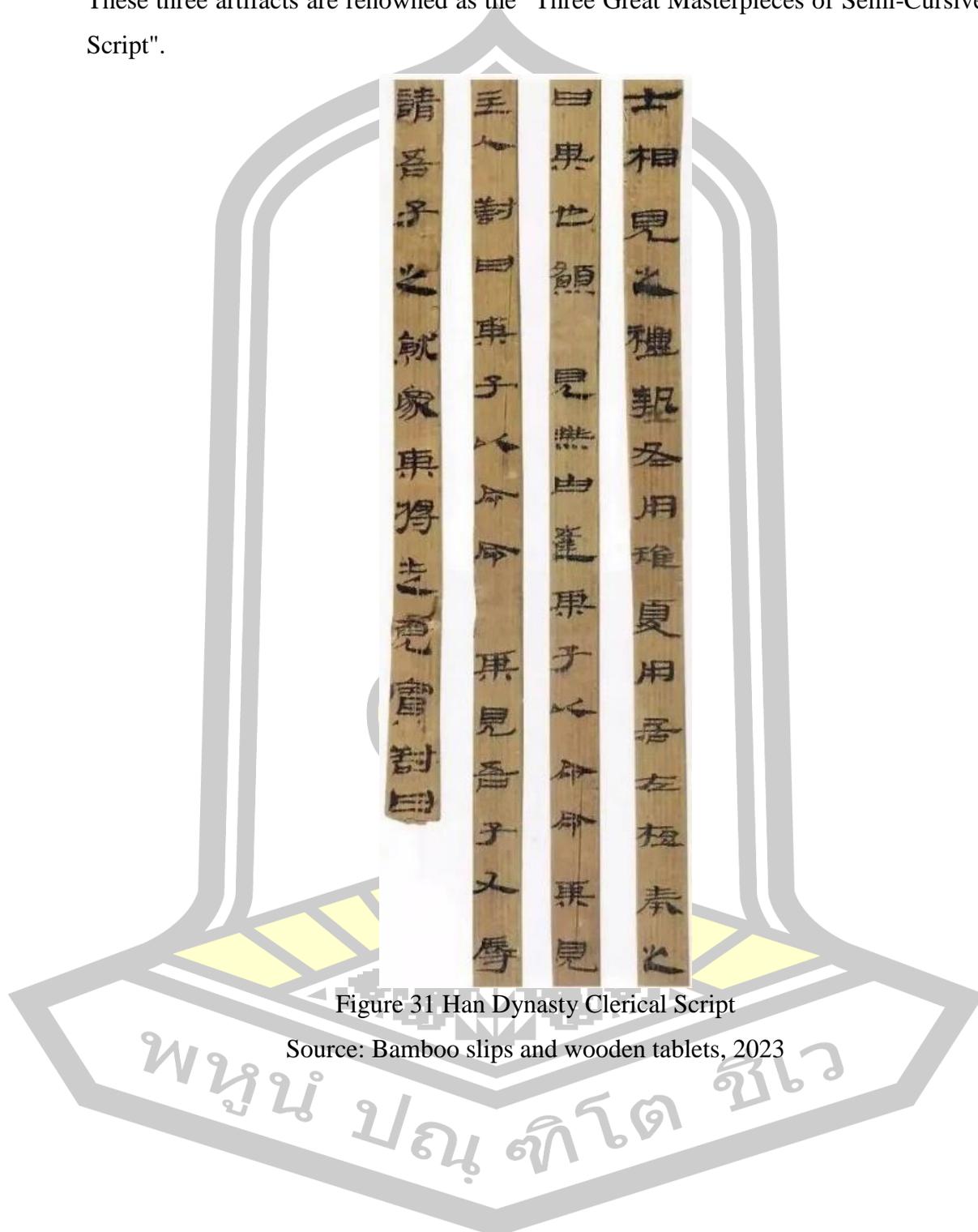


Figure 31 Han Dynasty Clerical Script

Source: Bamboo slips and wooden tablets, 2023

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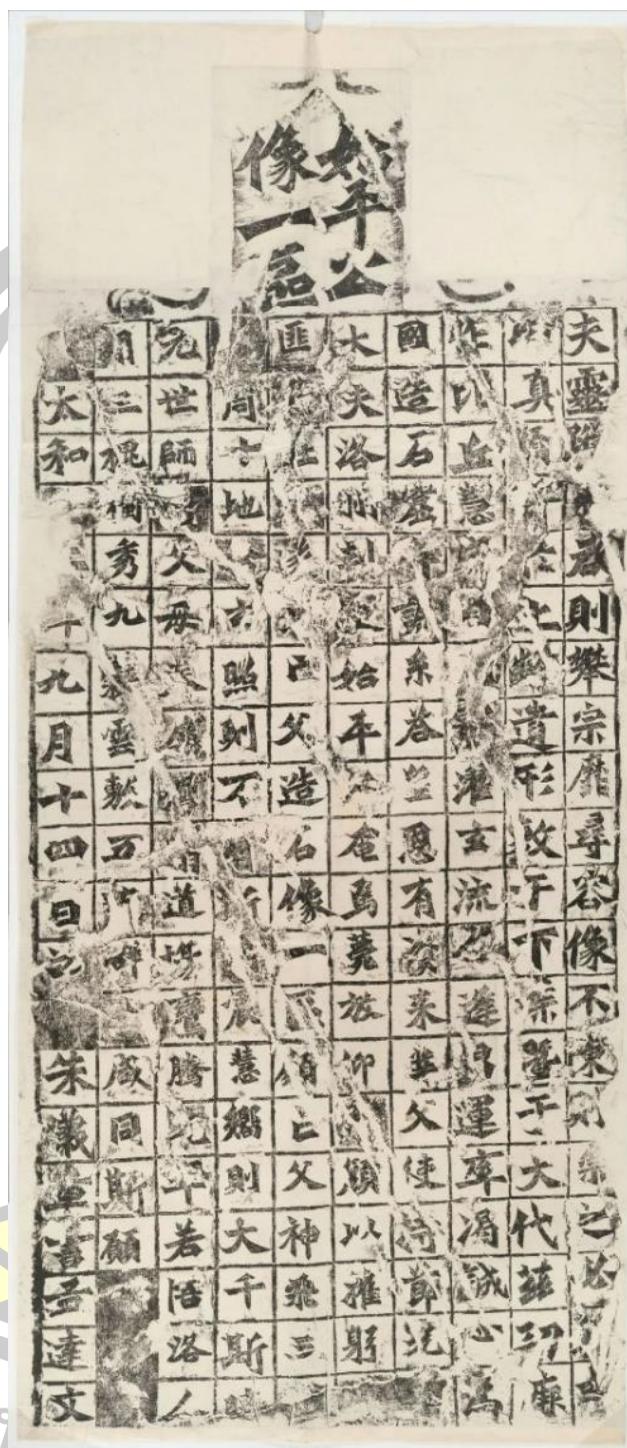


Figure 32 The Regular Script During The Wei and Jin Dynasties

Source: The Longmen Grottoes in Luoyang, Henan province, Cao Hengyuan, 2023

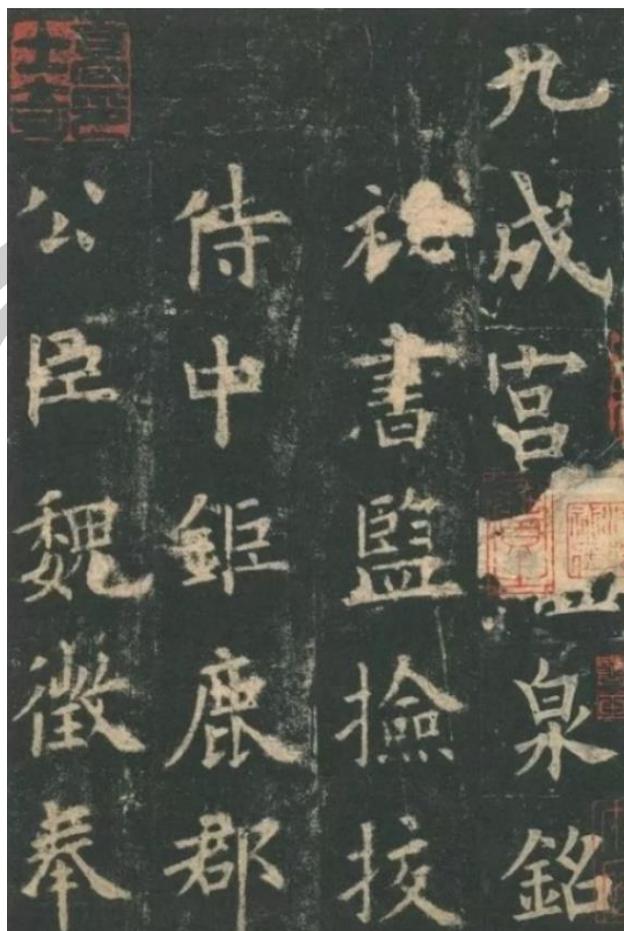


Figure 33 Ouyang Xun's Regular Script in The Tang Dynasty  
Source: Shanxi Linyou County Stele Pavilion Scenic Area, 2023

From the development of regular script, the Han Dynasty represented a nascent stage, the Wei and Jin Dynasties marked a period of development, and the Sui and Tang Dynasties saw maturity. During the Wei and Jin Dynasties, the calligraphy on the statues in the Longmen Grottoes in Luoyang, Henan Province, known as the "Twenty Categories of Longmen," served as a representative example. In the Tang Dynasty, calligraphy works such as Ouyang Xun's "Inscription on the Liquor Spring at Jiucheng Palace", Yan Zhenqing's "Duo Bao Pagoda", and Liu Gongquan's "Xuanmi Pagoda Inscription" were representative.

In fact, during the transition from seal script to clerical script, rapid writing emerged for practical convenience. Based on this, the evolution of writing took two different directions: utility and artistry. These two aspects did not completely separate but developed simultaneously during the evolution of writing. In summary, the

development of Chinese calligraphy has seen the emergence of five script styles: seal script, clerical script, semi-cursive script, cursive script, and regular script.

## 2.2 The ancient imperial examination system and calligraphy education

### 2.2.1 The Imperial Examination System

According to the article "The Origin of the Imperial Examination System and the Establishment of the Jinshi Examination," the term "Keju" (科举) can be explained as follows:

In a broad sense, Keju refers to the system of selecting and appointing officials through examinations in various subjects starting from the Western Han Dynasty. In a narrow sense, Keju specifically refers to the Jinshi Examination system, which was established during the Sui Dynasty to select and appoint officials through examinations. (Liu Haifeng, 2000)

According to the article "Analysis of the Origin of the Imperial Examination System — with a Discussion on the First Establishment of the Jinshi Examination during the Tang Dynasty," the imperial examination system can be understood as follows:

The imperial examination system, which examines scholars from the entire feudal society, can be summarized into three main characteristics:

Firstly, it allows scholars to participate in the examination voluntarily, without the need for specific recommendations from officials or authorities. This is the primary feature of the imperial examination system and the fundamental difference from the recommendation system.

Secondly, success or failure in the examination is determined strictly based on performance in the examination.

Thirdly, the Jinshi Examination serves as the main method of selecting officials, and scholars participate in the examination regularly.

In summary, the imperial examination system can be understood as a system where individuals voluntarily participate in examinations, performance in the examination determines success or failure, and the Jinshi Examination serves as the main method of selecting officials. (He Zhongli, 1983)

In the articles written by the two scholars, they summarized the concept of the imperial examination system and its characteristics, examined the origin and development of the system, and compared it with other systems. According to Professor He Zhongli from the History Department of Hangzhou University, the development of the ancient Chinese imperial examination system can be divided into three main stages: the recommendation system of the Han Dynasty, the Nine-Rank System of the Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties, and the imperial examination system of the Tang Dynasty. For ancient literati, especially after the establishment of the imperial examination system, it opened up a way for commoner's sons to obtain official positions. For the state, it selected the most outstanding talents to enter the political center, develop the economy, and serve the ruling class. The imperial examination system deeply influenced the development of ancient Chinese politics.

In "Exploration of Classical Studies," it is recorded that calligraphy became a subject during the Tang and Song dynasties, known as "Shuxue" (书学), which refers to:

Schools that cultivated calligraphy talents during the Tang and Song dynasties. In the Tang dynasty, students studied the "Stone Classics" for three years, the "Shuowen Jiezi" for two years, and the "Zilin" for one year. Students practiced writing characters, producing one piece of paper daily, and occasionally studying current affairs. During the Song dynasty, calligraphy studies were under the jurisdiction of the Imperial Academy's Calligraphy Office, mainly focusing on the study of seal, clerical, and cursive scripts, as well as texts such as "Shuowen," "Ziti," "Erya," "Daya," and "Fangyan," and also included understanding the meanings of "The Analects" and "Mencius." (Zheng Xiaohua, 1999)

It can be seen that the primary task of "Shuxue" was literacy, and the "Stone Classics," "Shuowen Jiezi," and "Zilin" were all books for learning Chinese characters, providing detailed explanations of the origin, evolution, meaning, structure, and calligraphy styles of each Chinese character. "Producing one piece of paper daily" refers to homework, where students were required to complete one piece of writing every day.

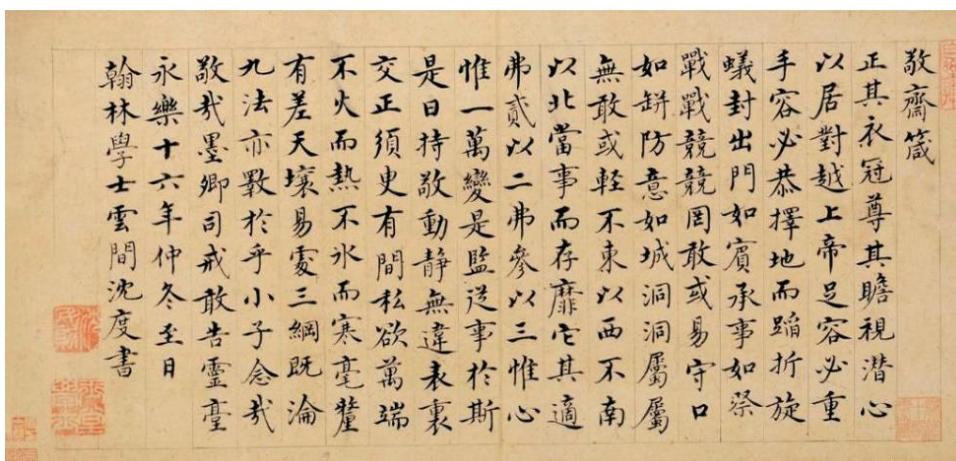


Figure 34 Ming Dynasty calligraphy by Shen Du, Characterized by The Taige Style  
Source: The Palace Museum (Beijing) , Cao Hengyuan, 2023

The imperial examination system was a concentrated reflection of the practical value of Chinese calligraphy. Its first principle was the ability to recognize characters, and the absolute standardization of writing was a necessary condition. On one hand, this made Chinese calligraphy a compulsory subject for both the elite and the common people, providing political assurance for its inheritance. On the other hand, it deeply attached the development of Chinese calligraphy in the direction of art to practicality. Therefore, during the Ming and Qing dynasties, a uniform writing style emerged, characterized by its blackness, squareness, glossiness, and uniformity, to meet the demands of examinations, becoming the standard script in examination halls, known as "Taige script (台閣體)" and "Guange script (館閣體)".

In 1905, Yuan Shikai and Zhang Zhidong proposed the cessation of the imperial examination system in order to promote school education, leading to the abolition of the system that had lasted for 1300 years.

## 2.2.2 Calligraphy Education

### 2.2.2.1 Primary and Secondary School Calligraphy Education

In 2013, the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China issued a notice titled "Notice of the Ministry of Education on Printing and Distributing the 'Guidelines for Calligraphy Education in Primary and Secondary Schools,'" announcing the publication of the "Guidelines for Calligraphy Education in Primary and Secondary Schools." Starting from the spring semester of the same year, calligraphy education

would be incorporated into the primary and secondary school teaching system, and students would learn both hard-pen and brush calligraphy according to their age and stage.

The guidelines set clear requirements for learning with a hard pen: In the lower grades of primary school, students would learn to write regular script with a pencil, mastering basic strokes of Chinese characters, commonly used radicals, and basic stroke order rules. They would use copybooks to grasp the strokes and structure of characters, aiming for standardized, upright, and neat writing, and gaining an initial appreciation of the aesthetic beauty of Chinese characters. In the middle grades of primary school, students would start using a fountain pen, becoming proficient in writing regular script with it, striving for symmetry, and gradually improving writing speed. In the upper grades of primary school, when practicing writing passages with horizontal lines, they would aim for neat and beautiful handwriting at a certain speed; interested students could try writing regular script with a hard pen. In junior high school, students would learn to write regular script with a hard pen. In senior high school, they could learn to write running script with a hard pen, aiming for beauty.

Regarding brush calligraphy, the guidelines stipulate that from grades 3 to 6, one class hour per week would be allocated for brush calligraphy learning. Grades 3 to 4 would focus on copying regular script calligraphy models, while grades 5 to 6 would attempt to copy classical regular script inscriptions and learn to appreciate calligraphy works. In junior high school, interested students could try learning other scripts such as clerical and running scripts, while in senior high school, they could deepen their study through elective calligraphy courses to develop their expertise.

The guidelines also recommend a selection of models and appreciation works, including works by Wang Xizhi, Yan Zhenqing, Zhao Mengfu, Lu Xun, Mao Zedong, and Qi Baishi.

According to the requirements of the Ministry of Education, the provision of calligraphy courses would be included in educational supervision as a special focus area, but there would be no specific examinations or grading for calligraphy. (Sougou Encyclopedia, 2021)

#### 2.2.2.2 Higher Calligraphy Education

In the article "Reflections on Contemporary Higher Calligraphy Education," the origin of contemporary calligraphy education discipline is introduced as follows:

In 1912, Cai Yuanpei, the then Minister of Education, proposed five educational objectives: "military and nationalistic education, utilitarian education, civic moral education, worldview education, and aesthetic education." On April 15, 1918, during the establishment and opening ceremony of the National Beijing Academy of Fine Arts, Cai Yuanpei stated, "Chinese painting and calligraphy are closely related; hence, those who are skilled in painting are also skilled in calligraphy." He expressed the hope that when the school's funding expanded, a calligraphy department would be added.

In the middle and later stages of the Republic of China, higher calligraphy education saw further development. In 1928, the "Liangjiang Normal School" was renamed "National Central University" and gathered highly representative artists of the time. The school explicitly stipulated that students majoring in Chinese painting must take calligraphy and seal carving as part of the "five compulsory courses."

Before and after the New Culture Movement, many art schools were established successively, such as the Suzhou Academy of Fine Arts founded in 1922 and the Shanghai Academy of Fine Arts in 1930, all of which offered majors in calligraphy and seal carving. While the Suzhou Academy of Fine Arts focused on painting and drawing, it also offered calligraphy courses. In 1934, Hu Xiaoshi established a calligraphy theory course at the National University of Jinling's Chinese Studies Research Class. Such initiatives were of extraordinary significance for higher calligraphy education. Fine arts higher education began to focus on calligraphy as a discipline, extracting calligraphy as an independent research subject and placing it in a broader cultural context. (Wang Cheju, 2022)

In the article "Investigation of the Current Situation of Higher Calligraphy Education," the process of building higher calligraphy education disciplines is outlined as follows:

In 1979, the Zhejiang Academy of Fine Arts enrolled its first batch of master's students in calligraphy. Starting from the mid-1980s, Mr. Ouyang Zhongshi devoted himself to the construction and development of higher calligraphy education at Capital Normal University. In 1985, a calligraphy education major was established, and in

1993, Capital Normal University established the first doctoral program in calligraphy art education in China. In 1999, it enrolled post-doctoral fellows in calligraphy. Subsequently, schools such as the China Academy of Art, Zhejiang University, Jilin University, Central Academy of Fine Arts, and Shandong University successively established doctoral programs in calligraphy, and institutions such as Renmin University of China and Beijing Normal University also established post-doctoral workstations. At the same time, non-degree education has become increasingly diverse, providing various forms of study platforms such as advanced classes, graduate classes, course classes, and visiting scholars for numerous calligraphy enthusiasts. (Zhou Kan, Xu Min, Li Nan, 2009)

Currently, there are 145 higher education institutions admitting undergraduate students in calligraphy, 111 admitting master's students in calligraphy, and 26 admitting doctoral students in calligraphy.

In conclusion, higher calligraphy education refers to the academic study and practice of calligraphy at the tertiary level. In higher education institutions such as universities and colleges, calligraphy is often offered as a specialized subject within departments of fine arts, Chinese language and literature, or traditional Chinese culture. Students enrolled in higher calligraphy education programs typically study various styles of calligraphy, including regular script, running script, cursive script, and seal script. They also learn about the history and evolution of calligraphy, famous calligraphers and their works, as well as calligraphy theory and aesthetics.

In addition to theoretical courses, practical training is a crucial component of higher calligraphy education. Students spend considerable time practicing calligraphy under the guidance of experienced calligraphy instructors. They learn proper brush handling techniques, stroke order, character composition, and artistic expression. Higher calligraphy education aims to cultivate students' artistic skills, deepen their understanding of Chinese culture, and foster appreciation for the art of calligraphy. Upon completion of their studies, graduates may pursue careers as professional calligraphers, educators, researchers, or work in fields related to art and culture.

## 2.3 The Historical Transformation of Chinese Calligraphy

In 2018, my master's advisor, Hu Kangmei, was invited to the "Chinese Calligraphy and Painting Lecture Hall" to conduct a seminar titled "Identity Awareness in the Modern Transformation of Calligraphy" on October 14th from 3:00 to 6:00 PM. He briefly summarized seven historical transformation periods of Chinese calligraphy and published them in the "Chinese Calligraphy and Painting" magazine. The summary is as follows:

### 2.3.1 Wei-Jin New Style

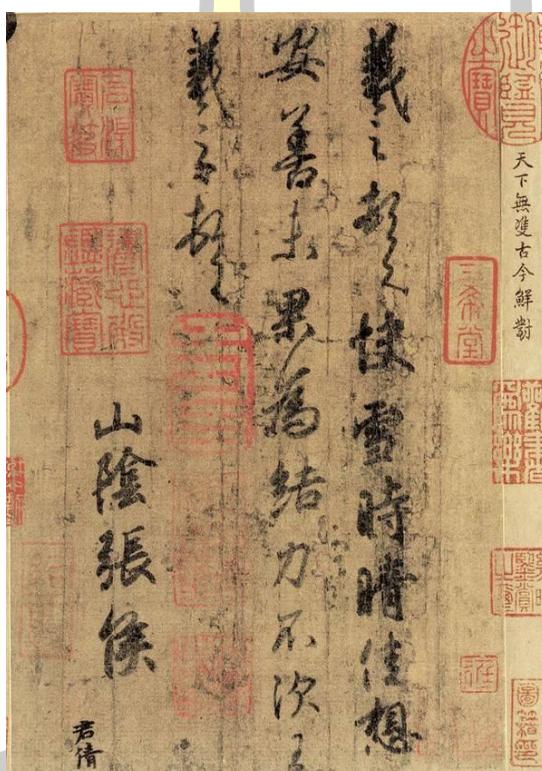


Figure 35 Wang Xizhi's Running Script: A Quick Snow Clearing After a Sunny Spell

Source: The Palace Museum (Taipei), 2023

The important hallmark of the first transition is the emergence of the Wei-Jin new style. Historical choices in the first transition centered around Wang Xizhi. What is the essence of Wang Xizhi? It is a kind of spirit. The first aspect of Wang Xizhi's spirit is innovation, the second is his inheritance, and the third is the Wei-Jin tradition constructed by a large number of calligraphers represented by him. What is the Wei-Jin tradition? One very important aspect is based on seal script and clerical script. Therefore, the difficulty of studying Wang Xizhi's calligraphy lies not in elegance and

beauty, but in simplicity, vibrancy, and the creation of vivid artistic images using the lines of seal script and clerical script. (Hu Kangmei, 2018)

### 2.3.2 The Transition from The Wei and Jin Dynasties to The Tang dynasty



Figure 36 The Record of the Yang Da Yan Statue

Source: The Longmen Grottoes in Luoyang, Henan province, Cao Hengyuan, 2023

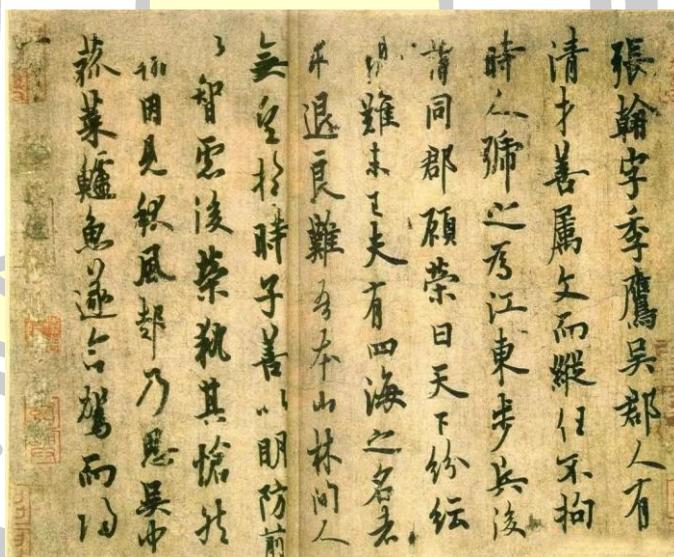


Figure 37 The Zhang Han Inscription by Ouyang Xun in the Tang Dynasty

Source: The Palace Museum (Taipei), 2023

The second transition occurred during the Tang Dynasty. That is to say, from the Wei and Jin Dynasties to the year 581 AD, and then to the Tang Dynasty, during this period, calligraphy existed in two major styles: one represented by Wang Xizhi's delicate style, and the other represented by the relatively rough tradition of the Northern Dynasties. Whether from the Northern or Southern Dynasties, they all originated from the Qin and Han Dynasties. It should be said that in the early Tang Dynasty, calligraphy did enter a stage of "construction" of norms. Various norms, centered around Ouyang Xun's "Thirty-Six Laws," were established successively, emphasizing the initiation, conclusion, and turning of strokes, while neglecting the long process of stroke expression, which is precisely the tradition of seal and clerical scripts that we emphasized earlier. (Hu Kangmei, 2018)

Of course, Ouyang Xun was the one who rediscovered the lost calligraphic tradition (seal and clerical scripts) at that time, so he wrote the book "Thirty-Six Laws." However, the process of artistic self-discipline will not shift due to individual will.

### 2.3.3 The Transition During the Song Dynasty

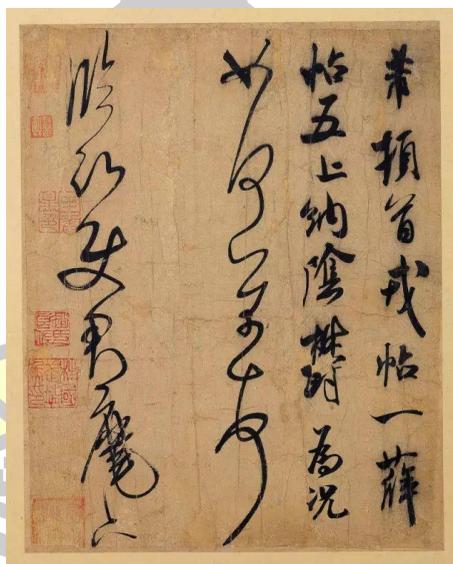


Figure 38 The Running Script of Mi Fu's Letter to the Lord of Linyi in the Song Dynasty

Source: The Palace Museum (Taipei), 2023

A turning point from prosperity to decline emerged, marking the relaxation of calligraphic standards. In the Song Dynasty, the strokes of calligraphy became more standardized and formulaic. Images like "traces on the roof, lines drawn in sand, birds

flying out of the forest" became relatively rare, replaced by formulaic expressions akin to mathematical formulas. Consequently, this lowered the difficulty of understanding brushwork and techniques, rendering the secrets of calligraphy less mysterious. Mi Fu's "eight sides produce sharpness" and "wind at the masthead, horses in formation" challenged the traditional central focus, with rules and standards becoming tools in the creative process rather than the sole focus of expression. (Hu Kangmei, 2018)

#### 2.3.4 The Retrogression and Transformation of the Yuan Dynasty



Figure 39 The Poem Returning Home by Zhao Mengfu of the Yuan Dynasty

Source: Shanghai Museum, Cao Hengyuan, 2023

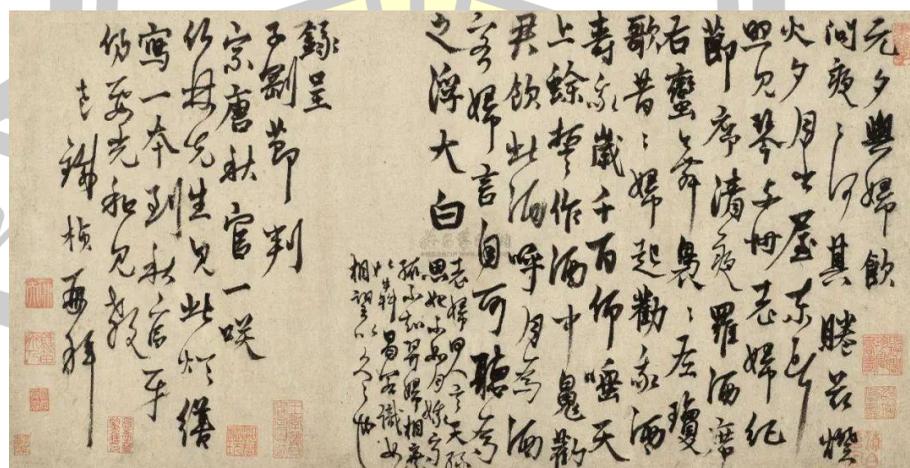


Figure 40 Yuan Xi and Woman Drinking Poetry by Yang Weizhen in the Yuan Dynasty

Source: Private Collection of Wang Jiqian in the United States, 2023

The fourth transformation occurred amidst the confrontation between retrogression and transformation. Zhao Mengfu's retrogression mainly manifested in the emulation, imitation, and copying of ancient styles. In terms of calligraphy, Zhao Mengfu's retrogressive influence was extremely powerful, almost becoming the common pursuit of intellectuals at that time. Representing the transformation of the Yuan Dynasty was Yang Weizhen. He did not conform to conventional norms but used brush and ink to express his inner world freely and vividly. While Zhao's retrogression distanced itself from the "Two Wangs", it was under the hands of figures like Yang Weizhen that the spirit of the "Two Wangs" was more prominently displayed. (Hu Kangmei, 2018)

### 2.3.5 The Mass Transformation in the Ming Dynasty

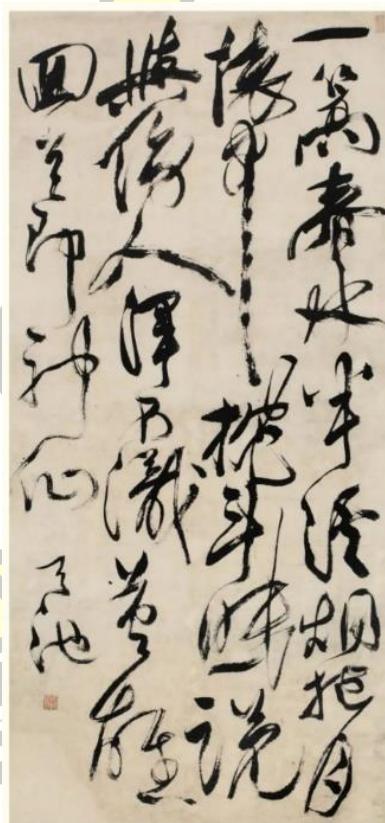


Figure 41 Xu Wei's Cursive Script Poem Scroll

Source: Shanghai Museum, Cao Hengyuan, 2023

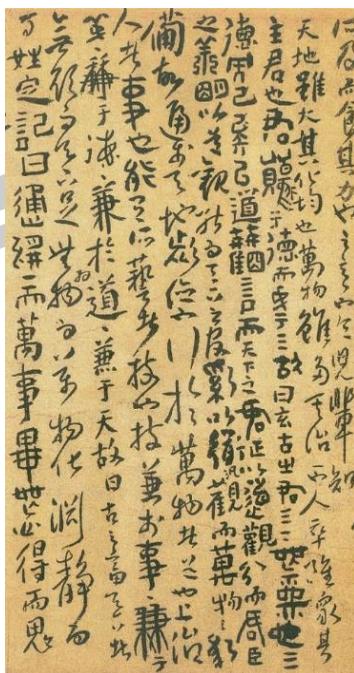


Figure 42 Fu Shan's Calligraphy

Source: Bai Qianshen's *The World of Fu Shan: The Evolution of 17th Century Chinese Calligraphy*, published by the Harvard University Asia Center, 2003 edition

The fifth transformation exhibited characteristics of collectivity and diversity. In the aforementioned transformations, we have discussed representative individuals, but in the Ming Dynasty, the researcher believes that the calligraphers undergoing transformation formed almost a collective, each with their own characteristics and personal transformations. Xu Wei's madness, especially using the symbols of cursive script to write wild cursive script, was unprecedented; Huang Daozhou, theoretically speaking, interpreted the "Two Wangs" very well, but in his works, he only embodied the spirit of the "Two Wangs"; Ni Yuanlu was also a very individualistic calligrapher, bold and unconstrained, mainly using square turns in his strokes, very flamboyant; Zhang Ruitu created a new pattern of structure and rhythm, with tight structure but wide line spacing, transcending people's aesthetic inertia; the first one to be bold with ink should be Wang Duo; Fu Shan boldly declared "better to be ugly than flattering" during the transformation...So the researcher believe that during this period, there emerged a collective of transformation, expressing their nature and aspirations in various different manners. (Hu Kangmei, 2018)

## 2.3.6 The Stele Study Movement in the Qing Dynasty



Figure 43 Tang Dynasty's Li Yangbing's Thousand Character Classic

Source: Treasured Calligraphy Works by Famous Calligraphers Through the Ages,  
Zhongzhou Ancient Books Publishing House, 2018



Figure 44 Deng Shiru's Record of the Lodges and Studios in the Lu Mountains

Source: Deng Shiru's Seal Script in the Qing Dynasty, Anhui Fine Arts Publishing  
House, 2022

The sixth transformation is the stele study movement. Firstly, there was an excessive emphasis on carving tablets, which led to distortion in conveying the essence of the "Two Wangs", Wei and Jin dynasties, including the Tang dynasty's information. People's painstaking efforts in copying tablets gradually drifted away from the original intent. Secondly, the prevalence of the "Tai Ge" and "Guan Ge" styles under the protection of the imperial examination system. Thirdly, the emergence of new materials such as oracle bone inscriptions also contributed to this transformation. This stele study movement served as a reminder, correction, supplement, and defense of the tablet study. Simultaneously, it separated the creation and practical application of seal script and clerical script, while achieving the integration of stele inscriptions and model books. (Hu Kangmei, 2018)

In "The Debate on Southern and Northern Schools of Calligraphy" by Ruan Yuan during the Qing Dynasty, the concepts of the Southern School's "tie xue" (modeling after calligraphy) and the Northern School's "bei xue" (modeling after inscriptions) were first proposed. Ruan Yuan categorized ancient ink traces into the Southern School's "tie xue," emphasizing antiquity, simplicity, and robustness, while the rugged and rustic inscriptions were included in the Northern School's "bei xue." Bao Shichen then advocated for the Northern Inscriptions, which rose as the Tie School declined. Deng Shiru further revolutionized the writing style of seal script, creating a profound and powerful style. By the end of the Qing Dynasty and the beginning of the Republic of China, the study of inscriptions reached its peak, with a large number of inscription scholars emerging, including Wu Changshuo, Kang Youwei, Zhao Zhiqian, Zhang Yuzhao, Shen Zengzhi, and Li Ruiqing.

### 2.3.7 The Modernity Transition

พหุ มั ปรณ ทั โด ทั เว



Figure 45 Huang Binhong Couplets

Source: In the Brief Analysis of Huang Binhong's Seal Script Art by Yu Mingquan, published in Issue 386 of Chinese Calligraphy Newspaper, sections 5, 8, and 6

The seventh transition occurred mainly in the first half of the 20th century, and the researcher believe this period of transition is characterized by modernity. First, the abolition of the imperial examination system and the introduction of the Western pen forced calligraphy to develop towards specialization and professionalism. Second, influenced by the trend of Western learning, unprecedentedly, Western art theories and aesthetics were introduced into calligraphy theory, expanding the theoretical horizon of calligraphy. Third, the trend of inscription studies during this period yielded fruitful

results, giving rise to a unique calligraphic paradigm of the time—the Republican Period style. (Hu Kangmei, 2018)

## 2.4 Overview of Conceptual Theory

### 2.4.1 The Concept and Theory of Paradigms

The term "paradigm" originates from Greek and originally conveys the meaning of "shared display". It has since been extended to mean pattern, model, or exemplar. The concept and theory of paradigms were introduced by the renowned American philosopher of science Thomas Kuhn in his book "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions" (1962), where he provided a systematic exposition.

"Paradigm" is the most central concept in Kuhn's "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions"; its emergence itself constitutes a "revolution". Kuhn explicitly defined "paradigm" in the postscript: (1) broadly, it refers to the entire set of beliefs, values, techniques, etc., shared by a particular community member; (2) narrowly, it refers to an element of that whole, namely a specific puzzle solution.

Kuhn opposed the notion that scientific knowledge develops in an accumulative manner. According to his theory, the development pattern of scientific knowledge should follow a cyclical model: "Science - Normal Science - Crisis - New Normal Science - New Crisis..." Science represents an evolving discipline system without a systematic theoretical framework, a process that numerous scholar endeavor to explore. Normal science represents the formation of a disciplinary system, where the so-called "paradigms" are employed within the system to solve the theoretical and experimental problems encountered, constituting the normal science phase. Crisis represents the increasing inability of the existing paradigm to solve more and more problems; thus, a crisis emerges. Through a "scientific revolution" of the existing paradigm, namely a paradigm shift, the discipline forms a new paradigm. The new normal science represents the advancement and development of the discipline within the new order.

### 2.4.2 Formalistic Aesthetics

"Form" is an important concept in ancient Greek philosophy, corresponding to "substance," describing the essence of things, and referring to the "primary entity." Form and matter, as part of Aristotle's "ontology," have had a significant impact on subsequent philosophy.

The Pythagorean school of ancient Greece attempted to find beauty in geometric relations. In the 18th century, British art theorist Hogarth (1697-1764) proposed in "Analysis of Beauty" that beauty arises from the interplay of changes in form and variations in quantity. During the Enlightenment period, German art historian Winckelmann (1717-1768) claimed that true beauty was geometrical, regardless of whether it was classical or romantic art. Kant (1724-1804) explicitly stated that "the most essential thing in all art is undoubtedly form." Kant strongly emphasized formal beauty, leading later aestheticians to realize that excessive emphasis on imitation and representation would divert people's attention away from the artwork itself, thus diminishing its intrinsic value. After Kant, the main representative of formalistic aesthetics was the German aesthetician Herbart (1776-1841), who argued that beauty can only be examined through form, which arises from the relationships among various elements of a work.

Since the 20th century, British art critics Roger Fry (1886-1934) and Clive Bell (1881-1964) provided another interpretation of this formalistic view. Fry believed that form is the essence of painting, and the form constituted by the arrangement of lines and colors integrates "order" and "diversity," evoking a unique sense of pleasure. This pleasure differs from the emotions evoked by representational content, which fades quickly, while the pleasure elicited by form remains eternal and unimpaired. Bell pointed out that representational content not only does not aid the beauty of form but also undermines it. Relationships formed by elements such as lines, colors, or blocks possess a unique significance, termed "significant form," which alone can evoke aesthetic emotions. "Significant form" is an eternal characteristic of art that transcends temporal changes and can be recognized and appreciated by viewers from different periods and cultures. Appreciating art does not require recourse to real-life content or everyday emotions; art is not a tool for eliciting ordinary emotions, but rather it transports people from the real world to a mysterious realm, inducing a state of ecstasy, which constitutes genuine aesthetic emotions.

Clive Bell's theory of "significant form" had a profound impact on the development of Western art in the future. Modern abstract painter Mondrian (1872-1944) pointed out that for modern artists, the experience of beauty is a universal, cosmic experience, and the forms of abstract art present "universal elements" through the

reconstruction of cosmic relations. Russian painter Kandinsky (1866-1944) referred to these so-called "universal elements" as the content of abstract forms, but this content is no longer in the traditional sense; it mainly refers to the various natures of abstract form elements themselves, such as activity, dynamism, and purposefulness.

"Formalism" has always been one of the main trends in Western aesthetics history, while modern structuralism, semiotics, phenomenology, and other aesthetic trends with scientific inclinations, as well as the "New Criticism" in literary theory, all more or less carry elements of formalism. (Sogou Encyclopedia, 2022)

#### 2.4.3 Iconology

Iconology, also known as iconography or critical iconology, is a method and science of image studies, which laid an important theoretical foundation for the establishment of art history as an independent discipline in the first half of the 20th century. The term "iconology" is derived from the Greek roots "eikṓn," meaning "image, likeness, portrait," and "lógos," referring to various discourses, theories, and disciplines. Traditional iconology involves artists compiling and collecting symbolic or allegorical image prototypes for use in their creations, including pictograms, emblems, emblematic inscriptions, encyclopedic charts, etc., and explores icons and specific subjects. In the modern sense of the 20th century, iconology emphasizes the description and classification of artworks, combined with the study of iconography, examines motifs and their historical, cultural, or social implications, and interprets the worldview and contemporary significance of artworks, forming a comprehensive methodological theory.

The establishment of modern iconology was first advocated by the German scholar Aby Warburg. In 1912, he first mentioned "critical iconology" in a speech in Rome, attempting to interpret the worldview and humanistic connotations embodied in artworks based on iconography. Warburg's art history is the most important field in cultural intellectual history. He liberated art studies from the constraints of aesthetic appreciation and emphasized social functions and contemporary significance, thus pioneering the development of modern iconological schools. Shortly thereafter, scholars of the Vienna School of Art History, such as Wofflin (1864-1945), published "Principles of Art History" (*Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, 1915), conducting systematic analysis of the appearance and form of artworks and regarding artworks as

primary historical sources for art history research. Since then, the iconological and stylistic schools have become important foundations for the establishment of art history as a discipline in the 20th century. (Zhang Xingqing, 1993)

#### 2.4.4 Pedagogy

Education is a social science that takes the phenomena and issues of education as its research object, continuously exploring and revealing the laws governing educational activities to serve educational practice. The fundamental task of education is to uncover these laws. The emergence of education as a field began when education became an independent social activity for humanity. Alongside the ongoing development of educational practices and the accumulation of educational experiences, philosophers and thinkers started to summarize and generalize these experiences. They addressed and elucidated educational issues within their political and philosophical thoughts. Examples include ancient Chinese thinkers such as Confucius, Mencius, Xunzi, and Zhu Xi, as well as ancient Western philosophers like Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and Quintilian.

Since the 17th century, with the emergence of new scientific schools, traditional educational methods used in church schools and knightly education became inadequate. These new scientific schools required new teachers and innovative teaching methods. Consequently, teacher training institutes and specialized pedagogical courses began to appear across Europe from the late 17th century onwards. Education began to separate from its philosophical roots and emerged as a distinct area of study. Francis Bacon is often referred to as the "father of modern experimental science." His development of the inductive method laid the methodological foundation for the field of education. In his work "The Advancement of Learning" published in 1623, Bacon first proposed education as an independent discipline. Comenius, a Czech educator of the 17th century, was a pivotal figure in the history of human education. He famously described teaching as the most glorious profession under the sun. His work "The Great Didactic" (1632) is considered a milestone in the establishment of education as a distinct academic discipline. John Locke, the renowned British philosopher and educator, articulated his educational ideas primarily in his book "Some Thoughts Concerning Education" (1693).

Jean-Jacques Rousseau is a renowned French Enlightenment philosopher. His work "Emile" (1762) reflects the naturalistic educational ideas and child-centered educational views. In Western modern history, Rousseau is considered the first to "discover children." Immanuel Kant's educational philosophy is primarily reflected in his work "On Education." Kant was the first to teach education as a separate course at the university level. He believed that all natural endowments of humans require development, asserting that "man is the only animal that needs education." Kant viewed the fundamental task of education as the full development of natural endowments, enabling individuals to become themselves, to realize their inherent selves, and to achieve self-perfection. Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, a renowned Swiss educator, is best known for his work "Leonard and Gertrude." He was the first in Western educational history to explicitly advocate for "psychologizing education" and to integrate the idea of education with productive labor into practice. Pestalozzi believed that the purpose of education should be to "promote the comprehensive and harmonious development of all human faculties and powers," aiming to cultivate individuals who are morally upright, wise, capable of labor, and physically healthy.

Herbert Spencer was a renowned philosopher, sociologist, and educator in 19th-century England, best known for his work "Education: Intellectual, Moral, and Physical" (1861). In this book, he proposed that the purpose of education is to "prepare for complete living." He evaluated the value of knowledge based on its relevance to life, production, and personal development. After thorough analysis, he concluded, "What knowledge is of most worth?" The answer, according to Spencer, was "science." His curriculum centered on scientific knowledge and emphasized its close connection to everyday life. His scientific educational philosophy revolutionized classical humanistic education content and significantly promoted the development of scientific education. Johann Friedrich Herbart is acclaimed as the "father of modern educational theory" and the "founder of scientific pedagogy." In 1806, the publication of his "General Pedagogy" marked the formal birth of education as a standardized and independent discipline. This book is also regarded as the first modern work in educational theory.

#### 2.4.5 Cultural Communication

In communication studies, the term "communication" is a transliteration of the English word "communication." It originates from the Latin words *communicatio* and *communis*, and in the 14th century, it was written as "comynycacion" in English. American sociologist Charles Cooley, in his 1909 book "Social Organization," dedicated a chapter specifically to discuss communication and provided a widely recognized definition: "Communication refers to the mechanisms upon which human relationships are established and developed—encompassing all symbolic expressions transmitted in space and preserved over time. This includes gestures, attitudes and actions, intonations, language, writings, printed materials, railways, telegraphs, telephones, and any other recent achievements of human conquest over space and time."

In the first half of the 20th century, four scholars significantly influenced the establishment of communication studies:

In 1927, Harold D. Lasswell wrote "Propaganda Technique in the World War," analyzing propaganda strategies and their effects during a major war, establishing himself as an authority in propaganda studies. He explored many fundamental issues in communication studies, initially summarizing the three basic social functions of communication and introducing the "5W" model of the communication process. His work made significant contributions to the theoretical framework and major research areas of communication studies.

Luhmann's primary research area was the channels of mass communication. One of his significant contributions was introducing the concept of "gatekeepers." Luhmann himself theorized the concept of "gatekeeping" within communication systems, and later, his students extensively applied the "gatekeeping" theory to the study of news selection and processing processes.

C.I. Hofland was the first to introduce psychological experimental methods into the field of communication studies. He was primarily concerned with the persuasive effects of communication, specifically examining attitude change resulting from communication. From the World War II period to the early 1960s, Hofland conducted numerous experimental studies on factors influencing persuasive effects, such as source credibility, communication techniques, and audience characteristics. His research revealed the complexity and contingencies involved in forming communication effects.

P.F. Lazarsfeld systematically applied social survey methods to audience research. He and Katz published the landmark Elihu study report titled "Personal Influence" in 1948, marking a milestone in the history of communication research. This book introduced notable theoretical viewpoints such as the "two-step flow hypothesis," "selective exposure hypothesis," and the role of opinion leaders in communication. Lazarsfeld is considered the founder of the empirical tradition in communication studies.

The concept of cultural communication spans across multiple academic disciplines such as communication studies, sociology, and anthropology. It typically refers to the process of transmitting and receiving cultural content, symbols, ideas, and values within societies and groups. According to the "Dictionary of Propaganda and Public Opinion Studies," cultural communication is defined as a cultural interactive phenomenon that arises from social activities and interactions within communities, groups, and the coexistence of individuals.

Intercultural communication is the English name for "跨文化传播," and a more accurate translation is "communication between cultures." However, in China, it has various corresponding names: 跨文化沟通、跨文化交际、跨文化交流、跨文化对话、跨文化研究, reflecting the lack of consensus on the discipline's positioning. Intercultural communication flourished in the United States after World War II, rooted in communication studies but involving contributions from linguistics, sociology, psychology, anthropology, and other fields. In China, its positioning has been unclear; initially centered on linguistics as "cross-cultural communication" or "intercultural communication," it expanded with literary and cultural scholars to "cross-cultural exchange," "intercultural dialogue," or "cross-cultural studies." The development of "intercultural communication studies" led by communication scholars is still in its early stages in China, where communication studies have only been established for 40 years, making it an emerging discipline.

#### 2.4.6 Semeiology

In 1894, Ferdinand de Saussure first introduced the concept of "semiology" in his teaching lectures, "Course in General Linguistics," laying the initial theoretical

groundwork that is considered the origin of structuralist semiotics. Roland Barthes' semiotic theory originated from Saussure's basic ideas in linguistic semiotics, further developing and critiquing Saussure's foundational theories. Building upon Saussure's fundamental concepts in semiotics, Barthes established structuralist semiotics.

In his book "Elements of Semiology," Roland Barthes proposed his own semiotic theory based on four fundamental categories: language and speech, signifier and signified, combination and system, denotation and connotation. Barthes stated, "Semiology is part of linguistics, responsible for the larger units of meaning within discourse." He elaborated on Saussure's theory, modifying and refining its imperfect and unreasonable aspects. This development made "Elements of Semiology" a significant reference in semiotic studies, profoundly influencing subsequent research in the field of semiotics.

In the field of art history, semiotics holds its unique charm:

In a landmark paper in 1934 titled "Art as a Semiotic Fact," Czech linguist Jan Mukařovský proclaimed, "Artworks possess symbolism." He then applied Saussure's methods to visual art analysis. While Saussure distinguished between the signifier and the signified, Mukařovský differentiated between the "sensuously perceptible 'work-as-entity'" existing in the "collective consciousness" and the "aesthetic object."

In 1960, French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty published "Signs," applying Saussure's framework to phenomenology. Merleau-Ponty linked painting to language because, like language, painting is composed of symbols and assembled according to "syntax or logic."

Roland Barthes' influential work "Elements of Semiology" applied Saussure's framework to popular images such as cartoons and advertisements.

In the 1960s, American scholar Meyer Schapiro began exploring semiotic analysis in the field of visual arts. In 1969, he published the seminal paper "Some Problems in the Semiotics of Visual Art: Categories, Artists, Society," where he linked formal analysis of artworks to examinations of their social and cultural histories.

American scholar Norman Bryson transitioned from literary studies to semiotics. In his influential work "Word and Image: French Painting of the Ancien Régime," he explored the linguistic-like characteristics of art and the relationship between art and written language from a semiotic perspective. Bryson viewed images as open rather

than closed symbols, suggesting that within an image and its cultural context, multiple interlocking systems of symbols are at play.

French art historian Louis Marin, in a significant paper discussing Poussin's painting "The Shepherds of Arcadia," highlighted inherent challenges in applying semiotic theory, which largely developed from linguistics, to interpret visual arts. Marin's work is doubly significant as it reminds us that theory is not a one-way street: it not only applies theories to interpret art but also changes our understanding of theory through the interpretation of art.

Dutch scholar Mieke Bal, trained in literary criticism, made significant contributions to art semiotics. He emphasized that artworks are events—each time an image is processed by a viewer, an event occurs. Therefore, artworks act as a medium, actively shaping the viewer's experience and ultimately constructing the viewer's subjectivity. The task of semiotic art history is to simultaneously analyze the image itself, its interpretations, the relationship between them (why a subject interprets it in a specific way), and the positioning of the image within these interpretations.

## **2.5 Chinese Calligraphy Literature**

### **2.5.1 Ancient Calligraphy Literature**

"The Selected Essays on Calligraphy through the Ages" and "The Continued Compilation of Selected Essays on Calligraphy through the Ages" are currently the most comprehensive books on ancient calligraphy literature, formatted vertically and written in classical Chinese. Although lacking in sources and annotations, they preliminarily construct the theoretical system of ancient calligraphy as a tool book for calligraphy theory.

"The Selected Essays on Calligraphy through the Ages" is arranged in chronological order according to the birth and death dates of the authors, starting from Zhao Yi's "Fei Cao Shu" in the Han Dynasty and ending with Kang Youwei's "Guang Yi Zhou Shuang Ji" in the Qing Dynasty. It includes 95 essays by 69 famous calligraphers throughout history, covering various aspects such as calligraphy techniques and calligraphy history, facilitating readers' understanding of the development of Chinese calligraphy. Some essays, such as those by Lady Wei and Wang Xizhi in the Wei and Jin Dynasties, are suspected of being pseudo-works, but

considering their significant influence and academic value, they are still included in the collection.

"The Continued Compilation of Selected Essays on Calligraphy through the Ages" is a supplement to "The Selected Essays on Calligraphy through the Ages," compiling and editing important calligraphy essays and reviews omitted from the former. It includes 45 essays by 43 calligraphers from the Eastern Han Dynasty to the modern era. Some famous articles on traditional philology, such as Xu Shen's "Shuo Wen Jie Zi Xu" from the Han Dynasty and Zhang Taiyan's "Xiao Xue Lue Shuo" from the modern era, are also included in the collection. (Edited by Cui Erping, First Edition, 1993)

"The Selected Essays on Calligraphy through the Ages" was edited by Huang Jian and published by Shanghai Calligraphy and Painting Publishing House in 1979. It has since been repeatedly reprinted after being selected, compiled, and collated by the Ancient Books Editing and Research Office of East China Normal University. "The Continued Compilation of Selected Essays on Calligraphy through the Ages" was edited by Cui Erping and published by Shanghai Calligraphy and Painting Publishing House in 1993, followed by multiple reprints.

### 2.5.2 Contemporary Calligraphy Literature

Contemporary calligraphy literature includes calligraphy documents from the Republic of China era and the People's Republic of China era.

The compilation of calligraphy documents from the Republic of China era follows the format of "Selected Essays on Calligraphy from Past Dynasties," which is evident in works such as "Selected Essays on Calligraphy from the Republic of China" and "Selected Essays on Calligraphy from the Modern and Contemporary Periods."

Calligraphy literature from the People's Republic of China era has exhibited diversified development. Philosophers, aestheticians, historians, economists, cultural scholars, and others interpret calligraphy from various perspectives, constructing a panoramic contemporary calligraphy cultural system.

#### 2.5.2.1 The Main Literature of the Republic of China Era

(1) "Selected Essays on Calligraphy from the Republic of China" collects twenty-one essays on calligraphy theory from the Republic of China era. The selected articles, representing distinct perspectives from cultural, artistic, and calligraphic

realms, are chosen to encompass the authors' own levels of calligraphy proficiency. This selection aims to immerse readers in calligraphy, allowing them to experience and study calligraphy within the context of aesthetic appreciation, thereby exploring the cultural and artistic dimensions of calligraphy. (Zheng Yizeng, 2011)

(2) "Selected Essays on Modern and Contemporary Calligraphy" builds upon the foundation of "Selected Essays on Calligraphy from the Republic of China," including over thirty essays (or chapters) on calligraphy theory written by more than twenty modern and contemporary calligraphers and theorists. Offering insightful perspectives on calligraphy techniques, aesthetics, history, and linguistics from various angles, these profound insights serve as guiding lights for calligraphy learners and researchers. This is a high-level theoretical book on calligraphy. (Xiao Peijin, 2014)

During this period, scholars from the Republic of China era proposed different viewpoints. For example, Liang Qichao's "Theory of Four Beauties" includes beauty in lines, light, force, and personality. Zong Baihua's "Theory of Mood" suggests that the form of calligraphy is its content, and "mood" is the "form of life." Lin Yutang's "Theory of Rhythm" posits that "all artistic problems are rhythm problems," learning calligraphy is learning the theory of form and rhythm, and indicates that "calligraphy provides the Chinese people with a basic aesthetics, and it is through calligraphy that the Chinese people learn the basic concepts of lines and forms."

#### 2.5.2.2 The Main Literature of the People's Republic of China Era

(1) "History of Chinese Calligraphy (Seven Volumes)" represents the highest achievement in the study of calligraphy history today. It is a collaborative work of seven experts who have made significant contributions to the discipline of calligraphy history. They respectively undertake the volumes on Pre-Qin and Qin Dynasty, Han Dynasty, Wei-Jin-Northern and Southern Dynasties, Sui-Tang-Five Dynasties, Song-Liao-Jin Dynasties, Yuan-Ming Dynasties, and Qing Dynasty. Combining literature with archaeology, historical research with theoretical exposition, emphasizing the interpretation of calligraphic works, and focusing on the essence of calligraphy art, this work has had a significant impact on the discipline of calligraphy history. (Published by Jiangsu Education Press, 1999-2002)

The Pre-Qin and Qin Dynasty volume is authored by Professor Cong Wenjun from Jilin University's Department of Literature. The Han Dynasty volume is authored

by Hu Ren De, a representative figure in the study of calligraphy history in the Han Dynasty. The Wei-Jin-Northern and Southern Dynasties volume is authored by Liu Tao, an expert in the study of the "Two Wangs." The Sui-Tang volume is authored by Zhu Guantian, one of the first master's students in calligraphy in China. The Five Dynasties and Song-Liao-Jin Dynasties volume is authored by Cao Baolin, a leading figure in the study of calligraphy history in the Song Dynasty. The Yuan-Ming Dynasties volume is authored by Huang Dun, one of the pioneers in the development of contemporary calligraphy studies. The Qing Dynasty volume is authored by Liu Heng, an expert in the study of calligraphy history in the Qing Dynasty.

(2) "The Theoretical System of Chinese Calligraphy" is authored by the renowned French-Chinese artist and philosopher Xiong Bingming. (Published by Tianjin Education Press, 2002)

This book is Mr. Xiong Bingming's dedicated work in calligraphy theory. He systematically examines and studies ancient Chinese calligraphy theories, and explores the unique and profound aesthetic values of Chinese calligraphy within a philosophical framework. Transforming the ancient calligraphy theories, which were adept at figurative thinking but somewhat diffuse, into a logically rigorous theoretical system, with broad vision and unique insights, Mr. Xiong's work has made significant contributions to the study of Chinese calligraphy theory.

(3) "Fu Shan's World: The Evolution of 17th Century Chinese Calligraphy" is authored by Bai Qianshen, a professor in the History Department at Boston University and currently the Dean of the School of Arts and Archaeology at Zhejiang University. (Published by the Asia Center of Harvard University, 2003)

The 17th century was a crucial period in the transition of Chinese calligraphy history from clerical script to tablet inscription, with Fu Shan being a representative figure. Unlike previous scholars who studied calligraphy history in isolation, the author of this book, Bai Qianshen, places Fu Shan's calligraphy within the broader cultural context of the era. From the perspective of the development history of academic thought, material culture, and printing culture, and through the lens of the sense of loss experienced by those who endured the transition from the Ming to the Qing Dynasty, Bai Qianshen observes and interprets Fu Shan's life and the academic ideas and artistic creations derived from it. In attempting to redraw the life experiences of Fu Shan, the

author not only sheds light on this turning point in Chinese calligraphy history but also offers a fresh perspective on the cultural world of 17th-century China. This book has attracted keen attention from academic circles at home and abroad and has been praised as "one of the finest works to date on the study of individual artists."

In addition, Professor Bai Qianshen has also authored "Social Interaction and Entertainment of Fu Shan: A Case Study of Art Social History" and "Reflections on Classical Calligraphy Issues through Ancient and Graceful Hairdressing."

(4) "Chinese Calligraphy: 167 Exercises" is authored by Qiu Zhenzhong, a professor and doctoral supervisor at the Central Academy of Fine Arts. (Published by Renmin University of China Press, 2005)

This book is a calligraphy technique textbook composed of 167 exercises, covering all basic techniques of traditional and modern calligraphy creation. It includes some content that has never been discussed before. Based on in-depth and meticulous morphological analysis of works from various dynasties, the author has established a calligraphy training system focusing on the comprehensive development of talent. In addition to traditional techniques, important techniques derived from modern visual experiences are also introduced. The author also endeavors to establish connections between two visual experiences.

Moreover, Professor Qiu Zhenzhong has also authored "Brushstrokes, Structure, and Character Composition: Calligraphy Morphology Study," marking the completion of the theory of Chinese calligraphy morphology. It provides new possibilities for creation, teaching, and research in the field of calligraphy, establishing a systematic method for form analysis and serving as a reference for graphic research in various visual fields.

(5) "On Calligraphy Creation" is authored by Professor Wo Xinghua from Fudan University. (Published by Shanghai Classics Press, 2008)

This book elaborates on some unique insights and creative thoughts of Professor Wo Xinghua in calligraphy creation practice, expressing his creative intentions through his works.

In addition, Professor Wo Xinghua has also authored "History of Chinese Calligraphy," "New Theory of Calligraphy Techniques," "From Creation to Copying,"

"Dunhuang Calligraphy Study," "Bronze Inscription Calligraphy," "Tablet Inscription Calligraphy," and "Rice Belt Calligraphy Study," among others.

(6) "Research on Chinese Calligraphy Composition" is authored by Hu Kangmei, a professor and doctoral supervisor at the Chinese Academy of Arts. (Published by Rong Baozhai Publishing House, 2014)

This book mainly discusses calligraphy composition, such as the differences between ancient and modern composition, the characteristics of contemporary composition, and the rules governing composition. It also touches on the definition, evolution, significance, and methods of composition. Most of the content in the book comes from the author's lectures, conversations, and reading notes in recent years. The author believes that calligraphy composition best reflects the spirit of the times and is closest to people's hearts. Furthermore, calligraphy composition provides the greatest space for further exploration left by the ancients. Therefore, this book is an excellent reference for calligraphy enthusiasts.

In addition, Professor Hu Kangmei has also authored works such as "Form Studies of Calligraphy - Teaching Documents of Hu Kangmei," "Contemporary Discussion on Chinese Calligraphy Art," "Drafts on Calligraphy Studies by Hu Kangmei," "Manpower Wisdom in Ancient China," among others.

(7) "History of Chinese Calligraphy Criticism" is authored by Gan Zhongliu, a professor and doctoral supervisor at the Institute of Chinese Calligraphy Culture at Capital Normal University. (Published by People's Fine Arts Publishing House, 2016)

This book points out that calligraphy criticism, in a narrow sense, refers to the requirements posed for Chinese character writing and the evaluations made on the results of writing, including what is good, what is not, what is beautiful, why it is beautiful, and what kind of beauty it possesses. Broadly speaking, it includes the status, function, connotation, nature, aesthetic category, and judgment criteria of calligraphy art. "History of Chinese Calligraphy Criticism" systematically examines Chinese calligraphy criticism theory from a broad perspective. Divided into five volumes and twenty chapters, it covers calligraphy criticism from the Eastern Han Dynasty to the Tang Dynasty, the Song Dynasty, the Yuan and Ming Dynasties, the Qing Dynasty, and modern calligraphy criticism.

Moreover, Professor Gan Zhongliu has also authored works such as "Technical Methods and Creative Interpretations of Wang Xizhi's 'Seventeen-Character Inscriptions'," "A Guide to Wang Xizhi's Running Script Correspondence," among others.

(8) "Aesthetics of Calligraphy" is authored by Chen Zhenlian, Vice Chairman of the China Federation of Literary and Art Circles. (Published by Shanghai Book and Painting Publishing House, 2017)

This book systematically elucidates the basic principles of calligraphy aesthetics, the laws of form, and compares them with other art forms, offering many innovative insights. The author extracts aesthetic issues from calligraphy and then uses aesthetic speculation to explain and prove them. Here, aesthetic theory is a means, not an end, and calligraphy is the object of study, not the material and means of proof. The tone of the book is humorous, the style is fluent, and it can help readers open up their thinking, broaden their horizons, and gain a more comprehensive understanding of the existence and value of calligraphy beauty, its relationship with life, and its cultural significance.

This book mainly introduces the establishment of calligraphy aesthetics, the nature of calligraphy art, the status of characters as carriers in calligraphy, the composition of calligraphy forms, the appreciation of calligraphy beauty, and its specific approaches.

Additionally, Professor Chen Zhenlian has authored works such as "The World of Lines," "Aesthetic Course of Calligraphy," "Comparative Study of Modern Sino-Japanese Painting Exchange History," among others.

(9) "The World of Chinese Characters: The Origin of Chinese Culture" is authored by the renowned Japanese sinologist Bai Chuanjing. (Bai Chuanjing, 2018)

This book systematically interprets the system and cultural significance of Chinese characters according to themes such as mythology, curses, wars, religion, and music and dance, revealing the cultural implications of Chinese characters. Through meticulous analysis of oracle bone inscriptions and bronze inscriptions, Bai Chuanjing has established a complete system of Chinese characters and sinological culture, exerting a tremendous influence in the field of textual studies.

### 2.5.3 Case Study: Enjoying Criticism: Collection of Papers from the National Representative Middle-aged and Young Calligraphers Case Study Association

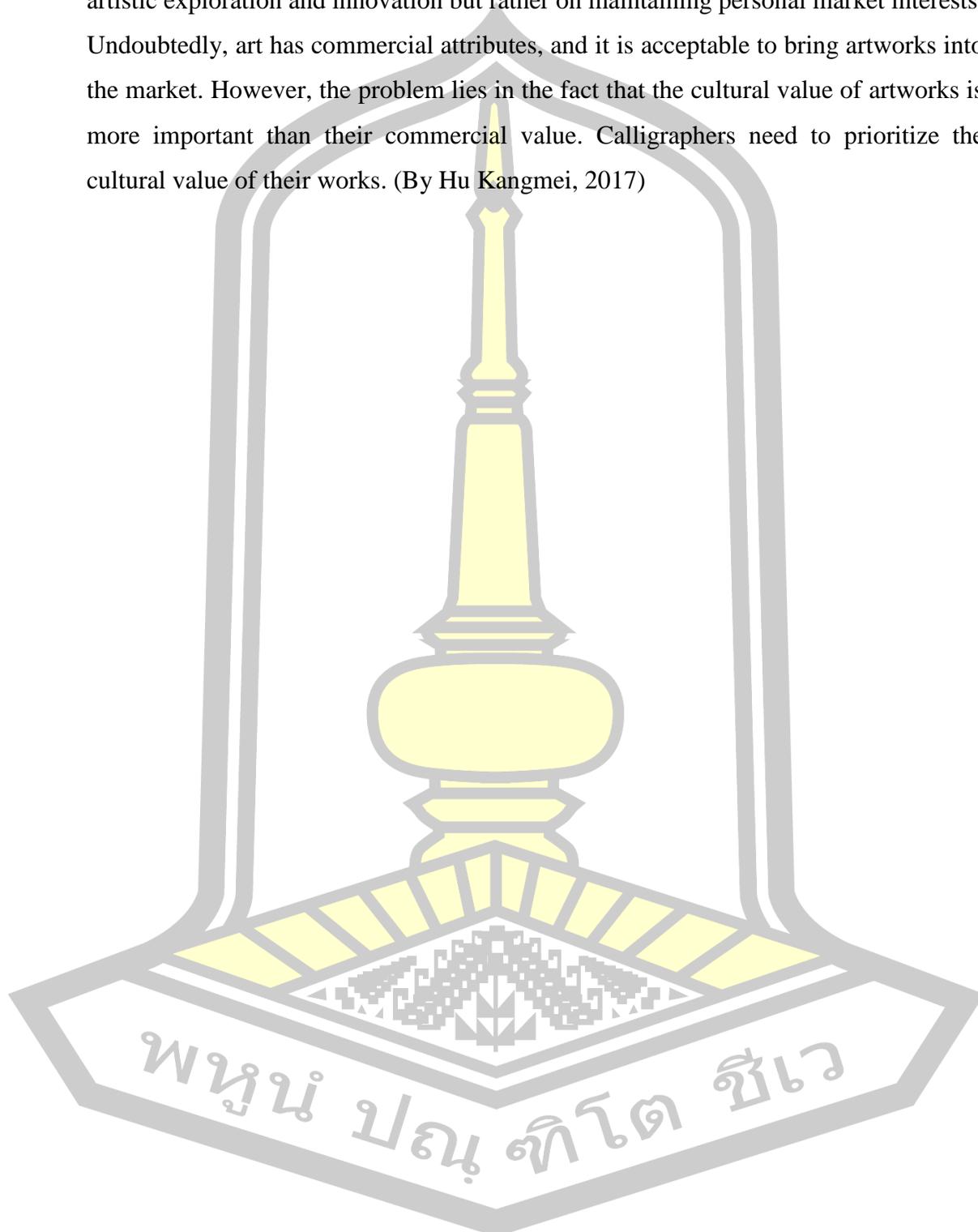
"Enjoying Criticism: Collection of Papers from the National Representative Middle-aged and Young Calligraphers Case Study Association" is a compilation of documents from the "Enjoying Criticism: National Representative Middle-aged and Young Calligraphers Case Study Association." The collection is divided into six volumes and mainly consists of on-site criticism speeches. It presents a two-year-long academic criticism activity conducted in the form of case studies on 27 representative middle-aged and young calligraphers in China, in the order of authors' self-narratives, mutual evaluations among members, and summaries by mentors. (Published by Rong Baozhai, 2017-2019)

As one of the members of the editorial committee, the researcher participated throughout the process.

"Enjoying Criticism" follows the principle of speaking the truth. It does not dwell solely on technical critiques but rather examines the author's aesthetic stance, attitude, ability, direction, and creative use of brush and ink through strokes, structures, and forms. This type of "criticism" is different from mere comments on works; it places calligraphers, works, calligraphy trends, and calligraphic phenomena into problem awareness, logical argumentation, and theoretical interpretation for contemplation. It is an effective experiment in criticism that explores new avenues for contemporary calligraphy criticism. Through this activity, the 27 members have shaped vivid and diverse images of their works, presenting different life states.

Calligraphy criticism is a responsibility, and enjoying criticism is also a responsibility, based on the attitude towards Chinese calligraphy art. Calligraphy is the essence of Chinese culture and the national quintessence. To ensure the sustainable and healthy development of our national quintessence and to define its lofty position in the world of art, calligraphy criticism is indispensable. However, what is the current state of calligraphy criticism? As many have pointed out, calligraphy currently "lacks sincere criticism." Literally speaking, "sincerity" means focusing criticism on the analysis and study of the work itself, speaking the truth and speaking with scholarly reasoning. The real question here is, what is hindering the "sincerity" of criticism? Since the 1990s, the calligraphy market has become part of the booming art market. The negative effects of

market development have led many calligraphers to no longer base their styles on artistic exploration and innovation but rather on maintaining personal market interests. Undoubtedly, art has commercial attributes, and it is acceptable to bring artworks into the market. However, the problem lies in the fact that the cultural value of artworks is more important than their commercial value. Calligraphers need to prioritize the cultural value of their works. (By Hu Kangmei, 2017)



## **CHAPTER III**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This article adopts qualitative research methods, focusing on the preservation and inheritance of the cultural wisdom of Chinese calligraphy art. Chapter 3 introduces the research methods employed in this study, which mainly consist of two parts, involving research content, research methods, study period, research area, population and sample, research tools, data collection, data processing and analysis, research results, and personation, etc. Specifically, it includes the following information:

#### 3.1 Scope of research

##### 3.1.1 Research content

##### 3.1.2 Research period

##### 3.1.3 Research methods

##### 3.1.4 Research area

##### 3.1.5 Population and Sample

#### 3.2 Research Administration

##### 3.2.1 Research Tools

##### 3.2.2 Data Collecting

##### 3.2.3 Organizing and Analyzing data

##### 3.2.4 Presentation of Research Results

#### **3.1 Scope of research**

##### 3.1.1 Research content

- (1) To study the historical development and artistic value of Chinese calligraphy.
- (2) To study the current situation and problems of contemporary Chinese calligraphy.
- (3) To study guidelines for the protection and inheritance of Chinese calligraphy art.

##### 3.1.2 Research perio

The study period was one year. The research schedule is as follows:

No	Period	Time
1	Gather basic information of the research	2months
2	Field investigation	1month
	Field research and data collection	4months
3	Data organization and analysis	3months
4	Conclusion and submit of results	2months

### 3.1.3 Research methods

This study is a qualitative study and will be conducted using the following steps:

Step 1: Interview and gather information. Researchers will collect data from relevant documents and research papers. Field studies will collect data and information through the use of surveys, observations, and interviews. In addition, photographs, video and audio recordings will be taken.

Step 2: Interpret the information using concepts, theories, documents, and related research.

Step 3: The method of image comparison and descriptive analysis is used to classify and summarize according to the research purpose, and then the text is output.

The method of image comparison and descriptive analysis is used to classify and summarize according to the research purpose, and then the text is output.

### 3.1.4 Research area

This article focuses on the Chinese art of calligraphy. Firstly, it organizes the historical information regarding Chinese calligraphy. Secondly, it discusses the current situation and the challenges faced by contemporary calligraphy, taking the abolition of the imperial examination system in 1905 as a pivotal point, and explains the differences between ancient and contemporary calligraphy. Finally, it summarizes the cultural wisdom concerning the preservation and inheritance of Chinese calligraphy art.

The scope of this study encompasses Beijing Municipality and Henan Province. Beijing was chosen because it gathers the most outstanding artists nationwide, reflecting the most distinctive artistic viewpoints in contemporary China. Henan Province was selected because it has the largest population of artists, which can reflect the calligraphy perceptions of the majority of people.

### 3.1.5 Population and Sample

#### 3.1.5.1 Key Informant

5 persons: Famous contemporary calligraphers and calligraphy theorists.

Table 4 Key Informants

No.	Name	Gender	Role	Age
1	Hu Kangmei	Male	Government officials / Professor	72
2	Zeng Xiang	Male	Professor	66
3	Wo Xinghua	Male	Professor	68
4	Wang Yong	Male	Professor	74
5	Wang Dongling	Male	Professor	82

Source: Cao Hengyuan, 2023

#### 3.1.5.2 Casual Informant

10 persons: Ordinary people.

Table 5 Casual Informants

No.	Name	Gender	Role	Age
1	Wang Naiyu	Female	Professoriat	36
2	Zang Jiawei	Male	Artists	53
3	Guo Ruo	Female	Auctioneer / Collectors	37
4	Yang Shufei	Female	Calligraphy students	51
5	Gong Haitao	Male	Calligraphy doctorates	54
6	Ma Detian	Male	Artists	52
7	Li Lin	Male	Calligraphy instructors	48
8	Chai Tianlin	Male	Artists	46
9	Li Xiaoxiao	Male	Artists	35
10	Zhang Fangjin	Male	Artists	28

Source: Cao Hengyuan, 2023

### 3.1.5.3 General Informant

15 persons: Calligraphy major for college and graduate students, has been primary and secondary school students.

Table 6 General Informant

No.	Name	Gender	Role	Age
1	Song Xiangru	Male	Senior High School Student	17
2	Cao Zixi	Female	Elementary School Students	10
3	Lv Zhanhua	Male	Trainer	34
4	Feng Yang	Male	Organizational staff	36
5	Cao Junyi	Male	Doctorate	32
6	Cao Quanxi	Male	Doctorate	32
7	Jin Jing	Female	Businessperson	46
8	Liu Ming	Male	Organizational staff	36
9	Shen Siying	Female	Organizational staff	32
10	Nie Shengxuan	Male	Trainer	30
11	Sun Yijia	Female	Trainer	30
12	Gu Shankai	Male	Trainer	28
13	Huang Lin	Male	Doctorate	30
14	Wang Jianhua	Male	Businessperson	36
15	Li Jie	Male	Businessperson	38

Source: Cao Hengyuan, 2023

## 3.2 Research Administration

### 3.2.1 Research Tools

#### 3.2.1.1 Literature collection

Literature research method refers to the method of retrieving, collecting, verifying, organizing, and analyzing literature materials to form a scientific understanding of facts. This study employs the literature research method to collect ancient, modern, and contemporary works related to Chinese calligraphy, as well as theoretical historical materials on Chinese calligraphy. These materials play an important role in the research of this subject. On one hand, reviewing history can

provide new research ideas and new knowledge. On the other hand, new problems can be discovered within the literature. Therefore, literature research not only involves the collection of materials but also emphasizes the analysis of these materials.

The literature collected in this study mainly comes from two sources: journals and books. Articles in journals usually undergo rigorous verification and repeated scrutiny, making them the most representative literature. Books can best represent the main views of authors or artists and provide a clear understanding of the process of argumentation.

#### 3.2.1.2 Interview

The interview method in sociological research is a qualitative research method for data collection, where the interviewer purposefully engages in verbal activities with the interviewee to obtain firsthand information. Interview activities involve two or more people, with one person being the interviewer who asks questions.

In this study, the interview methods used include structured interviews, semi-structured interviews, and unstructured interviews. The choice depends on the context of the interview and the context of the questions and answers. A good interview setting and context will allow the interview to proceed smoothly according to the predetermined questions, resulting in coherent, complete information. When the interview setting and context are affected by external factors, the interviewer needs to calm the interviewee and flexibly pose guiding questions to increase the depth and breadth of the interview.

Recording and storing interview data is a crucial part of the interview research method. It helps in reviewing and referencing the interview content during data analysis and ensures the accuracy and credibility of the interviews.

#### 3.2.1.3 Observation

The observation method refers to a systematic and comprehensive observation of the research subjects by the researcher according to a specific plan to achieve certain research goals, collecting various phenomena data and conducting analysis. In this study, the observation method is applied mainly to images, including ancient calligraphy works, modern calligraphy works, and contemporary calligraphy works. In these calligraphy works, the logic and thinking of observation play a major role; they are key to discovering new knowledge and raising new questions.

There are mainly two types of observation: direct observation and indirect observation. Direct observation refers to the process where people obtain relevant information through direct observation of the research subjects using their sensory organs. Indirect observation refers to the process of observing the research subjects with the help of instruments, indirectly obtaining relevant information about the research subjects. This leads to qualitative changes in the depth and breadth of observation. In this study, direct observation is the main research method. This method requires researchers to have profound aesthetic literacy and practical foundation to distinguish styles, scripts, and aesthetics in calligraphy works. Indirect observation is applied to the study of Xuan paper, where instruments can be used to identify the age of the paper.

#### 3.2.1.4 Group Discussion

Group discussion is a form of face-to-face communication. In this study, relevant issues related to Chinese calligraphy are communicated to each group member before the discussion. During the discussion, members express their views to ensure the accuracy of the discussion. As researchers, recording the key points and details during the discussion is essential for preparing for in-depth research.

#### 3.2.2 Organizing and Analyzing data

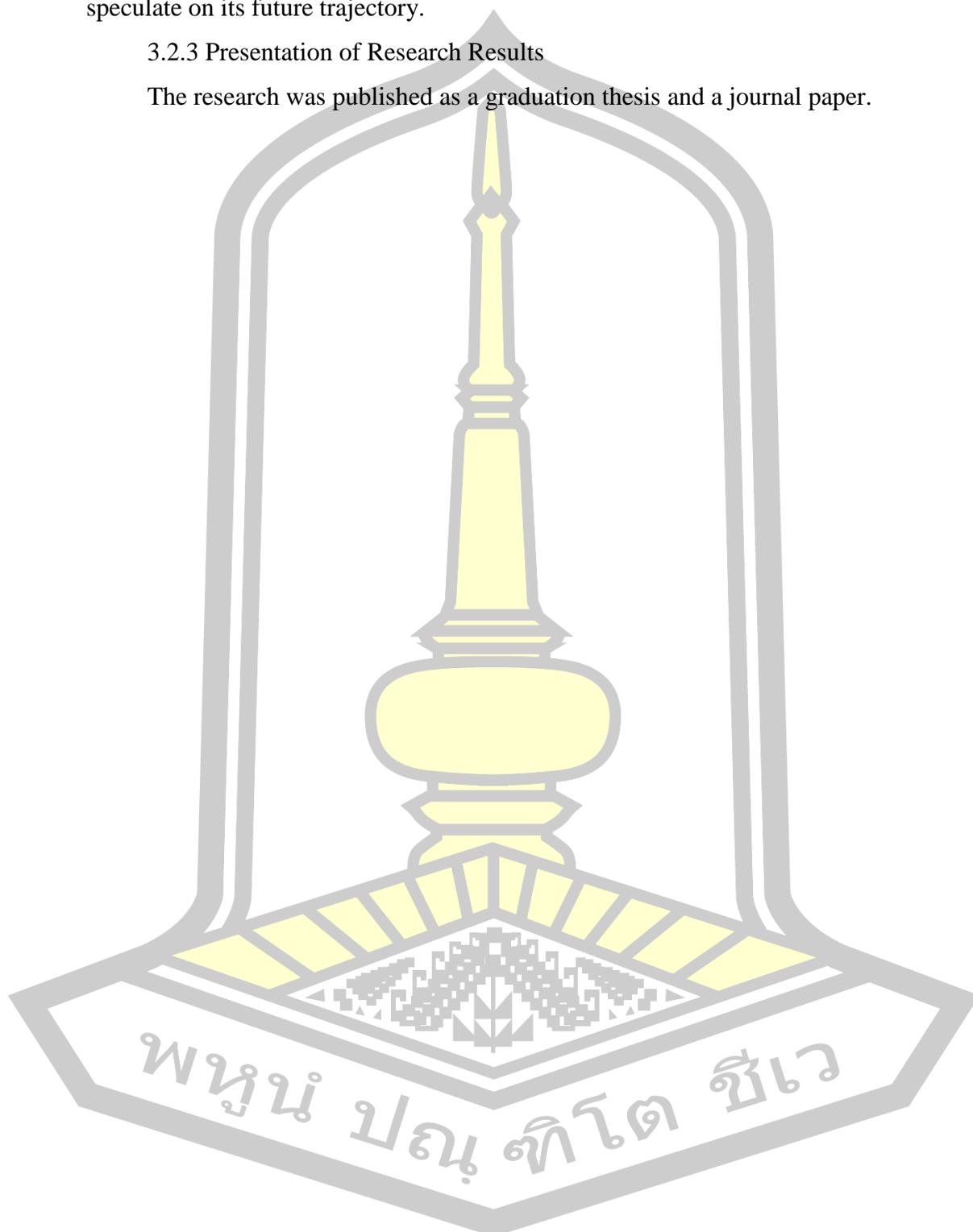
The collection of literature involves three main aspects: first, the gathering of ancient calligraphy literature and works; second, the interpretation and analysis of calligraphy art by aesthetic, philosophical, and literary figures of the Republic of China era; third, the documentation and interview records regarding the current state of Chinese calligraphy. Literature collection takes two forms: historical documents, books, images, audio, video, etc., and visiting calligraphers and theorists, or attending contemporary calligraphy exhibitions to gain firsthand insight into calligraphers' daily lives, artistic concepts, and the function of contemporary calligraphy. Notes should be taken and recordings made during interviews and observations. Additionally, the names, contact information, and addresses of information providers should be retained for future contact.

Data analysis follows the paradigm theory throughout the entire research process and employs formalist aesthetics and iconography to analyze calligraphic styles throughout history in detail. This analysis, combined with recorded calligraphy

literature, aims to deduce the developmental patterns of Chinese calligraphy art and speculate on its future trajectory.

### 3.2.3 Presentation of Research Results

The research was published as a graduation thesis and a journal paper.



## **CHAPTER IV**

### **RESEARCH RESULTS**

This chapter mainly analyzes the research objectives of the paper, divided into three parts. The first part provides a detailed review of the historical development and artistic value of Chinese calligraphy through literature data. The second part elaborates on the current situation and problems of contemporary Chinese calligraphy. In this part, the researcher mainly used field investigations, in-depth interviews, and participatory observations to collect question-and-answer texts from different social strata and role groups, understanding the current situation and existing problems of contemporary Chinese calligraphy. The content of the third part is the guidelines for the protection and inheritance of the cultural wisdom of Chinese calligraphy art. Combining the transformation trends of the artistic value of contemporary Chinese calligraphy, guidelines for protecting and inheriting cultural wisdom are proposed. The research framework of this chapter is as follows:

- 4.1 The historical development and artistic value of Chinese calligraphy
  - 4.1.1 The first era of calligraphy, Primitive Society to 2070 BC.
  - 4.1.2 The second era of calligraphy, 2070 BC to 221 BC.
  - 4.1.3 The third era of calligraphy, 221 BC to 589 AD.
  - 4.1.4 The fourth era of calligraphy, 581 AD to 1905 AD.
- 4.2 The current situation and problems of Chinese calligraphy
  - 4.2.1 The current situation of Chinese calligraphy heritage
  - 4.2.2 The problems of contemporary Chinese calligraphy
- 4.3 Guidelines to Protect and inherit Chinese calligraphy art
  - 4.3.1 Protection Guidelines
  - 4.3.2 Heritage Guidelines

#### **4.1 The historical development and artistic value of Chinese calligraphy**

Through the collection from CNKI, Baidu Academic, field surveys, and interviews, a large amount of historical literature, records, books, and significant information regarding Chinese calligraphy has been gathered. Chapter 2 has

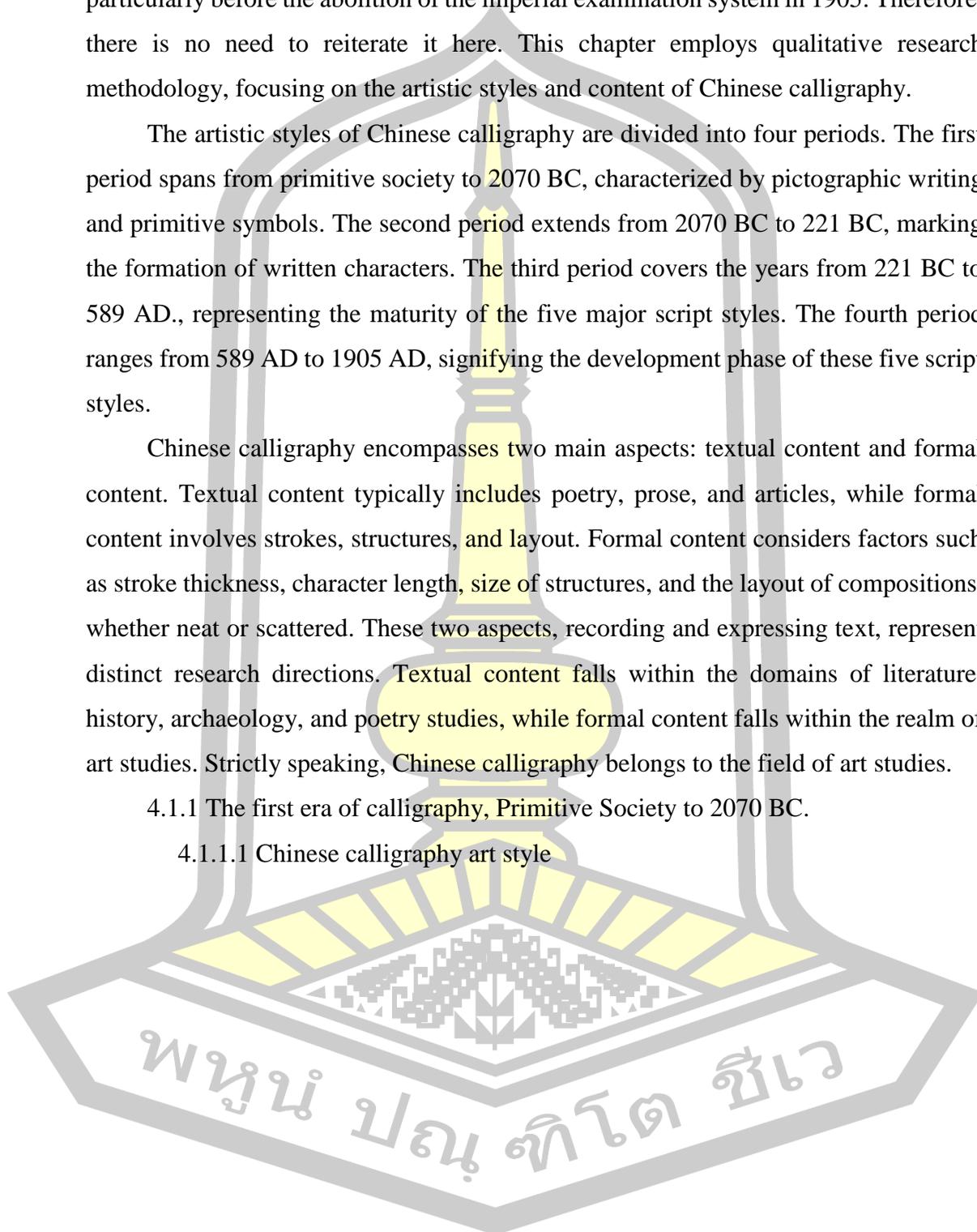
extensively detailed the historical development and evolution of Chinese calligraphy, particularly before the abolition of the imperial examination system in 1905. Therefore, there is no need to reiterate it here. This chapter employs qualitative research methodology, focusing on the artistic styles and content of Chinese calligraphy.

The artistic styles of Chinese calligraphy are divided into four periods. The first period spans from primitive society to 2070 BC, characterized by pictographic writing and primitive symbols. The second period extends from 2070 BC to 221 BC, marking the formation of written characters. The third period covers the years from 221 BC to 589 AD., representing the maturity of the five major script styles. The fourth period ranges from 589 AD to 1905 AD, signifying the development phase of these five script styles.

Chinese calligraphy encompasses two main aspects: textual content and formal content. Textual content typically includes poetry, prose, and articles, while formal content involves strokes, structures, and layout. Formal content considers factors such as stroke thickness, character length, size of structures, and the layout of compositions, whether neat or scattered. These two aspects, recording and expressing text, represent distinct research directions. Textual content falls within the domains of literature, history, archaeology, and poetry studies, while formal content falls within the realm of art studies. Strictly speaking, Chinese calligraphy belongs to the field of art studies.

#### 4.1.1 The first era of calligraphy, Primitive Society to 2070 BC.

##### 4.1.1.1 Chinese calligraphy art style



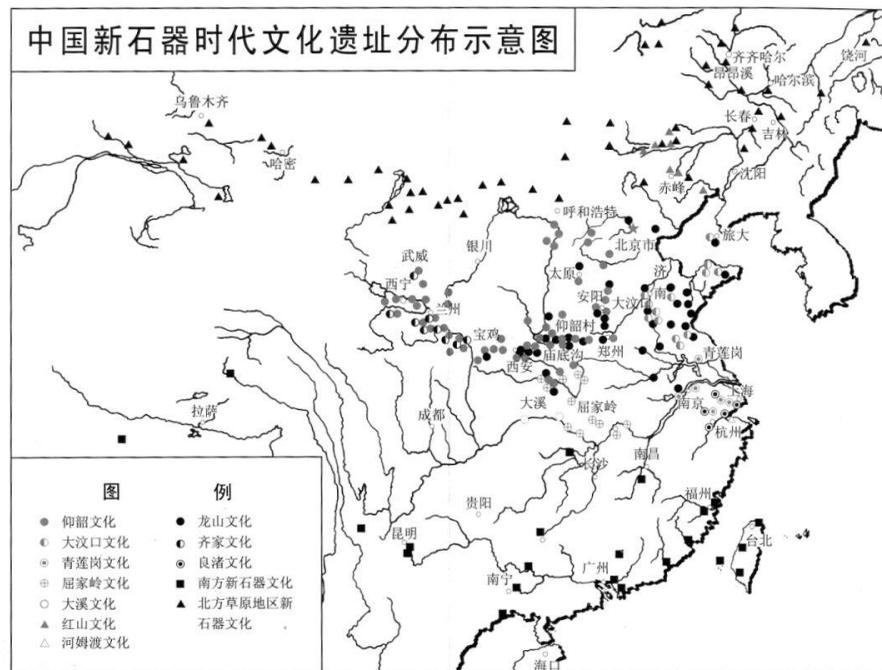


Figure 46 Map indicating the distribution of cultural sites from the Neolithic era in China

Source: <http://mt.sohu.com/20160131/n436467421.shtml>, 2016

The origin of Chinese calligraphy can be traced back to the early stages of human social development, namely the period of stone inscription culture in primitive society. During this period, humans relied on stone tools for survival, satisfying their material needs through simple grinding and crafting, such as hunting, fishing, and gathering food. Therefore, this period is also known as the Stone Age.

The Stone Age is divided into the Paleolithic and Neolithic periods. Major Paleolithic sites include: Yuanmou Man (approximately 1.7 million years ago), Lantian Man (approximately 800,000 years ago), Peking Man (approximately 700,000 to 200,000 years ago), and Upper Cave Man (approximately 18,000 years ago). Major Neolithic cultural sites include: Peiligang Culture (approximately 7,000-8,500 years ago), Hemudu Culture (approximately 6,000-7,000 years ago), Yangshao Culture (approximately 5,000-7,000 years ago), Dawenkou Culture (approximately 4,500-6,200 years ago), Liangzhu Culture (approximately 4,000-5,200 years ago), and Longshan Culture (approximately 4,000-4,500 years ago). Due to the lack of written

records, our understanding of this period is primarily based on archaeological excavations.



Figure 47 Mid-Neolithic Peiligang Culture Turtle Shell Inscriptions

Source: Henan Museum, Cao Hengyuan, 2023

Table 7 Inscriptions at the Jiahu Site (above) and Oracle Bone Script (below)

类别	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
贾湖遗址							
殷墟遗址							

Source: Henan Museum, 2023

In the Peiligang Culture, the most famous site is the Jiahu site in Wuyang County, Henan Province. The Jiahu site is an important relic of the Central Plains civilization during the Neolithic period. Located in Jiahu Village, Wuyang County, Luohe City, Henan Province, archaeologists discovered 17 instances of turtle shell inscriptions during the sixth excavation. Among them, 9 instances were found on turtle shells, 3 on bone artifacts, 2 on stone tools, and 3 on pottery. Some of these symbols bear resemblance to the oracle bone script of the Yin ruins. Carbon dating indicates that these inscriptions date back approximately 8,000 years, preceding the hieroglyphs of

ancient Egypt and cuneiform script of the Mesopotamian region, making them one of the earliest known forms of writing in human history. These 17 inscriptions exhibit characteristics similar to Chinese characters, with writing sequences from left to right, top to bottom, and inside to outside, essentially resembling the structure of later Chinese characters. Therefore, some scholars believe that these symbols represent a primitive form of writing, possibly the precursor to Chinese characters.

The Dawenkou Culture, also representative of achievements during the Neolithic period, derives its name from the Dawenkou site in Tai'an City, Shandong Province. Its distribution extends from the eastern coast of the Yellow Sea to the western part of the Lushan Plain, from the northern coast of the Bohai Sea to the southern area around the Huai River in Jiangsu Province, mainly within the region traditionally associated with the legendary leader of the Han ethnic group, Shaohao. It marks the origin of the Longshan Culture. The main feature of the Dawenkou Culture is the emergence of pottery, indicating that early humans had already mastered the use of fire.



Figure 48 Wine-making Utensils from the Late Period of the Dawenkou Culture  
Unearthed from the Lingyang River in Juxian County, Shandong Province  
Source: National Museum of China, 2023

The image above depicts a utensil excavated from the Dawenkou site, believed to be used for brewing. The exact meaning and representation of the patterns on this pottery remain a subject of debate in the academic community. Some experts interpret

the design as five mountain peaks at the bottom, bird wings in the middle, and the sun above, thus explaining it as an "island." Some professors believe it represents an altar. Other scholars suggest it portrays sunset and sunrise. Still, others argue it depicts the sun, moon, and mountains. Despite these differing views, they all point to the "natural world," indicating the primitive human imitation and understanding of nature. It can be seen that the existence of pottery and depicted patterns is based on practicality. As art historian Zheng Yuanzhe stated in "The Root of Art":

"Prehistoric art is the existence of prehistoric ideology, not aesthetic existence or aesthetic ideological existence. We already know that prehistoric art is not fundamentally aesthetic and does not exist for aesthetics. Prehistoric humans, through art as a form of manifestation, did not rely on aesthetics nor did they exist for aesthetics. The association between prehistoric art and 'beauty' mainly manifests through content characteristics, while formal aspects are relatively secondary. In summary, meaning comes first, form comes second."

The researcher believe Zheng Yuanzhe emphasizes the survival content of primitive human societies. However, from another perspective, this unconscious and involuntary state of life reveals a pure artistic talent, with primitive humans' perception of space and expression of life forms being both sincere and direct. Hence, it resonates with subsequent generations' consciously cultivated minds. For Chinese calligraphy, at a stage where writing was not yet fully developed and tools were not yet mature, this period at least possessed lines and structures. It was this foundation that laid the groundwork for the emergence of calligraphy art.

#### 4.1.1.2 Chinese Calligraphy Writing Content





Figure 49 Patterns of the Huashan Rock Paintings in Chongzuo, Guangxi

Source: Neolithic rock paintings, 2023

The Huashan Rock Paintings in Guangxi are also representative achievements of the Neolithic period. It is the largest single-panel rock painting in the world, covering an area of over 8,000 square meters and depicting nearly two thousand images. In the paintings, people hold their hands up high, squat with their legs, their heads are square with a hint of roundness, their bodies forming an inverted triangle. Five fingers are represented by only three short lines, and interspersed among them are domesticated animals crawling on all fours, varying in size. Several long red lines serve as upper and lower divisions. The multitude of figures demonstrates the strength of the tribe. Some individuals' faces are not purely red; instead, internal spaces are adorned with dots and lines, likely indicating shamans or tribal leaders. In the center of the crowd are some red circles with star-like patterns inside, resembling flags.

These images already possess complete symbolic forms, depicting hunting, horseback riding, archery, bonfires, shamanic dances, and decorations, showcasing a rich and colorful array of shapes. As an early form of human written communication, we can glimpse the cultural scenes of that time. It is evident that primitive humans had already mastered the production and skilled application of pigments.

In summary, the primitive period was the genesis of calligraphy. In addition to lines and structures, there was also an aesthetic pursuit evident. Whether it's the inscriptions from the Jiahu site, the "sun, moon, and mountains" from the late Dawenkou culture, or rock paintings like those found at Huashan, ancient people could only express emotions and understand the world through graphics. Thus, these serve as the earliest texts for studying primitive humans. They were preparatory stages before the formation of writing, the prototypes of pictographs during the Shang and Zhou periods, laying the aesthetic foundation for the emergence of oracle bone inscriptions during the Shang and Zhou periods.

#### 4.1.2 The second era of calligraphy, 2070 BC to 221 BC.

##### 4.1.2.1 Chinese calligraphy art style

Xia, Shang, Zhou, refers to the Xia Dynasty, Shang Dynasty, and Zhou Dynasty in China.

Xia: Approximately 2070 BCE - Approximately 1600 BCE.

Shang: Approximately 1600 BCE - 1046 BCE.

Zhou: 1046 BCE - 221 BCE. Among them, Western Zhou: 1046 BCE - 771 BCE. Eastern Zhou: 770 BCE - 256 BCE. Spring and Autumn Period: 770 BCE - 476 BCE. Warring States Period: 475 BCE - 221 BCE.

##### (1) Oracle Bone Script

Xia, Shang, Zhou, represents the earliest historical stages in China with written records. They represent three different ethnic origins that successively ruled the Central Plains region in northern China. They assimilated with each other and also with local indigenous tribes. After over a thousand years of development, they gradually formed into a major ethnic group, self-identified as "Zhuxia" or "Huaxia." By the end of the Western Zhou Dynasty, this form had been firmly established, evidently as a cultural amalgamation. Compared to the Stone Age, the productivity during the Xia, Shang, and Zhou periods saw significant development. People mastered the technology of bronze metallurgy and no longer used crude stone tools, instead utilizing bronze artifacts as daily life tools. Therefore, the period of the Shang and Zhou dynasties is also known as the Bronze Age.

During this period, society witnessed significant progress in culture, technology, and other aspects, providing several necessary conditions for the formation

of Chinese calligraphy. Firstly, the invention of the writing brush, which became the writing tool for Chinese calligraphy. Secondly, the emergence of Chinese ink provided a basis for the expression of Chinese calligraphy. Thirdly, the presence of writing itself. Oracle Bone Script, as the first complete writing system in Chinese history, possessing the three basic elements of strokes, structure, and composition, laid the artistic foundation of Chinese calligraphy.



Figure 50 Excavation site of the Warring States Chu tomb at Zuoqia Gongshan

Source: <https://zhuanlan.zhihu.com/p/48666186>, 2018



Figure 51 Brushes and bamboo tubes

Source: <https://zhuanlan.zhihu.com/p/48666186>, 2018

Firstly, the invention of the writing brush was a significant revolution in the history of Chinese calligraphy, transforming the habit of primitive humans carving on rocks into writing. In 1954, in the Left House Public Mountain in Changsha City, Hunan Province, a late Warring States period Chu tomb (approximately 300 BC) was discovered, yielding precious artifacts such as writing brushes, bronze weights, weapons, and lacquerware. These are the earliest physical evidence of writing brushes found to date.

It can be observed that the writing brush from the late Western Zhou period had already reached a considerable level of craftsmanship. Often, one end of the brush handle was made of materials such as sheep hair, wolf hair, or weasel hair, connected to the brush handle. Sheep hair was used in making the brush because of its softness, allowing for the creation of various line forms. However, excessively soft sheep hair could also cause inconvenience in writing. Therefore, the addition of wolf hair or weasel hair became crucial in addressing this issue.



Figure 52 Ink Inscription Oracle Bone Script of The Shang Dynasty

Source: The Anyang Museum of Yin Ruins, 2023

In fact, judging from the traces of writing on oracle bones, it can be inferred that the writing brush already existed during the Shang Dynasty. However, since no physical evidence of writing brushes from the Shang Dynasty has been unearthed, we cannot determine whether the writing tools used at that time were the same as or similar to those of the late Western Zhou period.

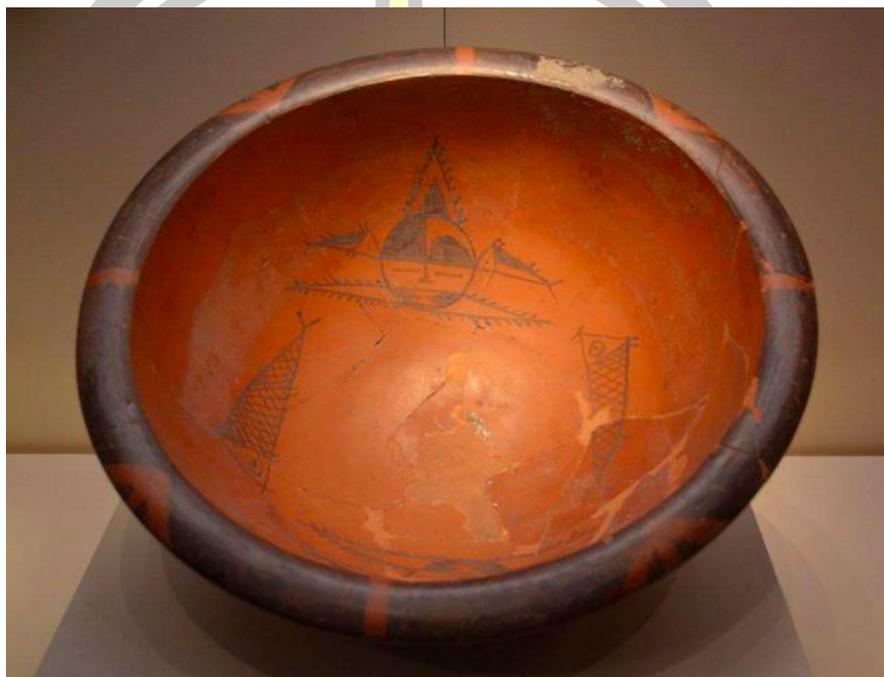


Figure 53 A Human-Faced Fish-Patterned Colored Pottery Basin

Source: The National Museum of China, Cao Hengyuan, 2023

Secondly, Chinese ink. Before the invention of artificial ink, natural or semi-natural ink was commonly used as writing material. Traces of primitive ink can be found in prehistoric painted pottery decorations, Shang and Zhou oracle bone inscriptions, bamboo and wooden slips, silk and bamboo writings, and other artifacts. Historical records indicate that ancient ink was also used for practices such as tattooing, woodworking, and divination. Archaeological excavations in China have uncovered ink traces on bone and stone artifacts dating back to the 14th century BCE, as well as ink blocks from the Warring States period unearthed in Yunmeng County, Hubei Province. The mention of "licking the brush and ink" in the book of Zhuangzi indicates that brushes and ink were already in use during the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods.

Thirdly, writing. The oracle bone inscriptions of the Shang Dynasty marked the beginning of Chinese calligraphy history. During this period, the tradition of carving on tortoise shells or animal bones, inherited from primitive human societies, was continued. These inscriptions mainly consisted of divination records of the late Shang royal court and formed a complete and mature writing system known as oracle bone script, which is the earliest known writing system.



Figure 54 Oracle Bone Inscriptions of the Shang and Zhou Dynasties

Source: The Anyang Museum of Yin Ruins, 2023

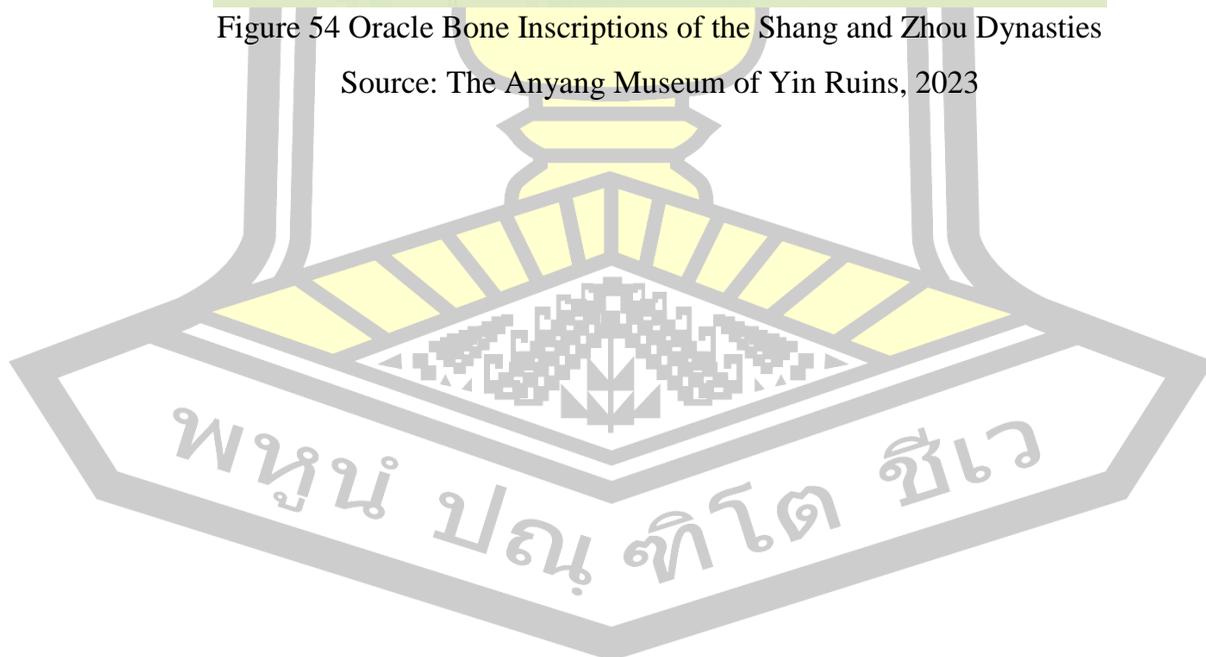


Table 8 Comparison table of Oracle Bone Script and Chinese Characters

A																												
安	安	安																										
ABCDEF			GHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ																									
B																												
八	八	巴	巴	巴	巴	發	白	百	敗																			
般	般	邦	響	響	寶	寶	飽	保	保																			
保	保	保	保	豹	豹	卑	北	貝	狽																			
坊	備	鼻	匕	匕	匕	比	必	閉	界																			
界	界	敝	敝	敝	敝	辟	辟	漚	兵																			
兵	丙	丙	丙	丙	丙	丙	丙	乘	并																			
并	并	并	并	駁	帛	泊	毫	毫	毫																			
毫	卜	不	不	步																								

Source: The Anyang Museum of Yin Ruins, 2023

In terms of strokes, oracle bone script was predominantly carved with straight lines due to the use of knives on hard tortoise shells or animal bones. Even curved lines were composed of short straight lines, presenting a feature of slightly thicker in the middle and slightly thinner at both ends, appearing lean, robust, upright, sharp, and three-dimensional.

Regarding character structure, oracle bone script mainly featured rectangular shapes, exhibiting symmetric beauty and diverse variations in form. It had a distinctive contrast between square and circular shapes. Some characters retained traces of primitive drawings and pictographic meanings to varying degrees, reflecting the initial stages of the development of writing with a sense of simplicity and vividness.

From the perspective of layout, the inscriptions are clear throughout, with the size of the characters arranged in a varied and orderly manner. There are changes in

density from top to bottom, left to right, with a balance between dense and sparse areas, and a sense of coherence between the beginning and end. Longer inscriptions are arranged compactly, giving a sense of lushness, while shorter ones appear ethereal. Overall, they present a rustic yet charming aesthetic.

## (2) Bronze Inscriptions

In the formation stage of Chinese calligraphy, besides oracle bone script, there is another important form of writing known as bronze inscriptions. It evolved from oracle bone script and appeared on bronze objects during the Shang and Zhou periods.

According to current archaeological research, bronze artifacts in China date back to the Majiayao culture of the Neolithic period and continued until the Qin and Han dynasties. Initially, they were small tools or ornaments. Bronze containers and weapons appeared during the Xia Dynasty. By the middle of the Shang Dynasty, there was already a wide variety of bronze artifacts, including inscriptions and intricate patterns. The late Shang to early Western Zhou period was the heyday of bronze development, with a diverse range of shapes, thick and solid bodies, and gradually lengthening inscriptions accompanied by elaborate designs. Subsequently, the bodies of bronze artifacts began to thin, and the patterns gradually simplified. During the late Spring and Autumn Period to the Warring States Period, with the widespread use of iron tools, bronze implements became increasingly rare.

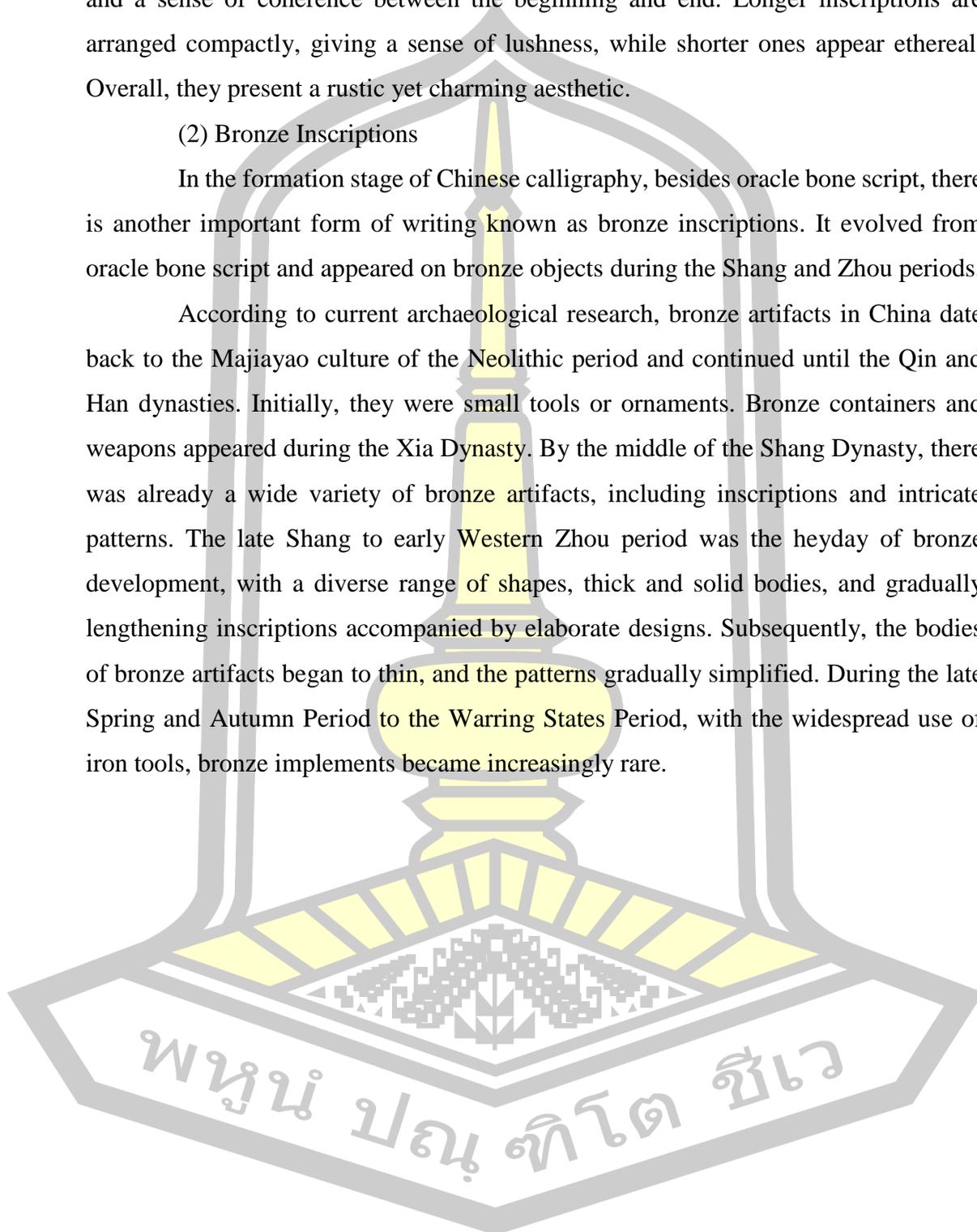




Figure 55 San Shi Pan Inscription

Source: The Palace Museum (Taipei), 2023



Figure 56 Pan of the San Clan

Source: The Palace Museum (Taipei), 2023

During the Shang and Zhou periods, among the numerous bronze inscriptions, the "Pan of the San Clan" is particularly famous, with 19 lines totaling 357 characters.

It is currently housed in the Taipei Palace Museum. The inscription records events during the later period of King Li's reign in the Western Zhou Dynasty. The land system of the Western Zhou Dynasty was the well-field system, a form of state ownership of land in the slave society of ancient China. The well-field system evolved from the communal land ownership system of primitive clans, with the basic characteristic being that the actual cultivators had no ownership rights over the land, only the right to use it. While writing was recorded during the Shang Dynasty, it flourished during the Western Zhou period. The inscription on the "Pan of the San Clan" documents the entire process of land compensation and transfer between two states.

The "Pan of the San Clan" inherited the arrangement style of oracle bone script, with each character independent and easy to read. However, in terms of strokes and structure, compared to the sharp and symmetrical beauty pursued by oracle bone script, the inscription appears more rounded, simple, mottled, diverse, and naturally formed. This difference arises from the difference in the medium of writing and the method of production. The medium of oracle bone script was tortoise shells and animal bones, which were hard in texture, while the medium of the inscription was bronze, cast using smelting technology. This difference gave rise to two different styles of writing systems.

Bronze inscriptions played an important role in the development of calligraphy. If primitive drawings and stone carvings were the results of the formation period of writing, then oracle bone script and bronze inscriptions were the results of the formation period of writing. The appearance of oracle bone script provided ample artistic conditions for bronze inscriptions. As a prelude to the development of calligraphy, bronze inscriptions directly influenced the emergence of the small seal script in the Qin Dynasty, hence they are also called large seal script.

In conclusion, during the Bronze Age, the mindset of writers changed. They no longer simply depicted natural phenomena but integrated the physical properties of existing materials into their aesthetic cognition, finely carving jade artifacts and smelting bronze artifacts. From primitive stone tools to cast bronze tools, from primitive engraving to brush writing, this process not only marked a great technological advancement but also symbolized the transformation of ancient peoples from savagery

to humanity, from unconscious aesthetics to conscious aesthetics, and from divinity (shamanism) to humanity's return.

We divide the formation period of Chinese calligraphy into two stages: oracle bone script and bronze inscriptions. This is because these two forms of writing are cultural products of the same historical period, mutually influencing and developing during the Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties. Furthermore, although the five styles of Chinese calligraphy have not been established yet, the strokes, structures, and compositions of oracle bone script and bronze inscriptions were mature and complete.

#### 4.1.2.2 Chinese Calligraphy Writing Content

Calligraphy was a primary narrative method in ancient China. Initially, primitive humans carved symbols on rocks to record events and social activities. Over time, these symbols evolved into oracle bone inscriptions, mainly used for divination and record-keeping by the royal court during the Shang Dynasty. The results of divination determined various activities such as sacrifices, witchcraft, dealings with spirits, military expeditions, farming, and hunting.

Table 9 Oracle Bone Script and Chinese Characters

	日	象太阳的形状，但契刻不易刻圆，中间一点或谓表实体。
	月	象一轮弯月。在甲骨文中“月”和“夕”同形。早期前形为月后形为夕，后期相反。反正无别。
	牛	象正面看的牛头，以其头部特征，表示全体。
	羊	象正面看的羊头，双角弯弯下垂。也是以头部表全体。

Source: The Anyang Museum of Yin Ruins, 2023

The image above depicts the "sun," "moon," "ox," and "sheep" in oracle bone script. A dot drawn in the middle of a circle represents the sun, while a dot in the middle of a semicircle represents the moon. The horns pointing upwards indicate an ox, while those pointing downwards indicate a sheep. We can see that oracle bone script imitates nature, using shapes to represent objects. Therefore, it can be confirmed that this form marks the starting point of the development of Chinese calligraphy.

By the time of the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period, bronze inscriptions (大篆) had evolved from oracle bone script. They mainly recorded significant events of the royal families and nobles during the Shang and Zhou dynasties. The "Mao Gong Ding" from the Zhou Dynasty is a bronze ware, belonging to one of China's ancient bronzewares. It dates back to the late Western Zhou period and is currently housed in the Palace Museum in Beijing, China. "Mao Gong Ding" consists of thirty-two lines, approximately five hundred characters, making it the bronze ware with the most inscriptions among extant artifacts. This artifact records historical events of the Zhou dynasty, primarily focusing on the significant reforms undertaken by King Xuan of Zhou for the nation's development. He appointed Mao Gong (also known as Mao Wang) to a position of responsibility, hoping that he would serve faithfully, govern diligently, and contribute to the prosperity and flourishing of the country.

This is an encouragement and exhortation to Mao Gong. The textual content of the Mao Gong Ding is detailed, complete, with meticulous narration, and it truthfully reflects the political, cultural, historical, and social aspects of the late Western Zhou Dynasty.

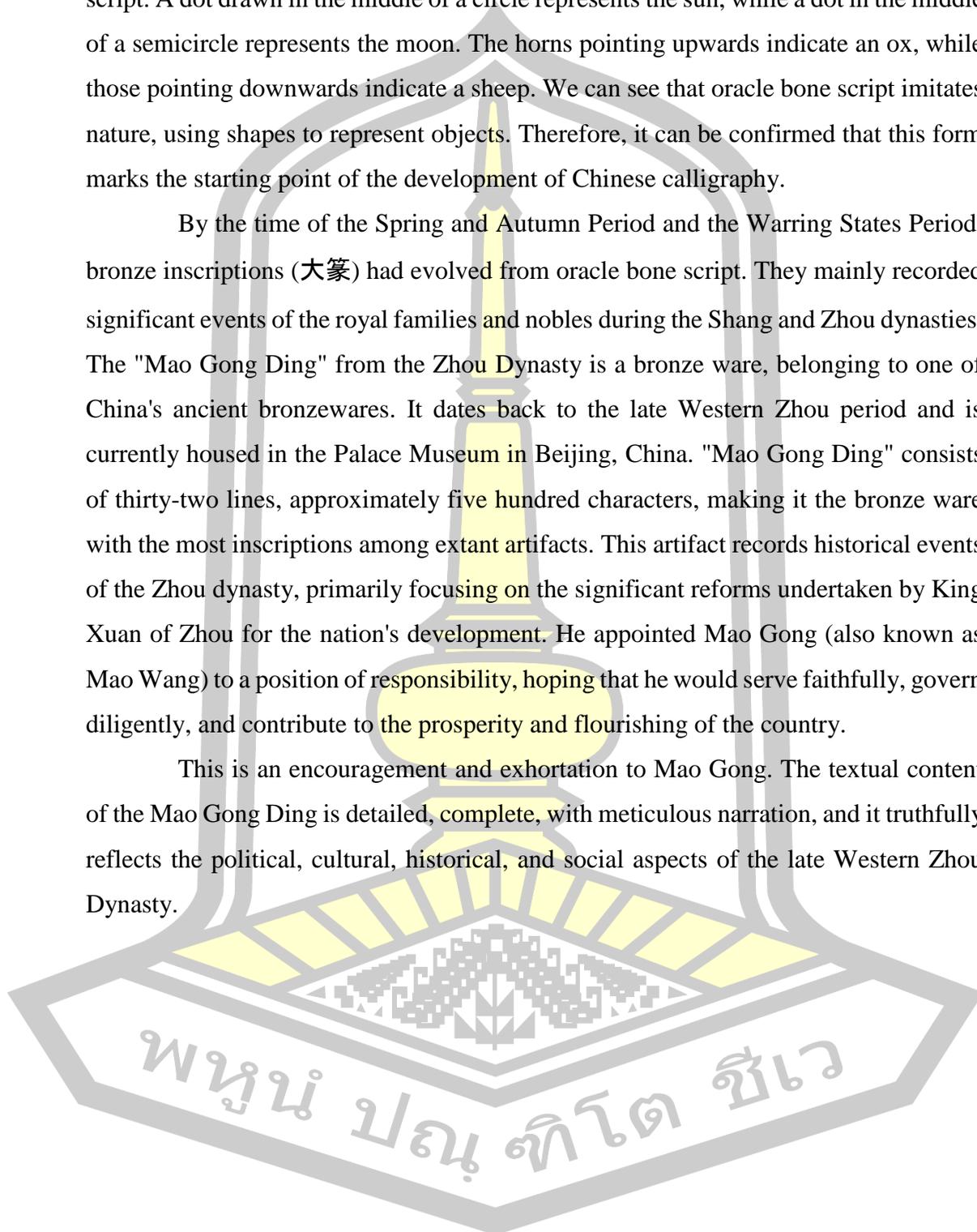




Figure 57 "Mao Gong Ding" inscription

Source: The Palace Museum (Taipei), 2023



Figure 58 "The Mao Gong Ding" from the Zhou Dynasty

Source: The Palace Museum (Taipei), 2023

In terms of formal content, the inscription on the Mao Gong Ding utilizes a large number of straight and curved lines, with characters sometimes appearing steady and sometimes slanted, floating up and down. Some lines are replaced by blocks, some are extremely long, and others are shortened into dots, adding contrast elements to the entire work. The combination of dots, lines, and surfaces is both rich and cohesive. We observe that the fifth character in the fourth row and the second character in the fifth row are the same, but they differ greatly. The upper triangle of the first character is smaller, while that of the second character is larger. The lower part of the first character

consists of three arcs, whereas the lower part of the second character consists of three straight lines. The sixth character in the second row and the sixth character in the third row exhibit a significant contrast, with one having a structure that is low on the left and high on the right, and the other having a structure that is high on the left and low on the right. In terms of layout, the Mao Gong Ding pursues a neat arrangement, but due to the curved interior of the bronze vessel, there are variations that result in a staggered layout.

In summary, during the stage of primitive drawings and pictographs in Chinese calligraphy, both practical and artistic functions emerged simultaneously. The practical function aimed at facilitating daily life, enabling quick identification and reading of characters. The artistic function aimed at serving the upper echelons of society, as bronze ware and inscriptions served the ruling class, requiring uniform rules. During this period, whether in oracle bone inscriptions or bronze inscriptions, the layout of characters was orderly, lines were graceful, and structures were rational.

#### 4.1.3 The third era of calligraphy, 221 BC to 589 AD.

##### 4.1.3.1 Chinese calligraphy art style

The development stages of Chinese calligraphy refer to the formal establishment stages of the five scripts in Chinese calligraphy. Generally, Xiaozhuan (Small Seal Script) began in the Qin Dynasty, Lishu (Official Script) began in the Han Dynasty, and during the Wei and Jin Dynasties, Xingshu (Running Script), Caoshu (Cursive Script), and Kaishu (Regular Script) had already appeared. This period spans approximately 800 years from the Qin and Han Dynasties to the Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties.

Qin Dynasty: 221 BC - 207 BC.

Han Dynasty: 202 BC - AD 220. Among them, the Western Han Dynasty: 202 BC - AD 8. Eastern Han Dynasty: AD 25 - 220.

Three Kingdoms Period: AD 220 - 280. Among them, Wei: AD 220 - 265. Shu: AD 221 - 263. Wu: AD 222 - 280.

Jin Dynasty: AD 265 - 420. Among them, the Western Jin Dynasty: AD 265 - 316. Eastern Jin Dynasty: AD 317 - 420.

Sixteen Kingdoms Period: AD 304 - 439.

Northern and Southern Dynasties: AD 386 - 589. Among them, the Northern Dynasties: AD 386 - 581. Southern Dynasties: AD 420 - 589.

### (1) Seal Script

The Qin Dynasty emerged from the state of Qin during the Warring States period, marking the first unified empire in Chinese history. From 230 BC to 221 BC, King Zheng of Qin, later known as Qin Shi Huang, conquered the states of Han, Zhao, Wei, Chu, Yan, and Qi, achieving national unification and establishing Xianyang as the capital. The Qin Dynasty ended the era of feudal fragmentation that lasted for five hundred years since the Spring and Autumn period, becoming the first centralized authoritarian state in Chinese history, with the Han nationality as the main body and the integration of multiple ethnic groups. It laid the foundation for the basic political structure of China for over 2000 years, exerting profound influence on Chinese history.

In the early stage of Qin unification, to consolidate its rule, various measures were adopted in politics, economy, and culture based on the original Qin system. Regarding writing, the script used by the states during the Warring States period was standardized into Xiaozhuan (Small Seal Script). According to legend, Xiaozhuan was created by Li Si, the Prime Minister of Qin, and his works include "Inscriptions on Mount Tai" and "Inscriptions on Mount Yi."

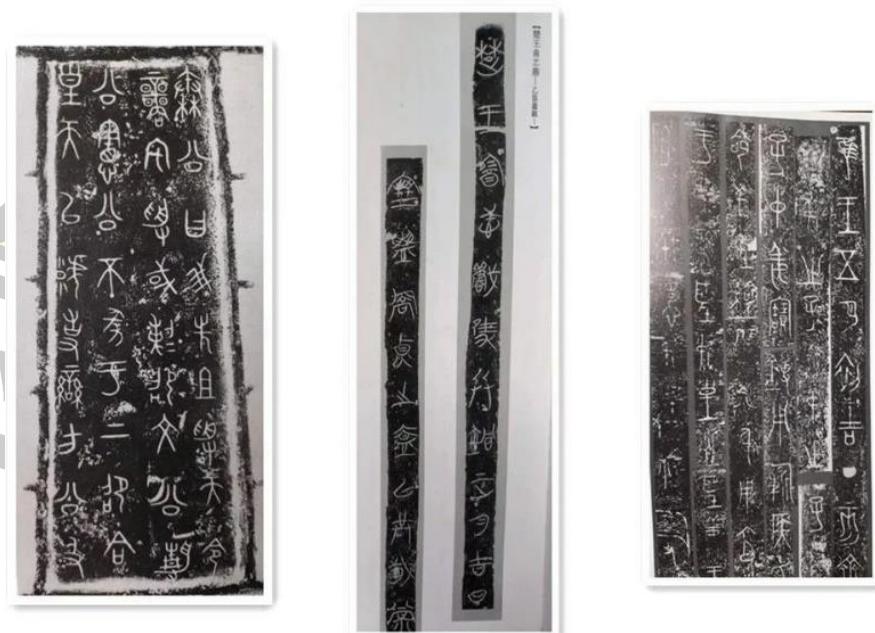


Figure 59 Warring States Period Scripts:

(Left) Qin State Script, (Middle) Chu State Script, (Right) Qi State Script

Source: Cao Hengyuan, 2023



Figure 60 The Yishan Stele in Seal Script by Li Si of the Qin Dynasty

Source: The Stone Steles Museum in Xi'an, Cao Hengyuan, 2023

"The Inscription on Mount Yi" was carved during the eastern tour of Emperor Qin Shi Huang in his 28th year of reign (219 BC), making it the earliest known Qin inscription. It praises Emperor Qin Shi Huang for unifying the country, abolishing the feudal system, and establishing the prefecture and county system. Mount Yi, also known as Mount Dong, stands opposite to Mount Tai. During the Warring States period, the Confucian scholar Mengzi once said, "Confucius ascended Mount Dong and saw Lu as small; he ascended Mount Tai and saw the whole world as small." Here, Mount Dong refers to Mount Yi.

From the inscription, it can be observed that the lines are straight and the structure is neat and symmetrical, exhibiting a dignified and rigorous style. The structure of the characters is tight at the top and loose at the bottom, with elongated vertical lines, giving them an imposing stance that seems to require viewers to look up to them. In terms of calligraphy principles, the script appears rigid compared to the lively styles of the Six Kingdoms, reflecting the spirit of the Qin dynasty.

In fact, by the time of the Qin dynasty, Chinese calligraphy had matured in terms of lines, structure, and composition. We can trace a clear development trajectory from primitive line carving and painting to the unification of oracle bone script, from the unified oracle bone script to the diverse styles of bronze inscriptions, and from the diverse styles of bronze inscriptions to the standardization of seal script in the Qin dynasty. Based on this, Chinese calligraphy completed two cycles of "diversity-unification-diversity-unification." The intention behind these cycles is clear, indicating the intertwining of writing and calligraphy, which underwent different transformations in different historical contexts. Diversity represents the varied line carvings and different scripts of various countries before the emergence of writing, embodying the tension in calligraphic artistic expression. Unification represents the formation of the writing system and the uniformity of writing standards, demonstrating the social value of calligraphy's practical function.

The diversity of primitive line carvings was based on the differences between various tribes and groups of primitive humans, resulting in different rock paintings between the southern and northern regions, with one focusing on painting and the other on line carving. The unification of oracle bone script was based on the low productivity of the time, where writing had to rely on sturdy and durable animal bones and tortoise shells. The diversity of bronze inscriptions stemmed from political, cultural, and regional differences between countries, resulting in different forms of writing. For example, before the unification of Qin, the contrast between different scripts was rich, with the Chu script being enchanting, and the Qi script being mediocre. The emergence of Qin seal script was based on the foundation of political, cultural, economic, and social unity.

The Qin dynasty, after 15 years of establishment, soon met its demise. Emperor Liu Bang of the Han Dynasty overthrew the rule of the Qin dynasty and

established the Han Dynasty, inheriting and continuing the social system of the Qin dynasty. It was another unified empire after the Qin dynasty, highly representative in Chinese history and one of the most advanced civilizations and powerful empires in the world at that time. Therefore, we generally refer to this historical period as the Qin and Han dynasties.

## (2) Clerical Script

Since the Han Dynasty, the Han ethnic group gradually became known as the Han Chinese, and Confucianism was established as the core of Han culture. The inclusiveness and unity of Han culture facilitated exchanges and integration among various ethnic groups, leading to rapid economic development and significant improvements in productivity. During this period, one of China's Four Great Inventions, papermaking, brought about a profound revolution in Han society, propelling a leap forward in the development of Chinese calligraphy.



Figure 61 Calligraphy of The Western Han Dynasty

Source: Dunhuang, 2023

According to archaeological discoveries, during the Western Han Dynasty, China already had paper made from hemp fibers. However, the texture was rough, and the quantity was limited, making it costly and thus not widely available. It is said that Cai Lun of the Eastern Han Dynasty improved the papermaking process by using materials such as tree bark, hemp, coarse cloth, and fishing nets. Through processes

such as beating, pulping, pressing, and drying, paper suitable for writing and painting was manufactured. Eventually, this paper became widely used.



Figure 62 The Chu Bamboo Slips Unearthed in Hunan During the Warring States Period

Source: Bamboo slips and wooden tablets, 2023



Figure 63 The Qin Bamboo Slips Discovered in Longshan Village, Hunan

Source: Bamboo slips and wooden tablets, 2023

Thus, the medium of Chinese calligraphy completed a historical transformation, entering a completely new era where papermaking became the primary means of recording history. It was not merely a significant technological revolution but also a monumental social change. From the primitive era of rock inscriptions to the oracle bones and animal bones of the Shang and Zhou dynasties, from the bronze vessels of the Shang and Zhou periods to the bamboo and wooden slips (wooden and bamboo strips) and textiles of the Warring States period, from the stone steles of the Qin dynasty to the papermaking of the Han dynasty, each transition greatly altered people's habits in life, reading, communication, writing, and cultural practices, even influencing political and economic habits. From this perspective, papermaking, in relation to writing and calligraphy, is like water to fish.

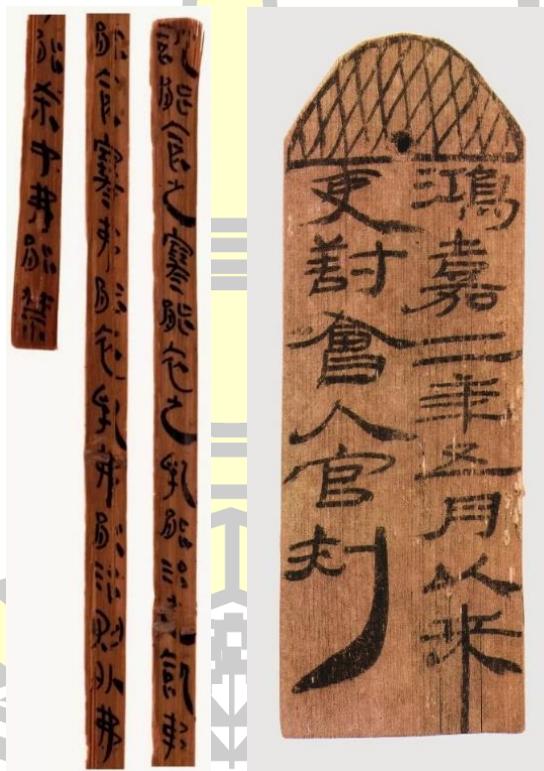


Figure 64 Early Western Han clerical script

Source: Bamboo slips and wooden tablets, 2023

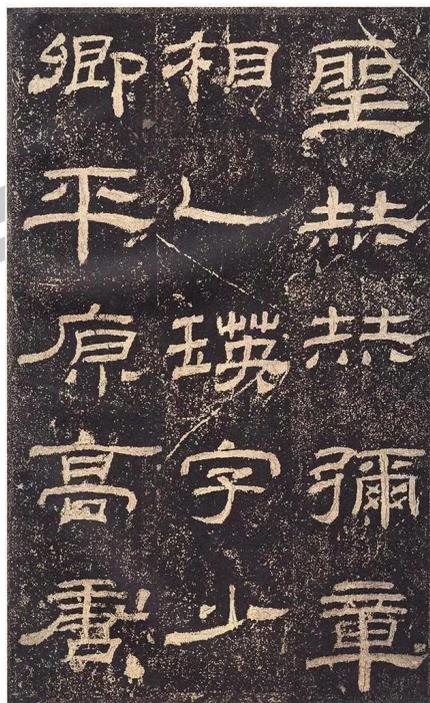


Figure 65 Mature Clerical Script of The Eastern Han Dynasty: The "Yi Ying Stele"

Source: Confucius Temple in Qufu, Shandong, 2023



Figure 66 The original stone of the Yiyin Stele

Source: Confucius Temple in Qufu, Shandong, Cao Hengyuan, 2023

Lishu (隶书) originated in the Qin Dynasty and flourished in the Han Dynasty.

The transition from seal script to clerical script marks a shift from complex writing to convenient writing. In the early Western Han Dynasty, clerical script was in a transitional phase, with the character forms still infused with the style of seal script. We can observe that seal script is vertically elongated, while clerical script adopts a more expansive horizontal style. There are two reasons for emphasizing the horizontal strokes in clerical script: firstly, horizontal strokes are more in line with the physiological structure of the hand, and secondly, the bold horizontal strokes in characters can more fully express emotions. By the Eastern Han Dynasty, clerical script had become the official script, and its lines, structure, and arrangement were further standardized.

In summary, the Qin seal script embodies the purity of lines, primarily using fine strokes with even thickness. The Han clerical script, on the other hand, showcases the diversity of lines, making more extensive use of the brush and exhibiting significant variations in thickness. In terms of structure, clerical script is flatter, allowing for more characters to be written on a single bamboo or wooden strip, thus demonstrating the practical function of calligraphy. The arrangement of characters in Qin seal script is characterized by closer vertical spacing and wider horizontal spacing, while in Han clerical script, the vertical spacing is wider and the horizontal spacing is narrower. Although both the Qin and Han dynasties were centralized monarchies, their aesthetic sensibilities were markedly different.

The development of clerical script faced the same issue of aesthetic transformation as that of small seal script. The transformation from small seal script resulted in clerical script, and the transformation from clerical script led to cursive script, running script, and regular script, which were formally established during the Wei and Jin dynasties. This period marked the formal establishment of the five major script styles.

### (3) Cursive Script

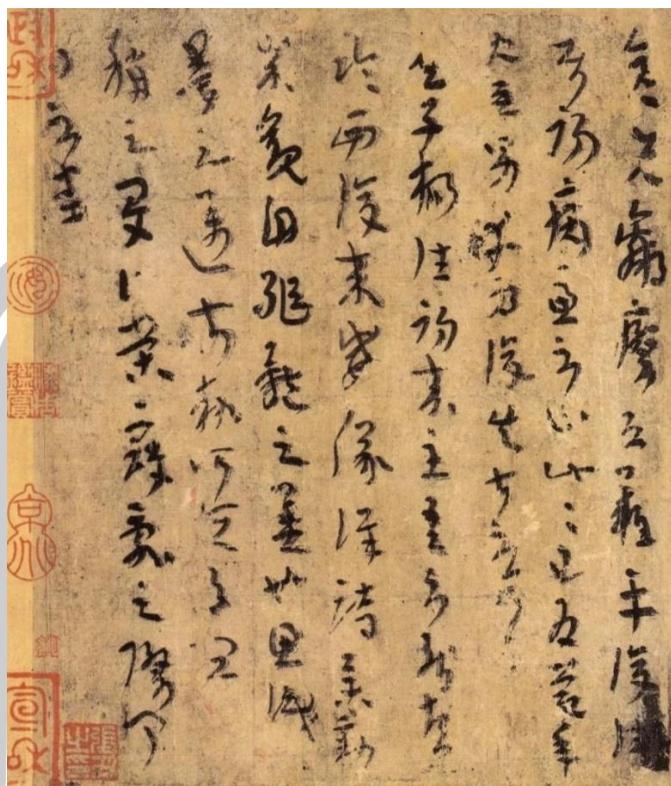


Figure 67 The Ancient Cursive Script Work "Pingfu Tie" by Lu Ji of The Jin Dynasty  
Source: The Palace Museum (Bei Jing) , Cao Hengyuan, 2023

The Wei and Jin period, which refers to the period from the fall of the Eastern Han Dynasty to the era of the Three Kingdoms and the Two Jin Dynasties, commonly including the Northern and Southern Dynasties. During this time, there were frequent changes of political power, and there was greater freedom of thought, leading to significant cultural development. This period also had a direct influence on the art of calligraphy. The transformation of clerical script began with the rapid writing style of clerical script, known as ancient cursive script, with Lu Ji being its representative.

Lu Ji, born in 261 AD and passed away in 303 AD., was a renowned literary figure and calligrapher of the Western Jin Dynasty. His work "Pingfu Tie" (Letter of Greetings) dates back over 1700 years and is generally believed to be a letter of greeting written by Lu Ji to a friend during the early reign of Emperor Wu of Jin. Inscribed on hemp paper with ink, it is currently housed in the Palace Museum in Beijing. It holds a special significance as the first systematically preserved ink artifact in the history of Chinese calligraphy.

According to available records, prior to the Wei and Jin periods, whether in oracle bone inscriptions, bronze inscriptions, seal scripts, or clerical scripts, there were very few instances where the names of calligraphers or engravers appeared in works. However, during and after the Wei and Jin periods, the phenomenon of signature gradually increased, often with detailed records of the calligrapher or engraver's name. Thus, from this period onwards, a large number of calligraphers who left their names in history emerged in the annals of Chinese calligraphy. Of course, this phenomenon indicates a shift towards independent, conscious, subjective aesthetic cognition.

We can observe that "Pingfu Tie" differs from the texts and scripts before the Wei and Jin periods. It no longer emphasizes each part of the characters but rather emphasizes the coherence of the writing and the emotions of the calligrapher. At least one stroke in each character is simplified and connected. Ancient cursive script had not completely departed from the structure of pictographic characters, but the emergence of cursive script completely broke this rule and fully expressed the calligrapher's spiritual pursuit.

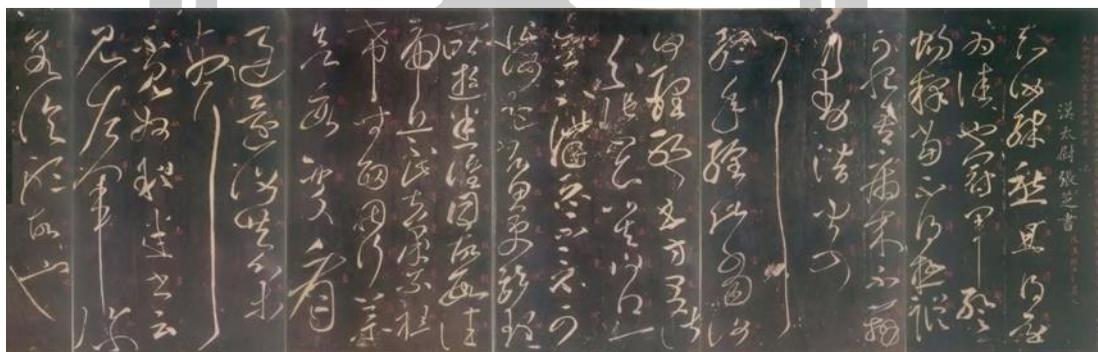


Figure 68 Champion Tie by Zhang Zhi of the Eastern Han Dynasty

Source: The Palace Museum (Bei Jing), Cao Hengyuan, 2023

According to legend, during the Eastern Han Dynasty, there was a piece of calligraphy known as "Champion Tie" by Zhang Zhi. Currently, no ink trace has been found, only engraved stone inscriptions remain. In the inscription, the characters are interconnected, with varying thickness, size, left-right balance, length, and speed compared to regular script. It appears bolder and the characters are less recognizable when compared to standard script.

#### (4) Running Script

The development of ancient cursive served two purposes. First, the establishment of cursive script. Second, the establishment of running script. Cursive script is the swift form of ancient cursive, while running script is the standardized form of ancient cursive. The representative figure of running script is Wang Xizhi, who holds the most significant position in the history of Chinese calligraphy.



Figure 69 Wang Xizhi's Semi-Cursive Script work "Preface to The Orchid Pavilion"

Source: The Palace Museum (Beijing), 2023

Wang Xizhi, born between 303 and 321 AD., and passed away between 361 and 379 AD., was a renowned calligrapher during the Eastern Jin Dynasty, known as the "Sage of Calligraphy." His calligraphy inherited the traditions of ancient masters while also forming his own unique style. Proficient in all five major script styles, his artistry embodies a tranquil and natural style, characterized by elegance and subtlety, with a profound and far-reaching influence. Together with his son Wang Xianzhi, they are collectively referred to as the "Two Wangs," serving as exemplary figures for future calligraphers to emulate. Wang Xizhi's masterpiece, the "Preface to the Orchid Pavilion Collection," is hailed as the foremost example of running script.

Compared to ancient cursive script, running script is more refined, with clear and precise starting, process, and ending points of each stroke, rendering it exceptionally complete. From this perspective, running script directly influenced the emergence of regular script.

#### (5) Regular Script

The development of regular script can be divided into three stages: the embryonic stage in the Han Dynasty, the developmental stage in the Wei and Jin Dynasties, and the mature stage in the Sui and Tang Dynasties. During the Wei and Jin

period, the script was represented by inscriptions found in the Longmen Grottoes in Luoyang, Henan Province, such as the "Twenty Inscriptions of Longmen." In the Tang Dynasty, representative works include Ouyang Xun's "Inscription on the Liqueur Spring at the Jiucheng Palace," Yan Zhenqing's "Inscription on the Many-Treasure Pagoda," and Liu Gongquan's "Inscription on the Xuanmi Pagoda."



Figure 70 The Record of the Yang Da Yan Statue

Source: The Longmen Grottoes in Luoyang, Henan province, Cao Hengyuan, 2023

The image above is a regular script from the Wei and Jin period, titled "Record of the Yang Family Statue." Its writing inherits the squareness of the Han Dynasty's clerical script, with a strong emphasis on lowering the center of gravity and highlighting the beauty of simplicity. However, the structure of the characters is more complex than that of clerical script. The characters have a lower left and a higher right, showing obvious variations in thickness within a single stroke, and employing numerous triangular shapes to convey a stable and powerful feeling.

In summary, the Qin, Han, and Wei-Jin periods represent a developmental stage in Chinese calligraphy. The Qin Dynasty's seal script, the Han Dynasty's clerical script, and the Wei-Jin period's regular script, cursive script, and running script laid the foundation for the five major script styles. The Qin and Han dynasties, as two unified dynasties, provided favorable conditions for the formation of seal script and clerical script. Despite the social turmoil and continuous warfare during the Wei-Jin period, it also promoted cultural exchanges and ethnic integration, leading to the emergence of running script, cursive script, and regular script.

We can see that during the developmental stage of Chinese calligraphy, especially in the Wei-Jin period, there are two main stylistic trends: one is the elegant and delicate style represented by Wang Xizhi, and the other is the bold and robust style represented by the "Record of the Yang Family Statue." In terms of medium, the elegant and delicate style is often found in ink writings, while the bold and robust style is more commonly seen in stone inscriptions. In conclusion, from the Qin and Han periods to the Wei-Jin period, from seal script to clerical script, and then evolving into running script, cursive script, and regular script, Chinese calligraphy has completed the basic construction of the five script styles, continuing to the present day.

#### 4.1.3.2 Chinese Calligraphy Writing Content

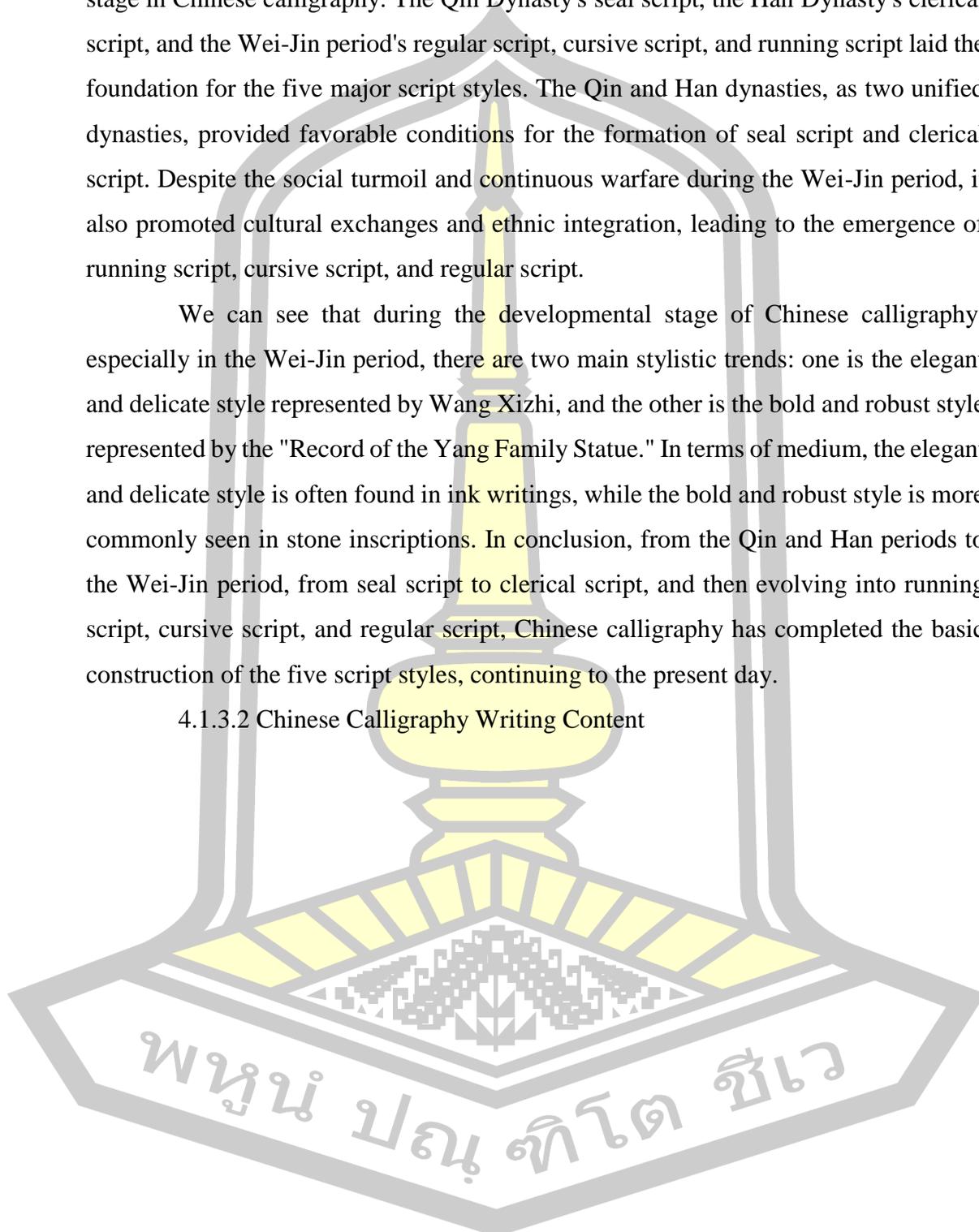




Figure 71 Li Si's "Inscription on Mount Tai"

Source: Mount Tai, Shandong, Cao Hengyuan, 2023

During the Qin and Han dynasties, Chinese calligraphy evolved from oracle bone inscriptions and bronze inscriptions (large seal script) to include seal script, clerical script, running script, cursive script, and regular script. The emergence of these five script styles marked the initial establishment of the aesthetic system of Chinese calligraphy. Seal script, clerical script, and regular script are easily readable and recognizable, while running script and cursive script are less so. This indicates that the artistic function of Chinese calligraphy gradually gained importance during this period, which also represented a stage of aesthetic consciousness.

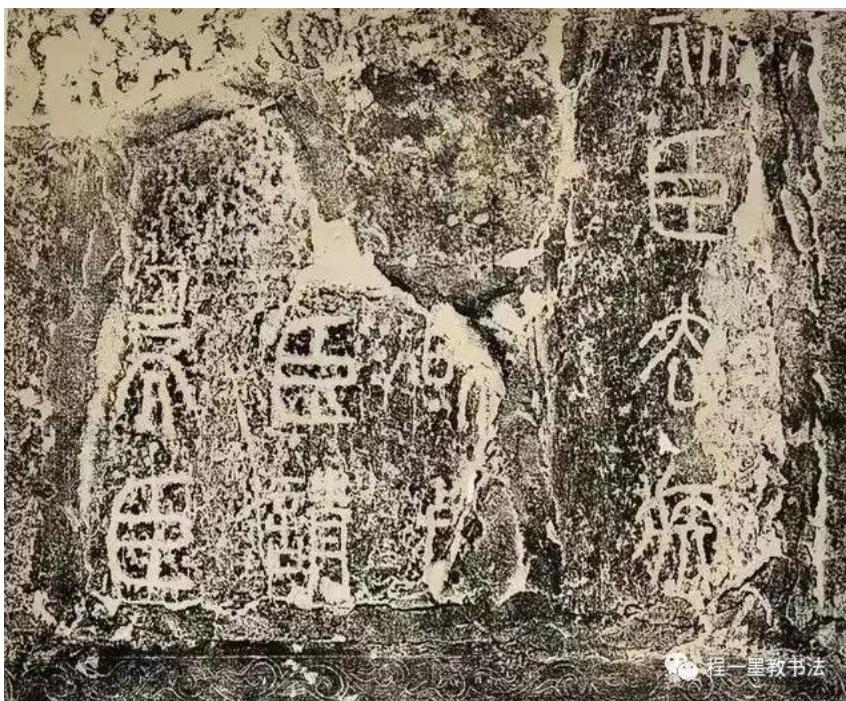


Figure 72 The Inscription on the Stone Tablets of Mount Tai

Source: Mount Tai, Shandong, Cao Hengyuan, 2023

According to historical records, during the Qin Dynasty, there were inscriptions in seal script on Mount Yi, Mount Tai, Langya, Dongguan, Zhifu, Jieshi, and Kuaiji. The texts of these inscriptions all praised the Qin Dynasty. Among the surviving original stones, only those from Mount Tai and Langya remain. The "Mount Yi" inscription mentioned earlier is a later imitation. Their formal content is basically the same, with round and full lines, smooth and uniform characters, emphasizing the beauty of curves, and some characters still retain the characteristics of pictographs.

The emergence of seal script was the first time that national power was used to unify the written language, ending the phenomenon of regional differences. This was a significant advancement in the history of Chinese characters. It provided a powerful guarantee for the dissemination of ideological culture and had an important influence on the implementation of national laws at that time, as well as the development of clerical script, regular script, cursive script, and regular script.

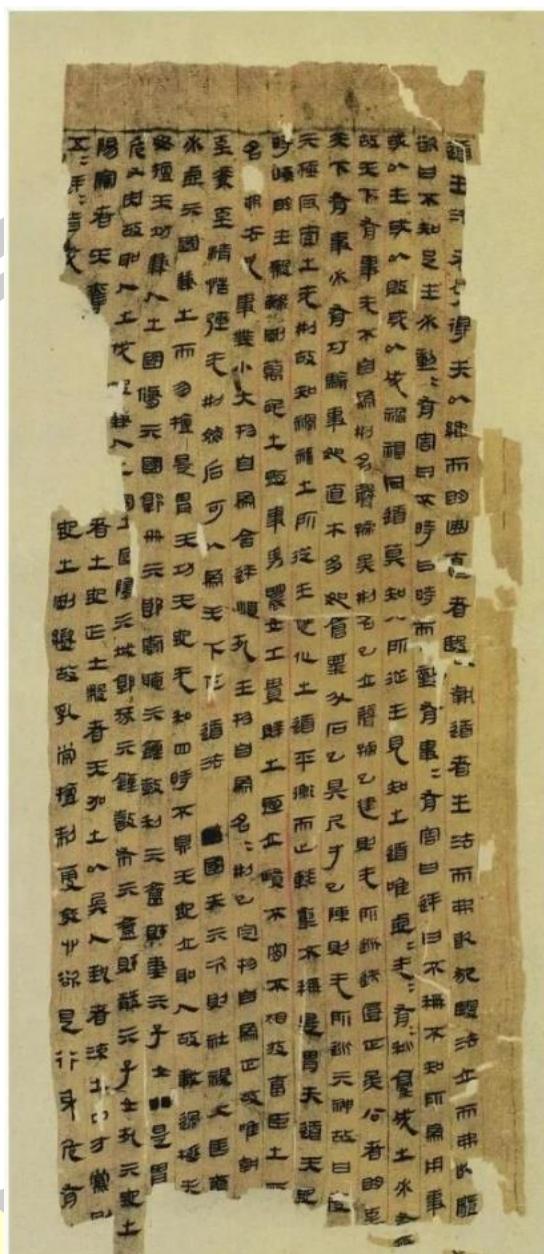


Figure 73 The Mawangdui Silk Texts

Source: The Hunan Provincial Museum, 2023

The text content of the Han Dynasty clerical script can be classified into two categories. First, in December 1973, more than 200,000 characters of silk and bamboo texts were unearthed from Tomb No. 3 at Mawangdui in Changsha, Hunan Province. These texts cover a wide range of literature, philosophy, medicine, divination, and other fields from the Warring States period to the early Western Han Dynasty. They include works such as "Jing Fa," "Sixteen Classics," "Cheng," "Dao Yuan," "Laozi," "Zhou Yi,"

among others. They also record some of the oldest astronomy and health preservation methods in China, making them precious cultural heritage of the Han Dynasty. These silk and bamboo texts not only serve as primary historical sources but also provide a basis for studying the evolution and development of Han Dynasty calligraphy.

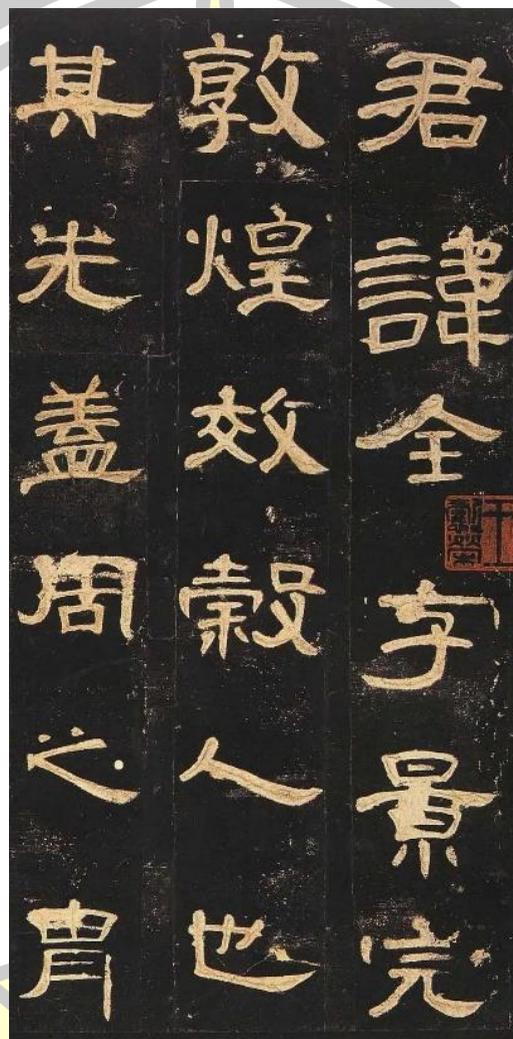


Figure 74 Caoquan Stele

Source: The Stone Steles Museum in Xi'an, 2023

The second type is the mature Han Dynasty clerical script, such as the "Yiying Stele", "Zhang Qian Stele", "Caoyuan Stele", and "Liqi Stele". Their textual content belongs to the same category as that of seal script and bronze inscriptions, all recording the contributions of the royal nobility or officials to the state, erecting steles as evidence for future generations. For example, the "Caoyuan Stele" records the event of Cao Quan suppressing the Yellow Turban Rebellion, providing detailed information on the

peasant uprising, which is important historical material for studying the class contradictions and peasant struggles at the end of the Eastern Han Dynasty.

From the image, it can be observed that the brushwork of the Han Dynasty was excellent and the writing was very skilled. The character shapes are flat, emphasizing horizontal strokes. Although some characters still bear the semblance of seal script, the characteristics of clerical script have basically formed. There is a relatively large vertical distance between characters, while the horizontal distance between characters is relatively small. In the "Caoyuan Stele", the contrast in structure is more prominent. For instance, the fifth character in the second row has only two strokes, with one very short and the other very long. Especially noteworthy is the contrast between openness and compactness. The third character in the first row has a very elongated upper part, while the lower part consists of only three short horizontal strokes and one short vertical stroke. Additionally, the upper right parts of the sixth character in the second row and the fifth character in the third row appear tightly packed, while the rest of the space is very open.

In the late Han Dynasty, clerical script underwent changes, giving rise to semi-cursive script, cursive script, and regular script. Semi-cursive script and cursive script are represented by Wang Xizhi's "Seventeen Steles", while regular script is represented by the "Twenty Chapters of the Dragon Gate".

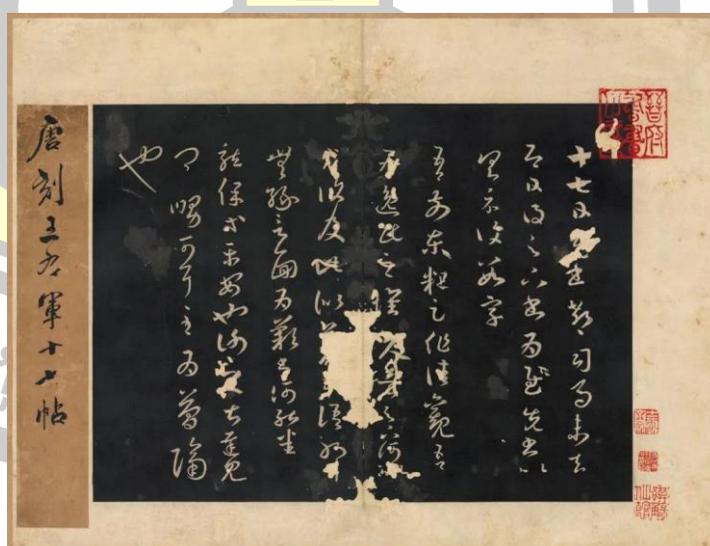


Figure 75 Wang Xizhi's Seventeen Steles

Source: The Art Museum of the Institute of Chinese Studies at The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2023

"The Seventeen Scrolls" contains twenty-nine letters written by Wang Xizhi, engraved on stone tablets, with approximately one thousand characters in total. According to research, these letters were written between the third and fifth years of the Yonghe era to the fifth year of the Shengping era of the Eastern Jin Dynasty, which is from 347 to 361 AD. The content mostly consists of greetings between Wang Xizhi and his friends, along with simple descriptions of his life and living environment.

The formal content of "The Seventeen Scrolls" is closely related to the development of calligraphy styles. Regular script and cursive script emerged and became highly mature. There were significant changes in the characters, transitioning from the single-character forms seen in oracle bone inscriptions, bronze inscriptions, seal script, and clerical script to multiple-character forms. Two, three, or four characters, or even entire lines of text, were written together, making the script difficult to read and recognize. This indicates that Wang Xizhi's calligraphy evolved from practical to artistic, emphasizing aesthetic functionality.

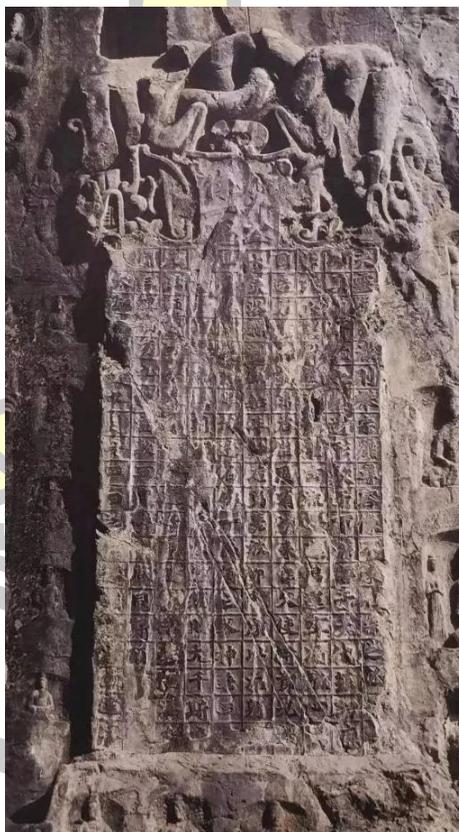


Figure 76 The Regular Script During the Wei and Jin Dynasties

Source: The Longmen Grottoes in Luoyang, Henan province, Cao Hengyuan, 2023

Although regular script had emerged during the Wei and Jin periods, possessing standards in terms of strokes, structure, and layout that resembled regular script, it was not as refined as the regular script of the Sui and Tang periods. Strictly speaking, the regular script of this period served as a transitional stage from clerical script to regular script. "The Inscription of Lord Shiping" represents regular script during the Wei and Jin periods, with Meng Da as the author of the text, recording the religious sentiments of the sculptor and praying for blessings and the removal of disasters for the deceased. Zhu Yizhang, the author of the formal content, inclined the characters vigorously, handled the ends of the strokes into square shapes, maintained a very tight structure, compressed the space, and emphasized the visual impact.

In summary, during the Qin, Han, Wei, and Jin periods, the textual content mainly recorded daily life and social customs. The changes in formal content, such as strokes, structure, and layout, were all results of the evolution of calligraphic styles, imbuing artistic value within practical utility. It can be said that each evolution of calligraphic style not only inherited the tradition of the previous generation but also reflected the characteristics of the new era. The formation of these characteristics was influenced by factors such as the political system, economic development, historical background, social ecology, cultural customs, and technological innovation of the time. From the perspective of formal content, studying the artistic value of calligraphy means studying traditional aesthetics and modern aesthetics, traditional preservation, and modern inheritance, as well as exploring the cultural wisdom of China.

#### 4.1.4 The fourth era of calligraphy, 581 AD to 1905 AD.

##### 4.1.4.1 Chinese calligraphy art style

The flourishing period of Chinese calligraphy refers to the time from the Tang Dynasty to the late Qing Dynasty.

Sui Dynasty: 581-618 AD

Tang Dynasty: 618-907 AD

Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms: 907-979 AD

Song Dynasty: 960-1276 AD (Northern Song: 960-1127 AD; Southern Song: 1127-1276 AD)

Liao Dynasty: 916-1125 AD

Western Xia: 1038-1227 AD

Jin Dynasty: 1115-1234 AD

Yuan Dynasty: 1271-1368 AD

Ming Dynasty: 1368-1644 AD

Qing Dynasty: 1644-1911 AD

The flourishing period of Chinese calligraphy spans from the Sui and Tang periods to the late Qing Dynasty. It is mainly divided into five historical stages: Tang, Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing. The reasons for this division are as follows:

Firstly, since the Tang Dynasty, the imperial examination system has been established and continued until the late Qing Dynasty. For ancient literati, the imperial examination system provided a way for commoner's children to obtain official positions. For the state, it selected the most outstanding talents to enter the political center, develop the economy, and serve the ruling class. In 1905, Yuan Shikai and Zhang Zhidong requested the abolition of the imperial examination system and the promotion of modern school education.

Secondly, since the Tang Dynasty, each historical stage has had its own cultural characteristics and writing habits, such as regular script in the Tang Dynasty, running script in the Song Dynasty, semi-cursive script in the Yuan Dynasty, cursive script in the Ming Dynasty, and the stone inscription movement in the Qing Dynasty.

#### (1) Regular Script in the Tang Dynasty

During the Tang Dynasty, with Han culture as the mainstream and the policy of "when China is tranquil, the people from surrounding nations will submit themselves," China possessed a highly inclusive cultural identity and a comprehensive ecological system. From philosophy, religion, historiography, and arts to astronomy, calendar calculation, geography, and medicine, various crafts and skills covered the entire spectrum of society's economic foundation and superstructure. Upholding the Confucian doctrine of "when three people walk together, there must be one I can learn from" and the Neo-Confucian concept of "harmony is the most important," it evolved into the center of world politics, economy, and culture. During this period of over a century, there was political stability, national strength flourished, the economy prospered, relations among different ethnic groups were harmonious, and there was close cultural exchange between China and foreign countries. This was the most significant period in the history of Chinese calligraphy, witnessing the emergence of

renowned masters of regular script such as Ouyang Xun, Chu Suiliang, Yu Shinan, Yan Zhenqing, and Liu Gongquan.



Figure 77 Yan Zhenqing's Inscription on the Many-Treasure Pagoda

Source: The Stone Steles Museum in Xi'an, Cao Hengyuan, 2023

Yan Zhenqing, a renowned calligrapher of the Tang Dynasty, initially studied under Chu Suiliang and later became a disciple of Zhang Xu, from whom he inherited his brushwork. His regular script developed into a distinctive style known as "Yan Kai," which had a significant influence on future generations. "The Stele Inscription of the Great Buddha Pagoda" is one of Yan Zhenqing's early works, mainly recording the reasons for and process of the creation of the Great Buddha Pagoda by the Zen master Chu Jin in the Longxing Temple of the Western Capital. The characters are steady, balanced, and robust, exuding a grand demeanor. The lines are compact and orderly, always adhering to strict writing methods. Compared to the regular script of the Wei and Jin Dynasties, it employs richer brushwork techniques, making its lines more expressive.

Why did regular script become the characteristic script of the Tang Dynasty? Firstly, the appearance of regular script in the Tang Dynasty built upon the development of regular script during the Wei and Jin Dynasties. Secondly, after the significant integration of ethnic groups and cultures during the Wei and Jin Dynasties, the Tang

Dynasty once again unified the country, making it more prosperous and developed than the Qin and Han Dynasties, and establishing itself as a superpower of that era. The strict writing methods symbolized the control of the ruling class, while the diverse brushwork techniques reflected the inclusiveness of society. Therefore, during this historical period, regular script became the main script for expressing the characteristics of the time. Thirdly, the imperial examinations were a concentrated manifestation of the practical value of Chinese calligraphy, with the ability to read characters being its primary principle and the absolute standardization of writing being its necessary condition. Hence, the imperial examinations promoted the maturity of regular script.

## (2) Running Script in the Song Dynasty

In terms of territorial expansion, the Song Dynasty did not rival the earlier Qin and Han dynasties, nor did it compare to the later Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties. However, it stood out culturally and, in a sense, reflected the sentiments of the people of the time—an expression of the era's emotions. During the Southern Song period, there were external barbarian threats and internal banditry, and the country was constantly in turmoil. Despite facing immense pressure on their living space, the ruling class displayed a vigorous intellectual vigor, demonstrating that even when the national power was inferior to foreign powers, they still aspired to be cultural conquerors, pushing the resonance generated by Neo-Confucianism to its peak. It was during this period that calligraphers such as Su Shi, Huang Tingjian, Mi Fu, and Cai Xiang emerged as masters of running script.

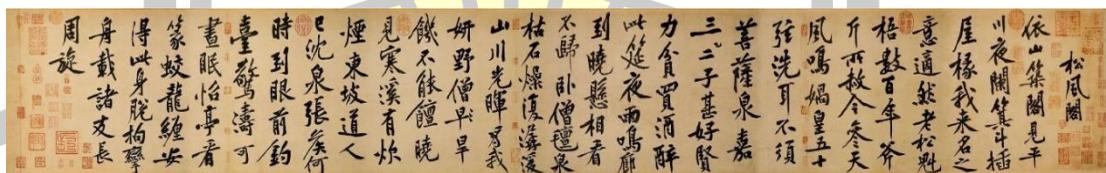


Figure 78 Huang Tingjian's Pavilion of the Pine Breeze Inscription

Source: The Palace Museum (Taipei), 2023

Huang Tingjian (1045–1105), a poet and calligrapher of the Northern Song Dynasty, excelled in the styles of running script and cursive script. "Pavilion of the Pine Breeze Inscription" is one of Huang Tingjian's representative works in running script, praising the scenery he observed at the time and expressing his nostalgia for friends.

The textual form breaks free from strict rules, with lines resembling long spears and halberds, undulating dramatically, contrasting sharply with the rigid regularity of Tang Dynasty kaishu. In the inscription, the size of the characters varies, the thickness of lines fluctuates, and the structure of characters elongates and shortens, creating dynamic tension and unexpected sensations. This pursuit of formal variation reflects the calligrapher's inner world, perhaps serving as a microcosm of the era.

### (3) The Running and Cursive Scripts of the Yuan Dynasty

The Tang and Song Dynasties were two periods of Han Chinese rule, whereas the Yuan Dynasty marked an era of minority ethnic governance. In this period, most Han literati were redefined under the new social system. The scholar-officials, who had previously belonged to the elite class, faced oppression. Measures such as the exacerbation of ethnic tensions, the abolition of the imperial examination system, and the dissolution of the royal painting academy led to fundamental changes in the social ecology of the Yuan Dynasty. Consequently, many Han literati chose to retreat from society and lead lives of leisure and tranquility, reaching a state of self-forgetfulness in their spiritual pursuits. This state of mind resulted in a distinct shift in aesthetic preferences compared to the Tang and Song Dynasties. Han literati no longer sought to showcase martial prowess and cultural excellence but instead yearned to return to the previous Han rule. One of the representative figures of the Yuan Dynasty was Zhao Mengfu.

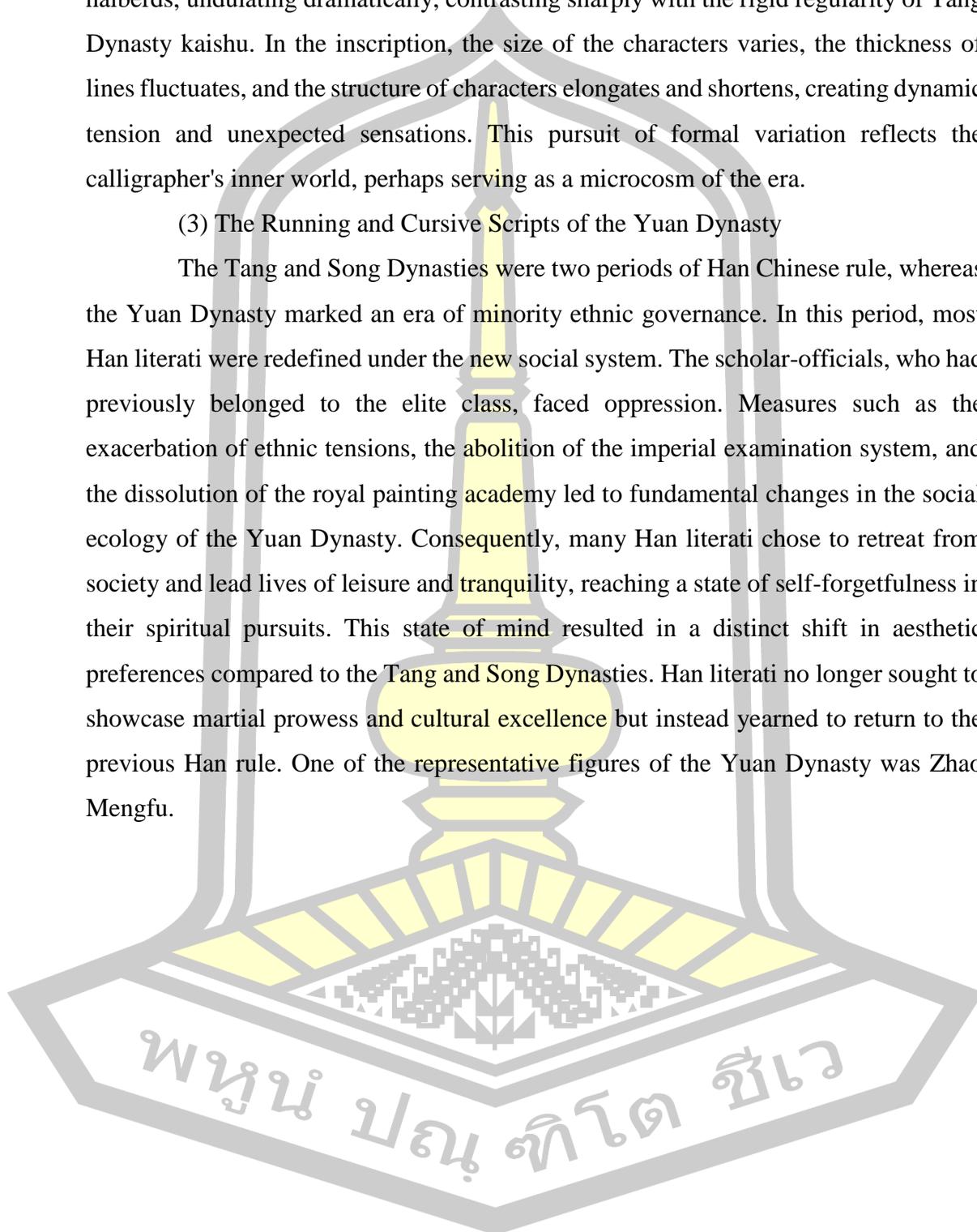




Figure 79 Zhao Mengfu's Autumn Sounds (partial)

Source: The Liaoning Provincial Museum, Cao Hengyuan, 2023

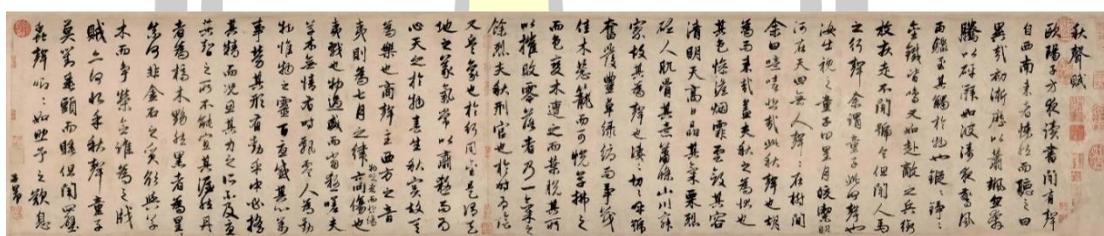


Figure 80 Zhao Mengfu's Autumn Sounds

Source: The Liaoning Provincial Museum, Cao Hengyuan, 2023

Zhao Mengfu (1254-1322), born in the Song Dynasty but active during the Yuan Dynasty, was a renowned calligrapher, painter, and poet from the late Southern Song to the early Yuan Dynasty. His work "Autumn Sounds" is considered one of his masterpieces, consisting of 40 lines and 408 characters. It is based on a text by Ouyang Xiu from the Song Dynasty, depicting the desolate scenery of mountains and rivers, withered grass and fallen leaves. Through the scenery, Zhao expresses a lament for the worries of life. It is evident that Zhao Mengfu inherited the tradition of the Wei and Jin dynasties, with elegant and rounded strokes that give a sense of restraint. The structural integrity of the characters is robust and weighty, bearing a striking resemblance to the calligraphic style of Wang Xizhi. In his writing, Zhao alternates between regular script and cursive script, blending the two seamlessly in a single piece.

During this period, Zhao Mengfu actively advocated for the revival of classical ideals, garnering support and emulation from many literati. Amidst the societal changes and cultural decline of the era, Zhao rectified the prevailing negative atmosphere and redefined the historical status of literati in the Yuan Dynasty. In another sense, his work reflects the suppressed emotions of the Han literati of that time.

#### (4) Ming Dynasty Cursive Script

The Ming Dynasty was a period of Han ethnic rule that emphasized martial prowess and attempted to rectify the moral decline of the Yuan Dynasty while restoring Confucian ideals of societal order. This ideological stance was particularly pronounced in the early Ming Dynasty. Although it contributed to regulating the society to some extent, it also brought about a sense of ostentation and rigidity. The goal of literati during this period was to enter the political center through the imperial examination system, so all principles revolved around practical utility. As a result, literati were able to permeate various aspects of society. In the mid to late Ming Dynasty, there was a significant trend towards artistic inclinations and changes in literati aesthetics. During this period, there emerged collective and diverse characteristics among calligraphers such as Xu Wei, Huang Daozhou, Zhang Ruitu, Wang Duo, and Fu Shan. Their works often emphasized contrasting elements, with some focusing on roundness, others on squareness, some on ink variations, others on the integrity of characters, and still others on the fragmented nature of the text, resulting in different artistic styles.

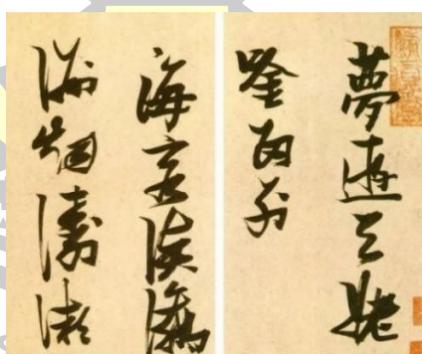


Figure 81 Zhang Ruitu's Cursive Script "Poems of Li Bai" (Partial),

Source: The Rong Bao Zhai, Cao Hengyuan, 2023

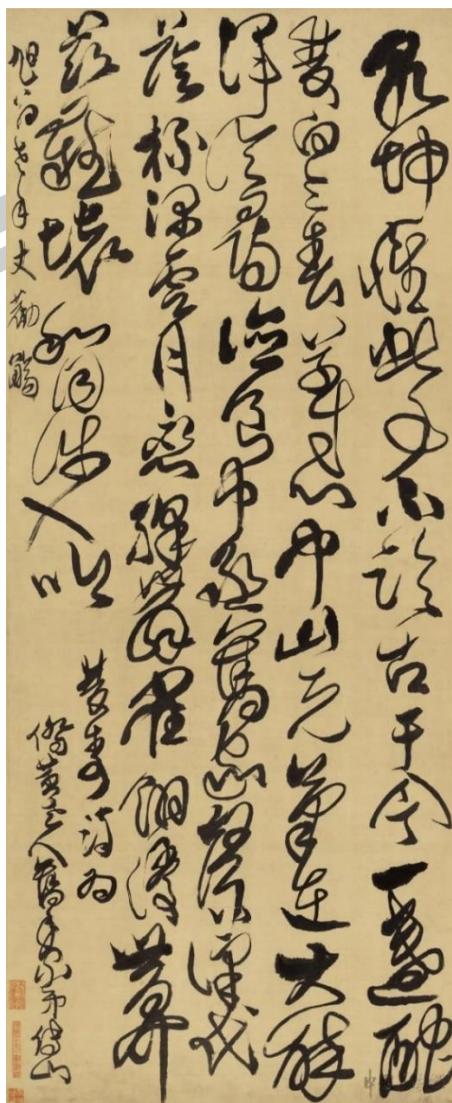


Figure 82 Fu Shan's Cursive Script "Couplet for Longevity"

Source: Shanghai Museum, Cao Hengyuan, 2023

Zhang Ruitu (1570-1641) was an official and painter of the Ming Dynasty. Fu Shan (August 11, 1607 – August 2, 1684) was a calligrapher and physician of the Ming and Qing Dynasties.

The year 1644 marks the boundary between the Ming and Qing Dynasties. Strictly speaking, Zhang Ruitu was a calligrapher of the Ming Dynasty. Fu Shan was born in the Ming Dynasty but died in the Qing Dynasty, making him a calligrapher who experienced the transition of dynasties.

Their calligraphic styles are markedly different, representing distinct understandings of the Ming and Qing societies. In Zhang Ruitu's calligraphy, the connections between strokes form acute angles, appearing sharp and vigorous,

embodying the noble spirit of the Ming Dynasty. In contrast, Fu Shan's calligraphy features connections with obtuse angles, conveying a sense of magnanimity and resignation, reflecting the feeling of being unable to live in the Ming Dynasty despite being a Ming person. Zhang Ruitu's calligraphy has large spacing between lines, displaying strictness and formality with an intent of inviolability. On the other hand, Fu Shan's calligraphy shows interweaving lines with a casual expression, freely conveying inner emotions.

#### (5) The Study of Steles in the Qing Dynasty

History often exhibits astonishing similarities. The Qing Dynasty, as a minority ethnic regime, brought an end to the diverse ideological trends of late Ming, with the rule of an external ethnic group preventing Han Chinese literati from expressing independent views. Consequently, archaeology, epigraphy, and historiography became the main research directions during this period. This ideological shift led to the comprehensive development of calligraphy and painting from another perspective. Literati began to trace back to the origins of calligraphy and painting, realizing that they evolved from rock paintings, pottery, oracle bones, and bronze inscriptions. Most of these pre-Qin texts had few ink traces and were mostly formed through carving and casting, leading to unprecedented heights in the study of steles during this period.

The emergence of stele studies in the Qing Dynasty can be attributed to three main reasons. Firstly, the calligraphy of the Wei, Jin, and Tang dynasties had been reproduced repeatedly through carving, resulting in significant distortions of information, causing calligraphers' attempts to faithfully copy ancient traditions to drift further from reality. Secondly, under the protection of the imperial examination system, calligraphy could not liberate its artistic nature. Thirdly, the large number of oracle bone inscriptions unearthed provided a research foundation for stele studies. During this period, calligraphy not only continued the development of cursive script from the Ming Dynasty but also made significant breakthroughs in seal script and clerical script.



Figure 83 Deng Shiru's "Yi Jing Qian Gua"

Source: Deng Shiru's *Lishu Yi Jing Qian Gua*, Jilin Publishing Group Co., Ltd., 2014

Deng Shiru (1743—1805), born in Huaining, Anhui Province, was a calligrapher and seal engraver during the Qing Dynasty, known for his expertise in seal script and clerical script. "Records of the White Hall" and "Qian Gua" were both late works of Deng Shiru, characterized by a distinct style, with heavy and simple characters exuding an ancient charm. During this period, many calligraphers used his work as a standard to establish their own styles.

The seal script of the Qing Dynasty differed greatly from that of the Qin Dynasty in terms of style. The Qin Dynasty's seal script featured uniform lines and pursued symmetry, with writing done using the tip of the brush. In contrast, Qing Dynasty seal script exhibited varied lines and sought a balance between density and spacing, with rich and diverse brushwork. Similarly, Qing Dynasty clerical script differed from that of the Han Dynasty. The Han Dynasty's clerical script exhibited a relatively careless handwriting, and the characters on stone tablets appeared fragmented due to weathering. In contrast, Qing Dynasty calligraphers pursued completeness and uniformity, expressing subjective aesthetics.

From the Sui and Tang Dynasties to the Qing Dynasty, spanning over 1300 years, the flourishing period of Chinese calligraphy witnessed comprehensive development based on the initial formation of the five script styles: kaishu in the Sui and Tang Dynasties, xingshu in the Song Dynasty, caoshu in the Yuan Dynasty, caoshu

in the Ming Dynasty, and beixue in the Qing Dynasty, all exhibiting distinct characteristics of their respective eras.

We can observe a secret. The evolution of the five script styles during the formative period of Chinese calligraphy, from the Qin and Han Dynasties to the Wei and Jin Dynasties, was: seal script to clerical script, and then xingshu to caoshu, and finally kaishu. Meanwhile, during the flourishing period of Chinese calligraphy, from the Tang, Song, Yuan, Ming, to Qing Dynasties, the development process of the five script styles was: kaishu, xingshu to caoshu, and seal script to clerical script. This secret reflects a natural cycle, as Chinese calligraphy completed the first historical stage loop from the formative period to the development period, and then another loop from the development period to the flourishing period.

#### 4.1.4.2 Chinese Calligraphy Writing Content

From the Sui and Tang Dynasties to the Qing Dynasty, the development of Chinese calligraphy was based on five script styles, each corresponding to a specific era: regular script in the Tang Dynasty, running script in the Song Dynasty, semi-cursive script in the Yuan Dynasty, cursive script in the Ming Dynasty, and inscriptional script in the Qing Dynasty. Each script style reflects the characteristics of the corresponding period. However, it should be noted that each era was not limited to just one script style. For example, in addition to regular script, the Tang Dynasty also saw the flourishing of cursive script by Zhang Xu, which served as a model for later generations. In summary, from the Sui and Tang Dynasties to the Qing Dynasty, it represents the second historical cycle of Chinese calligraphy.

During this period, with the rapid development of productivity, various techniques became highly sophisticated. The widespread use of papermaking had extensive applications across all sectors of society, including natural sciences, medicine, literature, historiography, poetics, commerce, aristocracy, agriculture, industry, fishing and hunting, Buddhism, Taoism, Christianity, and more. These textual contents provide rich documentary evidence for researchers.

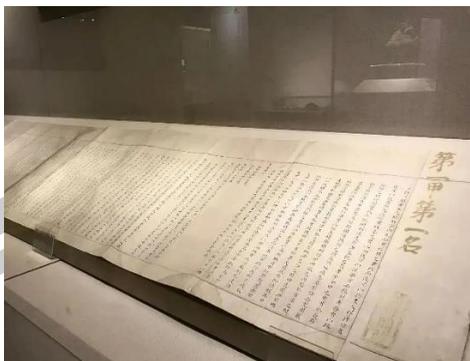


Figure 84 The Examination Papers of the Imperial Examination System in the Ming Dynasty

Source: National Museum of Chinese National Examination Versions, Cao Hengyuan, 2023

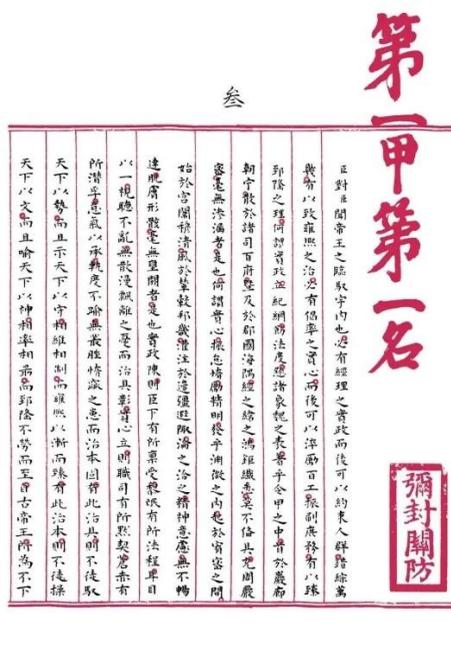


Figure 85 The Examination Paper of the First Place Winner, Zhao Bingzhong  
Source: National Museum of Chinese National Examination Versions, 2023

The imperial examination system reflects the practical value of this period. The image above shows the examination paper of Zhao Bingzhong from the Ming Dynasty, with the calligraphy of Emperor Wanli of the Ming Dynasty in the upper right corner. This paper consists of 2460 characters, extremely neat, and without a single error throughout. It is evident that Zhao Bingzhong wrote with great care and reverence towards the emperor. The textual content of the imperial examination system

emphasizes both ideological and logical aspects, as well as the aesthetic appeal of the writing.

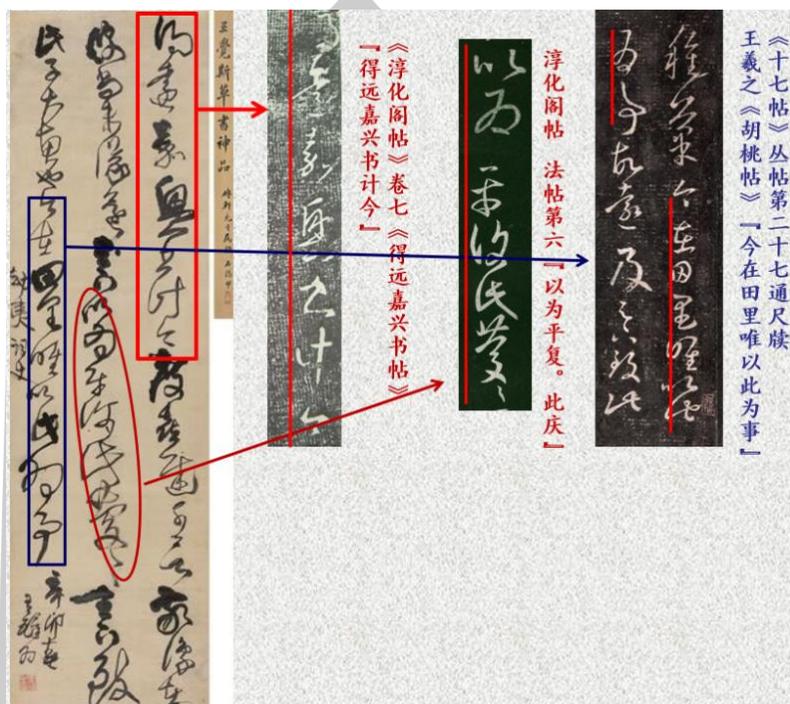


Figure 86 Comparison between Wang Duo's Calligraphy in the Qing Dynasty and Ancient Calligraphy

Source: Cao Hengyuan, 2023

After the Sui and Tang dynasties, there was a significant change in the formal content of calligraphy, with artistic aesthetics becoming a conscious pursuit, sometimes even disregarding the logical structure of the text and characters. The image above shows the cursive script of Wang Duo from the Qing dynasty, with the text derived from the letters of Wang Xizhi from the Wei and Jin dynasties. It can be confirmed that this is a work left by Wang Duo during his study of Wang Xizhi's calligraphy. The three lines of text in the image do not come from a single work by Wang Xizhi but rather from three different pieces. The upper part of the first line, marked with a red square, comes from the seventh volume of the "Chunhua Ge Tie"; the middle part of the second line, marked with a red ellipse, comes from the sixth volume of the "Chunhua Ge Tie"; and the lower part of the third line, marked with a blue square, comes from the twenty-seventh letter of the "Shiqi Tie". In terms of formal content, although Wang Duo studied

calligraphy from the Wei and Jin dynasties, he did not merely copy it but expressed his own understanding of tradition.

The rich and varied use of ink is the most distinctive feature of Wang Duo's cursive script. It is evident that Wang Duo dipped the brush in ink a total of twelve times, with each stroke initially forming a solid block. With each dip of ink, he could write multiple characters continuously, sometimes two, sometimes three, sometimes four, sometimes an entire line. As the ink gradually decreased, the characters became increasingly blurred, capturing this natural progression throughout the entire piece. The formal content of Wang Duo's cursive script is reflected not only in the lines, structure, and layout but also in the variation of ink.

#### **4.2 The current situation and problems of Chinese calligraphy**

Researching the current status of Chinese calligraphy first requires defining the time frame for contemporary Chinese calligraphy. From the perspective of China's national system, contemporary refers to the present era, from the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 to the present, including a certain period into the future. From a global perspective on the development of productivity, it is marked from the third world scientific and technological revolution of the 1940s-50s to the present, also including a certain period into the future. However, for the purposes of this article, neither of these perspectives accurately delineates the time frame for contemporary Chinese calligraphy. Instead, an academic approach should be taken, marking the abolition of the imperial examination system in 1905 as the starting point up to the present and a certain period into the future.

The current status and issues of contemporary Chinese calligraphy tradition consist of two parts: the first is the current status of Chinese calligraphy tradition, and the second is the issues faced by contemporary calligraphy. In order to address these questions, The researcher conducted interviews with 30 individuals. Among them, 5 were experts or scholars engaged in calligraphy research, 10 were ordinary individuals, and 15 were calligraphy majors or students majoring in calligraphy. Due to the diverse educational backgrounds of each individual, the researcher tailored different interview scripts. For interviews with experts and scholars, emphasis was placed on gathering their research findings. When interviewing ordinary individuals, emphasis was placed

on gathering their perceptions of calligraphy. When interviewing students majoring in calligraphy, it is important to focus on collecting information about their learning methods and calligraphy works.

#### 4.2.1 The current situation of Chinese calligraphy heritage

This section is divided into four groups: Calligraphy group made from paper, Calligraphy group made from cloth, Calligraphy group made from wood, Calligraphy group made from rocks. The works from the four groups were provided by five renowned calligraphers (experts and scholars), and their calligraphic perspectives were documented during the interviews.

##### 4.2.1.1 Calligraphy group made from paper

The invention of papermaking appeared during the Han Dynasty and paper became widely used during the Tang, Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties. Later, through multiple improvements, Xuan paper became the essential material for calligraphy creation, continuing to be used to this day.

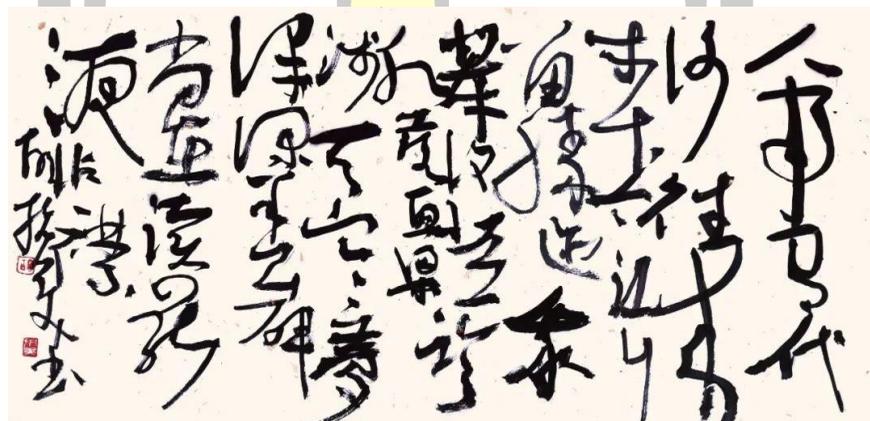


Figure 87 The calligraphy works of Hu Kangmei

Source: Cao Hengyuan, 2023

Hu Kangmei, born in 1952, currently serves as a consultant for the Chinese Calligraphers Association and as a doctoral supervisor at the China Academy of Art and Sichuan University. He is also a part-time professor at Peking University, Renmin University of China, Communication University of China, and Beijing Normal University. Additionally, he is the Deputy Dean of the Calligraphy and Seal Engraving Institute at the China National Academy of Painting.

He believes that whether it's literary works or calligraphic works, form and emotion interact, which is a commonality in art. However, the methods and approaches of expressing emotions are different, and the essence of literature and calligraphy should not be confused due to this commonality, leading to a misunderstanding. Calligraphers create through the combination of character forms rather than semantic constructs. The emotions of calligraphers are generally not guided by literary works but are reflected in the combination of strokes and structures. It is the handling of these relationships that demonstrates the cultivation and quality of calligraphers. The aim of calligraphers' creation is to transform the selected poetry and prose into ink and brush forms. (Hu Kangmei. 2023: Interview)



Figure 88 The calligraphy works of Zeng Xiang

Source: Cao Hengyuan, 2023

Zeng Xiang, born in 1958, is currently a researcher at the China National Academy of Painting. He also serves as a mentor at the Zeng Xiang Calligraphy Studio of the China National Academy of Painting and as a master's supervisor at the Changxin International Art Institute of Yunnan University. He holds the title of National First-class Artist.

He believes that he is not an artist, but rather a dream pursuer in the realm of art. His creations are highly innovative and break through people's existing perceptions. Faced with different opinions from the outside world, Zeng Xiang said, "In the river of tradition, no one can be sure that elegance or roughness can represent tradition. Perhaps my creation tends to lack elegance, but I am indeed within the tradition." (Zeng Xiang, 2023: Interview)

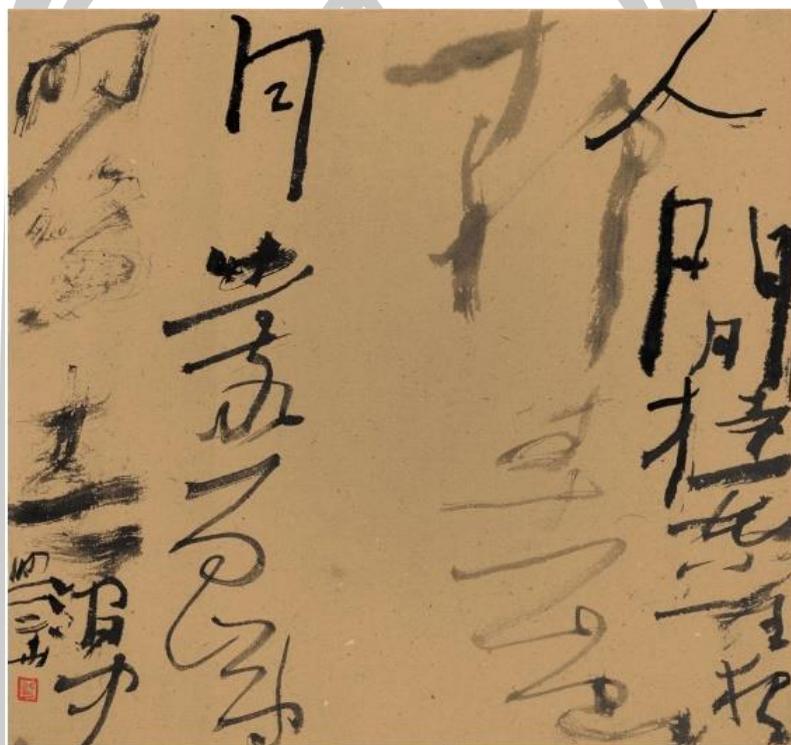


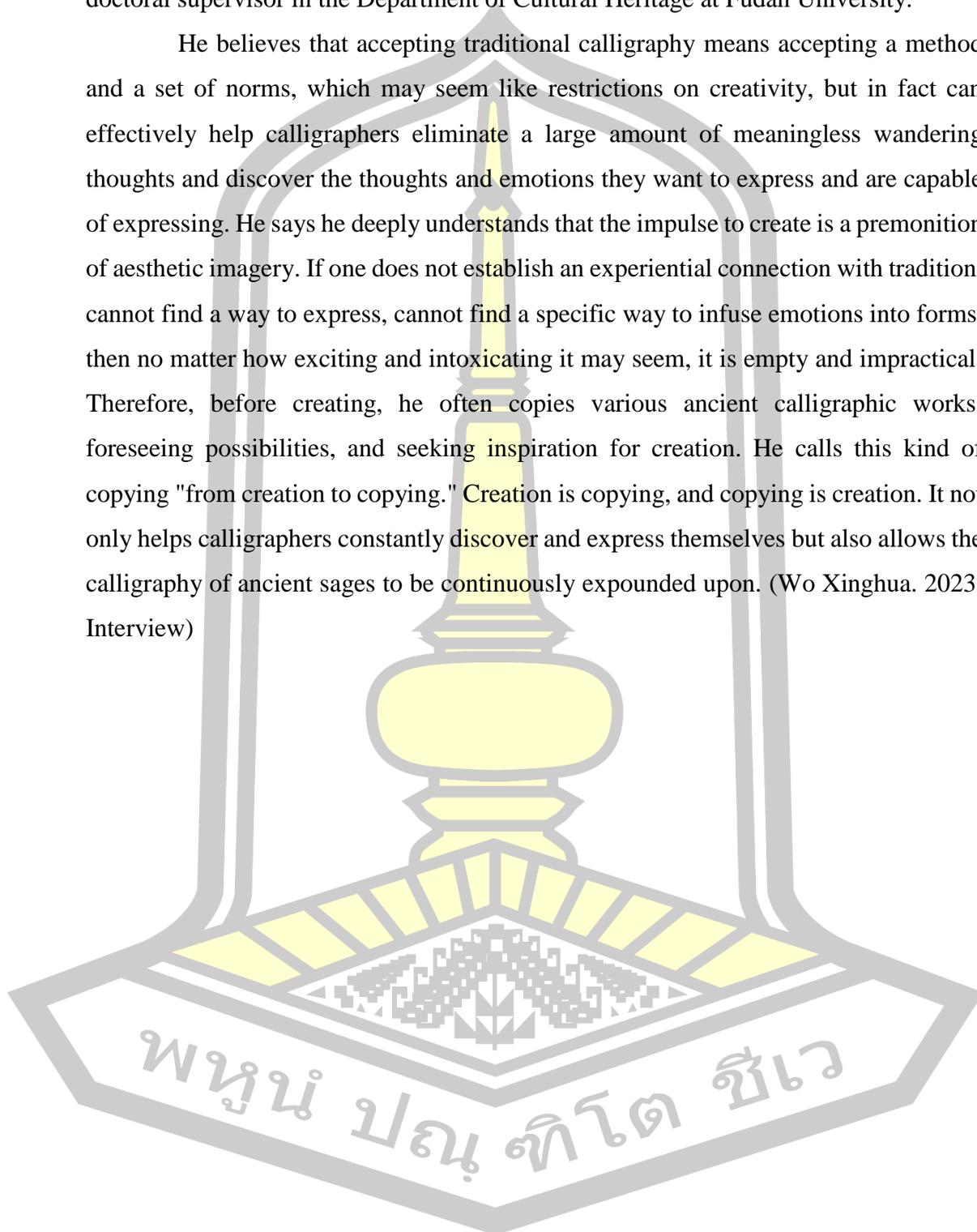
Figure 89 The calligraphy works of Wo Xinghua

Source: Cao Hengyuan, 2023

Wo Xinghua was born in Shanghai in 1955. In 1977, he was admitted to the History Department of East China Normal University. In 1979, he was admitted to the graduate program in Ancient Chinese Characters at East China Normal University, breaking the norm. He graduated in 1982 with a master's degree and remained at the university to teach. In 1994, he was promoted to professor, and in 1995, he became a doctoral supervisor. He has taught in the History Department and Art Department of East China Normal University. He has served as a director of the Chinese Calligraphers Association, a judge for the National Young Calligraphers and Seal Carvers Exhibition, secretary-general of the Shanghai Calligraphers Association, and host of exhibitions on

popular calligraphy styles, among other roles. He currently serves as a professor and doctoral supervisor in the Department of Cultural Heritage at Fudan University.

He believes that accepting traditional calligraphy means accepting a method and a set of norms, which may seem like restrictions on creativity, but in fact can effectively help calligraphers eliminate a large amount of meaningless wandering thoughts and discover the thoughts and emotions they want to express and are capable of expressing. He says he deeply understands that the impulse to create is a premonition of aesthetic imagery. If one does not establish an experiential connection with tradition, cannot find a way to express, cannot find a specific way to infuse emotions into forms, then no matter how exciting and intoxicating it may seem, it is empty and impractical. Therefore, before creating, he often copies various ancient calligraphic works, foreseeing possibilities, and seeking inspiration for creation. He calls this kind of copying "from creation to copying." Creation is copying, and copying is creation. It not only helps calligraphers constantly discover and express themselves but also allows the calligraphy of ancient sages to be continuously expounded upon. (Wo Xinghua. 2023: Interview)



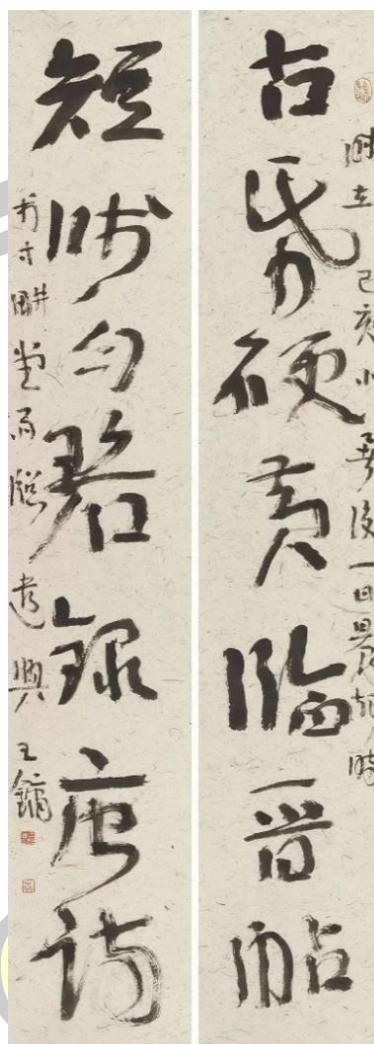


Figure 90 The calligraphy works of Wang Yong

Source: Cao Hengyuan, 2023

Wang Yong was born in Beijing in March 1948. In 1979, he was admitted to the graduate program in Chinese Painting at the Central Academy of Fine Arts, studying under Professor Li Keran and Professor Liang Shunian, specializing in landscape painting and calligraphy and seal engraving. He received guidance from Mr. Ye Qianyu and Mr. Liang Shunian. In 1981, he won the Ye Qianyu Award First Prize at the graduate exhibition and remained at the university to teach. He has served as a consultant, professor, doctoral supervisor, and director of the Calligraphy Research Office at the Central Academy of Fine Arts. He has also served as the director of the Chinese Calligraphy Institute and doctoral supervisor at the China Academy of Art, an outstanding expert of the Ministry of Culture, a member of the National Senior Art Title

Evaluation Committee of the Ministry of Culture, the vice president of the Li Keran Painting Institute, and the honorary president of the Art Institute of the China People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries.

Entering the 21st century, two terms that have been constantly debated in the Chinese calligraphy community are "popular calligraphy style" and "artistic calligraphy", and Mr. Wang Yong is undoubtedly the creator of these two terms. He elevated the artistic level of Chinese calligraphy to unprecedented heights. He believes that exaggeration and deformation are common techniques used in all literary and artistic creations since ancient times, and calligraphy is no exception. Using architecture as a metaphor, using the same materials of beams, pillars, bricks, and tiles, but due to different structures, two houses with completely different styles can be created. It can be said that the stylistic history of each script is also a history of deformation because when the overall aesthetic pursuit of a work changes, the structure of its individual characters must also change. This variability and plasticity provide endless possibilities for creating new calligraphy styles. It should be noted that deformation can be good or bad. However, change is inevitable, while staying unchanged is impossible, unless it is a printed product. Deformation of a single character's beauty must conform to the needs of the overall form of the entire passage. And the overall form must also conform to the pursuit of aesthetic conception. He also applies the concept of rhythm in music to the visual appreciation of calligraphy art. He says that the density, dispersion, weight, openness, size, reality, and emptiness in the work form a relationship of unified variation. Contradictions and troubles need to be created in the work, conflicts need to be intensified, for calligraphy works to have complex relationships. In a piece of work, if so many contradictions and troubles can be handled properly, it will reflect both tradition and innovation; it will have both internal connections and rhythm fluctuations; it will have both local conflicts and overall harmony; it will have both ingenious emergence and order of importance... It's too difficult, but also very interesting. (Wang Yong. 2023: Interview)

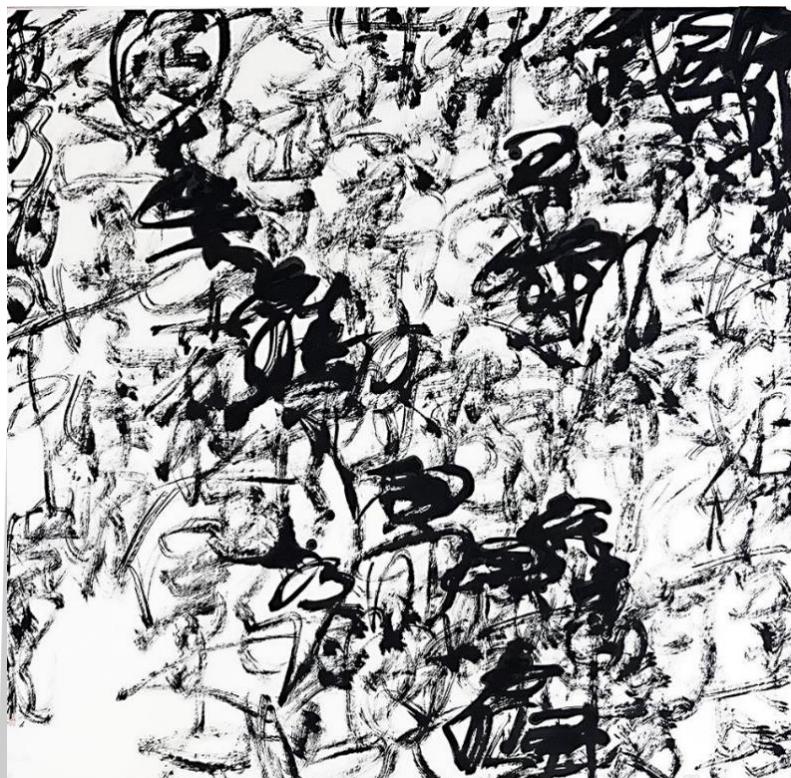


Figure 91 The calligraphy works of Wang Dongling

Source: Cao Hengyuan, 2023

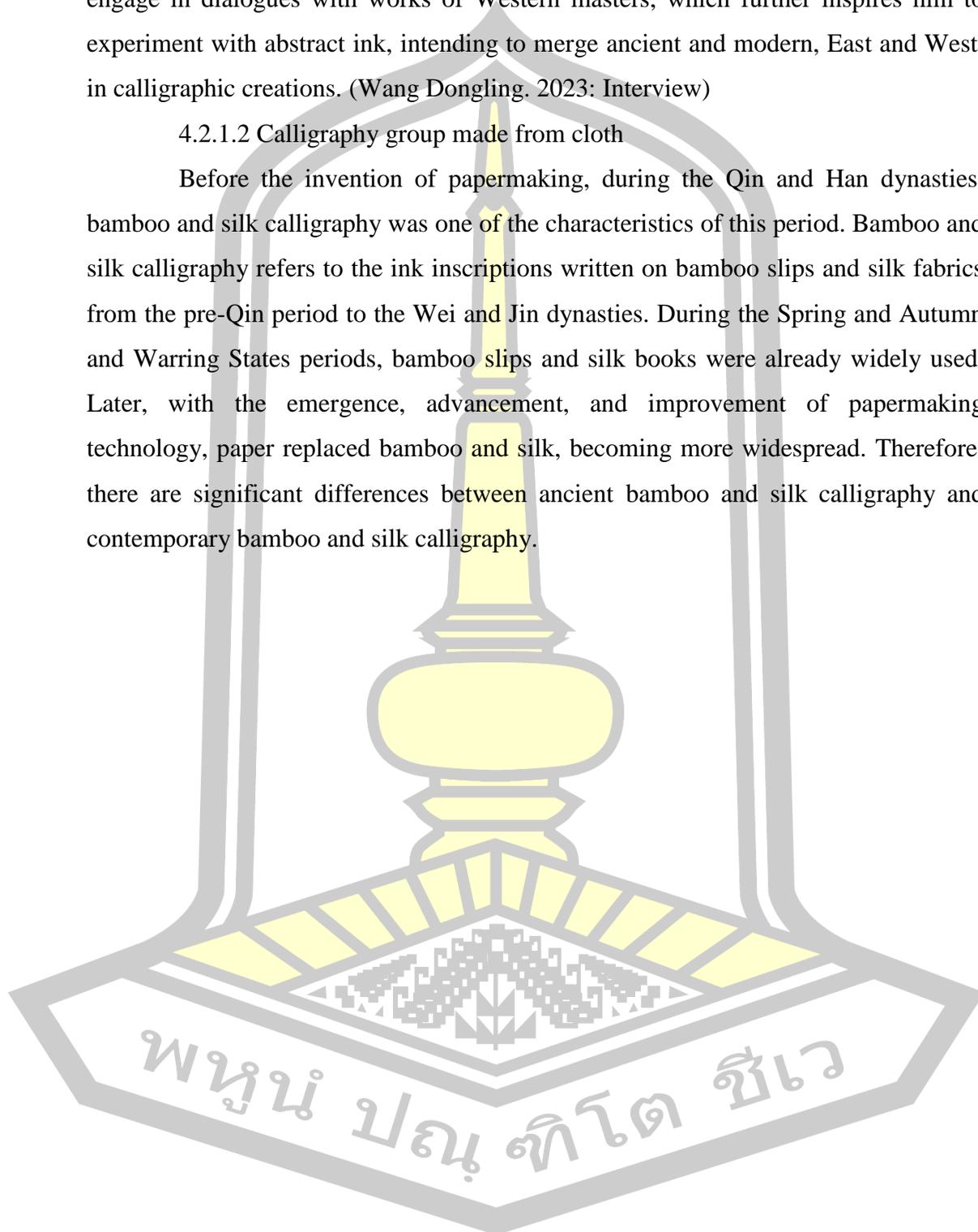
Wang Dongling, born in 1945, is a professor and doctoral supervisor at the China Academy of Art. He is also the director of the Modern Calligraphy Research Center at the China Academy of Art.

He believes that it's a waste to confine the concept of Chinese calligraphy only to tradition; instead, it should be expanded to modern calligraphy, starting from one's own life and closely related to current feelings and thoughts. This means that those who step out of calligraphy should engage in abstract ink art and build their own unique artistic language. This is his summary of traditional calligraphy and the beginning of exploration into modern calligraphy. In his artistic practice, Mr. Wang Dongling discovered that ancient calligraphy possesses an incredible contemporary artistic temperament. In the relativity of time, in the spatial transformation between the East and the West, it seems that modernity becomes primitive, and the primitive becomes modern. As a calligrapher who converses with paper, he is often attracted to some foreign papers. On these newspapers and images, he can write lines freely and enjoy

visual pleasure. His experience of studying abroad provides many opportunities to engage in dialogues with works of Western masters, which further inspires him to experiment with abstract ink, intending to merge ancient and modern, East and West, in calligraphic creations. (Wang Dongling. 2023: Interview)

#### 4.2.1.2 Calligraphy group made from cloth

Before the invention of papermaking, during the Qin and Han dynasties, bamboo and silk calligraphy was one of the characteristics of this period. Bamboo and silk calligraphy refers to the ink inscriptions written on bamboo slips and silk fabrics from the pre-Qin period to the Wei and Jin dynasties. During the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, bamboo slips and silk books were already widely used. Later, with the emergence, advancement, and improvement of papermaking technology, paper replaced bamboo and silk, becoming more widespread. Therefore, there are significant differences between ancient bamboo and silk calligraphy and contemporary bamboo and silk calligraphy.



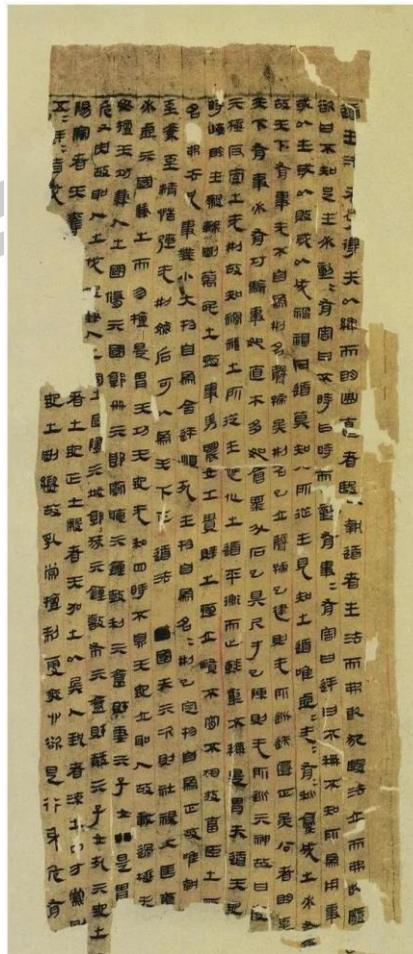


Figure 92 The Mawangdui Silk Manuscripts

Source: Cao Hengyuan, 2023

The Mawangdui silk manuscripts are a collection of silk books unearthed from the Han Dynasty period in China. They were discovered in the tombs at Mawangdui in Jingzhou City, Hubei Province, hence the name. These silk books contain a wealth of content covering literature, history, medicine, and other areas, making them of significant importance for studying the society, culture, and academia of the Han Dynasty. The Mawangdui Bamboo and Silk Texts, as the most representative unearthed artifacts for the study of calligraphy during the Qin and Han dynasties, reveal the transition of Chinese characters from seal script to clerical script.

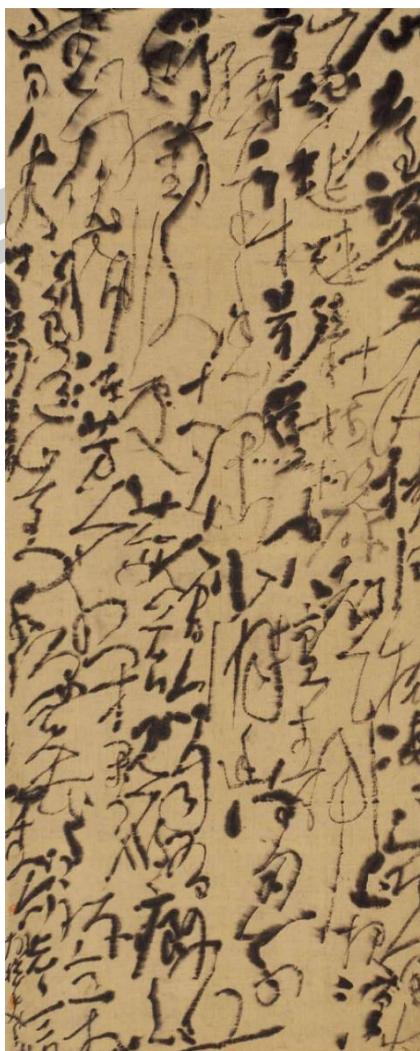


Figure 93 The calligraphy works of Hu Kangmei

Source: Cao Hengyuan, 2023

This is a contemporary silk calligraphy work created by Mr. Hu Kangmei. The biggest difference between it and ancient silk calligraphy lies in the script style. Ancient silk calligraphy belonged to a historical period transitioning from seal script to clerical script, so seal script and clerical script were characteristic of ancient silk calligraphy. Contemporary silk calligraphy not only can depict seal script and clerical script but also can showcase semi-cursive script, cursive script, and regular script. Compared to traditional ancient silk calligraphy, contemporary silk calligraphy highlights a more prominent contrast, making its visual impact more dynamic.

#### 4.2.1.3 Calligraphy group made from wood

The calligraphy of bamboo slips and silk books emerged during the same historical period. Like silk calligraphy, bamboo slip calligraphy was gradually replaced by paper with the advent of papermaking technology.



Figure 94 Wang Dongling's Bamboo Calligraphy

Source: Zhejiang Art Museum, 2021

He believes that the spirit of modern calligraphy pursues richness. In contemporary society, where thoughts and emotions are more complex, relying solely on traditional techniques is no longer sufficient to fully meet the needs of artistic expression. Moreover, because traditional calligraphy has a nature of elegance and leisure, calligraphers often repeat themselves throughout their lives, while modern calligraphy, due to its strong conceptual nature, inevitably brings about original creative force, thereby driving the development of forms. Like outstanding calligraphers and painters, they can express both nobility and beauty, rather than having a singular appearance, thus enabling the spirit of the times in calligraphy to achieve a more perfect embodiment. Wang Dongling's bamboo calligraphy was specifically exhibited at the Zhejiang Art Museum to reflect this artistic viewpoint. It can be said that he truly inherits the artistic spirit of traditional bamboo calligraphy. (Wang Dongling. 2023: Interview)

#### 4.2.1.4 Calligraphy group made from rocks

The Forest of Stone Steles Museum in Xi'an was established in 1087 AD (Song Dynasty) and is the earliest museum established in Shaanxi. It is located near Yongning Gate at the foot of the Xi'an city wall. It is well-known for its large collection of cultural relics and extensive exhibition area. The museum currently houses over 11,000 cultural relics, including famous stone steles, tomb epitaphs, mausoleum stone carvings, and Buddhist statues. Among its treasures are stone inscriptions by renowned calligraphers such as Yan Zhenqing, Wang Xizhi, and Liu Gongquan, as well as twelve Confucian classics and handwritten works by members of the imperial family, as well as textual and pictorial depictions of the "Eight Scenic Wonders of Guanzhong".



Figure 95 The Forest of Stone Steles Museum in Xi'an

Source: Cao Hengyuan, 2023

Visiting the Forest of Stone Steles Museum is mainly divided into three sections: the Confucian Temple, the Forest of Stone Steles, and the Stone Carving Art. There are currently 7 stele rooms, 8 stele galleries, and 8 stele pavilions.



Figure 96 Temple of Confucius

Source: Cao Hengyuan, 2023

On the large plaque outside the Forest of Stone Steles Museum in Xi'an, there are prominent characters "Confucian Temple," which were inscribed by Liu Hui, a famous calligrapher from Shaanxi during the late Qing Dynasty. The Forest of Stone Steles Museum in Xi'an was expanded on the basis of the ancient architecture complex of the Confucian Temple in Xi'an. Due to the impact of wars at the end of the Tang Dynasty, it was relocated several times before finally settling in its current location during the Northern Song Dynasty. The entire Confucian Temple in Xi'an preserves the basic layout and iconic buildings of the Confucian Temple complex from the Ming and Qing Dynasties. It coexists with the Forest of Stone Steles, bearing the responsibility of cultural inheritance. Upon entering the museum, the first thing that catches the eye is the six stele pavilions along the way. The inscriptions on the steles record the wars to pacify the separatist forces in the northwest during the Kangxi and Qianlong periods. However, these stele pavilions are not yet open to visitors.



Figure 97 The sixth exhibition hall

Source: Cao Hengyuan, 2023

The first exhibition hall of the Beilin mainly showcases the "Kaicheng Stone Classics", consisting of twelve classic Confucian texts including "Zhou Yi", "Shang Shu", "Shi Jing", "Li Ji", "Zhou Li", "Yi Li", "Chun Qiu Zuo Shi Zhuan", "Chun Qiu Gong Yang Zhuan", "Chun Qiu Gu Liang Zhuan", "Xiao Jing", "Lun Yu", and "Er Ya". The second, third, and fourth exhibition halls primarily feature stone inscriptions from various dynasties, gathering calligraphy works from the Tang, Song, Yuan, and Ming periods. This includes masterpieces like Yan Zhenqing's "Duo Bao Ta Stele", Liu Gongquan's "Xuan Mi Ta Stele", and the "Da Tang San Zang Sheng Jiao Xu Stele" written by Monk Huai Ren and collected by Wang Xizhi. The fifth exhibition hall mainly displays stone carvings related to local and social history, documenting temple construction, land allocation, and other significant events. The sixth exhibition hall showcases poems and writings from the Qing, Yuan, and Ming dynasties. The seventh exhibition hall's stone tablets are preserved and exhibit the "Chun Hua Ge Tie", featuring works by emperors, dignitaries, and calligraphers throughout history, thus possessing high artistic value.



Figure 98 Stone Art Museum

Source: Cao Hengyuan, 2023

The Stone Carving Art Museum mainly exhibits tombstone carvings and sculptures from the Han Dynasty to the Ming and Qing Dynasties.

#### 4.2.2 The problems of contemporary Chinese calligraphy

As a treasure of Chinese culture, Chinese calligraphy carries rich historical and cultural heritage as well as artistic wisdom, playing a significant role in preserving and inheriting traditional Chinese culture. However, with the changes of times and the development of society, Chinese calligraphy faces various challenges and threats, making the tasks of protection and inheritance particularly urgent and crucial.

##### 4.2.2.1 Protect Problems

From the information provided by interviews with five calligraphy experts, it can be seen that the focus of protection lies in the preservation of the artistic concepts of calligraphy. They believe that ancient calligraphers and theorists elaborated on the artistic concepts of calligraphy, and this tradition was continued during the Republic of China era. Therefore, when contemporary calligraphy loses its practicality, its artistic value should be upheld, and its artistic concepts protected.

From the information provided by interviews with 10 calligraphy students and artists, they all agree with and support this artistic concept.

(1) Wang Naiyu, female, 36 years old, teacher at the School of Fine Arts, Shangqiu Normal University. From 2009 to 2013, she earned a bachelor's degree from Hebei Normal University, with a research focus on oil painting and Chinese painting. From 2018 to 2022, she obtained a master's degree from the China Academy of Art, specializing in Chinese painting. Since 2023, she has been a doctoral student at Mahasarakham University in Thailand, focusing on art studies.

She believes that as an artist, artistic creation should be prioritized as it is the artist's duty. Creation stems from practical experience, and technique is the foundation for an artist; without technique, creation is meaningless. Techniques are derived from the understanding and learning of traditions. Of course, technique is just one aspect; cultural literacy, artistic taste, and emotional expression are also crucial. These spiritual aspects need to be realized through technique. In other words, technique carries the artist's thoughts, feelings, and insights, enabling the greatness of art. Therefore, as a university teacher and art educator, it is essential to impart not only techniques but also the spirit and concepts of art. The same principle applies to Chinese calligraphy. In terms of protection, it involves both the preservation of techniques and the protection of artistic spirit and concepts. (Wang Naiyu. 2023: Interview)

(2) Zang Jiawei, male, 53 years old, instructor at the Art Training Center of the China Academy of Art. He has studied at Qingdao University of Science and Technology, Fujian Normal University, Capital Normal University, Tsinghua University Academy of Arts & Design, and Tokyo University of the Arts in Japan.

He believes that both Chinese calligraphy and Chinese painting are inseparable from China's cultural traditions, which form the foundation of Chinese art. The preservation of Chinese calligraphy should be based on protecting these traditions. How the ancients preserved calligraphy should guide our preservation methods today. Ancient Chinese calligraphy treatises contain many records of these methods. For example, Zhao Mengfu from the Yuan dynasty said, "There are two aspects to learning calligraphy: one is brush technique, the other is character form." Kang Youwei from the Qing dynasty stated, "Calligraphy is the study of forms." In other words, the core of preserving Chinese calligraphy lies in protecting brush techniques and character forms. This aligns with the artistic concepts of Chinese calligraphy. (Zang Jiawei. 2023: Interview)

(3) Guo Ruo, female, 37 years old, a student of Chinese Art Studies. She previously worked as an auction manager at Poly Auction before transitioning to a career as a collector.

She believes that the preservation of Chinese calligraphy can start from the perspectives of auction and collection, as these are indispensable components of the preservation process for both Chinese calligraphy and painting. She points out that there are many factors affecting the auction and collection of artworks, including temperature, humidity, mold, insects, dust, harmful gases, light, and human damage. Among these, temperature and humidity have the most significant impact on calligraphy and painting, and are the most severe factors in causing damage. Therefore, suitable storage environments, strict daily management, and the professional competence of staff are essential for the safety of calligraphy and painting. (Guo Ruo. 2023: Interview)

The researcher believes that the essence of auction and collection lies in the recognition of the value of artworks, which includes economic, cultural, historical, artistic, and research values. Among these, artistic value is particularly important, as the artistic spirit and artistic concepts are concentrated in the artworks. Recognizing the value of artworks is, in another sense, a means of transmitting and protecting the artistic spirit and artistic concepts.

(4) Yang Shufei, female, 51 years old, student at the Chinese Academy of Arts, organizer of exhibition activities.

She believes that, despite the absence of a dedicated calligraphy discipline in Western academic classifications, calligraphy is unquestionably an art form. This viewpoint originates from her teacher, Hu Kangmei. She recalls that before taking courses with Hu Kangmei, she viewed calligraphy merely as a simple writing technique; however, after studying under him, she came to a profound understanding that calligraphy is fundamentally an art. (Yang Shufei. 2023: Interview)

(5) Gong Haitao, male, 54 years old, a tutor at the Art Training Center of the Chinese Academy of Art Research, and an artist.

He believes that Chinese calligraphy has always been art since ancient times. Ancient people used brushes for practical writing, emphasizing utility, but often overlooked the artistic value of calligraphy. Today, with the decline of brush writing,

calligraphy's practicality has naturally diminished, yet its artistic value continues to be overlooked, reflecting a form of aesthetic inertia. Contemporary calligraphers face the same challenges as their ancient counterparts. Ancient calligraphers showcased artistic realms through their works, while calligraphy theorists explored artistic viewpoints in their writings. Today's calligraphers similarly demonstrate artistic realms through their works, while calligraphy theorists articulate artistic viewpoints in their writings. (Gong Haitao. 2023: Interview)

The researcher notes that he is a student of Teacher Hu Kangmei, from whom his artistic viewpoints naturally derive.

(6) Ma Detian, male, 52 years old, instructor at the China Academy of Art Research and Training Center, artist.

(7) Li Lin, male, 48 years old, dean of the School of Fine Arts at Shangqiu Normal University, associate professor.

(8) Chai Tianlin, male, 46 years old, instructor at the Calligraphy College of Hebei Academy of Fine Arts, associate professor.

(9) Li Xiaoxiao, female, 35 years old, employee at China State Construction Engineering Corporation, artist.

(10) Zhang Fangjin, male, 28 years old, employee at the Beijing office of Shandong Province, artist.

Ma Detian, Li Lin, Chai Tianlin, and Zhang Fangjin studied at the Chinese National Academy of Arts (the highest institution of art in China) and the School of Continuing Education at Renmin University of China. From 2011 to 2014, Li Xiaoxiao pursued a master's degree at the Chinese National Academy of Arts, focusing on calligraphy creation under the guidance of Professor Hu Kangmei. Like Gong Haitao, they were influenced by professors such as Hu Kangmei, Zeng Xiang, Wang Yong, and Wo Xinghua during their student years, inheriting their related artistic propositions and concepts. The difference lies in the fact that Ma Detian, Li Lin, and Chai Tianlin, being calligraphers of the 1960s and 1970s, have developed their unique artistic styles. Li Xiaoxiao and Zhang Fangjin, as artists of the 1980s and 1990s, are attempting further exploration. Professor Wang Dongling's calligraphy art is quite avant-garde. Ma Detian, Li Lin, and Chai Tianlin maintain a neutral attitude towards it, while Li

Xiaoxiao and Zhang Fangjin hold an open attitude. (Ma Detian & Li Lin & Chai Tianlin & Li Xiaoxiao & Zhang Fangjin. 2023: Interview)

The researcher believes that whether they are calligraphers, collectors, educators, or those engaged in literary and artistic fields, their fundamental understanding of Chinese calligraphy is correct. However, the issue lies in the inertia of public aesthetics. From interviews with 15 ordinary people, it is evident that due to their lack of education in calligraphy art, many misconceptions arise. They mistakenly believe that writing is equivalent to calligraphy, that the practical function of calligraphy is its artistic function, and that the textual content of calligraphic works is the same as their formal content.

During an interview with Professor Zeng Xiang, a national first-level artist, he stated:

"Many people refer to my work as 'ugly calligraphy' and believe that I am challenging the tradition of Chinese calligraphy. However, I don't see my work as ugly at all. Ugliness and beauty are just different perspectives of aesthetics. If I thought I was creating ugliness, I definitely wouldn't write like this. Art cannot be divided into beauty and ugliness; it shouldn't be defined by outward appearance, but rather by one's understanding of beauty. Therefore, I disagree when some people say my calligraphy is ugly.

Regarding the creation of calligraphy, I focus on the formal content and artistic value of the work. Artistic expression is a reflection of one's inner self, so we can't equate disorder with ugliness. Neatness doesn't represent art; neatness and art are two different concepts. Wang Xizhi of the Wei and Jin dynasties believed that writing with perfect alignment and uniformity was not calligraphy. In other words, Wang Xizhi's understanding of calligraphy was that the characters should not be overly neat. This cultural wisdom is equally applicable to contemporary Chinese calligraphy.

The judgment of beauty and ugliness should be defined by art critics. Ordinary people may think that neatness represents beauty, while elegance represents beauty. However, for calligraphers and artists, a clumsy style is also a form of aesthetic appreciation. Some say my work is somewhat comical, conveying a sense of life as a drama. However, comedy is also a form of aesthetics; for example, do you think Charlie

Chaplin is ugly? I believe that art is diverse. Conversely, vulgarity is the enemy of art."  
 (Zeng Xiang, 2023: Interview)



Figure 99 Liu Yino, Aged 10, Regular Script Work

Source: Xinfeng Town, Raoping County, Yindong Elementary School, 2023



Figure 100 Zeng Xiang, Aged 60, Calligraphy Couplets

Source: Zeng Xiang Calligraphy Studio, 2023

Professor Zeng Xiang has conducted in-depth research on the practice of calligraphy and provided relevant insights into the creation of Chinese calligraphy, highlighting the relatively low aesthetic standards of the general public. This issue was confirmed through a survey of 15 ordinary people. During the survey, two calligraphy

works were shown: one by an elementary school student and the other by Professor Zeng Xiang. The 15 respondents unanimously found the student's work to be neater and more aesthetically pleasing, while they did not understand Professor Zeng's work.

Among these 15 respondents, although there was consensus on the neatness and aesthetic appeal, there were also differences. Three Ph.D. holders expressed acceptance of the diversity in art, likely due to their higher level of cultural education, demonstrating at least a non-rejecting attitude. The other twelve not only failed to understand Professor Zeng's work but also believed it might have a negative impact on society. Based on the information and data collected, we found that while the tradition of Chinese calligraphy can develop fully and gain recognition within the art field, it lacks support from the majority outside the art community. This indicates that the protection of contemporary calligraphy art should start with perspectives and aesthetics. In essence, the issue of protecting Chinese calligraphy is fundamentally about protecting artistic concepts and aesthetics.

#### 4.2.2.2 Inheritance problems

The issue of inheriting Chinese calligraphy requires focused research, mainly concentrated on the transition from ancient calligraphy to contemporary calligraphy. This transition encompasses a shift in educational systems, from the imperial examination system to higher education and primary and secondary education.

##### (1) Ancient Calligraphy Theoretical Education

The inheritance of ancient calligraphy theory faces a linguistic issue, namely the transition from classical Chinese to vernacular Chinese. Because the Republican era marked a transition from ancient to contemporary calligraphy and from classical Chinese to modern language, reinterpreting ancient calligraphy theory using modern aesthetics has become a challenge in the inheritance of Chinese calligraphy art.

According to historical records, the first piece of calligraphy theory during the Wei and Jin Dynasties was Zhao Yi's "Fei Caoshu" (Non-Cursive Script). Following this, there were Cai Yong's "Bi Lun" (On the Brush), "Jiu Shi" (Nine Principles), Wei Heng's "Si Ti Shu Shi" (Four Styles of Calligraphy), Lady Wei's "Bi Zhen Tu" (Diagram of Brush Formation), Wang Xizhi's "Shu Lun" (On Calligraphy), and during the Southern and Northern Dynasties, Wang Senqian's "Lun Shu" (On Calligraphy) and "Bi Yi Zan" (Praise of the Brush), Tao Hongjing's "Yu Liang Wudi Lun Shu Qi"

(Discussion on Calligraphy with Emperor Wudi of Liang), and Liang Wudi's "Guan Zhong Yao Shu Fa Shi Er Yi" (Observations on Zhang Yao's Calligraphy and Its Twelve Meanings), among others.

During the Sui, Tang, and Five Dynasties, there were Ouyang Xun's "Ba Jue" (Eight Essentials) and "Yong Bi Lun" (On the Use of the Brush), Yu Shinan's "Bi Sui Lun" (Essence of the Brush), "Shu Zhi Shu" (On Calligraphy), Tang Taizong's "Bi Fa Jue" (Principles of the Brush Method), "Wang Xizhi Chuan Lun" (On the Transmission of Wang Xizhi's Calligraphy), Sun Guoting's "Shu Pu" (Calligraphy Catalog), Zhang Huaiguan's "Lun Yong Bi Shi Fa" (On the Use of the Brush in Ten Methods), Xu Hao's "Lun Shu" (On Calligraphy), Yan Zhenqing's "Shu Zhang Changshi Bi Fa Shi Er Yi" (Twelve Meanings of Zhang Changshi's Calligraphy), Han Fangming's "Shou Bi Yao Shuo" (Essential Instructions for Writing with the Brush), Lu Xie's "Lin Chi Jue" (Precepts for the Study of Calligraphy), and Shi Yaqi's "Lun Shu" (On Calligraphy), among others.

In the Song Dynasty, there were Ouyang Xiu's "Liu Yi Lun Shu - Shi Bi" (Six One Treatises on Calligraphy - The Brush Test), Su Shi's calligraphy-related essays in "Dongpo Ti Ba" (Notes on Dongpo), Huang Tingjian's "Lun Shu" (On Calligraphy), Mi Fu's "Haiyue Mingyan" (Famous Sayings on Sea and Mountains), Emperor Gaozong's "Han Mo Zhi" (Record of Brush and Ink), Chen You's "Fu Xuan Ye Lu" (Records from the Fu Xuan Studio), Jiang Kui's "Xu Shu Pu" (Continuation of the Calligraphy Catalog), Chen Si's "Qin Han Wei Si Chao Yong Bi Fa" (Brush Techniques from the Qin, Han, and Wei Dynasties), and an anonymous work "San Shi Liu Fa" (Thirty-Six Methods), among others.

In the Yuan Dynasty, there were Zhao Mengfu's "Lan Ting Shi Qi Ba" (Seventeen Postscripts of the Orchid Pavilion), Zheng Biao's "Yan Ji" (On the Spread), Chen Yizeng's "Han Lin Yao Jue" (Essentials of Han Lin), Wu Qiu Yan's "Xue Gu Bian" (Compilation of Learning from the Past), etc.

During the Ming Dynasty, there were Xie Jin's "Chun Yu Za Shu" (Miscellaneous Notes on Calligraphy), Feng Ban's "Dun Yin Shu Yao" (Essentials of Calligraphy), Zhao Huanguang's "Han Shan Zhou Tan" (Conversations at Cold Mountain), Xiang Mu's "Shu Fa Ya Yan" (Elegant Words on Calligraphy), Dong Qichang's "Hua Chan Shi Sui Bi" (Random Notes on Painting and Calligraphy), etc.

In the Qing Dynasty, there were Feng Ban's "Dun Yin Shu Yao," Da Zhongguang's "Shu Fa Yue Yan" (Monthly Discourses on Calligraphy), Song Cao's "Shu Fa Yue Yan," Liang Yan's "Ping Shu Tie," Wu Dexuan's "Chu Yue Lou Lun Shu Sui Bi," Zhu Hezhen's "Lin Chi Xin Jie," Kang Youwei's "Guang Yi Zhou Shuang Ji," and so on.

In ancient calligraphy theory, Zhao Yi's "Fei Caoshu" opposes the artistic value of calligraphy and emphasizes its practical value. Besides, there has been a consensus among calligraphy theorists throughout history that calligraphy art lies not in textual content but in formal content. These ancient calligraphy theories serve as important references for the study of the artistic value of Chinese calligraphy.

## (2) Higher Education in Calligraphy

In the article "A Few Thoughts on Contemporary Higher Calligraphy Education," the origin of contemporary calligraphy education discipline construction is introduced as follows:

In 1912, Cai Yuanpei, the Minister of Education at the time, proposed five educational purposes: "militarism education, utilitarian education, civic morality education, world view education, and aesthetic education." On April 15, 1918, during the establishment and opening speech of the National Beijing Academy of Fine Arts, Cai Yuanpei stated, "Chinese painting and calligraphy are connected, so good painters are also good calligraphers." He hoped that when the school's budget expanded, a calligraphy department would be added.

In the later period of the Republic of China, higher calligraphy education further developed. In 1928, the "Two Rivers Normal School" was renamed "National Central University," attracting the most representative artists of the time. The school explicitly stipulated that those studying Chinese painting must also take calligraphy and seal carving as part of the "five major compulsory courses."

Before and after the New Culture Movement, many art schools were established successively. For example, the Suzhou Academy of Fine Arts, founded in 1922, and the Shanghai Academy of Fine Arts, established in 1930, both offered calligraphy and seal carving majors. The Suzhou Academy of Fine Arts focused on painting and sketching but also offered calligraphy courses. In 1934, Hu Xiaoshi opened a calligraphy theory class in the National Studies Research Class at Jinling

University. Such initiatives were of great significance for higher calligraphy education. Higher art education began to focus on calligraphy disciplines, which were fully extracted, becoming independent research subjects and placed within a broader cultural context. (Wang Cheju, 2022)

In the article "An Investigation into the Current Status of Higher Calligraphy Education," the process of constructing higher calligraphy education disciplines is outlined as follows:

In 1979, the Zhejiang Academy of Fine Arts enrolled the first group of master's students majoring in calligraphy. Starting from the mid-1980s, Mr. Ouyang Zhongshi devoted himself to the construction and development of higher calligraphy education at Capital Normal University. In 1985, a calligraphy education major was established, and in 1993, Capital Normal University established the first doctoral program in calligraphy art education in China. In 1999, it began enrolling post-doctoral candidates in calligraphy. Subsequently, various universities such as the China Academy of Art, Zhejiang University, Jilin University, Central Academy of Fine Arts, and Shandong University successively established doctoral programs in calligraphy. Additionally, institutions like Renmin University of China and Beijing Normal University also established post-doctoral workstations. Meanwhile, non-degree education has become increasingly diversified, offering various forms of refresher courses, graduate classes, curriculum classes, and visiting scholar programs to many calligraphy enthusiasts.

Currently, there are 145 higher education institutions admitting undergraduate students majoring in calligraphy, 111 institutions admitting master's students majoring in calligraphy, and 26 institutions admitting doctoral students majoring in calligraphy.

Based on existing literature research, higher calligraphy education began to be promoted during the Republican era, and the Zhejiang Academy of Fine Arts enrolled the first group of master's students majoring in calligraphy in 1979. The implementation of these policies has greatly assisted in the inheritance of Chinese calligraphy art. Although there has been policy support, the actual situation is not optimistic.

Professor Hu Kangmei, doctoral supervisor at the Chinese Academy of Arts, stated:

“Currently, fine arts as a first-level discipline have developed very comprehensively, including art history, art criticism, and art theory. Calligraphy, on the

other hand, is a branch of fine arts, namely a second-level discipline. Although in 2022, the Academic Degrees Committee of the State Council and the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China formally listed "Fine Arts and Calligraphy" as a first-level discipline, the discipline construction of calligraphy in higher education in China is still incomplete, and academic research in calligraphy still needs to further drive the development of the calligraphy discipline.

According to the general rules of art education, higher education in calligraphy should form a disciplinary system including calligraphy theory, calligraphy history, and calligraphy criticism. These three areas are related to each other while having independent academic goals. In terms of calligraphy theory, the formal theory introduced during the Republican period provided an effective interpretation of calligraphy based on a modern cognitive structure characterized by a reverence for rationality. According to Kant's statement in "What is Enlightenment," the so-called modernity is an era in which people can freely use reason. However, the rational spirit possessed by the calligraphy of the Republic of China has not been well inherited. Therefore, an important issue in contemporary higher education in calligraphy is to fully inherit and absorb the theoretical achievements of Eastern and Western academia, and establish a calligraphy theory that is compatible with the requirements of modern art disciplines.

Another important academic direction in higher education in calligraphy is the study of calligraphy history. On one hand, it inherits the calligraphy historiography tradition before the Qing Dynasty. On the other hand, as Gong Bulishi said, it raises valuable questions to the tradition. Not long ago, the 34th World Congress of Art History was held in Beijing, and the research on calligraphy history was not included in the agenda, which was regrettable for many scholars in the calligraphy field. The researcher believe that the occurrence of this situation indicates a limitation in the academic perspective of the organizers. As early as the first half of the 20th century, Zheng Zhenduo believed that calligraphy was not art, so there was no calligraphy history as art history. However, the researcher believes that the status of calligraphy history research in the field of art history mainly depends on the efforts of calligraphy historians. If it only stays at the stage of textual research, without artistic interpretation

of the essence of calligraphy, and without the application of new research methods, research on calligraphy history will inevitably fail to achieve significant achievements.

In terms of calligraphy criticism, with the introduction of the modern exhibition system and the formation of the art market, calligraphy criticism has become an urgent issue to be addressed. Some new phenomena in the field of calligraphy creation, such as "modern calligraphy," "popular calligraphy style," and "ugly calligraphy," should be interpreted by critics with true academic depth. However, the reality is that calligraphy criticism is in a serious state of deficiency. Theoretically, artworks need to be critiqued to enter history; otherwise, contemporary calligraphy becomes a chaotic space without order. Therefore, the idea proposed by Zhang Yinlin during the Republican period to establish "calligraphy criticism" urgently needs to be realized at the level of higher education."

The calligraphy tradition from the Republican era is an integral part of contemporary Chinese calligraphy. Although the development of calligraphy studies in contemporary China has been relatively slow, it does not imply a lack of achievement during this period. On the contrary, calligraphy during the Republican era made significant accomplishments. In summary, Republican calligraphy exhibits two notable characteristics: firstly, scholars of that era were influenced by Western aesthetic theories and artistic concepts in their aesthetic perception and interpretation of calligraphy. Secondly, due to calligraphy's profound cultural heritage, calligraphic practice was widespread during this period.

From the perspective of calligraphic style history, the style of calligraphy during the Republican era was generally a continuation of the stele studies since the late Qing dynasty. Calligraphers such as Zheng Xiaoxu, Shen Zengzhi, Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, Yu Youren, and Xie Wuliang established unique personal styles, making the Republican era an important period in calligraphic history.

From the perspective of academic development in calligraphy, calligraphy studies during the Republican era are a heritage worthy of special attention. At that time, scholars from different research directions made varying degrees of contributions to the development of calligraphy as an artistic discipline, laying the foundation for the modern transformation of calligraphy studies. Scholars such as Liang Qichao, Zhang Yinlin, and Deng Yizhe, based on comparisons between Eastern and Western cultures,

proposed influential viewpoints on calligraphic art. Liang Qichao regarded calligraphy as "a special form of fine art" and "the highest form of fine art," proposing the concept of the "four beauties" (the beauty of lines, light, force, and individual expression). Wang Guowei, inspired by Kant's formal aesthetics, categorized calligraphic beauty into a distinct value of "the second form," thus incorporating calligraphy into the scope of modern aesthetics. Historian Zhang Yinlin defined calligraphy as "art in which form is the main component" and advocated the establishment of "calligraphy criticism studies." Deng Yizhe integrated Eastern and Western aesthetics, proposing viewpoints that calligraphy is "pure art" and "a form with artistic conception." Lin Yutang, in his English work "My Country and My People," asserted that "calligraphy is the foundation of Chinese aesthetics" and, from an appreciation perspective, explained the formal viewpoint that "appreciating Chinese calligraphy disregards its literal meaning; people only appreciate its lines and structure." It can be said that the Republican era was a summary of ancient Chinese calligraphy tradition. (Hu Kangmei. 2023: Interview)

In conclusion, addressing the issue of Chinese calligraphy inheritance hinges on the transition from ancient calligraphy to contemporary calligraphy, specifically the historical period from 1905 to 1949. The Republican era (1912 to 1949) falls within this period. Therefore, the essence of the issue lies in inheriting the artistic concepts of calligraphy from the Republican era.

### (3) Calligraphy Education in Primary and Secondary Schools

In 2013, the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China issued a notice on the promulgation of the "Guidelines for Calligraphy Education in Primary and Secondary Schools," announcing the implementation of calligraphy education into the teaching system of primary and secondary schools starting from the spring semester of that year. Students will practice both hard-pen and brush calligraphy according to their age and stage.

The guidelines to provide specific requirements for hard-pen learning: in lower grades of primary school, students learn to write regular script with pencils, mastering the basic strokes of Chinese characters, commonly used radicals, and basic stroke order rules. They should use grid paper to grasp stroke structures and write neatly and correctly to appreciate the beauty of Chinese characters. In the middle grades of primary school, students start using fountain pens to write regular script proficiently, focusing

on neatness and aesthetics while gradually improving writing speed. In the upper grades of primary school, students practice writing continuous passages neatly and beautifully using horizontal-line paper, and those interested may attempt to write regular script with fountain pens. In junior high school, students learn to write regular script neatly, and in senior high school, they can learn to write running script with fountain pens, aiming for aesthetic appeal.

Regarding brush calligraphy, the guidelines require one class hour per week for students in grades 3 to 6 to learn. In grades 3 to 4, students learn to copy regular script calligraphy, and in grades 5 to 6, they try copying classic regular script inscriptions and learn to appreciate calligraphy works. In junior high school, interested students may try learning other styles such as clerical and running script, while in senior high school, they can deepen their study through elective calligraphy courses to develop their expertise.

The guidelines also recommend a selection of copybooks and appreciation works, including works by famous calligraphers such as Wang Xizhi, Yan Zhenqing, Zhao Mengfu, Lu Xun, Mao Zedong, and Qi Baishi.

According to the requirements of the Ministry of Education, the provision of calligraphy courses should be included in educational supervision as a special content, but there are no separate exams or proficiency tests for calligraphy.

Based on the existing literature, the promotion of higher education in Chinese calligraphy since 1912 to the announcement of calligraphy education policies for primary and secondary schools by the Ministry of Education in 2013 spans a period of 100 years. From a positive perspective, this signifies the improvement and progress of the Chinese calligraphy education system and marks the beginning of its integration into primary and secondary education. From a negative perspective, there has been a significant discontinuity in the protection and inheritance of the cultural wisdom of Chinese calligraphy art.

### **4.3 Guidelines to Protect and inherit Chinese calligraphy art**

#### 4.3.1 Protection Guidelines

##### (1) Guidelines for being treated in a museum

**Respecting the Exhibits:** Visitors are required to maintain an appropriate distance, cherish the exhibits, avoid touching display cases and exhibits, and refrain from touching or damaging the exhibits.

**Maintaining Silence:** Visitors are requested to keep quiet, avoid loud noises or using mobile phones. This helps create a quiet and peaceful visiting environment.

**Following Regulations:** Visitors are required to comply with the museum's regulations and instructions, including no photography, no smoking, etc. These regulations are aimed at protecting the interests of the exhibits and other visitors.

**Respecting Other Visitors:** Visitors are required to respect the rights and feelings of other visitors. Visitors should not push, shove, or overcrowd in crowds, ensuring that everyone can freely and joyfully appreciate the exhibits.

**Handling Belongings Carefully:** Visitors are required not to bring large luggage or dangerous items into the museum. If necessary, these items can be stored in designated storage areas.

**Maintaining Personal Hygiene:** Visitors are required to maintain personal hygiene and cleanliness. If necessary, visitors can use the restrooms and hand sanitizers provided by the museum.

**Following Guidance:** Visitors are required to follow the guidance of museum staff. If you have any questions or need assistance, please feel free to consult the staff at any time.

**Acknowledgment:** Thank you for your cooperation and understanding. All behaviors within the museum are crucial for maintaining order and the safety of the exhibits.

## (2) Guidelines for Establishing Databases

In the context of the digital age, establishing a Chinese calligraphy art database is a crucial initiative for the protection and inheritance of the treasures of Chinese culture. This study proposes guidelines for establishing a Chinese calligraphy art database, aiming to promote the research, protection, and inheritance of calligraphy art, providing more comprehensive and convenient resources for scholars, enthusiasts, and the general public.

**Data Collection and Organization:** Collect digital images of calligraphy works along with relevant information, including titles, authors, creation periods, and stylistic

characteristics. Organize works of calligraphy masters from various dynasties, calligraphy historical materials, and research achievements to establish a comprehensive calligraphy literature database.

**Technical Support and Platform Construction:** Utilize advanced digital technology to achieve high-definition scanning, digital processing, and online display of calligraphy works. Construct diverse platforms, including websites, mobile applications, etc., facilitating users' access to and utilization of resources anytime, anywhere.

**Knowledge System Construction:** Establish a comprehensive calligraphy art classification system, including different scripts and schools such as clerical, regular script, running script, and cursive script. Build a network of interrelated calligraphy works to delve into the historical, stylistic, and school-related relationships among works.

**Academic Research and Educational Promotion:** Provide abundant academic resources to support scholars in calligraphy art research and paper writing. Conduct online training and educational activities for calligraphy art to attract more people to participate in calligraphy learning and inheritance.

**Copyright Protection and Cooperative Sharing:** Strictly protect the copyright of calligraphy works and enhance awareness of intellectual property protection. The database should establish cooperative relationships with relevant institutions and individuals to share resources and promote cross-border exchanges and cooperation in calligraphy art.

**Social Engagement and Feedback Mechanism:** Establish a user feedback mechanism to timely understand user needs and opinions, continuously optimize the functions and services of the database. Actively organize calligraphy art activities to attract participation and support from various sectors of society, jointly promoting the development of Chinese calligraphy art.

Establishing a Chinese calligraphy art database is a long-term and complex project that requires joint efforts and support from the government, academia, industry institutions, and all sectors of society. Through relentless efforts, the Chinese calligraphy art database will become an important platform for the inheritance of

Chinese culture, providing strong support and guarantee for future generations to understand, learn, and inherit Chinese calligraphy art.

#### 4.3.2 Heritage Guidelines

##### (1) Guidelines for Establishing Heritage Organizations

As time passes, Chinese calligraphy, as a treasure of Chinese culture, needs better protection, inheritance, and research. Establishing specialized heritage organizations is a key step in promoting academic research in calligraphy and advancing its development. This study proposes the establishment of a Chinese Calligraphy Art Research Center to promote the research, protection, and inheritance of calligraphy, providing more comprehensive and convenient resources and services for scholars, enthusiasts, and the general public.

**Determining Mission and Vision:** The mission of the research center is to promote research, education, and innovation in Chinese calligraphy art. The initial goal is to create an academic platform recognized at the national or regional level. The long-term goal is to establish the Chinese Calligraphy Art Research Center as a nationally influential academic institution in the field of calligraphy art.

**Organizational Structure and Functions:** Establish a scientifically reasonable organizational structure, including leadership, research departments, academic committees, etc., to ensure the orderly progress of research work. Determine the functions and tasks of the research center, including academic research in calligraphy art, talent cultivation, collection and protection of artworks, academic exchanges, and cooperation.

**Recruitment of Professional Talents:** Recruit researchers with backgrounds in calligraphy art and professional knowledge, possessing solid academic foundations and research capabilities. Establish an academic committee, invite renowned calligraphy art experts and scholars from home and abroad to serve as consultants, providing academic guidance and support.

**Establishment of Rich Research Resources:** Actively collect and organize relevant literature, ancient books, artworks, etc., to build a rich research resource library. Utilize modern technological means to establish digital archives and online resource platforms, facilitating scholars and enthusiasts to access calligraphy art materials and research results.

**Promotion of Academic Research and Results Transformation:** Conduct academic research on calligraphy art, delve into historical, theoretical, and technical aspects of calligraphy art to improve the level of academic research. Encourage the transformation and application of academic achievements, promote the application and promotion of calligraphy art research results in education, cultural and creative industries, etc.

**Promotion of Tradition and Innovation:** Inherit and promote the essence and spirit of traditional calligraphy art, promote the integration and innovation of traditional calligraphy art with modern culture and technology. Support and encourage the growth and innovation of young calligraphy artists, cultivate a new generation of talents for calligraphy art inheritance, and promote the innovative development of calligraphy art.

**Enhancement of Academic Exchange and Cooperation:** Actively organize academic exchange conferences, seminars, lectures, etc., to promote in-depth discussions and exchanges on calligraphy art in the academic community. Establish domestic and international academic exchange and cooperation mechanisms, collaborate with relevant institutions and academic organizations to conduct joint research projects, and promote international exchanges and cooperation in calligraphy art.

**Enhancement of Academic Influence and Social Reputation:** Publish high-quality academic papers and research results to enhance the research center's influence and status in the academic community. Actively participate in social welfare activities and cultural exchange activities to establish a good social image and brand reputation.

**Diversified Funding Support:** Actively seek government support, increase financial allocations for calligraphy art heritage projects, ensure the basic operation and implementation of projects. Conduct diversified fundraising activities to attract social capital participation, establish stable sources of funding, and ensure the sustainability and stability of calligraphy art heritage work.

Establishing the Chinese Calligraphy Art Research Center is an important measure to promote academic research in calligraphy art and advance its inheritance. It requires the joint efforts and support of the government, society, and relevant organizations. Through the implementation of the above guidelines, the Chinese Calligraphy Art Research Center will be able to better play its role, providing solid

academic support and intellectual guarantee for the inheritance and development of Chinese calligraphy art, and making positive contributions to the inheritance and development of Chinese calligraphy art for future generations.

## (2) Guidelines for Conducting Teaching Activities

To promote the inheritance and development of calligraphy art, conducting high-quality calligraphy teaching activities is crucial. This study proposes guidelines on how to conduct Chinese calligraphy art teaching activities, aiming to provide effective teaching methods and guidance for teachers and students.

**Establishing Teaching Objectives:** Clearly define teaching objectives, including aspects such as students' understanding of calligraphy art, improvement of skill levels, and cultivation of cultural literacy. Based on students' age, level, and interests, develop specific teaching objectives and plans.

**Creating a Favorable Teaching Environment:** Create a teaching environment with a traditional Chinese cultural atmosphere, including displaying calligraphy works and showcasing calligraphy tools. Provide comfortable classrooms and good teaching facilities to ensure students can focus on learning calligraphy.

**Selecting Appropriate Teaching Materials:** Choose teaching materials that suit students' age and level, covering fundamental knowledge, technique training, and appreciation of classic works. Flexibly utilize various teaching materials and resources according to teaching needs to meet the diverse learning needs of students.

**Designing Diverse Teaching Activities:** Integrate theoretical teaching and practical exercises, design diverse teaching activities including lectures, demonstrations, practice sessions, and artwork creation. Innovate teaching methods, introduce interactive teaching and gamified learning to stimulate students' interest and enthusiasm for learning.

**Enhancing Technique Training:** Emphasize training in fundamental techniques, including brush strokes, structure, and proportion, to solidify students' basic calligraphy skills. Conduct staged and progressive technique training, providing personalized guidance based on students' actual situations.

**Encouraging Creation and Expression:** Encourage students to create calligraphy works and guide them in expressing their emotions and thoughts. Organize calligraphy

competitions, artwork exhibitions, etc., to showcase students' creative achievements and inspire their enthusiasm and confidence in learning.

**Focusing on Cultural Inheritance and Literacy Cultivation:** Guide students to understand the history, cultural background, and spiritual connotations of calligraphy art, cultivating their cultural confidence and national identity. Foster students' aesthetic taste and humanistic literacy, enhancing their overall quality and humanities cultivation.

**Establishing an Effective Evaluation System:** Design scientifically sound evaluation methods and standards to comprehensively assess students' learning achievements and comprehensive abilities. Conduct regular teaching feedback and evaluation, timely adjust teaching strategies and methods, and continuously optimize teaching effectiveness.

**Expanding Teaching Resources and Collaboration Opportunities:** Actively expand calligraphy teaching resources and collaboration opportunities, including inviting professional calligraphy artists to give lectures, visiting calligraphy exhibitions, etc. Strengthen cooperation between schools and social/cultural institutions, jointly promoting the development and inheritance of calligraphy art education.

**Inspiring Students' Passion for Calligraphy Art:** It is every student's goal to love, understand, and master calligraphy. Through rich and colorful teaching activities and by stimulating students' interest in learning, cultivate students' passion for and persistence in calligraphy art.

Through the implementation of these guidelines, teachers can better organize and conduct Chinese calligraphy art teaching activities, stimulate students' interest in learning and creative potential, and promote the inheritance and development of Chinese calligraphy art.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION, AND SUGGESTIONS

This study is a summary, discussion, and suggestion on the topic. The first part is a summary of the research findings. The second part mainly discusses theories and concepts, and derives new knowledge as well as the researcher's viewpoints. The third part provides some research suggestions based on the current status and issues of contemporary Chinese calligraphy. The outline of this chapter is as follows:

#### 5.1 Conclusion

#### 5.2 Discussion

##### 5.2.1 The Selection of Research Topics

##### 5.2.2 The Selection of Research Concepts

##### 5.2.3 The researcher's viewpoints

#### 5.3 Suggestions

### 5.1 Conclusion

The historical development and artistic value of Chinese calligraphy can be summarized into four historical periods.

Firstly, from the Stone Age (primitive society) to the Qin, Han, Wei, and Jin dynasties, this was the formative period of Chinese calligraphy. It can be divided into two stages. Firstly, from the pictographic symbols of primitive society to the oracle bone inscriptions and bronze inscriptions of the Shang and Zhou dynasties. This period was the formation of writing, providing a medium for calligraphy art. Secondly, from the oracle bone inscriptions and bronze inscriptions of the Shang and Zhou dynasties to the seal script of the Qin dynasty. This period was the maturity stage of Chinese calligraphy in terms of form and content, establishing basic rules such as line, structure, composition, stroke, and ink color.

Secondly, from the Qin, Han, Wei, and Jin dynasties to the Sui and Tang dynasties, this was the period of the formation of the five major styles of Chinese calligraphy, namely seal script, clerical script, cursive script, running script, and regular script. Seal script, as the earliest script, originated from oracle bone inscriptions and

bronze inscriptions of pre-Qin China. The characteristics of seal script are even lines, elongated characters, and a pursuit of symmetry in structure. It was often used for official documents, possessing high practicality and standardization. From an aesthetic perspective, seal script already had a complete artistic form. Clerical script emerged during the Qin and Han periods. Its characters are neat and standardized, with smooth and powerful lines, emphasizing horizontal visual tension. It was widely used for stone inscriptions and official documents. Exemplary works of clerical script include the Chu Bamboo Slips, Han Bamboo Slips, Yiyi Stele, and Cao Quan Stele. The discovery and study of these ancient documents provided important references for the development of calligraphy in later generations. During its evolution, clerical script gradually gave rise to running script, cursive script, and regular script. The swift writing of clerical script led to the formation of ancient cursive script, which later evolved into continuous cursive script works. Ancient cursive script is mainly reflected in the ink traces of clerical script, with characteristics of ideographic characters. Cursive script simplified ancient cursive script to ensure the continuity of horizontal lines, emphasizing contrast and textual modeling. Running script is a standardized form of ancient cursive script, with clear depiction of the starting point, process, and ending point of each stroke, delicacy and finesse in each stroke, and the application and fluency of ink being its main features. Representative figures include Wang Xizhi and Wang Xianzhi. The regular script of the Wei and Jin periods, such as the "Twenty Models of Longmen," although in the embryonic stage of regular script, already had complete aesthetic effects. Later, regular script gradually matured during the Sui and Tang dynasties, with dignified and beautiful characters, sturdy structure, and being regarded as the epitome of calligraphy art.

Thirdly, from the Sui and Tang dynasties to the end of the Qing dynasty, this period witnessed the development of the five major styles of Chinese calligraphy. During this stage, each era made ample contributions to and demonstrated great achievements in the five styles, each showcasing its unique charm and artistic value. In the Tang dynasty, calligraphers such as Ouyang Xun, Yan Zhenqing, and Liu Gongquan collectively formed the unique style of Tang regular script. Their characters were sturdy and square, with strict adherence to stroke techniques, providing subsequent calligraphers with a set of theoretical foundations, and possessing extremely high

artistic value. In the Song dynasty, Su Shi, Huang Tingjian, Mi Fu, and Cai Xiang, known as the "Four Masters of the Song Dynasty," made significant contributions to the development of running script. They enriched the artistic style of running script with their smooth and natural brushwork, expressing their understanding of calligraphy art and emphasizing the expression of emotions, laying the emotional basis for the development of Chinese calligraphy art. The Yuan dynasty was a period of contention between retrogression and transformation, essentially a transitional stage from running script to cursive script. Retrogression reflected a reflection on calligraphy tradition, while the expression of personality and emotion was an exploration of calligraphy development. The calligraphy of the Ming dynasty exhibited characteristics of collectivity and diversity. Cursive script during this period displayed a richer artistic style. Calligraphers such as Zhang Ruitu, Ni Yuanlu, Fu Shan, and Wang Duo achieved significant accomplishments in cursive script. Zhang Ruitu focused on sharp angles and square turns, Ni Yuanlu emphasized the undulating nature of lines, Fu Shan emphasized the roundness of lines, and Wang Duo emphasized the block-like effects of ink. In the Qing dynasty, calligraphers such as Deng Shiru, Zhao Zhiqian, Wu Xizai, and Wu Rangzhi collectively formed the unique style of Qing dynasty stele studies. Their calligraphy possessed a unique artistic feature, adding new artistic charm to Chinese calligraphy. In fact, the rise of stele studies corrected the overly soft trend of tie calligraphy.

Fourthly, contemporary Chinese calligraphy. From the early 20th century to the mid-20th century, Chinese calligraphy underwent a process of modernization and innovation under the influence of the New Culture Movement and the May Fourth Movement. A group of calligraphers emerged who actively explored and boldly innovated, such as Huang Binhong, Qi Baishi, and Pan Tianshou. They absorbed techniques and concepts from Western art while building upon traditional calligraphy, propelling the modernization of Chinese calligraphy and opening up the path of diversified development for calligraphy art. From the 1950s to the 1970s, Chinese calligraphy was influenced by political movements, experiencing a period of stagnation and distortion. During the Cultural Revolution, calligraphy art was restricted and scrutinized, leading many calligraphers to change professions or remain silent. During this period, the development of Chinese calligraphy art plummeted, severely impeding

the inheritance of traditional skills and theories, and facing existential challenges. Since the reform and opening-up, Chinese calligraphy has shifted from practical to artistic functions. Calligraphers have begun to redefine calligraphy art, emphasizing technical methods, highlighting the spirit of the times, and actively participating in international exchanges and cooperation. This has earned more opportunities for the dissemination of Chinese calligraphy and explored more possibilities for its development.

In summary, from the Stone Age to the Shang and Zhou dynasties was the period of the formation of writing. The Qin dynasty to the Sui and Tang dynasties was a crucial period for the formation and evolution of the five major styles of Chinese calligraphy. The formation of writing provided a medium for expressive communication in Chinese calligraphy art, while the establishment of the five styles of calligraphy laid the formal foundation for Chinese calligraphy art.

## 5.2 Discussion

The research topic of this thesis is Chinese calligraphy art, which employs relevant concepts from paradigm theory, formalist aesthetics, and semiotics. It elaborates on the following three research objectives:

- (1) To study the historical development and artistic value of Chinese calligraphy.
- (2) To study the current situation and problems of contemporary Chinese calligraphy.
- (3) To study guidelines for the protection and inheritance of Chinese calligraphy art.

### 5.2.1 The Selection of Research Topics

Why did the researcher choose Chinese calligraphy art as the research topic? There are mainly two aspects, positive and negative. From the positive aspect: Firstly, Chinese calligraphy art has a long history and unique cultural connotations. As a form of artistic expression of Chinese characters, Chinese calligraphy originated from the carving and writing of ancient texts. After thousands of years of evolution and development, it gradually formed a unique artistic style and expressive technique. Calligraphy is not only a way of writing characters but also a carrier of artistic expression and cultural heritage, reflecting the wisdom, emotions, and spiritual pursuits of the Chinese people. Therefore, studying Chinese calligraphy art helps to deepen the

understanding of the connotations and developmental processes of Chinese traditional culture.

Secondly, Chinese calligraphy art has profound influence and wide dissemination. As an important part of Chinese traditional culture, Chinese calligraphy art not only occupies a significant position in Chinese history but also has received widespread attention and praise worldwide. People from many countries and regions have a strong interest in Chinese calligraphy art, and by studying and learning calligraphy, they promote the dissemination and exchange of Chinese culture. Therefore, studying Chinese calligraphy art contributes to enhancing cultural exchange and understanding internationally.

Additionally, Chinese calligraphy art has unique aesthetic value and artistic charm. As an art form, calligraphy emphasizes the use of brush and ink and artistic expression. Through the fluidity of lines and the density of ink traces, it expresses profound artistic conception and emotional connotations. Chinese calligraphy attracts numerous art enthusiasts and collectors with its unique aesthetic characteristics and expressive forms, becoming a valuable resource in the art market. Therefore, studying Chinese calligraphy art helps to enhance personal artistic appreciation and aesthetic level.

Finally, Chinese calligraphy art has a positive influence on personal cultivation and spiritual growth. Calligraphy is an art activity that requires concentration and tranquility. Through practicing and creating calligraphy works, one can regulate emotions, cultivate sentiment, and improve personal temperament and cultivation. Additionally, calligraphy is a unique cultural experience and spiritual enjoyment that can bring inner peace and pleasure to people. Therefore, studying Chinese calligraphy art not only enriches people's spiritual life but also helps to enhance personal spiritual realm and cultural cultivation.

From a negative perspective: Contemporary Chinese calligraphy is facing enormous challenges and pressures, and how to protect and inherit Chinese calligraphy art is an important issue in contemporary times. On the one hand, there are internal challenges within calligraphy art, such as the abolition of the imperial examination system, the advancement of contemporary aesthetics, the complexity of social relations, and the intersection of interdisciplinary research. The emergence of these problems will

bring about a thorough baptism to the ancient calligraphy tradition. On the other hand, contemporary Chinese calligraphy faces the issue of transition, and researchers need to re-examine calligraphy art, reinterpret calligraphy art, and redefine calligraphy art. The exploration and resolution of these issues can lead to new directions and opportunities for the development of Chinese calligraphy.

In summary, choosing to study Chinese calligraphy art is a way to inherit and promote Chinese traditional culture, as well as a manifestation of artistic pursuit and humanistic spirit. Through in-depth research and exploration of Chinese calligraphy art, we can better understand and appreciate the profoundness of Chinese culture, while also enriching our artistic perspective and humanistic literacy, making a worthy contribution to the progress of contemporary Chinese calligraphy art.

#### 5.2.2 The Selection of Research Concepts

This study employs paradigm theory, formalist aesthetics, iconology, pedagogy, cultural communication studies, and semiotics. Among these, paradigm shifts, formalist aesthetics, and iconology are integral to the three research objectives. Pedagogy, cultural communication studies, and semiotics address issues of education, cultural preservation and transmission, and aesthetics. The selection of these concepts and theories not only allowed the researcher to re-evaluate the artistic value of Chinese calligraphy but also led to the discovery of new knowledge. Below, we discuss each aspect in detail.

The concept of the paradigm originated from the philosophy of science and was introduced by the American philosopher of science Thomas Kuhn in 1962. In his book "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions," Kuhn describes the development of science as a series of paradigm shifts and replacements. The famous 20th-century art historian and theorist Ernst Gombrich applied paradigms mainly in his art history research methods, particularly in his "paradigm shift" theory. Paradigm shift is a method of analyzing art by studying symbols, icons, and meanings to uncover the cultural, historical, and ideological contexts behind artworks, thus providing a deeper understanding of the pieces.

This study adopts and utilizes these theoretical concepts to explain the formation, evolution, development, and flourishing of Chinese calligraphy. It discusses the history of ancient calligraphy and outlines a clear research trajectory: from the emergence of

writing to the formation of calligraphy, from the evolution of seal script and clerical script to the establishment of running script, cursive script, and regular script, and from the maturity of regular script in the Sui and Tang dynasties to the development of running script in the Song dynasty, semi-cursive script in the Yuan dynasty, cursive script in the Ming dynasty, and stele studies in the Qing dynasty. In fact, each transformation of calligraphic styles represents a shift from one paradigm to another, much like Kuhn's view that the scientific community operates under a specific paradigm until anomalies or contradictions arise that the current paradigm cannot explain, leading to a crisis and potential scientific revolution that introduces a new paradigm to address the issues.

Within the theory of paradigm shifts, Gombrich proposed three levels of interpretation: The first level is the description of surface phenomena, including the form, composition, and colors of the work. The second level involves the interpretation of symbols and icons, studying the hidden symbolic elements within the work and their meanings and cultural contexts. The final level is the paradigm shift, placing the work within a broader historical and cultural context to explore its universal significance and historical process.

Based on this, the study has made new discoveries. Ancient Chinese calligraphy has completed two cycles: the first historical cycle from the formative period to the developmental period, and the second historical cycle from the developmental period to the flourishing period. The first cycle occurred during the Qin, Han, Wei, and Jin periods, where the evolution of the five major scripts was as follows: 1) seal script to clerical script, 2) running script to cursive script, and 3) regular script. The second cycle occurred during the Tang, Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing periods, where the development of the five major scripts was as follows: 1) regular script, 2) running script to cursive script, and 3) seal script to clerical script. The start and end points of these two cycles are connected, forming a natural progression. The third cycle began in 1905 with the abolition of the imperial examination system, and contemporary calligraphy has entered this third historical cycle.

Based on the experiences of the first and second cycles, contemporary calligraphy is likely to start from the end of the second cycle, specifically from seal script, clerical script, and stele studies. It will further expand the aesthetic domain of calligraphy, move

towards the expressive running and cursive scripts, and ultimately, at some future stage, return to regular script.

The first cycle lasted 839 years, from the Qin dynasty in 221 BCE to the Tang dynasty in 618 CE.

The second cycle lasted 1,287 years, from the Tang dynasty in 618 CE to the Qing dynasty in 1905 CE.

The third cycle began in 1905 during the Qing dynasty and continues today...

This represents a historical cycle. The first cycle resulted in the establishment of the five major scripts, the second cycle saw their development and flourishing, and the third cycle is currently underway. In today's multicultural context, the third cycle is bound to exhibit diverse and cross-cultural development.

Researchers believe that the concept of a paradigm is rather abstract, and different researchers might provide different interpretations, leading to strong subjectivity in the theory. This type of interpretation often places artworks within a broad cultural context, thereby neglecting the artist's personal creative intentions and experiences, as well as the multiple meanings and cross-cultural influences that a work might have. Modern art frequently breaks away from traditional artistic forms and symbolic systems, resulting in meanings that can be more complex and varied. Paradigm theory may not fully explain these meanings. Additionally, as a theoretical framework, its abstract and theoretical nature limits its operability in specific research, necessitating the combination of other specific methods and tools for in-depth study. Therefore, formalist aesthetics becomes an important analytical method in this study.

The origin and development of the concept of formalist aesthetics can be traced back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries in Europe, particularly the modernist art movement. With the accelerated development of industrialization and urbanization, artists began to question traditional artistic norms and cultural values. They sought to break free from the constraints of traditional forms and pursue new ways of artistic expression. Russian art theorist Nikolai Kandinsky had a profound influence on the formation of formalist aesthetics. In his work "Painting and Art Forms," Kandinsky emphasized the importance of form in art, viewing art as a pure language of form rather than merely an imitation of the objective world. In the early 20th century, the philosophical thoughts of German philosophers Martin Heidegger and Theodor Adorno

provided a theoretical foundation for the development of formalist aesthetics. They emphasized the self-sufficiency and independence of art, believing that art should transcend reality and possess its own internal logic and structure. In the West, formalist aesthetics was widely applied in the modernist art movement. For example, Picasso's Cubist art emphasized the composition and structure of form, while Dadaism attempted to break traditional art forms and emphasize the free exploration of form.

Thus, formalist aesthetics, as a powerful tool for interpreting the essence of calligraphic art, is all-encompassing and all-embracing, with emotion infused within it, manifested through the forms of brushwork, spatial arrangement, and emotional expression. Among these, brushwork is the most fundamental; spatial arrangement arises from it, and emotional expression flows from it. These elements have their own aesthetic significance, not based on the precision of imagery, but on the texture and rhythm of lines, as well as the meanings conveyed within the space. This seeks to explore the qualities and styles of calligraphy beyond the physical form. Therefore, using the analytical method of formalist aesthetics to interpret Chinese calligraphy highlights the artistic expression inherent in the art form and addresses the essential questions of calligraphic art. This also provides a theoretical basis for the development of contemporary calligraphy.

Researchers believe that the most thorough representative of formalism is Clive Bell (1881-1964), who introduced the concept of "significant form" in his book *Art*. "Significant form," as he described, refers to "the arrangement and combination in a particular way that moves us." This perspective comes from his teacher Roger Fry, who believed that art could exist independently of real life and advocated for analyzing and studying art itself independently from other disciplines. However, Fry did not deny that art originates from real life, reflecting and presenting the world of reality in an artistic manner. In other words, Roger Fry was a formalist critic but not an exclusive formalist.

Formalist aesthetics is significant in revealing the deeper meanings of art, emphasizing the formal structure and intrinsic aesthetic characteristics of artworks, and, to some extent, advancing the development of artistic appreciation. However, this focus on form tends to overlook the historical and cultural context and social value reflected in the works, resulting in certain limitations in interpretation.

Therefore, this study introduces a third concept, iconology. Iconology (German: Ikonologie; English: Iconology), also known as iconography or critical iconology, is a method and science of image research. It is also an important pioneering theoretical foundation that helped establish art history as an independent discipline in the first half of the 20th century. The term "iconology" has Greek roots: "eikón" meaning "image, likeness, portrait," and "lógos" referring to discourse, theory, or discipline. Traditional iconology involves artists organizing and collecting symbolic or allegorical image examples for use in their creations, including hieroglyphs, emblems, annotated images, and encyclopedic picture collections, focusing on icons and specific subjects.

In the 20th century, modern iconology gained a new significance, emphasizing the description and classification of artworks. Combined with iconography (Ikonographie) research, it examines motifs and their historical, cultural, or social meanings and interprets the worldview and era significance of artworks. This forms a comprehensive methodological theory. The establishment of modern iconology was first advocated by German scholar Aby Warburg. In 1912, during his lecture in Rome, he first mentioned "critical iconology," attempting to interpret the worldview and humanistic connotations embedded in artworks based on iconography. Warburg's approach to art history emphasized the broader cultural and intellectual history, moving beyond mere aesthetic appreciation to highlight the social functions and historical significance of art. This marked the beginning of the development of modern iconology. Shortly thereafter, Vienna School scholar Heinrich Wölfflin (1864-1945) published "Principles of Art History" (Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe, 1915), systematically analyzing the formal aspects of artworks and considering them as primary historical sources for art historical research. Consequently, the iconological and stylistic approaches became foundational to the establishment of 20th-century art history as a discipline (Zhang Shengqing, 1993).

For this study, the application of iconology significantly aided in the collection and analysis of ancient calligraphy works, providing a comprehensive examination of their cultural background, social context, textual content, and formal elements. This helped to address the limitations of paradigm theory and formalist aesthetics, offering insights into the third historical cycle of Chinese calligraphy. The research indicates that the first historical cycle achieved the establishment of the five major script styles

of Chinese calligraphy, the second cycle saw their development and flourishing, and the third cycle marks the transition of Chinese calligraphy from a functional practice to an artistic one. The reasons for this include: (1) the transformation of calligraphy media, (2) changes in calligraphy tools, (3) shifts in the function of calligraphy, (4) changes in calligraphy concepts, and (5) the transformation of calligraphy social strata.

Before the Ming and Qing dynasties, the carriers of calligraphy were familiar materials such as paper, silk, walls, and stone inscriptions. The stylistic characteristics emphasized precision and clarity. This phenomenon underwent significant changes after Xu Wei. Xu Wei's use of Xuan paper for writing and painting marked the first true appearance of a rich and immersive visual experience in ink and wash painting. Subsequently, Xuan paper gradually gained recognition and widespread use. In fact, the development of Xuan paper can be credited to advancements in papermaking technology, which propelled the development of calligraphy art.

Before the Ming and Qing dynasties, whether on paper, silk, walls, or stone inscriptions, these materials were relatively "hard" in nature. This meant that brush and ink couldn't achieve the effect of smooth and moist lines. In contrast, Xuan paper's "soft" nature allowed for blurred contours and a flourishing ink effect.

As for calligraphy tools, they primarily consisted of brushes. Before the Ming and Qing dynasties, artworks were mostly small pieces, hand scrolls, and short documents. Therefore, brushes were required to be small, simple, and portable for knee-writing. Typically, one or two brushes sufficed, hence the predominance of wolf hair and mouse whisker brushes. However, from the Ming and Qing dynasties onwards, calligraphy works gradually increased in size. This led to a shift in brush requirements from small and precise to larger and more versatile, suitable for portraying larger images. As a result, combined hair and goat hair brushes became the main materials. Wolf hair brushes, slightly harder in texture, could achieve high-quality ink without overly pursuing line quality. Goat hair brushes, softer in texture, tested the depth of the artist's skill and their ability to handle brushes.

The functionality of calligraphy primarily refers to its artistic and practical purposes. In the history of calligraphy, from primitive symbols to oracle bone inscriptions, from bronze inscriptions to seal script, and from clerical script to cursive,

running, and regular scripts, the essence of this process emphasizes the form of lines. Lines have become the core content of calligraphy art.

After the Ming and Qing dynasties, with the construction of larger and broader buildings, calligraphy works transitioned from being handheld and admired to being hung indoors for contemplation. Knee-writing evolved into standing appreciation, and the refined brushwork transitioned into more solid strokes to support the entire vast pictorial space, gradually enlarging its artistic function.

The evolution of calligraphy concepts confirms that "brush and ink should suit the times." Before the abolition of the imperial examination system in 1905, traditional perceptions of calligraphy were deeply rooted, balancing both artistic and practical values. Practicality referred to daily writing and the imperial examinations, while artistic value emphasized the creation of a unique personal style by calligraphers, which was not necessarily aligned with practical requirements. During the Republican era, scholars influenced by Western aesthetics introduced multidimensional perspectives to Chinese calligraphy, leading to interdisciplinary convergence as a trend.

Today, there is no longer just one art history nor one art style; interconnectedness of all things is a key feature of contemporary times. For Chinese calligraphy, calligraphers and theorists can address contemporary issues within the discipline itself, such as inheriting traditions, issues of textual form, crises in new contexts, exploring innovation, and stylistic evolution. Moreover, they can also engage experts from outside the discipline, including socialist scholars, Marxists, philosophers, aestheticians, political scientists, economists, cultural scholars, historians, formalists, and iconologists, among others. These researchers may come from elite, working-class, and mass cultural backgrounds, each bringing different perspectives that rejuvenate and invigorate contemporary calligraphy.

In conclusion, paradigm theory, formalist aesthetics, and iconology serve as the main concepts and theories of this study, focusing on calligraphers, researchers, and creators. Information gathered from interviews indicates that the greatest challenge facing Chinese calligraphy is public aesthetic perception. Therefore, the introduction of educational studies, cultural communication studies, and semiotics will address this issue, focusing on recipients and appreciators.

In this study, semiotics serves as another concept and method to interpret Chinese calligraphy, complementing iconology and formalist aesthetics to construct the aesthetic paradigm of contemporary calligraphy. Just as French art historian Louis Marin discussed in an important paper on Poussin's work "The Shepherds of Arcadia," semiotics faces inherent challenges in its application, primarily developed from language but used to interpret visual arts. The dual nature of semiotics is suitable and appropriate for explaining Chinese calligraphy because Chinese calligraphy itself embodies both textual and formal aspects. Since the abolition of the imperial examination system in 1905, Chinese calligraphy has shifted from linguistic characteristics to symbolic characteristics, where its artistic function occupies the position of textual representation. In fact, this transformation in contemporary Chinese calligraphy signifies the decline of everyday writing and the rise of image-making, no longer viewing calligraphy merely as a means of text recording but as a symbolic representation of Chinese culture, art, traditional exemplars, and the spirit of heritage. Throughout history, each transformation of calligraphy in different eras has followed this pattern.

Based on this, the study can further discuss the issues of Chinese calligraphy education and cultural dissemination. Chapter 4's research demonstrates that while Chinese calligraphy education has established artistic consensus within the professional field, the key issue lies in public aesthetic perception, namely aesthetic dissemination. Therefore, cultural communication studies play a crucial role here. On one hand, researchers in the field of calligraphy need to establish contemporary aesthetic paradigms for calligraphy. On the other hand, they also need to consider the collective acceptance by the audience. Based on the earlier discussion that the third historical cycle of Chinese calligraphy marks its transition from practical to artistic functions, the following conclusions can be drawn:

Firstly, the appreciation of calligraphy has transitioned from reading to viewing. Ancient calligraphy was closely tied to practical use, where utility was paramount, thus reading held a dominant position. However, modern calligraphy, often created for specific purposes such as display or exhibition, prioritizes viewing as the primary mode of appreciation. Utilitarian calligraphy was used for writing articles, poems, letters, etc., with the author's focus primarily on expression through words and phrases. In contrast,

specialized calligraphy for exhibitions, collections, or gifts emphasizes artistic creation, focusing on aesthetic experiences. These aesthetic experiences are gained through viewing rather than reading. As we are in a transitional phase between these two modes of appreciation, it indicates that both coexist, differing in the shift from reading to viewing.

Secondly, the sequence of appreciating calligraphic art has shifted from strokes and structure to compositional rules. In ancient times, appreciating calligraphy generally began with observing strokes and structure before considering compositional rules. This was because ancient works were relatively small; although from the Song Dynasty onwards, works gradually increased in size, they still cannot compare to the grandeur seen today. Moreover, ancient calligraphers, even with larger works, did not emphasize compositional rules as strongly as modern calligraphers do. With the development of social productivity and changes in thinking, calligraphic creation has gained new momentum. Contemporary calligraphers prioritize the overall effect of their works, emphasizing comprehensive and harmonious compositional rules. Therefore, appreciating calligraphy now starts with considering compositional rules before examining structure, strokes, and brushwork. Compositional rules are closest to people's hearts and directly reflect the spirit of the times.

Thirdly, the detailed appreciation of calligraphic art has shifted from focusing on the delicacy of strokes and structures to the richness of contrast relationships. Details determine the style of a work, but there has been a significant change in how details are understood. In the past, the emphasis was on observing the nuances of strokes and the layout of structures. Today, there is a greater focus on contrasting elements such as square and round, straight and slanting, fast and slow, condensed and expanded, opening and closing, sparse and dense, breaks and continuations, dryness and wetness, among many others. The richer and more harmonious these contrast relationships are, the deeper the connotation and the more touching the details become. Previously, details emphasized refinement, whereas today, they emphasize contrast relationships.

Fourthly, the perspective of appreciating calligraphic art has shifted from merely observing brushwork to simultaneously appreciating blank spaces. From a color perspective, calligraphy consists of black and white parts. However, traditionally, people have focused more on black lines while paying less attention to blank spaces,

sometimes even overlooking them. The blank spaces in artworks are like green spaces, parks, and water surfaces in cities. Imagine how life in a city would be without these "blanks." Similarly, calligraphy without blank spaces would lack something essential. Blank spaces in calligraphy are tangible, meaningful, and emotive; they can "speak" and "breathe." Blank spaces are like rests in music, embodying the Buddhist concept of "emptiness" and the Taoist concept of "non-being."

Fifthly, the theoretical construction of calligraphic art has entered a transition from empirical analogy to rational speculation. Before 1905, most ancient calligraphy theories were written in classical Chinese and relied heavily on figurative metaphors, such as "traces of a leaking roof," "drawing lines in sand with a stick," "bending a hairpin," "stamping with mud," "dragons leaping to the heavens," "tigers lying at the phoenix's gate," "like mountains and rivers," "like the sun and moon," and so on, making them obscure and difficult to understand. After 1905, many scholars in the Republic of China and the People's Republic of China reinterpreted calligraphy from the perspective of Western aesthetics and achieved certain results (see below). Currently, Chinese calligraphy has been included as a national-level discipline, and scholars in the new era are refining the education system for calligraphy. As the famous 19th-century British educator Herbert Spencer said in "Education: Intellectual, Moral, and Physical" (1861), "What knowledge is of most worth? The answer is, scientific." Scientific calligraphy education will bring rich returns to society and the public.

In summary, studying the transformation of calligraphy appreciation involves not only issues in aesthetic education but also issues in cultural dissemination. The research delves not only into the psyche of creators but also into the psyche of appreciators. In this regard, the theoretical concept of communication theory by C.I. Hovland is applied, introducing psychological experimentation to obtain communication skills and audience attributes from interviews with 30 participants. Researchers believe that the persuasive effect of communication, namely the induced attitude change, is key to the popularization of calligraphic aesthetics.

### 5.2.3 The researcher's viewpoints

Ancient calligraphy as well as contemporary calligraphy both serve as aesthetics and art. So, what constitutes the content of a calligraphic work? There is a widespread misunderstanding today that often equates the textual content of writing with the formal

content of calligraphic works. It should be noted that textual content refers to the literary works or articles created by the text's author, while the formal content of calligraphic works refers to the calligrapher's brushwork styles, the arrangement of blank spaces, and the relationships of combination and contrast among them. Research on this aspect explains the correctness of this viewpoint in reverse order: contemporary calligraphic art, the periods of Sui, Tang, Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties, and the Qin and Han dynasties.

### (1) Contemporary Calligraphy Art

The artistic viewpoints of contemporary calligraphy are mainly reflected during the Republican era. Philosophers, aestheticians, and literary figures of this period reached a consensus: calligraphy is regarded as an art form rather than simply a literary one. Details are as follows:

In Feng Youlan (1895-1990) "The Six Scripts of the Zhengyuan Era," it is recorded: Calligraphy can transcend its literal meaning and evoke a sense of mood through its intrinsic beauty... Such realms as vigorousness and elegance correspond to the emotions it arouses in people.

In Lin Yutang (1895-1976) "Calligraphy is the Foundation of Chinese Aesthetics," he wrote: Appreciating Chinese calligraphy disregards its literal meaning entirely; people only appreciate its lines and structures. In this realm of absolute freedom, various rhythms are explored, and diverse structures are experimented with. It is the Chinese brush that makes the expression of every rhythm possible.

Zhang Yinlin (1905-1942) stated in the preface to "Critique of Chinese Calligraphy": Although calligraphy art uses textual symbols as tools, its beauty exists solely in the form of symbols, independent of their meanings. The composition of calligraphy art lies in the gloss, style, and positioning of the brushstrokes, without any need for significance.

Xiong Bingming (1922-2002) "Theoretical System of Chinese Calligraphy" records: Chinese people appreciate calligraphy not solely to read the characters; many cursive scripts are often difficult to decipher, and before we can read them, the aesthetic satisfaction from calligraphic form has already been obtained. Therefore, true appreciation of calligraphy lies in its pure form. When the characters are eventually read, and we recognize them as a seven-character quatrain or a five-character regulated

verse, our appreciation shifts from the domain of calligraphy to that of poetry. Characters are the basis of calligraphy art, but their meaning is not paramount.

Zhou Xian (1954-) stated in "What is Aesthetics?": Calligraphy, as a unique art form, although arranged in Chinese characters, has little to do with literacy; although it carries textual meaning, the main purpose of calligraphy is not to convey textual meaning; although there are some imitative ideograms in calligraphy, they are not the main focus of calligraphy expression.

Zhu Guangqian (1897-1986) once analyzed: Calligraphy has always been an independent art form in China, equal to painting. Some people nowadays doubt whether it (calligraphy) can be classified as art, probably because Western art history has never given a place to calligraphy, so they find it strange that the Chinese value calligraphy. In fact, there is no doubt that calligraphy can be classified as art. Zhu Guangqian also said: In modern times, after the bourgeois revolution, some people who always mention Greece probably do so because Greece lacks Chinese calligraphy art, so they do not recognize the artistic nature of Chinese calligraphy.

## (2) During the Periods of Sui, Tang, Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing Dynasties

The most distinctive features of Chinese calligraphy were the expression of calligraphers' personalities and the advancement of the five script styles. The Kai script of the Sui and Tang periods, the Xing script of the Song dynasty, the Xingcao script of the Yuan dynasty, the Caoshu script of the Ming dynasty, and the Beixue movement of the Qing dynasty each recorded the calligraphers' views on calligraphy based on their experiences.

In his work "Wenzilun" (On Calligraphy), the Tang dynasty calligraphy theorist Zhang Huai Guan wrote: "Those who deeply understand calligraphy art only observe the spirit, not its form." (Selected Essays on Calligraphy Through the Ages, 2013) Form exists objectively, so why is it not seen? When people appreciate calligraphy, they focus only on the spirit, and the form is dissolved into elements of the spirit. From this, it can be understood that the spirit is the relationship between forms, such as the combination of large and small, long and short, dense and sparse, fast and slow, etc. The harmonious relationship between contradictory combinations is the spirit. The composition of the spirit consists of form, the relationship after contrasting forms, and the involvement of

the calligrapher's emotions. To appreciate calligraphy from this perspective, one needs eyes that can perceive the spirit.

The Tang dynasty calligrapher Sun Guoting wrote in "Shupu" (A Handbook of Calligraphy): "Calligraphy is an expression of temperament, and temperament requires form for presentation." (Selected Essays on Calligraphy Through the Ages, 2013) Sun Guoting answered what calligraphy is from the perspective of pure art, believing that form is the external manifestation of "sorrow, joy," and "temperament."

Han Yu, a literary figure from the Tang Dynasty, interpreted Zhang Xu's wild cursive works in this way. He said in "Song Gao Xian Shang Ren Caoshu Xu" (Preface to Zhang Xu's Cursive Script): "Zhang Xu excelled in cursive script, disregarding other techniques. Whether it's joy, anger, embarrassment, sadness, happiness, resentment, longing, drunkenness, boredom, or indignation, all feelings and perceptions are expressed through cursive script. Observing natural scenery, whether it's mountains and rivers, cliffs and valleys, birds and beasts, insects and fish, grasses and trees, flowers and fruits, the sun, moon, and stars, wind, rain, fire, thunder, lightning, singing, dancing, and battles, the changes in all things of heaven and earth, whether joy or astonishment, are all expressed in calligraphy." (Selected Essays on Calligraphy Through the Ages, 2013) It can be seen that Han Yu's discussion of Zhang Xu's wild cursive works focuses not on textual content but on emotional content, namely the formal aspects.

In "Dazi Jiegou Bashisifei" (Eighty-four Methods of Large Character Structure) by Li Chun of the Ming dynasty, it is recorded: "The form of characters includes size, density, thickness, and length; the strokes of characters include bending, stretching, and transformation... For example, the form of a character has multiple aspects, with some having larger upper parts, some longer lower strokes, some higher left sides, and some higher right sides. The paths are not the same, but all follow the general principles." (Selected Essays on Calligraphy Through the Ages, 2013) Here, Li Chun mainly discusses the spatial relationships of structure, echoing relationships, and changes in form.

At the end of the Ming dynasty and the beginning of the Qing dynasty, Bao Shichen in "Yi Zhou Shuang Ji" (The Double Oars of the Yizhou) offered a different interpretation of Sun Guoting's words. He said that emotional elements are all hidden

in the modeling of calligraphy, originating from the heart but difficult to express. To understand the emotions in the work, the modeling is the visible basis, and discussing the content of the work cannot be separated from brushwork modeling. Modeling is the object of vision, while emotions are the object of feeling. Here, the relationship between "seeing" and "feeling" is discussed.

### (3) Qin, Han, Wei, and Jin Dynasties

This period witnessed the formation of the five script styles of calligraphy, evolving from seal script to clerical script, and from clerical script to regular script, cursive script, and running script.

According to tradition, Li Si of the Qin dynasty invented seal script. His calligraphic artistic view was: "In order to structure characters, one must imitate objects... By employing proper proportions, it can be called calligraphy. If it resembles the movement of birds, or the devouring of insects on crops, or mountains, or trees, or clouds, or mist." (Selected Essays on Calligraphy Through the Ages, 2013)

This passage discusses the prerequisite conditions for calligraphic art. He first proposed the concept of calligraphic modeling, stating that when creating a structural form, one must consider imitating some natural object, such as "resembling the flight of birds," which is a specific modeling image indicating that a certain structure should have a sense of movement. Calligraphic modeling should draw inspiration both from the human form and from natural objects. Depending on the creative context, the form can resemble the majesty of mountains, the lushness of trees, or the ever-changing nature of clouds and mist.

Cai Yong of the Han dynasty recorded in his "Bi Lun" (On the Brush): "To create the body of calligraphy, one must embody its form, such as sitting, walking, flying, moving forward, coming back, lying down, or rising up. It should express sorrow or joy, mimic insects devouring leaves, or sharp swords and long spears, or powerful bows and sturdy arrows, or clouds and mist, or the sun and moon. Only when there are forms that can be represented horizontally and vertically can it be considered calligraphy." (Selected Essays on Calligraphy Through the Ages, 2013)

Similar to Li Si, Cai Yong also believed that calligraphy could only be achieved through the modeling of characters. If Li Si personified characters through metaphors, then Cai Yong's significant contribution was to imbue characters with real life,

transitioning from form to emotion with expressions like "expressing sorrow or joy," thus entering the realm of emotion.

During the Three Kingdoms period, Zhong Yao wrote in his "Bifa" (Methods of Brushstrokes): "The trace of the brush represents boundaries; the flow of beauty represents humanity... All things seen resemble each other. Dots are like crumbling mountains, strokes are like rain lines, fine lines are like silk. Light as clouds and mist, departing like the flight of a phoenix through the Milky Way, coming back like a maiden entering a flower grove." (Selected Essays on Calligraphy Through the Ages, 2013) Zhong Yao developed the thoughts of his predecessors by connecting the author's inner world with the forms, further explaining the distinction between the practical and artistic value of calligraphy.

In the Wei and Jin periods, Wang Xizhi recorded in his "Ti Wei Furen Bizhen Tu" (Inscription on the Picture of the Lady Wei's Brush Formation): "If it looks flat and straight, resembling a counting rod, with perfect squareness from top to bottom, and evenness from front to back, then it is not calligraphy." (Selected Essays on Calligraphy Through the Ages, 2013) Wang Xizhi, from a negative perspective, explained that if characters are written flat and straight, evenly balanced (as in everyday writing), it is not calligraphy.

In conclusion, researchers believe there has always been a difference in understanding what constitutes calligraphy and what does not, as well as what defines good versus vulgar calligraphy. In ancient times, Wang Xizhi of the Wei and Jin dynasties was even regarded as producing "ugly calligraphy" by his contemporaries. This issue reflects not just a matter of individual or era-specific opinions, but also attitudes towards accepting innovation in art forms, illustrating the challenges of calligraphic innovation. Subsequently, calligraphic styles such as those of Yan Zhenqing in the Tang dynasty, criticized as "clumsy rustic style" by Li Yu, the last ruler of the Southern Tang, and the calligraphy of Su Dongpo and Huang Tingjian in the Song dynasty, described as "like stones pressing on frogs and dead snakes hanging from tree branches," have become models of excellence in contemporary times. In essence, researchers conduct comparative studies of ancient and modern calligraphy from various perspectives to promote a correct understanding and appreciation of

calligraphic art. Therefore, whether ancient, contemporary, or future, calligraphy remains an art form of aesthetics rather than literature.

### 5.3 Suggestions

Research on Chinese calligraphy art has broad practical application value, spanning across fields such as culture, education, and the art industry. Here are some suggestions for the practical application of Chinese calligraphy art:

(1) At the national level, the key to protecting and inheriting Chinese calligraphy art lies in establishing a comprehensive policy framework and specific implementation plans. First, efforts should focus on nurturing and supporting calligraphy artists, including establishing special funds to support the creation and education of outstanding calligraphy talents. Second, it is crucial to establish a system for the protection and management of calligraphy artworks to ensure the preservation and inheritance of precious works. In terms of education, integrating calligraphy art into school curricula to promote calligraphy knowledge and skills is essential. Additionally, leveraging modern technology to digitize the display and teaching of calligraphy art can enhance its influence and dissemination among the public. These measures effectively promote the inheritance and development of Chinese calligraphy art, revitalizing its vitality and value in contemporary society.

(2) At the societal level, protecting and inheriting Chinese calligraphy art can be achieved through various implementation strategies. Firstly, society should encourage and support public exhibitions and promotion activities of calligraphy art, such as organizing exhibitions, competitions, and public courses, to enhance public awareness and interest in calligraphy. Secondly, advocating for the popularization of calligraphy art education from schools to communities by promoting calligraphy education courses and workshops to cultivate more enthusiasts and professionals. Additionally, social organizations and non-profit institutions can act as bridges to facilitate exchanges and cooperation among calligraphy artists, enthusiasts, and the public. In the digital age, utilizing internet platforms and social media for displaying and disseminating calligraphy artworks can expand their influence and reach wider audiences. Finally, strengthening the protection and preservation of calligraphy cultural heritage, encouraging private and public institutions to collect and exhibit precious calligraphy

works to ensure their historical and cultural continuity. Through these measures, society can comprehensively protect and inherit Chinese calligraphy art, promoting its full development and dissemination in contemporary society.

(3) At the family level, protecting and inheriting Chinese calligraphy art can be approached through several initiatives. Firstly, families can cultivate children's interest in calligraphy from a young age by guiding and demonstrating its allure, such as scheduling weekly family calligraphy study sessions. Secondly, parents can encourage children to participate in calligraphy competitions and exhibitions to enhance their skills and confidence. Additionally, families can choose to decorate their homes with calligraphy artworks or decorations to foster an artistic atmosphere and stimulate aesthetic sensibilities among family members. Moreover, families can expand children's perspectives and learning channels by engaging with calligraphy artists or community enthusiasts. Lastly, parents can support and actively participate in calligraphy education programs and activities in schools or communities to promote the spread and practice of calligraphy education. These measures effectively protect and pass down Chinese calligraphy art within families, cultivating a new generation passionate about and understanding of calligraphy.

(4) At the primary and secondary school level, protecting and passing down Chinese calligraphy art can be implemented through multiple approaches. Firstly, schools can integrate calligraphy art as a significant component of arts education, incorporating calligraphy elective courses or art workshops to develop students' basic calligraphy skills and aesthetic abilities. Secondly, schools can organize calligraphy competitions and exhibitions to stimulate student participation and competitive spirit, thereby improving their calligraphy proficiency and artistic expression. Thirdly, schools should establish calligraphy art clubs or societies to regularly host lectures, workshops, and exchange activities, providing students with platforms for artistic learning and interaction. Additionally, schools can invite calligraphy artists or teachers to provide professional guidance, imparting techniques and historical knowledge of calligraphy art. Lastly, schools should ensure adequate calligraphy teaching resources and tools, such as brushes, Chinese ink, rice paper, and classic works, to ensure students have optimal learning conditions and experiences in calligraphy education. Through these specific implementation strategies, primary and secondary schools can effectively

protect and pass down Chinese calligraphy art, nurturing students' artistic interests and cultural confidence.

(5) At the higher education level, various measures can be taken to protect and inherit Chinese calligraphy art. Firstly, universities can establish calligraphy majors or art directions to provide systematic calligraphy education and training, cultivating professional calligraphy talents. Secondly, universities can invite renowned calligraphers and artists to conduct lectures, workshops, or on-site teaching to impart calligraphy techniques and artistic theories, inspiring students' learning interests and creative passions. Thirdly, universities can establish calligraphy research centers or laboratories to conduct research and innovation in calligraphy art, exploring its integration and application with modern technology. Additionally, universities should organize calligraphy exhibitions and competitions to showcase the creative achievements of students and faculty, promoting the exchange and dissemination of calligraphy art. Lastly, universities can strengthen cooperation with cultural institutions and art groups to jointly promote the inheritance and development of calligraphy art. Through interdisciplinary collaboration and exchange, the application scope and influence of calligraphy art can be expanded, ensuring its sustained development and inheritance in higher education.

(6) Art institutions can adopt various specific implementation plans to protect and inherit Chinese calligraphy art. Firstly, they can establish dedicated calligraphy exhibition and display spaces, regularly organizing various calligraphy exhibitions to showcase traditional and modern calligraphy works, promoting artistic exchange and understanding. Secondly, organizing calligraphy competitions and activities can attract more young people to participate in and pay attention to calligraphy art, stimulating their interest in learning and creation. Thirdly, art institutions can set up calligraphy art training classes or workshops, inviting famous calligraphers to impart their skills, promoting traditional education and inheritance of calligraphy art. Additionally, establishing calligraphy art research centers or academic groups can promote theoretical research and academic exchange in calligraphy, providing theoretical support and academic depth for calligraphy art. Lastly, art institutions can actively cooperate with educational institutions, cultural departments, and enterprises to jointly plan calligraphy art projects and activities, promoting calligraphy art, expanding its

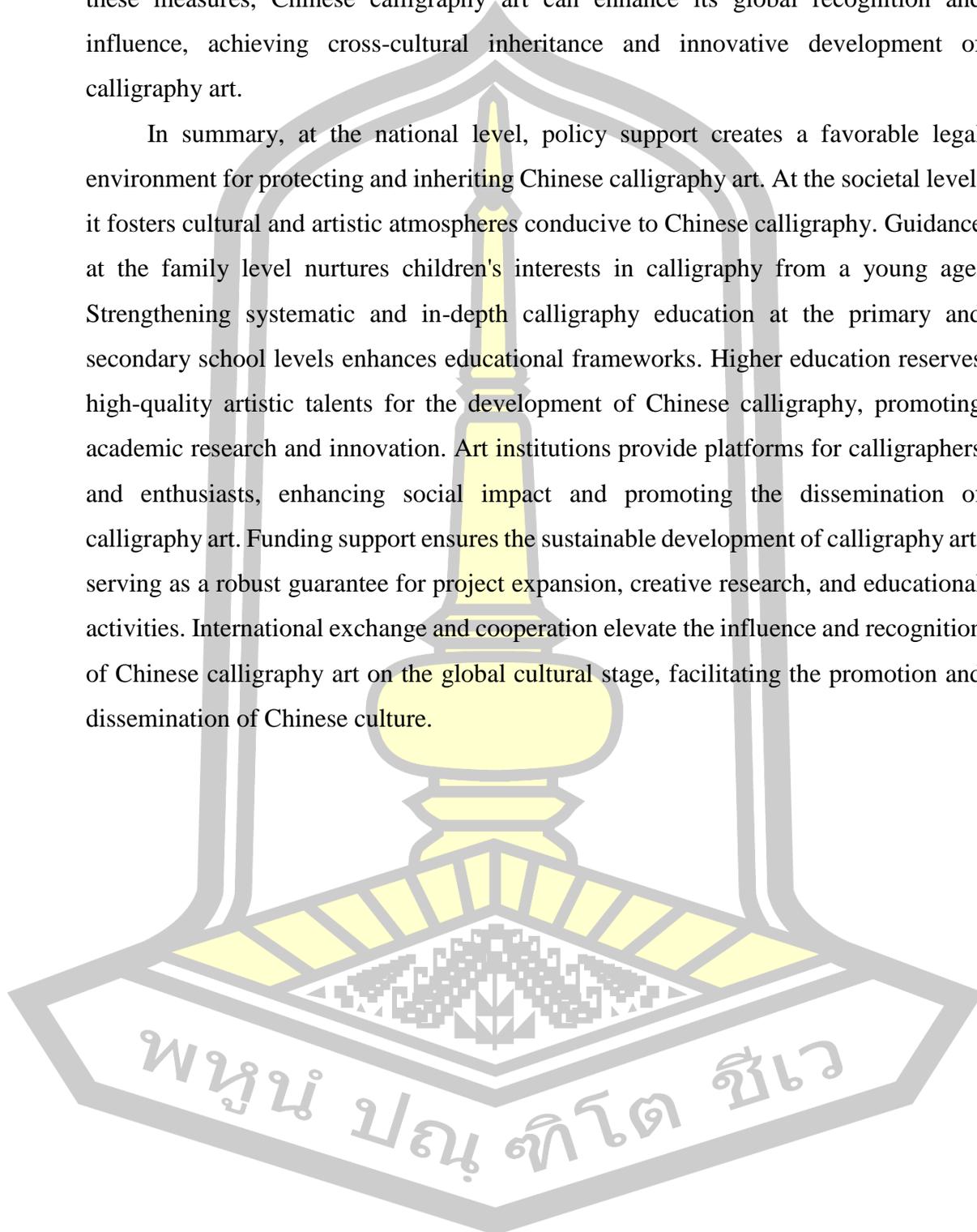
influence and social value, ensuring the continuous protection and inheritance of Chinese calligraphy art at the level of art institutions.

(7) Funding support is crucial in protecting and inheriting Chinese calligraphy art. Firstly, the government can increase specialized funding for calligraphy art projects, including exhibitions, competitions, education, and training, ensuring the continuous progress and development of artistic activities. Secondly, establishing calligraphy art award funds can encourage the creation and exhibition of outstanding calligraphy works, enhancing the creativity and social recognition of calligraphy artists. Simultaneously, funding can support calligraphy artists in their creation and research, facilitating their exploration of the integration and innovation of traditional and modern calligraphy. Additionally, encouraging corporate and social organization sponsorship and donations for calligraphy art, and establishing nonprofit calligraphy art foundations or alliances, can collectively promote the protection and inheritance of calligraphy art. Finally, establishing an evaluation mechanism for calligraphy art funding ensures transparency and effectiveness in fund utilization, promoting rational allocation and optimal use of calligraphy art resources to achieve long-term goals of calligraphy art protection and inheritance.

(8) International exchange and cooperation are essential for the protection and inheritance of Chinese calligraphy art. Specific implementation plans include: Firstly, establishing international calligraphy art exchange platforms, regularly organizing international calligraphy exhibitions and cultural exchange activities, inviting calligraphy artists from around the world to participate, showcasing the unique charm and cultural connotations of Chinese calligraphy art. Secondly, promoting exchanges for calligraphy artists abroad, organizing international seminars and workshops to facilitate exchanges and collisions among calligraphy arts from different countries and regions, enriching international perspectives and innovative thinking in calligraphy art. Thirdly, enhancing international cooperation projects, collaborating with international art institutions and organizations to jointly conduct research, protection, and promotion of calligraphy art, sharing resources and experiences, and promoting sustainable development of calligraphy art globally. Lastly, leveraging modern technological means such as internet platforms and social media to expand the international influence and dissemination channels of calligraphy art, enabling more international audiences to

understand and appreciate the essence and charm of Chinese calligraphy art. Through these measures, Chinese calligraphy art can enhance its global recognition and influence, achieving cross-cultural inheritance and innovative development of calligraphy art.

In summary, at the national level, policy support creates a favorable legal environment for protecting and inheriting Chinese calligraphy art. At the societal level, it fosters cultural and artistic atmospheres conducive to Chinese calligraphy. Guidance at the family level nurtures children's interests in calligraphy from a young age. Strengthening systematic and in-depth calligraphy education at the primary and secondary school levels enhances educational frameworks. Higher education reserves high-quality artistic talents for the development of Chinese calligraphy, promoting academic research and innovation. Art institutions provide platforms for calligraphers and enthusiasts, enhancing social impact and promoting the dissemination of calligraphy art. Funding support ensures the sustainable development of calligraphy art, serving as a robust guarantee for project expansion, creative research, and educational activities. International exchange and cooperation elevate the influence and recognition of Chinese calligraphy art on the global cultural stage, facilitating the promotion and dissemination of Chinese culture.



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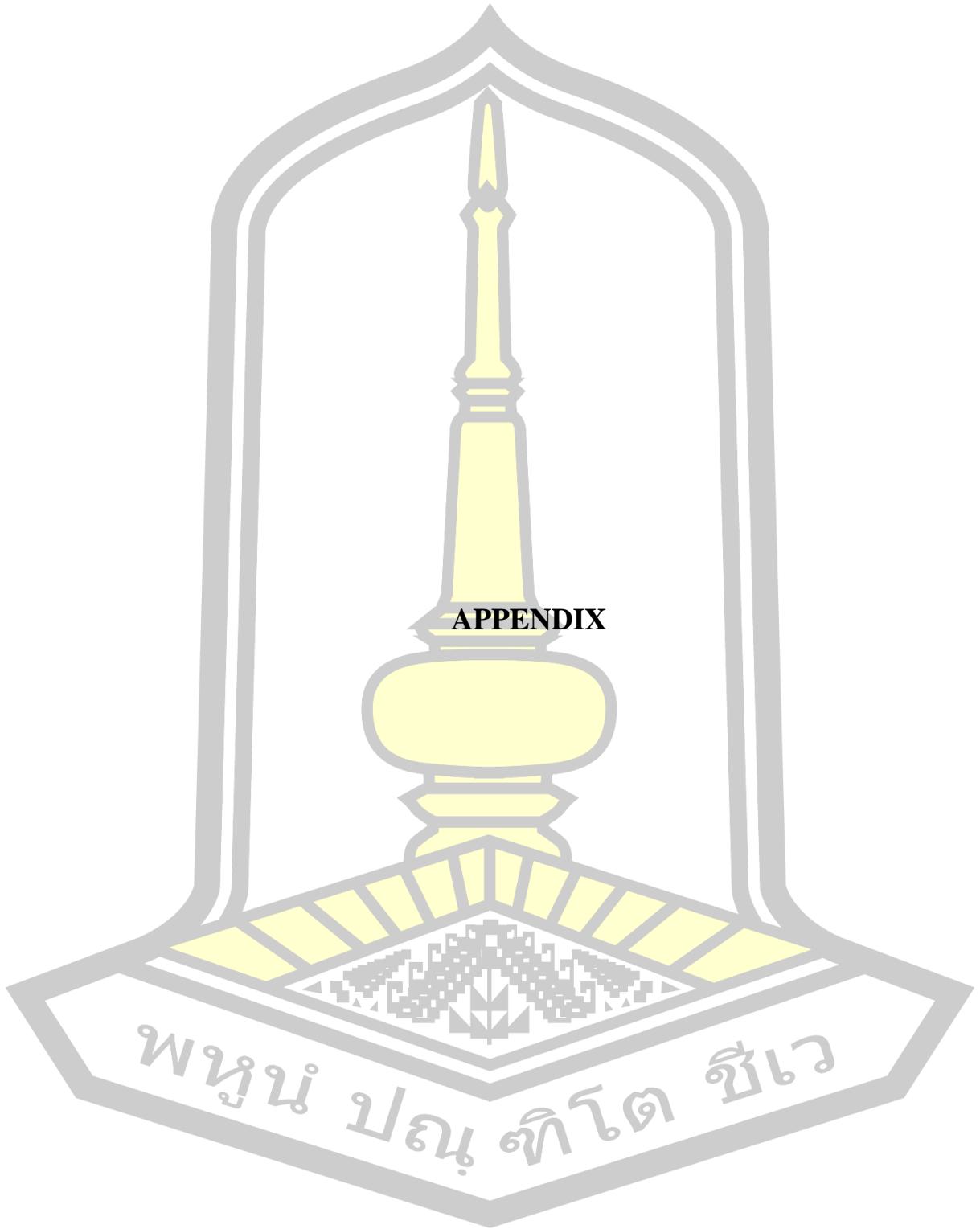
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**APPENDIX**

พหุบัณฑิตยศาสตร์ จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

## Appendix I

### 1. The name of Interviewee form

#### Key Informants

No.	Name	Gender	Role	Age
1	Hu Kangmei	Male	Government officials / Professor	72
2	Zeng Xiang	Male	Professor	66
3	Wo Xinghua	Male	Professor	68
4	Wang Yong	Male	Professor	74
5	Wang Dongling	Male	Professor	82

#### Casual Informants

No.	Name	Gender	Role	Age
1	Wang Naiyu	Female	Professoriat	36
2	Zang Jiawei	Male	Artists	33
3	Guo Ruo	Female	Auctioneer / Collectors	37
4	Yang Shufei	Female	Calligraphy students	51
5	Gong Haitao	Male	Calligraphy doctorates	54
6	Ma Detian	Male	Artists	52
7	Li Lin	Male	Calligraphy instructors	48
8	Chai Tianlin	Male	Artists	46
9	Li Xiaoxiao	Male	Artists	35
10	Zhang Fangjin	Male	Artists	28

#### General Informant

No.	Name	Gender	Role	Age
1	Song Xiangru	Male	Senior High School Student	17
2	Cao Zixi	Female	Elementary School Students	10
3	Lv Zhanhua	Male	Trainer	34
4	Feng Yang	Male	Organizational staff	36
5	Cao Junyi	Male	Doctorate	32
6	Cao Quanxi	Male	Doctorate	32
7	Jin Jing	Female	Businessperson	46
8	Liu Ming	Male	Organizational staff	36
9	Shen Siying	Female	Organizational staff	32
10	Nie Shengxuan	Male	Trainer	30
11	Sun Yijia	Female	Trainer	30
12	Gu Shankai	Male	Trainer	28
13	Huang Lin	Male	Doctorate	30
14	Wang Jianhua	Male	Businessperson	36
15	Li Jie	Male	Businessperson	38

## 2. The list of interviewees

Interviewees with MR. Hu Kangmei (Bei Jing. Home of MR. Hu) and interviewer Hengyuan Cao on November 11, 2022.

Interviewees with MR. Zeng Xiang (Bei Jing. Home of MR. Zeng) and interviewer Hengyuan Cao on December 23, 2022.

Interviewees with MR. Wo Xinghua (Bei Jing. Home of MR. Wo) and interviewer Hengyuan Cao on December 26, 2023.

Interviewees with MR. Wang Yong (Bei Jing. Home of MR. Wang) and interviewer Hengyuan Cao on December 29, 2022.

Interviewees with MR. Wang Dongling (Bei Jing. Home of MR. Wang) and interviewer Hengyuan Cao on December 23, 2022.

Interviewees with MS. Wang Naiyu (Xing Tai City, Hebei Province. Home of MS. Wang) and interviewer Hengyuan Cao on October 17, 2023.

Interviewees with MR. Zang Jiawei (Bei Jing City. Home of MR. Zang) and interviewer Hengyuan Cao on November 3, 2023.

Interviewees with MS. Guo Ruo (Heze City, Shandong Province. Home of MS. Guo) and interviewer Hengyuan Cao on December 12, 2023.

Interviewees with MS. Yang Shufei (Chifeng City, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. Home of MS. Yang) and interviewer Hengyuan Cao on January 10, 2024.

Interviewees with MR. Gong Haitao (Heze City, Shandong Province. Home of MS. Gang) and interviewer Hengyuan Cao on January 10, 2024.

Interviewees with MR. Ma Detian (Zao Zhuang City, Shandong Province. Home of MS. Ma) and interviewer Hengyuan Cao on January 12, 2024.

Interviewees with MR. Li Lin (Shangqiu City, Henan Province. Home of MS. Li) and interviewer Hengyuan Cao on February 18, 2024.

Interviewees with MR. Chai Tianlin (Shangqiu City, Henan Province. Home of MS. Chai) and interviewer Hengyuan Cao on February 20, 2024.

Interviewees with MS. Li Xiaoxiao (Zao Zhuang City, Shandong Province. Home of MS. Li) and interviewer Hengyuan Cao on January 23, 2024.

Interviewees with MR. Zhang Fangjin (Heze City, Shandong Province. Home of MS. Zhang) and interviewer Hengyuan Cao on January 10, 2024.

Interviewees with MR. Song Xiangru (He Nan, Online Questionnaire) and interviewer Hengyuan Cao on February 28, 2024.

Interviewees with MS. Cao Zixi (He Nan, Online Questionnaire) and interviewer Hengyuan Cao on February 28, 2024.

Interviewees with MR. Lv Zhanhua (He Nan, Online Questionnaire) and interviewer Hengyuan Cao on February 28, 2024.

Interviewees with MR. Feng Yang (He Nan, Online Questionnaire) and interviewer Hengyuan Cao on February 28, 2024.

Interviewees with MR. Cao Junyi (He Nan, Online Questionnaire) and interviewer Hengyuan Cao on February 28, 2024.

Interviewees with MR. Cao Quanxi (He Nan, Online Questionnaire) and interviewer Hengyuan Cao on February 28, 2024.

Interviewees with MS. Jin Jing (He Nan, Online Questionnaire) and interviewer Hengyuan Cao on February 28, 2024.

Interviewees with MR. Liu Ming (He Nan, Online Questionnaire) and interviewer Hengyuan Cao on February 28, 2024.

Interviewees with MS. Shen Siying (He Nan, Online Questionnaire) and interviewer Hengyuan Cao on February 28, 2024.

Interviewees with MR. Nie Shengxuan (He Nan, Online Questionnaire) and interviewer Hengyuan Cao on February 28, 2024.

Interviewees with MS. Sun Yijia (He Nan, Online Questionnaire) and interviewer Hengyuan Cao on February 28, 2024.

Interviewees with MR. Gu Shankai (He Nan, Online Questionnaire) and interviewer Hengyuan Cao on February 28, 2024.

Interviewees with MR. Huang Lin (He Nan, Online Questionnaire) and interviewer Hengyuan Cao on February 28, 2024.

Interviewees with MR. Wang Jianhua (He Nan, Online Questionnaire) and interviewer Hengyuan Cao on February 28, 2024.

Interviewees with MS. Li Jie (He Nan, Online Questionnaire) and interviewer Hengyuan Cao on February 28, 2024.

## Appendix II

### 1. Observational Form

#### Research Objectives:

RO1: To study the historical development and artistic value of Chinese calligraphy.

RO2: To study the current situation and problems of contemporary Chinese calligraphy.

RO3: To study guidelines for the protection and inheritance of Chinese calligraphy art.

#### Header Information:

- (1) Observer's Name
- (2). Contact Information
- (3). Date of Observation
- (4). Time of Observation
- (5). Location of Observation
- (6). Objective Addressed

#### Observation Details:

- (1). Activity/Item Observed:
- (2). Description and Context:

#### Supplementary Materials:

- (1). Photographs
- (2). Video/Audio Recordings

### 2. Interviews Form

#### (1) Key Informants

Name: ..... Age: ..... Gender: .....

Occupation: ..... Time: ..... Place: .....

Role: .....

Did the evolution of ancient calligraphy follow the laws of art?

What is the relationship between text and calligraphy?

How did the abolition of the imperial examination system in 1905 influence contemporary calligraphy?

What is the position of Chinese calligraphy in the history of Chinese art?

What is the current situation of Chinese calligraphy art?

What problems and challenges does Chinese calligraphy art face?

Is the theory education of ancient calligraphy the same as contemporary calligraphy art education?

What are your artistic propositions?

How do you perceive the aesthetic level of contemporary calligraphy?

How should ordinary people learn calligraphy?

What are your views on the future of calligraphy art?

What advice do you have for contemporary calligraphers?

(2) Casual Informants

Name: ..... Age:..... Gender: .....

Occupation:..... Time:..... Place: .....

Role: .....

Which period of calligraphy history do you like the most?

What script have you been practicing recently?

What understanding do you have of this script?

How has this script evolved over time?

What are the differences between ancient calligraphy and contemporary calligraphy?

Do you consider calligraphy to be art?

Who is your teacher? Do you agree with their views on calligraphy?

Do you participate in exhibitions and public teaching activities?

Would you recommend calligraphy to friends or family?

Please provide some suggestions for calligraphy education.

(3) General Informant

Name: ..... Age:..... Gender: .....

Occupation:..... Time:..... Place: .....

Role: .....

Do you like these two works? Why?

Have you studied calligraphy before? When did you start learning? Which script did you learn?

Do you still practice calligraphy now?

Would you let your children learn calligraphy?

With pens and keyboards being the primary writing tools nowadays, do you think calligraphy will still exist in the future?

Please name some calligraphers you know.

Which calligrapher do you know the most about?

Have you been to the Forest of Stone Steles Museum in Xi'an? Which works did you visit?

### 3. Group discussion

Research topic: The Art of Chinese Calligraphy: Protection and Inheritance of Cultural Wisdom.

- (1). Date, time, and place of group discussion.
- (2). Group discussion participants: Government personnel, non-heritage protection units, Calligrapher, Primary and Secondary School Students.
- (3). Topics in group discussion: The Art of Chinese Calligraphy: Protection and Inheritance of Cultural Wisdom.
- (4). Group discussion moderator: Hengyuan Cao.
- (5). Group conversation recorder: Wang Naiyu.
- (6). Group discussion materials: Research materials, Research concepts and theories, the historical development and artistic value of Chinese calligraphy, the current situation and problems of contemporary Chinese calligraphy, guidelines for the protection and inheritance of Chinese calligraphy art.
- (7). Summary of the points in the group discussion: Digital artist Prof. Hu Kangmei gives his opinion and advice.
- (8). Others.

พหุ ม ประ โท ชี เว

## BIOGRAPHY

<b>NAME</b>	Heng Yuan Cao
<b>DATE OF BIRTH</b>	Nov.07.1990
<b>PLACE OF BIRTH</b>	CHINA
<b>ADDRESS</b>	Debang Building, No.123 Quannan East Street, Xiangdu District, Xingtai City, China
<b>POSITION</b>	Deputy Director of Education Center of Culture and Art Publishing House
<b>PLACE OF WORK</b>	Chinese National Academy of Arts
<b>EDUCATION</b>	2009-2013 Bachelor of Calligraphy, Hebei Normal University. 2014-2017 Master of Arts, Chinese National Academy of Arts. 2021-2024 (Ph.D.) Cultural Science Mahasarakham University

