

## The Spirit of “Taking Recreation in Art”: The Pursuit of Art by Tsang Wing-kwong

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Tsang Wing-kwong 曾榮光 (1926–2005), a native of Huiyang of Guangdong Province, was a Chinese calligrapher and seal-carving artist. He belonged to the first generation of Chinese intellectuals who came from the mainland to settle in Hong Kong after 1949. In the 1950s and 60s, he first worked as a secondary-school teacher and later taught evening classes at the Hong Kong Linghai Academy of Art at the same time. He gave up teaching in late 1974 and devoted his time and effort to launch the bi-monthly *Shupu* (書譜, Calligraphy Manual), China’s first post-war journal about the arts of Chinese calligraphy and seal-carving. Being the journal’s executive editor from the first issue to 1983, Tsang was an important witness to the establishment and development of the publication. He also contributed a series of articles for the journal on the history and appreciation of calligraphy and seal-carving under the pen names of Tso Tin-su 楚天舒, Sun Chong 辛莊 and Lo Tai 魯泰. In the 1960s, he joined the Geng Zi Calligraphy and Painting Society 庚子書畫會 and coordinated the work of the society in the 1990s. He died in 2005. Throughout his life, he shunned the limelight, preferred to work behind the scenes, having no idea of personal fame and gain and always maintaining a low profile. In achieving the ideal of “taking recreation in art”, he dedicated his life to the pursuit of art and always strove to attain spiritual elevation unencumbered by material or earthly concerns.

Essays published on the art of Tsang Wing-kwong have been few and far between during his lifetime. It is therefore the purpose of this essay to explore his pursuit of art from three different perspectives: his life, his bonds with *Shupu* and his artworks.

### Forging bonds with art

In 1958, Tsang Wing-kwong carved a seal, inscribing on it *Fengyu Lou* (Plate 1, 風雨樓 Wind and Rain Terrace). Engraved on one side was “Having abandoned this art for 13 years, I picked up my tools again in Hong Kong in 1958”, suggesting that he took up seal-carving before 1945 when he was in his teens. In 1949, he forged a silver ring bearing a hieroglyphic design of the phrase *Yu Yishu Jieyuan* (與藝術結緣 Forging Bonds with Art). The ring later became a token of love which he gave to his fiancée Siu Yun-tung 蕭潤彤. The two were later married and had two sons.<sup>1</sup> It was common knowledge at that time that forging bonds with art, as Mrs Tsang recalled, was not an easy path to take; people who put their hearts into art would never betray their ideals for material gain. As much as a keepsake, the ring was also Tsang’s declaration of his unyielding passion and dedication to art, which he hoped she would understand and accept. It was proven by time that in spite of the changes and difficult circumstances over the years, Tsang’s devotion to art never diminished. Yet, failing

eyesight and weakened hands forced him to quit seal-carving after completing his last piece of work *Hainian Canqiu Ouzuo* (Plate 2, 亥年殘秋偶作 *An Improvisation in Late Autumn, the Year of Hai*) in 1992. It was calligraphy that remained his lifelong passion, through which he sought spiritual attainment and actualised his artistic vision. In 2004, he expressed his mind through a cursive-script rendition of Zhou Dunyi's *Ailianshuo* (Plate 3, 愛蓮說 *On the Love of the Lotus*).<sup>2</sup> After undergoing a series of surgical operations and bedridden, Tsang still tried to pick up the art again. He was often seen moving his hand in the air as if he were holding a brush and writing with it. Calligraphy, for the artist, was part of his life.

Traditional art seemed to be in the blood of Tsang Wing-kwong. The artist was born in Guangzhou and had two elder brothers and a younger sister. Their father could speak English and French and worked for the post and telegraph office in the British and French concessions. The westernised father believed that a child must be educated in accordance with his aptitude. When he noticed that his eldest son King 曾頃 (aka Wing-chung 曾榮忠) was not cut out for scholarly pursuits, he found the young boy a teacher of Western painting. King became an oil-painting artist. He taught Western painting at True Light Girls' School in Guangzhou 廣州真光女校 and later at the Hong Kong Linghai Academy of Art 嶺海藝術專科學院. It was natural that Tsang Wing-kwong was to a certain extent familiar with Western painting and culture at a very young age, although the early induction did not result in his embarking on an exploration of Western art. His interest in traditional Chinese calligraphy and seal-carving was somehow related to his own temperament and disposition.



Plate 1 (left)  
*Wind and Rain Terrace*,  
1958

Plate 2 (right)  
*An Improvisation in Late  
Autumn, the Year of  
Hai*, 1992



Plate 3  
*On the Love of the  
Lotus*, 2004

When the Japanese invaded Guangzhou in 1938, Tsang's father retreated to Guangzhou Bay (now Zhanjiang), which was then a French concession, with the office. But he died shortly afterwards before he could relocate his family and reunite with them. His distraught wife soon fell ill and died. The orphaned siblings were entrusted to the care of their relatives in Huizhou. In 1944, Tsang Wingkwong graduated from high school and left home to continue his studies at the Guilin Normal College 桂林師範學院. When the war ended the following year, he returned to Guangzhou before completing his studies. His beautiful handwriting earned him a job as a scrivener at a law firm. Though his work was to copy legal documents in the small regular style, known as the *Yintou xiaokai* (蠅頭小楷 fly-head script), he embraced the tedious routine, devoid of challenge, as a learning opportunity to hone his calligraphic craft and reach new heights of artistic attainment. He later joined the Studentenvereine in Deutschland 留德同學會 as an art technician to provide technical support for all kinds of cultural and recreational activities and venue decoration. In retrospect, Tsang described this period of stability as the foundation stage of self-learning and practice of art. It was then when he could afford the time to read abundantly and create, which built a solid foundation for the self-taught artist.

As the political situation became stable in 1949, the Studentenvereine was dissolved. Tsang Wingkwong moved to Hong Kong, where he taught Chinese and art consecutively at two secondary schools. Traditional calligraphy and painting are said to have a common origin (*Shu Hua Tong Yuan* 書畫同源), and so are poetry and painting (*Shi Hua Tong Yuan* 詩畫同源), which underscore the intertwined nature of traditional Chinese art and literature as two branches of the same root. In his twenty-odd years of teaching Chinese and art, Tsang must have gained a profound understanding of their origins and influences from navigating between the two art forms. In an exemplary illustration of applying theory into practice in the classroom, the teacher encouraged his students to hone their seal-carving skills on potatoes and the hands-on experience proved to be popular among the students. To supplement the meagre salary of teaching at private schools and also to fulfil his vision of promoting the arts of calligraphy and seal-carving, Tsang moonlighted as a part-time tutor at the evening classes of Hong Kong Linghai Academy of Art 嶺海藝術專科夜校.

In the 1950s and 60s, large quantities of antiques, collectibles and calligraphy paintings flowed into Hong Kong from mainland China. Tsang recalled that in antiques shops such as Tsi Ku Chai 集古齋 and Le Long Gallery 琳瑯閣, one could buy a piece of larderite seal-stone for only two hundred dollars; bloodstone for a couple dozens, and a sheet of calligraphy work of couplet by Zeng Guofan 曾國藩 or Li Hongzhang 李鴻章 for as little as twenty dollars. This brought up a group of collectors who had no idea of what antiques were before. Though the two teaching jobs brought financial stability to the family, the income was just enough to make ends meet. Tsang had to content himself with visiting antique shops, Chinese department stores and bookshops to browse the stone rubbings, calligraphy books and paintings albums on display. One of his regular haunts was the Chung Hwa Book Company in Central, the art section in particular, where he would examine the exhibits carefully and seriously. It was also at Chung Hwa where he made friends with other art aficionados, one of whom was Li Kwok-wing 李國榮, a tutor at the Department of Fine Arts,

Grantham College of Education 葛量洪師範學院藝術系。A regular customer of the bookshop, Lee was well acquainted with the head of the art section, Lau Sek-to 劉石徒, whose father was the renowned calligrapher and painter Lau Cho-yi 劉草衣。Lau Sek-to inherited from his father not only the passion for traditional calligraphy and painting but also a discerning eye for art treasures. Tsang fondly remembered that whenever the bookshop bought in a quality item, Lau would show it to them generously. The three of them would then discuss and exchange views deliberately. He had, in his remaining years, a precious and rare set of *Song Reng Hua Ce* (宋人畫冊 Paintings in the Song Dynasty), which he treasured so much that he wrote an article on how he acquired, offering a fascinating glimpse into the milieu of those days.

Tsang bought the *Paintings in the Song Dynasty* from Chip Yick Fast Printing Co 集益書局 in 1999. Published by the Palace Museum of Beijing, the set consisted of five albums with blue cloth hardcover that were handsomely decorated with silk brocade. Each album had ten paintings, one a page, all mounted meticulously, with a small tag at a top corner of each page, bearing the exquisite touches of an authentic collectible piece. The first time Tsang saw the book set was in the mid-1950s:

At that time I often visited Chung Hwa Book Company and chatted with Lau Sek-to. It was said that the book sets were originally given as gifts to international friends who visited China. After the Korean War, some copies were sold outside the country at a high price. I thought then that the publication was the finest specimen of calligraphy and painting mounting of our country, and I liked it very much... It's very unusual to have a collection of 50 exquisite works by painters in the Song dynasty. As for the printing, it was said that a team of old masters had elaborately matched against the originals to produce it.<sup>3</sup>

The encounter left a deep impression on Tsang. Some 40 years later, when he saw the book again, the spark rekindled. Though there was not much money he could spare, he was determined and spent a small fortune out of his savings to buy the book set. It was a happy ending for a man and the book he loved.

In addition to Li Kwok-wing and Lau Sek-to, Li Kai-yim 李啟嚴, a local art collector, should also be credited for expanding the artistic vision of Tsang. Li Kai-yim was a businessman, a sole agent in Hong Kong for German sewing machines in the 1950s. Li was an enthusiast of antiques and collectibles and had amassed a trove of calligraphy and painting works, ink slabs, seals and stones. Impressed with Tsang's knowledge in Chinese art, he often met the teacher at Shun Sau Middle School 信修中學 after class, bringing with him items from his collection. The two would then study and appreciate the items together. Li's impressive collection included a stone rubbing in the Song dynasty of the *Tang Huaisu Dacao Qianziwen* (唐懷素大草千字文 Thousand-character Essay in Grand Cursive Script by Huaisu of the Tang Dynasty). His study was named Qunyu Room 群玉齋 after the source of the stone rubbing.<sup>4</sup> When Tsang launched *Shupu*, the collector supported his cause of popularising and promoting the art of calligraphy by lending out his precious, sole surviving

copies of stele and stone inscription rubbings, which were duplicated and given away free with the magazine to give readers the pleasure of admiring those masterpieces in print.<sup>5</sup>

### Forging Bonds with *Shupu*

*Shupu*, a bi-monthly journal, is familiar to aficionados of the art of calligraphy. But they may not know it was solely by the strength of a handful of old-fashioned but passionate literati who were strictly motivated by an obligatory sense of duty towards art that the journal was founded and established itself as a model of its kind. By the end of 1974, Tsang left his teaching career of over a decade and committed himself to *Shupu*, directing its editorial content and shepherding its development as executive editor until his departure in 1983. Going through the *Shupu* published during these eight years, we can appreciate from another perspective Tsang Wing-kwong's knowledge and views on the arts of calligraphy and seal-carving. (Plate 4)



Plate 4  
Cover page of *Shupu*,  
Issue #1, December 1974

In the early 1970s, Hong Kong's economy had yet to take off and ordinary people were far from being affluent; many were in fact leading a hand-to-mouth existence. Tsang's decision to quit his stable teaching job and walked into a small start-up on the niche art of calligraphy and seal-carving was bold and risky. This move, taken against the dim view of the sceptics, underscored his resolve and his deep sense of duty to his art and dreams.

*Shupu* was by and large a product of chance. It relied on neither financial support from a big company nor a carefully thought-out business plan. It was a labour of love, fuelled by a zealous, if somewhat rash, passion felt by a few literati with a mission to develop a topical journal devoted to Chinese calligraphy and seal-carving driven by a single vision of bringing the arts and life together.<sup>6</sup> From the inception of the journal to Tsang’s resignation in 1983, *Shupu* had only a handful of people on its payroll, full-time and part-time employees included.<sup>7</sup> Tsang took up the editorship through the recommendation by Lam Chun 藍真, who must have been taken by Tsang’s insight into calligraphic art and found the hard-working and practical school teacher a perfect candidate for the job. Lam’s choice proved to be a good one. The journal was blessed with Tsang’s diligence and talents, which ran the gamut from editing, proofreading, commissioning articles, copywriting, developing new contents and columns to liaising with artists and art collectors for the loan of artwork. The content of *Shupu* was solid and practical, balancing the needs of technique and theory which made it a good read and reference. It was lauded by scholars and loved by readers on the mainland, in Hong Kong and Taiwan, and as far away as Japan and France, making it both a model of its kind and an extraordinary success story in the publishing industry of Hong Kong.<sup>8</sup>

“Our goal was to combine popular interest, information and academic quality,” Tsang said, recalling his days with *Shupu*.<sup>9</sup> The editorial vision was laid down explicitly in the journal’s first issue: “One of the missions we endeavour to achieve is to make it [*Shupu*] popular, appealing to the average readers. To make a calligraphy journal a popular magazine is not a subjective point of view. As a matter of fact, calligraphy is an integral part of society having close ties with all walks of life. The art of calligraphy has a significant part to play in many aspects of life. It’s not some kind of pastime enjoyed by a small group of people at leisure in their studies.”<sup>10</sup> It was reiterated in the epilogue of the following issue that the journal “will firmly associate its style with real life.”<sup>11</sup> Similar messages could be found in the epilogue of issues #13 and #14, which reaffirmed the journal’s commitment to accommodate both highbrow and lowbrow tastes<sup>12</sup>, and that it is worthy of appreciation, research and further studies and appropriate for beginners<sup>13</sup>. Fusing art and life is as much the editorial vision of the journal as Tsang’s personal conviction.

Another guiding principle of *Shupu* was that it would strive to keep an open mind and foster a liberal attitude. Breaking down barriers among different cliques in art, the journal encouraged free flow and honest exchange of creative ideas in calligraphy and seal-carving for Chinese art enthusiasts. In order to maintain a neutral and objective stance, the editor was adamant that the title of *Shupu* on its cover would not feature the works of a contemporary calligrapher but draw from a collage of ancient inks. In this regard, one could not think of a more fitting match than “*Shupu Xu*” (書譜序 Preface to the Calligraphy Manual) by Sun Guoting 孫過庭 in the Tang dynasty. But Li Bingyan 李秉仁, one of the founders of the journal, found it an unsatisfactory choice of font for the cover title, as the piece of work was written in the cursive script. He suggested instead to adopt the style of Wei Bei, an abundance of which is found on the “*Zhang Heinü Bei*” (張黑女碑 Epitaph of Zhang Heinü). However, only the character *Shu* was identified and *Pu* was missing. The editorial team worked around the problem by taking from the epitaph the characters *yan* 言 and *pu* 普 as

the respective radical and root to make up the intended character *pu* 譜. Tsang invited an artist or scholar in Hong Kong, China, Taiwan or from abroad to render the title, *Shupu*, which was to be printed on the inner page of the journal, one for each issue. A total of 49 issues of *Shupu* had been graced by the works of such renowned painters and calligraphers as Fung Hong-hou 馮康侯 (Plate 5), Chan King-Hung 陳荊源, Luis Chan 陳福善 (Plate 6), Yam Chun-hon 任真漢, Chow Tse-Tsung 周策縱, Jao Tsung-i 饒宗頤 and Leung Yam-boon 梁蔭本 from Hong Kong; Xu Bangda 徐邦達, Liu Haisu 劉海粟, Huang Chun-pi 黃君璧 and Fu Shen 傅申 from Taiwan, and Ping-ming Hsiung 熊秉明 from overseas. They represented an eclectic group comprising calligraphers and seal-carving artists trained in the traditional schools, practitioners of modern art and oil painting, as well as cartoonists and academics. Their calligraphy renditions make for a fascinating and rewarding comparison.<sup>14</sup>



Plate 5 (left)  
Calligraphy by Fung  
Hong-hou, inner page  
of *Shupu*, Issue #12,  
October 1976

Plate 6 (right)  
Calligraphy by Luis  
Chan, inner page of  
*Shupu*, Issue #28, 1979

### Views on the art of calligraphy

Despite his lack of formal education in art, Tsang Wing-kwong remained a humble self learner who followed his heart and passion for the art of calligraphy and seal-carving and became proficient in it. During his years of editing *Shupu*, he brought tremendous insight and fascinating perspectives to the many discussions on works and theories on calligraphy, both ancient and modern, mapping out the development of traditional calligraphy, analysing the merits and flaws of different schools and styles, while retaining a voice that was always objective and unbiased. He took a contemporary view on the outlook of traditional calligraphy, using the example of *Shodo*, or Japanese calligraphy, to illustrate the need for the centuries-old art to evolve with the times, extending his all-encompassing vision and a keen sense of current trends into his writing.



His views on the art of calligraphy and seal-carving were presented in the articles he wrote under various pen names for *Shupu*, including “*Zhongguo Zhuanke Fazhan Gaishu*” (中國篆刻發展概述 A Preliminary Study of the Development of Seal-carving in China), in issues #1 to 8, using the name Tso Tin-su; “*Jianming Zhongguo Shufa Shi*” (簡明中國書法史 A Concise History of Chinese Calligraphy), #2 to 7, under the name Sun Chong; “*Handai Zhuyao Beike Xuan*” (漢代主要碑刻選 Selected Major Stele and Stone Inscriptions of the Han Dynasty), in #14, and “*Guanyu Qianziwen*” (關於千字文 On the Thousand-Character Essay), in #29, both under Lo Tai. Besides, he published “*Zhong Ri Shufa de Guanxi*” (中日書法的關係 The Relationship between Chinese and Japanese Calligraphy) in issue #25, using his own name. The article offered an insightful commentary on the way the two schools responded to modern-day challenges. Tsang had also been invited by the Hong Kong Museum of Art to give talks and demonstrations of calligraphy. One such occasion was in 1984 when he delivered a four-part series on “The Art of Chinese Calligraphy”. The manuscripts of the lecture notes have been preserved.

“The Art of Chinese Calligraphy” consisted of four lectures: 1. “The Form of the Clerical Script of the Han Dynasty and Writing Principles”; 2. “The Formation of the Regular Script of the Tang Dynasty and Writing Principles”; 3. “The Running Script in Cursive Style and Writing Principles”; 4. “Calligraphy and Contemporary Styles”. The comprehensive talk traced the origins of Chinese calligraphy back to its genesis in the seal and clerical scripts of the Qin and Han dynasties, in particular the influence of the transformation from the small seal script to the clerical script (i.e. *Libian* 隸變) on the formation and perfection of the regular script of the Tang dynasty. It also covered topics on the features of the running and cursive scripts and the contemporary styles. Tsang used a lot of inscription rubbings in the lectures as examples to briefly explain the main points of appreciating and writing Chinese calligraphy. Among the things he left behind were two sets of the lecture notes (Plate 7). The first set was recorded in a single-line notepad, and with the exception of



Plate 7  
The lecture notes  
manuscripts of The Art  
of Chinese Calligraphy  
Talk Series

the notes of the second lecture, which were photocopies, all were hand-written, with occasional cut-and-pasted pages. The second set was essentially a photocopied duplicate of the first, stapled into different volumes for ease of presentation. It was a time-saving trick in the time before computer word-processing. Ever the meticulous editor, Tsang would go over the notes and make additions and revisions in red ink, adding annotations and references to ancient works and noteworthy discoveries of the latest discoveries. The four lectures summed up the essentials of bamboo slips, stone inscriptions and script models, and explored the topics through analyses of their origins and stylistic features. Written in simple, clear language supplemented by excellent references, the lectures deserves to be published as a book. Six years later, in 1990, Tsang was again invited by the Hong Kong Museum of Art as a guest speaker to present a talk at the exhibition “Hong Kong Calligraphy: Collection of the Hong Kong Museum of Art”. The talk was titled “Random Talks on Calligraphy Appreciation”, and Tsang also gave a demonstration of the art.<sup>15</sup> The lecture notes of this second talk, in three drafts, showing how conscientious and meticulous Tsang was, have also been preserved.

Adorning a wall at his home was a rubbing of the sixth “Stone-Drum Inscriptions” (Plate 8, *Shiguwen Di Liu Gu* 石鼓文第六鼓). The accompanying short passage, written by Tsang himself, chronicled the discovery and history of the inscriptions. Characterised by its rectangular shape, thick and full strokes, the line-directed stone-drum script had transcended hieroglyphic writing, which was a milestone in the development of the Chinese writing system and calligraphy. Tsang devoted much time to studying the historical development of Chinese calligraphy and writing, in particular the script changes from seal to clerical, analysing the internal structure of characters and stroke techniques during the time of transformation. He read extensively on the subject in order to better understand the periods of changes of seal-carving calligraphy, as well as the cultural backgrounds and



Plate 8  
Rubbing of the sixth  
Stone-Drum Inscriptions

aesthetic origins of the art. In his analysis of the different styles of calligraphers in the Tang dynasty, Tsang noted:

Ouyang Xun 歐陽詢: The constitution is graceful, lively and bright. Rectilinear strokes are contained in square arrangements. The writing defies constraints and exerts strength, dropping sharply when necessary, like forbidding blades and spears.

Yu Shinan 虞世南: A suave style with compact manipulation. The vigor of the writing is modestly exhibited, covering the strength with grace.

Chu Suiliang 褚遂良: A distinguished bearing well set off by a handsome, free spirit. Each distinct pressing down and lifting up of the brush is done with delicacy and strength.

Yan Zhenqing 顏真卿: Following the rule of “thin horizontal and thick vertical strokes”, his lavish, rich ink fills the entire grid in a combination of strength, boldness and cordial elegance. Composed and firm, the centre-tip technique is applied to slant, pressed and first strokes to give an air of lofty grandeur.

Liu Gongquan 柳公權: A cool and brisk style. The strokes, vigorous and strict, are delivered in an exaggerated flourish.<sup>16</sup>

On the appreciation of calligraphy, Tsang explained:

Each Chinese character is a square-shaped configuration with condensed strokes, arranged in a linear order to form words and texts. Variations in the regularity, size, angle and density of the order yield different forms and visual effects. In addition, the conical head of the Chinese calligraphy brush, made of hairs from animals with different firmness and softness, lends its own assets to the sense of rhythm and movement in writing with every grip, release, pressing and lifting. The strokes are like the reserved or bold emotions we experience in life. Chinese calligraphy is much loved and appreciated because it allows people to come in touch with their inner selves.<sup>17</sup>

Regarding the principle of “*Xinwu Shoucong*” (心悟手從 The heart reads and the hands follow) adhered by calligraphers in the olden days, Tsang said:

The heart, a noble spirit as I understand (personal artistic ideals); the hands, techniques perfected by practice. That is to say, good writing is the result of a noble mind guiding competent techniques. Addressing the importance of techniques, this is as important to the calligrapher who writes as to a beholder who appreciates the writing. The heart and the hands, therefore, are guidelines for appreciating calligraphy.<sup>18</sup>

## A gentle, honest and sincere artistic style

There are three noteworthy aspects of Chinese calligraphy appreciation. First, the relationship between the work and its subject; secondly, the aesthetic value of calligraphy and seal-carving; lastly, the aesthetic views on traditional arts. Below is an outline of the basics of these three perspectives. An analysis of the artistic style of Tsang Wing-kwong will follow.

As art is a medium of intrinsic expression, Chinese calligraphy is probably the best art form that can capture the spirit of a subject. The paper, brush and ink used in Chinese calligraphy are media that leave no room for deletion or correction. Once a stroke is completed, one cannot go back to touch it up, and even if one does, traces of corrections will be visible. And more importantly, the distinct properties of the Chinese brush document every movement of the hand and the speed of writing; any changes to the stroke effected by the slightest turn and contortion will be shown in their entirety. A work of calligraphy reveals the calligrapher's mental and emotional states at the time of writing. Artists and calligraphers throughout the ages have shared the view that calligraphy can be used as a judgement of character and that it is an abstract expression of a man's mind. In Book 5 "*Wenshen*" of his anthology, *Fayan* (法言 · 問神 *Exemplary Words* "Ask the Deity"), the Han dynasty philosopher Yang Xiong 揚雄 first put forward the saying: "Calligraphy is the painting of the hearts" (書, 心畫也). This proposition was quoted by Zhu Changwen 朱長文 in the Song dynasty in "*Xu Shuduan*" (續書斷 A Continuation of Judgements of Calligraphy), in which he cited the example of the calligrapher Yan Zhenqing to illustrate the practice of calligraphy as a manifestation of temperament.<sup>19</sup> In "*Fei Caoshu*" (非草書 Criticising the Cursive Style), Zhao Yi 趙一 of Eastern Han said that "Each man has his own particular energies and blood, and different sinews and bones. The mind is either coarse or refine, and the hand skilled or clumsy. Whether the writing is good or bad depends on the mind and hand. Can it be changed by force? This is like our face. Can you copy a pretty one and become good-looking?"<sup>20</sup> Zhao's commentary primarily addressed the cursive style, but it also pointed out clearly that calligraphy expressed a character unique to the artist and that the calligraphic style reflected his temperament, knowledge and spiritual cultivation.

Since the inscriptions on bones or tortoise shells in ancient times, Chinese characters have been endowed with the beauty of forms. As the characters evolved, different scripts and styles were produced, each with its own unique qualities. With every lifting and pressing of the brush, the process of writing sparked in ancient artists an awareness of the beauty of the intrinsic order, structure and form that gave Chinese calligraphy credibility and recognition as an art form since the Han dynasty. The pursuit of the art of Chinese calligraphy and seal-carving, from the pragmatic to the aesthetic, is also an attainment of the compositional principles of calligraphy. The focus is not only on the beauty of form borne out of the qualities of the brush strokes, but also the internal balance, symmetry and variations within a character, and the tension, harmony, rhythm and proportion between lines that are the essence of spatial aesthetics. The variations in the beauty of calligraphy and seal-carving are immense, and the pleasure they bring infinite.

Generations of literati throughout the ancient dynasties had been instrumental in elevating traditional calligraphy and painting to the grand stature of high art. Their reviews and criticisms shaped the development of calligraphy and painting since the earliest days of its existence. The emergence of the concept of “Literati Painting” (*Wenren Hua* 文人畫) in the Song dynasty produced a whole new set of aesthetics and standards of practice, such as inwardly reflective styles being favoured over overtly expressive ones; hidden tips preferred over exposed tips; simplicity and understatement preferred rather than the overstated and contrived.<sup>21</sup> In understanding how the traditional brush was manipulated, we should, in addition to appreciating the beauty of the forms, also register the fact that the contents selected and expressed through the brush and ink reflect the writer’s sense of value.<sup>22</sup>



Plate 9  
*Li Bai: Watching the  
Waterfall at Mount Lu,*  
1982



Plate 10 (left)  
*Wang Changling:*  
*Bidding Farewell to Xin*  
*Jian at the Cotton Rose*  
*Inn, 1988*

Plate 11 (right)  
*Luo Guanzhong:*  
*Lyrics in the Cipai of*  
*Linjiangxian, 1994*

Deeply engrossed in seal-carving and calligraphy, Tsang took a great pleasure in studying stele and stone rubbings and copy models, the two major traditions of calligraphic art. The rubbings and models he had studied covered an extensive category of masterpieces over the centuries. Highlighting the pragmatic and the aesthetic, two distinct dimensions of Chinese writing, he argued that content of a calligraphy work or painting is intrinsic in its creation and appreciation. The motion of calligraphy writing, he maintained, not only corresponds to the rhythm of the brush – a choreography of lifting, pressing, pausing and breaking – but also accords with the writer’s moods and emotions, with the hand following the heart to express the inner spirit and moral cultivation of the writer. It is more than a sheer coincidence that his views echo those of Chinese critics in the olden days. Tsang’s calligraphy works run the gamut of styles from the seal script through clerical, formal, to the running and cursive styles, though the artist was best known for his works in the running and cursive styles.

Fluid and graceful, Tsang’s running and cursive styles draw comparison with the “Two Wangs” (Wang Xizhi王羲之 and son Xianzhi王獻之). He full-length works in these two styles are rhythmic and firm and his short-length ones are vivid and lucid. Appreciating his works is akin to enjoying a piece of silent music. Flowing at a vivace tempo to imitate the foaming cauldron of ferocious water, his brushstrokes bring to life Li Bai’s poem, *Wang Lushan Pubu* (Plate 9, 望廬山瀑布 Watching the Waterfall at Mount Lu), the exuberant application of ink illuminating the scroll with a free, magnanimous spirit and tinkling brightness. A feature to note is the character *yin* 銀 in the second



Plate 12 (top)  
*An ape, pulling aside the  
withered vines, drank  
from a brook in the cold,*  
1987



Plate 13 (bottom)  
*Lines from the Poetry of  
Wang Wei,* 1989

line: *Yi Shi Yinhe Luo Jiutian* (疑是銀河落九天 It could be the Milky Way [*Yinhe*] surging down from the heavens). The writer used an upward tilt of the horizontal lines to give the character's root *gen* 艮 a precarious look and retraces the downward slant to paint a thicker ending, creating an internal balance and echoing the composition of the adjacent line.

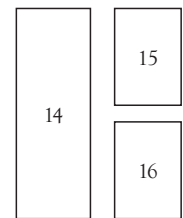


Plate 14 (left)  
*A Selected Couplet in  
Yuding Script, 1991*

Plate 15 (right top)  
*A Selected Couplet in  
Yuding Script, 1990*

Plate 16 (right bottom)  
*Couplet in the Clerical  
Script, 1988*



Plate 17  
*Wei Yingwu: An  
Autumn Night Message  
to Esquire Qiu, 1990*



In the cursive rendition of Wang Changling’s *Furong Lou Song Xinjian* (Plate 10, 王昌齡：芙蓉樓送辛漸 Bidding Farewell to Xin Jian at the Cotton Rose Inn), and Luo Guanzhong’s *Linjiangxian* (Plate 11, 羅貫中：臨江仙 Lyrics in the *Cipai* of *Linjiangxian*), written in the running script, the lifting and pressing of the brush is achieved orderly and synchronously. The concealed tip is applied to increase the sturdiness of each stroke while adding grace to the characters. The influence of Wang Xizhi’s *Shi Qi Tie* (十七帖 The 17 Copy Model) is evident in the former, with each character standing distinctly on its own, clear and serene as floating clouds. In the latter, varied speed of writing produces the visual and rhythmic beauty of running water. While pulsing with rhythmic vitality, his running script also displays a strong visual presence. Tsang once analogised the way the cursive style achieves the desired visual effects to a scene Huaisu depicted in *Zi Xu Tie* (自敘帖 My Self-Account Copy Model): *Han Yuan Yin Jian Han Kuteng* (Plate 12, 寒猿飲澗撼枯藤 An ape, pulling aside the withered vines, drank from a brook in the cold). Take the example of his 1989 work, *Wang Wei Shiju* (Plate 13, 王維詩句 Lines from the Poetry of Wang Wei), which he wrote “*Yelai Fengyu Sheng, Hua Luo Zhi Duoshao*” (夜來風雨聲，花落知多少 After a night’s wuther [*sheng*] of wind and rain, how many blossoms have thus fallen I wonder.). With the exception of the last

Plate 18 (left)  
*Steadfast in Preserving  
Integrity and Leading an  
Austere Life with side  
inscription, 1963*



Plate 19 (right)  
*Learning Calligraphy is  
the Best Hobby with side  
inscription, 1983*



vertical line of the character *sheng* 聲, which is elongated and willowy, the entire work is composed of bold, imposing strokes in one continuous movement to conjure up the imagery of whipping winds and piercing rain. From the slender ending stroke in *sheng* comes a hollow shriek, which becomes a whimper, then a gurgle, and finally silence as the solitary stroke feebly battles the ghastly storms and loses. The work comes complete with the inscription line, which reads: “Written in the summer of the Year *Jisi* [己巳] to express my feelings’. The year of *Jisi*, in the Western Calendar, is 1989, and the summer early June. The artist burst into tears before his brush hit the first stroke. In the midst of a tragedy what could the literati turn to but calligraphy to pour out his heart?

I have a particular fondness for Tsang’s seal-script and clerical-script calligraphies. As Tsang’s seal-script calligraphy was written in a movement not as fast as that of the running-script, it displays a more elegant and reserved poise. The way the characters formed in his two renditions of *Yuding Jilin* (Plates 14, 15, 孟鼎集聯A Selected Couplet in *Yuding* Script) stands out for its rustic and earthy

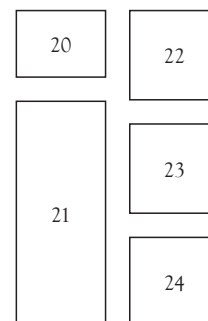


Plate 20 (left top)  
*My Conscience is Clear*,  
1962

Plate 21 (left bottom)  
*Fierce-browed, I Coolly  
Defy a Thousand  
Pointing Fingers*, with  
the portraits of Lu Xuan  
as side inscription, before  
1972

Plate 22 (right top)  
*Fresh Autumn  
Chrysanthemum as  
My Dinner*, with the  
portraits of Qu Yuan as  
side inscription

Plate 23 (right middle)  
*One Cannot Straighten  
the Road of a Thousand  
Miles with a Rope Ruler*,  
with the portraits of Du  
Fu as side inscription

Plate 24 (right bottom)  
The portraits of Mao  
Zedong

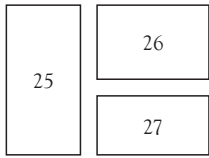


Plate 25 (left)  
*Bow Not for Five  
dou of Rice with side  
inscription, 1961*

Plate 26 (right top)  
*Free and Self-liberating*

Plate 27 (right bottom)  
*A Tranquil Mind Helps  
Fulfill High Aspirations*



beauty. The centre-tip technique is applied throughout to impart vigour and produce rounded and full lines. Tsang was also a dedicated researcher of the clerical script, a varied and richly expressive style in the Eastern and Western Han dynasties. As the stone-tablet script in the Wei dynasties was a milestone in the evolution of the clerical script of the Han dynasties to the regular script in the great Tang era, Tsang said that once a calligraphy student could master the stone-tablet script, he would be enlightened as to how to use the brush to write properly, and subsequently liberated to develop a personal style. His view could be summarised in Kong Youwei 康有為’s remarks: “Any single calligraphy in the stone-tablet script of the Wei dynasty can become a style on its own; a combination of all will be the perfection of beauty”.<sup>23</sup> The artist himself not only had an understanding of the strengths of different styles but also the talent of incorporating them into his compositions. He displayed a gift to meld the strengths of different schools, as demonstrated in his 1988 work, *Lishu Duilian*” (Plate 16, 隸書對聯 Couplet in the Clerical Script), and the 1990 work, *Wei Yingwu: Qiuye Ji Qiu Yuanwai* (Plate 17, 韋應物：秋夜寄邱員外 Wei Yingwu: An Autumn Night Message to Esquire Qiu). In the former, “*Feng Quan Dong Qing Ting, Yunshui Ruo Wuxin*” (風泉動清聽 雲水若無心. There come the clear sounds of the wind and the springs, but the clouds and the water do not seem to care”, the symmetric, square-shaped characters are rounded at the corners to lend an air of serene solemnity and classic refinement. The latter, a horizontal scroll, reads: “*Huai Jun Shu Qiuye, Sanbu Yong Liangtian. Kongshan Songzi Luo, Youren Ying Wei Mian*” (懷君屬秋夜，散步咏涼天。空山松子落，幽人應未眠。Thinking of you in this autumn night / I took a stroll, a poem on this cool day recited. / Deep in the mountain a pine cone fell / The hermit must still be awake) Running vertically in twos, the characters feel light and uninhibited. Their crisply pointed endings – the foot at the end of the stroke – create an atmosphere of tranquillity without the slightest hint of heavy stillness in the air. It is a fantasia composed with the crystal crisp sounds of pine cones dropping against a hauntingly beautiful landscape.

Tsang's enthusiasm for calligraphy could only be surpassed by his love of seal-carving, a life-long pursuit he had no choice but to abandon because of his failing eyesight and trembling hands in his old age. Although Tsang worked so hard the whole life, he left only a small quantity of seal-carving works. The side inscription of his seal, *Ku Jie Qiong Ju* (Plate 18, 苦節窮居 Steadfast in Preserving integrity and Leading an Austere Life), reads: "Dealing with repeated setbacks in the year of *Guimao* [癸卯 1963], I have to exercise stringent self-discipline and live an austere life. This seal is to commemorate this difficult time. A postscript by Wing-kwong on the day after Great Cold". It was evident that the artist took to seal-carving as a source of encouragement and endurance during the difficult years of his impoverished early life. In a seal cut in 1983, *Xue Shu Xian Yu Ta Hao* (Plate 19, 學書賢於他好 Learning Calligraphy is the Best Hobby), Tsang engraved on the side: "I have learned calligraphy since young. Achieved nothing though, I am influenced by the art all my life. Recorded in the year of *Guihai* [癸亥 1983]". This statement attests to the importance of calligraphy to the artist as a pursuit of spiritual fulfilment. Because life was difficult, Tsang did not have enough money to spend on buying seal stones. He had to scrape off the inscriptions so that the stones could be used again. Even the works he was particularly pleased with suffered the same fate of deletion, survived only in rubbings.

"Steadfast in Preserving integrity and Leading an Austere Life" documents the hard times the artist went through but it shows no signs of discontent or bitterness. Cut in the style of a Han official seal,



Plate 28  
*A Humble Mind as Deep  
as a Valley and as Broad  
as the World*



Plate 29

*Taking Recreation in Art*

the four-character intaglio fills the face with elegance. With a stately arrangement, the strokes within each character and the relationship of one character to another create harmony and balance. Forceful turns and hooks transgress the grid on the top, bottom and right sides of the grid. The tip of the character *ku* 苦 and the two places at the base of the character *ju* 居, in particular, are instrumental to the character composition. Many of his seal-carving works are reminiscent of the style of the Han seal, including “Learning Calligraphy is the Best Hobby”, mentioned above, *Fuyang Wukui* (Plate 20, 俯仰無愧 My Conscience is Clear), and *Hengmei Leng Dui Qianfu Zhi* (Plate 21, 橫眉冷對千夫指 Fierce-browed, I Coolly Defy a Thousand Pointing Fingers) were created with rustic quaintness and graceful solemnity in the traditions of the Han seal, which also accorded with the artist’s natural temperament. Among his collection were a number of seals bearing the portraits of historical and contemporary figures in the side inscriptions: the portraits of Qu Yuan 屈原 (Plate 22, *Can Qiuju Zhi Luoying* 餐秋菊之落英 Fresh Autumn Chrysanthemum as My Dinner), Du Fu 杜甫 (Plate 23, *Qianli Zhi Lu Bu Ke Fu Yi Sheng* 千里之路不可扶以繩 One Cannot Straighten the Road of a Thousand Miles with a Rope Ruler), Lu Xun (Plate 21, 橫眉冷對千夫指 Fierce-browed, I Coolly Defy a Thousand Pointing Fingers), and Mao Zedong 毛澤東 (Plate 24), people who must have had a bearing at some points in his life.

### The Spirit of “Taking Recreation in Art”

In 1961, Tsang cut a seal, *Bu Wei Wudou Mi Zheyao* (Plate 25, 不為五斗米折腰 Bow Not for Five *dou* [斗] of Rice), with the inscription: “The words of Tao Yuanming 陶淵明 inscribed in 1961 to remember the hard times. Wing-kwong”. On his sickbed, in 2004, Tsang picked up his brush for one last time and wrote Zhou Dunyi’s “On the Love of the Lotus” to avow his personal convictions through the flower which grows untainted from the mud. At Tsang’s home in Taikoo Shing, in his remaining years, there was a horizontal glass picture frame, showcasing a rotation of his beloved personal favourites: *Piaoran Zi Fang* (Plate 26, 飄然自放 Free and Self-liberating); *Ningjing Zhi Yuan*



(Plate 27, 寧靜致遠 A Tranquil Mind Helps Fulfill High Aspirations); *Xuhuaiuogu Tiandi Kuan* (Plate 28, 虛懷若谷天地寬 A Humble Mind as Deep as a Valley and as Broad as the World) and *You Yu Yi* (Plate 29, 游于藝 Taking Recreation in Art). As creative adventures in art, these works depart from the prescribed features and formality of traditional calligraphy to explore composition and word formation, and the many fascinating possibilities of experimenting with the ink and brush. The results are highly stylised pieces, at once abstract, free-spirited and care-free.

The Master said, “I set my heart on the Way, base myself on virtue, lean upon benevolence for support and take my recreation in the arts.”<sup>24</sup> In the linguistic context of traditional Chinese culture, “art” is not viewed as a medium serving the pleasure of the senses but a carrier of spiritual cultivation. “Taking recreation” suggests the state of immersion. “Taking recreation in art” highlights the commitment and perseverance that the artist drew upon in immersing himself in the world of art, where he would experience how “a tranquil mind helps fulfil high aspirations” and come to appreciate the idea of ‘a humble mind as deep as a valley and as broad as the world’, and ultimately, embrace the free and self-liberating state of mind to live a life of “taking recreation in art”. Tsang liked reading Chan Baisha 陳白沙’s *Lun Shu* (論書 On Calligraphy) and had created a number of calligraphic renderings of lines selected from the book. The work selected for this essay is written in the running cursive (Plate 30). The calligraphy exudes a natural and dignified air, poised yet motional, radiating a sense of ease and liberation that encapsulates the spirit of “taking recreation in art”. This will conclude the essay, which is dedicated to Tsang Wing-kwong’s art and life.

In calligraphy I always seek stillness in motion, which is to release but not to let go, to pause yet not holding back; this is why I am fascinated by motion. Do not be surprised by accomplishments, neither worried by distress; I maintain myself a tranquil mind. Follow principles but do not be hindered by them, be free but not unrestrained. Leave the skill and more skilful you become, be sinewy yet tender; establish the form and the momentum will gain force, conceived fully and the best will come out; to guide my heart, to mould my temperament, to balance my mind, these are reasons for which I take recreation in art.”

*On Calligraphy by Chan Baisha*

Lingnan University, February 2012

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Printing plates credits: *Zeng Rongguang Zuopinji* [曾榮光作品集] (Hong Kong: Sunglow Culture Publishing Co, August 2011) (In Chinese)

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- <sup>1</sup> Their eldest son, Tsang Shui-lung 曾瑞龍, an enthusiast of Chinese calligraphy, was an associate professor in the department of history of the Chinese University, specialising in military history of the Song dynasty. In May 2003, during the SARS outbreak in Hong Kong, he suffered from acute cholecystitis and died shortly. It took Tsang years to get over the loss of his son. Tsang's second son Tsang Tung-yeung 曾東陽 is a pianist and master of the harpsichord. Tung-yeung has loved music since young. He went to Vienna to study music in the 1980s and has stayed in Austria ever since. He now teaches the piano and the harpsichord at W.A. Mozart Musikschule in Horn.
- <sup>2</sup> For details about the creation of the “Forging Bonds with Art” silver ring and “On the Love of the Lotus”, please read Siu Yun-tung: “Huainian Lao Zeng” (懷念「老曾」In Loving Memory of “Old Tsang”), in *Zeng Rongguang Zuopinji* (曾榮光作品集 The Collected Works of Tsang Wing-kwong) (Hong Kong: Sunglow Culture Publishing Co, August 2011), p.12-14. (In Chinese)
- <sup>3</sup> “Jiujiu Nian Xiari Rongguang Zhi” (九九年夏日榮光誌 Records by Wing-kwong, Summer '99), unpublished manuscripts. (In Chinese)
- <sup>4</sup> Editor's note: For more details about this precious stone rubbing, please see Law Suk-mun Sophia: “Huaisu Fatie Liu Dao Meiguo de Gushi” (懷素法帖流到美國的故事 The Exile of Huaitsu's Calligraphy to America), in Lai Kin-keung Edwin (ed.), *Xing Cai Fengliu : Xianggang Shijue Wenhua Shihua* (形彩風流—香港視覺文化史話 Visual Colours: Essays on the History of Hong Kong Visual Culture) (Hong Kong: Joint Publishing (Hong Kong) Company Limited, November 2002), p.60-63. (In Chinese)
- <sup>5</sup> Editor's note: *Shupu* once published the “Huaisu Dacao Ben Qianziwen” (懷素大草本千字文 Thousand-Character Essay in Grand Cursive Script by Huaitsu, original rubbings produced by *Qunyutang* 群玉堂 in the Song dynasty) collected by Li Kai-yim alongside with the duplicate copy produced in the Ming dynasty (the original stones are now kept in the Xi'an Stele Forest) for comparison in a series between issues #8 (February 1976) and #12 (October 1976).
- <sup>6</sup> For more details about the founding of *Shupu*, please read Sheung Yik 雙翼 (aka Ng Yeung-bik 吳羊璧): “Li Bingren Ban Shupu” (李秉仁辦《書譜》) The founding of *Shupu* by Li Bing-ren in Lo Fu (ed.), *Xianggang de Ren he Shi* (香港的人和事 Hong Kong: People and Event) (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1998), p.214-220.
- <sup>7</sup> Three years ago, the author began researching on the founding and development of *Shupu*. Ng Yeung-bik and Lam Chun 藍真, the journal's key figures, were interviewed so that more could be known about the operation of the publication. They said the journal employed only two full-time employees, an executive editor and a distribution manager. The graphic design and typesetting were taken up by part-time staff. Other details will have to be the subject of a separate essay.
- <sup>8</sup> For more information, see Law Suk-mun Sophia: “*Shupu de Moxiang*” (書譜的墨香 The Ink Fragrance of *Shupu*) in Lai Kin-keung Edwin (ed.), *Xing Cai Fengliu: Xianggang Shijue Wenhua Shihua* (形彩風流—香港視覺文化史話 Visual Colours: Essays on the History of Hong Kong Visual Culture) (Hong Kong: Joint Publishing (Hong Kong) Company Limited, November 2002), p.52-55.
- <sup>9</sup> Tsang Wing-kwong: “*Yi Shupu*” (憶《書譜》 Remembering *Shupu*) in Choi Bou-guk 蔡布谷 (ed.), *Art in Hong Kong*, bi-monthly, Issue #1 (Hong Kong: Art in Hong Kong Editorial Board, January 2000), p.46-49.
- <sup>10</sup> See *Shupu*, Epilogue, Issue #1, December 1974.
- <sup>11</sup> See *Shupu*, Epilogue, Issue #2, February 1975.



- <sup>12</sup> See *Shupu*, Epilogue, Issue #14, February 1977.
- <sup>13</sup> See *Shupu*, Epilogue, Issue #13, December 1976.
- <sup>14</sup> The author examined these 49 designs in detail in an essay presented at the CAA 96th Annual Conference, an international academic seminar held in 2007. The report has yet to be translated into Chinese and published.
- <sup>15</sup> Editor’s note: “Hong Kong Calligraphy: Collection of the Hong Kong Museum of Art”, presented by the Hong Kong Urban Council, organised by the Hong Kong Museum of Art, 10 April to 10 June 1990.
- <sup>16</sup> Tsang Wing-kwong: “*Mantan shufa xinshang*” (漫談書法欣賞 Random Talks on Calligraphy Appreciation), 28 April 1990, unpublished manuscripts. (In Chinese)
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>19</sup> [Northern Song dynasty] Zhu Changwen: “*Xu Shuduan*” (續書斷 A Continuation of Judgements of Calligraphy), in [Northern Song] Zhu Changwen (ed), *Mochi Bian - Juan zhi san - “Pin Zao”* (墨池編 · 卷之三 · 品藻 *The Ink Pond Vol III “Comments”*).
- <sup>20</sup> [Eastern Han dynasty] Zhao Yi: “*Fei Caoshu*” (非草書 Criticising the Cursive Style), in [Northern Song] Zhu Changwen (ed), *Mochi Bian - Juan zhi yi - “Za yi”* (墨池編 · 卷之一 · 雜議 *The Ink Pond Vol I “Miscellaneous Discussions”*).
- <sup>21</sup> For more details about the concept of literati painting and the traditions of literati painting, see Wan Qingli: “*Wenren hua’: Yige lishi gainian de jieding*” (「文人畫」: 一個歷史概念的界定 “Literati Painting”: Definition of a Historical Concept) in Wan Qingli *Meishu Wenji* (萬青力美術文集 Essays on the Art of Wan Qingli) (Beijing: People’s Fine Arts Publishing House, first edition, June 2004), p.23-32.
- <sup>22</sup> There is a wealth of theories and studies on the development of calligraphy attesting to the art not only as an expression of form and is also a rich body of content in its own right. For related debates and discussions, see Mok Kar-leung Harold (ed.) *Bimo Lunbian: Xiandai Zhongguo Huihua Guoji Yantaohui Lunwenji* (筆墨論辯—現代中國繪畫國際研討會論文集 Debates on Brush and Ink: Collected Essays of the International Conference on Modern Chinese Painting) (Hong Kong: Department of Fine Arts, The University of Hong Kong; Department of Fine Arts, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, January 2002, in Chinese); Wan Qingli: “*Wubi Wumo Dengyu Ling - Xubaizhai Ming Qing Huihua Lungao*” (無筆無墨等於零—虛白齋明清繪畫論稿 Without Brushstroke and Ink is Equivalent to Nothing: Essays on Ming and Qing Paintings Collected by Xubaizhai Gallery), in *Wan Qingli Meishu Wenji* (萬青力美術文集 Essays on the Art of Wan Qingli) (Beijing: People’s Fine Arts Publishing House, first edition, June 2004), p.33-42.
- <sup>23</sup> [Qing dynasty] Kang Youwei: *Guang Yi Zhou Shuang Ji*-Juan san - Bei wei di shi (廣藝舟雙楫 · 卷三 · 備魏第十 *Two Oars of the Boat of Art*, Vol III Part 10 “On Wei Tablets”).
- <sup>24</sup> Editor’s note: *The Analects*, Book VII (論語 · 述而). English translation taken from *The Analects of Confucius*, translated by D.C. Lau, (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1992). In the original context, “the arts” meant the six skills 六藝—rites 禮, music 樂, archery 射, charioteering 御, writing 書 and mathematics 數—Confucius taught his disciples. Nevertheless, the “art” here refers to nothing but fine arts.

## A Chronology of Tsang Wing-kwong's Life and Art

- 1926 Born in Guangzhou.
- 1939 Orphaned during the Anti-Japanese War, Tsang went to stay with their relatives in Huizhou together with his elder brother and younger sister.
- 1944 Graduates from Huizhou Middle School and continues his studies intermittently at the Guangxi Arts Institute廣西藝專 (now Guangxi Art College廣西藝術學院) and the Guilin Normal College桂林師範學院 during the war years.
- 1945-49 Returns to Guangzhou when the war ends.
- Works as a scrivener at a law firm, responsible for copying legal documents.
- Later joins the Studentenvereine in Deutschland留德同學會 as an art technician to provide technical support and venue decoration for cultural and recreational activities.
- 1949 Moves to settle in Hong Kong when Studentenvereine dissolves.
- 1952-1968 Teaches art and Chinese at Shun Sau Middle School信修中學.
- 1961-1968 Teaches seal-carving and calligraphy evening classes at the Hong Kong Linghai Academy of Art嶺海藝術專科夜校.
- 1970-1975 Teaches art and Chinese at Sun Kiu Middle School新僑中學.
- 1974-1983 Works full-time as executive editor of the bi-monthly journal, *Shupu*.
- 1978 Hosts the talk on “The Relationship between Chinese and Japanese Calligraphy” at the Hong Kong Festival of Asian Arts.
- 1983-1986 Serves as a tutor of Calligraphic Studies in the Department of Extramural Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong.
- 1984-1985 Teaches refresher courses for secondary school art teachers held by the Education Department.
- 1984 Invited by the Hong Kong Museum of Art to give the four-part thematic talk on “The Art of Chinese Calligraphy”.
- 1989 Serves as the secretary of the “Tian Tan Buddha of Lantau Painting Exhibition”大嶼山天壇大佛畫展 and the calligrapher of *Dafu Yuanqi Bei* (大佛緣起碑The Origin of the Tian Tan Buddha tablet).
- 1991 Provides the name of Ma On Shan Tsung Tsin Secondary School in calligraphy.
- 1993-2000 Appointed honorary advisor to the Hong Kong Museum of Art.

- 1994 Serves as an adjudicator of the Contemporary Hong Kong Art Biennial Exhibition 1994.
- 1996 Serves as an adjudicator of the Contemporary Hong Kong Art Biennial Exhibition 1996.
- 2005 Passes away peacefully at his home in Taikoo Shing.

#### **Exhibitions in Hong Kong and abroad**

- 1977 “Exhibition of Hong Kong Artists”, jointly organised by the Hong Kong Arts Festival Society, the Urban Council and the Hong Kong Art Centre. Exhibition Hall, Low Block, Hong Kong City Hall, 14-28 February.
- 1980 “The First National Calligraphy and Seal Cutting Exhibition”, Shenyang Art Museum, Liaoning.
- 1981-82 Invited by the International Calligraphy Alliance of Japan 日本國際書道聯盟 to participate in the 9th and 10th editions of its annual exhibition at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum.
- 1982 “A Rich Life Hundred-Flowers Exhibition” 豐盛人生百花展, organised by the Hong Kong Independent Commission Against Corruption.
- 1988 “A Joint Exhibition of Works by Hong Kong Artists”, organised by the Regional Council and held at the Tsuen Wan Town Hall.
- 1990 “Hong Kong Calligraphy: Collection of the Hong Kong Museum of Art”, presented by the Urban Council and organised by the Hong Kong Museum of Art, held between 10 April and 10 June; also serves as a guest speaker of a talk on Chinese calligraphy appreciation and gives a demonstration of the art.
- Donates his artworks to exhibition and charity sales held by the Dharmasthiti Buddhist Institute.
- 1994 Invited by the Hong Kong Museum of Art to take part in “Hong Kong Art”, held at the Kagoshima Prefectural Museum of Culture, Remeikna

Tsang’s works are collected by:

The Hong Kong Museum of Art.