

“USING THE PEAK OF THE FIVE ELDERERS AS A BRUSH”:

A CALLIGRAPHIC SCREEN BY

JUNG HYUN-BOK

(1909-1973)

by

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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Korean calligraphy went through tremendous changes during the twentieth century, and Jung Hyun-bok (1909-1973), a gifted calligrapher, played an important role in bringing about these changes. This thesis focuses on one of Jung’s most mature and refined works, “Using the Peak of the Five Elders as a Brush,” owned by the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art. In addition to translating and explicating the poems on the screen, through a close examination of both the form and content of the work I explore how it reflects Jung’s values, intentions, and background. This thesis also addresses the question of why some critics have classified Jung as a professional artist and considers some of the ways in which he actually cultivated and projected an image of himself as a traditional literatus.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

“I have heard many people praise Jung Hyun-bok’s calligraphic screens, the most famous of which is the Nine Songs of Wu Yi [done when he was 23 years old]. Today I can see that it’s really true: his wonderful brushwork is truly divine. ”

--權昌鉉 (Kwon Chang-hyun)¹

As noted in these words by a contemporary Korean scholar, Jung Hyun-bok (1909-1973) was already a gifted calligrapher at a very young age. The earliest known calligraphic work by Jung was produced at the age of four. Korean calligraphy went through tremendous changes during the twentieth century and Jung Hyun-bok played an important role in bringing about these changes. As the chief curator of the Calligraphy Art Museum of the Seoul Arts Center, Lee Dong-kook, argues in his article *Study of Yudang Jung Hyun-bok’s Calligraphy*, by combining deep traditional cultural roots and a mastery of modern calligraphic style under Western influence, Jung Hyun-bok created a new style that is both contemporary and traditional.²

There is, however, some ambiguity as to whether Jung should be classified as an amateur or a professional calligrapher. On the one hand, as a Confucian scholar who studied under the famous masters of his time, Jung’s attitude toward calligraphy was very traditional. For him, calligraphy was not merely a form of art, but a means of self-expression and self-cultivation. In this sense, Jung has much in common with those traditional amateur *literati* calligraphers who viewed calligraphy as a hobby that should

not be created for sale. However, without any other means of earning a living, Jung also became a professional calligrapher who sold his works in exchange for money.

There is relatively little English or Chinese scholarship on Korean calligraphy as a whole; also, because Jung Hyun-bok's importance has been only newly recognized in Korea, there are few scholarly articles about him. An important resource is the bilingual Gyeongnan Art museum catalogue 鄭鉉輻 (*Jung Hyun-bok*): *Verve in life and art*, with a curatorial introduction by Lee Seong-seok and a scholarly essay by Lee Dong-kook. Another contribution is a paper by Dr. Lee Jin-seon presented at the 21st Geun-mook-seo-hak-hoe (槿墨書學會) Symposium on *Yudang Jung Hyun-bok's Calligraphy*.³ The focus of the previous scholarship has been an examination of Jung's calligraphic style and an assessment of its importance in the history of Korean calligraphy, through the discussion of Jung's biography, network, and the social background of his time. Jung Hyun-bok is often described in these articles as a calligraphy genius, with a paradoxical temperament that is both bohemian and refined. His importance lies not only in the calligraphic style that he practiced, but also in his contribution to the formation of Korea's first regional calligraphic exhibition. This paper, however, will try to take a different route by beginning in an object-centered analysis that will focus on an important calligraphic screen by Jung Hyun-bok in the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art (JSMA), entitled *Using the Peak of the Five Elders as a Brush*. My goal is to explore how the artist's work reflects his value, intention, and background, while still taking into consideration Jung's calligraphic career, and social background.

Jung Hyun-bok and His Time

Born in 1909 and dying in 1973, Jung Hyun-bok (鄭鉉輻) lived in Korea during a period of turbulence and uncertainty. He lived through the Japanese colonial era from the 1920s to the early 1940s, the Korean War of 1950—1953, and the chaotic transitional period of the 1960s and '70s. During this period, new cultures and ideas flooded into Korea. In the 1860s, not long before Jung was born, the previously blocked and isolated Korea was forced to open its ports to Japan and Western countries with unequal treaties. This soon was followed by these countries' political penetrations, economic explorations and finally the complete colonization by Japan in 1910.

Jung Hyun-bok was born into a well-educated family. At a very young age, they moved to live in a local art community in a small county within Gurye (求禮郡), Jollanam-do. The Confucian education he received and the bohemian and free life he lived influenced his work greatly. Gurye is a place with profound cultural background and many traditional scholars and calligraphers were based there during Jung's time. There Jung Hyun-bok immersed himself in calligraphy and Joseon tradition and seemed to be cut off from the political and cultural trends at that time. He studied Chinese literature and Confucianism under the great masters Songsan Kwon Jae-gyu (松山 權載奎 1870-1952) and Yulgye Jung Gi (栗溪 鄭琦 1879-1950). As a part of Confucian study, Jung also practiced calligraphy for a long time. Yet, unusually, his learning of calligraphy in his early years turned into a lifelong dedication. In the year 1962, the 53 year-old calligrapher changed his pen name to *Yudang* (惟堂, literally: only studio), dedicating his life solely to calligraphy.⁴ During the early years of his life in Gurye, Jung began to gain

fame by winning an award at the 15th Fine Arts Association's Exhibition in 1936.

However, he still remained a local artist.

In the latter half of Jung Hyun-bok's life (after the 1950's), he moved from Gurye to Jinju (晉州市), Gyeongsangnamdo (慶尚南道), and frequently visited Seoul (首爾) for exhibitions. The change of location and getting to know different people provided new inspiration, and new characteristics were added into his work. It was also at this time that he finally gained national recognition and reputation. He won various competitions in exhibitions such as the National Art Exhibition, and received various awards such as the Gyeongsangnamdo Cultural Award and the Noolwon Culture Award.⁵

Jung Hyun-bok was also enthusiastic about protecting and fostering local and traditional culture. After Korea gained independence in 1945, he, together with other artists who shared the same goal, created the Gacheon Art Festival (開天藝術祭) in Jinju in hopes of promoting traditional local Korean art, which was endangered by the influx of Western culture. These artists were from many different fields including music, calligraphy, theater, etc. The art festival, which began in 1950, has been held for more than 60 years and today has become one of the largest art events in Korea.

Because of Jung's virtuosity in calligraphy and his reputation, he was also invited as judges for the National Art Exhibition and several other art competitions. Thirteen years after Jung Hyun-bok died, the Yudang Art Award, which was named after him, was established as a part of the Gyeongnam Grand Art Festival to support outstanding artists. Just like changing his pen name to show his dedication to calligraphy, Jung also changed the last character of his name from 福 (blessing) to another homophone: 輻 (spoke) to show his great ambition.⁶ The character 輻 indicates his willingness to be useful to the

society just like a spoke is useful and important to the wheel.⁷ With all of Jung's achievement, it would seem that he lived up to the promise of his name.

The Screen Using the Peak of the Five Elders as a Brush

In 2010, the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art (JSMA), in Eugene, Oregon acquired a special calligraphic work by Jung Hyun-bok, which was donated to the museum by the calligrapher's son, Jung Do-jun.⁸ This folding screen was discovered in a large box of art works, most of which were in good condition, which Jung left to his family. Before it was donated to JSMA, this screen belonged to Jung Hyun-bok's granddaughter Jung So-yeon (鄭素娟).⁹ Whether the screen was used by Jung Hyun-bok himself or not, and how it was used, cannot be known now. But as a part of the legacy which Jung left to his family, and perhaps which he considered would benefit his family in the future, this must be a work with which he himself was very satisfied. This background makes the meaning of this particular work even richer and more interesting.

Written in the morning of New Year's Day in 1972, one year before the calligrapher died, this calligraphic work represents the mature artistic style and skill of Jung Hyun-bok. It was named *Screen of Ten Tang Poems* (唐詩十幅屏) in the Gyeongnan Art Museum's catalog, but actually the ten poems are not all from the Tang dynasty (618-906). Although the poems are all in five-character four-line style, which was perfected during the Tang dynasty, some of the poems were couplets cut from longer poems to fit this style. Since Jung Hyun-bok did not title the screen, I will refer to it as *Using the Peak of the Five Elders as a Brush* (using the first line of the first poem as the title). Reading from right to left, the ten poems are as follows:¹⁰

1. "Using the Peak of the Five Elders as a Brush", author unknown. ¹¹
2. "The Qiupu Song" by Li Bai (701-762)
3. "Thinking of Li Bai on a Spring Day" by Du Fu (712-770)
4. "Hut Among the Bamboos" by Wang Wei (701-761)
5. "Departing Early in the Morning from Shaozhou" by Song Zhiwen (656 -712)
6. "Mooring on the River at Jiande" by Meng Haoran (689-740)
7. "To Vice Director Qiu on an Autumn Night" by Wei Yingwu (737-791)
8. "River Snow" by Liu Zongyuan (773-819)
9. "Four Seasons" by Tao Yuanming (Eastern Jin, circa 365-427)¹²
10. "In Reply to an Inquirer" by Tai Shang Yinzhe (Tang, dates unknown)

As may be seen from the above, nine of the poems are by different famous ancient Chinese poets. The first poem, even though it may not be completely composed by Li Bai, was possibly thought to be when Jung Hyun-bok wrote this piece of work. According to Jung Do-jun, the poem was long thought to be by Li Bai, but since it is very difficult to find a definitive, published form as there are a few different versions, it was probably transmitted orally.¹³ This poem, *Using the Peak of the Five Elders as a Brush*, was sometimes also considered to be composed by An Jung-geun, a modern Korean independence activist who assassinated the Japanese prime minister Ito Hirobumi (伊藤博文 1841-1909) in 1909. This opinion is based on the piece of calligraphy that he wrote (Fig. 5) with the poem *Using the Peak of the Five Elders as a Brush* when in prison. There are actually two characters in An's poem that are different from Jung Hyun-bok's version, which is consistent with Jung Do-jun's account of there being several versions of this poem. Maybe it is the difficulty of finding the author of the poem that led people to

consider it as composed by An. No matter who actually composed these four sentences, however, it seems that Jung Hyun-bok was thinking of Li Bai when writing the poem.

Not only did Jung Do-jun (who was heavily influenced by his father and who received a similar education) consider it to be composed by Li Bai, but Jung wrote this calligraphic screen the same year as An's calligraphies were designated as National Treasures, though a little earlier. In another work that was created two years earlier, Jung also wrote this poem, which shows that he had long favored this particular work (Fig.5). It is possible that Jung Hyun-bok was aware of the fact that this poem was used as a subject by An, given that the time of the designation and Jung's creation of the piece were so close. This added political connotation to his screen and could make people wonder about Jung's own political inclinations.

Additionally, it is interesting that this work was done in the format of a folding-screen, which is both furniture and a work of art in Korea. Traditionally in Korea, calligraphy can be appreciated in different formats such as handscroll, hanging scroll, fan, folding screen and so on. Folding screens, which were common furniture that appeared almost in every Korean house until at least the 1980s, have a functional use. Due to this utilitarian dimension and the fact that they were so commonplace, folding screens were often regarded as a mundane craft or low art, and the artists who painted or wrote the screens were usually not credited. So, this creates a tension between calligraphy, which is traditionally considered a form of high or supreme art, and the format of this particular calligraphic work as low art. My goal is to explore the meaning of this screen in terms of its poetic content and format, and to examine where and how this screen fits into the larger picture of Jung's artistic output. Written one year before his death, this piece of

calligraphy not only represents the culmination of Jung's calligraphic style, but also reflects Jung's life as a calligrapher, the social background of his work, and Jung's personal philosophy.

Notes

¹ Gyeongnan Art Museum, 鄭鉉輻: *Verve in Life and Art* (Gyeongnan: Choi Deokgyu, 2009), 222. Thanks to Mr. Yudang Jung's presentation of the calligraphic folding-screen (My translation). The original poem was written in Chinese and reads, “所長人道是屏書，九曲武夷最得舉。今日方知為實際，定然運筆入神歟”。權昌鉉 (1900~1976): famous Confucian scholar and son of 權載奎 (Kwon Jae-gyu, 1870-1952), who was Jung Hyun-bok's teacher and also a prominent Confucian scholar.

² Dong-kook Lee, 鄭鉉輻: *Verve in Life and Art*, 25.

³ Jin-seon Lee, *Study on Jung Hyun-Bok's Calligraphy*. Translated by Nam Eunju (researcher and exhibition interpreter at JSMA). Geun Mook Seo Hak Hoe (槿墨書學會) Symposium, 2009.

⁴ Jin-seon Lee, *Study on Jung Hyun-Bok's Calligraphy*. Translated by Nam Eunju. Geun Mook Seo Hak Hoe (槿墨書學會) Symposium, 2009, 10.

⁵ Gyeongnan Art Museum. 鄭鉉輻: *Verve in Life and Art*, 15.

⁶ The two characters are both read as Bok.

⁷ Dong-kook Lee, 鄭鉉輻: *Verve in Life and Art*, 14

⁸ In 2007, a major show of work by Jung Do-jun was held at the JSMA, and was accompanied by a catalog; see Lachman, Charles. *A Way with Words: The Calligraphic Art of Jung Do-jun*. Eugene, Oregon: Jordan Schinitzer Museum of Art, 2007.

⁹ From email correspondence with Jung Do-jun, July 25th, 2011. The content was translated by Jung So-yeon, Jung Do-jun's daughter.

¹⁰ Please refer to the appendix to see the full poems in Chinese with Korean transliterations and English translations. The inscription on the last panel reads 王子新朝惟堂散人戲筆 (“Playfully written by Yudangsanin on New Year's Morning, 1972”). It is a literati convention to claim that one “playfully” wrote a piece of calligraphy or painted a painting.

¹¹ Some sources including Jung Do-jun attribute the first poem on the folding screen to the famous Chinese Tang dynasty poet, Li Bai (李白). This poem was not included in *Quan*

Tang Shi (《全唐詩》) or *Li Bai Ji Jiaozhu* 《李白集校注》. However, two lines “五老峰為筆，洋瀾作硯池” are quoted in *Sheng Lü Qi Meng* (《聲律啟蒙·三卷注釋全》), a rhyme and tonal pattern training book for children, and was attributed to Li Bai. This book was compiled by Qing dynasty Che Wanyu (車萬育, 1632-1705). Another common opinion is that this poem is by early twentieth century Korean independence activist An Jung-geun (1879-1910).

¹² Some sources attribute this poem to the famous painter Gu Kaizhi (顧愷之, ca. 344-406).

¹³ From email correspondence with Jung Do-jun on May 5th, 2012. Translated by Jung So-yeon.

CHAPTER II
THE “FORM” OF *USING THE PEAK OF THE FIVE*
ELDERS AS A BRUSH

The Use of Chinese Characters

Historically, calligraphy was viewed in East Asia as the supreme visual art form, superior to other art forms such as painting and sculpture. This idea came originally from Chinese art practice and carries a profound social reasoning. The earliest Chinese writing can be seen on the oracle bones and bronze objects of the Shang dynasty which date back more than three thousand years.¹⁴ However, the time when writing becomes an art form starts much later in the Han dynasty with the invention of paper and the widespread use of other writing materials (ink, brush, inkstone, etc.) that allow for a better writing experience. The way the calligraphy is executed—with brush and ink—makes the tracking of strokes possible and thus builds the connection between the viewer and writer, even though the writer is absent. Calligraphy is not only a form of art, but an art that can reveal personality and a person’s spiritual world, or the “qiyun” (氣韻) of a person, through the order and treatment of the strokes and the shape of the characters.¹⁵ Confucianism regards calligraphy as one of the “six classical arts” which a virtuous man should master. The importance of calligraphy was also carried to Korea, especially during the Joseon dynasty (1392-1897), when Neo-Confucianism was the dominant ideology.

The entire Joseon society had a constant cultural exchange with China and was modeled on Chinese Ming dynasty institutions and its Neo-Confucianism, with some influence of the earlier Song dynasty. It remained so until the early colonial period, even long after the downfall of the Ming dynasty.¹⁶

The art of calligraphy as a high art was long associated with the Chinese characters. It might seem strange to some viewers that this whole folding screen by Jung Hyun-bok was written all in Chinese; however, in Korea, *hanja* (Chinese characters) had been the written language of learning and scholarship for a long time, from the fourth or the fifth century to late 19th century.¹⁷ Chinese characters were for a long time associated with elite culture, largely due to the great power and influence of ancient China over East Asian countries. Actually, the Korean alphabet (originally *Hunmin jeongeum*, or “the correct sounds for the instruction of the people”; renamed *hangeul* around 1912) was invented in the 15th century by King Sejong from the Joseon dynasty, but was used only by women and the uneducated for a long time.¹⁸

Things changed before and after the colonial period in Korea. Despite the hatred toward those who colonized their country, the Koreans sought to learn Western technology and institution-- largely from Japan-- as a way to strengthen their power. As mentioned earlier, historically in the Joseon dynasty (1392-1910), Chinese was long used as the official written language and Confucianism was the nation’s orthodox ideology. However, the two were regarded as the “old feudal” order that had hindered the independence of Korea since the late 19th century. Although Chinese was still used by literate people through the colonial time, “most educated people privileged the use of Hangeul and labeled anyone using Chinese as a stateless nonentity.”¹⁹

Given this social background, it may seem somewhat peculiar to find that almost all of Jung's calligraphic works were written in Chinese.²⁰ Many of his personal letters, included in the Gyeongnan Art Museum's exhibition catalog commemorating Jung's 100th birthday in 2009, were also written in classical Chinese. Only one work titled *A Record of Rebuilding a House* is half-hangeul and half-hanja. This is a wooden plaque written in 1968 recording the event of the rebuilding of the library in Jinju High School (晉州高等學校). A close examination of Jung's life and thought will explain this phenomenon.

As mentioned above, Jung started to learn calligraphy only as one of the "six classical arts" that was required by Confucianism. The traditional style in Chinese characters must have had great influence on him. This is not to say that Jung was particularly stubborn and unwilling to accept new styles later on. Actually, when Jung moved to Jinju, he was fascinated to see all the modern calligraphic styles and practices, and incorporated the new Sojeon style into his calligraphy.²¹ Why, then, did Jung Hyun-bok continue to use Chinese characters later in his life? I think this is related to Jung's eager hope to protect and promote traditional culture. The Korean alphabet was already used in calligraphy by other calligraphers in the later years of Jung's life. However, calligraphy written in Chinese characters, despite its foreign origin, has become an indispensable part of the Korean tradition, especially of the long reign of the Joseon dynasty. Whereas for the wooden plaque that records the event of the rebuilding of Jinju High School's library, which is written in the way people would normally read and write at that time (half-hangeul and half-hanja), it clearly has a public function, and shows Jung's willingness to accept and try new styles.

The field of contemporary Korean calligraphy is vigorous and diverse. *Hanja* is still used but sometimes in an interesting and playful way. For example, Jung Do-jun utilizes the pictographic feature of ancient Chinese script to create calligraphy that can be read as also an abstract image. This is a brilliant way to challenge to the idea that calligraphy can be appreciated only when you understand the words. The Korean alphabet is no longer seen as unsuitable for calligraphy. Actually, one of the first Korean calligraphers to advocate for *hangeul* calligraphy was Jung Do-jun's teacher, Kim Choong-hyun.²² Jung Do-jun brought calligraphy to a new level in which he not only incorporated Korean characters into his work, but also used his own intelligence to create a distinct style. In his work, we can trace some long valued features of the traditional calligraphy for Chinese characters— for example, the use of dry brush and the variation of ink color. He also connects different parts from different characters to create a sense of cursive writing. Not only has Korean calligraphy developed greatly in practice, but creative minds also have coined various innovative theories such as Malpism (物波主義), which emphasizes the harmony of spirit and body.²³

The Use of Cursive Style

Calligraphy and poetry have long been closely related to each other in the scope of traditional Chinese art history. Poetry, calligraphy and painting are said to be the “three perfections”²⁴ for Chinese scholars. A scholar should be versatile and master the three arts of poetry, calligraphy and painting. Thus, many poets in ancient China were also famous for their calligraphies. The Tang dynasty, a flourishing time for almost everything in Chinese history, was surely a time for the full blossoming of both calligraphy and

poetry. Great poets such as Song Zhiwen and Wang Wei, whose poems also appear on Jung's screen, were also talented calligraphers. The deep relationship between poetry and calligraphy was shown in many ancient poems, especially in Tang dynasty poems, where poets lavishly extolled and appreciated famous calligraphers' works.

However, among the four typical scripts of calligraphy, namely standard, semi-cursive, cursive and seal scripts, Tang poets were extremely enthusiastic about the cursive style, partly because its bold and unrestrained temperament fits most easily into the Chinese literati ideal.²⁵ Chinese literati are essentially a class of scholars who are well educated in Confucianism and classic literature, and are also greatly influenced by Daoism. Although they were educated in hopes of becoming government officials, having a free will and not being bound to the material life or to social status is one of their ideals.

As noted previously, living in a peaceful and small community in Gurye, which is rich in culture and history, Jung studied Confucianism and other Chinese classics intensively in his youth. Traditional Chinese thinking must have had a great influence on him. Besides, classic Chinese poems had also been introduced to Korea much earlier and were widely accepted. In the Joseon dynasty, a still extant annotated compilation of famous Tang dynasty poems may have functioned as a textbook for the Imperial Civil Examination at that time.²⁶ So, it is really not surprising that Jung Hyun-bok chose classical Chinese poems as his writing subject. As I noted earlier, Jung Hyun-bok was really a calligraphy master who was very skilled at various scripts. Here, Jung Hyun-bok's choice of cursive style may also be a reference to this Tang dynasty ideal.

A deliberate choice of cursive style is obvious when comparing Jung's work to other calligraphy works with the same content. For example, the poem on the first panel of *Using the Peak of the Five Elders as a Brush* was also calligraphed by the Korean independence activist, An Jung-guen (Fig.2) in prison. In 1910, An Jung-guen assassinated Japan's prime minister Ito Hirobumi, whom he believed to be responsible for Japan's colonization of Korea.

Although the assassination was successful, An was caught shortly after and put into prison in northeast China. In prison, he wrote more than 200 calligraphy works, many of them at the request of the guards in prison and staff at court. There are forty-eight works that we know now and can find their exact places.²⁷ Regarded as a national hero in Korea, An Jung-guen was not only influential politically. All his artistic works in Korea were designated as national treasures in August, 1972, the same year Jung Hyun-bok wrote this screen. Since An's calligraphy is so famous and was possibly already very well-known before the designation, it would not be surprising if Jung Hyun-bok knew about An's calligraphy when he wrote his own screen.

In his version of this poem, An Jung-guen used a standard script in Chinese. The characters are separated, clear, squared and well organized; the brush strokes are firm and heavy. When you look at the individual characters, you see the traces of semi-cursive script. This technique makes An's calligraphy solemn but vivid. The viewer of this calligraphy will be impressed by An Jung-guen's seriousness, resolution, and strong mind. For Jung Hyun-bok's calligraphy, the cursive script connects the characters together, making them harder to identify and thus producing a more picturesque quality. Compared to An's work, the thinner dancelike strokes of Jung's work give a more remote and

ethereal feeling. Here we can see an older person's wisdom and the reclusive ideal of the literati.

Cursive script was so extolled in China because of the belief that it can best shows a person's "qi" (氣).²⁸ The character in cursive style is usually very difficult for people to recognize, especially for those who do not study cursive calligraphy. The inability to read the content of the calligraphy gives people the chance to focus on the calligraphy itself and the emotion embedded within it. Comparing the cursive style in the screen of *Using the Peak of the Five Elders as a Brush* and Jung's other earlier works done in cursive style, we see a more mature and resolute feeling. This is a unique style that developed over the course of Jung's life, through which evolved Sojeon's experimental Seal Script Style, based on the traditional Wongyo and Changam semi-cursive and cursive styles.²⁹ This is the style that can fully represent Jung, rather than an imitation of other styles.

Folding Screens as Both Art Work and Furniture

The folding screen format

The folding screen was a very basic piece of furniture found in almost every Korean house or apartment in modern times until at least the 1980s. Nowadays, many Korean houses still use folding screens, though mainly for decoration. Records of screen in Korea are found going back to the late seventh century.³⁰ Two, eight, ten and twelve panels are all common in Korea. One folding screen can be used in many places and in many different ways, and while it is a piece of furniture, it also is a work of art. A screen can be used to decorate the house. It functions as the backdrop for a person sitting in front

or for an event held in the room. For example, a screen painted with longevity symbols such as cranes will be displayed in a celebration of the birthday of an elderly person. In a wedding celebration, people in Korea were supposed to use tiger skins to decorate their rooms. Those who could not afford this would set out a screen with tiger skin painted on it. A screen can also be used in an interior room as a divider to create a private space. Although they may look huge and heavy, screens are generally light and easy to move, so a person can use the screen to create a temporary space quickly at any time and place. A screen can even be used in exterior settings, for example, at a funeral. Evelyn McCune described the versatility of a screen in her book titled *The Inner Art*, stating that (the screen is designed to) “meet day-to-day needs, providing comfort, supplying entertainment and stimulating imagination.”³¹

The multifunction and everyday use of the screen offers multiple layers of meaning when analyzing this particular folding screen. On the one hand, although as a professional artist, Jung sometimes wrote and sold his works, he and his family always kept this particular screen. The screen functioned first as a piece of private furniture which the family owned. Even though it was probably not used by Jung Hyun-bok, as a personal legacy it has an intimate connection to the artist that cannot be neglected. On the other hand, the screen is also and above all a work of art, an important calligraphic work in the medium of folding screen.

A private piece of furniture

The term *folding screen* cannot be separated from the concept of *space*. Not only does it create or separate spaces literally, as the backdrop in a room, but it also becomes

an imaginary space itself. By looking at a screen, a person enters the space metaphorically and is able to imaginatively engage the depiction or description on the screen, a space that is different from the physical reality that surrounds the viewer. Thus, in addition to containing a space, the screen further functions as the *connection* between reality and imagination or dreams.

As a personal object and piece of furniture, the folding screen must correspond with the owner's taste and aesthetic, since the screen often is placed behind its owner. When a visitor meets the master of a place, the screen will be seen as a harmonious whole with its owner, and it suddenly becomes a public object. It inevitably makes a public statement of one's life philosophy. The tie between the screen and the owner becomes even more firm when the owner is the creator of the screen, as in the case of Jung Hyunbok's screen of *Using the Peak of the Five Elders as a Brush*.

The Korean folding screen can be traced to Chinese origins. However, once it was transmitted to Korea, the screen evolved according to the local climate and culture and became very different from the later Chinese screens that continued to develop in China. One distinctive feature of the Korean screen is that, due to Koreans' custom of sitting directly on the ground, the folding screen in Korea tends to have a low foot. A Korean screen is usually viewed from the lower angle of a person sitting on the ground. This generates special requirements for the painting on Korean folding screens. The space and shading should be different. Yet, this problem is significantly reduced for a calligraphic screen. Actually, there are huge distinctions between a calligraphic screen and a painted screen in terms of their engagement with the viewer and ability to stimulate the imagination, so I think it is necessary to discuss the differences between the two first.

Calligraphic screens are frequently favored by scholars and appear more frequently in a scholar's room. The simplicity of black-and-white is eminently suitable, as Confucianism discourages extravagance and ostentation. Yet, while different from the colorful paintings, the black-and-white calligraphy may be less intriguing to casual viewers, especially those who cannot read the characters. Even though the artful and diverse strokes give calligraphy a painting-like quality that can be appreciated by everyone, it is true that without knowing the meaning of the characters, one loses a large part of the joy of appreciating calligraphy. When a guest enters the master's room, the screen's black-and-white color is so obvious that it becomes largely detached from the owner who is sitting in front of the screen. It is not easy to get into the imagination unless you can read the content of the calligraphy. For the owner of the screen, it is his way to "test" his guests. Only those who are able to read the content and appreciate the beauty of the calligraphy can share his imaginative space. This determines the possibility of a more intimate relationship between the guest and the master.

A decorative art

Besides being functional furniture, a screen is a carefully made artwork for appreciation. A calligraphic screen is the harmonious combination of its screen frame, mounting and calligraphy. The nicely cut and polished frame as well as the simple but beautiful mounting of *Using the Peak of the Five Elders as a Brush* show the care of the calligrapher. Yet the most striking characteristic of this screen is its skillfully written cursive characters. Looking at the calligraphy, you can feel the flow of the brush stroke

and imagine the easy and smooth hand movements of the calligrapher. The calligraphy bestows upon the poems on the screen a great vigor and elegance.

Appreciation of the screen will be incomplete if the viewer looks only at the format of it. The content of the calligraphic work is also a very important part that reveals the calligrapher's inner world. Next, I would like to examine the choice of poems and the arrangement and modification of the poems by the calligrapher to show how this screen became a re-interpretation of literary works, rather than a mere copy of the poems.

Notes

¹⁴ See Robert E. Harrist, Jr, "Reading Chinese Calligraphy" in *The Embodied Image: Chinese Calligraphy from the John B. Elliott Collection*, for more information.

¹⁵ See Wen C. Fong, "Chinese Calligraphy: Theory and History" in *The Embodied Image: Chinese Calligraphy from the John B. Elliott Collection*, for more information.

¹⁶ Pierre Cambon and Joseph P. Carroll. *The Poetry of Ink*, 11.

¹⁷ Charles Lachman, *A Way with Words: The Calligraphic Art of Jung Do-jun*, 11.

¹⁸ Cambon, Pierre, and Joseph P. Carroll. *The Poetry of Ink*, 13.

¹⁹ Peter Lee, *A History of Korean Literature*, 337.

²⁰ There is the only one work that was written in Hangeul in Gyeongnan Art Museum's exhibition catalog of 2009. This exhibition and catalog was a very comprehensive representation of Jung Hyun-bok's oeuvre. Jung Hyun-bok's son, Jung Do-jun, together with the calligraphy curator of the Seoul Art Center, Lee Dong-kook, were responsible for the collection of his father's works from all over the nation to make the exhibition possible. Jung Do-jun is also a distinguished and well-known calligrapher in Korea now.

²¹ Gyeongnan Art Museum. 鄭鉉輔: *Verve in Life and Art*, 23.

²² Charles Lachman. *A Way with Words: The Calligraphic Art of Jung Do-jun*, 12.

²³ Peter Zhu (朱培爾), *亞洲當代書法思潮—中日韓書法及其主義*, 30.

²⁴ See Michael Sullivan, *The Three Perfections: Chinese Painting, Poetry, and Calligraphy* for more information.

- ²⁵ Zhiyuan Yu (於植元), *全國唐詩討論會論文選*, 551.
- ²⁶ Pingqiu Zha. ed., *夾註名賢十抄詩*, 3.
- ²⁷ Wengui Hua. ed., *安重根研究 (Study on An Jung-guen)*, 171.
- ²⁸ See Wen C. Fong, “Chinese Calligraphy: Theory and History” in *The Embodied Image: Chinese Calligraphy from the John B. Elliott Collection* for more information.
- ²⁹ Gyeongnan Art Museum. 鄭鉉輯: *Verve in Life and Art*, 25.
- ³⁰ O-young Lee, *Things Korean*, 135.
- ³¹ Evelyn McCune, *The Inner Art: Korean Screens*, 6.

CHAPTER III
THE “CONTENT” OF *USING THE PEAK OF THE FIVE*
ELDERS AS A BRUSH

Dual Identity of Jung Hyun-bok

In most articles about Jung Hyun-bok, Jung is categorized as a professional artist in the sense that he sells his works for a living. This is very different from the traditional Chinese and Korean literati who are amateur artists and who practice calligraphy primarily as an outlet for self-expression and self-cultivation. Yet Jung’s bohemian, semi-reclusive early life and his great knowledge of Confucianism and other classical Chinese literature seem to have endowed him with a literati temperament.

Actually, there is no sign that Jung Hyun-bok started his calligraphic life with the intention of becoming a professional calligrapher. The fact that Jung could write his grandfather’s penname beautifully at the age of four not only shows his talent, but also the strong cultural atmosphere around him then. He was born into a well-educated family, whose friends were also knowledgeable and versatile people. So, little Jung Hyun-bok learnt his calligraphy naturally due to extensive exposure within a literary atmosphere. Later on, during the early days of the colonial period, Jung’s family moved to live in Gurye and he began to practice the traditional Joseon style calligraphy, called Donggukjinche, while studying Confucianism with famous masters. It is noteworthy that during the 1920s and 1930s one of the most important art events in Korea was the Joseon

Art Exhibition organized by the Japanese government. Under western artistic influence, the exhibition totally eliminated the display of calligraphy because there was a “belief that calligraphy did not belong in the art category.”³² An abrupt disjuncture between the traditional and contemporary calligraphy thus occurred during the colonial period. Jung Hyun-bok’s continual practice of traditional style calligraphy in a place that was far away from the mainstream enabled him to become a distinguished tie between the past and future.

In the latter half of Jung Hyun-bok’s life, after he moved from Gurye to Jinju in 1931, his calligraphic practice and its style changed enormously. Although still in classical Chinese characters, he began to practice contemporary Korean calligraphic styles and re-interpret other various styles. Jung Hyun-bok also became more skilled at all different scripts: seal, standard and cursive scripts. A turning point in Jung’s calligraphic career came at the age of 27, in 1936, when he won a prize at the 15th Fine Arts Association’s Exhibition (書畫協會展). This award was said to be an accident because Jung submitted his work to the exhibition only at the urging of his friends.³³ But from that point, Jung started to get national recognition and actively participated in various exhibitions as artist or judge. Jung Hyun-bok did what a professional artist would do to sell his works. With the emergence of art exhibitions in Korea, exhibiting art works was also added to the work of a “professional artist”. However, what is more about Jung was his true dedication and love of this format of art in that calligraphy was also his hobby and spiritual ballast. We can tell this from one of Jung’s letters: “Both of my parents are not feeling well, and even my children are getting sick one by one. So I feel very anxious. However, whenever I get a chance, I take a short trip to the Euigye Valley

with three friends of mine, Yejeon, Poongsok and Jebong. There I have drinks with them, and sometimes write a few things in order to refresh my body and soul.”³⁴ We see that calligraphy is not merely a means of livelihood for Jung, but something he loved that could distract him from sorrow. Jung also lived a very bohemian life as can be deduced from the following quote: “Jung Hyun-bok’s bohemian life style frequently prompted him to leave home without telling anybody, and once he came back with a string player’s callused fingers.”³⁵ This unrestrained life, getting together with friends who shared similar hobbies, drinking wine and writing, was very much like the ideal life of the literatus. In fact, this was also the life that many of the poems on the screen we are examining depicted. So, the screen of *Using the Peak of the Five Elders as a Brush* is not only a work of art with the skilled rendering of characters, but might also be seen as a reflection of Jung’s life and ideals.

Being a professional artist did not impede Jung’s appreciation and admiration of the literati’s value and their attitude toward calligraphy. Moreover, through his personal letters and works, we see Jung actively presenting himself as a part of this literati tradition. Some anecdotes, later told by Jung’s friends, frequently mention Jung Hyun-bok as being a prodigy. For instance, it was claimed that he always fell asleep in class but still learned better than any other students.³⁶ This depiction of a brilliant, unrestrained, and usually intoxicated character seems to be very similar to descriptions of highly respected literati, such as, Li Bai. Whether or not these narratives are reliable, they help to construct an artistic persona of Jung as a literatus through this direct linkage to famous literati of the past.

Living in a time of tremendous changes, Jung Hyun-bok chose to dedicate his whole life to calligraphy and art. As a professional artist, he wrote calligraphy for sale, for exhibiting, or simply to give to other people as gifts.³⁷ His achievements lie not only in his mastery in various calligraphy styles and scripts, but also in his resolution, persistence, and the dedication that made him indispensable and distinct in the history of Korean calligraphy.

A Re-interpretation of the Literary Works

Calligraphers often choose to write out literary works that are not necessarily composed by them. But just as in this particular screen of *Using the Peak of the Five Elders as a Brush*, by choosing different poems, juxtaposing them in a certain order and changing several of the characters, the calligrapher creates a new work that re-interprets the previous literary works.

As explained before, only eight poems on the screen were composed by Tang dynasty poets. Of the other two poems, one is by the famous Eastern Jin literatus Tao Yuanming, the other has an unclear author, although sometimes the work is attributed to Li Bai. Why did Jung choose these ten poems? At a first glance at these poems, there seems to be no consistency in theme. The ten poems can be sorted roughly into four categories: two poems on the theme of reclusion; five poems on the theme of loneliness, and of thinking of a friend or of home; two poems on the theme of expressing one's aspiration; and one poem on the theme of praising natural scenery. Some of the poems on the screen also appeared in other works by Jung. This possibly indicates that these are poems that he liked very much, if not considered his favorites. For example, in his work

Selection of Classical Poems (集古詩) (Fig. 6), seven of the poems are the same as those on this screen, although the order of the poems has been changed. The other three poems have also appeared in his other works (Fig. 7&8). One specific poem on panel two talks about the poet's concern of getting old so fast, without making any contribution to society and country. This resonates perfectly with Jung Hyun-bok's aspiration to be useful to society. We know that Jung actually made a great contribution to the preservation of Korea's local and traditional art, and the poem may be a humble reflection of Jung's life.

An interesting inclusion is the first poem, *Using the Peak of the Five Elders as a Brush*. The prominent position on the screen indicates that this poem has a very important meaning to the calligrapher. Moreover, this is one of only two panels to contain artist seals, and the only one whose seals seem to comment on the poetic inscription.³⁸ Given the fame of the activist An Jung-guen's calligraphy and the possible connection of Jung's first poem to it, one easily becomes curious about Jung Hyun-bok's political life. Is there any political connotation to his choosing this poem? Jung Hyun-bok actually was a great patriot and one anecdote notes that he refused to hold an exhibition in Japan when invited simply because he did not like the Japanese.³⁹ This gesture of patriotism builds a strong tie between An Jung-guen and himself. So, even though Jung possibly thought this poem was composed by Li Bai, he may also have thought about An Jung-geun when writing the poem.

However, we should also notice the difference between the two poems written by An and Jung. An's calligraphy used the characters: “青天一丈線 (Sky as ten feet of string)”⁴⁰ while in Jung's poem, the calligraphy reads “青天一張紙 (Sky as a piece of

paper)”. Comparing the blue sky to a piece of paper sounds brilliant and it shows a poet’s great ambition to express his own talent. Only the immensity of the sky is large enough to hold the writer’s talent and genius. This is a poem that fits Jung’s own philosophy to be useful to the society. It would be strange to compare the sky to pieces of string by which people would write poems as in An’s calligraphy.

Maybe, as Wang Zhenren (王珍仁),⁴¹ a researcher and one of the authors for the book *安重根研究* (Study on An Jung-geun) explains, the string represents the shackles that An had at that time. Also, the blue sky was just like strings when looking out from the windows of the prison. Whether this poem was passed down to An like this, or whether An changed the poem according to the situation he was in, it is clear that both of the versions of the poem fits the background and anticipations of the two calligraphers. Even though there was an allusion to An and his patriotic activity, the calligraphy of Jung, by using different characters in the poems, presents the unique concern of the calligrapher.

The problems about the linkages among the poems, in terms of content, and the meaning of the order, are intricate. Some links among several of the poems are easy to observe. For example, the second poem on the screen was composed by Li Bai and the third poem was named “Thinking of Li Bai on a Spring Day” by another famous Tang poet, Du Fu. The various ways a screen can be folded make the number of poems one can see different every time. Even though it may be folded in the same way, according to where one sits, the amount of the poem one can see also varies. It is intriguing to think about the variety of imaginary spaces a screen is able to provide because of this. Poems should also be able to be viewed separately and still convey the message of the calligrapher even though the screen is folded differently or viewed from different

locations. This makes the repetitions of the themes understandable and of great importance. The importance of the order of the poems is also reduced. Additionally, all the themes themselves are actually quite typical for traditional Chinese poems by literati. When talking about Wang Wei's poem, Stephen Owen talks about the "law of repression": "the universal feeling of homesickness, the literary historical context of grief in exile, or the modal associations of a meter will tell the reader that some deeper significance or intense emotion lies beneath the poem's placid surface."⁴² It may not have been the literal connection or the surface meaning that Jung was concerned with when creating this folding screen, but rather, the repressive emotion and what it generates that he sought to convey

Notes

³² Youngna Kim, *20th Century Korean Art*, 21

³³ Jin-seon Lee, *Study on Jung Hyun-Bok's Calligraphy*. Translated by Nam Eunju. Geun Mook Seo Hak Hoe Symposium, 2009, 13.

³⁴ Jin-seon Lee, *Study on Jung Hyun-Bok's Calligraphy*. Translated by Nam Eunju. Geun Mook Seo Hak Hoe Symposium, 2009, 13-14.

³⁵ Jin-seon Lee, *Study on Jung Hyun-Bok's Calligraphy*. Translated by Nam Eunju. Geun Mook Seo Hak Hoe Symposium, 2009, 14.

³⁶ Jin-seon Lee, *Study on Jung Hyun-Bok's Calligraphy*. Translated by Nam Eunju. Geun Mook Seo Hak Hoe Symposium, 2009, 11.

³⁷ From email correspondence with Jung Do-jun, July 25th, 2011. The content was translated by Jung So-yeon, Jung Do-jun's daughter.

³⁸ See page 39 for information about the seals.

³⁹ Jin-seon Lee, *Study on Jung Hyun-Bok's Calligraphy*. Translated by Nam Eunju. Geun Mook Seo Hak Hoe Symposium, 2009, 15.

⁴⁰ According to common Chinese calligraphy practice, the work by An Jun-geun should be read as "五老峯為筆，青天一丈線。三湘作硯池，寫我腹中詩". Whether An

intentionally reversed the two lines in the middle or calligraphed this poem in a different way as compared to traditional Chinese practice is unclear.

⁴¹ Vice director, researcher in Lüshun Japan-Russia Prison Museum, Dalian. From email correspondence, September 27, 2011.

⁴² Stephen Owen, *The Great Age of Chinese Poetry: the High T'ang*, 38.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

In traditional calligraphy practice in China, calligraphers who write whatever they want without purposely planning ahead are greatly valued. In Chinese, the term *calligraphy* (書法) literally means *writing law or method*, and though it is commonly said that *calligraphy is written without law* (書法無法), writing calligraphy must inevitably follow certain rules. Before starting, a calligrapher needs to plan for the organization, script, and content of the writing. Things that seem random and without preparation are, most of the time, deliberate choices and may also reflect the calligrapher's personal life philosophy. Jung Hyun-bok, a true master who dedicated his whole life to calligraphy and art, expressed his personal values consciously (and unconsciously) to the world through the artworks he created and kept. By closely observing the screen of *Using the Peak of the Five Elders* and his earlier works, we see a repetitive use of some of the same poems; however, there is also a change of calligraphic styles over time. From the early experimental, standard style to the late mature and personalized cursive style that is reflected on this screen, we see a calligrapher's growth. From the repetitive content of the poems, we see the calligrapher's solid Confucian background and his education in traditional Chinese literature. Although the content of the poems that Jung loved and wrote on this screen and other works reflect the real life of Jung to some degree, there is a deeper ideal embedded in those lines that intrigued Jung Hyun-bok. It is this romanticized past that Jung was celebrating. For Jung, the evidence suggests that calligraphy

functioned not only as a means to earn a living, but also as an expressive outlet and a spiritual support.

APPENDIX A

TRANSLATIONS OF THE POEMS ON THE SCREEN

Ten poems on the screen (from right to left):

Panel 1

五老峯為筆，	(오로봉위필)
三湘作硯池。	(삼상작연지)
青天一張紙，	(청천일장지)
寫我腹中詩。	(사아복중시)

五老峯為筆 (오로봉위필)

“Using the Peak of the Five Elders as a Brush”

Authorship unknown

*Using the Peak of the Five Elders⁴³ as a brush,
The Three Rivers as inkstone pond,
Blue sky as a piece of paper,
I write the poem in my heart.⁴⁴*

Panel 2

白髮三千丈，	(백발삼천장)
緣愁似箇長。	(연수사개장)
不知明鏡裏，	(부지명경리)
何處得秋霜。	(하처득추상)

秋浦歌⁴⁵ (추포가)

“The Qiupu Song”

Composed by Tang poet 李白 (Li Bai, 701-762)

*My gray hairs seem to measure thirty thousand feet,
Because my sorrows seem as endless.*

*Whence in the bright mirror
Has the frost of autumn made its appearance?*⁴⁶

Panel 3

渭北春天樹， (위북춘천수)
江東日暮雲。 (강동일모운)
何時一樽酒， (하시일준주)
重與細論文。 (중여세논문)

春日憶李白⁴⁷ (춘일억이백)

“Thinking of Li Bai on a Spring Day”

Composed by Tang poet 杜甫 (Du Fu, 712-770)

*I am North of the river Wei, looking at the spring trees;
You are East of the Yangzi river, watching the sunset clouds.
When shall we meet over a jug of wine?
When shall I have another precious discussion of literature with you?*⁴⁸

Panel 4

獨坐幽篁裏， (독좌유황리)
彈琴復長嘯。 (탄금부장소)
深林人不知， (심림인부지)
明月來相照。 (명월래상조)

竹裏館⁴⁹ (죽리관)

“Hut Among the Bamboos”

Composed by Tang poet 王維 (Wang Wei, 701-761)

*Sitting alone in the bush of the bamboo grove
I thrum my lute and whistle lingering notes.
In the secrecy of the wood no one can hear—
Only the clear moon comes to shine on me.*⁵⁰

Panel 5

綠樹秦京途， (녹수진경도)
青雲洛水橋。 (청운낙수교)
故園長在目， (고원장재목)
魂去不須招。 (혼거불수초)

早發韶州⁵¹ (조발소주)

“Departing Early in the Morning from Shaozhou”

Composed by Tang poet 宋之問 (Song Zhiwen, 656?-712)

*Green trees along the road of the capital,
Blue clouds over the bridge above the Luo River.
I see my hometown all the time,
My soul is on the way ahead and there is no need of evocation.*⁵²

Panel 6

野曠天低樹， (야광천저수)
江淸月近人。 (강청월근인)
移舟泊煙渚， (이주박연저)
日暮客愁新。 (일모객수신)

宿建德江⁵³ (숙건덕강)

“Mooring on the River at Jiande”

Composed by Tang poet 孟浩然 (Meng Haoran, 689-740)

*Beyond the desolate field the sky rests on the tree-tops;
In the clear river the moon seems very near to man
My boat is moored beside an island of mists;
In the twilight a stranger grows melancholy.*⁵⁴

Panel 7

懷君屬秋夜， (회군속추야)
散步詠涼天。 (산보영량천)
山空松子落， (산공송자락)
幽人應未眠。 (유인응미면)

秋夜寄邱二十二員外⁵⁵

“To Vice Director Qiu on an Autumn Night”

Composed by Tang poet 韋應物 (Wei Yingwu, 737-791)

*I hold you in my thoughts this autumn night,
While I stroll in the cool air reciting poetry.
Pinecones fall on the lonely mountain,
And my solitary friend is not yet sleeping.*⁵⁶

Panel 8

千山鳥飛絕， (천산조비절)
萬徑人蹤滅。 (만경인종멸)
孤舟蓑笠翁， (고주사립옹)
獨釣寒江雪。 (독조한강설)

江雪⁵⁷ (강설)

“River Snow”

Composed by Tang poet 柳宗元 (Liu Zongyuan, 773-819)

*In a thousand hills birds have ceased to fly;
On countless tracks footprints have disappeared.
A solitary boatman in bamboo cape and hat
Is fishing the icy river in the snow.*⁵⁸

Panel 9

春水滿四澤，	(춘수만사택)
夏雲多奇峯。	(하운다기봉)
秋月揚明輝，	(추월양명휘)
冬嶺秀孤松。	(동령수고송)

四時⁵⁹

“Four Seasons”

Composed by Eastern Jin poet 陶淵明 (Tao Yuanming, circa 365-427)

*Spring water fills the Four Marshes,
 Summer clouds vary in shape resembling marvelous peaks.
 Autumn moon radiates bright light,
 Winter mountains set off the solitary pines.⁶⁰*

Panel 10

偶來松樹下，	(우래송수하)
高枕石頭眠。	(고침석두면)
山中無曆日，	(산중무력일)
寒盡不知年。	(한진부지년)

答人⁶¹ (답인)

“In Reply to an Inquirer”

Composed by Tang poet 太上隱者 (Tai Shang Yinzhe [“Ultimate Recluse”], dates unknown)

*Casually I placed myself beneath the pines;
 High on a stony pillow I lay down to sleep.
 There is no calendar in these high mountains;
 The wind ends, with no clear signs to mark the year’s changes.⁶²*

Notes

⁴³ The Peak of the Five Elders (Wulao Feng) is the second highest peak of Mount Lu (Lushan), which is located in present day Jiujiang, Jiangxi province in China. Together with Mount Lu, they are favored themes to depict in poems and paintings by literati. Mount Lu is associated with Daoism and is said to be the abode of Daoist sage Kuang Su (匡俗). The mountain is also related to many famous painters, poets and scholars such as Gu Kaizhi and Li Bai (李白). Eastern Jin Gu Kaizhi's painting *Viewing the Peak of the Five Elders under the Clear Sky after Snow* (《雪霽望五老峰圖》) is considered to be the first landscape painting in China. Poet Li Bai wrote well-known poems about the mounting and he had a study located in the southern foot of the Peak of the Five Elders called White Deer Cave. It was named so because Li Bai is said to have raised a white deer there. Li Bai's study was enlarged in early Song dynasty to become the White-Deer Cave Academy. It is one of the earliest institutions of higher learning in China. Indeed, the beautiful scenery and cultural background becomes the inspiration of numerous painters and poets in the history of China.

⁴⁴ My translation. The last line "魂去不須招" implies that the poet is determined to not look back, having set his mind on the journey ahead (in the original Chu lyrics context, the soul is lured from straying in the edges to the center of the civilized world; here the poet is adding an important twist to that original use). Thank Prof. Yugen Wang for this reference.

⁴⁵ This is the 15th poem of Li Bai's 17 Qiu Pu Song series. The famous hyperbole of comparing "melancholy" to "thirty thousand feet" of white hair shows the poet's genius. This poem composed around 741 (1st year of Tianbao 天寶元年), on the eve of the rebellion of An Lushan (安史之亂). It shows the old poet's concern about the peace of the country and his depression at not being able to show his political talents. This is more than ten years after Li Bai was exiled from court. How time flies and still he could not make any contribution to the country. Even worse, the poet was still living a rootless life and had to travel around all the time.

⁴⁶ Adapted from "The Ch'iu-p'u Song" translation by Shih Shun Liu, *One Hundred and One Chinese Poems: With English Translations and Preface* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1968), 19.

⁴⁷ This poem was composed by Du Fu at the spring of the 6th year of Tianbao (天寶六年, 747). Du Fu and Li Bai met in 746 and traveled together in Luoyang. They established a good friendship during the travel. After that, Du lived in Chang'an (located north of the Wei River) and Li Bai went to visit Jiangdong (east of Yangzi river). This is the context when Du Fu wrote this famous poem to his good friend Li Bai.

⁴⁸ Adapted from "Thinking of Li Po on a Spring Day" translation by Amy Lowell, *Fir-flower Tablets: Poems from the Chinese* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1922), 114. These four lines represent the second half of the original eight-line poem by Du Fu.

⁴⁹ This poem by Wang Wei was composed in the poet's forties and is the 17th poem in this anthology *Wangchuan Ji* (《輞川集》). Wang Wei at this time, although still remaining in his official post, is tired of it and did not care too much about politics. The death of his wife caused him great grief. He bought a house at Wangchuan (a place near Tang capital Chang'an), which originally belong to Song Zhiwen, for his mother to practice Buddhism. Wang Wei and his friends such as Pei Di (裴迪) also gathered together to have parties there. Wang and Pei wrote forty poems about the beautiful sceneries at Wangchuan, which became the content of *Wangchuan Ji*. This poem expresses Wang Wei's reclusive ideal to get away from the secular world, social obligation, fame and gains. Inside the woods at night, he sang and played music alone, with beautiful nature as the only company.

⁵⁰ Innes Herdan, *The Three Hundred T'ang Poems* (Taipei: The Far East Book Co., Ltd, 1973), 379.

⁵¹ Song Zhiwen is a problematic figure in terms of moral standards because of his support of the infamous Zhang brothers during Empress Wu Zetian's reign. He was banished after the downfall of the Zhang brothers. This poem was written during his banishment to the south.

⁵² My translation. These are the last four lines of an original twenty-line poem by Song Zhiwen.

⁵³ The poem was composed by Meng Haoran in the eighteenth year of Kaiyuan (開元十八年) during his travel to Jiangde County, Zhejiang province. The poet was in his forties and was very frustrated at not being able to pass the Jinshi exam and be appreciated by Emperor Xuanzong (玄宗). So, here, the "melancholy" of the stranger, which is the poet himself, was possibly due to either homesickness or disappointed ambition at court.

⁵⁴ Adapted from "Mooring on the River at Chien-te" translation by Innes Herdan, *The Three Hundred T'ang Poems* (Taipei: The Far East Book Co., Ltd, 1973), 385. The calligrapher has reversed the original order of these two couplets by Meng Haoran.

⁵⁵ This poem was written by Wei Yingwu in thinking of his good friend Qiu Dan (邱丹).

⁵⁶ Adapted from translations by Shih Shun Liu, *One Hundred and One Chinese Poems with English Translations and Preface* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1968), 63 and Innes Herdan, *Three Hundred T'ang Poems* (Taipei: The Far East Book Co., Ltd., 1973), 394.

⁵⁷ The exact date when this poem was written by Liu Zongyuan is unknown. It was generally considered to be composed during the time when the poet was banished to Yongzhou (永州). Here in the South, Liu experienced a surprisingly big snow in the winter and wrote this poem around 806. The loneliness, chillness and emptiness depicted in the poem were very suitable for Liu's mood at that time.

⁵⁸ Innes Herdan, *The Three Hundred T'ang Poems* (Taipei: The Far East Book Co., Ltd, 1973), 398.

⁵⁹ Tao Yuanming (Tao Qian) is one of the originators of the reclusive ideal in poetry. Although he had several minor official posts under the influence of Confucianism that encourages people to contribute to the state, he soon found this dream was impossible to fulfill and that he would never be able to get an important position. Also, the life in the court was really not suitable for Tao who had a peaceful and upright heart. The disappointment and the influence of Daoist ideas finally lead him to a reclusive life in the rural area.

⁶⁰ My translation.

⁶¹ The real name and life of Taishang Yinzhe is unknown. This poem is said to be written in reply to an inquirer about the poet's identity. The poet is probably a Daoist believer who lived a reclusive life.

⁶² Shih Shun Liu, *One Hundred and One Chinese Poems* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1968), 113.

APPENDIX B
ILLUSTRATIONS



Figure 1. Jung Hyun-bok, *Using the Peak of the Five Elders as a Brush*. 130x33cm x10, 1972. Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art.

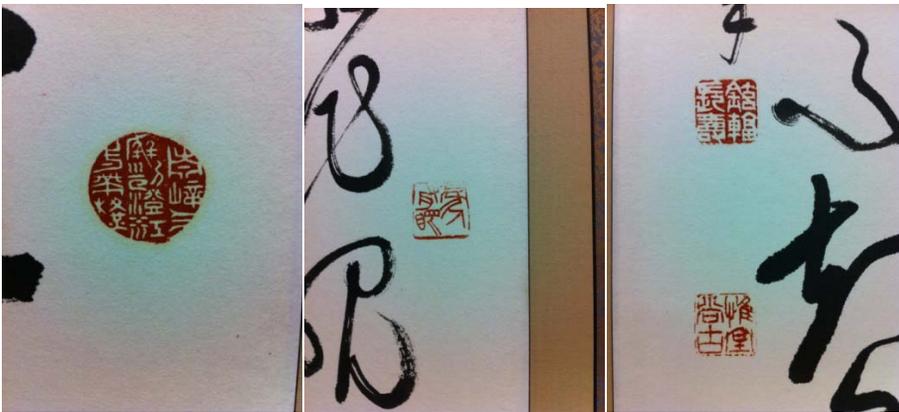


Figure 2. Seals on *Using the Peak of the Five Elders as a Brush*. (from left to right: “青嶂三屏列，澄江一帶橫 (Green Mountains stand like screens, Clear river spreads like a broad strip)”; “旁人有眼 (bystanders have eyes)”; “鉉輻長壽 (long life for Hyun-bok)”, “惟堂尚古 (Yudang admires tradition)”))

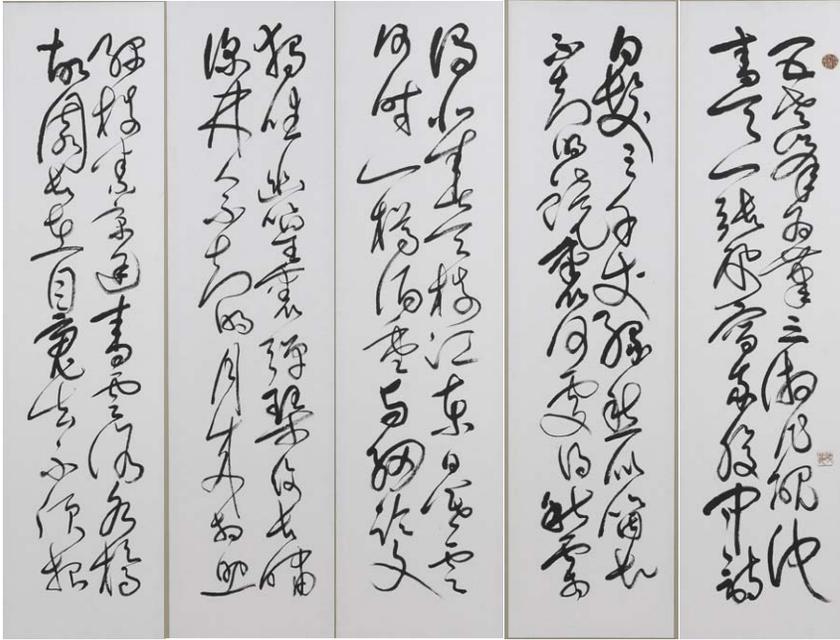


Figure 3. Jung Hyun-bok, Individual panels from *Using the Peak of the Five Elders as a Brush*. (Right to Left: panel 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art.

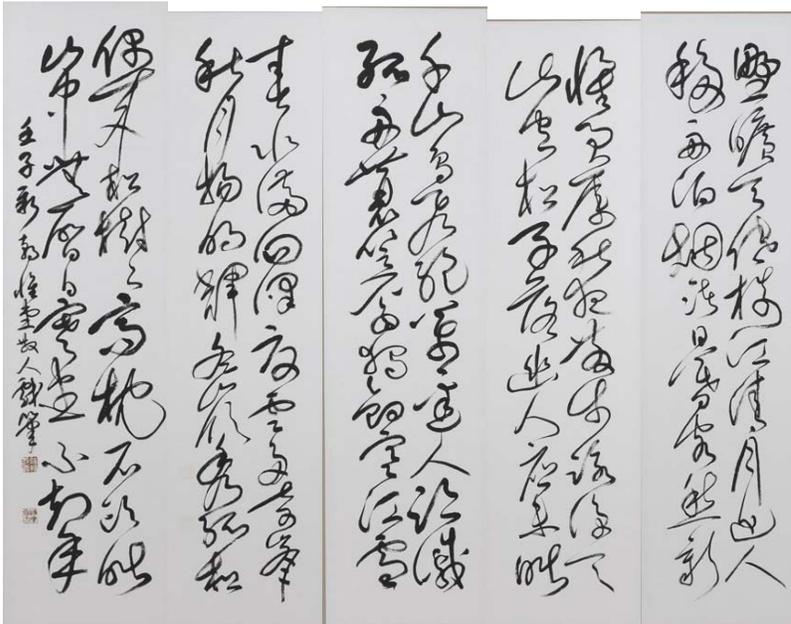


Figure 4. Jung Hyun-bok, Individual panels from *Using the Peak of the Five Elders as a Brush*. (Right to Left: panel 6,7,8,9,10) Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art.

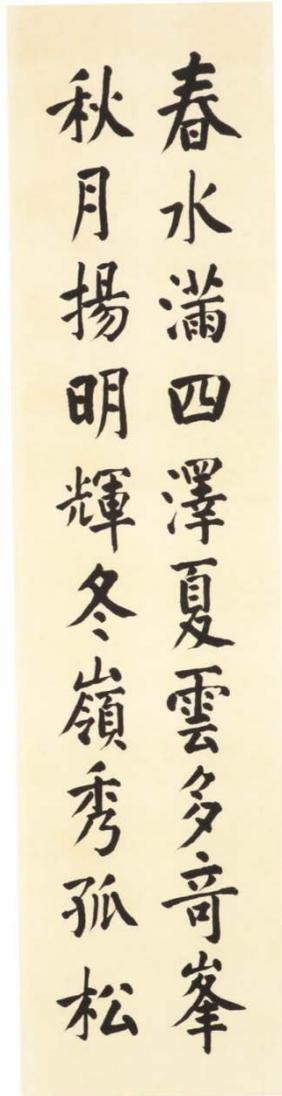


Figure 7. *Four Seasons*, 128x31cm, 1964. Gyeongnan Art Museum.

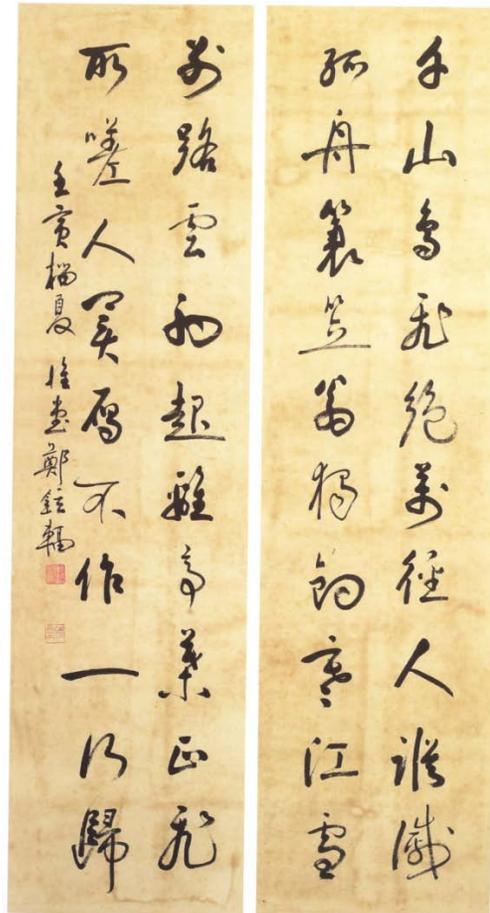


Figure 8. *Snow River*, 123x31cm x2, 1962. Gyeongnan Art Museum.

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