

Dong Qichang 董其昌 (1555-1636. Attributed)

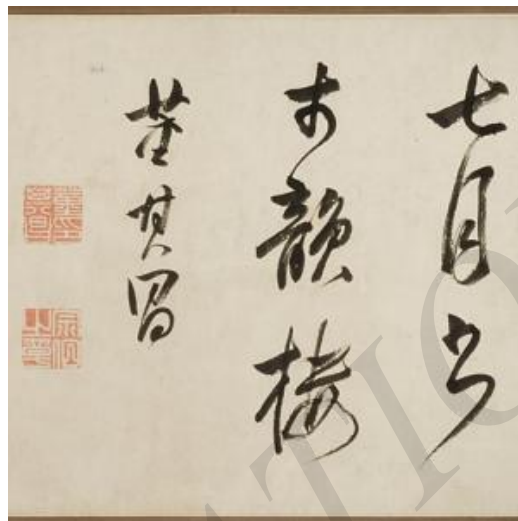
[Four Tang Poems on Morning Court Audience]

[唐早朝詩四首]

[*Tang zaochao shi si shou*]

Calligraphy in running script

Handscroll, ink on paper mounted on silk, 49.4 cm x 1727.2 cm (scroll sheet), 47.8 cm x 1328.7 cm (calligraphy)



Dated 1631

The Mactaggart Art Collection. Access #: 2004.19.20

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ARTIST'S COLOPHON & SIGNATURE

(4 columns in running script, dated August 1631)

In the year of *xin wei*, autumn /, the seventh lunar month, written / in the Rhyme House / [by] Dong Qichang.

辛未秋/七月書/於韻樓/董其昌

ARTIST'S SEALS

Xuan shang zhai 玄賞齋, tall rectangular relief

Dong yin Qichang 董印/其昌, square intaglio

Zongbo zhi zhang 宗伯/之章, square intaglio

POEMS

(82 columns in running script)

[岑參，奉和中書舍人賈至早朝大明宮]

鷄鳴紫陌曙光寒，鶯囀皇州春色闌。金闕曉鐘開萬戶，玉階儼仗擁千官。
花迎劍珮星初落，柳拂旌旗露未乾。獨有鳳皇池上客，陽春一曲和皆難。

[王維，敕借岐王九成宮避暑應教]

帝子遠辭丹鳳闕，天書遙借翠微宮。隔窗雲霧生衣上，卷幔山泉入鏡中。
林下水聲喧語笑，簷前樹色隱房櫳。仙家未必能勝此，何處吹簫向碧空。

[王維，奉和聖制從蓬萊向興慶閣道中留春雨中春望之作應制]

渭水自臨秦塞曲，黃山舊繞漢宮斜。鑾輿迥出千門柳，閣道迴看上苑花。
雲裏帝城凌鳳闕，雨中春樹萬人傢。為乘陽氣行時令，不是宸遊重物華。

[王維，和賈舍人早朝大明宮之作]

絳幘雞人報曉籌。尚衣方進翠雲裘。九天閭闔開宮殿，萬國衣冠拜冕旒。
日色纔臨仙掌動，香煙欲傍袞龍浮。朝罷須裁五色詔，珮聲歸向鳳池頭。

COLLECTORS' SEALS

Zheng Jinde 鄭晉德 (fl. the late 17th – early 18th centuries)

Tiandu Zheng Jinde Fanxiu shi jianding 天都鄭晉德蕃修氏鑑定, square intaglio

Yunge 韻閣, square intaglio

Yunge tushu 韻閣圖書, square intaglio, repeated ten times

Zhang Ze 張澤 (1882-1940)

Shanma 善孖, square intaglio

Huchi xinshang 虎癡心賞, square relief

Zhang Daqian 張大千 (1899-1983)

Cang zhi Daqian 藏之大千, square intaglio

Dafengtang zhangwu 大風堂/長物, tall rectangular relief

Unidentified

Shaoxi 紹/熙, square relief

□ *yin Zonglu* □印/宗魯, square intaglio

NOTE

CALLIGRAPHY attributed to Dong Qichang (1555-1636), dated 1631, bearing one poem by Cen Shen (715-770) and three by Wang Wei (692-761) on their morning court audiences in 758 with the Suzong emperor of Tang (r. 756-762) during the An Lushan Rebellion (755-763).

The Rhyme House (*Yun lou* 韻樓) mentioned in the artist's colophon was a property owned by the Cheng 程 family of Xiaogan 孝感 in today's Hubei Province. Cheng Liangru (1584-1640s) got to know Dong in 1605 in his provincial school of Huguang when Dong inspected it as the Education Intendant.¹ Dong introduced Cheng Liangru to his artistic circle. His friend Wu Zhen 吳楨 (native of She County 歙縣; fl. the 17th century) approved Cheng's encyclopedic commonplace *Dushu kaoding* (1613).² About twenty years later, Wu, together with Chen Jiru 陳繼儒 (1558-1639), another friend of Dong's, prefaced Cheng's another commonplace *Rugu lueji* (1631-1633).³ Cheng

¹ Tu Daoyong 屠道鏞, 1883, 14:7b; For Cheng Liangru's year of birth, see Cheng Zhengkui, "Daren qiye chudu weishou bashou" 大人七月初度為壽八首, in Cheng Zhengkui 1696, 9:1a-2b.

² Cheng Liangru 1613.

³ Cheng Liangru 1633.

Liangru's son, Zhengkui 正揆 (1604-1676; *jinshi* 1631) studied painting and calligraphy under Dong's supervision. Dong highly praised Zhengkui's work.⁴

Dong could have presented some calligraphy and paintings to the Chengs, but the creation of this current piece is questionable. The year 1631 was busy for both Dong and the Chengs. Cheng Liangru took the post of the Magistrate of Xingtang 行唐 County (in today's Hebei Province) in 1628 and two years later transferred to She 涉 County (also in today's Hebei). He was promoted around 1632 to a secretary in the Ministry of Revenue, supervising the royal granaries in Fengyang until his relief of duty in 1635 because of his failed defense against rebels.⁵ In 1631 he remained on his government duties in She County.⁶ The same year witnessed Cheng Zhengkui's success in his metropolitan examination in Beijing where he perhaps continued staying in 1632. On Dong's side, it was not possible for him to visit the Rhyme House in Hubei. He was travelling in Linping 臨平 (in today's Hangzhou) in May, sailing in the Tai Lake in June - August, before celebrating the Mid-Autumn Festival (10 September 1631) in Nanjing. In December Dong departed for Beijing at the Chongzhen emperor's (r. 1627-1644) summon to take his reappointment of the Minister of Rites. He arrived in Beijing in May 1632.⁷ It was in Beijing that Cheng met his master for the first time in the past several years.⁸ No record

⁴ Wang Shiqing 1992, 481; Dong Qichang, "Ba Cheng Taishi shu Jiuge" 跋程太史書九歌 and "You ba Cheng Duanbo shu" 又跋程端伯書, in Dong Qichang 1968, "Rongtai bieji" 容臺別集, chap. 2.

⁵ Tu Daoyong 1883, 14:7b-8a.

⁶ Cheng Liangru 1633, "Zixu" 自敘 that he wrote in his magistrate's office.

⁷ Zheng Wei 1989, 201-207.

⁸ Cheng Zhengkui, "Shu Wang Mojie Jianggan xueji juan hou" 書王摩詰江干雪霽卷後, in Cheng 1696, 23:3a-4a.

about this current piece has been found in Cheng Zhengkui's extant writings, nor his seals on or colophon to this current piece.

The artist's three seals were rarely used and his signature seems suspicious. The same combination of the three seal legends, as far as we located, appears only on a piece in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Accession # 1989.363.100; after 1632), yet in different sizes and a different style of engraving. The noticeable discrepancies are in the radicals man (*ren* 人) and white (*bai* 白) of the character *bo* 伯, the left part of the character *zhi* 之 in seal script, and the upper part of the character *qi* 其.⁹ The square intaglio *Zongbo zhi zhang*, without any broken strokes as in the MMA one, also appears in Japan in a size and style slightly different from that on the Mactaggart piece.¹⁰ In respect of the signature on this piece, the lower part *zhong* 重 of the character *dong* 董 features its first horizontal line (*yi* 一) much shorter than that in his stylized signature.

Compared with genuine pieces by Dong, however, this current piece represents some characteristics of his calligraphy style, specifically the structure of some characters and his way of writing them. Characters such as *xing* 行 (walk), *zhang* 掌 (palm, or control), *yang* 陽 (sun), *he* 何 (what), *yi* 衣 (cloth), *sheng* 聲 (voice, sound), and *tou* 頭 (head) in this piece were written in the same style in his handscroll *Singing Aloud* (*Fangge xing* 放歌行, ca. 1630. Shanghai Museum).¹¹ Meanwhile, the last vertical lines (*gun* 丨) of the characters *xian* 僊 (immortal), *liu* 柳 (willow), *cui* 翠 (green), *zhong* 中 (middle), *sheng* 聲, *xia* 斜 (slanting), *di* 帝 (emperor) and *hua* 華 (luxury) obviously

⁹ Riely 1992, 303 for the three seals; Ho 1992, 238 pl. 65 for the MMA piece.

¹⁰ Saitō Ken 2003, 333.

¹¹ Ho 1992, II:233–235.

resulted from his imitation of Mi Fu 米芾 (1051-1107), as his scroll of the *Rhapsody on the Celestial Horse* (*Tianma fu* 天馬賦, dated 1612. Shanghai Museum) shows.¹² In calligraphy, Dong said, “No vertically descending stroke can be completed without an upturned movement at the end of the stroke” by running brush with its tip concealed and slightly pressed.¹³ Yet such upturned vertical lines mainly appear in his imitations of Mi Fu. In his own creations, especially in those he composed in the 1630s, the vertical line tends to end with a sharp point by running brush with its healthy tip exposed. Some of the above typical features of Dong’s calligraphy could convince Zhang Daqian (1899-1983) and his brother Zhang Ze (1882-1940) of this piece’s authenticity, but its production cannot be historically verified. It could be an imitation of Dong by a competitive seventeenth-century calligrapher who knew Dong’s modeling after Mi.

Zheng Jinde (fl. the late 17th – early 18th centuries, native of She County 歙縣) was the first identified owner of this current piece. He was a poet, though later better known for inventing the Three Kingdoms chess (*san you qi* 三友棋).¹⁴ He could know about the Chengs’ and Dong’s artistic networks in his home county, which made him to treat this piece as genuine by stamping one of his seals ten times.

Forgeries of Dong’s calligraphy, most of which were imitations and ghostwriting, had been common in his life, and sometime he even tacitly approved outstanding fakes as his own works.¹⁵ Textually, this current imitation was made possible as Dong indeed

¹² Ibid., II:208–211.

¹³ Cited in Xu Bangda 1992, 119.

¹⁴ Liu Dakui 1771, 14:25a; Zheng Jinde ca. 1700.

¹⁵ Xu Bangda 1992, 123–127; Qi Gong, “Dong Qichang shuhua dabi ren kao” 董其昌書畫代筆人考, in Qi Gong 2010, III:108–120.

created a couple of pieces bearing some of the four poems transcribed above, with seals affixed different from those on this piece. The last poem by Wang Wei, together with one by Jia Zhi 賈至 (718-772), appeared in a piece that Dong created in 1625.¹⁶ The same poem, with one by Du Fu (712-770), was written in regular script in a piece that was conserved in the Qing court (now in the National Palace Museum in Teibei. Access # Gu-shu-000128-00000).¹⁷ As he said in his colophons to these two pieces, Dong knew well the set of poems on the morning audiences in 758 with the Suzong emperor.

Morning audiences were expected and emphasized, not only in terms of court ritual, but in order to ensure the daily administrative collaboration and communication between the emperor and his ministers. Dong experienced the Wanli emperor's (r. 1572-1620) absence from court audiences. It was reasonable for him to expect regular meetings with the Tianqi emperor (r. 1620-1627), who appointed him the Minister of Rites in Nanjing in 1625, and with the Chongzhen emperor, who reappointed him the same title in Beijing in the winter of 1631. In his pieces, Dong actually conveyed the concern and expectation that had lingered in court officials' minds for nearly one thousand years and that was about to continue into the nineteenth century.

REFERENCE MATTER

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---, 1633. *Rugu lue ji* 茹古略集. Xiaogan: Yun lou. Reproduced in SKCM.

¹⁶ Pei Boqian 1937, 12:20b–21b.

¹⁷ Guoli Gugong Bowuyuan 1965, 1.138.

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