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# Lotus Leaves



**Bencharong: Chinese Export Ware for Siam**  
by Dawn F. Rooney

3

**Kim Jeonghui's Calligraphy**  
by Hyonjeong Kim Han

18

**Around the Asian: Your Dog**  
by Robert Mintz

29

Spring 2019



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# Bencharong: Chinese Export Ware for Siam

by Dawn F. Rooney



Figure 1-1: Interior of two stem plates that are similar in color, motif, and placement of the decoration; Left–*Lai Nam Thong*; Right– Bencharong (diam. 11 cm.) 19th century (Wesley Kirkholm Collection).

**B**encharong is the most colorful and richly decorated ware in the long history of ceramics in Thailand. The Siamese court ordered this enameled Chinese porcelain custom-made to the king's tastes and preferences in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The name derives from two Sanskrit words, *pancha ranga* (five colors) and suggests the number of colors on a piece. It can, though, be more or less than five. Since the number of colors does not always conform to those on Bencharong, perhaps the name was honorific as the number

five resonates throughout Buddhist mythology and Chinese symbolism. *Lai Nam Thong*, a Thai phrase (gold washed pattern) is a variant of Bencharong. As the name suggests, it is distinguished by the addition of gold (gilt) and by three, rather than two, firings. Otherwise, the technology, forms, motifs, colors, and placement of decoration are similar. The bold and vibrant colors cover the exterior in a dense, rhythmical, and repetitive pattern that sets Bencharong apart from other classes of enameled Chinese export ware. See [Figure 1-1](#).



Figure 1-2: Tall covered pedestal jars, *Lai Nam Thong* (h. 20 cm) early 19th century (private collection).

## Patronage

**B**encharong enters the historic trade of Chinese export ware in the eighteenth century when European orders for customized enameled porcelain were flourishing. By then, the Siamese kingdom of Ayutthaya (1351–1767) was a major trading center and a trans-shipment port for maritime commercial trade between east and west. It was ideally located inland from the Gulf of Thailand and offered the ships protection from the monsoons, and rice and fresh water for the crews. Its population surged to include a large number of Chinese who settled at Ayutthaya to support the burgeoning cross-cultural trade. Siam was likely intrigued by the customized enameled porcelain destined for Europe and followed the trend by placing

orders for this type of Chinese export ware with specially designed forms and motifs in colorful enamels.

Bencharong was made initially for exclusive use by the Siamese court but the patronage expanded in the nineteenth century to include Chinese in Siam as their affluence increased. They were assimilated into the Siamese community and appointed to high positions in the court, put in charge of the king's maritime and mercantile matters, and absorbed into the trading system. The Burmese sacked Ayutthaya in 1767 and the capital re-located at Thonburi on the banks of the Chao Phraya River. The new ruler Taksin, the

son of a Chinese father and a Siamese mother, became the self-proclaimed reigning monarch and was backed by the military and supported by the Chinese population. Taksin was deposed in 1782 and replaced with General Chakri who moved the capital across the river and founded the Chakri Dynasty (1782 to present). He took the name Ramathibodi after the first king of Ayutthaya and ruled as Rama I. Each successive king assumed the title of Rama and added an ascending roman numeral. The popularity of Bencharong continued from the reigns of the first through the fifth kings (1782–1910).

## Forms and Usage

Initially, Bencharong was made to be used in the daily lives of Siamese royalty. Thus, the forms are simple and functional. They include containers for serving and eating food, for cosmetics, for betel chewing ingredients, cups and teapots for drinking tea, and tiles for adorning Buddhist temples. Sets of bowls (both covered and uncovered) in graduated sizes contained delicacies for sumptuous meals served to foreign rulers and visiting dignitaries. The jar family is the most varied among Bencharong forms but all were containers. The largest jar has a pedestal with tall sides, a wide mouth, and tiered cover with a knob in the shape of a truncated lotus-bud. This graceful form contained liquids such as water, sauces, soups, or syrups. See [Figure 1-2](#).

Small jars (pots) with tiered gold knobs inlaid with precious gems were containers for cosmetics, oils, powders, and medicines for the dressing stands of female queens, consorts, and young maidens. See [Figure 1-3](#). These small jars were also containers for betel chewing ingredients such as tamarind, ginger, or coriander. See [Figure 1-4](#). The same small pots with similar decoration in gold were part of the royal regalia of Chakri Dynasty kings. A spittoon, another component of a betel set, was used to expectorate the juice and quid. The typical Siamese form is a squat s-shaped body with a wide mouth, a rolled rim, and a sturdy base. See [Figure 1-5](#). Beautiful Bencharong and



SIAMESE MAIDEN

Figure 1-3: Archival postcard (c 1910) depicting HSH Princess Pattanyu Diskul at her dressing table bedecked with small Bencharong jars containing powders, oils, and medicines.

*Lai Nam Thong* tea pots testify to the popularity of the custom of drinking tea amongst the Siamese court and wealthy Chinese merchants. See [Figure 1-6](#) and [Figure 1-7](#).

Bencharong was also used as decoration for some Buddhist temples dated to the Chakri Dynasty. For example, the walls of Wat Ratchabophit in Bangkok are decorated with hundreds of diamond-shaped tiles filled with flowers and scrolls in a myriad of colors — yellow, red, pink, turquoise, blue, green create a richly-decorated tapestry. See [Figure 1-8](#).

In the nineteenth century, the patronage of Bencharong extended to the Chinese as their wealth, status, and assimilation into Siamese society increased. Merchants began ordering new



Figure 1-4: Small jars for female cosmetics and for betel chewing ingredients, *Lai Nam Thong* and *Bencharong* (avg. h. 4.6 cm.), early 19th century (private collection).



Figure 1-5: Spittoon of typical Siamese form, *Lai Nam Thong* (diam. 19 cm.), early 19th century (Wesley Kirkholm Collection).



Figure 1-6: Tea pot of European-influenced form, Bencharong (h. 10.3 cm.), early 19th century (formerly of Wesley Kirkholm Collection).



Figure 1-7: Tea pot of Chinese form and *Lai Nam Thong* decoration (h. 19.9 cm.), early 19th century (Wesley Kirkholm Collection).



Bencharong forms that were suited to Chinese taste and function such as vases and incense burners for ancestral altars. Motifs also included more Chinese symbolism. A typical example of the Chinese impact on Bencharong forms is a so-called *kamcheng* (a Hokkien word) covered jar with a round body, wide mouth and a protruding cover with a knob in the form of a Chinese lion. This type of jar was used to store dry foods such as rice and sugar or pickles. See [Figure 1-9](#).

## Motifs

**B**uddhist and Hindu mythology, Chinese symbolism, folk tales, and the *Ramakien* (Thai version of the great Indian epic, the *Ramayana*) inspired the decoration on Bencharong. The motifs were not unique to Bencharong as many appear on other



Figure 1-8: Bencharong tiles covering a wall at Wat Ratchabophit, Bangkok. Photo by author, 2017.



Figure 1-9: Chinese-influenced covered jar, *Lai Nam Thong* (h. 15 cm.), 19th century (Wesley Kirkholm Collection).

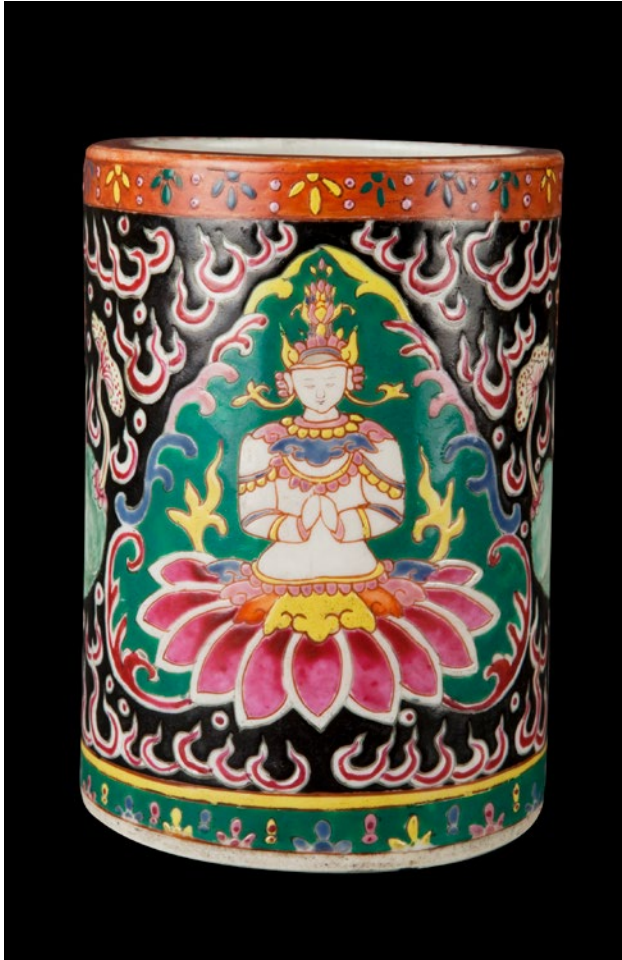


Figure 1-10: *Thep phanom* on a cylindrical brush holder, Bencharong (h. 9 cm.), 19th century (Wesley Kirkholm Collection).

materials such as wood, lacquer, mother-of-pearl, textiles, metals (gold, silver, bronze, copper), mural paintings, and manuscripts. Influence on Bencharong forms draws mainly from metal (silver, gold, copper) whereas textiles made in India for Siam were the major source of inspiration for the motifs.

The *Thep phanom*, a minor deity in one of the lower heavens of Buddhist cosmology, was a beloved mythical figure that appears throughout the 200-year production period. Typically, only his white torso is visible and he sits in a ring of radiating pink lotus petals with arms crossed on his chest and palms held together, fingers pointing upwards in a gesture of adoration; he wears a petal-like collar and elaborate jewelry, a helmet with floral extensions on each side, and a tiered crown tapering to a slender point. See [Figure 1-10](#).

Both Buddhist and Hindu mythology describe a menagerie of real and imaginary creatures, exotic animals, and minor deities who inhabit *Himaphan*, a magical forest on the slopes of Mount Meru in the Himalayas. While human beings can neither see nor enter the forest, we can glimpse some of these exotic inhabitants on Bencharong. A *Norasingha* (man-lion), a minor Buddhist deity with a human torso and arms, the hind quarters of a lion, and the hoofs of a deer is frequently paired with the *Thep phanom* in an alternating pattern. See [Figure 1-11](#). *Garuda*, the king of birds and the mount of the Hindu god Vishnu, is depicted in a frontal stance with a human torso and the head, wings, and talons of an eagle. He wears a tall, pointed hat and his head is turned sideways revealing a pointed beak. See [Figure 1-12](#). *Garuda* was adopted as a protective deity and symbol of the kings of Thailand in the Chakri Dynasty. Thus, Bencharong pieces decorated with *Garuda* are reserved for the king.

Many motifs relate to nature but boundaries between reality and abstraction are often blurred in the artistic depictions. Intricate designs intertwine with complex elements to create an intriguing pastiche inspired by nature. Petals of flowers native to Thailand and China are often set in a geometric motif such as a diamond that swirls around a piece with a pleasing cadence.

A *kranok* (flame or fire) decoration on Bencharong is the most common filler motif on Bencharong and symbolizes the flame of Buddhism. The Bencharong form is stylized with leaf-like appendages emerging from an undulating stem. A typical flame on Bencharong is deep pink outlined in white that looks like flashes of flame on a black background. See [Figure 1-13](#).

## Making Bencharong

**M**aking Bencharong was a two stage process. It began in China at Jingdezhen, northeast Jiangxi province, the porcelain center of the world, then and now. The quarries for essential materials — kaolin (china clay) and china (porcelain) stone — to



Figure 1-11: *Norasingha* (man-lion) on a teapot, Bencharong (h. 24.8 cm.), mid-19th century (Wesley Kirkholm Collection).



Figure 1-12: *Garuda* with human arms and torso; hind quarters of a lion; and hooves of a deer on a covered bowl; Hanuman (monkey king) in blue medallion, Bencharong (diam. 15.1 cm.) (formerly Wesley Kirkholm Collection).

make porcelain are located in the hills east of Jingdezhen. The Chinese call these two interdependent “the bones and flesh.” They are pulverized, mixed with water, refined to a paste-like consistency, and formed into rectangular clay bricks. Then, they are transported by river to Jingdezhen where they are formed into the desired shape on a stick-propelled potter’s wheel. Next, limestone, ash, and water are mixed together to form the glaze that is applied to the form either by pouring or dipping, depending on the size. Each piece is

placed in a cylindrical box made of fired clay (*sagar*) to protect it from excessive heat, exposure to the flames, and dirt in the kiln. See [Figure 1-14](#). The boxes are stacked in vertical rows inside the kiln which is fired to a temperature of 1300 to 1350 degrees centigrade in an oxidizing atmosphere. The result is a glazed, white porcelain form, a “blank,” because it is undecorated. The second stage of production is applying the decoration with enamels over the glaze. The piece is fired in an oxidizing atmosphere to a lower temperature



Figure 1-13: Bowl with flame motif (pink with white outline) on a black background, Bencharong (diam. 11 cm.), 19th century (Wesley Kirkholm Collection).

of 700 to 800 degrees centigrade to fuse the glaze. If gold is applied, it is fired a third time at a lower temperature in a small, inner, dome-shaped muffle kiln that protected the pieces from flames or smoke during firing.

## Dating Bencharong

Establishing a beginning date for Bencharong is problematic because of the scarcity of written and archaeological evidence both in Siam and China. All records were burned when the capital of Ayutthaya was destroyed in 1767. This irretrievable loss is crucial as some historians believe that the earliest date for Bencharong was the late Ayutthaya period, but primary evidence is lacking for confirmation of this theory. Also, no written records of Bencharong production or export have turned up in China. The lack of archaeological records is another obstacle in forming a reliable evolution of Bencharong.

Bencharong is one class of the larger category of enameled Chinese export ware that was sent to the West throughout the eighteenth century, but for those pieces detailed inventories exist giving the date received, types, color and patterns, and the price paid. None of that is available for Bencharong, making it one of the most challenging of all classes of Chinese export ware for dating and establishing a chronology.

The following points, though, provide some guidelines. First, Bencharong cannot be earlier than the known dates of ceramic technical advancements in China. Jesuits introduced the technology to produce low-fired, lead-based enamel colors to Chinese potters in the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century. Soon after, two of these enamels, yellow (*famille jaune*) and pink (*famille rose*) became fashionable for Chinese export ware that was custom-made for Europe. A few pieces of Bencharong with these colors have a Chinese Wanli reign mark (r. 1573–1620) which surely must be apocryphal as it predates the



technology of producing multi-colored enamels. Perhaps it was put on to honor the past.

Second, *A History of Chinese Porcelain* written (in Thai) by Prince Damrong Rajanubhab in 1917 has been used by historians as a source for dating Bencharong.<sup>1</sup> He built a chronology based mainly on the evolution of shapes. Subsequent studies, though, have proven that this is not a reliable methodology because many forms were stable with minor change throughout the entire 200-year production period and, therefore, offer little help in establishing a chronology. The long period of producing porcelains with few technological changes complicates dating.

Third, Pariwat Thammapreechakorn, a leading Thai art historian, has recently compiled the largest and most comprehensive systematic database known for all types of Chinese trade wares found in Southeast Asia from the late Tang Dynasty (second half of the eighth century) to the mid-twentieth century.<sup>2</sup> He grouped the wares

by type, period (based on a comparison with firmly dated wares from burials and shipwrecks), and available archaeological evidence. Then, he considered which types dominated in any given period, their characteristics, provenance, and place of discovery.<sup>3</sup> This methodology has yielded some surprising findings that must be considered along with existing evidence when trying to date Bencharong.

Considering these three points, I propose the following ways to work towards constructing a provisional chronology based on stylistic, historical, and archaeological evidence. Pieces with yellow (or *famille jaune*) and pink (or *famille rose*) date to the early eighteenth century. Bowls without covers predate those with a cover. Bowls with a green enameled interior date between the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. *Lai Nam Thong* appeared in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, slightly later than Bencharong. The use of gold and the exceptionally fine workmanship on these pieces corresponds to a period

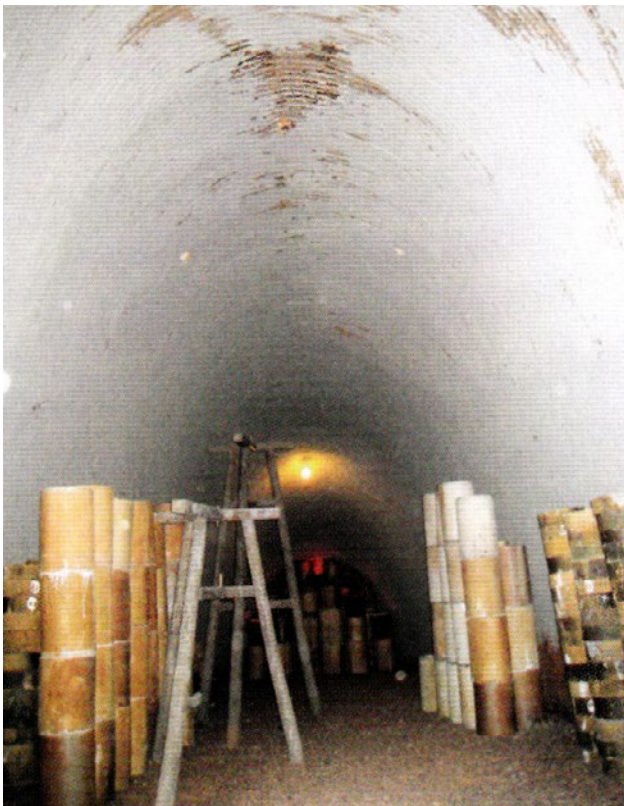


Figure 1-14: Fired clay saggars for protecting porcelain during firing; inside a kiln at Jingdezhen, China, 2011.



Figure 1-15: Bencharong shards from a kiln excavation on the Chang River outside Jingdezhen, China.



Figure 1-16: Candlesticks for a Chinese shrine, Bencharong (h. 20 cm.), late 19th century (Wesley Kirkholm Collection).

of peace and prosperity in Siam which would have supported such expensive and luxurious enameled porcelain.

Findings by Pariwat pinpoint a date of the second quarter of the nineteenth century (Rama II, r. 1809-1824) for pieces with borders at the mouth, shoulder, and foot containing the same motif.<sup>4</sup> A breakthrough discovery for dating Bencharong was made in 2011 by Chinese archaeologists who found enameled shards in a controlled excavation of a kiln site on the bank of a river outside Jingdezhen in association with blue and white shards dated to the Daoguang period (r. 1821-1850) or Rama III (r. 1824-1851). This find provides a firm date for the Bencharong shards. Most of the shards are small cups and medium bowls with a dense and fine grained and with a crystalline appearance. See [Figure 1-15](#). This discovery also confirms that some Bencharong was enameled at Jingdezhen rather than the previous belief that all enameling was done in Guangzhou or perhaps

Fujian provinces in southern China.<sup>5</sup> The kilns at Jingdezhen were destroyed by Taiping rebels in 1855, and Bencharong dating to this brief period in the mid-nineteenth century (Rama IV, r. 1851-1868) is of poor quality with coarse clay, crudely painted motifs, and stoneware rather than porcelain.

The Jingdezhen kilns were restored by the last half of the nineteenth century and Bencharong appeared once again, although it never reached the fine workmanship of the earlier period. Two trends in Bencharong can be tracked to the last half of this century and both reflect cross-cultural connections. One trend is the appearance of larger shapes and previously unknown Bencharong forms, such as incense burners, candlesticks and vases for flowers, used for offerings in Chinese rituals to celebrate deified ancestors and ensure the continued existence of the deceased. See [Figure 1-16](#). The second trend is that from 1850 onwards the Siamese court looked westward



Figure 1-17: Plate combining Siamese, Chinese, and European elements, enameled Chinese export ware (diam. 15 cm.), late 19th century (Wesley Kirkholm Collection).





and entered into trade treaties, missions, and diplomacy that resulted in a shift in court taste and a fascination with things European. At this time we see a combination of European forms decorated with Siamese motifs and vice versa. An example of this cross-cultural phase is a plate with Siamese *Thep phanom*, rather than Mandarin, figures on a red medallion encircling a central motif resembling a Chinese scene, and a busy background of flowers and scrolls enclosed by a decorated border. The elements of the decoration are reminiscent of a rose medallion pattern (c. 1860–1910) on enameled Chinese export ware for Europe. See [Figure 1-17](#). King Chulalongkorn (r. 1868–1910) was the last royal patron of Bencharong and production ceased following his death.

In conclusion, it is clear that there is no closure yet to the dating of Bencharong. Each new piece of evidence requires a reassessment of existing information but, at the same time, it brings us closer to arriving at a full understanding of the period when Bencharong was produced and the Siamese society in which it was used.

## Epilogue

**M**odern Bencharong emerged as a cottage industry in Thailand around 1970. Many small factories are located in Samut Songkhram and Samut Sakhon provinces, southwest of Bangkok, where one can visit the workshops and observe the various production stages in progress. Today, modern Bencharong is a coveted gift that serves as a reminder of the nation's cultural heritage and the royal Siamese tradition of Bencharong in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

An on-line introduction to Bencharong is available at (<http://rooneyarchive.net>), illustrated with ninety pieces in the Jim Thompson collection in Bangkok, where you can also take a three-minute virtual tour of Bencharong in situ at the Jim Thompson House in Bangkok.

**Acknowledgments:** I am grateful to Wesley Kirkholm for allowing me to use photographs of pieces in his Bencharong collection.

**Dawn F. Rooney** is an art historian specializing in Southeast Asia. She is the author of twelve books on the art and culture of the region, including six on ceramics, and guides to Angkor and Sukhothai. Her latest publication is *Bencharong, Chinese Porcelain for Siam*, Bangkok, River Books (2017).

## Notes

1. Damrong Rajanubhab, Prince , *Tambon Khrueang to Lai Thai* [A History of Chinese Porcelain], Bangkok: Funeral of Prince Prida, Commemorative Volume, 1917, Reprint, Bangkok Phra Nakhon, 1964.
2. Pariwat Thammapreechakorn, 'Becharong: Origin, History, use and patronage,' in *Royal Porcelain from Siam: Unpacking the Ring Collection*, Anne Habu and Dawn F. Rooney, eds. Oslo, Norway, Hermes Publishing, 2013, pp. 49–67.
3. Email correspondence received from Pariwat Thammapreechakorn dated 27 January 2019.
4. Personal conversation with Pariwat Thammapreechakorn dated 22 April 2018.
5. Dawn F. Rooney, *Bencharong, Chinese Porcelain for Siam*, Bangkok, River Books, 2017, p. 63.



# Kim Jeonghui's Calligraphy

in the Collection of  
the Asian Art Museum of  
San Francisco

by Hyonjeong Kim Han

## The calligraphy couplet

我書意造元無法  
此老胸中常有詩

*In my writing,<sup>1</sup> meaning and composition  
follow no method;*

*In this aging heart, there ever exist poems.*

**K**im Jeonghui (김정희, 金正喜) (1786–1856) expresses his fundamental artistic belief in this couplet of only fourteen Classical Chinese characters — seven in each line. (Figure 2-1). This article briefly explains what a calligraphy couplet is and how Kim Jeonghui formulated the couplet work now housed in the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco; the short background about the artist and his significances in East Asia; and how the couplet reflects the calligraphy trends in the 18th and 19th centuries in Korea and China; but shows Kim Jeonghui's unique styles.



Figure 2-1: Kim Jeonghui (1786–1856), Calligraphy couplet, approx. 1830-1850, ink on paper, h. 81 in. x w. 17 in., h. 205.7 cm. x w. 43.2 cm. (overall), Gift of Arthur J. McTaggart, 1997.25.1-.2, the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, (Photo courtesy of Asian Art Museum).



The couplet format of calligraphy condenses meaning and message into a limited number of characters, and the required parallel grammatical structure of the lines limits the couplet's form.<sup>2</sup> This kind of couplet was usually displayed in scholars' studies or men's quarters. For scholars during the Joseon dynasty (1392–1910), creating a couplet was sometimes a form or word play or dialogue among friends and fellows. For example, one scholar completed the first line, and then his fellow composed the second and final line following a similar grammatical order. Normally, one of the composers of each line would do the calligraphy and be the author of the couplet. The content of the two lines could be harmonious, or it could reveal a poignant argument. These artistic and intellectual dialogues were not confined to contemporaries. A scholar could choose one line from a favorite poem or a quote from an earlier writer and juxtapose it with his own line using the same number of characters. Some scholars selected two lines from different sources to create new couplets with existing phrases, sometimes combining disparate lines from a single author.

For this couplet now at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, Kim Jeonghui selected the first line from a poem, "Shi Cangshu's Drunken Ink Studio," composed by an eminent Chinese scholar, poet, calligrapher, and philosopher, Su Shi (1037–1101), who has enormously influenced Chinese and other East Asian intellectuals for the past millennium. Su wrote his 16-line poem (7 characters in each line) to decorate the studio of his artist friend, Shi Cangshu, whose pen name was Drunken Ink.<sup>3</sup> Kim Jeonghui's first line in the couplet is the same as the ninth line of Su Shi's poem, except for the fifth character. However, the two characters, 本 (*bon*) in Su Shi's poem and 元 (*won*) in Kim's, have both mean "originally" and are interchangeable.

Why did Kim Jeonghui take his first line from Su Shi's poem? Su Shi emphasized freedom, or spontaneity in artistic practice. Although Su recognized the importance of learning and practice, he placed more value in transcending conventions and being creative. Su Shi's so-called "no method" theory tremendously influenced later

generations. The "no method" theory grows out of Su Shi's emphasis on crafting an 'idea' or a 'mind' He argued that instead of being bound by rules or methods, artists should focus on ideas when creating artwork. This theory sets the context for Kim Jeonghui's second line in the couplet, which demonstrates Kim's general value on ideas and poetry.

Within the limited words in the format of this couplet, Kim Jeonghui conducted a conversation with the non-Korean scholar, Su Shi who lived almost 800 years ago. In East Asia, it was a common practice among literati to memorize, respect, and revise phrases from the classics or famous literature by earlier writers. For literati painters in East Asian countries, imitating the ancient styles was highly regarded. There are several stages of copying styles of the past: from literally copying works to capturing the ideas of earlier masters. In calligraphy, writers not only emulated the masters' calligraphic styles, but also took or revised the content or meaning of earlier sources.

During Kim's time, the first line by Su Shi was highly recognized among scholars, as it states one of Su's mottos. Kim's dialogue with a famous line exhibited his erudition, was a form of intellectual play, but was also a form of reverence for Su's perspectives and ideas. This couplet illustrates the way emulation and elaboration of the past was a scholarly pursuit among literati in the Joseon dynasty.

## Kim Jeonghui, a Renaissance man of Korea

Kim Jeonghui was a Renaissance man of the nineteenth-century Joseon dynasty. One of the most eminent figures in Korea, he was a prominent scholar with numerous followers, an upright politician who was even exiled several times due to his political views, an astute connoisseur with a grand art collection, and an art critic and artist.

Kim Jeonghui was born in an established yangban (upper class) family in the city of Yesan



Figure 2-2: Yi Hanbok (active 20th century), *Copy of Zhu Henian's Sending Chusa to the East*, 1940, colors on paper, 22 x 324 cm, Chusa Museum, Gwacheon, Korea, (Photo courtesy of Chusa Museum).

in Chungcheong Province. The short biography written by Min Kyuho (1836–1878) records a remarkable story about Kim’s birth: that Kim was born after 24 months of pregnancy.<sup>4</sup> Although it is not quite believable, the story shows that Kim Jeonghui was considered special from birth. According to the epitaph of Kim Jeonghui on his tomb stele, at the age of five, Kim wrote words to celebrate the New Year on the front doors of his family house, immediately catching the attention of a famous scholar official, Park Jega (1750–1805). Park volunteered to mentor the five-year-old Kim Jeonghui.<sup>5</sup> Park Jega was a *Geomseogwan*, editor and manager in the royal library *Kyujanggak*, who also examined royal books and managed royal portraits and writings. As one of the early advocates of Practical Learning (*silhak*), Park visited Beijing four times and maintained relationships with more than a hundred Chinese scholars at that time.<sup>6</sup> Park profoundly influenced Kim Jeonghui’s perspectives on various fields including art practice and exposed Kim to new cultural trends from China.

The very next year, when Kim Jeonghui was six years old, his writing caught another eminent scholar’s attention. Kim Jeonghui’s New Year’s message on the front doors of his house impressed Che Jegong (1720–1799), a representative scholar and politician. Che belonged to the opposite intellectual party from that of Kim Jeonghui’s father. Che, seeing Kim’s writing when he passed by, paid a special visit to Kim’s house in order to find out who wrote it. As it was unusual to visit a house of a member of the opposing party, Kim Jeonghui’s father Kim Nokyoung (1766–1837) was surely surprised.<sup>7</sup>

In 1809, Kim Jeonghui passed the national civil examinations at age 23, and accompanied his father to Beijing. Kim Nokyoung had been appointed as one of Joseon’s envoys, who were usually assigned to go to Beijing around the winter solstice. During his 60-day stay in Beijing, Kim Jeonghui was able to meet famous senior figures, including Weng Fanggang (1733–1818) and Ruan Yuan (1764–1849). Both

Chinese scholars were influential politicians, critics, artists, and philosophers. Among the many intellectual movements led by these two Chinese scholars, was “Evidential Studies” (*kaozhengxue*), which influenced Kim Jeonghui. *Kaozheng* scholars valued empirical approaches, objective perspectives, and practical applications of scholarly research. Kim Jeonghui deeply respected Weng Fangang’s knowledge, literature, calligraphy, and connoisseurship. Weng, in turn revered Su Shi so much that he named his studio in Beijing, “Treasuring Su (*baosuchai*).” After returning to Joseon, Kim Jeonghui named his own studio, “Treasuring Weng (*baowengchai*).”<sup>8</sup> Kim and Weng, 55 years apart, were inspired intellectually by Su Shi. Kim Jeonghui even came to be regarded as Su Shi in Joseon. So, it is no surprise that Kim took Su’s line for his calligraphy couplet now in the Asian Art Museum.

Without any doubt, Kim Jeonghui was one of the Chinese scholars’ favorite Joseon friends; eight Chinese intellectuals threw a farewell party for Kim on his last day in Beijing. (Unfortunately, Weng Fangang could not attend, but Ruan Yuan could.) One of Kim’s Chinese artist friends, Zhu Henian (1760–1843), depicted the scene in a painting that he gave to Kim (Figure 2-2).<sup>9</sup> In this painting, the honored guest Kim Jeonghui, wearing his Korean hat, is seated at the center. During and after the event, the participants exchanged poems to commemorate their friendship. The relationships continued after Kim returned to Joseon. For example, Weng Fangang and Kim Jeonghui exchanged letters, and gifts such as books and paintings.

In addition to his in-depth scholarship and connoisseurship, Kim Jeonghui, a Confucian scholar, possessed a profound knowledge of Buddhism. Through his close relationship and debates with his Buddhist monk friend, Choyi (1786–1866), Kim Jeonghui became highly interested in the Buddhist theory of non-dualism (*bulyi*).<sup>10</sup> The monk Choyi, who claimed that Buddhism and tea culture are the same in practice, influenced Kim to learn tea culture. When Kim Jeonghui was exiled to Jeju Island, he developed and established tea cultivation on the island.

Kim Jeonghui was exiled to Jeju from 1840 to 1848 because of his political views. During the Joseon dynasty, Jeju was an extremely isolated island in the south, far from the capital, Hanyang (modern-day Seoul). Unfortunately, three years after he returned to the capital, Kim was exiled again, this time to Bukcheong in Hamgyeong Province in the northern part of the Korean peninsula. After being released from two years of exile in Bukcheong, Kim Jeonghui spent the remainder of his life in Gwacheon, a city close to the capital. Although his exiles to remote villages in the south and north were extremely difficult, some scholars argue that his art developed depth and he evolved his own style during these periods.

Im Changsun (1914–1999), a 20th-century calligrapher and probably the last scholar of traditional studies in Korea, pointed out two reasons why Kim Jeonghui’s art, especially his calligraphy, stood out from the others:

How could Wandang [Kim Jeonghui] succeed in the innovation of calligraphy so audaciously? First, compared to his predecessors, he researched abundant resources and studied deeply the origin of calligraphy. He also continuously copied earlier examples, which was the right way to master calligraphy. Along with these basic practices, his innate talent played a significant role in accomplishing a new stage in calligraphy.

Another important contributor to Wandang’s accomplishment is the unfortunate events in his social and political life. He established his innovative style in calligraphy while in exile. He formed his own calligraphic style by expressing his anger and resentment—sometimes humorously—during the difficult periods of his lifetime.<sup>11</sup>

During his exile in Jeju Island in 1844, Kim Jeonghui created his famous painting, “Bitter Cold (*sehan*)” (Figure 2-3). Kim did not create many paintings, but this one and his orchid painting (Figure 2-4) have become his most celebrated works. “Bitter Cold” depicts a simple, rugged, small house, one old pine tree and three



Figure 2-3: Kim Jeonghui (1786 – 1856), *Bitter Cold*, 1844, National Treasure no. 180, ink on paper, 28 x 68.2 cm., Chusa Museum, Gwacheon, Korea, (Photo courtesy of Cultural Heritage Administration of the Republic of Korea).

young Korean pine trees, drawn with a few brush strokes. The brush strokes are dry but strong, and the speed of the brushwork is well balanced. Kim Jeonghui's Clerical script in the title and the Regular script in the inscription are similar to the strokes in his painting.

Kim Jeonghui's inscription explains that the painting's title, 'bitter cold' comes from the Confucian saying that only when the year becomes bitter cold does one realize how green the pine trees are. This means that during a time of hardship, the genuine and upright qualities of a scholar can stand out. It can also mean that one can find a true friend during an experience of hardship. In East Asian culture, the pine tree, bamboo, and plum tree are grouped as the so-called "three friends in cold," representing upright, true scholars. After five years in Jeju, Kim Jeonghui painted this work and wrote an inscription to thank his student, Yi Sangjeok (1804-1865), who provided him with precious books and gifts during his exile. Kim Jeonghui considered Yi as one of his three friends in his bitter cold time. Yi brought the painting to a gathering in China, where 17 Chinese schol-

ars wrote inscriptions following Kim Jeonghui's inscription.

As Im Changsun mentioned, Kim Jeonghui never ceased his research, calligraphy practice, and painting. He remained open to new styles, and continuously tried to develop his own styles based on extensive practice and research. That he used up 10 inkstones and 1000 brushes in 70 years is evidence of his labors.<sup>12</sup>

Kim Jeonghui was a Renaissance man and international scholar. With his accomplishments in numerous fields, including literature, Buddhism, tea culture, calligraphy, and painting it was difficult to select one or two areas as Kim's specialties. Some critics say Kim was most talented in scholarly literature or Buddhist practices, but others list Kim's calligraphy art as his top achievement. Hong Hanju (1798–1868) highlights Kim Jeonghui's connoisseurship, saying, "Chusa [Kim Jeonghui] was the best in connoisseurship, and then calligraphy follows, and then it is his literature."<sup>13</sup> Before his death at 71 in Gwacheon city, Kim Jeonghui influenced many students in

various areas of art.

## The Calligraphy of Kim Jeonghui

Park Gyusu (1807–1877), a politician, literati, and liberal activist, commented on Kim Jeonghui’s calligraphy:

The style of Chusa [Kim Jeonghui]’s calligraphy has changed many times throughout his life. When he was young, he focused only on the calligraphy of Dong Qichang (Chinese, 1555–1636). In middle age, Kim was close to Weng Fangang, so the strokes in Kim’s writing became thick and somehow lacked their bones. But soon, he also followed Su Shi and Mi Fu (Chinese, 1051–1107), and his calligraphy became stronger. Finally, he obtained the essence of Ouyang Xu (Chinese, 557–641). After returning from exile in Jeju, he did not copy other masters, nor was he restrained [by the rules]. He established his own style by embracing all the great aspects of earlier masters’ styles. His calligraphy exhibits great spirit and energy, and it looks like strong ocean waves. Some people criticize his calligraphy as overly vigorous or arrogant, but they do not know the extreme dignity in his works. That is why I told younger scholars not to take his writing lightly nor hastily learn of his calligraphic style.<sup>14</sup>

Park did not favor Kim’s writing in the style of Weng Fanggang. Rather, Park Gyusu emphasized that Kim Jeonghui, although influenced by Chinese calligraphers, established his own style after his exile. Park’s comment coincides with that of the aforementioned Im Changsun, 20th-century connoisseur and scholar of classical studies. Park’s writing above is also valuable, because one can interpret some of the criticism of Kim’s calligraphy as a reaction to a new style or idea.

Kim Jeonghui was a pioneer who brought a new trend in calligraphy from China. In the late 18th century, a new calligraphy movement had emerged in China. This movement was based on the “Evidential Studies (*kaozhengxue*)” to which Weng and Ruan made significant scholarly



Figure 2-4: Kim Jeonghui (1786-1856), *Orchid*, 19th century, ink on paper, 54.9 cm. x 30.cm., National Museum of the Republic of Korea.

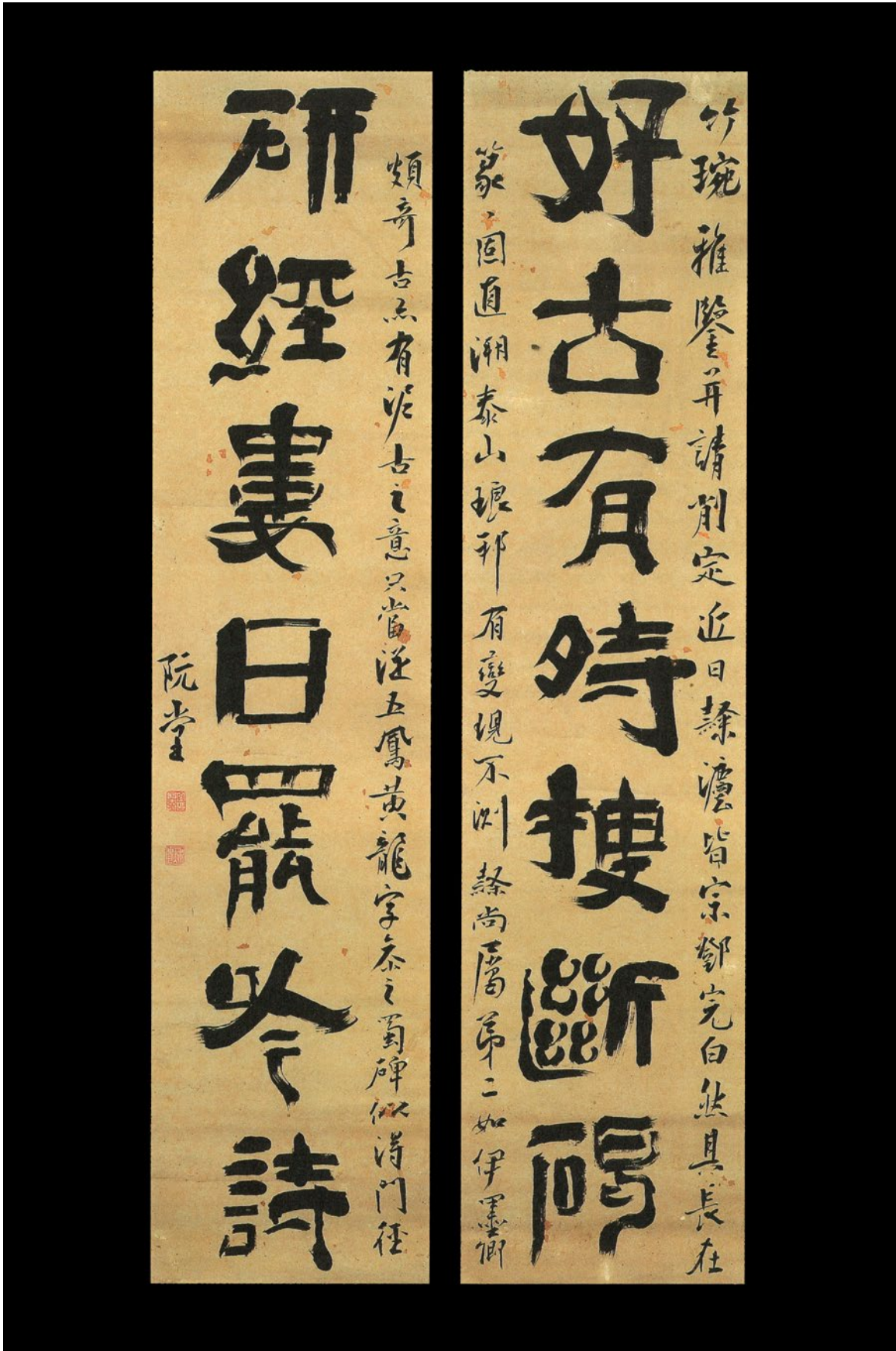


Figure 2-5: Kim Jeonghui (1786–1856), calligraphy couplet, ink on paper, 124.7 x 28.5 cm. (each), Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art (Photo courtesy of Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art).





contributions. Influenced by *kazhengxue*, calligraphers of the new trend considered the calligraphy of earlier masters found on bronze and stone memorials as most genuine or authentic. In contrast earlier writers had studied and valued copies of manuscripts by ancient masters. The former were categorized as the “Stele School (*bei pai*)” whereas the latter were called as “Modelbook School (*tie pai*).”<sup>15</sup> During the late 17th century a new intellectual trend called “Practical Learning (*silhak*)” became popular in Korea. Practical Learning emphasizes realistic and evidential studies, such as science and agronomy. There was more interest in Korean landscapes and people, and paintings depicting Korean people and landscapes became more popular in 18th-century Korea. In this context, Stele School calligraphy was introduced and became favored in Korea. Kim Jeonghui’s research and identification of a stele in Mt. Bukak in Seoul exemplifies his absorption of *kaozhengxue* and the Stele School.<sup>16</sup>

Because writings on bronzes, stele or stone monuments are in seal script or clerical script, many calligraphers of the Stele School created works in these two scripts. Kim Jeonghui’s couplet in Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art, is a good example of Kim Jeonghui’s calligraphic style in the clerical script (Figure 2-5). His creative style and inscriptions on the sides of the two lines give an idea of Kim’s perspective on the seal and clerical scripts. Mentioning Chinese calligraphers Deng Shiru (1743–1805) and Yi Bingshou (1754–1815), who were experts in the seal and clerical scripts, Kim Jeonghui emphasized the importance of studying earlier examples than those that his contemporary calligraphers used. Kim’s contemporaries set the calligraphy of the Chinese Han dynasty (221–206 BCE) as their model, but Kim insisted on looking at much earlier examples from the Chinese Chu state (ca. 703–223 BCE). Kim valued the balance between the creativity—even strangeness—and archaism of this era.<sup>17</sup>

Kim Jeonghui’s calligraphy couplet in the collection of Asian Art Museum of San Francisco is in the semi-cursive script, which he enjoyed writ-



Figure 2-6: Yi Ha-eung (1820 -1898), calligraphy couplet, ink on paper, 193.2 x 39.2 cm. (each), National Museum of Korea, (Photo courtesy of National Museum of Korea).



Figure 2-7: Norakdang building in Yunhyun Palace in Seoul. (Photo by Ria Kim, KRIART).

ing. Compared to other calligraphers' semi-cursive script calligraphy, this work by Kim is bolder and has more strength. The vivid contrast of thick and thin strokes as well as that of dry and wet inks are well demonstrated in the two lines. There is no earlier example for comparison, as Kim's own style is presented in this couplet. Therefore, it is natural that his calligraphy is called "style of Chusa (*chusa-che*)" and enormously influenced his followers. Chusa is one of Kim's more than a hundred pen names. On the middle left side of the left scroll of the Asian Art Museum's couplet are Kim's two seals. The two are read as the "seal of Kim Jeonghui" and "Wandang." (Wandang is another of Kim's pennames.)

Kim Jeonghui's calligraphic style "*Chusa-che*" influenced numerous calligraphers of the following generations. Gwon Donin (1783–1859), Heo Ryon (1809–1892), and Yi Ha'eung (1820–1898) tried to emulate Chusa style, but, as many critics have pointed out, they did not attain the level of

Kim Jeonghui. Yi Ha'eung, regent and father of King Gojong (1852–1919), studied calligraphy and orchid painting under Kim Jeonghui. Interestingly, Yi created a couplet in the semi-cursive script with the same lines as Kim's work in the Asian Art Museum (Figure 2-6). Yi Ha'eung seems to have favored this couplet, as he included it when he engraved important literary lines on planks to put on the pillars of the Norakdang building in Yunhyon Palace in Seoul, (Figure 2-7) where Yi stayed in his later years. See Figure 2-8.

## Epilogue

Just as Kim Jeonghui represents the worlds of intellectuals, politicians, religious figures, tea masters, artists, and connoisseurs, his couplet in the Asian Art Museum illustrates many aspects of Korean calligraphy in the late Joseon dynasty. Kim Jeonghui's calligraphy is highly esteemed, and



Figure 2-8: Yi Ha-eung (1820 -1898), calligraphy couplet on pillars of Norakdang Yunhyun Palace in Seoul, Korea (Photos by Ria Kim, KRIART).



many aspire to collect his works. During his time, not only Koreans, but also Chinese and Japanese collectors were eager to obtain his works from Korea. Although several written records by Kim testify to the high demand for his art, Sang Yuhyun (1844-1923), who visited Kim Jeonghui's house in Gwacheon in 1856 just before Kim's death, and later recorded his thoughts in an essay, said:

The best calligrapher in our country is no doubt Chusa Kim Jeonghui. Everyone likes his style and extremely cherishes his albums. Qing [Chinese] people purchase a lot of his calligraphy works, and so do the Japanese. That is why his calligraphy has become so valuable and rare, and the price easily reaches about a hundred won. As my eyes for art are not keen, I do not know the reason why Kim's calligraphy is so precious.<sup>18</sup>

More recently, You Hongjune, Korean art historian, compared Kim Jeonghui with the Korean international celebrities of today in a newspaper interview. He described Kim Jeonghui as the first and foremost figure in Korean Wave (*Hanryu*), the Korean pop trends which have swept the international world.<sup>19</sup>

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## Notes

1. The character, 書 (seo) can be translated as writing or calligraphy. Here I select 'writing' as a broader sense.
2. For the literary aspect of calligraphy couplets, refer Ronald Egan, "Literary Aspects of Calligraphy Couplets," in Ronald Egan, Herald Mok, Peter C. Sturman, and Jason Kuo, *Double Beauty: Qing Dynasty Couplets from the Lechangzai Xuan*

3. SSSJ 6. 235–6; for the translation and explanation of this poem in the context of Su Shi's ideas on poetry, refer Shiyi Yang, *Dialectics of Spontaneity: The Aesthetics of Ethics of Su Shi (1037–110) in Poetry*, Sinica Leidensia 122, Leiden, Boston; Brill, 2015, 57–60.
4. Min Kyuho, "Wandang Kimgong sojeon (Short Biography of Wandang Master Kim)," 1868 in *Wandang jeonjip (Compilation of Wandang's Writings)*, Seoul; Youngsaengdang, 1934, volume 1, 5; translation of the biography into Korean can be found in Korean Classics Translation DB. [http://db.itkc.or.kr/dir/item?itemId=BT#/dir/node?dataId=ITKC\\_BT\\_0614A\\_0010\\_000\\_0070](http://db.itkc.or.kr/dir/item?itemId=BT#/dir/node?dataId=ITKC_BT_0614A_0010_000_0070)
5. The eulogy was written by Kim Jeonghui's descendent, Kim Seungryol. Kim Jeonghui's stele and the tomb are now in Yesan, Kim's birth place.
6. *Silhak* was a movement emphasizing education in the natural sciences, including agronomy and engineering.
7. Hongjune You, *Chusa Kim Jeonghui; Saneun nopgo badaneun gipne* (Chusa Kim Jeonghui: Mountains are High and Sea is Deep), Seoul: Changbi, 2018 30.
8. Hongjune You, *ibid*, 71–72.
9. The painting, which is believed to be in a private collection in Korea, has been known to the public only through a black and white photograph. Yi Hanbok copied the original painting by Zhu Henian, and the copy once was in the collection of Japanese scholar, Fujizuka Jikashi (1879–1948) who conducted extensive research on Kim Jeonghui.
10. For Kim Jeonghui's Buddhism, refer Yu Hoseon, "Chusa Kim Jeonghui simunhak-eu bulgyojeok segyeinsik (Buddhist world view in Chusa Kim Jeonghui's literary works)," in National Museum of Korea, *A Great Synthesis of Art and Scholarship: Painting and Calligraphy of Kim Jeong-hui*, Seoul; National Museum of Korea, 2006, 343–356.
11. Im Changsun, "Hanguk seoye gagwan (Overview of Korean Calligraphy)," in Joongang ilbosa, *Hanguk-eu mi* (Beauty of Korea), vol. 17, Seoul; Joongang ilbosa, 1985, 189–190.
12. National Museum of Korea, *A Great Synthesis of Art and Scholarship: Painting and Calligraphy of Kim Jeong-hui*, Seoul; National Museum of Korea, 2006, 190.
13. You Hongjune, *ibid*, 495.
14. Park Gyusu, *Hwanjejip* (Writings of Park Gyusu), gwon 11, 32–33.
15. For the Stele school calligraphy, see "Peter C. Sturman, "Aesthetic Dimensions of the Clerical Script." In Ronald Egan, Herald Mok, Peter C. Sturman, and Jason Kuo, *Double Beauty: Qing Dynasty Couplets from the Lechangzai Xuan Collection*, Chinese University of Hong Kong Art; 2003, 31–37.
16. You Hongjune, *ibid*, 99–101.
17. Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art, *Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art: Traditional Art Collection*, Seoul; Leeum, 2011, 266–267; You Hongjune, *ibid*, 198–201.
18. You Hongjune, *ibid*, 504.
19. Interview with You Hongjune; "Chusa is the father of Han Wave stars. This time, I properly wrote his life of ups and downs" in Chosun ilbo, April 23, 2018.

# Your Dog

by Robert Mintz



Figure 3-1: *Your Dog* (2017) by Japanese artist Yoshitomo Nara 奈良美智 (b. 1959)

The entry to the Asian Art Museum had been home for the last two and a half years to the colorful and auspicious *Dragon Fortune* (2014) by Taiwanese artist Hung Yi 洪易 (b. 1970). The community became accustomed to the sculpture, and a regular stream of families and individuals posed with it capturing some of the auspicious messages inscribed on its surface. Popular though the work was, in 2018 the museum agreed to lend the sculpture to another Bay Area institution. Quickly we began to look for a successor work to occupy this important location.



It came to the attention of Contemporary art curator, Dr. Karen Oen that a newly fabricated edition of *Your Dog* (2017) by Japanese artist Yoshitomo Nara 奈良美智 (b. 1959) would become available for loan to the museum late in the fall of 2018. This, we all agreed, would be a worthy sculpture for the entrance to the museum; after all 2018 was the year of the dog. After much negotiation and planning, the work arrived on Osher Plaza, the newly named steps in front of the Asian Art Museum, in early December. It was carefully uncrated, lifted into place, and secured to its platform as the daily river of pedestrians headed to work in the offices of Civic Center. A substantial audience watched our every move. Many of them may have been waiting for one of the hourly buses to the Graton Casino, and this was much more activity than they typically get to see on Larkin Street. They all knew something new was coming to the neighborhood, and they wasted no time in offering the first rounds of commentary. “How cute,” “aww,” and “it’s a puppy,” were joined by a few choruses of “you can’t block the sidewalk; I’m writing to the mayor about this!” and “that is not art; it’s terrifying!” After about eight hours of installation, the sculpture was in place, and the public was able to begin living with this new addition to the urban landscape. The cries of outrage and praise largely quieted down, and a steady stream of dog-walkers began to photograph themselves in front of the oversized white puppy presumably to be able to share a lighthearted moment with their friends.

The work itself is one that can be read and experienced in many different ways. It is at once charming, inviting, playful, threatening, off putting, and to some insulting. It simply depends on each individual observer’s point of view and their relationship to art, to culture, to public space, and of course to dogs.

Nara’s relationship to dogs and their presence in his art has a long history. In interviews about his work he has often remarked on his childhood and the experience of growing up without many

people around.<sup>1</sup> In his own words, Nara says he grew up lonely with no one to talk to, so he “talked to the trees, to the dog and the pigs...”<sup>2</sup> This is a key part of Nara’s backstory that plays out in his paintings, his sculpture, and in his children’s book, *The Lonesome Puppy*, 2008.<sup>3</sup> Some of the earliest versions of the distinctive character we see in *Your Dog* appear during the 1990s while Nara worked out of his studio in Cologne, Germany. There he carefully crafted his persona and his characters and made sure his story was one that would be sustained through all of his art.<sup>4</sup>

Nara’s distinctive style emerged during his studies at Aichi Prefectural University where he pursued both his undergraduate and graduate degrees in Fine Art. He continued to refine his distinctive dog over the decades always retaining its oversized feet, upright tail, dangling, floppy ears and distinctly canine smile. The charming quality of *Your Dog* is encoded as an essential part of this character. Recognizable from a great distance, the sculpture does not offer a portrait of a dog, or a generic dog, but rather like the character of Mickey Mouse, the sculpture is Nara’s dog.

It is within the features of Nara’s dog character that the vague sense of inviting playfulness emerges. The scale of the dog, its oversized feet, upright tail, and long, dangling ears all convey ideas we cherish in real dogs. They are simplifications that, like the best caricatures, capture something essential about the playfulness of puppies. Those who like dogs are drawn to these traits and feel an instant affection for this big new friend.

Sadly though, with friendship comes the potential for loss and trauma. Among the traumas that Nara cites in reflecting on his youth is one of abandoning his dog.<sup>5</sup> The scale of the sculpture emphasizes the dog’s presence and carries with it the capacity to scare the casual visitor. Nara has compared the large scale of this and other sculptures to the experience we have as children

when we confront a big animal. Looking up to the face and head of this dog emphasizes our own relative size and our vulnerability. We are at once placed in a position of having to think about how we are going to interact with this big creature who we may love or we may need to hurt.

The challenge offered by *Your Dog* is off-putting to some. It provokes them to say that it is simply trite, that it has little to offer through its slick enameled aluminum surface and childish sleepy eyes, or that it is nothing more than a commercial ploy. What they object to is in part the essential character of Nara's art. His work quite deliberately challenges the adult mind to confront the nature of the process of maturation and the inevitable feeling of a loss of childhood innocence. Perhaps even more distressing, Nara's works suggest that this innocence never really existed. Throughout his work, Nara "explicitly and repetitively thematizes the 'child' as an internal formation and as an external object in mass culture and commodity life."<sup>6</sup> The friendly dog, while pleasant on its surface, makes us think about the unrelenting forces of our commercial world and the intrinsic narratives that define adulthood that we all take for granted. When decrying the work as trite or childish, we are responding directly to what Nara has offered up for us all to reflect upon as we dismiss his imposing creation.

Works like *Your Dog* generally receive the label of Japan's Neo Pop movement.<sup>7</sup> This identifies Nara and his works with several widely recognized art world phenomena including Takashi Murakami, Jeff Koons, and Damien Hirst. While emerging from similar roots, Nara's work offers something a little different from these post-pop titans. The inward turn that his works demand and the obsession with a kind of introversion places the work in a subgenre that has been called "Micropop."<sup>8</sup> Almost a decade older than the other Japanese Micropop artists, Nara serves as a kind of godfather to this generation of artists born during Japan's economic boom years. His works, like *Your Dog*, are able to reach

across generations to touch on a sense of childhood loss, fear, joy, and wonder, all while firmly standing on ground that has traditionally been the exclusive purview of the fine (mature) arts.

**Dr. Robert Mintz** has been the Deputy Director, Art and Programs at the Asian Art Museum since 2016. He is a scholar of the history of Japanese art with a particular interest in the connections between Japanese art and the arts of other cultures and traditions.

### Note

1. Hideo Furukawa. "An interview with Yoshitomo Nara," *Asymptote*, <https://www.asymptotejournal.com/interview/an-interview-with-yoshitomo-nara/> (accessed February 15, 2019).
2. Aimee Lin. "Yoshitomo Nara," *ArtReview Asia*, [https://artreview.com/features/summer\\_2015\\_ara\\_yoshitomo\\_nara/](https://artreview.com/features/summer_2015_ara_yoshitomo_nara/) (accessed February 14, 2019).
3. Nara Yoshitomo. *The Lonesome Puppy*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2008.
4. Adrian Favell. *Before and after Superflat: A short history of Japanese contemporary art 1990-2011*, Hong Kong: Blue Kingfisher Limited, 2011, pp. 25–26.
5. Midori Matsui. "Yoshitomo Nara, 2001," *Index Magazine*, [http://www.indexmagazine.com/interviews/yoshimoto\\_nara.shtml](http://www.indexmagazine.com/interviews/yoshimoto_nara.shtml) (accessed February 12, 2019).
6. Marilyn Ivy. "The art of cute little things," *Mechademia 5: Fanthropologies*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013, p. 5.
7. Sawaragi Noi, "On the battlefield of 'Superflat': Subculture and art in postwar Japan," Murakami Takashi ed., *Little Boy: The arts of Japan's exploding subculture*, New York: Japan Society, 2005, pp. 186–207.
8. Midori Matsui. *The age of micropop: The new generation of Japanese artists*. Tokyo: Parco Co. Ltd., 2007.



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