

Su Shih's Copy of the *Letter on the Controversy over Seating Protocol*

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During the Northern Sung dynasty (A.D. 960–1127), the early Neo-Confucian activists waged a campaign to promote Yen Chen-ch'ing (709–785), the illustrious calligrapher, statesman, and Confucian martyr of the eighth century, as the “patriarch” of literati calligraphy. This elite group of scholar-officials revived the calligraphic style of Yen Chen-ch'ing as one aspect of their program to establish new cultural and political standards based on Confucian thought, employing that style as a rallying standard in their struggle to assert the autonomy of their class against the throne. Although their campaign was waged on other fronts such as literature, painting, and philosophy, employing or advocating the calligraphic style of Yen Chen-ch'ing became an identifying mark of the Neo-Confucians.

The calligraphic style against which they rebelled had been promoted as the court style since it was first sponsored by Emperor T'ai-tsung (r. 626–649) of the T'ang dynasty (618–907). The style was that of Wang Hsi-chih (307–365), a Taoist aristocrat of the Six Dynasties period (221–589), whom centuries of imperial sponsorship have made the most celebrated calligrapher in the Chinese tradition. The Six Dynasties period was a time of tremendous aesthetic creativity and sophistication in the Chinese culture of the south, and to Emperor T'ai-tsung, a northerner who initiated the T'ang dynasty by reuniting the two halves of China by military force, the calligraphic style of Wang Hsi-chih was the embodiment of its superior cultural standard. One of his methods for reintegrating the country was to study Wang Hsi-chih's style himself, to have copies of Wang's works distributed among the nobility and high officials, and to have the Wang style taught at the imperial academy.

Based on the establishment of the calligraphic style of Wang Hsi-chih as the classical tradition in the T'ang dynasty, the early rulers of the Northern Sung furthered the imperial promotion of his style, as a means to legitimize their political and cultural

status. Emperor T'ai-tsung (r. 976–997) instructed the calligraphers of the Han-lin Academy to practice the style of Wang Hsi-chih, and he had the scattered extant works of Wang Hsi-chih brought back into the palace. He ordered a set of engravings made from the imperial calligraphy collection, known as the *Model Letters in the Imperial Archives in the Ch'un-hua Era* [990–995] (*Ch'un-hua ko t'ieh*^a), of which five of the ten volumes comprised pieces by Wang Hsi-chih and his son, Wang Hsien-chih (344–388). Ink rubbings from the set of engravings were given to the nobility and to officials on the occasion of their promotions.

As the alternative to Wang Hsi-chih, the Sung Neo-Confucian officials chose as their calligraphy patriarch the mid-T'ang statesman Yen Chen-ch'ing, a man whose Confucian conduct and background they could identify with and admire. Yen Chen-ch'ing earned his reputation as an exemplary loyalist when he helped to preserve the dynasty during the An Lu-shan Rebellion (755–763); some thirty years later, he was martyred at the age of seventy-six for refusing to turn his coat and serve under another rebel leader. Yen Chen-ch'ing's ancestors, many of whom gained considerable fame as scholars, were never hereditary aristocrats, and Yen Chen-ch'ing himself was a conscientious official who practiced the arts strictly in an amateur capacity. His calligraphic style, moreover, provided an obvious contrast to that of Wang Hsi-chih: where Wang Hsi-chih's regular script was seen as “clever,”^b modulated, and dynamic, Yen Chen-ch'ing's was considered “clumsy,”^c unmodulated, and four-square. Yet cleverness was not an aesthetic ideal of the Sung Neo-Confucian officials. They believed it betokened a striving for effect and was evidence of insincerity in the personality of the calligrapher, whereas clumsiness showed a lack of artifice and therefore demonstrated honesty. Through the age-old equation of style and personality, the Neo-Confucians evoked the style of Yen Chen-ch'ing to represent themselves as honest

and loyal officials, in opposition to those whom they accused of clinging to all debased latter-day forms of tradition, in both politics and culture.

The original propagandist for the calligraphy of Yen Chen-ch'ing as the standard for the Neo-Confucian scholar was the controversial scholar and statesman, Ou-yang Hsiu (1007-1072). He focused his contemporaries' feelings of dissatisfaction with the court-sponsored Wang style and their admiration for the style of Yen Chen-ch'ing into a competition between the two as representatives of an imperial style and a scholar style by ignoring the former and praising the latter in his collecting and criticism. A distaste for the style of Wang Hsi-chih was by no means his own invention. Most probably he took his cue from the caustic criticism of the style of Wang Hsi-chih by his much-beloved model in literature, Han Yü (768-824), who once stated that "the vulgar calligraphy of [Wang] Hsi-chih makes a display of its ingratiating appearance."¹ This judgment was quite well known to calligraphy connoisseurs of the Northern Sung, and the term *tzu mei*,^d "ingratiating appearance," became a synonym for the style of Wang Hsi-chih.² To Ou-yang Hsiu, whose youthful discovery of the literary works of Han Yü shaped his life as a man of letters, Han Yü's disapproval of the style of Wang Hsi-chih and his association with the circle of Yen Chen-ch'ing may have suggested the rough outline for the conflict between imperial and scholar-sponsored styles that Ou-yang Hsiu fostered.

Ou-yang Hsiu's political allies were also admirers of the style of Yen Chen-ch'ing. His fellow partisans during the minor reform of 1043-1044 considered it the appropriate calligraphic style for the Neo-Confucian official, for Han Ch'i (1008-1075) himself studied it,³ while Fan Chung-yen (989-1052) coined the famous phrase, "sinews of Yen [Chen-ch'ing], bones of Liu [Kung-ch'üan]" to identify the stylistic references in the calligraphy of their friend, the poet Shih Man-ch'ing (994-1041).⁴

Other colleagues of Ou-yang Hsiu were interested in Yen Chen-ch'ing's works from epigraphical and historical standpoints. Ou-yang Hsiu shared an interest in epigraphy with Liu Ch'ang (1019-1068) and the study of T'ang history with Sung Min-ch'iu (1019-1079).⁵ During the Chia-yu era (1056-1064), Sung Min-ch'iu compiled the first collection of the writings of Yen Chen-ch'ing, the preface for which was written by Liu Ch'ang.⁶ During this same period, Ou-yang Hsiu was collecting and writing colophons for ink rubbings of the stone inscriptions by Yen Chen-ch'ing.⁷

In the realm of calligraphy, Ou-yang Hsiu's close friend Ts'ai Hsiang (1012-1067) was a student and

interpreter of the style of Yen Chen-ch'ing and the one artist most responsible for making the study of the style of Yen Chen-ch'ing part of the standard curriculum of future generations of scholars.⁸ Although Han Ch'i and Shih Man-ch'ing practiced the style of Yen Chen-ch'ing in the 1030s and 1040s, the drive to establish orthodox lineages and patriarchs in literature and the arts only gained overwhelming force with Ou-yang Hsiu's triumph in instituting Han Yü's ancient-style prose as the required style for the national examinations in 1057. Where Ou-yang Hsiu promoted Yen Chen-ch'ing in his epigraphy collection and the accompanying colophons, Ts'ai Hsiang was the one who studied from that collection, using his considerable artistic ability and his dual status as one of the heroes of the minor reform and as a favorite calligrapher of Emperor Jen-tsung (r. 1022-1063) to make the style of Yen Chen-ch'ing a workable tool in the Sung context. The calligraphic style of Yen Chen-ch'ing was brought into vogue together with the literary style of Han Yü, and when these styles were then aggressively championed by the protégés of Ou-yang Hsiu, such as Su Shih (1036-1101), they very soon became orthodox standards.⁹ Indeed, Su Shih declared (inaccurately) that the style of Yen Chen-ch'ing had actually triumphed over that of Wang Hsi-chih:

In the T'ang, Yen [Chen-ch'ing] and Liu [Kung-ch'üan] were the first to combine ancient and modern brush methods and thereby create the ultimate transformation of calligraphy. And since they were taken as clan teachers throughout the subcelestial realm, the styles of Chung [Yu] and Wang [Hsi-chih] have become increasingly insignificant.¹⁰

Although the style of Yen Chen-ch'ing was elevated to the status of a standard for the literati, the importance of Wang Hsi-chih can hardly be said to have waned, certainly not to insignificance. Su Shih's theoretical stance on the style of Yen Chen-ch'ing, then, may be described as fervently orthodox, in line with that of his sponsor, Ou-yang Hsiu. What is interesting about his copy of Yen Chen-ch'ing's *Letter on the Controversy over Seating Protocol*,^e as we shall see, is how it reveals his approach as an artist to the calligraphic style of Yen Chen-ch'ing in practice.

YEN CHEN-CH'ING'S LETTER ON
THE CONTROVERSY OVER SEATING PROTOCOL

In the summer of 762, Emperor Tai-tsung (r. 762-779) of the T'ang dynasty succeeded to the throne; shortly thereafter Yen Chen-ch'ing was called back to court, for Liu Yen (715-780), the Vice Minister of Revenue, had nominated Yen Chen-ch'ing as his own replacement, enlisting him as an ally in his

struggle against the opposing clique at court. This clique was headed by the highest-ranking outer-court official, Grand Councilor Yüan Tsai (d. 777), and the most influential eunuch in the inner court, Inspector of the Armies Yü Ch'ao-en (d. 770). Early in 764, Yen Chen-ch'ing clashed for the first time with Yüan Tsai. When the imperial court had fled from Ch'ang-an to escape the invading Tibetan army in the autumn of 763, Yen Chen-ch'ing was appointed Vice Director of the Right at the temporary court in Shan-chou. Two months later, as the court was preparing to return to the capital, Yen Chen-ch'ing suggested to the emperor that he offer sacrifices at the tombs of his royal ancestors before reoccupying the palace. Yüan Tsai publicly rebuked Yen Chen-ch'ing, who lost his temper and accused Yüan Tsai of abuse of office. Back at court, Yüan Tsai plotted against Yen Chen-ch'ing and succeeded in having most of his official appointments removed. In defense, Yen Chen-ch'ing memorialized the throne concerning Yüan Tsai's treachery, to little avail.

Throughout the same year, the list of Yü Ch'ao-en's offenses against the sensibilities of the outer-court officials continued to grow. Yü Ch'ao-en had earned his position of prominence in Emperor T'ai-tsung's court by receiving and protecting the emperor in Shan-chou when the court had been forced to flee from the Tibetans. After the return, Yü Ch'ao-en was allowed to retain his post as Commander of the Army of Divine Strategy, which was incorporated into the palace guards, to provide a ready military force to the throne. The regular officials were gravely concerned by the unhappy possibilities offered by a eunuch in such a powerful position, and Yü Ch'ao-en's personal behavior, such as his vulgar displays of wealth and inappropriate meddling in other court institutions, caused considerable revulsion.

But not all the regular officials distanced themselves from Yü Ch'ao-en; one of those who curried favor with the eunuch commander was Kuo Ying-i (d. 765), a career military officer who had offered his troops to Emperor Su-tsung (r. 756-762) in the desperate early days of the An Lu-shan Rebellion. Since then he had moved rapidly up through several important military posts, including Military Commissioner of the Army of Divine Strategy, and when Emperor Tai-tsung took the throne, he was transferred to high civil offices. In 763, he was made Vice Director of the Right, and he joined the clique of Yüan Tsai.

Evidently, as Vice Director of the Right, Kuo Ying-i had the power to make arrangements for special court functions, for two of these are the

ostensible subject of the lengthy letter, known to posterity as the *Letter on the Controversy over Seating Protocol*, that Yen Chen-ch'ing wrote to Kuo Ying-i in the eleventh month of 764. In this letter, Yen Chen-ch'ing indicts Kuo Ying-i for allowing his allegiance to his clique to lead him astray in the enactment of proper court ritual. It is a singular display of wrath and righteous indignation in defense of the Confucian norms, fueled by personal offense and the longstanding rivalry between the two cliques. Yen Chen-ch'ing's letter opens with a flattering résumé of Kuo Ying-i's career:

It is said that "the finest [type of a thing that dies but does not decay] is an established virtue, while the next best is an established meritorious achievement . . . these are what is meant by 'that which does not decay.'" ¹¹ Further, I have also heard that the grand councilor is the superintendent of all the officials, while the feudal lords and kings are examples for their people. Now your eminent and imperishable meritorious achievements stand as an example to the people. How but through your talent have you emerged above your generation? Your meritorious achievements crown the age. You drove back Shih Ssu-ming's recalcitrant army and resisted the Uighurs' insatiable demands, by which you gained your portrait painted in the Hall of Ascending to the Clouds and your name reposed in the Imperial Ancestral Temple. How awe-inspiring!

Then the possibility of Kuo Ying-i's error is introduced:

[A career] so praiseworthy should be praised, even though the finale may present the real difficulty. Thus is it said, "To fill but not overflow is how long to retain riches; to be lofty but not precipitous is how long to retain honor." Can this be but a warning? The *Book of History* says, "You do not brag, yet no one contends your merit. You do not boast, yet no one contends your ability". . . ¹² Therefore, there is the saying, "To break off a journey of one hundred li at ninety li," which refers to the difficulty of the last stretch of the road.

Next, Yen Chen-ch'ing levels the specific charge:

At the earlier incense-burning ceremony in the street before the Buddha Temple, you arranged for one row of seats for the Grand Councilor and the Consultants-in-ordinary in the Secretariat, the Chancellery, and the Department of State Affairs together and one row of seats for Commander Yü and yourself, at the head of all the generals. ¹³ Were this even a case of just once acting in an irregular manner to comply with abnormal circumstances, it would still not be acceptable. How much the worse when it is a long-standing practice, engaged in repeatedly? Recently the populace rejoiced over Kuo Ling-kung [General Kuo Tzu-i (697-781)] and the armies of father and son [Kuo Hsi] that destroyed the host of the fierce rebels from the west. ¹⁴ To crown the occasion, the Hsing-tao [ward] banquet was held. But being as yet unaware of your previous error, you ended by following your own notions and made the arrangements without concern for the relative status of the official ranks and without regard for the relative position of civil and military officials. You set your heart solely upon pleasing the Inspector of the Armies [Yü Ch'ao-en]. Not once did you heed the sidelong glances of the officials. How does this differ from knaves who steal money in broad daylight? It is extremely unheard of. The gentleman's feelings for others

are expressed through ceremony. One never hears of self-indulgence in this. Have you managed not to remember this clearly? . . .

Yen Chen-ch'ing further reminds Kuo Ying-i that one man alone has the right to elevate an official arbitrarily:

The Imperial Favor is unique. The Emperor mandates dispatches and recalls. The multitude dare not compare themselves with Him, nor may they order the filling of their own positions. He must discriminate as to who is honored and respected. None but He is permitted to sit facing south toward the Grand Councilors, Preceptors, and Guardians. A Single Throne is fixed on the east-west axis, although a popularly-revered General Purpose Censor from the Censorate may occupy a separate bench [near the throne], so that all the officials may look up to them with reverence. Could it be acceptable otherwise?

And although in the recent past eunuchs had been elevated by emperors to inappropriately high positions, these precedents were considered extremely inauspicious by the regular officials:

In the time of Emperor Hsüan-tsung [r. 712-756], when [the eunuch] Commander Kao Li-shih's [d. 762] receipt of Imperial Favor was proclaimed, he was also permitted a similar seat on the east-west axis. Any other form of etiquette has never been heard of. Why must you order others to lose their places? When [the eunuch] Li Fu-kuo [d. 762] was entrusted with the Imperial Favor, he went directly to a position above the Vice Directors of the Left and Right and the Three Dukes, which was considered suspicious and strange throughout the subcelestial realm, was it not?

A man of antiquity [Confucius] said, "There are three friendships that are advantageous and three that are injurious."¹⁵ I hope that you and the Inspector of the Armies have a friendship between the honest and the sincere, not a friendship between the acquiescent and the insinuating . . .

Yen Chen-ch'ing closed his letter by throwing down the gauntlet:

When a court official first becomes a Secretariat Director, he hopes for no confusion or disorder, but makes an effort to follow orders and never twist his principles. We must all preserve and uphold the laws and regulations of the court. I blame you for allowing them to fall into a ruinous state, which I fear has reached you personally as well. Tomorrow you will suddenly find yourself in a towering rage. If I condemn you as a man who destroys the social relationships, then what will you have to say in reply?

The answer, if any, has gone unrecorded. The antagonists apparently remained in a stalemate through the following year, but at the beginning of 766, Yüan Tsai instituted a novel policy of having all memorials to the throne first pass under his review, allowing him to weed out anything that threatened to expose his private clique to the emperor. In protest, Yen Chen-ch'ing submitted a memorial arguing that all written documents presented at court be made public. Yüan Tsai was avid for an excuse to force Yen Chen-ch'ing out of the

capital; that year, Yen Chen-ch'ing was entrusted with the performance of the ceremonies at the imperial temple. When word reached court that Yen Chen-ch'ing had not had the ceremonial implements refurbished, Yüan Tsai seized the moment. He charged Yen Chen-ch'ing with denigrating the current regime and succeeded in having him degraded to serve as an Administrative Aide in Hsia-chou, nearly two thousand kilometers southeast of Ch'ang-an, on the eastern banks of the Ch'ang-chiang. Not content with this punishment, Emperor Tai-tsung had him banished even farther the following month, to fill the same lowly position in Chi-chou, eighteen hundred kilometers farther to the southeast.

SU SHIH'S COPY OF THE
LETTER ON THE CONTROVERSY

The *Letter on the Controversy over Seating Protocol* (Fig. 1) was the work by Yen Chen-ch'ing most commented upon by the Sung literati. The poet and calligrapher Huang T'ing-chien (1045-1105) ranked it second among his works and praised it as "extraordinary."¹⁶ Mi Fu (1052-1107), the eccentric artist and collector, also admired it enormously, calling it "the premier calligraphy among the running script works by Yen Chen-ch'ing in our day."¹⁷ Su Shih concurred: "compared to my lord's other writings, it is particularly extraordinary."¹⁸

The object of their appreciation was most probably the original manuscript, which is no longer extant.¹⁹ For a time during the Northern Sung, the *Letter* was in the possession of a family surnamed An. When the older and younger brothers decided to split the family property, they also divided the *Letter* in two; one half consisted of the first part of the letter, through the line "I hope that you and the Inspector of the Armies have a friendship between the honest and the sincere, not a friendship between the acquiescent and the insinuating," while the other half consisted of the remainder of the *Letter* with another shorter letter by Yen Chen-ch'ing attached.²⁰

The two halves were brought together once by Huang T'ing-chien. In a colophon written on an ink rubbing taken from a stone engraving of the *Letter*, he said, "During the Yüan-yu era [1086-1094], in the capital, for the first time I was able to borrow the last three sheets [i.e., the second half] from An Shih-wen and put [the two halves] together as one."²¹ The two halves of the *Letter* were apparently soon reunited, for in the *Hsüan-ho shu-p'u*,^f the catalogue of the imperial collection of calligraphy that was written around 1120, are listed a "preceding" and a "succeeding" *Letter on the Controversy over*

Seating, the two halves of the original manuscript.²²

In addition to the ink-written manuscript of the *Letter*, there was also a stone engraving An Shih-wen had done from the original manuscript during the Yüan-yü era. Su Shih personally made several ink rubbings from the engraving,²³ though Mi Fu declared that “the stone engraving preserves only a rough impression.”²⁴ Evidently, Huang T'ing-chien, Su Shih, and Mi Fu were all familiar with both the ink-written original and with ink rubbings from the stone engraving.

The Yüan-yü era was a time of great interest in the *Letter*, perhaps because it was the moment when both halves became accessible. Huang T'ing-chien served in the capital, in the Institute of Veritable Records, throughout the Yüan-yü era, and Su Shih served as a Secretariat Drafter at court from 1086 to 1089. Mi Fu's *Record of Searches for Precious Scrolls*, in which his earliest remarks about the *Letter* appear, is dated to 1086. An Shih-wen probably came to the capital with his calligraphy collection around this time, perhaps in company with the other officials of the conservative party, including Su Shih and Huang T'ing-chien, who were returned to high office by Ssu-ma Kuang (1019–1086) at the start of the Yüan-yü era.²⁵

Su Shih described his encounter with the original *Letter*, in a colophon that may have been inscribed on it:

Yesterday, An Shih-wen of Ch'ang-an brought out his several pages of the draft [of the *Letter on the Controversy*] from Yen, Duke of Lu to the Prince of Ting-hsiang Commandery [Kuo Ying-i], which is in his collection. Compared to my lord's other writings, it is particularly extraordinary, true? The appearance and bearing of the spontaneous movements [of his brush] make us realize that although betting for tiles makes for a worthier [performance] than betting for real gold, still my lord was unable to avoid doing so.²⁶

“Betting for tiles” is a reference to a parable attributed to Confucius in the *Chuang-tzu*:

When you're betting for tiles in an archery contest, you shoot with skill. When you're betting for fancy belt buckles, you worry about your aim. And when you're betting for real gold, you're a nervous wreck. Your skill is the same in all three cases—but because one prize means more to you than another, you let outside considerations weigh on your mind.²⁷

Su Shih implies that although experience tells us the serenity of the studio might allow for a better work of art, Yen Chen-ch'ing was able to create a masterpiece even under the terrifying conditions of partisan politics at court, where the stakes were careers and lives. This colophon suggests what must have made the *Letter on the Controversy* so emotionally resonant for Su Shih, that it was a work of art whose political content ultimately resulted in banishment

from court for its author, for Su Shih himself had been jailed, threatened with death, and finally banished to Huang-chou in 1079–1080, persecuted by the court censors on the basis of certain anti-authoritarian passages in his letters and poems.

Su Shih's involvement with the *Letter* outlasted his stay in office at court. He made numerous copies of the *Letter*, one of which is still extant, in ink rubbing form (Fig. 2).²⁸ Dated to 1091, it is followed by a lengthy colophon:

I once declared that the apogee in painting was reached by Wu Tao-tzu [fl. ca. 710–760], in literature by Ou-yang Hsiu, and in calligraphy by Yen, Duke of Lu, for they were the most capable practitioners in the subcelestial realm.²⁹ Someone said, “this may be so for painting and literature, but as for calligraphy, in the Han dynasty there were Ts'ui Yüan [77–142] and Chang Chih [fl. ca. 150], and in the Chin there were Wang Hsi-chih and Wang Hsien-chih, so how can you extol the Duke of Lu's skills alone?” I replied that his argument did not apply, for in high antiquity there was only the seal script and not the cursive or regular scripts. Once the Emperor granted me a viewing of calligraphy and paintings in the palace storeroom, where I saw the traces of the brush in the writings handed down from high antiquity. They were done with a centered brush tip, applied perpendicularly, and were absolutely free of any ingratiating demeanor. From the Han and Chin dynasties onward, beauty was attained solely by means of a slanted brush tip, so that the original intent of the men of antiquity was largely lost. But then came the Duke of Lu, whose brush hold was as centered and upright as that of Ts'ang Chieh himself,³⁰ like an awl drawing in sand or a seal stamped in clay.³¹ He swept away the ingratiating habits of the Han and Chin and made himself a master.

The centered^g or upright^h brush is a metaphor for moral probity that dates back at least to the T'ang dynasty. As the well-known anecdote has it, Emperor Mu-tsung of T'ang (r. 820–824) once asked his minister, Liu Kung-ch'üan (778–865), about the proper method for the brush, to which Liu replied, “The use of the brush lies in the heart. If the heart is upright, the brush will be upright.”³² Emperor Mu-tsung understood Liu's reply as a remonstrance couched in the metaphor of calligraphy, showing that the principle of the centered-brush writing of the morally upright man was accepted well enough by then to employ in double entendre.

Su Shih once commented on this episode. He wrote, “[Liu Kung-ch'üan's] statement that ‘if the heart is upright, the brush will be upright’ was not only remonstrance, but a true principle. Petty men of this world may have skill in writing characters, but the spirit and emotion of their calligraphy will end up appearing eager to please and flatter.”³³ This “true principle” is one of the central concepts in Sung dynasty Neo-Confucian calligraphy criticism.³⁴ It dictates that “upright” calligraphy, that is, calligraphy written with a centered brush, constitutes the most appropriate artistic model and the

man behind it an appropriate moral and political model. Conversely, calligraphy written with a slanted^d brush seduces eye and mind with its facile charms and so both the style and the man behind it are no standard to follow. Thus does calligraphic style gain moral import and the artist's choice of a calligrapher's style to emulate become a statement of his moral and political identification.

Su Shih concluded the colophon:

Without discussing his other works, but by looking only at his *Letter on the Controversy over Seating Protocol*, you will realize that my statement is no exaggeration. In leisure among my books, whenever I wash my hands, burn incense, and make a few copies of it in different sizes, although they do not resemble the original, my calligraphy has already improved a great deal over what it was before.

Indeed, his copies have a complicated resemblance to the original, if the ink rubbing from the engraving of the 1091 copy is any indication. If we compare passages in the copy by Su Shih (Fig. 2) and an ink rubbing from the engraving of Yen Chen-ch'ing's *Letter* (Fig. 1, 5th column from the right, 10th character from the top through the 5th character in the 6th column), it is readily apparent that Su Shih followed the original in terms of the text itself and the use of running script. The only difference with regard to the text is that Su Shih did not reproduce the lined-out characters or transposition marks in the original, but made a "clean copy" of it. No doubt Su Shih had memorized the entire letter. Yet the first thing that strikes us about these two works is how much the style and expression of the copy by Su Shih are at variance from its model. Where Yen Chen-ch'ing's line is blunt and virtually unmodulated and the composition of his characters awkward to the point of homeliness, in Su Shih's copy the modulation and shaping of the brush strokes display tremendous variation, and the compositions of his characters exhibit unusual constructions that are unconventional without being bizarre. Still, it was exactly the use of a blunt, unmodulated line in the *Letter on the Controversy* that made Mi Fu, for example, admire this work above all others by Yen Chen-ch'ing, for to him it was an expression in calligraphy of the Northern Sung aesthetic ideal of p'ing-tan,^j or blandness.

Su Shih had been the protégé of Ou-yang Hsiu, but he was also an artist. Where Ou-yang Hsiu seemed often to speak for the whole of his class, Su Shih expressed his emotions more as an individual. And yet he had no intention of casting off the aesthetic models set up by Ou-yang Hsiu or of rejecting his identification with the scholar-official class. Thus a subtle conflict arose between theory and practice, for in his critical writings Su Shih con-

tinued to repeat the same kind of praise for the same virtues that Ou-yang Hsiu had declared present in the style of Yen Chen-ch'ing, while in his calligraphy, Su Shih's own aesthetic prevailed.³⁵ Instead of the manner that Yen Chen-ch'ing used in his running-script drafts, which was admired for its p'ing-tan quality, or the manner of Yen Chen-ch'ing's regular script, which was deemed by Ou-yang Hsiu and others the perfect calligraphic expression of moral rectitude, Su Shih chose to rework his copy of the *Letter on the Controversy* in the manner of what was largely ignored during the Northern Sung as an unorthodox, even spurious, part of the calligraphic oeuvre of Yen Chen-ch'ing.

This part of the oeuvre of Yen Chen-ch'ing consists of a handful of works done in an eccentric mix of large, loose-jointed regular, running, and cursive characters: the *Defending Government Letter*,^k *Writing a Letter Letter*,^l *Kuang-p'ing Letter*,^m and the *Poem for General P'ei*ⁿ (Fig. 3).³⁶ The three letters are noticeably distinct from Yen Chen-ch'ing's other cursive-script letters, such as the *Cursive and Seal Script Letter*,^o though not so strongly that they suggest the style of another hand, and there is a certain uniformity among them.³⁷ The *Poem for General P'ei*, however, seems to be of another magnitude, the most extreme expression of the mode seen in the three letters, unequaled in the other works of Yen Chen-ch'ing and unprecedented in any earlier calligrapher.

What makes the *Poem for General P'ei* so different from the rest of Yen Chen-ch'ing's oeuvre is the unusual variety in script types and character size exhibited throughout the piece, engendering startling juxtapositions of delicate, looping cursive-script characters with massive, square running-script characters. The arrangement of the characters seems almost pictorial in design, and the effect is at once contrived yet somehow natural, deliberate yet unrestrained. The uniquely expressive and individualistic quality of this work was a sign to some traditional critics that Yen Chen-ch'ing was the true heir to his teacher, the progenitor of "mad cursive," Chang Hsü (658-747), but to others it has been cause to doubt its authenticity.³⁸

The *Poem for General P'ei* was not included in the *Wen-chung chi*, the earliest collection of the writings of Yen Chen-ch'ing, compiled by Sung Min-ch'iu in 1056-1064, nor was it commented upon by the connoisseurs of the Northern Sung. The poem first appeared as a work of calligraphy in the *Hall of Loyalty and Righteousness Compendium*,^p and as a work of literature in the second edition of the *Wen-chung chi*, both edited by Liu Yüan-kang (1180-1268) in 1215.³⁹ Liu Yüan-kang was more an enthusiast than



Fig. 1. Yen Chen-ch'ing, *Letter on the Controversy over Seating Protocol*, 764. Ink rubbing of "Hsi-an version" stele, engraved c. 1086, in Shan-hsi Provincial Museum, Hsi-an. From *Shu-p'u* 17 (1977): 41. Detail, 30.0 x 21.0 cm.

a connoisseur, and his decision to include certain questionable works in his compilations may have been based more upon their association with the name of his hero than on any considered judgment of their authenticity. However, it is also possible that Liu Yüan-kang either discovered a work unknown to the Northern Sung students of Yen Chen-ch'ing, or that he was willing to publish a work that was known to them, but which they excluded from discussion and publication because of what they judged to be its unorthodox style.⁴⁰

Aside from the claim for authenticity based on the similarity in style between the *Poem for General P'ei* and the three letters (which themselves have no pedigree before their appearance in the *Hall of Loyalty and Righteousness Compendium* of 1215), we should note that the subject matter of the daring exploits of General P'ei would not have been foreign to Yen Chen-ch'ing. P'ei Min was a contemporary of Chang Hsü, under whom Yen

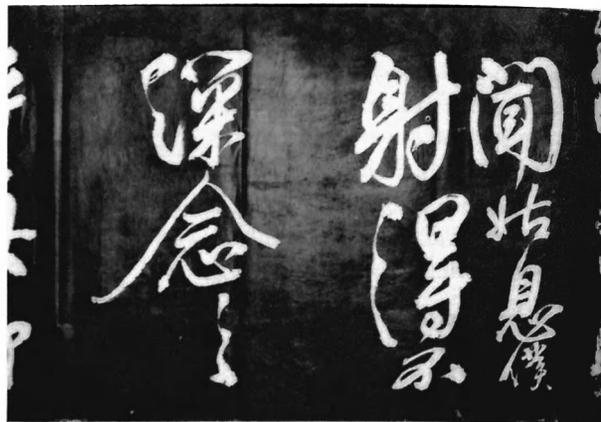


Fig. 2. Su Shih, *Copy of Yen Chen-ch'ing's Letter on the Controversy over Seating Protocol*, 1091. Ink rubbing of stele in Peking. Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago (File no. 244489a-d). Detail, 36.0 x 45.0 cm.

Chen-ch'ing studied cursive script, and other poems celebrating General P'ei were written by Wang Wei (701-761) and Ts'en Shen (715-770).⁴¹ As Yen Chen-ch'ing knew Chang Hsü and Ts'en Shen, it is quite likely that he also knew P'ei Min, so that he too could have written an admiring poem for him. If so, the poem could be authentic.

Let us suppose, for the sake of argument, that the *Poem for General P'ei* was known to Su Shih as a work by Yen Chen-ch'ing. However, it was a work never publicly approved by Su Shih's mentor, the foremost contemporary collector of the works of Yen Chen-ch'ing, for it is not recorded in Ou-yang Hsiu's *Collected Records of Antiquity*.⁴² And yet, it is the one piece out of Yen Chen-ch'ing's entire oeuvre in which the brushwork may be called hao-fang,⁹ or "bold and uninhibited." His other works, exemplary as they may be, are either derivative in style (family tradition in regular script; style of Chang Hsü in cursive script) or virtually without conscious stylistic reference (p'ing-tan running script). Only the *Poem for General P'ei* reveals the kind of individualism of style that the artists and writers of the Sung so admired. Perhaps the artist in Su Shih asserted his equality with the moralist, and he copied Yen Chen-ch'ing's *Letter on the Controversy* in the manner of Yen Chen-ch'ing's *Poem for General P'ei*.

Let us compare details from the ink rubbing of Su Shih's copy of Yen Chen-ch'ing's *Letter on the Controversy* (Fig. 2) with an ink rubbing after Yen Chen-ch'ing's *Poem for General P'ei* (Fig. 3). A number of points of similarity are evident: both are done in large-scale characters, arranged in compositionally dynamic columns of around three to five characters. In both we see striking contrasts in the sizes of characters used (Yen: third column from the right/



Fig. 3. Attributed to Yen Chen-ch'ing, *Poem for General P'ei*. Ink rubbing, probably from 1833 re-engraving of the *Hall of Loyalty and Righteousness Compendium*. Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago (File no. 245060). Detail, 32.0 x 60.0 cm.

first and second characters from the top; Su: 1/1-2) and the variation in line, from heavy, unmodulated strokes (Yen: 3/3; Su: 2/1) to delicate ligatures (Yen: 4/2-3; Su: 1/3). Both use exaggerated extensions of outer strokes to provide balance (Yen: 1/5; Su: 3/2).

Yet the differences are equally vivid: many of the characters in Yen Chen-ch'ing's work incorporate strong vertical and horizontal lines, so that the overall shapes of those characters are square (4/5) or rectangular (3/2); in Su Shih's work, the characters are made up of curving and diagonal strokes, so that they tend to describe spirals and ovals (2/2, 2/3). The mixture of curving cursive-script characters and geometric running-script characters in Yen Chen-ch'ing's *Poem* creates a sense of organic forms overlaying a static grid; in Su Shih's copy of the *Letter*, the characters are altogether organic rather than geometric and dynamic rather than static. From this comparison, it is evident that the styles of Su Shih and Yen Chen-ch'ing are fundamentally different. Yet what model for Su Shih's hao-fang manner copy of the *Letter* is there but the hao-fang manner of Yen Chen-ch'ing's *Poem*? Both display characters of strikingly contrasting sizes, dynamic composition, and highly modulated brushwork that are not seen in the main body of work left by these two men. To see the difference between Su Shih's hao-fang manner and his everyday manner, one may compare his copy of the *Letter on the Controversy* to, for example, his *Eulogy for Huang Chi-tao*⁴³ of 1087.

To sum up my argument, Su Shih rendered his copy of Yen Chen-ch'ing's *Letter on the Controversy* in his version of the hao-fang manner of Yen Chen-ch'ing's *Poem for General P'ei*. The irony is that Su Shih reworked one of the most admired monuments of the p'ing-tan aesthetic in the manner of a work

so dramatic and visually arresting that it has generally been held outside the accepted oeuvre of Yen Chen-ch'ing's calligraphy. In his art, Su Shih employed the unorthodox side of Yen Chen-ch'ing's calligraphy, even as he promoted Yen Chen-ch'ing in his criticism as the orthodox calligraphic model.

Indeed, so opulent and exciting are the brush strokes and the compositions that one is tempted to accuse Su Shih of the very thing he deplored in "petty men," that their calligraphy "appears eager to flatter and to please." The modulations in his brush line surely must have been achieved through the ignoble means that he condemned in the calligraphers of the Chin dynasty: the slanted brush tip.

Huang T'ing-chien, Su Shih's devoted student and friend, was compelled to acknowledge this criticism of Su Shih's brush method, even as he tried to demonstrate how Su Shih's weak point was really an advantage:

Some say that Tung-po's ko' strokes are always flawed and that his wrist placement allows the brush to slant, so that while the left-hand side [of his characters] is graceful, the right-hand side is stiff. But this only shows their limited experience and failure to understand the entire situation. Don't they know about Hsi Shih pounding her breast and knitting her brows? Though [her scowl] was a result of illness, on her it was beautiful.⁴⁴

Although it was a gracious and loyal defense, Huang T'ing-chien actually conceded the point.⁴⁵ If we understand Su Shih's background in calligraphy study, however, his reliance on the means of the Chin calligraphers was only to be expected, quite apart from his espousal of the style of Yen Chen-ch'ing. Huang T'ing-chien said of Su Shih's study of calligraphy:

When Tung-p'o Tao-jen [Su Shih] was young, he studied the *Lan t'ing*, so that his calligraphy had the same "ingratiating appearance" as that of Hsü Chi-hai . . . In middle age he enjoyed studying the calligraphy of Yen Chen-ch'ing . . .⁴⁶

Naturally, Su Shih's style remained fundamentally based on the slanted-brush manner of Wang Hsi-chih, since his childhood model had been Wang Hsi-chih's *Lan t'ing hsü*.⁴⁷ Even extensive study of another calligrapher in middle age would not significantly alter the habits of his hand.

Su Shih promoted Yen Chen-ch'ing as the patriarch of Sung Neo-Confucian literati calligraphy in his criticism and his choice of models in later life, and he extolled "the centered brush" both as proper calligraphic technique and as a metaphor for moral rectitude. And yet his own calligraphic manner, which does unquestionably owe some of its daring use of awkwardness and bluntness to his study of Yen Chen-ch'ing, does not emulate the unmodulated blandness seen in Yen Chen-ch'ing's centered-brush *Letter on the Controversy*, but is instead a triumph of the boldness and drama that can only

be achieved through the use of a slanted brush.

This gap between theory and practice is what Huang T'ing-chien attempted to bridge with the analogy to Hsi Shih. Although Su Shih's calligraphy is beautiful, it results from an "illness." Thus, while a great artist like Su Shih could be excused for employing the slanted brush in his calligraphy, any acknowledgment in one's critical writings that the slanted brush ought to have a place in the repertoire of the literati calligrapher would be apostasy. As a result, although the calligraphic styles of the Sung calligraphers are varied and individual, the same judgment of Yen Chen-ch'ing and his followers as the proper models and the centered brush as the proper method was handed down unchanged from one generation to the next in their critical writings. The same accolades for the achievements of the admirers of Yen Chen-ch'ing echo down the years, for to recognize the morally correct choice of calligraphic model in someone else is to identify yourself as another of the special few. For example, Huang T'ing-chien said of Su Shih what Su Shih had earlier said of Ts'ai Hsiang, that "his calligraphy is the best of this dynasty."⁴⁷ And Huang T'ing-chien

claimed for Su Shih what Ou-yang Hsiu had once said of Yen Chen-ch'ing, that "his loyalty and righteousness shine like the sun and moon."⁴⁸ Sometimes, the comparisons were explicit:

Master Tung-p'o once compared himself to Yen, Duke of Lu. I pondered it [and concluded that], all things considered, these two lords were equally heroes to their generation.⁴⁹

Su Shih's relationship to the style of Yen Chen-ch'ing reveals that the most important symbol of political identification was not the faithful reproduction of the ideal style, but rather the expression of affiliation in one's critical writings with the accepted patriarchs of one's political group. The calligraphic styles of Ts'ai Hsiang, Ou-yang Hsiu, Su Shih, and Huang T'ing-chien are instantly distinguishable and their uses of the calligraphic style of Yen Chen-ch'ing quite disparate, but their political identification with moderate conservative reform and the advancement of the political and cultural power of the scholar-official class was the same, and so, consequently, was their critical promotion of Yen Chen-ch'ing and themselves as his Neo-Confucian standard-bearers.

Chinese Characters

| | | | | | |
|---|------|----|-------|----|----------|
| a | 淳化閣帖 | o | 草篆帖 | ac | 東坡題跋 |
| b | 巧 | p | 忠義堂帖 | ad | 左傳 |
| c | 拙 | q | 豪放 | ae | 虞書 |
| d | 姿媚 | r | 祭黃幾道文 | af | 大禹謨 |
| e | 爭座位帖 | s | 戈(レ) | ag | 山谷題跋 |
| f | 宣和書譜 | t | 蘭亭序 | ah | 寶章待訪錄 |
| g | 中 | u | 石鼓歌 | ai | 張長史筆法十二意 |
| h | 正 | v | 續書斷 | aj | 墨池編 |
| i | 側 | w | 書史 | ak | 集古錄 |
| j | 平淡 | x | 文忠集 | al | 跋尾 |
| k | 守政帖 | y | 顏魯公集 | am | 黃州寒食詩 |
| l | 修書帖 | z | 歐陽修全集 | an | 潁州祈雨帖 |
| m | 廣平帖 | aa | 萬安橋記 | | |
| n | 贈裴將軍 | ab | 自書告身 | | |

Notes

1. Song of the Stone Drums,^a *Han Ch'ang-li chi* (Shang-hai: Commercial Press, 1936), ch. 2, p. 44.

2. The Sung critics appeared to use the phrase neutrally, as a cliché for calligraphy that followed the style of Wang Hsi-chih, and negatively, as an indictment against that style. For example, Huang T'ing-chien employed it as a neutral term in his analysis of Su Shih's style (see below), while Chu Ch'ang-wen's (1039-1098) statement that "the calligraphy of Yen Chen-ch'ing is quite lacking in 'ingratiating appearance'" clearly uses the term as a pejorative reference to the style of Wang Hsi-chih (see Chu Ch'ang-wen, *Hsü Shu tuan* in *Li-tai shu-fa lun-wen-hsüan*, edited by Huang Chien (Shang-hai: Shang-hai shu-hua ch'u-pan-she, 1979), pp. 323-324).

3. Mi Fu wrote, "Because Han Ch'i loved the calligraphy of Yen Chen-ch'ing, courtier and commoner alike studied Yen Chen-ch'ing's calligraphy" (*Shu shih*,^w in *I-shu ts'ung-pien*, edited by Yang Chia-lo [T'ai-pei: Shih-chieh shu-chü, 1962], p. 57).

4. From Fan Chung-yen's eulogy for Shih Man-ch'ing, quoted in Ma Tsung-ho, *Shu-lin tsao-chien*, *I-shu ts'ung-pien* ed., ch. 9, p. 197b. For examples of writing by Shih Man-ch'ing and Han Ch'i, see Fu Shen, Periodization of Yen Chen-ch'ing's Calligraphic Influence, in *The International Seminar on Chinese Calligraphy in Memory of Yen Chen-ch'ing's 1200th Posthumous Anniversary* (T'ai-pei: Council for Cultural Planning and Development, Executive Yüan, R.O.C., 1987), pls. 7, 11.

5. Ou-yang Hsiu and Liu Ch'ang are generally considered the progenitors of the study of epigraphy in China. See Ch'en Kuang-ch'ung, Ou-yang Hsiu chin-shih-hsüeh shu-lüeh (Ou-yang Hsiu's Epigraphy), *Liao-ning ta-hsüeh hsüeh-pao* no. 6 (1981): 54-57.

6. This edition is no longer extant; the earliest edition of the *Wen-chung chi*^x available is the one edited by Liu Yüan-kang in 1215. Liu Ch'ang's preface is found in *Wen-chung chi* (reprint ed., Shang-hai: Commercial Press, 1936), p. 1 and *Yen Lu-kung chi*^y (reprint ed., T'ai-pei: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1970), ch. 18, pp. 1a-1b.

7. Ou-yang Hsiu stated that he collected the one thousand scrolls in his collection in the years from 1045 to 1062 (*Ou-yang Hsiu ch'üan chi*^z [reprint ed., Peking: Chung-kuo shu-tien, 1986], ch. 69, p. 506), while the dates that appear in his colophons on the works of Yen Chen-ch'ing range between 1063 and 1066.

8. Two of the best-known examples of Ts'ai Hsiang's calligraphy in the style of Yen Chen-ch'ing are the *Record of the Wan-an Bridge*^{aa} dated to 1060, and the colophon to Yen Chen-ch'ing's *Self-Written Announcement of Office*,^{ab} dated to 1055, reproduced in *Shodō zenshū*, 26 vols. (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1954-1961), vol. 15, pls. 16-17 and vol. 10, pls. 60-63, respectively.

9. On the calligraphy criticism of Ou-yang Hsiu and Su Shih, see Ronald C. Egan, Ou-yang Hsiu and Su Shih on Calligraphy, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 49 (2) (1989): 365-419. My thanks to Professor Egan for access to his article before publication.

10. *Tung-p'o t'i-pa*,^{ac} *I-shu ts'ung-pien* ed., ch. 2, p. 45.

11. *Tso chuan*,^{ad} Duke Hsiang, year 24.

12. *Yü shu*,^{ae} *Ta Yü mo*,^{af} ch. 14.

13. Vice Directors, such as Kuo Ying-i, were Rank Two officials. Generals of the guards, such as Yü Ch'ao-en, were Rank Three military officials; in the arrangements of the officials they followed the Rank Three civil officials. Therefore, by placing Yü Ch'ao-en next to him, Kuo Ying-i elevated him past his appropriate rank and degraded the Rank Three civil officials, of whom Yen Chen-ch'ing was one.

14. Earlier in the same month the letter was written, Kuo Tzu-i came to court to announce his victory over P'u-ku

Huai-en (d. 765) and the Tibetan-Uighur forces at Fen-chou the month before. A banquet was held for him by the court officials. His son, Kuo Hsi, was a Vanguard Commander in the Shuo-fang Army, under his father's command. See Su-ma Kuang, *Tzu chih t'ung chien* (reprint ed., Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1956), ch. 223, pp. 7167-7169.

15. *Lun-yü*, bk. xvi, ch. 4.

16. *Shan-ku t'i-pa*,^{ag} *I-shu ts'ung-pien* ed., ch. 4, p. 40.

17. *Pao chang tai fang lu*,^{ah} *I-shu ts'ung-pien* ed., p. 7a.

18. *Tung-p'o t'i-pa*, ch. 4, p. 76.

19. The *Letter on the Controversy* exists now only in the form of engraved steles and ink rubbings. The most familiar version is the engraved stele in the Shan-hsi Provincial Museum in Hsi-an, which is known as the "Hsi-an version" or "Kuan-chung version." For discussions of the various versions, see Wen Yen, Yen Chen-ch'ing ti "Cheng-tso-wei t'ieh" (Yen Chen-ch'ing's "Letter on the Controversy over Seating Protocol"), *Shu-p'u* 17 (1977): 34-36 and Wang Chuang-hung, *T'ieh hsueh chü yao* (Shang-hai: Shang-hai shu-hua ch'u-pan-she, 1987), pp. 143-145.

20. According to Huang T'ing-chien. See *Shan-ku t'i-pa*, ch. 4, p. 40.

21. *Ibid.*

22. *I-shu ts'ung-pien* ed., ch. 3, p. 93.

23. According to the Yüan dynasty connoisseur Yüan Chüeh (1267-1327), in a colophon dated to 1315. From his *Ch'ing-jung chü-shih chi*, quoted in *Yen Lu-kung chi*, ch. 24, p. 2b.

24. *Shu shih*, p. 20.

25. Mi Fu wrote in his *Record of Searches for Precious Scrolls* that "An Shih-wen brought [the manuscript of Yen Chen-ch'ing's eulogy for his uncle Yen Yüan-sun] with him to the capital" (*Pao chang tai fang lu*, p. 8a).

26. *Tung-p'o t'i-pa*, ch. 4, p. 76.

27. Translated in Burton Watson, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), p. 201.

28. The ink rubbing reproduced here is in the collection of the Field Museum of Natural History (File no. 244489 a-d). See Hartmut Walravens (ed.), *Catalogue of Chinese Rubbings in Field Museum of Natural History*, *Fieldiana Anthropology* n.s. no. 3 (Chicago: Field Museum, 1981), no. 804.

29. Earlier, in 1085, Su Shih cited this list of cultural patriarchs: "The apogee in poetry was reached by Tu Fu [712-770], in prose by Han Yü, in calligraphy by Yen Chen-ch'ing, and in painting by Wu Tao-tzu" (*Tung-p'o t'i-pa*, ch. 5, p. 95).

30. The mythical inventor of writing. See Jonathan Chaves, *The Legacy of Ts'ang Chieh: The Written Word as Magic*, *Oriental Art* n.s. 23(92) (1977): 203.

31. Two well-known similes for unmodulated brush-strokes drawn with the centered brush.

32. *Chiu T'ang shu*, edited by Liu Hsü et al. (reprint ed., Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1975), ch. 165, p. 4310.

33. *Tung-p'o t'i-pa*, ch. 4, pp. 92-93.

34. Witness this complaint by the premier Neo-Confucian, Chu Hsi (1130-1200), about the calligraphy of Huang T'ing-chien: "When I look at Huang T'ing-chien's calligraphy, it definitely has its good points. But since he can write so well, why did he fail to learn the squareness and uprightness in other people's writing? Why did he have to write in such a slanted manner?" Quoted in Pien Yung-yü, *Shih-ku-t'ang shu-hua hui k'ao*, 4 vols. (reprint ed., T'ai-pei, 1958), vol. 2, pp. 122-123.

35. Although Su Shih also appeared to equivocate on the issue of the equation of style and personality, which was the basis

of Ou-yang Hsiu's promotion of the style of Yen Chen-ch'ing. See Egan, Ou-yang Hsiu and Su Shih on Calligraphy, pp. 399-402.

36. The *Defending Government Letter*, *Kuang-p'ing Letter*, and *Writing a Letter Letter* are reproduced in *Yen Chen-ch'ing hsing shu tzu t'ieh* (Hang-chou: Hsi-ling yin she ch'u-pan-she, 1986), pp. 22-24, 25-26, and 20-21, respectively. The ink rubbing of the *Poem for General P'ei* reproduced here is in the collection of the Field Museum of Natural History (File no. 245060). See Walravens (ed.), *Catalogue of Chinese Rubbings*, no. 583.

37. Reproduced in *Yen Chen-ch'ing hsing shu tzu t'ieh*, pp. 55-58.

38. The earliest doubter of the *Poem for General P'ei* on record was Lou Yüeh (1137-1213), in his *Kung-k'uei chi* (quoted in *Yen Lu-kung chi*, ch. 30, p. 8a-b). An ink-written version of the *Poem for General P'ei* is in the collection of the Peking Palace Museum. Hsü Pang-ta considers it a probable Yüan dynasty copy after the engraved version in the *Hall of Loyalty and Righteousness Compendium*. He believes that the *Poem for General P'ei*, both as a poem and a work of calligraphy, was originally fabricated sometime during the Sung, and so he terms the Palace Museum version "a fake within a fake." See Hsü Pang-ta, *Ku shu-hua wei o k'ao pien*, 4 vols. (Nan-ching: Chiang-su ku-chi ch'u-pan-she, 1984), vol. 1, pp. 123-125; reproductions in vol. 2, pp. 165-168.

39. The *Hall of Loyalty and Righteousness Compendium* was a set of stone engravings of some forty-five calligraphic works by Yen Chen-ch'ing set up in a building of the same name by Liu Yüan-kang; it is believed to be no longer extant. A unique surviving Sung dynasty ink rubbing of the *Compendium* is now held by the Che-chiang Provincial Museum in Hang-chou. For reproductions and a list of the contents, see Chu Kuan-t'ien, *Che-chiang po-wu-kuan ts'ang Sung t'a Yen Chen-ch'ing "Chung-i-t'ang t'ieh"* (A Sung Ink Rubbing of Yen Chen-ch'ing's "Hall of Loyalty and Righteousness Compendium" in the Che-chiang Museum), *Shu-p'u* 43 (1981): 18-24. On its history, see Lin Chih-chün, *T'ieh k'ao* (Hong Kong, 1962), pp. 141-151.

40. The Northern Sung literati were not unwilling to publicize works of questionable authenticity attributed to Yen Chen-ch'ing. Witness Chu Ch'ang-wen's inclusion of the "Twelve Concepts of the Brush Method of Administrator Chang,"^{ai} a spurious text attributed to Yen Chen-ch'ing that purports to record a conversation between Yen Chen-ch'ing and Chang Hsü, in his *Mo ch'ih pien*^{aj} of 1066. Chu Ch'ang-wen himself said of this text, "There are those who say the 'Twelve Concepts' is that which Chang Hsü transmitted to Yen Chen-ch'ing. True or false?" (*Li-tai shu-fa lun-wen-hsüan*, p. 326).

41. *Yen Lu-kung chi*, ch. 12, pp. 1a-1b.

42. *Chi ku lu*^{ak} or *Chi ku lu pa-wei*^{al} (*Collected Records of Antiquity Colophons*), in *Ou-yang Hsiu ch'üan chi*.

43. In the Shang-hai Museum, reproduced in *Chung-kuo li-tai fa-shu mo-chi ta-kuan*, edited by Hsieh Chih-liu, 5 vols. to date (Shang-hai: Shang-hai shu-tien, 1987-), vol. 5, pp. 136-140. Other works by Su Shih in his hao-fang mode are the famous *Huang-chou Cold Food Poems*^{am} of around 1082 (reproduced in *Shodō zenshū*, vol. 15, pls. 32-36) and the *Ying-chou Prayers for Rain Letter*^{an} of 1091, collection unknown, reproduced in *Chung-kuo li-tai fa-shu mo-chi ta-kuan*, vol. 5, pp. 146-151.

44. *Shan-ku t'i-pa*, ch. 5, p. 44.

45. Hsü Pang-ta uses detailed formula analysis to argue that Su Shih in fact employed the centered brush. See his article, Su Shih ho Mi Fu ti hsing shu (The Running Script of Su Shih and Mi Fu), *Shu-fa ts'ung-k'an* 1 (1981): 82-87.

46. *Shan-ku t'i-pa*, ch. 5, p. 45. "Ingratiating appearance," Han Yü's famous phrase of condemnation, is used here by Huang T'ing-chien as a neutral reference to the style of Wang Hsi-chih. Chi-hai was the style name of Hsü Hao (703-782), a contemporary of Yen Chen-ch'ing who followed the style of Wang Hsi-chih.

47. Huang T'ing-chien, *Shan-ku t'i-pa*, ch. 5, p. 45; Su Shih, *Tung-p'o t'i-pa*, ch. 4, p. 85.

48. Huang T'ing-chien, *Shan-ku t'i-pa*, ch. 5, p. 45; Ou-yang Hsiu, *Chi ku lu pa-wei*, ch. 7, p. 1173.

49. Huang T'ing-chien, *Shan-ku t'i-pa*, ch. 5, p. 45.