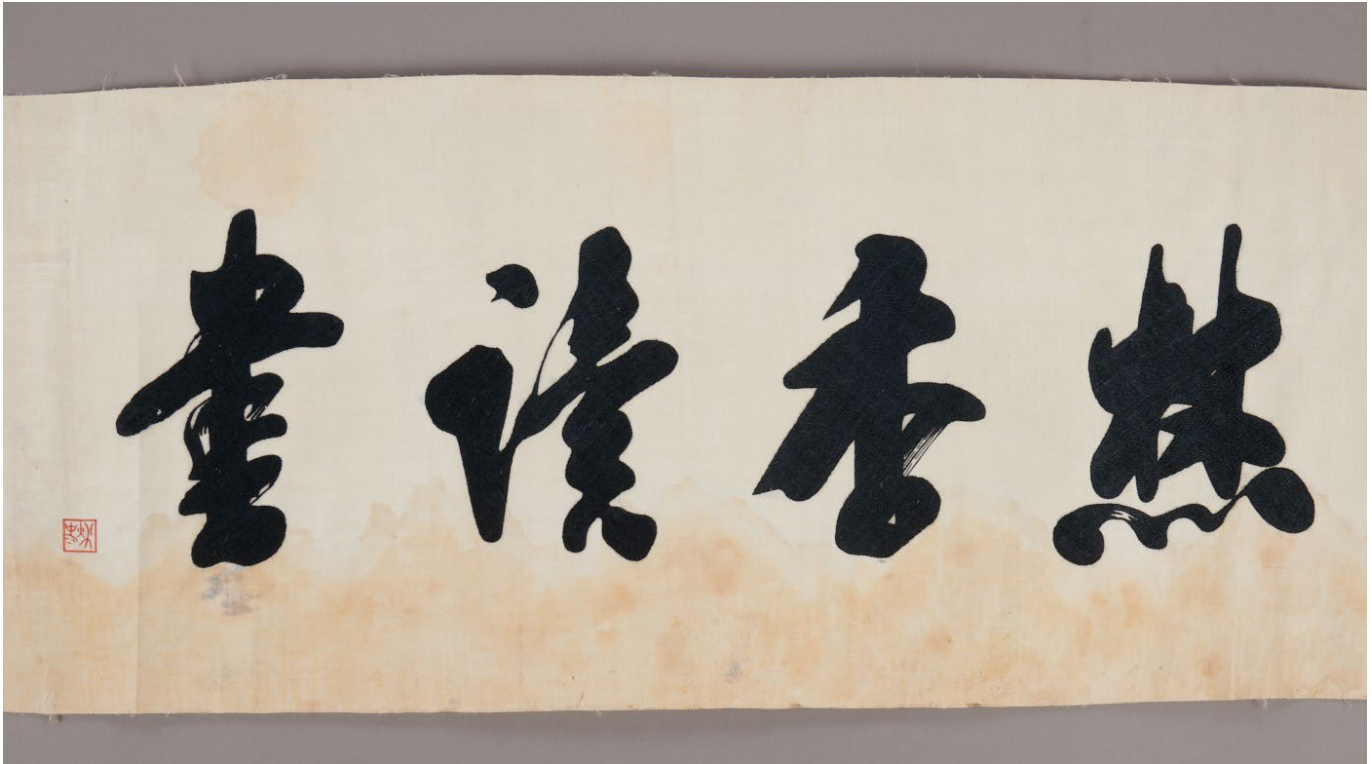


SPOTLIGHT: Calligraphy
Title of Piece: Example “Fen Xiang Du Shu”



Six points of interest about this work:

1. Calligraphy, Chinese writing, has been practiced for over 3,000 years.
2. It is recognized as the ultimate artistic expression, requiring years of training, discipline and dedication
3. It is an art of performance, but not until rigorous defined requirements have been fulfilled. Fundamentals must be mastered and brush stroke techniques must be learned. Only then can individual interpretation hold sway.
4. The first 1600 years or so, Chinese writing went through many revisions, from pictographic forms to simpler abstract representations.
5. First, the writing was done on stone, metal or bone, next bamboo or wood.
6. When paper evolved as the preferred writing material, the fully independent art form developed (second century A.C.E.).

Additional information on calligraphy usage:

1. “Scholar-gentries” were a kind of social leader who taught and oversaw community projects, preached Confucian moral teachings, and were scribes trained in calligraphy.
2. They underwent a serious course of study, wrote essays on moral issues and current affairs.
3. They had high social status, prestige and power.

4. A meritocracy developed allowing for social mobility to the best students. However, abuse of power and corruption commonly occurred once the scholar-gentry had passed their exams and had their future assured.
5. Scholar's Tools:
 - a. Brushes—various sizes from animal hair (goat, rabbit, weasel)
 - b. Ink stick— graphite, vermillion, soot
 - c. Inkstone—ink is ground into powder on the stone and mixed with liquid in the well of the stone
 - d. Paper—parchment
 - e. Libation cups (sometimes!)—there were often social gatherings where transcribing or creating was done and drinking occurred. Some experts point to noticing when the scholar became intoxicated from the subtle change in the hand in his work.
 - f. Weights—often jade, to hold the parchment paper flat.

Tour Type: Learning to Look, Explore Asia

JSMA Collection Example:

<https://jsmacollection.uoregon.edu/mwebcgi/mweb?request=record;id=5865;type=101>