

# A Paradox of Artistic Concept: Youwei Kang's Concept of Model Calligraphy

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This study focuses on Youwei Kang's concept of Model Calligraphy. He devoted all his life to advocating the Chinese Stele Theory and thus brought Stele Theory to a peak while criticizing and casting disapprobation toward Model Calligraphy. We must see Youwei Kang's overly extreme behaviors toward Model Calligraphy from a deeper understanding of the social background of the times. To purposefully promote Stele Theory, Youwei Kang decided to suppress Model Calligraphy, which was considered its opponent. However, just as what an acting force is to its counterforce, Youwei Kang's nearly unreasonable suppression of Model Calligraphy shows the huge impact of Model Calligraphy on himself. Youwei Kang's concepts on Stele Theory and Model Calligraphy may be explored according to a symbiotic frame of reference. Through a comparative study of Kang's concepts on Stele Theory and Model Calligraphy, we learn that there were in-depth political reasons behind his viewpoint of promoting Stele Theory and suppressing Model Calligraphy. Youwei Kang approved Model Calligraphy of the Jin Dynasty while criticized that of the Qing Dynasty. His theory was too extreme, yet his practice of calligraphy was a combination of Model Calligraphy and Stele Theory. In his later years, Kang regretted that he wrongly deserted Model Calligraphy. Therefore, his attitude toward Model Calligraphy could be considered a contradictory state that was being unconsciously inherited and self-consciously pressed.

*Keywords:* Youwei Kang, *Extension of Double Pedals for the Boat of Art*, Model Calligraphy, political reform

Youwei Kang was a famous politician, calligraphist, and scholar in the modern history of China. His *Extension of Double Pedals for the Boat of Art* sought new changes and

innovations, breaking ground for the development of calligraphic art during the later period of the Qing Dynasty. We can say that *the Extension of Double Pedals for the Boat*

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of Art, which is of great cultural significance, contributed hugely to Chinese calligraphic art.

Youwei Kang advocated copying and practicing stone inscriptions of the past six dynasties and held a strongly contrary opinion toward extreme conclusions, such as the attitudes of promoting Stele Theory and suppressing Model Calligraphy and respecting the Wei Dynasty style while despising the Tang Dynasty style, surely raised a lot of controversies among his contemporary scholars and the future ones as well. Youwei Kang is a core voice in the calligraphic theory and the creative practice of the Stele Theory school; his thoughts on the field still have a deep impact. Nevertheless, the existing studies on Youwei Kang's conceptions on Model Calligraphy are inadequate and not in-depth. This study intends to change the current research conditions where Youwei Kang's thoughts on Model Calligraphy are ignored and instead focus on exploring his concepts on the same. Moreover, we learn that there is a deeply political reason behind Kang's standpoint of promoting Stele Theory and suppressing Model Calligraphy and respecting the Wei Dynasty style while despising the Tang Dynasty style. In his later years, Kang visited Xizhi Wang in the Lanting and remarked on the scrolls of Wang's calligraphy entitled *Foreword of Holy Religion*, making it possible to conclude that he had taken a newer outlook on Model Calligraphy during his final years.

## Definitions of Model Calligraphy and Stele Theory

### Definition of Model Calligraphy

Model Calligraphy is yet another name for the Tie style. We could see many calligraphy works of the Tie style, for example, Xun Wang's *Boyuan Tie* (see Figure 1). It has already been explained in *the Interpretation of Chinese Characters* written by Shen Xu of the Han Dynasty, which reads thus, the Tie means words written on silk manuscripts. Yuan Ruan in his work *On Calligraphy Inscription on Tablets in North China and Books of Calligraphy Models in South China* written during the Qing Dynasty, further elaborated on this definition. The Tie first originated from handwritten titles on silk manuscripts. The writings or paintings handed down in the form of paper or silk manuscripts are all defined as the Tie. Calligraphic art like the *Chunhua Mige Calligraphy* that we see today and the works of You Zhong, Xizhi Wang, Jian Xi, An Xie, and other calligraphists all belong to the defined range of the Tie, instead of Stele Theory. Both Shen Xu and Yuan Ruan defined the Tie from the aspect of the materials to write on. However, Yuan Ruan specifically emphasized that though the materials used in *Chunhua Mige Calligraphy* were different, it still was the Tie because of the specialty of its content. The definitions made by

Shen Xu and Yuan Ruan are very clear, but Youwei Kang defined the Tie from another perspective. He explained that people's handwriting during the Jin Dynasty was called the Tie. In other words, he made the people who wrote the scripts as the criteria to define the Tie. In the chapter on cursive script in *Extension of Double Pedals for the Boat of Art*, the footnotes add to the definition of the Tie through the works illustrated by Youwei Kang. The best work of the Tie is *Chunhua Mige Calligraphy* written by Xizhi Wang, of which it is so hard to get a copy. However, we can sense the calligraphic style of the Jin Dynasty through this piece. After Xizhi Wang's works, there was the calligraphy works *Jiang Tie* by Shidan Pan, he said the artistic form is beautiful, but the connotation is insufficient. Other masterpieces such as Jing Cai's *Daguan Calligraphy*, Dao Liu's *Tai Qing Tower Calligraphy*, Shimian Cao's *Xing Feng Tower Calligraphy*, and those by Hong Xi, Yun Ting, and Qing Yu are all excellent pieces to appreciate. We can choose one of these calligraphists as our teacher and learn from their works, though they have passed away long before. Only for the calligraphy works *Yu Hong Jian Zhen Tie* of the Qing Dynasty written by Detian Zhang can we write copies of the piece of art since the brush strokes and the touches can be seen clearly. Of all the calligraphic works of the Canton region, *Wind-Blowing Tower Calligraphy* is the best, even better than *Yun Qing Guan Tie*. Rongguang Wu concentrated on and stayed at the top level of Model Calligraphy. He created the calligraphy work *Jing Tie*, which Kang was so regretful of not having a look at. From all the pieces Kang mentioned above, his definition of the Tie is clarified. Despite its limitations, the version is more direct and easier to understand, fully reflecting Kang's admiration of calligraphic art during the Jin Dynasty. On this basis, Youwei Kang proposed the conception of Model Calligraphy as those calligraphy art works done during the Song, Yuan, and Ming dynasties. This means that Kang regarded the behavior of people during the Song, Yuan, and Ming dynasties to learn Jin-Dynasty style calligraphy as Model Calligraphy. In Youwei Kang's point of view, Model Calligraphy or learning of Jin-Dynasty style calligraphy can appear in two conditions, one is the Model Calligraphy of Song, Yuan, and Ming dynasties, and the other is that of the Qing Dynasty. Sha (1930) juxtaposed Stele Theory and Model Calligraphy with seal script, clerical script, and Yan style, believing that Yan style had gathered all the merits of Stele Theory and Model Calligraphy, and that Model Calligraphy mainly follows the regular running script in the Jin and the Tang dynasties while Stele Theory mainly focuses on the style of the Wei Dynasty. Cao (2005) thinks that the conception of Model Calligraphy appeared with the rising of Stele Theory. Model Calligraphy's main research objects are the historic calligraphic styles of You Zhong, Xizhi Wang and the relevant content,

including the calligraphists, calligraphic theories, calligraphy pieces, calligraphic inscriptions, stone inscriptions, masterpiece styles handed down to the posterity, and the appreciation. All that leads to a relevant discussion and study of Model Calligraphy always form a certain conception which exactly is the idea of Model Calligraphy.

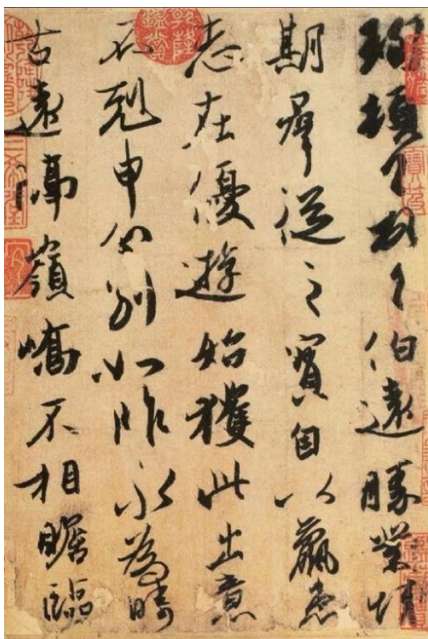


Figure 1. Xun Wang, *Boyuan Tie*, the Jin Dynasty, Calligraphy.

### Definition of Stele Theory

Stele Theory was first conceived by Yuan Ruan. It was later promoted by Shichen Bao and Youwei Kang and then it became the Bei-school or called Stele Theory. From the research perspective, the idea of calling the Bei and Tie as Stele Theory and Model Calligraphy, respectively ensure that the researchers have a breakthrough point to the history of Chinese calligraphy with two reference systems; thus, forming a new and more scientific concept of Chinese calligraphy. From the angle of creating art, the Stele Theory resuscitates a number of character styles such as the seal script, clerical script, and the regular running script that has been forgotten or ignored for over a thousand years, opening a new and huge area for calligraphy, and thus plays an important part in the overall resuscitating of the Chinese national culture. Junjie Zhou reckons that there are two definitions of Stele Theory: one refers to a subject that studies and verifies the background, artistic characteristics, the changes of the style, and the rubbings on the stone inscription artworks; the other refers to a creative genre, which is opposite to Model Calligraphy and based on stone inscriptions. As a matter of fact, we should have a reasonable awareness of the

stone carvings during the Northern Dynasty. Not all the stone inscriptions of the Northern Dynasty are excellent artworks. Moreover, epigraphers' pursuits toward the inscriptions in Stele Theory started from the Qing Dynasty and not the Northern Dynasty. The grand, wrecked, mottled Stele Theory of the Northern Dynasty we see today is the result of the natural conditions. (*Menglong Zhang Bei*) (see Figure 2) We could say that Stele Theory during the Northern Dynasty existed not only in the objective historical context but also in the understandings of the people from different dynasties. The wildness, modesty, and the talents shown in Stele Theory by the calligraphers of the Northern Dynasty, with the characteristics of wise, mild, and interesting use of strokes, compensate for Youwei Kang's political need of bringing new out of old and reforming for innovation.

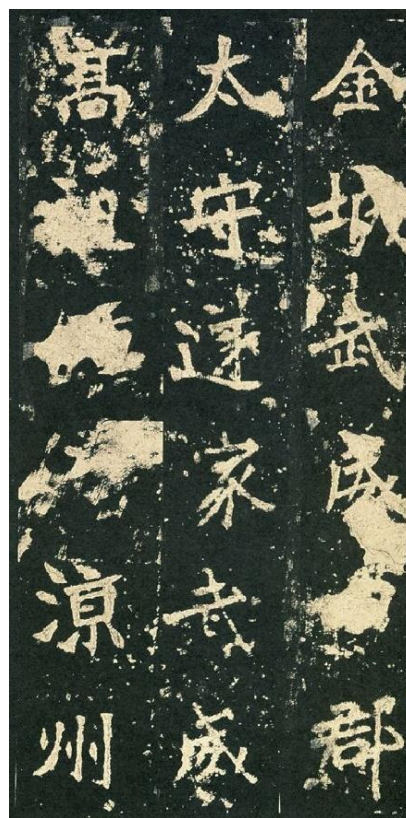


Figure 2. *Menglong Zhang Bei*, the Northern Wei Dynasty, Calligraphy.

### Core Ideas of Youwei Kang's Concept of Model Calligraphy

#### Respecting Calligraphy from the Jin Dynasty While Criticizing that of the Qing Dynasty

In Youwei Kang's opinion, there are two parts to the process

of learning the calligraphy of the Jin Dynasty. One is Model Calligraphy from the Song, Yuan, and the Ming dynasties, and the other is Model Calligraphy from the Qing Dynasty. Youwei Kang's attitudes toward these two periods are totally different. He persisted in negating the Model Calligraphy of the Qing Dynasty and kept promoting that of the Song, Yuan, and the Ming dynasties. Kang mentioned that he had enough reasons to hold on to the idea that the preserved letters and correspondences of the Jin Dynasty are called the Tie, whose authentic scripts still existed during the Ming Dynasty. Therefore, it was proper for the people of the Song, Yuan, and Ming dynasties to copy-write and practice Model Calligraphy. A piece of paper could be preserved at the most for 1,000 years, so it would have been impossible for the people of the Qing Dynasty to see the authentic calligraphy, needless to say, see the copybooks from the Tang Dynasty. Therefore, no matter who wrote, which calligraphy, if they were handed down from the past, most of them would have been recopied several times during the Song or the Ming dynasties. Although they were all entitled Xizhi Wang and Xianzhi Wang, the looks were not the same. This is like the case of how son, grandson, great-grandson, and great-great-grandson who have the same ancestors differ in their bodies and appearances. There are so many disadvantages, and it is hard to get a good copybook. When anything reaches its extreme, it reverses its course, and that is how nature works.

Obviously, why Youwei Kang held two totally different opinions is because the two methods of Model Calligraphy stood for two totally different aspects of calligraphy from the Jin Dynasty. People from the Song, Yuan, and the Ming dynasties could get a chance to see the calligraphy from the Jin Dynasty, so they could obtain the true spirits of learning the Jin calligraphy. That is to say, the calligraphers from the Song, Yuan, and the Ming dynasties could get to the middle level of calligraphy art standard when they kept practicing and copy-writing according to the best standards of the Jin calligraphy. Thus, it should be praiseworthy. However, the story of the Qing calligraphers was totally different because what they saw was the Jin calligraphy that was copied and changed several times. Therefore, the Qing calligraphers could just get to the low-level following the middle-level standard. The results of the Qing calligraphy could be easily guessed. Jin calligraphy was not complete till the Tang Dynasty when people started copying it in large numbers. When it came to the Song and the Ming dynasties, Jin calligraphy had faded, and there were few chances for the people to see the authentic Jin calligraphy; the copybooks were all made during the Tang and the Song dynasties. It was very rare to see an authentic Jin calligraphy artwork during the Song Dynasty, which can be seen clearly in the story of Fu Mi's willingness to trade his own life for Jin calligraphy in *The*

*History of Chinese Calligraphy*, written by Baolin Cai. Fu Mi was 38 years old when he saw fourteen calligraphy artworks by Jin calligraphists in Wei Li's house, but the host would not trade them for anything. Fu Mi went back home and tried copying some characters to comfort himself. By the time he was 51 years old, Fu Mi had managed to get his favorite *August 5th Calligraphy Artwork* by An Xie from Jing Cai through some dishonorable means. In addition, he had spent 150,000 Qian to get the *Lue Wang Calligraphy Artwork* by Xizhi Wang from the imperial clansmen. According to Cao (2002), these all showed that the calligraphists in the Song Dynasty needed to devote much more effort and money than the people before they did to promote the development of calligraphy in the Song Dynasty. They often set Tang calligraphic style as an example since penmanship could be easily preserved as Song was close to the Tang Dynasty. The other reason was that Jin calligraphy was very rare at that time. If the situation during the Song Dynasty had been like this, how it would have been during the Ming Dynasty is imaginable. During the Qing Dynasty, what people saw were the copied Jin calligraphy from the Song and the Ming dynasties, and under the influence of Guan Ge style of the Ming Dynasty, the Tai Ge style appeared during the Qing Dynasty. Till then, the Qing calligraphy was walking to a dead end.

Youwei Kang understood every bit of this, and he insisted on promoting Stele Theory and suppressing Tie. It looks like he had no other options than this, and he showed his helplessness by saying he wanted to respect Model Calligraphy, but it was impossible because it was rather roughly copied. So, he had to promote Stele Theory. Although Youwei Kang was not appreciative of the calligraphy of the Qing Dynasty, he really respected Jin calligraphy, which was the originator of Model Calligraphy. We can infer this from his comments on Jin calligraphy. He said maybe the Jin calligraphy stands for the highest level. It was a model of self-expression. These could be the highest remarks Youwei Kang ever made on Jin calligraphy. For the works of Xizhi Wang and his son Xianzhi Wang, Youwei Kang showed his admiration on several occasions. We could say that, in Kang's mind, Jin calligraphy represented by the Wangs were the best, and therefore, for him, Model Calligraphy, whose originator was Jin calligraphy, should also be the best to promote. However, Model Calligraphy during the Qing Dynasty was too far from the ideal Model Calligraphy, and its nature was no longer the spiritual nature of Jin calligraphy; so, it was assumed to be getting worse.

#### **Seeing Model Calligraphy Through the Eyes of Stele Theory**

In the calligraphic area where Youwei Kang attempted to make a change, Xizhi Wang was known as a classical saint of

calligraphy. Youwei Kang knew well that it could never be possible to easily negate Xizhi Wang, because it was groundless to promote a new theory while attacking the old one. Therefore, he came up with an excellent idea of building an image of Confucius, trying to make people believe that he was making new changes based on the old classics. Fan (1999) stated thus, Youwei Kang described Confucius as the head of constitutional reform and modernization, an image completely different from that of the old classics. More direct comments from Jiang (1999) went like this, the function brought by Youwei Kang's *Verifications of the Confucius' Reform* was nothing but to make Confucius Kang's puppet. Kang understood that if he upheld the idea of Xizhi Wang as in the case of Confucius, then he would be successful in achieving the ideological reform in the history of calligraphy. Therefore, Kang directly built Xizhi Wang as an expert in Model Calligraphy originating from Stele Theory during Han and Wei dynasties and further as a puppet of Stele Theory. Kang suggested that to learn from Xizhi Wang, people should learn from the teacher of teachers and learn the calligraphic history, instead of directly studying *The Foreword of Orchid Pavilion*, *Foreword of Holy Religion*. Youwei Kang purposefully promoted Xizhi Wang. His other ideas were to include fabulous calligraphists into his epigraphic system, though, to achieve his goal of promoting Stele Theory. At the same time, his loyalty and faithfulness to Xizhi Wang and Xianzhi Wang could be clearly shown.

## Reforms

Reforms are the guidelines of Youwei Kang's concept of Model Calligraphy and the core of his entire calligraphic thought. It could further extend to his political area. Two of his books, *Extension of Double Pedals for the Boat of Art* and *Study on Old Classics in a New Way*, undoubtedly show his thoughts on reforming. Both books came up with Xin Liu's idea of study on old classics in a new way, on the basis of which Liu had forged the old classics, and thus inferred that the old classics of over the last 2,000 years were all faked. This statement was too peremptory because every part of it contradicted the inscriptions of the classics as judged by Youwei Kang as faked. Youwei Kang even claimed that the old, uncovered relics were all buried by Xin Liu, who tried to deceive all the posterity (Lu, 2001). Youwei Kang's other motives could be easily felt in this statement. Besides, he compared the study of ancient classics and inscriptions relevant to the old and modern classics with Model Calligraphy and Stele Theory (which was frowned upon), and then he promoted Stele Theory while attacking Model Calligraphy. As a master studying Confucian classics and as a calligraphist, Youwei Kang respected modern classics and Stele

Theory, suppressed ancient classics and Model Calligraphy, from which the reform thoughts could be shown. In addition, Kang compared the competition between the fogyish and innovative parties to that between Model Calligraphy and Stele Theory, thereby adding a label of being fogyish on Model Calligraphy. Stele Theory of the Northern Dynasty had the features of simplicity characteristic and shape form, which are mentioned above, just meeting the political needs of Youwei Kang's reforms. This is also a very important reason why Kang respected Stele Theory while he criticized Model Calligraphy. It can be clearly seen here that Youwei Kang had already blended his political ideas into calligraphic art, which was obviously inappropriate. However, Youwei Kang's books like *Extension of Double Pedals for the Boat of Art* were in conformance with the mass idea of pursuing the change, which was why they received a relatively wide range of readers.

## The Reflections of Youwei Kang's Concept of Model Calligraphy in His Calligraphic Practice

Throughout Youwei Kang's entire life, we can find that his calligraphic practices were nothing subjective and extreme like his theory was. His calligraphic works were known for his epigraphic running script and the typical characteristics are majestic and powerful. Also, Stele Theory was prominent in his calligraphy, which could be seen in his idea about the Tie.

*Dian Shi Zhuang Tie* (written by Youwei Kang in 1895, belongs to the Gan Lu style), which is a style of writing used in ancient China for official documents. The change was an important guideline for Youwei Kang's calligraphic works, but after being influenced by family surroundings and the needs to reform for innovation, Youwei Kang had to face the fact and made up his mind to take to politics through calligraphy. It is thus clearly pointed out in Kang's *Extension of Double Pedals for the Boat of Art*. If he aimed to get an official post, then there was nothing unique about the idea. He was very clear that writing in Gan Lu style was just a method, and never the purpose, suggesting that the person who wrote for an official career was not eager for it. *Dian Shi Zhuang Tie* was the typical Guan Ge style which could be considered neat and disciplinary. Obviously, there was no individuality or personal style involved, but we can understand that Youwei Kang had worked very hard to learn calligraphy during his adolescence.

Among Youwei Kang's early-stage calligraphy works produced during his global tour, one that was written in Japan is *Fu Bo Tang Shi* preserved in the Shanghai museum. Two books were preserved by his seventh daughter, Tonghuan, of which one is the manuscript titled *Five Poems in October, 1900* written in Singapore, and the other is a banner with *Reading Poems About*



*Peony Written 15 Years Ago* written in 1901 again in Singapore. The former was in the running script, while the latter was in cursive and running scripts. If viewed from a perspective of style and brush strokes, these three pieces of work appeared in an early form of Kang's own handwriting style. People could feel that Youwei Kang had attempted to integrate all the styles such as Southern calligraphy, Northern Stele Theory, Han clerical script, and many others together, and this was a huge success. Although these works were far from maturity with some showing signs of immaturity, the precious features were evident. The sense of the Tie could be felt anywhere, and the style of two Wangs could be directly sensed, showing the solid foundation of Kang's calligraphy. It should be noticed that the time when Kang wrote *Fu Bo Tang Shi* was just about six months after he fled from the failure of the reform; the other two pieces were done a year later. If compared in detail, the banner had a stronger sense of Model Calligraphy and the vertical stroll showed more of Kang's own style.

Kang's representative work *Datong Manuscripts*, written during his early ages, is divided into three volumes, of which, the third edition is elaborated here. Because of the manuscript form, Kang had naturally paid no attention to calligraphy in this work and had focused less on management but more on true feelings, closer to his own style. This is a typical transition and combining Stele Theory into calligraphy. The brush-side techniques from Jin style and the humble Han Wei style can be seen everywhere. More importantly, the blending is considerably natural, though the lines seem a little mild and weak. All of these lead one to recall one of his poems where he penned who can blend the Northern Stele Theory and Southern calligraphy, even forge Zhou Qin culture and breed Han Stele Theory. Of all the long history, he just has a wish to achieve these goals.

In his *Extension of Double Pedals for the Boat of Art*, Youwei Kang wrote about his experience of studying calligraphy till he was 19 years old. He had studied Model Calligraphy and started copy-writing Xun Ouyang, Mengfu Zhao and *Yueyi Calligraphy*. After Xun Ouyang's *For Sweet Spring Water* (a precious version made in the Song Dynasty), Kang turned to learn from Tong Ouyang's *Stele for Monk Daoyin*, and then *Stele for Monk Guifeng*, *Stele for Sir Yu Gong*, *Stele for Mysterious Tower*, *Stele for Yan's Ancestral Temple*, and Guoting Sun's *the History of Calligraphy* and *Chunhua Mige Calligraphy* (Kang, 1889). When he talked about Stele Theory, Kang's calligraphy was still at the stage of Model Calligraphy (Youwei Kang's calligraphy work, couplet) (see Figure 3). He did not truly combine his epigraphic theory and calligraphic practice until the 1898 Wu Hsu Reform when he fled away to foreign countries. When he propagated his idea of respecting Stele Theory and attacking Model Calligraphy, he also witnessed a phenomenon, as a matter

of fact, that is due to the rising of Stele Theory. Calligraphy gradually faded, leading to the fall of running cursive scripts, and the people of the Qing Dynasty could not write in these two styles. Even the hands of some of the so-called calligraphists seemed ludicrous. Kang had opined thus. Lately, Stele Theory of the Northern Dynasty is booming prosperously while Model Calligraphy is failing. The cursive style faces the threat of extinction, while the running script is easy to write and still survives. However, he sees the celebrities in the capital city who are famous for their calligraphy trying to imitate the old ones but failing to understand and wisely use the calligraphic techniques, making their works seem so funny. Therefore, Youwei Kang emphasized the significance of Model Calligraphy over the running and the cursive styles. In the volume on the cursive script in his book *Extension of Double Pedals for the Boat of Art*, he discussed the cursive running style and Model Calligraphy, with a review of the value of Model Calligraphy. Youwei Kang was conscious of the fact that if he wanted to make it prosperous, he had to value Model Calligraphy as the fashion. Youwei Kang's concept of Model Calligraphy was based on a huge social and political background; as a calligraphist, he studied calligraphy to relieve his inner anguish, and most of the time, he made calligraphy a weapon and tool of reform as a politician.



Figure 3. Youwei Kang's handwriting of the Qing Dynasty, Calligraphy.

## Conclusion

All of Youwei Kang's life was spent in contradictions to hold his political standpoint, wandering between the two identities of a politician and a calligrapher. It is not hard to find that some of his extreme standpoints on calligraphy served his political reasons, to a great extent. In other words, most of the time, he explored the calligraphic issues as a politician. It looks like that in Youwei Kang's consciousness, to succeed in achieving the political purpose of abandoning the old institutes and embracing innovative reforms, he had to expand his influence in possibly more areas. Therefore, Youwei Kang chose to put the cat among the pigeons with *Extension of Double Pedals for the Boat of Art*, a book full of extreme ideas, raising big discussions in the calligraphic circles. Maybe that was his original intention. Back in the identity of a calligraphist, Youwei Kang's calligraphic theory was filled with contradictions. It can be reflected that he could not persuade himself to beat Model Calligraphy. As mentioned earlier in this study, 60-year-old Youwei Kang visited Xizhi Wang in the Orchid Pavilion and regretted not respecting Model Calligraphy, remarking on the scrolls of Wang's calligraphy entitled *Foreword of Holy Religion*. He said his previous part of the work, *Extension of Double Pedals for the Boat of Art*, was done because he had motives and feelings then. Now that he was back to respecting Model Calligraphy again, he should continue writing the latter part. This was a statement that came from the bottom of the heart of a real calligraphist. We can say that Youwei Kang purposefully masked Xizhi Wang as a puppet to help promote Stele Theory, while he himself unconsciously served as a spokesman of the era. In short, the concept of Model Calligraphy is an important part of the calligraphy thought of Youwei Kang. He approved of Jin calligraphy and criticized Qing calligraphy. And his theory was too extreme while his calligraphic practice combined Model Calligraphy and Stele Theory together, yet he visited Xizhi Wang in the Orchid Pavilion in his later years and regretted not respecting Model Calligraphy. Thus, he summed up his concept of Model Calligraphy.

In a certain sense, Youwei Kang's life has different opinions of later ages. However, it is undeniable that he was an important figure advocating social reform in the late Qing Dynasty. Meanwhile, the thought of "Require Change" has always existed in his elaboration of all disciplines of arts, and it also brings profound reforms to Chinese calligraphy's artistic concepts. Overall, Youwei Kang's concept of Model Calligraphy has a far-reaching influence on Chinese calligraphy.

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