



Chinese Writing: The Evolution of Ancient Calligraphy

中国书写——古代书法的演变



Liu xiaojia



2025.2.26

目录 CONTENTS

01 Formation of Chinese characters

03 The Value of Calligraphic Art

02 Eight Types of Calligraphy

04 Q&A

The image features a dark green, octagonal frame with a white border. Inside the frame, there are stylized white clouds at the top and bottom, and a mountain range with mist at the bottom. The number '01' is centered in a gold color, flanked by three gold triangles pointing right on the left and three gold triangles pointing left on the right. Below the title, there is a horizontal gold line.

01

Formation of Chinese
characters

”

Formation of Chinese characters Try to [draw your graphic](#)



We can still identify many common characteristics, and as these 'consensuses' gradually reach consensus, they gradually form the true pictographic script.

The image features a dark green, octagonal frame with a white border. Inside the frame, there are stylized white clouds at the top and bottom, and a mountain range with mist at the bottom. The number '02' is centered in a light beige color. To the left and right of the number are three right-pointing and three left-pointing triangles, respectively, in a dark green color. Below the title, there is a horizontal line.

02

**Eight Types of
Calligraphy**

“ The Evolution of Calligraphy Art

In the late Spring and Autumn period, people began to regard writing as a form of artistic creation.

甲骨文Oracle
(Shang Dynasty, approximately 1600 BC-1046 BC)

小篆Lesser Seal script
(Qin Dynasty, 221 BC-206 BC)

楷书regular script
(Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties
to modern times, 220 AD to present)

草书Cursive script
(From the Han Dynasty to the present,
206 BC to the present day)

金文Inscriptions on bronze
(From the Western Zhou Dynasty to the Spring and Autumn
Period and Warring States Period, approximately 1046-221 BC)

隶书official script
(Han Dynasty, 206 BC -220 AD)

行书running script
(Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties to
modern times, 220 AD to present)

魏碑Wei Bei
(Southern and Northern Dynasties, 386-589 AD)



“ The Evolution of Calligraphy Art

In the late Spring and Autumn period, people began to regard writing as a form of artistic creation.

甲骨文Oracle
(Shang Dynasty, approximately 1600 BC-1046 BC)

小篆Lesser Seal script
(Qin Dynasty, 221 BC-206 BC)

楷书regular script
(Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties
to modern times, 220 AD to present)

草书Cursive script
(From the Han Dynasty to the present,
206 BC to the present day)

金文Inscriptions on bronze
(From the Western Zhou Dynasty to the Spring and Autumn
Period and Warring States Period, approximately 1046-221 BC)

隶书official script
(Han Dynasty, 206 BC -220 AD)

行书running script
(Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties to
modern times, 220 AD to present)

魏碑Wei Bei
(Southern and Northern Dynasties, 386-589 AD)



Oracle bone script

Oracle bone script is the earliest mature writing system in China, engraved on turtle shells and animal bones.

Its lines are strong and powerful, its structure is ancient and has strong pictographic features.

 目 eye

 山 mountain

 鸟 bird

昨夜星辰昨夜風
畫樓西畔桂堂東
身無彩鳳雙飛翼
心有靈犀一點通
隔座送鉤春酒暖
分曹送舞管絳絳



“ The Evolution of Calligraphy Art

In the late Spring and Autumn period, people began to regard writing as a form of artistic creation.

甲骨文Oracle
(Shang Dynasty, approximately 1600 BC-1046 BC)

小篆Lesser Seal script
(Qin Dynasty, 221 BC-206 BC)

楷书regular script
(Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties
to modern times, 220 AD to present)

草书Cursive script
(From the Han Dynasty to the present,
206 BC to the present day)

金文Inscriptions on bronze
(From the Western Zhou Dynasty to the Spring and Autumn
Period and Warring States Period, approximately 1046-221 BC)

隶书official script
(Han Dynasty, 206 BC -220 AD)

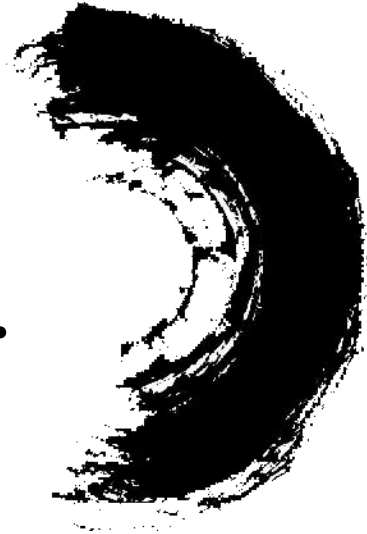
行书running script
(Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties to
modern times, 220 AD to present)

魏碑Wei Bei
(Southern and Northern Dynasties, 386-589 AD)



文 Inscriptions on bronze

**Bronze
Inscriptions
were cast and
carved on
bronze vessels.**



**Compared with Oracle
Bone Script:**

- lines were more rounded and smooth
- the structure tended to be regular
- the character shape was dignified and elegant.

**The solemnity and order of the Western
Zhou's ritual and music culture.**

“ The Evolution of Calligraphy Art

In the late Spring and Autumn period, people began to regard writing as a form of artistic creation.

甲骨文Oracle
(Shang Dynasty, approximately 1600 BC-1046 BC)

小篆Lesser Seal script
(Qin Dynasty, 221 BC-206 BC)

楷书regular script
(Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties
to modern times, 220 AD to present)

草书Cursive script
(From the Han Dynasty to the present,
206 BC to the present day)

金文Inscriptions on bronze
(From the Western Zhou Dynasty to the Spring and Autumn
Period and Warring States Period, approximately 1046-221 BC)

隶书official script
(Han Dynasty, 206 BC -220 AD)

行书running script
(Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties to
modern times, 220 AD to present)

魏碑Wei Bei
(Southern and Northern Dynasties, 386-589 AD)



水 篆

Lesser Seal script/ Small Seal Script/ Xiao Zhuan

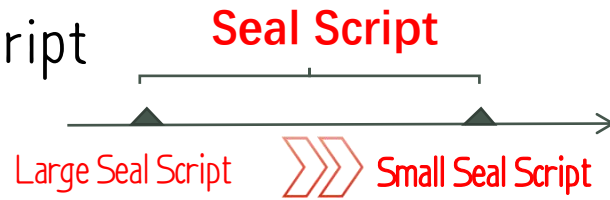


Small Seal Script was standardized by Li Si.

- Slender in shape
 - Uniform lines and symmetrical structure
 - Having a high degree of standardization and decorativeness.
-
- First unified font of Chinese characters nationwide, marking the standardization of calligraphic art.

Seal Script/ Large Seal Script/ Small Seal Script

篆书VS大篆VS小篆



Seal Script

- In a broad sense, it includes all scripts before Clerical Script, such as Bronze Inscriptions, Stone Drum Script, Ancient Scripts of the Six States, Miao Zhan, and Stacked Seal Script, etc.
- In a narrow sense, it mainly refers to "Large Seal Script" and "Small Seal Script".

Large Seal Script

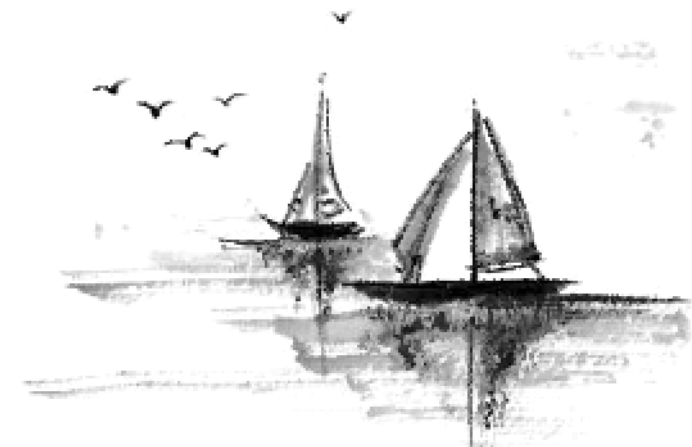
- The character standards of Large Seal Script had not been finalized.
- Many characters were like drawings and their writing methods were not fixed.

Small Seal Script

- A unified form of writing simplified
- Created on the basis of Large Seal Script after Emperor Qin Shi Huang unified the six states.



何似在清



“ The Evolution of Calligraphy Art

In the late Spring and Autumn period, people began to regard writing as a form of artistic creation.

甲骨文Oracle
(Shang Dynasty, approximately 1600 BC-1046 BC)

小篆Lesser Seal script/Small Seal Script/Xiao Zhuan
(Qin Dynasty, 221 BC-206 BC)

楷书regular script
(Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties
to modern times, 220 AD to present)

草书Cursive script
(From the Han Dynasty to the present,
206 BC to the present day)

金文Inscriptions on bronze
(From the Western Zhou Dynasty to the Spring and Autumn
Period and Warring States Period, approximately 1046-221 BC)

隶书official script
(Han Dynasty, 206 BC -220 AD)

行书running script
(Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties to
modern times, 220 AD to present)

魏碑Wei Bei
(Southern and Northern Dynasties, 386-589 AD)

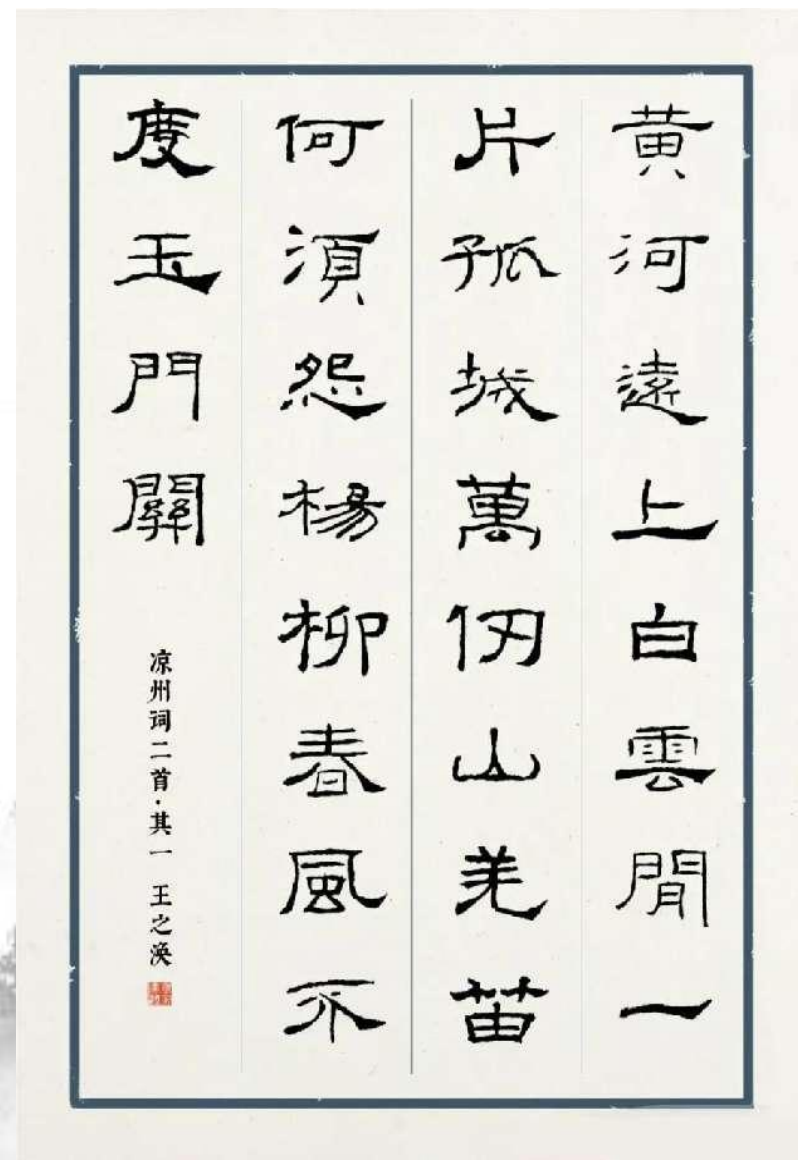


隶书 Official script/Clerical Script

- Evolved from the simplification of Small Seal Script
- Flat in shape, with square and angular strokes
- Had the characteristic of "silk - worm head and swallow tail", making it more convenient to write.

The emergence of Clerical Script **marked the transition of Chinese characters from ancient script to modern script**

It was an important turning point in the art of calligraphy.



“ The Evolution of Calligraphy Art

In the late Spring and Autumn period, people began to regard writing as a form of artistic creation.

甲骨文Oracle
(Shang Dynasty, approximately 1600 BC-1046 BC)

小篆Lesser Seal script/Small Seal Script/Xiao Zhuan
(Qin Dynasty, 221 BC-206 BC)

楷书regular script
(Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties
to modern times, 220 AD to present)

草书Cursive script
(From the Han Dynasty to the present,
206 BC to the present day)

金文Inscriptions on bronze
(From the Western Zhou Dynasty to the Spring and Autumn
Period and Warring States Period, approximately 1046-221 BC)

隶书official script
(Han Dynasty, 206 BC -220 AD)

行书running script
(Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties to
modern times, 220 AD to present)

魏碑Wei Bei
(Southern and Northern Dynasties, 386-589 AD)



楷书Regular Script

- A square character shape, clear strokes
- A rigorous structure

Regular Script was **the standard font** for Chinese character writing.

The model of calligraphic art, with far - reaching influence, and it is still the foundation for learning and writing today.

Representative Figures

唐朝欧阳询(欧体)

清



欧阳询

唐朝颜真卿(颜体)

清



颜真卿

唐朝柳公权(柳体)

清



柳公权

元代赵孟頫(赵体)

清



赵孟頫

起筆亦清
何似在人
中



“ The Evolution of Calligraphy Art

In the late Spring and Autumn period, people began to regard writing as a form of artistic creation.

甲骨文Oracle
(Shang Dynasty, approximately 1600 BC-1046 BC)

小篆Lesser Seal script/Small Seal Script/Xiao Zhuan
(Qin Dynasty, 221 BC-206 BC)

楷书regular script
(Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties
to modern times, 220 AD to present)

草书Cursive script
(From the Han Dynasty to the present,
206 BC to the present day)

金文Inscriptions on bronze
(From the Western Zhou Dynasty to the Spring and Autumn
Period and Warring States Period, approximately 1046-221 BC)

隶书official script
(Han Dynasty, 206 BC -220 AD)

行书running script
(Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties to
modern times, 220 AD to present)

魏碑Wei Bei
(Southern and Northern Dynasties, 386-589 AD)



行书 Running Script



——Wang Xizhi

(his "Lanting Xu" was acclaimed as the
"Number One Running Script in the World")

Running Script was between Regular
Script and Cursive Script:

- Strokes were coherent
- The writing was smooth
- Both the regularity of Regular Script and the liveliness of Cursive Script.

Running Script combined practicality and
artistry, and it was one of the most popular
scripts in the art of calligraphy.



“ The Evolution of Calligraphy Art

In the late Spring and Autumn period, people began to regard writing as a form of artistic creation.

甲骨文Oracle
(Shang Dynasty, approximately 1600 BC-1046 BC)

小篆Lesser Seal script/Small Seal Script/Xiao Zhuan
(Qin Dynasty, 221 BC-206 BC)

楷书regular script
(Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties
to modern times, 220 AD to present)

草书Cursive script
(From the Han Dynasty to the present,
206 BC to the present day)

金文Inscriptions on bronze
(From the Western Zhou Dynasty to the Spring and Autumn
Period and Warring States Period, approximately 1046-221 BC)

隶书official script
(Han Dynasty, 206 BC -220 AD)

行书running script
(Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties to
modern times, 220 AD to present)

魏碑Wei Bei
(Southern and Northern Dynasties, 386-589 AD)



草书 Cursive Script

Cursive Script

· Simplified strokes, which were continuous and varied in character shape, with strong expressiveness and artistry.

Cursive Script was the most free and creative script in the art of calligraphy, reflecting the calligrapher's personality and emotions.

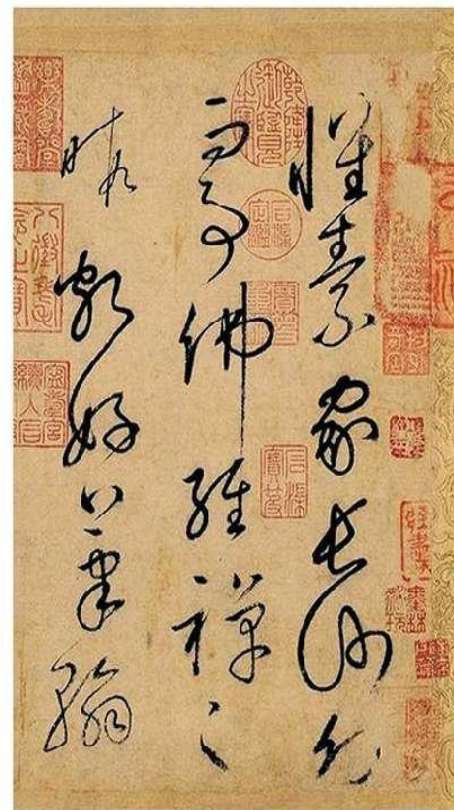
Classification:

Classical Cursive (early cursive script) 章草

Modern Cursive (developed by Wang Xizhi) 今草

Wild Cursive (Zhang Xu, Huaisu) 狂草

...



The "Zi Xu Tie", written by Huaisu at the age of 41, is acclaimed as

"Number One Cursive Script in the World".

怀素41岁写的《自叙帖》纸本真迹(局部)

被称为“天下第一草书”



“ The Evolution of Calligraphy Art

In the late Spring and Autumn period, people began to regard writing as a form of artistic creation.

甲骨文Oracle
(Shang Dynasty, approximately 1600 BC-1046 BC)

小篆Lesser Seal script/Small Seal Script/Xiao Zhuan
(Qin Dynasty, 221 BC-206 BC)

楷书regular script
(Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties
to modern times, 220 AD to present)

草书Cursive script
(From the Han Dynasty to the present,
206 BC to the present day)

金文Inscriptions on bronze
(From the Western Zhou Dynasty to the Spring and Autumn
Period and Warring States Period, approximately 1046-221 BC)

隶书official script
(Han Dynasty, 206 BC -220 AD)

行书running script
(Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties to
modern times, 220 AD to present)

魏碑Wei Bei
(Southern and Northern Dynasties, 386-589 AD)



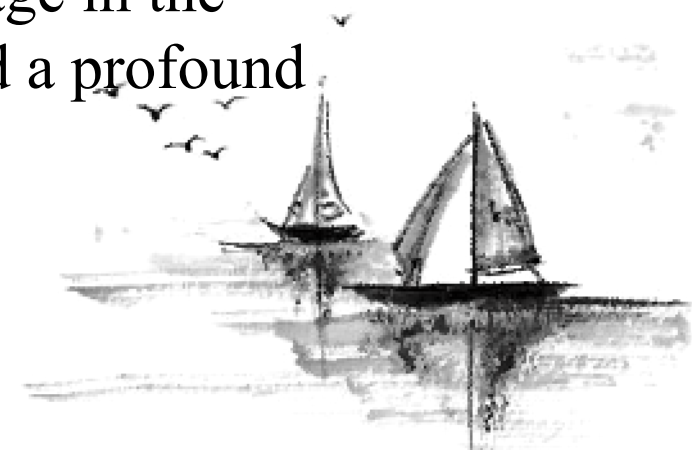
魏碑 Wei Stele/Wei Tablet Script

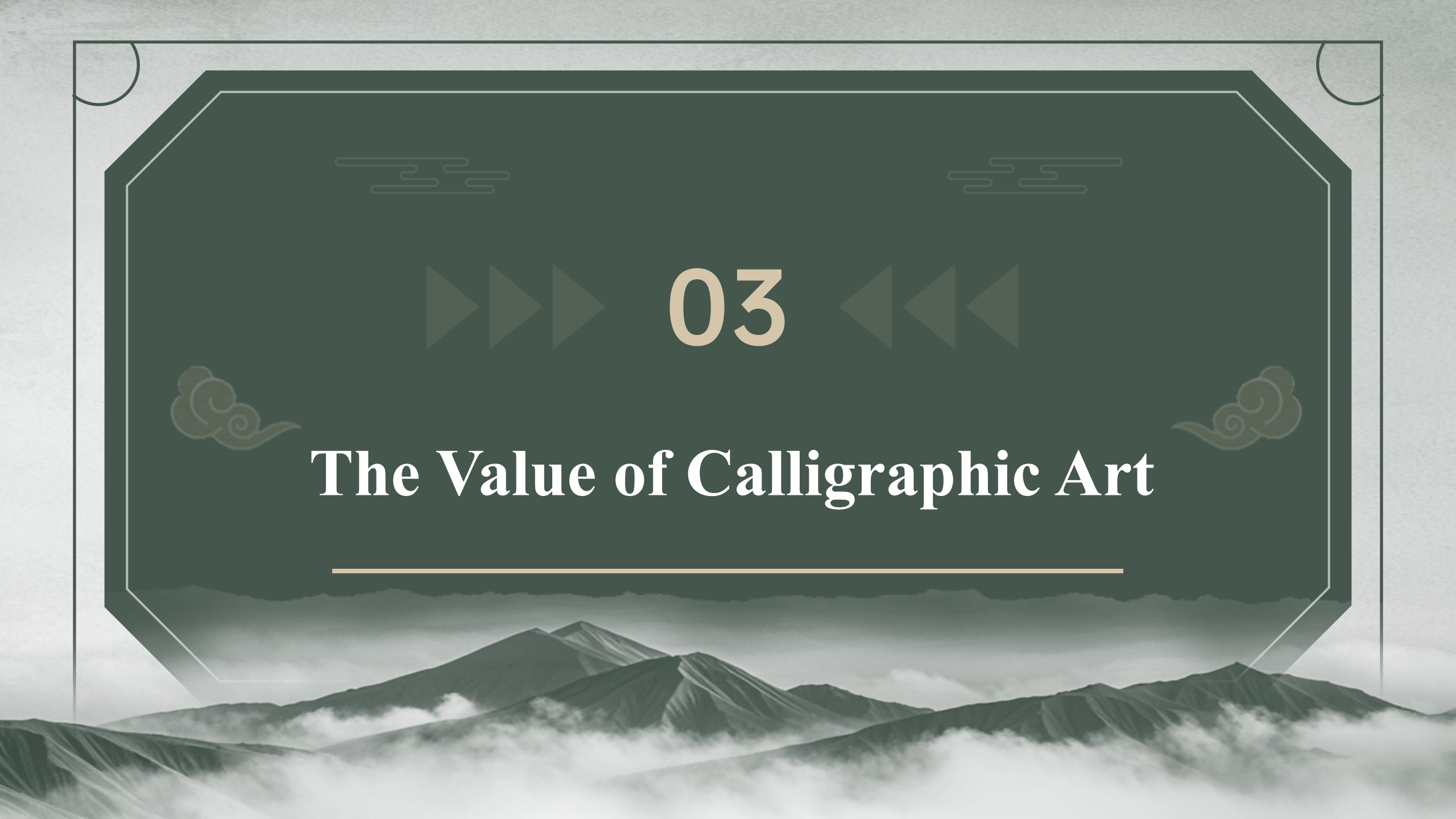
Wei Tablet Script

A form of regular script (Kaishu) **carved on stone tablets**

Characters are vigorous and powerful, with bold, angular strokes and a simple, ancient structure, exuding a strong sense of metal and stone.

Wei Tablet Script represents a crucial stage in the development of regular script and has had a profound influence on later calligraphy.



A decorative frame with a dark green background and a white border. The frame contains stylized clouds and mountains. The number '03' is centered in the frame. The background of the slide shows a misty mountain range.

03

The Value of Calligraphic Art

Your options——The Value of Calligraphic Art

壹

【Cultural Significance】



貳

【Economic and Collectible Value】



叁

【Educational Value】

靜以脩身
儉以養德

辛丑年小徽書

肆

【Modern Applications】





04

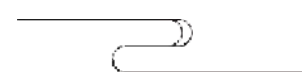
Q&A

Do you and the people around you have a passion
for calligraphy?
你与你身边的人是否热爱书法？



Will Chinese calligraphy continue to degenerate with the further development of the IT industry and typing?

随着 IT 业和打字의进一步发展，中国书法会继续退化吗？



Thanks!

2

0

2

5

