

Draft of a Requiem of My Nephew

祭侄文稿

Yan Zhenqing

颜真卿

presenter: Ziai Liu

其形也，翩若惊鸿，婉若游龙。荣曜秋菊，华茂春
 木。髣髴兮若轻云之蔽月，飘飖兮若流风之回雪。
 远上寒山石径斜，白猿啼处接苍崖。绿萝萦紫
 盖，丹厓映红霞。朝采石镜水，暮弄清溪花。似此
 佳景，不可虚传。且寄谢题于石。



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Style and Contributions



01

Yanti

Yan Script

Yanti(Yan Script)

- Yan Zhenqing (顏真卿, 709–785) was a leading Chinese calligrapher and a loyal governor of the Tang Dynasty. His artistic accomplishment in Chinese calligraphy parallels the greatest master calligraphers throughout the history.
- His “Yan style” of the Regular Script is the textbook—style that most calligraphy beginners imitate today. It often called Yan script (Yanti 颜体), brought Chinese calligraphy to a new realm, emphasizing strength, boldness, and grandness.

02

Stele of the “Abundant Treasure” Pagoda



多宝塔碑

《大唐西京千佛寺多宝佛塔感应碑文》
Stele of the "Abundant Treasure" Pagoda

大唐西京千福寺多寶佛
塔感應碑文
南陽岑勛撰
判尚書武部員外郎琅
邪顏真卿書
朝議郎
朝散大

夫撿校尚書都官郎中

東海徐浩題額



粵妙法蓮華諸佛之祕藏
也多寶佛塔證經之踴現
也發明資乎十力弘建在

於四依有禪師法号楚金
姓程廣平人也祖父並信
著釋門慶歸法胤母高氏
久而無妊夜夢諸佛覺而
有娠是生龍象之徵無取

熊羆之兆誕弥厥月炳然
殊相岐嶷絕於輦茹髭鬣
不為童遊道樹萌牙簪豫
章之栝幹禪池畎漚涵巨
海之波濤年甫七歲居然

猷俗自誓出家禮藏探經
法華在手宿命潛悟如識
金環摠持不遺若注瓶水
九歲落髮住西京龍興寺
衲僧錄也進具之年昇座

講法頃收珍藏異窮子之
疾走直詣寶山無化城而
可息尔後因靜夜持誦至
多寶塔品身心泊然如入
禪定忽見寶塔宛在目前

釋迦分身遍滿空界行勤
聖現業淨感深悲生悟中
淚下如雨遂布衣一食不
出戶庭期滿六年誓建茲
塔既而許王瓘及居士趙

崇信女普意善來稽首咸
捨珍財禪師以為輯莊嚴
之因資爽塏之地利見千
福默議於心時千福有懷
忍禪師忽於中夜見有一

水發源龍興流注千福清
澄泛灩中有方舟又見寶
塔自空而下久之乃滅即
今建塔處也寺內淨人名
法相先於其地復見燈光

遠望則明近尋即滅竊以
水流開於法性舟泛表於
慈航塔現兆於有成燈明
示於無盡非至德精感其
孰能與於此又禪師建言

雜然歡悵負畚荷插于橐
于囊登登憑憑是板是築
灑以香水隱以金鋌我能
竭誠五乃用壯禪師每夜
於築階所懇志誦經勵精
行道衆聞天樂咸嗅異香
喜歎之音聖凡相半至天
寶元載創構材木肇安相
輪禪師理會佛心感通
帝夢七月十三日勅內

侍趙思侶求諸寶坊驗以
所夢入寺見塔禮問禪師
聖夢有孚法名惟肖其日
賜錢五十萬絹千匹助建
修也則知精一之行雖先

天而不違純如之心當後
佛之授記晉漢明永平之
日大化初流我皇天寶
之年寶塔斯建同符千古
昭有烈光於時道俗景附

檀施山積庀徙度財功百
其倍矣至二載勅中使
楊順景宣旨令禪師於
花萼樓下迎多寶塔額遂
摠僧事備法儀宸睠俯

臨額書下降又賜絹百疋
聖札飛毫動雲龍之氣象
天文挂塔駐日月之光輝
至四載塔事將就表請慶
齊歸功帝力時僧道四

03

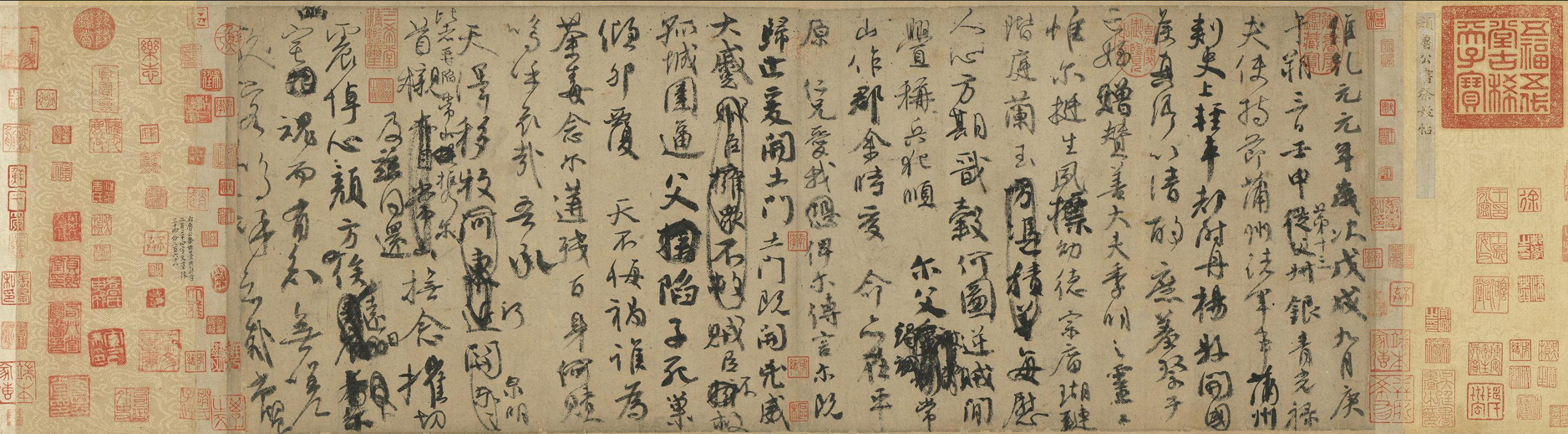
Draft of a Requiem to My Nephew



Ji Zhi Wengao

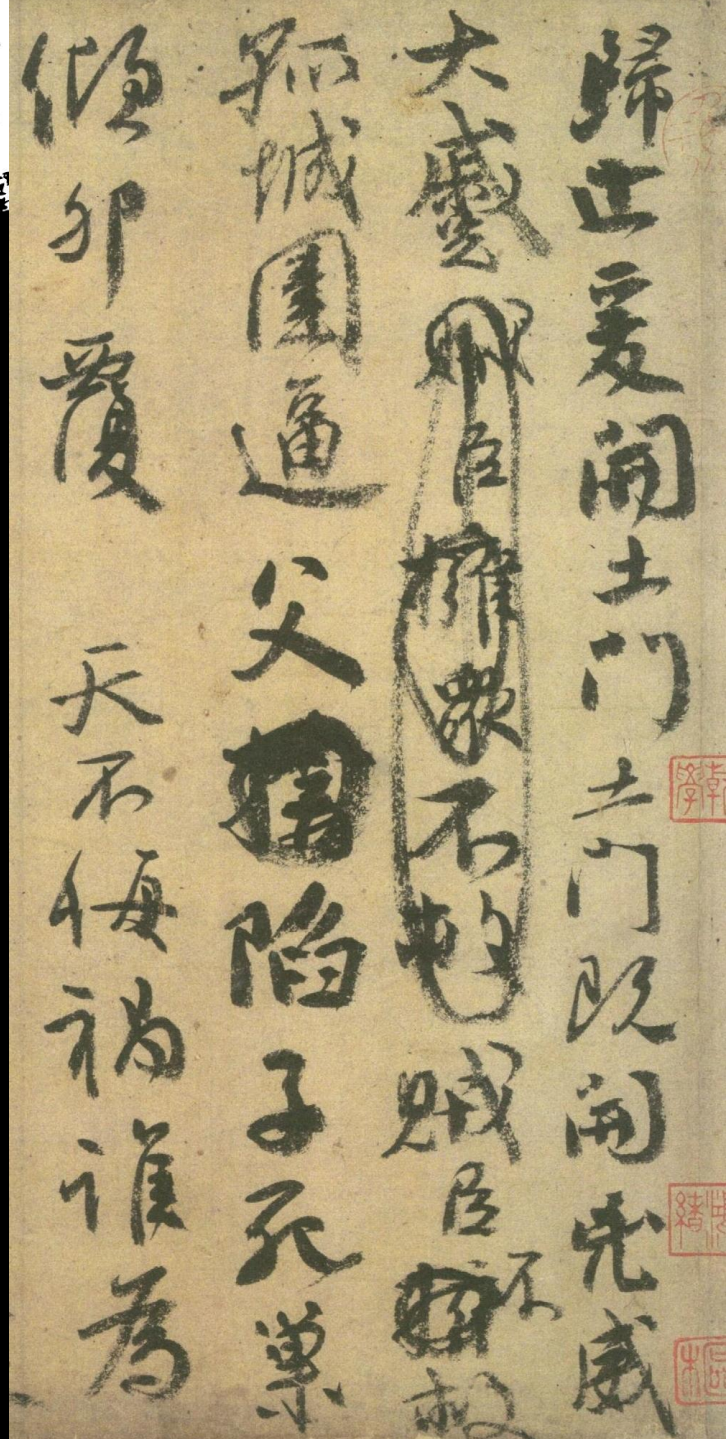
(Draft of a Requiem to My Nephew)

- The text of the 28.3 x 75.5 cm piece has 234 characters arranged in twenty—three columns. Plus the thirty—four characters Yan himself struck out, the calligraphy has a total of 268 characters.



Ji Zhi Wengao (Draft of a Requiem to My Nephew)

- In the rebellion of An Lu-shan (安祿山) around 755 CE, Yan Zhenqing's nephew Yan Jiming (顏季明) was serving in the government of Changshan (常山). The rebel forces invaded the town, the Tang armies did not come to the rescue, resulting in the fall of the town and the death of Jiming. This is what Yan Zhenqing meant when he wrote in this piece, "Traitorous officials did not rescue them, so the orphaned city was besieged and compelled to submit. The father was taken and the son killed in 756 CE, the nest tipped and the eggs overturned." After the incident, Yan Zhenqing sent his elder nephew Quanming (泉明) to the town to make funerary arrangements. Only his head of Jiming was found. In 758 CE against these circumstances, Yan Zhenqing at the age of 49 wrote the Draft of a Requiem to My Nephew. His heart was filled with deep sorrow and indignation. Hardly able to restrain himself, he poured love and hatred onto the paper.

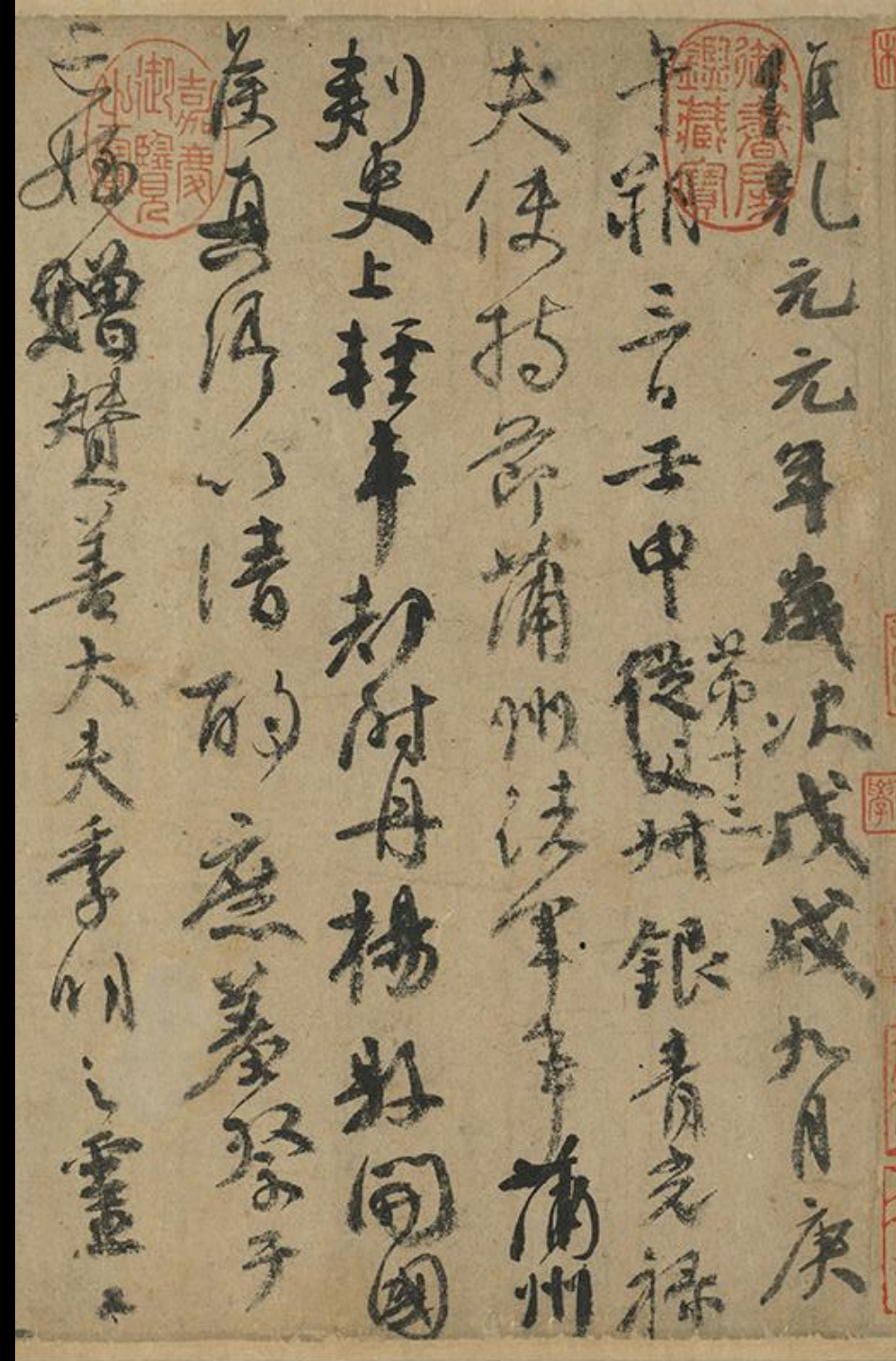


歸止爰開土門之門既開先威
大震州巨靡敢不赴賊臣不
和城圍逼父國陷子死巢
傾外覆天不悔禍誰為

Noticing Time, Official Position of the Worshiper, Nephew's Official Position

- 维乾元元年，岁次戊戌。九月庚午，朔三日壬申。
- In the inaugural year of Qianyuan, the reign period of Emperor Suzong of the Tang Dynasty. On the third, a Reshen day, of the ninth month, in which the first was a Gengwu day.

[9 October 758 CE]

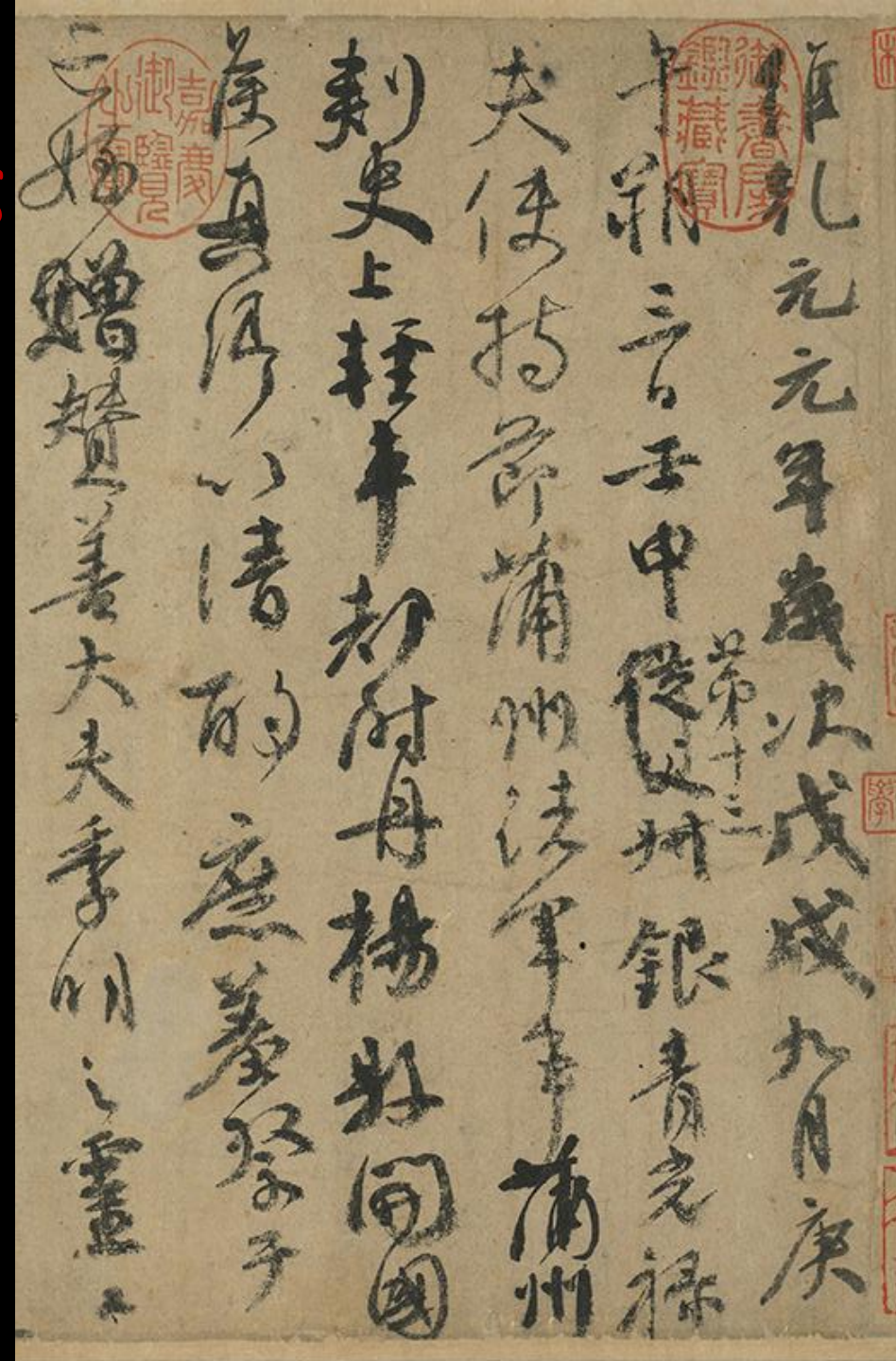


Noticing Time,

Official Position of the Worshiper Yan Zhenqing

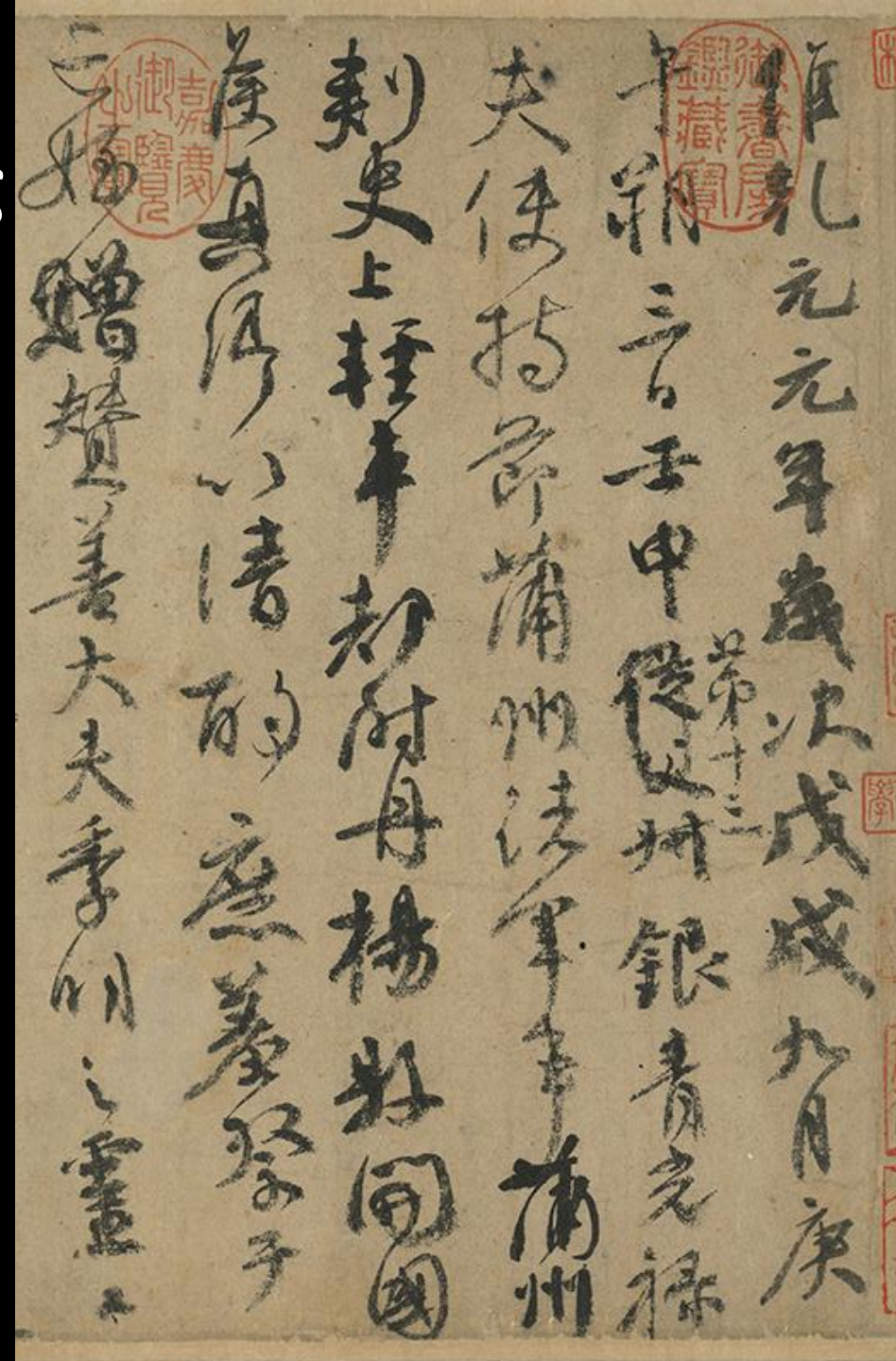
Nephew's Official Position

- 第十三叔，银青光禄（大）夫。使持节、蒲外诸军事、蒲州刺史。上轻车都尉、丹阳县开国侯真卿。
- His thirteenth uncle, Grand Master of Imperial Entertainments with Silver Seal and Blue Ribbon, Commissioner with Extraordinary Powers Over All Military Affairs in Puzhou, Prefect of Puzhou, Senior Commandant of Light Chariots, and Dynasty—Founding Marquis of Danyang District, Yan Zhenqing.



Noticing Time, Official Position of the Worshiper Yan Zhenqing Nephew's Official Position

- 以清酌庶羞家于亡任贈贊善大夫季明之靈。
- With pure wine and a complement of the delicacies, sacrifices to the spirit of Jiming, his late nephew, who was granted the posthumous title of Grand Master Admonisher.



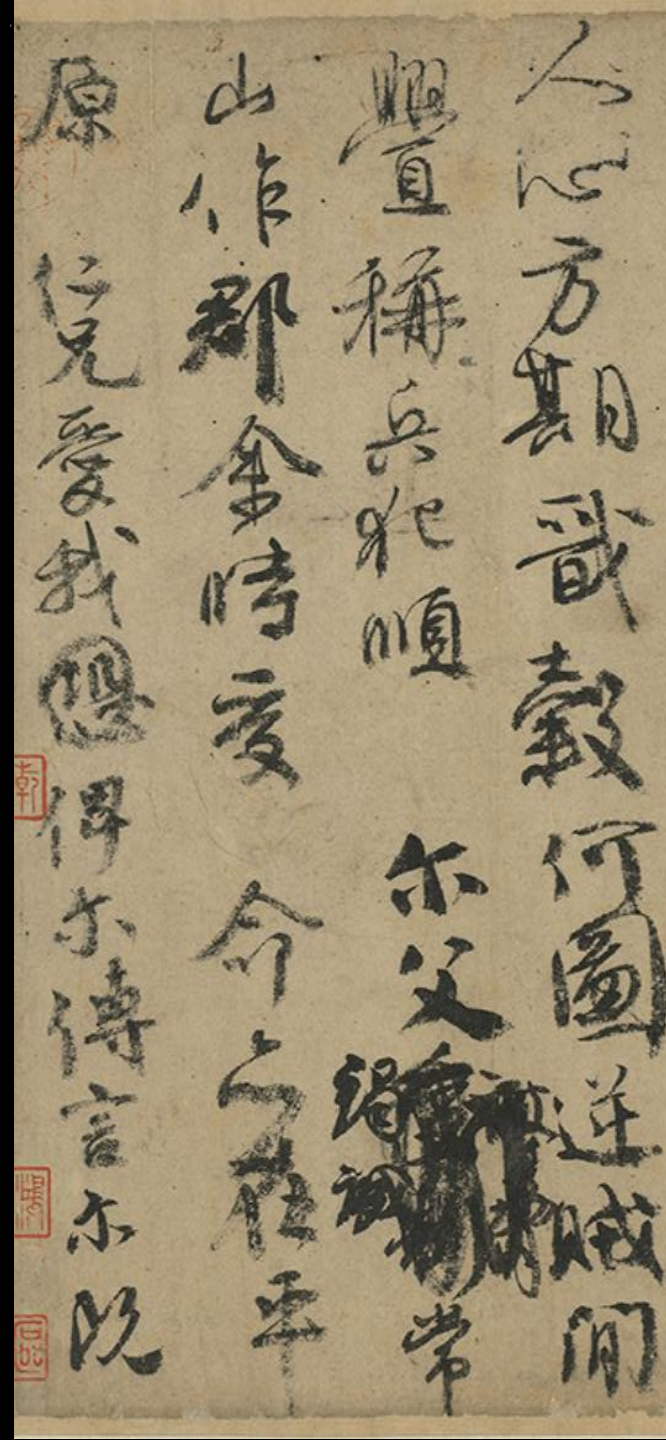
Nephew's Short Biography

- 惟尔挺生，夙标幼德。宗庙瑚琏，阶庭兰玉，每慰人心。
- From Jiming(your) birth, you showed your youthful virtue early. Like sacrificial vessels in the ancestral temple and fragrant plants in the courtyard, you were a comfort to our hearts.

惟尔挺生夙標幼德宗廟瑚琏
階庭蘭玉每慰人心方期戩穀
行圖逆賊聞

Huge Change

- 方期戡谷，河图逆贼闲衅，称兵犯顺。
- In those days, you were blessed and happy. How could we imagined that the rebel traitors would commence our misfortune ? But they took up arms and violated their submission [to the throne].
- 尔父竭诚，常山作郡。余时受命，亦在平原。
- Your father [Yan Gaoqing] expended his integrity as commandery governor of Changshan, while I, too, had received a mandate at that time, in Pingyuan.



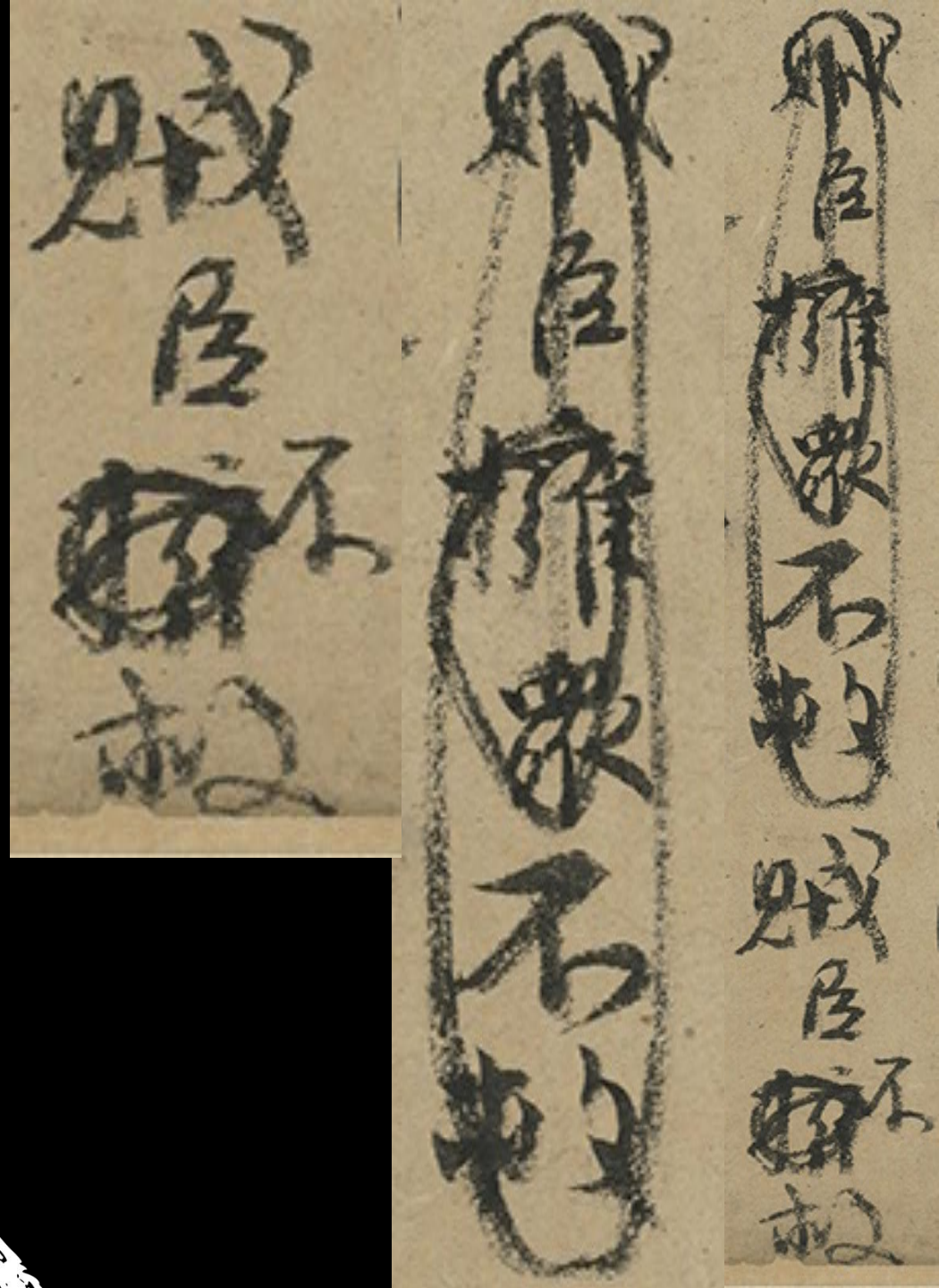
Huge Change

- 仁兄爱我，俾尔传言，尔既归止，爰开土门，土门既开，凶威大蹙。
- My selfless older brother so loved me that he asked you to send word to me. You had already returned home and Tumen Pass was conquered; with the opening of Tumen Pass, the villains feared they would be pressed on all sides
- 贼臣不救，孤城围逼。父陷子死，巢倾卵复。
- A traitorous official [Wang Chengye] failed the rescue and so the orphaned city was besieged and compelled to submit. The father was taken and the son killed, the nest tipped and the eggs overturned.

原 仁兄爱我，俾尔传言，尔既归止，爰开土门，土门既开，凶威大蹙。贼臣不救，孤城围逼。父陷子死，巢倾卵复。天石悔祸，谁为。

The Embitterment

- 賊臣（拥兵）不救
- A traitorous official [Wang Chengye] with a lot of soldiers but did not even try to begin the rescue.



The Embitterment

- 天下悔祸，谁为荼毒！念尔遘残，百身何赎？呜呼哀哉！
- Heaven has no regret for this calamity, but who else could cause such suffering? I remember how you met with your cruel death, but could we ransom all those people. Alas, how I grieve!

傾外覆 天不悔禍誰為
荼毒念爾遘殘百身何贖
嗚呼哀哉

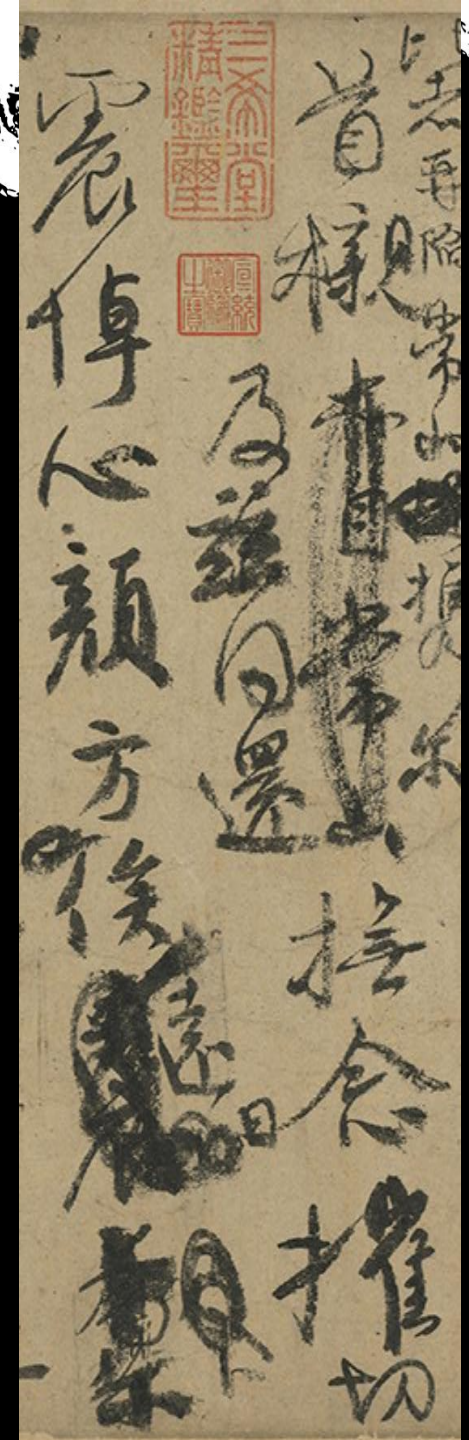
Grieve

- 我承天泽，移牧河关。泉明比者，再陷（至）常山，携尔首榛，及兹同还。
- Since that time, I have been graced with the Beneficence of Heaven and transferred to shepherd the flock on the He—Guan border [Pu—zhou]. After Quanming found me and Changshan was retaken, he retrieved your encoffined head and has now returned together with it.



Grieve

- 抚念摧切，震悼心颜！
- The memory of your death is revived in me and the shock of grief in my heart and my face is just as it was on that distant day.



Grieve

- 方俟远日，卜尔幽宅。魂而有知，无嗟久客。
- Wait for some time (may be quite long), I will select a suitable location for your grave. Your spirit may have knowledge of it. Please do not wander for too long.



Grieve

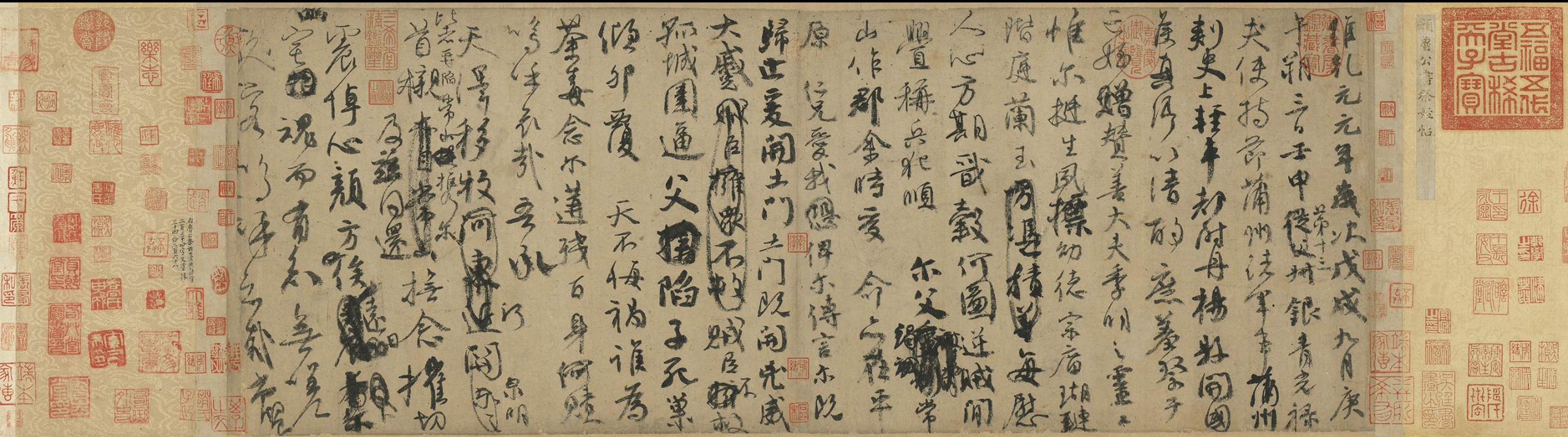
- 呜呼哀哉！尚飨。
- Alas, how I grieve!

May you accept this offering.



Ji Zhi Wengao

(Draft of a Requiem to My Nephew)



04

Style and Contributions



Contributions and Style

◦ ◦ ◦ ◦

- The masterpiece of Yan was regarded as the second best running script in history after Wang Xizhi's Lanting Xu (Preface to the Orchid Pavilion Collection). But the original of Lanting Xu has been lost. The Draft of a Requiem to My Nephew is regarded to be the best running script that survived till today.
- Of all the Tang calligraphers, Yan Zhenqing's style was the most original. His style was a form of liberation from the past. His overriding desire was to impart the maximum power into his strokes — 'dots like falling stones, horizontals like rain clouds, corners like bent metals, curves like extended bows.'
- The characters he executed were full of weight, achieved by enclosed forms which had the ideal solidity of the block or the cylinder. In this way he hoped to gain a greater fullness and a more pervasive movement. At the same time, he endowed his characters with an revitalising lustre — the brightness that is so essential to beauty.



踐遠游之文，
披羅衣之璀璨，
柔情綽態，媚
丹唇外朗，皓
延頌秀項，皓
仿佛兮若輕云之蔽月，飄飄兮若流風之回雪。
其形也，翩若驚鴻，婉若游龍。榮曜秋菊，華茂春
世，骨像應
善味，鑒輔承
後，後
以耀軀。
于山隅。

- <https://patricksiu.org/the-draft-eulogy-for-nephew-jiming-or-draft-of-a-requiem-to-my-nephew-%E7%A5%AD%E4%BE%84%E6%96%87%E7%A8%BF-by-yan-zhenqing-%E9%A1%8F%E7%9C%9F%E5%8D%BF/>

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