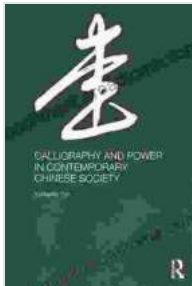


# Calligraphy and Power in Contemporary Chinese Society: An Anthropology of Asia



## Calligraphy and Power in Contemporary Chinese Society (Anthropology of Asia) by Yuehping Yen

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 1359 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Print length : 232 pages



This book explores the role of calligraphy in contemporary Chinese society, examining its historical roots, social significance, and political implications.

## Historical Roots

Calligraphy has a long and distinguished history in China, dating back to the Shang dynasty (1600-1046 BCE). It was originally used for writing and record-keeping, but over time it evolved into an art form. Calligraphy is considered one of the "four arts" of Chinese culture, along with painting, poetry, and music.

The development of calligraphy was closely tied to the development of Chinese writing. The earliest Chinese writing system was pictographic, meaning that each character represented a specific object or idea. Over time, the characters became more abstract and standardized. By the Han

dynasty (206 BCE - 220 CE), the Chinese writing system had evolved into a complex system of ideographs, each of which represented a word or phrase.

The development of calligraphy was also influenced by the development of Chinese philosophy and religion. Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism all emphasized the importance of self-cultivation and the pursuit of inner peace. Calligraphy was seen as a way to cultivate one's mind and spirit.

### **Social Significance**

Calligraphy is highly valued in Chinese society. It is seen as a mark of education, refinement, and good character. Calligraphers are often respected members of their communities, and their work is often displayed in homes and businesses.

Calligraphy is used for a variety of purposes in Chinese society. It is used for writing letters, poems, and other literary works. It is also used for creating signs, banners, and other forms of visual art.

Calligraphy is also used in religious ceremonies and rituals. For example, it is used to write the names of the dead on spirit tablets. It is also used to write charms and talismans.

### **Political Implications**

Calligraphy has also been used for political purposes in Chinese history. Emperors and other rulers often used calligraphy to legitimize their rule. They would often have their names and titles written in calligraphy by famous calligraphers.

In the 20th century, calligraphy was used by both the Kuomintang and the Communist Party to promote their political agendas. The Kuomintang used calligraphy to promote nationalism and traditional Chinese values. The Communist Party used calligraphy to promote socialism and revolution.

Today, calligraphy continues to be used for political purposes in China. The Chinese government uses calligraphy to promote its own legitimacy and to control the flow of information. For example, the government often uses calligraphy to create propaganda posters and slogans.

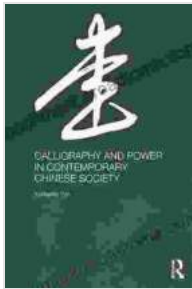
Calligraphy is a complex and multifaceted art form that has played an important role in Chinese society for centuries. It is a mark of education, refinement, and good character. It is also used for a variety of purposes, including writing, art, religion, and politics.

The book "Calligraphy and Power in Contemporary Chinese Society: An Anthropology of Asia" explores the role of calligraphy in contemporary Chinese society. The book examines the historical roots, social significance, and political implications of calligraphy. It is a valuable resource for anyone interested in Chinese culture, history, or politics.

## References

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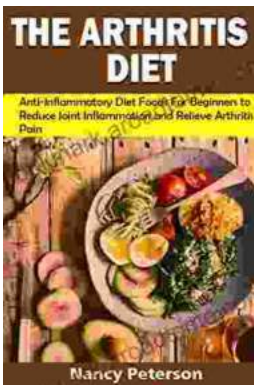
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