

Horyuji of the Southern Capital

by Jason Wang



Drawn during the Covid lockdowns that stopped travel between East Asia and the United States, this drawing scroll depicts Horyuji Temple in Nara, Japan, the oldest extant wooden structures in the world, in an environment of steep cliffs and lonely pine trees reminiscent of the Yellow Mountains in Anhui Province in China. This merging of scenes demonstrates the merging of two cultures and an expression of harmony and peace. Although the five-story pagoda and the kondo of Horyuji serve as the main subject of the drawing, I also added a three-story pagoda on each end to reference the two pagodas at Taima-dera temple located south of Horyuji. The emphasis on architecture derives from my personal interests in the wooden architecture of East Asia, particularly the wooden bracket sets between the columns and the roofs. I completed the scroll using only a #2 pencil over a period of four months in 2022 and added a short inscription in Chinese to discuss the scenery depicted in the drawing and to recognize the shared cultural heritage between China and Japan.