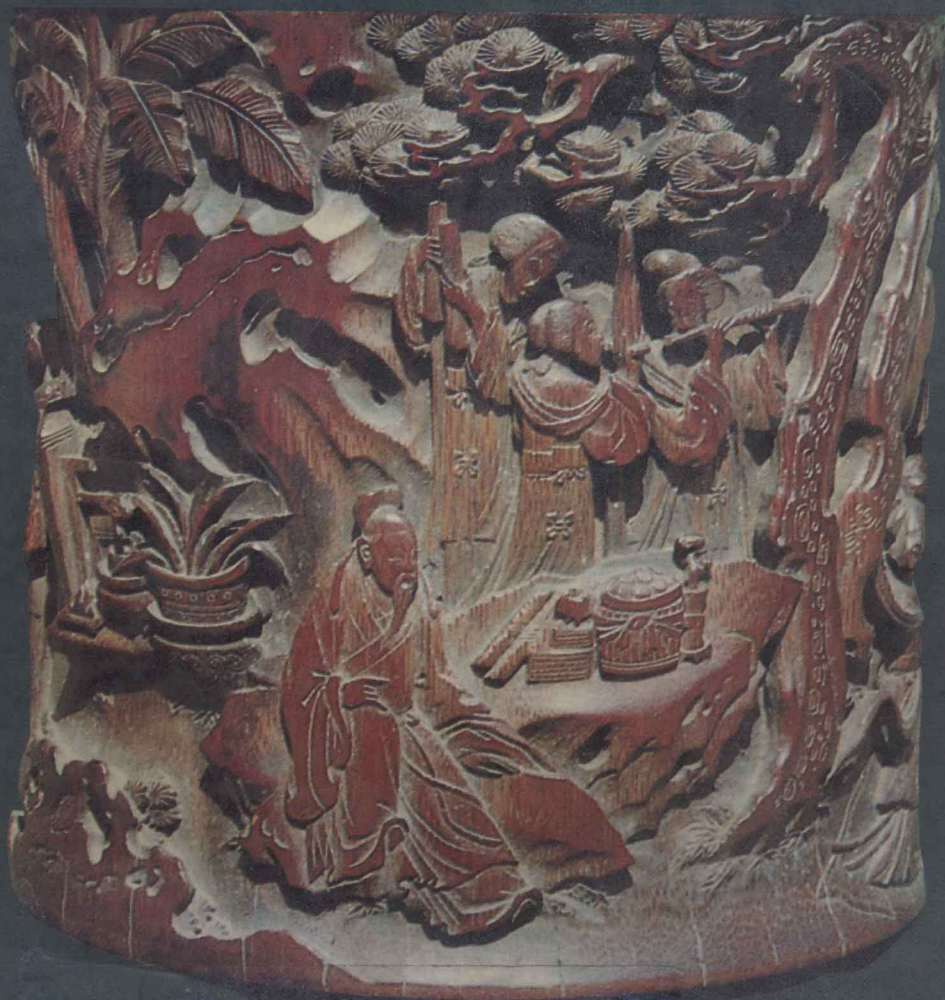


ART OF BAMBOO CARVING OF HUIZHOU DISTRICT

徽州竹雕藝術



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宋子龙 编 吴 敏 撰文·摄影

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浅谈徽州的竹刻艺术

吴 敏

在江南，在皖南山区，在风景美丽的黄山白岳间，竹子到处可见。它或三五丛生，依窗伴户；或漫山遍野，成海成林。竹的天然清韵与江南的山山水水浑融一体，为人们的生活平添无限情趣。自古以来，人们比之为君子，爱其“高风亮节”；为之讴歌吟咏，留下许多美丽的诗文。

竹，蕴含着丰富的文化内涵，与我国文化艺术有着千丝万缕的历史渊源关系。

竹之性，松脆黏坚四者皆兼而有之，施加雕刻的竹制品，不涂金饰彩，摩挲把玩后铮亮透红，纹理如蟹爪，色泽似犀角，素洁高雅，古色古香，与金、玉、犀、象制品同为艺林珍赏之品。因而竹刻这朵小小的奇葩，不仅可以争妍于我国民间工艺的百花园中，而且在世界文化艺术的行列亦可称得上是别具一格的。

我国是世界上最早用竹和最善用竹的国家之一。我国的竹刻工艺究竟始于何时？现在还难说清楚。若从明代算起，（据金西崖、王世襄《竹刻艺术》）大约已有五、六百年的历史了。

远在上古之时，人们操作之具，起居之器，争战之备，皆取材于竹。春秋战国时期，削竹为简册，是为书籍之前身。战国秦汉时，士大夫们即以竹制作典仪所用的笏，其上施有纹饰，而此属雕饰还是漆饰，则未可知。汉时蔡邕择竹制笛，乐音嘹亮悦耳。东晋书法家王献之有钟爱之物斑竹笔筒，美其名曰“裘钟”。六朝时齐高

帝把竹根雕制的如意作为珍贵的礼品赏赐给明僧绍。除文献所载，近年来考古工作中也相继发现秦汉时的竹管毛笔“云梦秦笔”和“江陵汉笔”，及西汉马王堆一号墓出土的雕龙纹髹彩漆的竹勺柄。竹刻实物与金玉陶瓷等文物相比，不易保存，故传世之器微乎其微。现今所知保存最早的竹刻实物是“唐雕人物花鸟尺八”，（《竹刻艺术》图版一）一种管弦乐器。其上用留青刻法作简炼花鸟人物纹。唐宋两朝虽都有竹制工艺品，并且积累了丰富的雕刻经验，但似乎尚未形成专门之艺术，传世器物 and 知名刻工绝少，文献记载亦鲜。

刻工有名之始，是为明正德，嘉靖时期的“三朱及李、濮”。三朱即朱松邻、朱小松、朱三松，父子三人为嘉定（今属上海）人；李文甫、濮阳仲谦为金陵人。刻竹经朱氏一门之承授发展，益臻妙绝，器物愈备，技法愈精，声名愈盛。嗣后从之者日众，而名手大家相继辈出。（能见诸文献者有二、三百人，姓名不彰者也代有其人。）至清诸艺并尊而刻竹尤盛。其作品收入内府，邀荷纯皇御题，遂致名播海内，艺遍士林。竹刻自明中叶以来二百八十余年流传不废。由来言其源流，惟前期竹人仅限两地，故依地域而派分为嘉定、金陵。至清乾嘉而后百十余年，竹人更多，且不限此两地，东南诸省各有名工。（《古玩指南》、《竹刻艺术》）

明清时期的徽州是“雕刻艺术之乡”，是哺育竹刻艺术成长的摇篮。

徽州（辖歙、黟、休、绩、祁、婺六县）地处万山之中，黄山白岳屹于境内，“山水清绝”，因环境关系而形成“守而弗失”又勇于开拓进取的精神，造就出明清时期的一代骄子——徽州商人。徽州人到黄山白岳之外安营扎寨，创家立业，创成奕奕煌煌的百年“无徽不成镇”的局面，徽商之名遂腾播宇内。徽商时代的徽州是富庶繁荣的。他们将徽州社会的发展奠定在一个坚实丰厚的经济基础之上；他们所造就的经济力量培养了一批批文人、学者、技艺之士，使徽州成为人文郁盛，人才

辈出，“文光射斗牛之墟”的文化之邦。五百年间“华盛之族，席履丰厚，器用材物，务求粹美。以故匠者艺能日进，片长薄技，新巧相尚，争自揣摩，蕲于尽美……故时值其盛，不特名臣硕彦，功业非常，焜耀当世。即一技一能，具有偏长者，莫不争为第一流人”，留下琳琳在目的文化宝藏；新安画派其造就尤震烁宇内，徽派篆刻阵列明清印坛，至于版刻，琢砚，制墨，髹漆，砖、石、木雕诸工艺则并称于世。其间知名的艺术家殆不可屈指而数。如丁云鹏、浙江、查士标等之于画，何震、程邃之于篆刻，皆可卓然不朽者；他若程君房、方于鲁之于制墨，蟹钳、王绥之之刻墨模，黄平沙、方信川、程以蕃之雕漆，叶壤、汪复庆之琢砚，皆可谓戛戛独造，前无古人；刻书雕版自当推歙县虬村黄、仇二姓，然黄、仇而外尚大有人在，见诸文献者不下数百人；他若镌碑刻石则有詹献（元）、程有寓、程奂轮、余香等，根雕有汤组，刻制文房用匣则有张兆熠，捏塑有郑约，雕凿桃花石子绝活有汪智。由此而知，黄山白岳之间一代巧工如林。凡有片长薄技者，皆家学渊源，功基厚实。有的身怀数技，即于诗书画印之外，无论金、玉、晶、牙、瓷、竹、石等均无所不善。巧工一辈大都“始资衣馔，遂与物产并著”。至是一乡一姓乃至一域之内，“奇杰异能之士”由是著声于世。

竹刻，取材易，制作便。凡具有一定书画和雕刻基础者，“其于刻竹一艺，但稍分神以研究之，升堂入室不难也”，非必言专事。徽州士林中人，多有事金石书画，外有余暇，墨戏奏刀，静中取乐，雅好刻竹而乐此不疲者，“尚有佳本，心仪手摹，故风神特胜”，所制庶乎登大雅之堂，可以集萃成册，显名于世。可惜有专长者，多不署款，生不有表彰，故世稍久，遗迹辗转，渐渐淹没无闻，无所称述。今知载诸地方文献者有吴元满、李希乔、方洁、程文在、张立夫等。其可称述者李希乔，方洁二人，“高山打鼓名声在外。”

李希乔，字迂于，号石鹿山人，清初歙县人。以书名。《民国歙县志人物·方

技》称其“多艺能”。能画竹石，工篆刻，勾勒法帖；刻竹精妙如写生，虽当时金陵濮阳仲谦号竹工绝技不能过也。施愚山极称之。

方洁，字矩平，号治庵，清道光时歙县人。工诗，善书画，最擅写生。《民国歙县志人物·杂技》载：“其刻竹尤为绝技。善刻人肖像于竹臂搁或笔筒。以其技遨游吴越间。尝为释六舟达受作庐山行脚图像，须眉毕现。又为阮元作八十岁像更佳。

张立夫，清道咸间歙县虬村人，以雕版刻漆为业，兼通书法及刻竹。黄宾虹《四巧工传》载其轶事云：“村之人以刮削为业者甚多，立夫角逐其间，无与俦比。上自籀篆钟鼎之古，下逮花鸟虫鱼之细，书画摹刻，不爽毫发。新安巨室，建筑宗庙，享堂两楹，必撰联语，名人书法，涂金镂炭，穷极华丽。劫灰零落，时或一见，盖多立夫昆季手工也。立夫不惟精刻，而又兼通书法。其字画波磔，神彩飞动，无不如意。出其余暇，镌竹杖笔格诸铭，人尤珍之。子振之世其业，艺事精能不坠家学……四方乡风，来从学者，亦不乏人。”

程文在，字郁卿，号桐月轩主人，清末休宁人。程忠壮公后裔。善人物仕女，山水经营势气恢宏。精刻印，兼刻竹。

吴元满，字敬甫，明歙县人。好六书，自三代及秦汉鼎彝碑铭，皆淹贯于中，著有《六书正义》等书。刻竹多摹古文字。

从有关竹人的文献中，可知李希乔、方洁在清一代竹人中影响极大，由于他们不仅能书善画，刻法能独自创新而自具风貌，作品为时人推重。尤其是方洁本以诗和画能，未想以刻竹成名。年轻时“以其技遨游吴越间”，以艺会友，曾一时传为佳话。其曾游禾城，每一艺出则手拓以赠同好，人争宝之。曾有竹刻拓本传世，被人誉之为“无上逸品”。时人称其“方竹”。张廷济题记云：“竹人自昔礪城传，只恐输君更擅场。”后歿于禾中，年仅三十九岁。后人致有作黄岩或金陵人之议。这两位徽州竹人曾先后名震金陵、嘉定。尚值一提的是朱氏（松邻），其“世本新安（即徽

州)，自宋建炎移居华亭，又六世而东徙，遂为嘉定人。”其二，明末“嘉定四先生”徽州人衡占其二：一为歙人李流芳；一为休宁人程嘉燧。李流芳工诗画及篆刻；其子李杭之，侄李宜之，孙李谦皆事书画，亦居嘉定；程嘉燧善书画，诗为晚明一代大家。曾有《题明濮阳仲谦山水臂搁竹刻》诗。与唐时升、娄坚合称“练川三老”。晚年归新安。其三是清雍正嘉庆时歙人程瑶田，以“博学多才艺”著名于世。乾嘉时曾一度官嘉定教谕。仅此数例足以说明徽州与嘉定两地间早有密切的交往联系，如同徽州与扬州之间。众所周知，促进扬州经济、文化发达的重要人物亦皆是徽州人。徽州确实人才济济，而且又都属于流动、外向、发展型的。纵横交织遍布在大江南北。徽州人对外的影响太深了，太大了。纵观“近现代的绘画，清代全部绘画，乃至散落到世界各地的画家的‘根’都延伸到黄山。”（《黄山画人录·陈传席序》）“故徽州文化往往能自成一种风气，久之风声所播，乃广被于海内，而黄山、白岳间隐然为学术渊薮。”（鲍幼文《饴闻文存》）

徽州的竹刻艺术，是中国竹刻艺术的重要组成部分。竹刻称有史以来四百余年，其大体被分作明中叶以后，清初，清嘉庆以后三个时期，徽州竹刻作品多见于前两个时期。两期中不乏精品佳制，多半出自艺高名晦的专家里手，或属文人自作自怡，或精通他艺旁通此技者所为，徽州竹刻自有徽州之特色，但总体看来，无论何地域的竹刻作品都统一于明显的时代风格中，而地方的风格并不显著，惟个人风格尤著。

徽州竹刻题材也皆取之传统一类，器物品种常见亦为香筒、笔筒、臂搁、扇骨等，他如竹根所制之钮章、人物、杯洗、手杖等精雅绝俗之品世曾有之，惜今已罕见。故此，这里仅从艺术欣赏角度略作点滴介绍。

竹刻香筒，故名思义是用作盛香花或香料的，阵阵清香自玲珑剔透的筒壁溢出，扑鼻爽心，使人提神，不仅能清新空气，且能防病防虫。筒壁四周雕镂人物、花鸟、

草虫、图案等亦精美别致，摩挲把玩，益以岁月，精华内敛，莹朗若犀玉，人皆珍之为宝。

竹刻笔筒，乃为明代徽州文人雅士倍极推崇的高雅的文房用具之一，用以装饰书斋，搁置案头。清代更是承袭前代遗风，“务置之几案而不厌，传之远而无弊”，赏鉴把玩之水平进一步提高。笔筒雕刻所展示的画面内容比其他器物更为丰富，雕刻更为精采。一般多为文人隐逸生活写照，如《竹林七贤》、《香山九老》、《听泉》、《对奕》等历史典故、山水人物一类内容，表现那些怀才不遇的名士，不满当朝统治，不入仕途，寄居山林，以诗画音乐诸艺自娱，以高远清新的意境抒发自己的情怀，表现个性的精神寄托，颇耐人寻味把玩。如《仙翁对奕图》（见图版八）一人正凝眸思考，似俟对方“高着”，另一个则手执一子，全神专注，欲落未下，究竟谁胜谁负，未可知之。（或有刻一旁观者，有流露惊讶之情致）阿睹传神，维妙维肖，耐人寻味不已。又如《教坊伎乐图》（见图版二）细致地描绘了一个仅七人组成的管弦歌舞乐会的生动场面：松荫下、石几后佇立着三位衣着古装的女子，她们分别执一笛一笙一板，正全神贯注地演奏着，其右方有二女子相倚相随，珊珊而至，其中一人半抱琵琶，掩面含羞，春光明媚，娇艳动人。石几不远有一妙龄女子正蹁跹起舞，舞姿优美，即使用“美人蹋上歌舞来，罗袜绣鞋随步设”，“反绾头髻盘旋风，衣带凌风曳衣裾”那样美妙动人的诗句来形容描述也犹恐未及。几席之外衬之以树石，恬静优雅。几席之上不设鱼肉壶浆，惟置香炉、书画、果匣、芝瓶等，又无客座喧哗，惟有丝竹管弦声歌妙舞。石几旁侧，端坐一长者，银须幘帽，非同凡俗，一边凝神倾听，一边击节和之，俨然深谙五音十二律，神情令人判然若见。此笔筒雕刻非常精工细致，层次分明。可知名晦艺高，代有其人。另有《荷趣图》（见图版八十）瞧，所刻荷叶之正、侧、俯、仰、卷、舒各种姿态，极尽变化。其中，间以一株株出水芙蓉，何其娉婷。游鳞蟹蚌之属乐于休憩其下。转而一变为风雨过后，遍是败叶残

枝，更有孤鹤形影相吊。其寓世态炎凉至此，形诸刀笔，胜之言表。构思立意不同凡响。

竹刻臂搁，为书写绘画时枕腕搁臂的用具。“赖其扶持，挥毫云烟”运笔才能有条不紊，毫发不爽。臂搁之上施以雕刻，凡山水人物、草虫花鸟、书法图案皆可入之，融诗书画印为一体则更佳妙，即“远水无人渡，孤舟尽日横”也好；“山势峰腰断，溪流燕尾分”也好。所刻之画实为无声之诗，如《无题》（见图版六十四）“客床犹是我，野月径来眠，长笛一唤起，空香忽杳然，阴阴望疏影，活活听流泉，此际情人梦，相思何处悬。”一咏三叹，堪为绝唱。臂搁，刻则多平浅，为实用罢。

由此看来，竹刻受益于书画艺术不浅，二者共同之处都在摹写传神，然而竹刻是以刀代笔、以竹为纸来做花样文章，而自成艺术的，故其表现形式与书画艺术迥然有别。竹刻有独特的玩味之处，就竹刻作品欣赏，便有识见高下之分，明其理方入得门。须知竹刻大体分两类，一类为竹面雕：如上述香筒、笔筒、臂搁、扇骨等；另一类为立体圆雕，即竹根所制人物鸟兽等立体形象之物。竹面雕刻可分阴文、阳文。二者又各有深刻、浅刻，如阴文则有毛雕、线刻、深刻、陷地深刻；阳文有留青、薄地阳文、浅浮雕、高浮雕、透雕。实际制作中，刻法变化，参互迭见，综错多方，不胜缕述。熟练掌握各种刻法、技巧后，能灵活变通，左右逢源，便称熟手。构图则需独具匠心，出奇制胜，大凡位置经营，繁简主次相宜之事往往皆苦思而得。要善于经营，妙造自然。除善于借用竹材之皮簧肌理色泽外，至于如何妙用“刀触味”须经一番斟酌，以收缓、急、利、钝、滑、涩、精、糙，光、洁、齐、整等效，以应墨色之浓淡干湿晕褪，以求生动表现物象，传其神韵，剖见刀法之优劣。竹刻亦具工写之分，格调遂有雅俗之别，高雅、别致一路，浑朴、甜俗一路。技艺有精巧，有娴熟。精工细镂，“心力所萃”，致不爽毫发，一一可辨是为精巧，粗疏而熟练为率就，即无须尽泯锋锷之痕，草草而成，生动有致，并无粗疏之感，尤为大气，

有非凡之气象。得悟个中三昧，方知精巧、娴熟二者都不愧为名家高手。

徽州为“文化之邦”，各类古迹文物颇多。其散之于民间得以流传于世之竹刻似可自成一类。近年来，随着文物价值日增，竹刻工艺品上升为“热门”，一时四方商客和收藏者们纷至沓来，争相购求，大有搜罗殆尽之势，遂致存留者罕如凤毛麟角。徽州竹刻工艺品已经遭受一场“文明的浩劫”，开始逐个逐批流出徽州，散佚到海角天涯。这使得《徽州竹刻艺术》画册的出版和有关竹刻资料的搜集、整理、研究工作加大了难度。

徽州是艺术的故乡，竹刻在徽州名为他艺所盖，乡邦文献鲜有论述。竹刻实物原本散佚于千家万户，秘藏而不易见，不同碑、坊林立户外，众人是观。若想集中之一睹其整体艺术概貌，确非易事。前人亦无墨拓留存，若实物一旦流于他境，纵或为识者所珍藏，因其屡经辗转，有谁知其来由？以往艺高名晦者，作品多未署名，倘若为俗手添改，伪托他人之作，致真正“有此专长者”，不有表彰，永远埋没于世。徽州竹刻艺术既无所称述，何以继承，又何以发扬光大？岂不令人遗憾！兹《徽州竹刻艺术》画册即于此种遗憾之下，努力以弥补之，把前人传下来的徽州竹刻作品介绍给大家。所载作品论其数量不及千之一，万之一，器物品种更难免挂一漏万，冀希竹刻艺术爱好者及诸方人士资以赏鉴，有所裨益，于我们所作的努力便可算是莫大之鼓舞慰藉罢。

一九九四年五月于博古精舍

A Tentative Approach to the Art of Bamboo Carving of Huizhou District

Wu Min

Bamboo is seen everywhere in the south of the Changjiang River, the mountainous areas of southern Anhui, and on Mount Huangshan and Mount Baiyue. It grows in the hilly places and at the waterside in clusters. The natural appeal of bamboo is mixed with charm of the mountains and waters of Anhui, adding infinite interest and pleasure to our life. Bamboo is loved by people for its noble and unsullied character and compared by them to a man of moral integrity. It is eulogized in numerous songs and poems and told in hundreds of thousands of stories.

Bamboo has rich cultural connotation. It has boundless links with China's culture and art. Bamboo possesses such qualities as of looseness, brittleness, stickiness and firmness. A carved bamboo article is as much treasured as a handicraft work made of gold or jade. It has lustre of the rhinoceros horn and grain of the crab's paw, plain and neat, quiet and refined with antique flavour.

China is among the earliest countries to use and to be good at using bamboo. It is still hard to tell when the art of bamboo carving came into being. If counted from the Ming Dynasty it should have a history of 500 to 600 years. In ancient times many implements, utensils and weapons were made of bamboo. In the Shang Dynasty bamboo slips appeared, out of which came the present books. In the Warring States Period and the Qin and Han Dynasties bamboo was used to make tablets which were presented in grand official ceremonies. On these tablets there were carved ornamental patterns. Cai Yi of the Han Dynasty created the flute out of bamboo, a wind instrument which produces melodious tunes. Wang Xianzhi of the Eastern Jin owned a favourite writing brush pot made of mottled bamboo named "Qiuzhong". The Emperor Gao of the State Qi in the Southern and Northern Dynasties presented "Ruyi" carved with the root of bamboo to the famous monk Shao as a precious gift. The recent archaeological discoveries also prove that there existed writing brushes with bamboo holders, the Yunmeng Qin Brush and the Jiangling Han Brush, and the bamboo handle of the ladle which was earthed from No. 1 tomb of Mawangdui of the Han Dynasty. Since bamboo articles are difficult to preserve,

bamboo carvings handed down are rare. The earliest known material thing with bamboo carving is Chiba of Tang Carvings of Figures, and Flowers and Birds—a string musical instrument on which were carved simple patterns of figures, flowers and birds. Though there existed handicraft bamboo articles and some experience in carving bamboo was acquired in the Tang and Han Dynasties, we can't say that the special art of bamboo carving was already formed.

Bamboo carving became more known in the Zhengde and Jiajing Periods of the Ming Dynasty. Some celebrated bamboo carvers appeared, like three Zhus, Li and Pu. The three Zhus were father Zhu Songling, and his sons Zhu Xiaosong and Zhu Sansong. They came from Jiading (Now the place belongs to Shanghai). Li was Li Wenfu, and Pu was Puyang Zhongqian, the two were from Jinling. The skill of bamboo carving became more mature in their hands. After them more bamboo carvers emerged. The well-known carvers then came to two to three hundred. Many more remained unknown. Bamboo carving became more popular in the Qing Dynasty. The carvers were chiefly gathered in two places, Jiading and Jinling, and the carvers were thus divided into two schools. After the Qianlung and Jiajing Periods of the Qing Dynasty bamboo carvers spread to more places. The eastern and southern provinces all had their master hands.

Huizhou was the home of carvings in the Ming and Qing Dynasties, and it was also the cradle of bamboo carving.

Huizhou is situated amidst ranges of mountains. It covers 6 counties: She, Yi, Xiuning, Jixi, Qimen and Wu. Within Huizhou stand Mount Huangshan and Mount Baiyue and flow clear and beautiful waters. This environment brought about a generation of proud men—merchants of Huizhou. These merchants gradually went beyond Huizhou and settled elsewhere. Towns appeared wherever they went. So there was the saying: No merchants of Huizhou, no towns. They brought wealth and prosperity to Huizhou and helped to lay for it a solid economic foundation. This economic force fostered batches of men of letters, scholars and skilled artisans. Hence Huizhou became a highly developed cultural centre.

Brilliant cultural treasures were thus created. Paintings of Xinan School attracted the eye of the outside world, works of the seal cutting of Hui School were put on display in the Ming and Qing Dynasties, and works of other arts, such as plate cutting, inkstick making, inkslab cutting, paint lacquering, and brick, stone and wood carvings were all known for their attainments. Distinguished artists came out in great numbers. Ding Yunpeng, Jian Jiang and Zha Shibiao were famous painters; He Zhen, Cheng Suizhi were well-known seal cutters; Cheng Junfang, Fang Yulu were good inkstick makers; Xian Qian, Wang Suizhi were marvelous inkstick mold-

ers. Huang Pingsha, Fang Xinchuan, Cheng Yifan were remarkable paint sculpters; Ye Rang, Wang Fuqing were excellent inkslab cutters. The two families of Huang and Chou in the Qiu Village of the She County were expert at cutting blocks for printing, and there were at least several hundred more artisans on this job. Zhan Xianyuan, Cheng Youyu, Cheng Huanlun and Yu Xiang excelled in tablet and tomb stone engraving; Tang Zu was a master in root sculpture; Zhang Zhaoyi was a master hand in carving caskets for the 4 treasures of the study; writing brush, inkstick, inkslab and xuan paper; Zheng Yue was good at molding sculpture, and Wang Zhi was a dab in engraving and chiselling peach-flower cobblestones. The superb talents were multitudinous as trees in a large forest. They all had their artistic family origin, and owned a sound and solid foundation in learning. Some possessed several, even all the above-mentioned skills.

Making carvings on bamboo is comparably an easier job. The material is easy to get, and the process is not so complicated. People with some knowledge of painting and calligraphy may quite readily acquire this skill. Some lovers of seal cutting, calligraphy and painting in Huizhou were engaged in bamboo carving in their spare time and found pleasure in this interest. Their works of bamboo carving were good enough to be collected in a volume. It is a pity most of their works were not signed. These authors were unknown in their life and remained for long years in obscurity. Now we've found some bamboo carvers from local records. They are Li Xiqiao, Fang Jie, Cheng Wenzai and Zhang Lifu. Of them Li Xiqiao and Fang Jie are more important.

Li Xiqiao, alternative name Yuyu, styling himself Shilushanren, born in the She County in the early Qing Dynasty. According to the county chronicles he was expert at seal cutting, calligraphy, stone and bamboo carvings. His bamboo carvings were lifelike, and in this he outshined Puyang Zhongqian of Jinling.

Fang Jie, alternative name Juping, styling himself Zhian, born in the She County in the Daoguan Period of the Qing Dynasty. He was good at poetry, calligraphy and painting. Bamboo carving was also his unique, and he was especially skillful at carving portraits. The Portrait of Shiliuzhoudashou at the Foot of Lushan Mountains, and The Portrait of Ruan Yuan at the Age of 80 are his masterpieces.

Zhang Lifu, born in the Qiu Village of the She County during the Daoguang and Xianfeng Periods of the Qing Dynasty, employed in wood blocks for printing and carving lacquerware, but versed in calligraphy and bamboo carving. The famous modern painter Huang Binhong told of the life story of Zhang Lifu in Biographies of the Four Skillful Artisans: "...Lifu, not only good in carving, but also expert at calligraphy and painting. His paintings and calligraphical works were ingenious and deeply loved by people. And his bamboo carvings done in his spare time were even more treasured.

Cheng Wenzai, alternative name Yuqing, styling himself master of Tongyuexuan, born in Xiuning in the Qing Dynasty. He was good at painting figures and beautiful women, and landscapes. He engaged himself in seal cutting and bamboo carving in spare time.

Wu Yuanman, alternative name Jingfu, born in the She County in the Ming Dynasty, excelling in engraving tablets and tomb stones. He imitated old scripts in his bamboo carvings.

Of the above mentioned bamboo carvers Li Xiqiao and Fang Jie had greatest influence due to their original and unique style. Fang Jie at first worked hard at poetry and painting, but out of his expectation he became better known for his bamboo carvings. Bamboo carving linked him and his friends. Whenever he produced a good carving he would rub the work and present it to friends who had the same interest. The gift was so much treasured as to be considered as the uncomparably excelling thing on earth. People of his day called him Bamboo Fang. He only lived to the age of 39. Other bamboo carvers worth of mention here are Zhu Songling-born in Xinan (Huizhou), but later moved to Jiading; Li Liufang, and Cheng Yaotian from the She County, Cheng Jiasui from Xiuning. Li Liufang was versed in poetry, painting and seal cutting, his son Li Hangzhi, nephew Li Yizhi and grandson Li Qian were all engaged in calligraphy and painting, they all lived in Jiading. This shows that there had been close cultural links between Huizhou and Jiading as had been the same between Huizhou and Yangzhou. It is known to all that important figures in promoting the development of economy and culture of Yangzhou all came from Huizhou.

Indeed, Huizhou possessed a galaxy of talent. These talented people were spread far and wide in the south and north of the Changjiang River. Huizhou's influence was really far too great and profound. "The root of paintings of the Qing Dynasty, and paintings of all the contemporary and modern times, and those paintings of the Chinese painters that scatter in different places of the world stretches to Mount Huangshan", Mount Huangshan and Mount Baiyue are the gathering place of culture and learning.

Bamboo carvings of Huizhou are an important component of the art of bamboo carving of China. The history of over 400 years of the art of bamboo carving may be divided into 3 periods; time after the middle of the Ming Dynasty, the early Qing Dynasty and the time after the Jiajing Period of the Qing Dynasty. Most bamboo carvings of Huizhou were seen in the first two periods, which were either products of the professionals or works of the amateurs. These works, completed in different styles all reflected local features of Huizhou.

Bamboo articles were various in kinds. Fragrant bamboo tubes, bamboo writing brush pots, bamboo arm resters and bamboo buttons, medals, figures, cups and saucers, sticks and so on. Carvings were done on these

bamboo articles. The themes were all taken from the traditional. The following is brief information about some of the carved bamboo articles.

Carved Fragrant Bamboo Tube: The tube was used to hold sweet flowers and perfumes. Fragrance came out from the inside of the tube refreshing the users. On all sides of the tube there were engraved figures, flowers and birds, grass, insects and other ornamental designs.

Carved Bamboo Writing Brush Pot: The pot was used to hold the writing brush and was put on a desk as an ornament in a study. Carvings on these pots were rich and varied. They generally described the life of seclusive scholars, such as "the 7 Worthy Men in the Bamboo Forest", "the 9 Elders in the Fragrant Mountains", "Listening to the Fountain", "Two Players at a Game of Chess", and so on. The landscape carvings too described those scholars living in mountains and forests, expressing their dissatisfactions, feelings and spiritual sustenance. In the carving "The Two Celestial Elders at a Game of Chess", one is lost in thinking, and the other is moving a chessman with great care, nearby a spectator is looking with interest and real relish expressing amazement. The carving "Music Played at the Lane" is a vivid picture of a performance of singing and dancing by 7 people. Under the shade of trees and behind a stone desk stand 3 women in ancient costumes, respectively playing a flute, a sheng and a ban. They are followed by 2 more women, one, shy and charming holding a pipa, the other dancing gracefully with ease. On the stone desk are put an incense burner, books and letters, a fruit case and a flower vase. At one side of the desk sits an elder with white hair and beard timing to the music played, having an air of a superb musician. In "Interest of Lotus" people see lotuses in different postures and fish swimming round, out of the lotuses there is one coming out of the water. The carvings on these brush pots are exquisite and lucid in the portrayal.

Carved Bamboo Reposer: It was an implement used as a cushion for the arm to rest on when one was engaged in painting. Carvings on these bamboo reposers include figures, landscapes, grass, insects, flowers and birds and other patterns.

Therefore bamboo carving has benefited much from painting and calligraphy. Painting and calligraphy use paper as the material, and the brush is the tool, while bamboo carving takes the knife as the tool, and the bamboo is the material. So there is great difference between them. Bamboo carving as a unique art, has special characteristics. It is divided into surface carving and stereoscopic circular cone carving. Surface carving is seen in the above mentioned fragrant tube, brush pot, arm reposer and fan framework; and stereoscopic circular cone carving is shown in stereoscopic images of figures and birds and beasts. In the surface carving there is cut-

ting in relief and cutting in intaglio, and there is deep cutting and shallow cutting. The cutting in relief covers rough engraving, lined cutting and deep cutting; cutting in intaglio comprises shallow relief cutting and high relief cutting. In actual approach different methods can be flexibly and interchangeably applied. Different kinds of knifework supplement each other. Designing should be original, and uniqueness is the thing to be aimed at. Marvelousness comes from naturalness. In the flexible use of various knife skills: slowness, swiftness, sharpness, bluntness, slippery, hardgoing, fineness and roughness, effects of smoothness, cleanness and neatness are achieved so that images of the things are vividly portrayed and their natural charm is lifelike presented.

In bamboo carving there is also the difference of fine work and freehand work, in the tone and style there is the difference of the elegant and the popular, and in skill and technique there is the difference of exquisiteness and consummateness. Exquisiteness requires great care and precision in carving, while consummateness asks for great skill in careless and inattentive handling, and boldness and vigorousness and simplicity. Both exquisiteness and consummateness are considered as excellent.

Huizhou is a "state of culture" and has many historical sites and cultural relics. Bamboo carving represents in a way the historical development and constitutes an important relic. Recently the historical relics are abruptly growing in value, and handicraft bamboo articles have become goods in great demand. Merchants and collectors keep pouring in. They vie with each other and seem to have the desire to buy up. Hence the handicraft bamboo articles with historical value become the rarity of rarities. Bamboo carvings have suffered a "havoc of civilization". Some works are carried away, and they are now scattered in the remotest regions of the earth. This makes the work to collect, sort out and study bamboo carvings more difficult, and also brings great difficulty to the publication of the book "Art of Bamboo Carving of Huizhou District".

"Art of Bamboo Carving of Huizhou District" is published in this circumstance. It will make known the works of bamboo carving of Huizhou left by our forefathers and make up for the loss to some extent. The works included in the book are only one thousandth, may be even one ten thousandth of the actual quantity of the works produced, and the varieties may not cover all. If this book is appreciated by lovers of bamboo carving and other readers and proves to be of some help to them we will feel honoured and comforted.

Translated by Zhang Zuwu