

微雕艺术曲儒

QU RU'S MICRO ENGRAVING

陕西人民美术出版社

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簡歷

曲儒曾任陝西省政協第六、七屆常委，原西安市文史研究館副館長。西安碑林博物館研究員。

曲儒1925年元月出生于山西省運城市一書香之家。自幼師從著名畫家楊武慶先生學習書畫篆刻。曾任中學美術教師。上世紀五十年代初學習、探索微雕藝術至今。數十年來，《人民日報》、《中國日報》、臺灣《中國時報》、香港《龍語》及日本《朝日新聞》、法國《費加羅》等國內外百餘家報刊，均有報道。

北京科教電影制片廠拍攝的《曲儒微雕藝術》專題片，除華語外，還有英、法、西班牙語向全球發行。該影片在“人與世界”國際博覽會播出後，被譽為“世界第一微型藝術片”。美國CTV電視中心拍攝的《人間奇迹》專題片，在“信不信由你”節目中多次播出。另外，加、法、澳、日以及中央、陝西、西安等國內外幾十家電視臺也先後為曲儒拍攝了專題片。

國家有關部門多次將曲儒的微雕贈贈許多國家的元首及知名人士，日本前首相福田赳夫在會見曲儒時握着他的手說：“你真是人間國寶。”

加拿大國家博物院、日本福岡美術館、新加坡文物館等機構都收藏了曲儒的微雕作品。先後應邀到歐、美、亞、大、非五大洲巡回訪問、講學和舉辦個人微雕展覽。

Qu Ru served as a Standing Committee member of the Sixth and Seventh Shaanxi Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. He was vice president of Xian Art & History Research Institute, and research fellow of the Xian Beilin Museum.

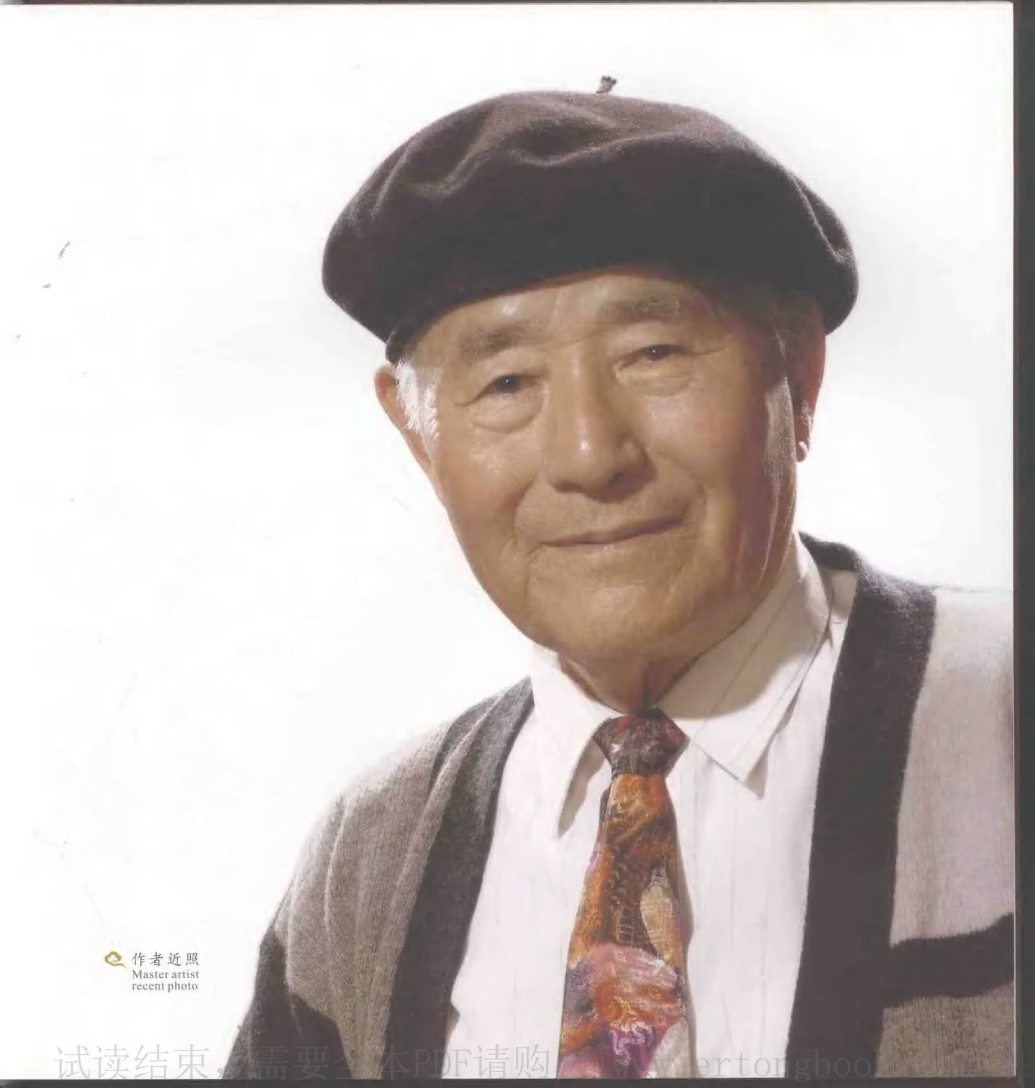
Qu Ru was born in January 1925. His family was considered well educated in the local Yuncheng area of Shanxi Province. At an early age, Qu Ru studied calligraphy and seal carving with Yang Shuchen, a famous artist. Then he became a high school art teacher. In 1950s, he began to study his micro engraving, and he has been working in that field ever since. In the past decades, his micro engraving works have been featured in over a hundred newspapers and magazines all over the world, such as the People's Daily, China Daily, Taiwan's China Times, Hong Kong's Dragon Words, Japan's Asahi Weekly, and France's Le Figaro.

The film "Qu Ru's Micro Engraving Art" made by Beijing Science & Education Film Studio was published in Chinese, English, and Spanish. It was honored as the "World's First Micro Engraving Art Movie at the Man and His World" at International Fair in Canada.

An American CTV company made a television documentary, "Wonder of the World," which was shown several times in the program of "Believe It or Not" television stations in Canada, France, Australia, and Japan, as well as the Chinese Central TV and Shannxi TV.

Chinese governmental officials occasionally presented Qu Ru's micro engraving works to foreign ministers and celebrities. The former Japanese Prime Minister Suzuki Zenko held Qu Ru's hand and exclaimed, "You really are a national treasure."

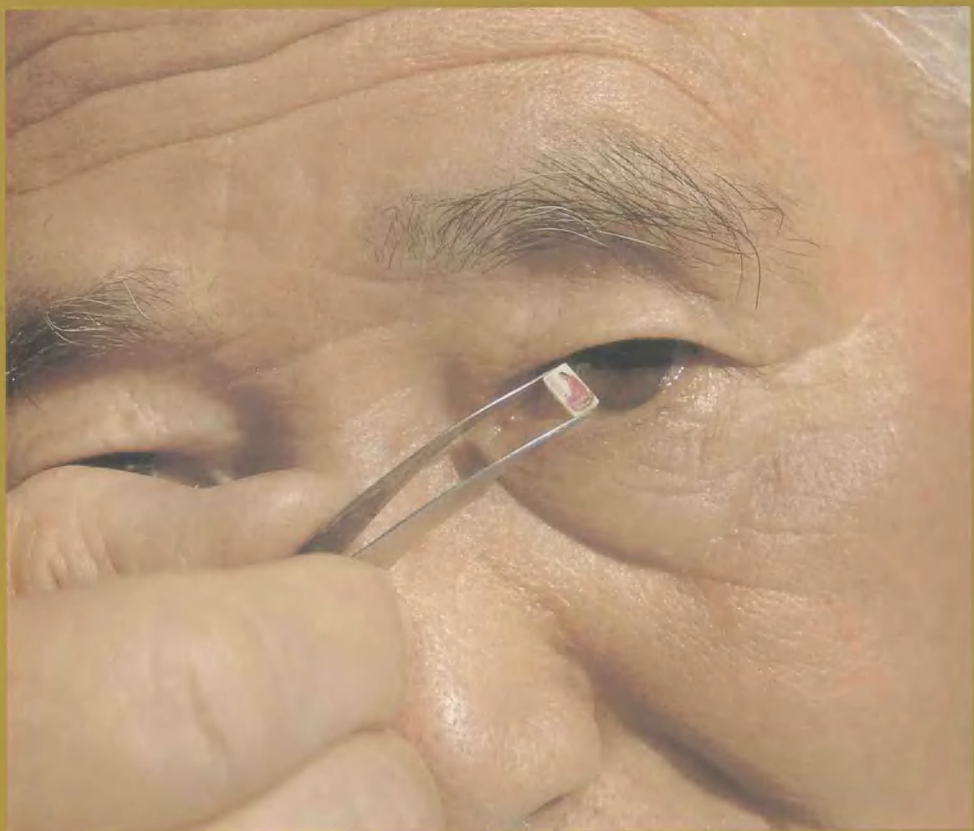
There are collections of Qu Ru's works in Canadian National Museum, Japanese Fugang Art Gallery, Singapore Art Institute. Qu Ru was invited to lecture and exhibit his art in continents of Europe, America, Asia, Africa and Australia.

A close-up portrait of an elderly man with a gentle smile. He is wearing a dark brown beret, a white collared shirt, a colorful patterned tie, and a grey and black striped cardigan. The background is a plain, light color.

作者近照
Master artist
recent photo

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微雕大師

序言

微雕在中國湖遠流長，我有佳作妙品煥世，只是至今還沒有看到一部正規出版的專著。書畫冊：《曲儒微雕藝術》的面世。實是文化、藝術、出版上一幸事。

在微雕藝術的開拓發展上，曲儒臻於巔峰，傾倒中外，久享大師之譽。這個選集，是從曲儒的作品中精選了近百幅得意之作，並收錄了他一篇有關微雕的學術專論，完整地體現了這位世界級大師的微雕藝術特色，有著很高的品鑒、珍藏價值。

曲儒以他80歲的生命創造了一連串的神奇。我們結識二十多年了，初奇於他在一粒米大小的象牙片上刻山雕水畫人物，就想這是一位與我們生活在不同領域的人。及至見面，咯噔一怔：其人體魄壯碩，與我想象的“玲瓏纖巧”相去甚遠，伸向我的足指頭比常人粗出一倍的大手……啊，我一頭霧水。

在曲儒的寫字臺上，我驚嘆得微微捧來一粒粒“米”上，出現了如夢如幻的美的情靈：有老杆如鐵皮寒散霜的臘梅，有玩氣球啃竹葉憨態可掬的熊貓。有仿懷素風神飄落行雲流水也似的書法，還有再現泱泱千里之趣的山水，真是一“米”一個境界，一“米”一個天地。更其神妙的，是在一根細若芒刺的象牙上出現一絲絲大象且居然從容地穿過一苗針的針眼（那件令世界喝彩叫絕的“一列駝駝隊穿過針眼”的極品，是其幾年後之作）。

這次的訪問紀實《一粒“米”上 萬千世界》於1980年7月16日《陝西日報》上刊出。一時間曲儒的微雕引發社會趣談，但麻煩也來了：有質疑的，有匿名信寄到中空部的。也怪不得，這一切似乎太離譜了，加之當時的曲儒也只是一介草民（至於省政協常委、市文史館副館長、省博物館研究員等名銜，是以後才有的），整日價就是畫、寫，或凝神靜氣地搞他的微雕。就這麼個不官不費、不驚不乍、寂寂一隅的人，陡然間在近乎整版的報面上大露峥嵘，在當時的社會心態下能平安無事嗎？

先是一位有點名氣的先生找來了，說報紙上寫的不是事實，他認識曲儒，他肯定曲儒是在高倍放大鏡下玩的把戲，并說他也可以玩。我說：你回去也在放大鏡下試試，再說你們相識，不妨找他當面給你演示演示。

我的回答也不是瞎蒙，曲儒就跟我談到顯微鏡。他說，顯微鏡只是在做檢驗作品時用的，在鏡下是沒法刻的，你要刻的東西在鏡下是放大了，可刀筆也相應地放大了，而且擋住了視線。這話兒，全靠的是意念和指端不精神經的觸感，也就是說，對要刻的物象，預先要一練再練，直到胸有丘壑，才能心到手隨，是此前人也有稱微雕為神刻意雕的。

隨後不久發生了一件事：省政府在歡迎日本前首相福田起夫的宴會上，贈一禮品，是由儒仿懷素羅懷素刻的《東陵聖母帖》微雕，深諳書法的福田驚喜地問曲儒：“這麼像懷素的，是靠氣功刻的嗎？”曲儒說：“不是的。”“是用現代高科技？”“也不是，主要是靠手指感覺刻的。”“我寫幾個字，你刻。”福田順手把面前的菜單翻過來，寫道：“日中友好是世界和平，福田起夫，一九八一—〇二九。”曲儒端詳片刻，在平拉芝麻大的象牙片上，操刀一氣呵成。福田用放大鏡看了說：“像我的字，像得很！你真是人間國寶。”

這個段子，多生動多有說服力。可是那個帶有質疑的先生再沒有見來。但跟着，接到中宣部來的一封信要求查處的函件，函件內附一署名文鏡的信，經訪查非此人。是封區名信，內稱：“曲儒不曾研究書法，沒有學過美術，他是在高倍放大鏡下把字和簡單的畫刻得很小的一種技能，這不是‘藝術’，而是雕蟲小技。”又稱“作品畫是些臨摹和抄襲”。說記者是筆下“演義”等等。與前面先生的質疑比，此信則大異其味，明顯帶有無端貶損的成分。

曲儒出生在山西運城一書香之家，1938年家鄉被日本鬼子占領，他的父母不願兒子受奴化教育，當時就跟本村一位曾留學日本，退隱在家的著名畫家楊扶塵先生學習書、畫、篆刻；老師講的《楳子記》和他欣賞家藏微型象牙佛像，給他埋下一個美妙的夢。

1947年他來西安，一邊上中學，一邊在另一所中學兼任美術教師。西安解放轉為正式教師，這才有較多時間研習書畫，并日益進醉篆刻、微雕。1952年到北京遊玩瞻賞，看到在兩粒綠豆大的象牙片上雕出精美字畫的名藝人陳景翼，撲上前去，就要拜師。在陳景翼憂焚地談到祖國這一文化遺產有凋萎斷種之虞時，又敦促他的思想上升到一個繁榮的層面：死也要搶救國粹。

如果說以往曲儒對微雕只是情懷，此刻就有了一種悲壯的使命感。使命感轉化為動力，他，整個的生命都投入了書、畫、镌雕世界。刀手不歇，家裏的器皿擺設，瓷的、玻璃的、玉石琥珀、金銀銅器……到處都是他的镌鐫刀痕。他刻下的粉末，够裝幾臉盆。點點滴滴，為人眼不進眼的。諸如吃飯間會前後、排隊等車坐車這些被視為“下腳料”的時間，他都惜之如金。“文革”中，畫堂“炮火連天”，他依舊把手指放在膝盖上，有滋有味地徜徉在他的微雕天地裏。可笑那些“鬥士”們沒有一雙識得“妖魔鬼”的火眼金睛。

到了七十年代初，曲儒就能在半粒“小米”上饗進28個字的七絕一首。但自得自樂了沒幾天，經過自創，嚴峻地意識到自己還未擺脫工匠氣，又一次否定自己：不能為小而小，以小蠅起大，小人作看驚毒；細看索然。這是死路。最要緊的是講究書畫氣韵，難得起放大。上銀摹和穿越時間的考驗。

後來他調到陝西省博物館，這裏有簞食了百代推崇的名家書法的碑林和濃郁的人文氛圍，這令他感動得無以名狀，同時也更有機緣同書畫界名流來往。他一頭鑽進碑林，如痴如醉，心摹手追。不知多少遍地臨摹經典古碑，直鍊到滾瓜爛熟，深得其妙，濃縮到小小的一粒“米”上，然後走訪名家，求其品評指點，如此堅持多年，刀下馳騁自如。風格獨具，筆清畫趣均得到完美的體現。凡親睹曲儒微雕作品的，無不嘆為罕物，越觀初一石魯、啓功、關山月、趙望雲、程十髮、黃胄、王雪濤等書畫界大家均有書畫為贈。李苦禪題詞：“古人云：‘神乎其技’，曲儒同志可謂當之無愧矣”；吳作人、李可染不約而同地畫一個緊之牛相贈；這正是對曲儒最深摯的理解。



序言

北京科教電影制片廠擬拍曲儒微雕，遭到反對：“這是為個人掛碑立傳，要拍就拍南北微雕名家的集納。”後把選拍的諸家微雕，拿來在銀幕上放大了三十萬倍，只有曲儒的微雕放大後仍神韻不減，這才誕生了世界第一部微雕專題片《曲儒微雕藝術》，配有四種語言，向國內外發行。



此後的曲儒由於閱歷上的豐富和技藝上不斷求新求變，作品的題材和藝術水平都有了很大的突破。慈惠祥和笑臉眯眯的彌勒佛，昂首闊步、引吭高歌的雄鷄，騰躍於崇山峻嶺上的“萬里長城”和世界最寬的“尼亞加拉大瀑布”，世界最高的鐵塔“埃菲爾鐵塔”，都應有盡有地收入了他的一粒“米”裏；敬贈星雲大師的《金剛經》微雕，全文5436個字，行草書體，字字結構嚴謹，行筆流暢，字距、行距疏密有致……上述作品，爐火純青，無不令人嘆為觀止。

匿名信稱曲儒作品只是些臨摹之作，意在不屑。不錯，曲儒微雕中有相當一部分是仿品。在書畫界搞仿品者是為人所不屑，但曲儒在微雕中之“仿”，却成為天下一奇，人間美談。一者，他不是竊名牟利，而是越明叫響地要把自己崇敬的也是公認的名家之作，移植到微雕這門特異的藝術形式中來，帶給人們又神秘又親切的快感、美感。再者，他不是偷懶取巧。要知道自創之作，可以揚己之長，精益求精。幸意天成；而臨摹之作，先得吃透名家名作，不只熟悉其用筆之法門，還要從整體上得其神韻。即便是做到這一切，要與原作惟妙惟肖，那就更難了。這正是其他微雕名家極少有吃這隻“螃蟹”的。他臨摹的名家，如懷素、石濤、八大山人、齊白石、徐悲鴻、張大千等竟有十數人之多，無不精妙入微，形肖神似。

曲儒的仿品，跟他的自創之作一樣，同樣視為曠世奇品。國家把他的微雕作為珍貴禮品贈贈給許多國家元首和國際名人的，其中就有一些是他的仿品。2002年贈給印尼副總統漢比哈茲的微雕，就是仿徐悲鴻的蒼鷹，副總統通過放大鏡觀看後，驚喜萬分，並對作者深表感謝。世人公認，曲儒的微雕仿品，正是曲儒微雕之一絕。

就在匿名者把污水潑向曲儒的1981這一年，曲儒以社會藝術活動家、民間文化使者的身份開始了他的轉徙歷程。二十多年來，曲儒暢遊五大洲：加拿大8次，法國5次，美國、荷蘭、德國、比利時、盧森堡、新加坡各3次，日本、澳大利亞各2次，南非、墨西哥、泰國、印尼、馬來西亞、芬蘭、新西蘭、菲律賓各1次，並到澳門、臺灣各1次，香港8次，進行巡回訪問，講學和舉辦個人微雕展。每到一地，轟動一方。

1981年，在加拿大蒙特利爾“人與世界”國際博覽會上，曲儒微雕的展櫃前形成了人流洶湧，遠至美國紐約、芝加哥等城市，都有遊客趕來觀看。有個星期天，觀者竟至萬人，潮水般地湧來，竟把玻璃展櫃擠破，爆出了這個展覽有史以來的一大新聞。最後，博覽會的評委會將中國館的一大一小（共兩個微雕）評為這屆博覽會最受歡迎的展品。

蒙特利爾文藝界圍女指揮家埃塞爾·斯塔克找曲儒的技藝進修了，接連十多次來到展櫃前，留連不捨。曲儒看眼裏，刻了一幅蘭花相贈；樂壞了的這位女指揮家，感動地

說：“我認為您才是世界上真正的藝術大師。”

加拿大總督斯賴耶在中國駐加大使王棟陪同下，也聞訊專程從首都渥太華來到博覽會中國館。當他看到井排兩行字的髮雕時，吃驚地問曲儒：“這是人的頭髮嗎？”曲儒說：“是的。”“能割給我看看嗎？”說着拔下自己的一根頭髮，帶着考一考的神情遞給曲儒，曲儒略一沉吟，操刀割下了“Welcome your excellency Mr. Governor-general to be present（歡迎總督閣下光臨）”一行英文字。總督熱情地握住曲儒的手說：“你是最優秀的藝術大師。”

為感謝、表彰曲儒多次在加拿大講學、展覽活動，加拿大加中友誼于1986年1月1日贈送給曲儒一塊制作華貴的牌匾，上書：“曲儒大師，通過你的微雕藝術，您在許多加拿大人民心中為中國割上了永恆的友誼。”

曲儒在法國，也是佳評如潮。《法蘭西西部報》稱他為“微雕王子”。《費加羅》雜誌以大幅彩照介紹他的作品，引起了轟動。也因此，在後來的崗城國際博覽會上一開展，就人流不斷。像在別處一樣，曲儒為了展示中國文化瑰寶和滿足觀眾好奇和審美心理，他照例當眾演示了絕技，也照例出現了與別處類似的場面：觀眾看他用兩三分鐘時間，就變戲法似地拿出一件刻品來，莫不驚詫，有的以為他戲的老花鏡是放大鏡，要來戴上試一試，有的攆他地睜開他的手掌，看是否藏有秘密“武器”。當疑問被解之後，也照例是一片贊嘆。可這天出現了不同——

一個秀髮閃亮、瀑布般垂至腰間的法國女郎，擠到曲儒跟前，帶着一臉的期待和喜色，拔下一根80多厘米長的頭髮。禮請曲儒大師獻藝。曲儒未加推辭，在不到1厘米長的髮絲上刻下了一段聖經……霎那間，風起雲湧，出現高潮：攝影的、拍電視的，要看要聞的，要刻要買的，嘖嘖贊嘆的，前擁後擠，鬧鬧嚷嚷……

崗城市副市長（博覽會主席）在其後深有感慨地發表談話說：“要搞一番事業，就必須有中國人的毅力和智慧。”

在海外，觀賞曲儒微雕藝術的人群中，最還應、最熱情的還是炎黃子孫——我們的僑胞和外籍華人，他們雖然都感受到一份光榮、一份驕傲：在法國維希市展出時，許多華人趕來，其中一個老人喊了一句：“啊，看呀，這是國父遺囑！”呼一下全都圍涌上來，爭相一睹，看個不夠。還有一位法籍華人觀看了曲儒臨摹于右任手體鐫刻的文天祥《正氣歌》，他無比自豪地面向那些望眼企盼的男女觀眾，用法語滔滔不絕地講解起來，講文天祥的故事，講中華文化的古老神奇。

去臺灣寶島，是曲儒多年心願，1995年終於成行。臺胞熱情似火，多次邀請出展。國民黨元老陳立夫專程趕來，看了曲儒的微雕《六服圖》，激動地說：“在一粒‘大米’上刻畫六匹馬，我活了九十多歲，還是第一次看到這樣精彩的藝術品。”隨即命筆揮毫“神乎其技”以贈。許多佛教徒觀賞了《達摩面壁》、《彌勒佛》、《釋迦牟尼》微雕，個個虔誠地雙手合十。得知佛光山舉行“佛光大學籌募建校基金義賣會”，曲儒踴躍獻出三件精心之作：《心經》、《燒爐》、《雙喜圖》，很快出手，拍賣之款，悉數捐給了佛光大學。



序言

在曲儒訪臺7年後的2002年2月，發生了一件令世界華人關注的盛事：臺灣高規格地恭迎陝西法門寺佛指捨利赴臺灣瞻禮供奉。

說起此事來，還與曲儒有着密切的關係：曲儒在訪臺期間，星雲大師就晝晚迎佛指一事對曲儒說：“佛指捨利在陝西，請你多費心。”曲儒不負重託，通過省政協等渠道，促成了此事。省臺辦的陝臺函（2001）97號文件：“關於曲儒先生有關建議事函”，“關於法門寺佛指捨利赴臺展示一事，我辦已就此向國務院臺辦作了報告，我們相信國務院臺辦會做出妥善安排。請轉告曲儒先生。”事後很多人都問曲儒：“你做了這麼大的一件事，為什麼都不告訴我們。”曲儒說：“爲了弘揚佛法，促進兩岸交流，盡一點微薄之力，何足一提。”

中國出現曲儒是中國之福。但曲儒又不僅僅只屬於中國的，他又是屬於世界的，他的卓越成就超越了國界，獲得了國際上的贊許和肯定。加拿大維多利亞市市長在歡迎曲儒的宴會上說：“您的來訪，是我們維多利亞市的光榮。”美國明尼蘇達州州長授予他“榮譽市民”。加拿大中華學院聘他爲“名譽教授”，許多國家的博物館、美術館、文物館都收藏了他的作品。曲儒行踪是媒體報道的亮點，先後有百餘家海內外報刊報導三百多篇次；美國CCTV電視中心爲他拍攝了《人間奇趣》專題片，多次在《信不信由你》節目中播出。先後還有許多國家爲他拍攝20多部專題片。中央電視臺、北京電視臺、山東電視臺、湖南電視臺、陝西電視臺、西安電視臺也都先後播放了他的微雕藝術。

曲儒在半個多世紀的藝術生涯中，不只以技藝款譽海內外，在道德人品上亦有上佳口碑。他爲人平樸、真誠、樸素，故其在藝術的趣味上偏重於對生命、對自然、對光明、對友誼的禮贊和對人間一切真善美的追求。他視微雕爲聖潔的藝術殿堂，在他的作品中找不到一點骯污納垢的東西，他眼睛裏也揉不進半粒沙子。

1985年冬，一次在加拿大開展會場，一美國巨商向他提出購買他一年的微雕專利（類似的事在香港也有過），開出的條件是：包付他夫婦環球游的全部費用，另付酬金十萬美元。但刻什麼內容要聽命於他。曲儒大爲反感，在這種仰人鼻息、有損聲譽的金錢面前，他毫不爲其所動，斷然拒絕。他說：“藝術，不容壟斷，藝術應當屬於人民。任人擺布，連刻什麼的自由都沒有了，還談得上什麼藝術家。”



曲儒年事已高，精神不老，這個選集的出版，了却他一樁心願，但不是他藝術生命的終結，他說他還要不吝餘力，爲微雕藝術事業再作貢獻。他在《七秩有感》中寫道：“名與利，恬而淡；古稱年，志彌堅，攀高峰，自著鞭……坦蕩蕩，度晚年。”多可貴的曲儒精神！

這個序言，對曲儒大師的微雕藝術作品賞析未便展開（在作品部分，我另有點評），這裏偏重的，是對他藝術人生的歷敘，尋思這樣或許能突出其精髓所在，即具有恆久魅力的地爲樸樸的如牛奮進的曲儒精神。這種精神，不只嘉惠微雕之後來人，更有裨於弘揚光大中華民族之魂。

薛義玉 于2006年元月

PROLOGUE

The art of Chinese micro engraving spans centuries, during which time splendid works have appeared. However, there has never been an album or monograph published. The publication of Qu Ru's Micro Engraving is truly an important breakthrough in the culture and artistic arenas.



Qu Ru is known in China and abroad as master of micro engraving. With ninety six of his best selected micro engraving works and one of his selected theses, this album truly represents the artistic characteristics of micro engraving, created by the master Qu Ru, and the album is invaluable for collectors or connoisseurs alike.

I have known Qu Ru for more than twenty years. During his eighty years of life, Qu Ru has indeed created a series of wonderful art. When I first came upon his carved works on ivory landscapes and figures as tiny as a grain of rice, I was truly amazed. I determined then that he must be a unique master artist. At our first meeting, I was surprised by his bold and firm physical appearance. You would not expect someone of his size to be able to do delicate art works of this nature. When his big hands reached for my friendship, I was further astonished to see his fingers were almost twice as large as a normal person.

I met him at his desk, where I had a chance to look at his micro engraving works. On every ivory grain there was a spirit of beauty. Plums were blossoming in the freezing cold, pandas were playing with balloons and nibbling at bamboo, Huai-su styled Chinese calligraphy looked like flowing clouds and running water, and landscapes stretched away thousands of miles. Even more marvelous was a tiny thread of ivory as thin as silk floss, along which trotted a line of elephants. A few years later, Qu Ru would create his world extraordinary, "Camels Walking through the Hole of the Embroidery Needle."

Shaanxi Daily published my story based on that interview. "The World on a Tiny Grain," on July 16, 1980. Qu Ru's micro engraving won immediately societal acclaim. Meanwhile some artists questioned the truth of my report. One of them sent an anonymous complaint to the Ministry of Propaganda. Evidently, introducing a commoner working day and night solitarily on his art to "the hall of fame" aroused jealousy in those days in China.

A skeptical artist told me that he knew Qu Ru, and was certain that Qu Ru's works were tricks of the magnifying glass. He claimed that he could do the same. I told him that he should try it himself, and that he could also ask Qu Ru to demonstrate his techniques to him. My suggestions were not unwarranted. Qu Ru had mentioned the magnifiers before. He said that one could not create the work under a magnifying glass because it would magnify both the ivory and his hands. The magnified hands would block the vision. The micro engraving had to be done with the delicate sense of touch with the fingers alone. The artist must obtain a perfect perception of the picture he was to create and learn it by heart before taking on the carving. That was why micro engraving was also called "the engraving of consciousness."

Shortly thereafter, at a banquet to welcome the Japanese Prime Minister Suzuki Zenko, the governor of Shaanxi Province presented him with Qu Ru's micro engraving "the Stone Rubbing of Goddess's East Mausoleum." Suzuki, an expert in Chinese calligraphy, exclaimed in amazement, "It resembles the style of Huai-su." Turning to Qu Ru, Suzuki enquired, "Did you do it by magic?"

"No," Qu Ru replied.

"Then by means of modern technology?"



"Neither, I did it with the sense of touch with my fingers."

"Please engrave some words I write," requested Suzuki, and he took a menu and wrote on the back of it in Chinese characters, "Japanese-Chinese friendship means world peace. By Suzuki Zenko, Xian, October 29, 1981."



Qu Ru examined the writing for a second and then carved the message on a piece of ivory as small as a grain of millet. Suzuki looked at the engraving under a magnifying glass and said, "It resembles my handwriting so much. You are really a national treasure."

Upon hearing of his incident, the skeptical artists became silent. However shortly afterward, the Ministry of Propaganda demanded an investigation based on a written accusation from Wen Jing to the effect that Qu Ru had never studied calligraphy or art. "To carve Characters and some simple pictures under a magnifier is not art but a skill. Qu Ru's work is full of plagiarisms." The accusation was more derogatory than the previous skepticism. In fact, Wen Jing was a pseudonym; it was another anonymous diatribe.

Much later, however, Qu Ru was appointed Standing Committee member of the Shaanxi Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, vice president of Xian Art & History Research Institute, and research fellow of the Xian Beilin Museum.

Qu Ru was born into a scholar's household in 1925 in Yuncheng, Shanxi Province. In 1938, as a teenager, he saw the Japanese occupation of his hometown. Reluctant to send him to schools controlled by the invaders, Qu Ru's parents sent him to study with Yang Shi-chen, a retired professor who once studied art in Japan. When the professor read the "He Zhou Ji" to him and showed him his treasured collection of miniature statues of Buddha, Qu Ru was enchanted by the wealth of Chinese art and literature.

After he came to Xian in 1947, Qu Ru taught art at a high school while he took classes. Not until he became tenured upon Xian's "liberation" in 1949, did he have time seriously to study art and calligraphy, with a focus on seal carving and micro engraving.

In 1952 when visiting Liu Ji-chang in Beijing, Qu Ru happened to meet famous artist Chen Jing-yi, who made beautiful micro engravings on pieces of ivory as small as two beans. Qu Ru threw himself before the master to ask for advice. Chen expressed his worries that micro engraving was on the verge of "extinction" and urged him to save this endangered art.

Qu Ru felt the calling. With knife in hand, he practiced carving on everything in his house, on clay and glassware, on stone and jade decorations, and on metal bars and handles. Powder from carving could have filled several buckets. He used every minute to practice carving. Despite numerous adversities during the Cultural Revolution, he never gave up his quiet yet persistent Pursuit of this love.

In the early 1970s, Qu Ru was already able to carve a poem of twenty-eight characters on half a grain of millet. However, he was dissatisfied with his work. His goal was not to make the carvings small simply for the sake of size. Instead, he felt that he must pursue the artistic potential of the work so that it would survive the test of being magnified and endure the test of time.

After this, he came to work at the Shaanxi Museum, where he had access to the museum's collection of ancient calligraphy incised on stone tablets. He studied classical calligraphy enthusiastically. At first he perfected the art of calligraphy by imitating the style over and over. Then he would carve the work in facsimile on grains, and show them to his artist friends for their critiques. After a decade of practice, he has created his own style in micro engraving.

People acclaim Qu Ru's works as "extraordinary." The distinguished artists Zhao Pu-Chu, Shi Lu, Qi Gong, Guan Shan-yue, Zhao Wang-yun, Cheng shi-fa, Huang Zhou, and Wang xue-tao each dedicated a painting or calligraphy to Qu Ru in appreciation of his art. Li Ku-chan wrote, "Qu Ru's work is truly as the ancient expression, 'The skill is like magic.' " Coincidentally, both Wu Zuo-ren and Li Ke-ran presented paintings of an ox, a Chinese symbol for honesty and devotion, to Qu Ru to express their deepest empathy for his artistic spirit.

A film director at the Beijing Science and Education Film Studio planned to dedicate a movie to Qu Ru's micro engraving. Some people argued against the proposal to dedicate a movie to Qu Ru's micro engraving. Some people argued against the proposal proclaiming that "the film should not glorify an individual; it should be about all the micro engraving artists." However, when the works of various artists were magnified to three hundred thousand times of the actual size on the screen, only Qu Ru's works remained good art. Thus the film Qu Ru's Micro Engraving was born, and was presented to the world in four languages.

Over the years, Qu Ru has matured into an outstanding Master of micro engraving artist. His works involved a wide range of topics from smiling Maitreya, crouching rooster, and the Great Wall to the Niagara Falls and the Eiffel Tower. His magnificent micro carving work to Master Xing-yun "Diamond Sutra" of 5,436 characters have been carved in "Xing Shu" brush style. Each character have been well planned and arranged.

The earlier accusation of plagiarism against Qu Ru is unfound. It is true that some of Qu Ru's works are classical masterpieces translated onto a tiny piece of ivory. However these translations have created national gems. In the first place, different from reproducing classical works in facsimile for profit, Qu Ru has successfully translated famous paintings and calligraphy onto his micro engravings and has credited the original artists. Secondly, while creating new art requires inspiration, translating a masterpiece into a different art form requires a deep understanding of the original work. That's why few other micro engraving artists have taken on this line of task. The most unusual difference is that Qu Ru is able to capture the quintessence of the works by a variety of famous artist including Huai-su, Shi-tao, Ba-da-shan-ren, Qi Bai-shi, Xu Bei-hong, Zhang Daqian, etc. His engraving of Yu You-ren's calligraphy "First and Second Pleas for Dispatching Troops" appears to be an exact likeness as the original. His recreation of Xu Bei-hong's painting of horses shows the same distinctive shade of colors, and portrays the dynamics of galloping.

Qu Ru's micro engravings based on classical paintings and calligraphy, along with his other works, has been presented to the heads of various countries as well as important international celebrities as precious gifts. In 2002, China presented Qu Ru's micro engraving "Goshawk," based on Qu Bee Hong's painting, to Indonesian Vice President Amah Has. It is universally recognized that Qu Ru's engravings based on the classical works are an integral component of his micro engraving art.



In 1981, the year that the anonymous accusation occurred, Qu Ru expanded his career to the social and cultural domain. In the last twenty years, he has visited, lectured, and exhibited his art in several dozen countries. He has made eight trips to Canada and Hong Kong, five trips to France, three trips to the United States, Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg and Singapore, two trips to Japan and Australia. He also has visited South Africa, Mexico, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Finland, New Zealand, the Philippines, Macau, and Taiwan. Qu Ru wins great admiration wherever he visits.

Visitors to the "Man and His World" International Fair in Montreal, Canada in 1981 were fascinated with Qu Ru's micro-engravings. One Sunday ten thousand visitors jam-packed the exhibition hall and broke the display case. In the end, Qu Ru's micro engraving and Chinese terra cotta both were nominated by the committee of the fair to win the award of the "Most Welcomed Exhibit."



Esther Stack, conductress of the Montreal Symphony Orchestra, was so mesmerized by Qu Ru's art that she returned to the micro engravings more than ten times until Qu Ru graciously micro engraved a picture of orchid for her. Filled with joy and excitement, she exclaimed, "You are the definitive master artist of the World."

The Canadian Governor General Edward Schreyer, accompanied by Wang Dong, Chinese Ambassador to Canada, made a special trip from Ottawa to attend the fair. When he saw the calligraphy carved on a piece of hair, he asked in amazement, "Is this human hair?"

"Yes," Qu Ru responded.

"Could you demonstrate the engraving techniques?" requested he, and he pulled out a piece of hair from his head and handed it to Qu Ru.

Qu Ru thought for a second, and carved on his hair in English, "Welcome Your Excellency Mr. Governor General to be present." The Governor General held Qu Ru's hands and said warmly "you are the most excellent master artist."

On the New Year's Day of 1986, to express appreciation for Qu Ru's art and visits, the Canadian Canada-China Friendship Association presented Qu Ru an exquisite tablet, which says, "Master Qu Ru, through your micro engraving, you have engraved a lasting friendship in the hearts of the Canadian people and the Chinese people."

Qu Ru was highly commended in France as well. West France Daily acclaimed Qu Ru as the "Prince of Micro Engraving." A French magazine introduced his work with an enlarged colored picture of a micro engraved panda on a pile of rice grains, which was called the "smallest panda in the world." The art exhibition at the international fair in Grenoble was filled with a huge crowd every day. As everywhere else, Qu Ru demonstrated his art. And as everywhere else, the audience watching him carve a work that took a few minutes admired him for his magical skills. They wondered if his glasses were magnifying glasses, and they wanted to try them on themselves. Some examined his hands to see if he had any secret "weapons." When they were sure that Qu Ru did it without playing any tricks, they gasped in admiration.

One day, a young French woman pushed through the crowd to stand in front of Qu Ru. She pulled out a piece of 80 centimeter long blond hair from her head and asked Qu Ru to engrave it. Qu Ru happily engraved

A famous citation from the Bible. Instantly there was an upsurge of interests. Some people took pictures, some people videotaped Qu Ru and his works, and some offered a price in hopes of buying a piece of his work. The deputy mayor of Grenoble and chairman of the Fair later expressed his thought about Qu Ru, "To pursue such a career, one must have the wisdom and perseverance of the Chinese people."

Overseas, Chinese descendants felt a deep emotional connection with Qu Ru's art. At an exhibition in Nice, France, an elderly Chinese man pointed at a micro engraving work and called out, "Come over here." It is the "Will of the Father of China." Many people went over to look at it. Another Chinese man saw the engraving of Wen Tian-xiang's "Song of Justice." He started to explain to other visitors in eloquent French the story of Wen Tian-xiang and his legacy.

In 1995, Qu Ru's wish to visit Taiwan was finally granted. He was invited to exhibit his art in several cities. Chen Li-fu, a senior member of the National Party, visited one of the exhibitions. After he looked at "Liu Jun Tu," he exclaimed excitedly, "This is the first time in my life of more than ninety years to see such a brilliant work of six horses carved on a grain." Then he picked up a writing brush and wrote "Magic skill" for Qu Ru. When some Buddhist visitors saw Qu Ru's works of "Bodidharma Meditating to the Wall," "Maitreya," and "Sakyani," they devoutly put their palms together to pray.

At the conference of fund raising for the Institution of Buddha, Qu Ru donated his three masterpieces, "Xin Jing, Heart Sutra," "Zhong Kui," and "Shuang Xi Tu, Picture of Double Happiness" to the school.

In February 2002, seven years after Qu Ru's visit to Taiwan, the Relics of Buddha's Finger from the Famen Temple of Shaanxi received consecration in Taiwan. This important Buddhist religious event could not have taken place without Qu Ru's devoted efforts. Buddhist Master Xing Yun met Qu Ru in Taiwan in 1995 and told him, "The Relics of Buddha's Finger is in Shaanxi. Please take care of it." Qu Ru considered this matter to be of the utmost importance. Working with the Shaanxi Political Consultative Committee, he successfully facilitated the tour consecration of the Relics of Buddha's Finger in Taiwan. The document (2001) #97 of the Shaanxi Provincial Office of Taiwan Affairs said, "Please inform Mr. Qu Ru that we have sent a report to the State Council regarding sending the Relics of Buddha's Finger to Taiwan for consecration. We trust the State Council to make a good arrangement for it." Some friends asked Qu Ru why he kept quiet about such a big contribution. Qu Ru replied, "All I want is to promote Buddhism and the understanding between the people across the Taiwan Straits."

Qu Ru's achievement is beyond national boundaries and is widely praised internationally. At a banquet to welcome Qu Ru, the mayor of Victoria of Canada says, "Your visit is our city's honor." The Governor of Minnesota in the United States appoints Qu Ru as "an Honorary Citizen." The Canadian College of China Studies engages him as "Honorary Professor." Museums, galleries, and research institutes in many countries have collections of his works. The media follows Qu Ru's whereabouts; hundreds of newspapers and magazines have reported his activities over three hundred times. The American CTV made a television documentary, "Wonder of the Worlds" which has been shown several times in the program "Believe It or Not."

Other countries have shot about twenty films on his micro engraving art. The Chinese Central TV, Beijing TV, Shandong TV, Hunan TV, Shaanxi TV, and Xian TV have all played programs featuring his art.

In his career of over half a century, Qu Ru has won high reputation in China and abroad. He is recognized not

