

主編 章群

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四知堂珍藏吳讓之印存孤本

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序

曩在潞淵丈靜樂篋拜讀《晉銅鼓齋印存》，並魏稼孫鈐搨之《師慎軒印略》，飽飫郇厨。惜弱冠少年囫圇吞佳味而已。稍長，在上海市青年宮篆刻班求學，去疾方老師常携讓翁刻石，訓示其用刀之法，且斷言讓翁印刀如魯智深月牙鏢狀。此則至今未解也。豫堂錢老師終生服膺趙悲盦，視讓翁爲小名家流，與潞丈、方師有仁智之異。二十五年前，僕移居委奴，購得彼邦刊印之讓翁編年印譜，窮力研讀，始有心得微進矣。去年秋，四知堂主人出示此冊吳讓翁手抑稿本，錄印三百六十四品，內有五品爲他人作品，又有重複鈐搨者，實收讓翁印蛻三百四十四品。十九爲他譜所未收，令人嘆爲觀止。冊中『三十六湖長』並『廷颺之印』二品，均有刻後初鈐及修飾後之定稿，爲從來所未見，彌足珍貴矣。讓翁以篆書、篆刻爲世膾炙，無須後生小子讚一辭。其於刻印頗自滿，冊中以圓圈自許者計有三十二品，又自題甲等二十五品，乙等三十一品，標以雙點者十三品，復以『無意得之』、『不單寒』、『橫直相安』、『安頓』、『此乃見刀法』等讚語自美，累計八十餘品，約爲全冊之四一。其自得之狀，可以想見矣。冊中『古香居士』一印，豐韻天然，有言愁欲愁之態。讓翁以雙圈綴之，復題『不可多得，得之無心』八字，爲冊中所僅見，當爲讓翁深自愜意，以爲至善至佳者。冊中尚有讓翁自題三跋語。一曰：『平和簡靜，適麗天成，曰神品。醞釀無跡，橫直相安，曰能品。』二曰：『冊中諸友，當時見賞，索刻名印。咸豐三年揚城賊退後，再檢是冊，半入劫灰，求如當日，指瑕剔疵者，邈不可得。心非木石，曷能無感。白頭燈下，掩淚書之。』按此題爲一八五三年，咸豐三年，太平軍敗退揚州後所書。是年讓翁五十五歲。三曰：『名作如林憶卷舒，而今空剩幾圖書。平生知己皆師友，無服之喪永不除。乙卯八月十九日，漏下三商再題。』按此詩爲一八五五年，咸豐五年所賦。是年讓翁五十又七。冊中『觀海者難爲水』他譜中曾見款搨，署爲『壬辰冬』，即一八三二年，道光十二年所刻。時讓翁三十四歲。是現存紀年之最早作。冊中其他作品均更爲成熟。故知是冊爲讓翁三十四歲後中年時代所爲也。向來譽讓翁者以娟美如俏佳人目之，竊以爲且具號國淡妝，洗盡脂粉之概，豈獨十七八女郎，執紅牙拍板，歌楊柳岸曉風殘月哉。

二零一零年，歲次庚寅，秋節，後晚學生陳茗屋養疴滬上

Foreword

I once had had the great pleasure of reading at the studio of master inscription artist Ye Luyuan, two books on ancient seals and inscriptions. Unfortunately I was too young and inexperienced to appreciate the meaning of such monumental works. As I grew older I studied seal carving and inscription at Shanghai's youth center. The teacher Fang Quji often brought along the seal carvings of Wu Xidai (Master "Rang") to demonstrate the latter's carving skills. Teacher Fang said confidently that the knife of Master Rang took the shape of a crescent moon. Till today I have no idea how Teacher Fang was able to come to such conclusion. On the other hand Teacher Qian Yutang held Master Zhao Zhiqian in the highest of esteem and instead thought Master Rang as being over-rated. In that regard he had differed from Master Ye and Teacher Fang. Some twenty five years I moved my residence to Japan. I was able to purchase copies of Master Rang's inscription collection printed by local publishers. They allowed me to study them at close quarters. I had benefited much from them. Last autumn the owner of Sizhi Studio showed a book which was said to be the handwritten copy of Master Rang containing 364 inscription works. Five of the works were from others and a few others were repetitions. As such there were 344 authenticated works. Out of these works 19 were seen for the first time. Furthermore two of the works were initial prints and corrected drafts rarely seen anywhere in the world. Master Rang's 'seal style' calligraphy and carvings are widely known and hence do not require any eulogies. What was interesting was his satisfaction with some of his works. The book contained 32 pieces which he singled out for self-appreciation. 25 pieces were rate first class; 31 pieces rated second class and 13 pieces rated 'commendable. The works were also liberally annotated with words of self-encouragement. In all more than 80 works contained comments, constituting almost a quarter of the entire collection. One particular seal called "The venerable lay practitioner" was particularly eye-catching with double-circle and comments to the effect that it was 'one of its kinds'. Master Rang must have been extremely pleased with it. The collection also contained three texts of historical significance. The second one was said to be written in 1853-around the time of the Boxer Rebellion -when Master Rang was 55 years old. The third one was written in 1855, when he was 57 years old. The inscription in the book he signed off the date showed 1832, when he was only 34. This last piece of work is now the oldest known work of Master Rang. The works after his 34 years old are more brilliant in this book. In any case one can infer that the book's works are all completed by Master Rang during his middle age. Master Rang's works have often been described as being a beauty with full make up. I think it is probably more apt to describe them as being of an unembellished beauty comparable to that of Lady Guguo during the Tang Dynasty period, with an aura of nobility that women of the world could not dream to possess.

By Chen Minwu in Shanghai, autumn 2010

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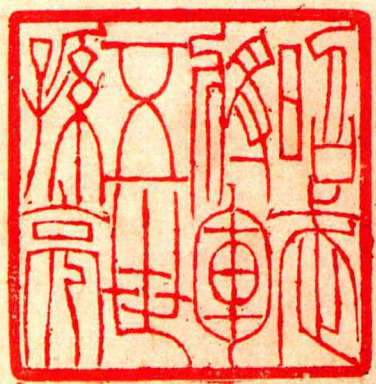
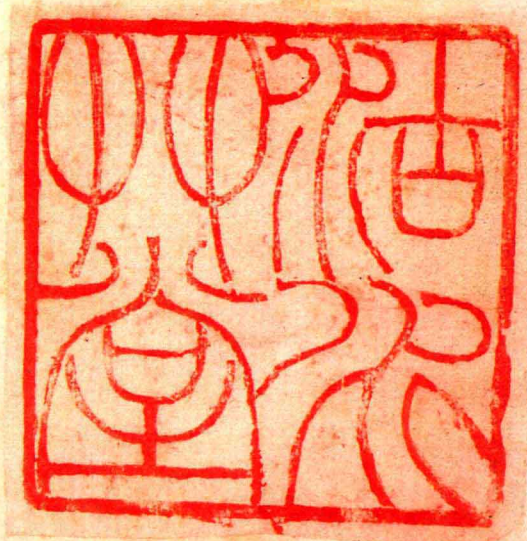
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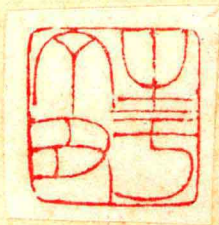


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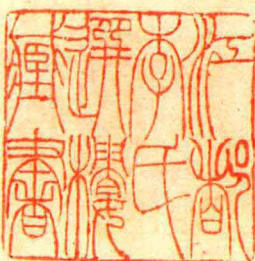
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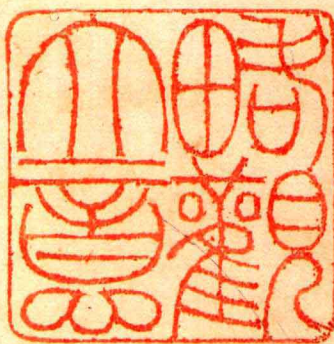
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