

= Hu Zhengyan =

Hu Zhengyan (Chinese : 胡正言 ; c . 1584 ? 1674) was a Chinese artist , printmaker and publisher . He worked in calligraphy , traditional Chinese painting , and seal @-@ carving , but was primarily a publisher , producing academic texts as well as records of his own work .

Hu lived in Nanjing during the transition from the Ming dynasty to the Qing dynasty . A Ming loyalist , he was offered a position at the rump court of the Hongguang Emperor , but declined the post , and never held anything more than minor political office . He did , however , design the Hongguang Emperor 's personal seal , and his loyalty to the dynasty was such that he largely retired from society after the emperor 's capture and death in 1645 . He owned and operated an academic publishing house called the Ten Bamboo Studio , in which he practised various multi @-@ colour printing and embossing techniques , and he employed several members of his family in this enterprise . Hu 's work at the Ten Bamboo Studio pioneered new techniques in colour printmaking , leading to delicate gradations of colour which were not previously achievable in this art form .

Hu is best known for his manual of painting entitled The Ten Bamboo Studio Manual of Painting and Calligraphy , an artist 's primer which remained in print for around 200 years . His studio also published seal catalogues , academic and medical texts , books on poetry , and decorative writing papers . Many of these were edited and prefaced by Hu and his brothers .

= = Biography = =

Hu was born in Xiuning County , Anhui Province in 1584 or early 1585 . Both his father and elder brother Zhengxin (郑信 , art name Wusuo , 吴所) were physicians , and after he turned 30 he travelled with them while they practised medicine in the areas around Lu 'an and Huoshan . It is commonly stated that Zhengyan himself was also a doctor , though the earliest sources attesting to this occur only in the second half of the 19th century .

By 1619 , Hu had moved to Nanjing where he lived with his wife Wu . Their home on Jilongshan (鸡龙山 , now also known as Beiji Ge) , a hill located just within the northern city wall , served as a meeting @-@ house for like @-@ minded artists . Hu named it the Ten Bamboo Studio (Shizhuzhai , 十竹斋) , after the ten bamboo plants that grew in front of the property . It functioned as the headquarters for his printing business , where he employed ten artisans including his two brothers Zhengxin and Zhengxing (郑亨 , art name Zizhu , 子注) and his sons Qipu (启浦) and Qiyi (启毅 , courtesy name 启毅) .

During Hu 's lifetime , the Ming dynasty , which had ruled China for over 250 years , was overthrown and replaced by China 's last imperial dynasty , the Qing . Following the fall of the capital Beijing in 1644 , remnants of the imperial family and a few ministers set up a Ming loyalist regime in Nanjing with Zhu Yousong on the throne as the Hongguang Emperor . Hu , who was noted for his seal @-@ carving and facility with seal script , created a seal for the new Emperor . The court offered him the position of Drafter for the Secretariat (zhongshu sheren , 中书舍人) as a reward , but he did not accept the role (although he did accord himself the title of zhongshu sheren in some of his subsequent personal seals) .

According to Wen Ruilin 's Lost History of the South (Nanjiang Yishi , 南江逸史) , prior to the Qing invasion of Nanjing Hu studied at the National University there , and whilst a student was employed by the Ministry of Rites to record official proclamations ; he produced the Imperial Promotion of Minor Learning (Qin Ban Xiaoxue , 勤班小学) and the Record of Displayed Loyalty (Biaozhong Ji , 表忠记) as part of this work . As a result , he was promoted to the Ministry of Personnel and gained admittance to the Hanlin Academy , but before he could take up this appointment , Beijing had fallen to the Manchu rebellion . Since contemporaneous biographies (Wen 's work was not published until 1830) make no mention of these events , it has been suggested that they were fabricated after Hu 's death .

Hu retired from public life and went into seclusion in 1646 , after the end of the Ming dynasty . Xiao Yuncong and Lü Liuliang recorded visiting him during his later years , in 1667 and 1673 respectively . He died in poverty at the age of 90 , sometime around late 1673 or early 1674 .

= = Seal @-@ carving = =

Hu Zhengyan was a noted seal @-@ carver , producing personal seals for numerous dignitaries . His style was rooted in the classical seal script of the Han dynasty , and he followed the Huizhou school of carving founded by his contemporary He Zhen . Hu 's calligraphy , although balanced and with a clear compositional structure , is somewhat more angular and rigid than the classical models he followed . Huizhou seals attempt to impart an ancient , weathered impression , although unlike other Huizhou artists Hu did not make a regular practice of artificially aging his seals .

Hu 's work was known outside his local area . Zhou Lianggong , a poet who lived in Nanjing around the same time as Hu and was a noted art connoisseur , stated in his Biography of Seal @-@ Carvers (Yinren Zhuan , ???) that Hu " creates miniature stone carvings with ancient seal inscriptions for travellers to fight over and treasure " , implying that his carvings were popular with visitors and travellers passing through Nanjing .

In 1644 , Hu took it upon himself to create a new Imperial seal for the Hongguang Emperor , which he carved after a period of fasting and prayer . He presented his creation with an essay , the Great Exhortation of the Seal (Dabao Zhen , ???) , in which he bemoaned the loss of the Chongzhen Emperor 's seal and begged Heaven 's favour in restoring it . Hu was concerned that his essay would be overlooked because he had not written it in the form of rhyming , equally @-@ footed couplets (pianti , ??) used in the Imperial examinations , but his submission and the seal itself were nevertheless both accepted by the Southern Ming court .

= = Ten Bamboo Studio = =

Despite his reputation as an artist and seal @-@ carver , Hu was primarily a publisher . His publishing house , the Ten Bamboo Studio , produced reference works on calligraphy , poetry and art ; medical textbooks ; books on etymology and phonetics ; and copies of as well as commentaries on the Confucian Classics . Unlike other publishers in the area , the Ten Bamboo Studio did not publish works of narrative fiction such as plays or novels . This bias towards academia was likely a consequence of the studio 's location : the mountain on which Hu took up residence was just to the north of the Nanjing Guozijian (National Academy) , which provided a captive market for academic texts . Between 1627 and 1644 , the Ten Bamboo Studio produced over twenty printed books of this kind , aimed at a wealthy , literary audience . The studio 's earliest publications were medical textbooks , the first of which , Tested Prescriptions for Myriad Illnesses (Wanbing Yanfang , ????) was published in 1631 and proved popular enough to be reissued ten years later . Hu 's brother Zhengxin was a medical practitioner and appears to have been the author of these books .

During the 1630s the Ten Bamboo Studio also produced political works extolling the rule of the Ming ; these included the Imperial Ming Record of Loyalty (Huang Ming Biaozhong Ji , ?????) , a biography of loyal Ming officials , and the Edicts of the Imperial Ming (Huang Ming Zhaozhi , ????) , a list of Imperial proclamations . After the fall of the Ming Dynasty , Hu renamed the studio the Hall Rooted in the Past (Digutang , ???) as a sign of his affiliation with the previous dynasty , although the Ten Bamboo imprint continued to be used . Despite Hu 's withdrawal from society after 1646 , the studio continued to publish well into the Qing dynasty , for the most part focussing on seal impression catalogues showcasing Hu 's carving work .

The Ming dynasty had seen considerable advancement in the process of colour printing in China . At his studio , Hu Zhengyan experimented with various forms of woodblock printing , creating processes for producing multi @-@ coloured prints and embossed printed designs . As a result , he was able to produce some of China 's first printed publications in colour , using a block printing technique known as " assorted block printing " (douban yinshua , ????) . This system made use of multiple blocks , each carved with a different part of the final image and each bearing a different colour . It was a lengthy , painstaking process , requiring thirty to fifty engraved printing blocks and up to seventy inkings and impressions to create a single image . Hu also employed a related form of multiple @-@ block printing called " set @-@ block printing " (taoban yinshua , ????) , which had

existed since the Yuan period some 200 years earlier but had only recently come into fashion again . He refined these block printing techniques by developing a process for wiping some of the ink off the blocks before printing ; this enabled him to achieve gradation and modulation of shades which were not previously possible .

In some images , Hu employed a blind embossing technique (known as " embossed designs " (gonghua , ??) or " embossed blocks " (gongban , ??) , using an uninked , imprinted block to stamp designs onto paper . He used this to create white relief effects for clouds and for highlights on water or plants . This was a relatively new process , having been invented by Hu 's contemporary Wu Faxiang , who was also a Nanjing @-@ based publisher . Wu had used this technique for the first time in his book Wisteria Studio Letter Paper (Luoxuan Biangu Jianpu , ??????) , published in 1626 . Both Hu and Wu used embossing to create decorative writing papers , the sale of which provided a sideline income for the Ten Bamboo Studio .

= = Major works = =

Hu 's most notable work is the Ten Bamboo Studio Manual of Painting and Calligraphy (Shizhuzhai Shuhuapu , ??????) , an anthology of around 320 prints by around thirty different artists (including Hu himself) , published in 1633 . It consists of eight sections , covering calligraphy , bamboo , flowers , rocks , birds and animals , plums , orchids and fruit . Some of these sections had been released previously as single volumes . As well as a collection of artworks , it was also intended as an artistic primer , with instructions on correct brush position and technique and several pictures designed for beginners to copy . Although these instructions only appear in the sections on orchids and bamboo , the book still remains the first example of a categorical and analytical approach to Chinese painting . In this book , Hu used his multiple @-@ block printing methods to obtain gradations of colour in the images , rather than obvious outlines or overlaps . The manual is bound in the " butterfly binding " (hudie zhuang , ???) style , whereby whole @-@ folio illustrations are folded so that each occupies a double @-@ page spread . This binding style allows the reader to lay the book flat in order to look at a particular image . Cambridge University Library released a complete digital scan of the manual , including all writings and illustrations in August , 2015 . Said Charles Aylmer , Head of the Cambridge University Chinese Department , " The binding is so fragile , and the manual so delicate , that until it was digitized , we have never been able to let anyone look through it or study it ? despite its undoubted importance to scholars . "

This volume went on to influence colour printing across China , where it paved the way for the later but better @-@ known Manual of the Mustard Seed Garden (Jieziyuan Huazhuan ?????) , and also in Japan , where it was reprinted and foreshadowed the development in ukiyo @-@ e of the colour woodblock printing process known as nishiki @-@ e ?? . The popularity of the Ten Bamboo Studio Manual was such that print runs continued to be produced all the way through to the late Qing dynasty .

Hu also produced the work Ten Bamboo Studio Letter Paper (Shizhuzhai Jianpu , ?????) , a collection of paper samples , which made use of the gonghua stamped embossing technique to make the illustrations stand out in relief . Whilst primarily a catalogue of decorative writing papers , it also contained paintings of rocks , people , ritual vessels and other subjects . The book was bound in the " wrapped back " (baobei zhuang , ???) style , in which the folio pages are folded , stacked , and sewn along the open edges . Originally published in 1644 , it was reissued in four volumes between 1934 and 1941 by Zheng Zhenduo and Lu Xun , and revised and republished again in 1952 .

= = Other publications = =

Other works produced by Hu 's studio included a reprint of Zhou Boqi 's manual of seal @-@ script calligraphy , The Six Styles of Calligraphy , Correct and Erroneous (Liushu Zheng 'e , ????) and the related Necessary Investigations into Calligraphy (Shufa Bi Ji , ????) , which discussed common errors in the formation of characters . With his brother Zhengxin , Hu edited a new

introductory edition of the Confucian classics , entitled The Standardised Text of the Four Books , Identified and Corrected (Sishu Dingben Bianzheng , ??????) (1640) , giving the correct formation and pronunciation of the text . A similar approach was taken with the Essentials of the Thousand Character Classic in Six Scripts (Qianwen Liushu Tongyao , ??????) (1663) , which Hu compiled with the aid of his calligraphy teacher , Li Deng . It was published after Li 's death , partly in homage to him .

The three Hu brothers worked together to collate a student primer on poetry by their contemporary Ye Tingxiu , which was called simply the Discussion of Poetry (Shi Tan , ??) (1635) . Other works on poetry from the studio included Helpful Principles to the Subtle Workings of Selected Tang Poems (Leixuan Tang Shi Zhudao Weiji , ???????) , which was a compilation of several works on poetry and included colophons by Hu Zhengyan himself .

Among the studio 's more obscure publications was a text on Chinese dominoes entitled Paitong Fuyu (?????) , written under a pseudonym but with a preface by Hu Zhengyan .

= = Gallery = =

Images from the ' ' Ten Bamboo Studio Manual of Painting and Calligraphy ' '