

Reasons for the Formation of the Consciousness of Literati and Seal Engravers in the Late Qing Dynasty from the Perspective of Epigraphy

Shiyi Xu

Krirk University, Thailand

Abstract: *The formation of the legal consciousness of literati seal engravers in the late Qing Dynasty can be attributed to various factors, one of which is the inheritance of ancient culture. Seal engravers have deep education in literatures, art, philosophy and other ancient periods such as the pre-Qin and -Han dynasties. Therefore, the appreciation and studies on ancient seal engravings have led them to form a legal consciousness. At the same time, they also highly admire classic calligraphy and painting, with the seal carving works in previous calligraphy and painting works highly respected. Scholars and seal carvers improve their artistic level by learning and imitating the works of previous seal carvers, drawing on ancient aesthetic standards and techniques in their creations. They pursue independent literary and artistic creations, emphasizing individual expressions, while also having a profound understanding and respect for traditional culture. Under the guidance of this ideology, adopting the teaching of ancient people has become a way to express one's own personalities. The method has become a way for literati to express their personalities and seek their self-identity. By imitating and innovating from their predecessors, they seek spiritual comfort and stability in turbulent times.*

Keyword: Horizontal selection; Epigraphy; Printed text.

1. THE IMPACT OF A LARGE NUMBER OF UNEARTHED CULTURAL RELICS DURING THE MING AND QING DYNASTY ON THE TRADITIONAL CONCEPT OF SEAL CARVING ART

A large number of cultural relics unearthed during the Ming and Qing Dynasty sparked a considerable trend among literati and scholars who were popular for seal carving art at that time. In his book *History of Chinese Seal Art*, Liu Jiang said that, "Many seals, calligraphers, painters or enthusiasts pay more attention to the study and organization of ancient characters in unearthed cultural relics. They incorporate oracle bones, bells, cauldrons, stone tablets, bricks, portraits and even bamboo slips into printing, which has opened up new fields for the use of engraved characters." This indicates that a large number of unearthed cultural relics during the Ming and Qing Dynasty have expanded the sources of selection for literati and scholars such as seal carvers and calligraphers, shifting from the traditional vertical selection method used in the Qin and Han Dynasty to the horizontal selection method, which are no longer confined to the traditional method of "Yin Zong Qin and Han", but the scope of their selection has been expanded. Later, Deng Shiru, Zhao Zhiqian and others proposed the theories of "Printing From the Books" and "Outside Beg to Print", which further enriched the theoretical foundation of seal carving art in the history of seal studies, leading more calligraphers, painters, epigraphers and scholars related to it to embark on the path of literati seal carving. It must be said that the well-organized theoretical system of seal studies has not only broadened the diversity of literati seal carving art, but also greatly improved its artistic quality. Research on the selection objects of literati seal carving in Jiangnan Region of late Qing Dynasty is based on the above three seal theories, summarizing the sources of various seal selection methods.

2. THE RISE OF CULTURAL FASHION IN THE STUDY OF EPIGRAPHY AND TEXTUAL RESEARCH HAS DRIVEN THE SELECTION OF PRINTED CHARACTERS

In his book *Duoye Zhai Yin Shuo* in the early Qing Dynasty, Dong Xun mentioned that ancient seals should be taught by teachers, which should also be mastered simultaneously during the Song, Yuan and Ming Dynasty. If there was no seal method after the Han Dynasty, how could there be no poetry after three hundred pieces? He was like a person who could understand the inscriptions on gold and stone, inscriptions as well as tombs, able to look at

the "Shigu" from Huang Xiaosong to the Imperial Academy and rub it against the scorching sun, and felt quite accomplished. Dong Xun's concept of incorporating inscriptions into seal carving is quite advanced. He believes that inscriptions and tombs can be used as objects for horizontal selection in seal carving art. As for the late Qing Dynasty, the development of epigraphy was extremely prosperous. At this time, seal engravers were almost crazy about the horizontal selection of epigraphy. It was precisely because of these seal engravers who had an infinite thirst for epigraphy that they left an indelible mark in the seal industry since the late Qing Dynasty. In the preface of *Shen Yi An Xian Sheng Qi Shi Shou Xu*, Wang Guowei said that: "In the early days of the founding of the Qing Dynasty, the knowledge was broad, and during the Qian and Jiaqing periods, the knowledge was profound. Since Dao and Xian Dynasties, many disciplines and methods that were unknown to the old Chinese scholars were introduced from the West, so it is said that learning is new." This sentence objectively and comprehensively summarizes the development of seal carving art in the Qing Dynasty from the perspective of historical changes and history.

During a period of historical decline in the study of textual research on epigraphy, it was objectively not possible to use inscriptions on epigraphy for printing. In his article *A Brief Discussion on the Creation of Jin Wen Yin*, Su Jinhai also believes that Jin Wen is not as practical in philology as it was in the Shang and Zhou Dynasty, but rather plays its role in ancient Chinese character studies, calligraphy art and seal carving art, which is an excellent object for calligraphers and seal carvers from ancient times to the present. It has been found through further research that even before the flourishing of literati seal carving in the Song Dynasty, private seals began to imitate ancient seals and those from the Warring States Period, and there were even cases of using bronze inscriptions for printing. By the Yuan Dynasty, this phenomenon was as common as bamboo shoots after rain, inscriptions on ancient bronzes and stone tablets have been inseparable from the art of seal cutting. As for seal theory, Wu Qiuyan of the Yuan Dynasty once listed the facts of sealing with epigraphic characters in "Xue Gu Bian, Thirty Five Ju":

It is different from popular customs to conform to the ancients, and there are no exceptions, fully demonstrating that the seal carvers' behavior of taking horizontal methods from unearthed cultural relics has emerged in the bud.

Ke Jiusi went further in the horizontal selection of seal carving art as well as the development of epigraphy and writing. For example, Zhu Wenyin (as shown in Figure 1) was the descendant of Ke Xiang in the fourth generation of Wu Zhongyong, and the Ji surname is the most representative work of Ke Jiusi in the field of bronze writing. His printing works, in the impression of Wu Yan and Zhao Mengfu in seal studies, are not limited to Qin Xiaozhuan, which is considered the standard of writing in *Shuowen Jiezi*. Furthermore, it expands the selection scope of pre-Qin seal script, such as the Zhu Wenyin "Dan Qiu Ke Jiu Si Zhang" (as shown in Figure 2), which is quite ancient. In addition, the style of bronze vessels was also utilized to create its own unique seal carving art style. Therefore, Zhu Zhu praised Ke Jiusi's seal as follows: "With a high standard of a single tree, Zhu Wen is superior to Bai Wen, representing the highest level of seal carving in the Yuan Dynasty."



Figure 1: Ke Jiusi's seal: "Ke Shi Chu Ji Xing Wu Zhong Yong Si Shi Yue Ke Xiang Zhi Yi Sun"



Figure 2: Ke Jiusi's seal "Dan Qiu Ke Jiu Si Zhang"

The development of literati seal carving experienced a small peak in the Ming Dynasty, with not only the emergence of schools of seal printing, but also the research results of epigraphy not being as sluggish as in previous dynasties. Therefore, seal carvers have explored and achieved much more in the sources and methods of seal entry than in previous dynasties. At that time, seal engravers not only absorbed the traditional small seal script of "Shuowen", but also had a strong ability to explore other types of printed characters. For example, Su Xuan was famous for incorporating ancient and unique characters into seals, although it did not become a mainstream style recognized by the world. They only transcribed the ancient and unique characters in their original forms and appeared as objects of horizontal selection in the seals, neither possessing a high style nor forming a good artistic appearance, as the seal of "Shen De Jiu Xian San Mei" shown in Figure 3.



Figure 3: Su Xuan's seal: "Shen De Jiu Xian San Mei"

In addition, there are also works of Tao Bi and others such as "Xing Lai Shu Zi Sheng" (as shown in Figure 4), which can be seen from the practice of horizontal selection in the printing industry of the Ming Dynasty.



Figure 4: Tao Bi's seal "Xing Lai Shu Zi Sheng"

In his "Xu Xue Gu Bian", He Zhen said that, "The saying that Dingwen does not enter the seal does not require mud." This statement clearly affirms the feasibility for Zhong Ding script to enter the seals. His "Wu Gong Shi" seal (as shown in Figure 5) was printed using the Jin script in the Warring States Period.



Figure 5: He Zhen's seal "Wu Gong Shi"

Cheng Shen followed closely behind, whose practice of printing inscriptions on gold and stone was relatively successful. Chen Daoyi mentioned in his article "A Brief Discussion on the Evolution of Contemporary Seal Engraving Art" that a part of Cheng Shen's seal carving art was based on the inscriptions of Zhong Ding. This action had a significant impact on future generations, expanding the scope of seal carving for them. In Cheng Shen's Bai Wen works, there are already traces of using inscriptions on gold or ancient seals for printing. His Zhu Wen characters are more exquisite than Bai Wen, not only integrating large and small seal scripts, but also incorporating the style of inscriptions on bells and cauldrons. This seal style, based on inscriptions on gold and stone tools, was highly sought after in the printing industry at that time, which also served as a model for many subsequent seal engravers to adopt the method of inscriptions on gold and stone. Subsequently, seal engravers increasingly practiced the use of inscriptions in epigraphy, marking a period of development in the field of epigraphy.

In the Qing Dynasty, a large number of literati and seal carving artists such as Ding Jing emerged. Ding Jing wrote the same seal and said that, "Ci Yin Yi Song Yang Bu Cha Hao Shu Yi Shang Zhong Shu Pei Zhi" (as shown in Figure 6). This is a strong evidence that he copied the inscriptions on bronze, but the character form of this seal is the same as that in the Song Dynasty. Although it can be regarded as a horizontal copy from the inscriptions on gold and stone, this method does not directly originate from "Shang Zhong Shu", but is copied again on the basis of the copying of the Song people, which also shows that the horizontal copying of inscriptions on gold and stone is only in the exploration stage.

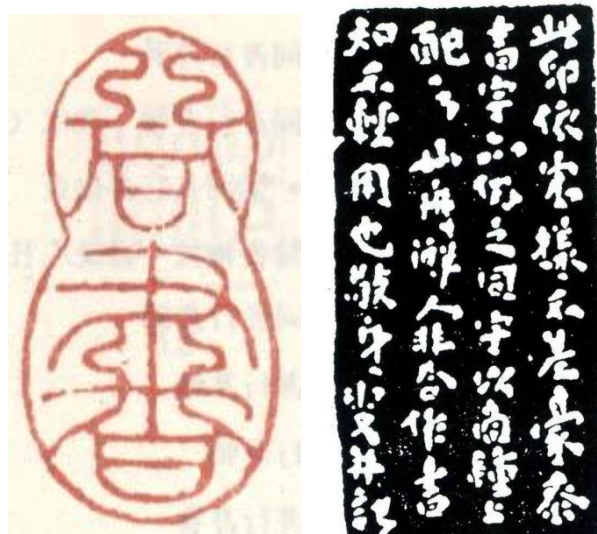


Figure 6: Ding Jing's seal "Tong Shu"

In terms of theory, Ding Jing also made a considerable amount of research on printed characters. He wrote in two poems "Lun Yin Jue Jue" that:

One of the quatrains on printing is:

"Shuowen Jiezi" and seal cutting are two different things. "Shuowen Jiezi" is in the category of philology and is academic, while seal cutting is artistic, and the two are not the same thing at all. He believed that those seal cutting theories that adhered to "Shuowen Jiezi" that many people were showing off were not advisable. After understanding the method of making seals in the Han Dynasty, you know that my statement is definitely not my private opinion, Ding Jing.

On the other quatrain of printing:

The seal carvings of ancient people always wanted to be different and break away from the confinement of stereotypes. The seals of the Six Dynasties, Tang and Song Dynasties were also very exquisite. How could they adhere to the seal carving laws of the Qin and Han Dynasties to govern seals?

Ding Jing believes that "Shuowen Jiezi" and seal carving art are not completely inseparable, which has opened a very advanced precedent for later seal carvers to dare to horizontally adopt characters other than "Shuowen Jiezi". As an early group of literati seal carvers, his understanding of seal carving art can reach such a high level, which is very rare. With the trend of the Seal School in the Qin and Han Dynasty and that of explaining texts using methods, Ding Jing realizes that the entry of seal carving art into printed characters does not necessarily rely heavily on "Shuowen Jiezi", but artistic elements can be obtained from literatures beyond "Shuowen Jiezi", which also indicates that Ding Jing's artistic concept is not rigid, but has a very advanced artistic concept.

After Ding Jing, Deng Shiru broke away from the traditional framework of "Outside Beg to Print" and believed that nutrients related to seal cutting art should be drawn from calligraphy. This is similar to Ding Jing's "Shuowen Jiezi and seal cutting are two different things", which is also worthy of recognition. Due to the abundance of unearthed inscriptions brought in the research on inscriptions and stone inscriptions in the Qing Dynasty, seal carving artists learned a large amount of inscriptions and stone inscriptions through inscriptions and stone rubbings, whose exploration and research on the horizontal selection of inscriptions and stone inscriptions far exceeded those in the Yuan and Ming Dynasty. The two characters "Feng Zuo" (as shown in Figure 7) in Gao Fenghan's multiple seal inscriptions are derived from "Guo Jizi Bai Pan", which is clearly inspired by the elegance and pure style of the Zhong Ding script.



Figure 7: Gao Fenghan's seal emblem "Feng Zuo"

Huang Yi, one of the Eight Masters of Xiling, once imitated the "Ping Yang" seal made by Zhong Ding ware (as shown in Figure 8); while Zhao Zhichen, a seal carver from the Zhejiang School, also used the same method as the "Bao Yi Zhai" seal in bronze inscriptions. During the Qianjia Period, a seal engraver named Wen Ding carved the inscription "Yin": "Zhou guoshu inscribed the Yin character, which was copied by the first brother of Yunlou. In the fourth month of the summer of the Jiaqing Yi Chou Period, Wen Ding was engraved." He explained in the inscription that the horizontal method of this seal was taken from the inscription of Zhou Duoshu, directly explaining the origin of its writing method.



Figure 8: Huang Yi's seal "Ping Yang"

From this, it can be seen that since the rise of epigraphy in the Song Dynasty, and through the long-term accumulation in the Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing Dynasty, literati and scholars have deepened their research on epigraphy, which has played a supportive role in the increasing phenomenon of seal carvers horizontally using inscriptions on epigraphy for printing.

From the late Qing Dynasty to the early Republic of China, the development of horizontal selection of inscriptions and inscriptions for printing reached its peak. In terms of theory, the late Qing seal engraver Hu Shu said in the preface of "Zhao Zhu Shu Yin Pu" that: "Steadily tasting the theory, the engraved text, the origin seal Zhou, the son Ji Gui, the winner Liu Quanxi, many or hundreds of words, few or even one or two characters as well as the complexity and density, the structure is naturally formed, the use of which for printing is actually elegant". Zhao Zhiqian believed that the art of seal carving originated from seal script and Zhou script, the use of which as input characters for printing is considered a top-quality masterpiece. In his seal theory "Ku Jian Shi Lun Yin", it is said that: "Engraving is mainly based on the Han Dynasty. If there are hundreds of Han seals on the chest, one should start from the mundane world and then follow the skill to step on the same path. They should follow the bell and cauldron, the ritual objects as well as the stone tablets and statues, until they reach the mountains, rivers, flowers and birds. For a moment, one should realize that everything is just the purpose of the seal, which is a wonderful enlightenment". Zhao Zhiqian clearly placed the inscriptions on the bells and Ding, as well as the statues on the steles, within the scope of horizontal selection. He even believed that there were objects that could be used for every matter, such as mountains, rivers, flowers and birds. This shows Zhao Zhiqian's extremely high vision as well as broad and open-minded views on selection, whose sudden emergence greatly influenced a large number of Indian people following him. In practical creation, Wang Guan's influence on the printing of inscriptions on gold and stone is also quite profound. A father and a son, namely Ba Weizu and Ba Shugu, were influenced by him, who used simple and beautiful Zhong Ding script for printing, which was extremely elegant. In the selection of printing script, Ba Shugu was more rigorous and meticulous than his father Ba Weizu. The horizontal selection of inscriptions by Ba and his son directly influenced Wu Zi's seal carving art creation, much of which was based on the Zhong Ding script from the Yin and Shang Dynasty. However, he was different from Su Xuan of the Ming Dynasty who directly copied the level of ancient and unique characters for printing. Wu Zi's method of selecting inscriptions on gold and stone has taken it to a higher level. Mr. Chen Zhenlian commented on Wu Zi's understanding of inscriptions on gold and stone that: using the structure of inscriptions on gold to occasionally incorporate the format of ancient seals, forming a unique pattern - neither a simple copy of ancient small seals nor Zhejiang. The current trends of the two schools of thought are vastly different [1]. Mr. Chen Zhenlian believes that Wu Zi's use of inscriptions in printing has achieved a high level of effectiveness, not only breaking away from the inherent thinking of the Zhejiang and Deng School, but also exploring ways to distinguish the use of ancient seal printing characters from the Zhong Ding characters [2]. According to the inscription "Zi Zhen Shi" printed by Wuzi and Zhuwen (as shown in Figure 9): Dao Guang Shi Jiu Nian Dong Shi Yue Ji Zhou San Shi Pan Ming Zi Ke Shi Wu Hang Zhou Wu Zi Sheng Yu.

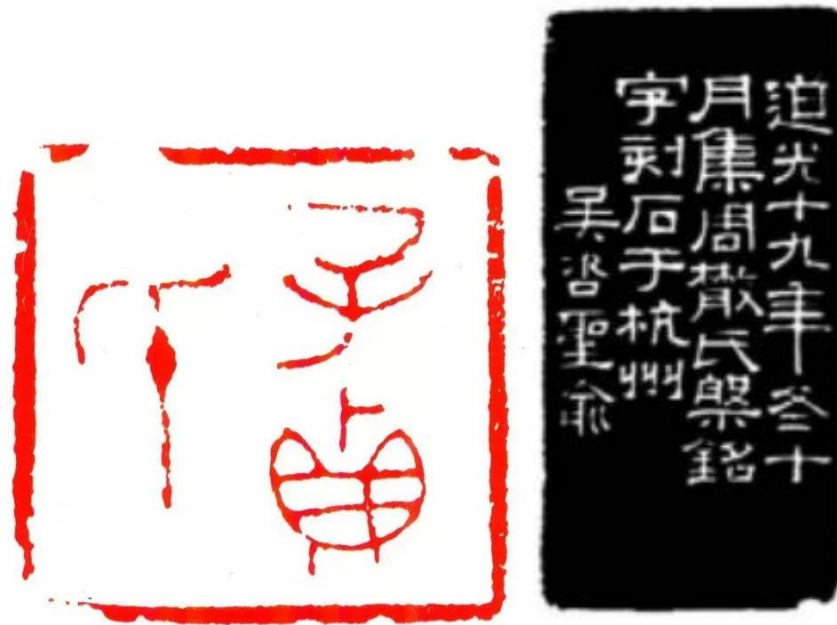


Figure 9: Wu Zi's seal "Zi Zhen Shi" and her literary style

Wu Zi clearly states here that the text of his seal is derived from the Sanshi disk. Although his seal study work *Continuation of Xu San Shi Wu Ju* has been lost, observation of his seal carving works shows that he must have his own unique understanding of the horizontal use of inscriptions on gold and stone. Liu Jiang also pointed out in *The History of Chinese Seal Art* that "especially his imitation of ancient seals and direct reference to the development of Jin script in the late Qing Dynasty had its unique approach" [3]. Han Tianheng wrote in his book *The Record of Yin Tan Dian Jiang Lu* that, "Following up on the Wu consulting of the Shang and Zhou Dynasty to open new faces", which states that Wu consulting followed up on three generations and the constantly emerging inscriptions on pre-Qin bronze artifacts and academic research results were fully utilized. He even extended his tentacles to the mirror inscriptions of the Han Dynasty that were not valued by orthodox epigraphers at that time, took characters and printed them, making this "Shu" no longer limited to the small seal script series of "Er Li", expanding the perspective of the Indian people, breaking through the category of seal matching in traditional seals, thus a new interpretation of the theory of "Outside Beg to Print" has been made. Wu Zi's works had great influence on printers in the late Qing Dynasty such as Wang Daxin, which also became a precursor for Zhao Zhiqian to extensively extract unearthed characters such as copper mirror spring coins as well as brick and tile weights for printing [4]. He believes that Wu Zi's seal carving works are full of the charm of gold and stone, which have had great influence on the expansion of the method of entering the seal script through subsequent figures, such as Wang Daxin and Zhao Zhiqian.

Following closely behind, Huang Mufu collected inscriptions on bells and Ding from previous dynasties, and changed the wording of the method chosen through changes in the layout of the printing surface, creating a new and rustic printing style that is rich in gold and stone. Huang Mufu's works, which were printed using inscriptions on gold and stone, have a unique style in the printing industry, ushering in a pinnacle of the integration of inscriptions on gold and stone as well as seal carving art. At the same time, a large number of seals have also been created for Huang Mufu and his successors. Mr. Sun Xun proposed in his book *The Art of Seal Engraving in the Republic of China* that Zhao Zhiqian's seal study ideas had a very profound impact on Huang Mufu. Due to Huang Mufu's ability to see more inscriptions on gold and stone, who, compared to Zhao Zhiqian, had a broader exploration path in horizontally selecting objects from inscriptions on gold and stone. In addition to his commonly-used inscriptions on bells and cauldrons for printing, he also integrated tablet inscriptions into his own seal carving works, which is also a reason why later generations evaluate Huang Mufu as having made contributions to the Rongzhousi family for more than three generations.

During the Republic of China era, the seal industry was even more prosperous, and the number of characters that seal carvers could use for printing was unprecedentedly prosperous. Sun Xun included 182 famous seal carvers in the seal carving industry from 1911 to 1949 in his book *The Art of Seal Cutting in the Republic of China*. From the works on these over 100 seal carvers, it can be seen that the phenomenon of horizontally using inscriptions for

printing during the Republic of China era inherited the achievements of the late Qing Dynasty and continued developing. Sun Xun divided the Republican printing industry into several major schools in his book:

The representative figure of the Wu School, Wu Changshuo, took the stone carving script "Shi Gu Wen" from the Eastern Zhou Dynasty and integrated it with his own calligraphy style, mapping it into his seal carving works. At the same time, he added broken and ancient seal mud in the seal, forming his own unique seal carving style. Sun Xun praised Zhu Fukan and Lai Chusheng for his ability to create inscriptions, seals, knives and brushstrokes using bronze, with a majestic and vast aura reminiscent of bronze casting, which is highly valued by later generations. Zhu Fukan and Lai Chusheng followed closely behind and had certain achievements in exploring the use of inscriptions.

Zhao Shuru, a representative figure of the Zhao School, was described by Sun Xun as "deeply devoted to bronze ware and ancient writing, who made certain achievements in carving ancient seals and Song Yuan round Zhu script, forming his personal appearance". This indicates that the scope of Zhao Shuru's selection of seal script is extremely broad, whose understanding of seal cutting art is definitely not inferior to that of his predecessors. Zhao Shuru's disciples Fang Jiekan and Sha Menghai have achieved a great success in the creation of ancient seals and the study on the use of inscriptions in bronze inscriptions. Among them, Mr. Sha Menghai is also dedicated to the study on seal cutting history, whose work "Yin Xue Shi" is classic in seal cutting research. Fang Jiekan also wrote "Xi Yin Wen Zong", which shows his deep understanding of the inscriptions on gold and stone as objects of horizontal selection.

Research on the inscriptions of the Zhejiang School is also very in-depth, and it can be seen that many Zhejiang School seal carvers during the Republic of China period copied and created horizontal methods for inscriptions. Renowned figures such as Wang Fu'an have cultivated their artistic foundation using the Zhejiang style seal cutting techniques and seal thinking. He also has a deep understanding of the art of round vermilion script, who has horizontally adopted the method of using inscriptions on gold and stone for printing. For example, the seals of Tang Zuishi and Han Deng'an are also unique, which are a new type of character that takes the horizontal method of inscriptions on gold and stone. However, due to the influence of the Zhejiang School in the Qing Dynasty, the continuation of the Zhejiang School during the Republic of China period still did not break away from the fixed thinking of the small seal script in the "Shuo Wen" and the Song Yuan Yuan Zhu script. Only slight changes were made to the character style of the Song Yuan Yuan Zhu script, and the seal still lacked overall novelty.

On the basis of inheriting Huang Mufu's seal carving style, Qiao Zengjiu, Chen Zifen, Li Yisang, Yi Dachang and others in the Yishan School have portrayed their respective appearances. Compared to the other three schools, the exploration of the Yishan School in the horizontal selection of inscriptions on gold and stone can be said the most successful, the foundation of which lies in the selection and innovation of inscriptions on gold and stone. Therefore, this has unique value for future generations to study the achievements in the horizontal selection of inscriptions on gold and stone.

In summary, the different directions and types of methods adopted by various schools during the Republic of China era created a diversity of the printing industry at that time, which further expanded the path of horizontal method selection for printed characters. From the rise and development of epigraphy since the Song Dynasty to the cultural trend of textual research during the Qing Dynasty and the Republic of China, it can be seen that the phenomenon of horizontal selection of inscriptions has continued growing with the development of epigraphy. It can be said that the selection scope of inscriptions has been greatly expanded based on epigraphy, which plays a huge role in promoting the development of seal carving art.

3. RESEARCH ON ANCIENT CHINESE CHARACTERS PROMOTES THE POPULARITY OF HORIZONTAL METHOD SELECTION

A main reason for the remarkable achievements in the study on epigraphy was the enthusiasm and advocacy of the Central Government at that time, whose reverence for epigraphy was at its peak in the Qing Dynasty, and due to official guidance, a trend of textual research on epigraphy emerged throughout the country. The Qianjia Period was an important period for the development of epigraphy in the Qing Dynasty, during which a large number of cultural relics from previous dynasties were unearthed, thus gradually making literati and scholars proficient in organizing, researching and interpreting these relics, fully reflecting the brilliant achievements of epigraphy in the Qianjia Period. In his article *An Overview of the Forms of "Jin Literature and History in the Qing Dynasty"*, Zhang Tao talked about the prosperity of epigraphy: "Scholars from both the court and the fields, as well as those in

ancient Chinese literatures and epigraphy, emerged one after another. As a result, epigraphy and historical studies became prominent in the Qing Dynasty.”

During the Qing Dynasty, a large number of scholars focused their academic research on the collection, organization and textual research of rare ancient books and unearthed cultural relics, who had great enthusiasm for the study on auspicious gold and stone inscriptions. Many series of books related to epigraphy in the Qing Dynasty were also compiled, and the research atmosphere of epigraphy remained prosperous from top to bottom, which was extremely conducive to the long-term development of epigraphy and also played a good role in promoting the study on epigraphy. The forty volume "Xi Qing Gu Jian" compiled during the Qianlong Period was a pioneer in the collection and research of inscriptions on epigraphy in the Qing Dynasty. The Qianjia Period witnessed the beginning of the study of inscriptions on epigraphy. In addition, there are also works such as Niu Yunzhen's "Jin Shi Tu Shuo", Wu Yucuo's "Jin Shi Cun", Zhang Yanchang's "Jin Shi Qi" and Huang Yi's "Feng Run Gu Ding Tu Shi", which include many inscriptions on gold and stone in the early Qianlong Period. In addition to the inscriptions on gold and stone, Zhang Xun's "Zhang Shi Ji Jin Zhen Shi Lu" also includes inscriptions on stone. Similar works include Wu Dongfa's "Shang Zhou Jin Wen Shi Yi" and Ruan Yuan's "Ji Gu Zhai Cang Qi Mu". Wang Chang's "Jin Shi Cui Bian" includes inscriptions on gold and stone, which are mainly composed of inscriptions on stone. From the writings in these books, it can be seen that research on the inscriptions on gold during the Qianjia Period was very fruitful. Study on the ancient Chinese characters and epigraphy in the Qing Dynasty can be said to be a culmination of previous studies. These researchers often delved deeply into the field of calligraphy and seal carving, such as Ding Jing, Huang Yi, Qian Zuo, Weng Fanggang, Ruan Yuan and others, all of whom integrated epigraphy scholars with calligraphers, and after them, countless students and close friends were influenced, whether in epigraphy or seal carving. There have been great achievements in both the study on ancient Chinese characters and the art of calligraphy as well as seal carving.

From the late Qing Dynasty to the Republic of China period, literati and scholars had made richer research on epigraphy, building upon a foundation for previous studies. For example, Wu Dacheng included over 900 inscriptions on epigraphy in "Shuo Wen Gu Zhou Bu", and Rong Geng's "Jin Wen Bian" was a necessary tool for seal carvers to use epigraphy for printing.

Numerous scholars and literati studying on seals and inscriptions are opening up and expanding the field of academic research. The exchange and mutual support among seal engravers, scholars and literati, as well as the discussion on artistic matters, have promoted the development of artistic ontology, which is both broad and profound.

This passage can be seen as an important evidence for the flourishing development of the phenomenon of horizontal method taking in the Republic of China period, during which the intersection of seal carvers and literati scholars made seal carving art even more prosperous. At the same time, the introduction of Western culture and technologies has a strong driving force for the dissemination and development of epigraphy.

From the Yuan and Ming Dynasty to the present, more and more inscriptions on epigraphy have been unearthed and circulated, making it increasingly easy for people to see inscriptions on Buddhist scriptures, ancient seals on inscriptions as well as various materials related to calligraphy and seal carving art. Through the process of organizing and researching these materials as well as integrating them into calligraphy and seal carving, literati and scholars have gradually deepened their research on them, making the inscriptions on epigraphy an irreplaceable part of calligraphy and seal carving art. The brilliant achievements in the study on inscriptions have played a powerful role in promoting the horizontal selection and significant development of seal carving art.

4. THE STUDY OF ANCIENT CHINESE CHARACTERS PROMOTES THE EMERGENCE OF THE IDEA OF "PRINTING FROM BOOKS"

Calligraphy creation is the pioneer of horizontal selection based on inscriptions. Therefore, studying the horizontal selection based on inscriptions in seal carving art is essential for the study of horizontal selection in calligraphy art. The main difference between literati seal carving art and ancient "seal carving" lies in the fact that a new form of literati seal carving art has been formed, which integrates seal carving art writing with carving. The process of "seal carving" has been separated from the cooperation between calligraphers and craftsmen, which has become an artistic carrier for literati artists to express emotions and thoughts. A good calligrapher may not necessarily become a seal engraver, but a seal engraver is definitely a good calligrapher. In the process of horizontally adopting the

method of epigraphy to seal carving art, it can be said that the level of epigraphy and calligraphy of seal carvers directly affects their level of seal carving.

This was a completely new development trend in the environment where "Shuo Wen" small seal script was the mainstream art at that time. Tian Wei stated in *Academic and Seal Calligraphy of the Qing Dynasty* that "the rise of the study on inscriptions on bronze has had a significant impact on future generations, since when epigraphy has no longer been focused on stone carvings as its main research object". This indirectly indicates that the continuous expansion of the research objects of epigraphy has influenced the creation of calligraphy and seal carving art, which has also profoundly influenced the imagination and creativity of seal carvers to horizontally adopt epigraphy characters.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Through the study on the phenomenon of horizontal selection in inscriptions, this phenomenon has been found to be deeply embedded in the thoughts and behavior of seal engravers with the development of seal carving art, which has enabled many seal engravers from ancient times to the present to have such rich and wonderful works, leaving a profound mark in the history of seal carving art.

In summary, the influence of horizontal selection on inscriptions in later generations is extremely profound. The theory and quantity of inscriptions in the Ming and Qing Dynasty were also very large. Study on the horizontal selection of inscriptions became more and more in-depth with the maturity of techniques, which provided great guidance for seal carvers and scholars studying inscriptions. At the same time, it also provided information for future generations to study their ideas and artistic sources of seals, providing an extremely valuable direction for the horizontal extraction of inscriptions in the study of seals by later generations.

REFERENCES

- [1] Chen Zhenlian (2007). "Chen Zhenlian talks about the history of Chinese seal cutting". Hangzhou: Zhejiang Ancient Books Publishing House.
- [2] Han Tianheng (1987). "Chinese Seal Year Calendar". Shanghai: Shanghai Painting and Calligraphy Publishing House.
- [3] Liu, Jiang (2005). "History of Chinese Seal Engraving". Hangzhou: Xiling Yinshe Publishing House.
- [4] Compiled by Han Tianheng (1999). "Selected Papers on Seal Studies of the Past Dynasties". Hangzhou: Xiling Seal Society.