

THOMAS KELLY

## Impressions of Loss: Writing and Memory in *Biographies of Seal Carvers*

### ABSTRACT:

This essay reconsiders the literary significance of Zhou Liangong's 周亮工 (1612–1672) *Yinren zhuan* 印人傳 (*Biographies of Seal Carvers*; 1673), not as an anthology of “biographies” but as a sophisticated effort to use seals as conceptual tools with which to investigate the relationship between writing and memory. Zhou's vignettes are structured around encounters with, and embodied acts of, making seal impressions, procedures that prompt reflection on the storage, transmission, and interpretation of memory more broadly. Early-Qing literary meditations on the vagaries of remembrance, Zhou's prose suggests, might be construed not simply as responses to traumatic experiences stemming from the dynastic transition, but as increasingly self-conscious reflections on how the tools and media of writing convey and counteract a vanishing past.

### KEYWORDS:

*Zhou Liangong, seals, seal carving, memory, writing, Ming-Qing transition, media*

The specter of destruction looms over Zhou Liangong's 周亮工 (1612–1672) oeuvre. After narrowly escaping execution in 1669, the eminent seventeenth-century writer set fire to the wooden printing blocks for his books on the fifth day of the second lunar month of 1671, confessing that he had “spent his life mistakenly in search of empty fame 一生虛名誤.”<sup>1</sup> This “twice-serving minister's” (*erchen* 貳臣) evocative act of immolation resonates with similar performances by other Ming “remnant subjects” (*yimin* 遺民) including Li Kuichun 李魁春 (1598–1677) and Fang Shou 方授 (n.d.), who both destroyed their manuscripts, and Zhang Gai 張蓋 (n.d.), who allegedly “set fire to his inkstones” (*feyan*

➤ Thomas Kelly, Dept. East Asian Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University

I THANK *Asia Major*'s editors and reviewers for generous feedback. Earlier versions were given at the conferences “Sensorium of the Early Modern Text” (University of Chicago, May 2022) and “Open Margins: Voice and Image from Text to Paratext” (Academica Sinica, November 2022). I am grateful to the organizers and all participants for encouragement and support.

<sup>1</sup> On the book burning episode, see Hongnam Kim, *The Life of a Patron: Zhou Liangong (1612–1672) and the Painters of Seventeenth-Century China* (NYC: China Institute in America, 1996), pp. 137–44. On the date of the book burning, see Chen Shengyu 陳聖宇, “Zhou Liangong wannian fenshu riqi quekao” 周亮工晚年焚書日期確考, *Gudian wenxian yanjiu* 古典文獻研究 11 (2008), pp. 541–44; Zhu Tianshu 朱天曙 and Meng Han 孟晗, *Zhou Liangong nianpu changbian* 周亮工年譜長編 (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 2021), pp. 215–16.

焚視).<sup>2</sup> While Zhou's self-inflicted bibliocaust may have been provoked by the fallout from a Manchu governor's slanderous accusations, the decision also evokes sentiments of remorse that can be traced back to his own poetry from the late 1640s.<sup>3</sup> Encountering the inky graffiti of his old benefactor Zhang Minbiao 張民表 (1570–1642) on the walls of the Southern Temple (Nan si 南寺) at Yexia 鄴下 in 1649, he wrote: "I feel shame at the events of those years; a vacuous reputation cannot be preserved 慚愧當年事, 浮名不可藏."<sup>4</sup> Zhang had accompanied Zhou Lianggong as they passed through this same temple on route to the examinations in 1640. Eventually, in 1642, Zhang Minbiao drowned himself and his manuscripts in the Yellow River, following the Ming court's defeat by the rebel leader Li Zicheng 李自成 (1606–1645) at Kaifeng.<sup>5</sup> The poet's ambiguous reference to a reputation "that cannot be preserved" is thus indelibly marked by memories of his former patron's suicide and the disappearance of his literary works.

Zhou elsewhere broached the idea of setting fire to books while imprisoned from 1660 to 1661. This occurred in a poem addressed to his friend, the Rugao 如皋 seal carver Huang Jing 黃經 (n.d.; *zi* Jishu 濟叔): "Of those 'strange characters,' I regret I knew too many, let's agree to burn the vestiges of those documents 奇字悔多識, 殘書約共焚."<sup>6</sup> The line insinuates Zhou's bitter regret that his many years of learning "strange characters" might not save him from, and may well have precipitated, his death sentence. Perhaps, he muses, the only way to ensure safety would be to "burn" those papers that he had still yet to read.<sup>7</sup> In both

<sup>2</sup> Zhu Tianshu, *Ganjiu: Zhou Lianggong jiqi Yinren zhuan yanjiu* 感舊, 周亮工及其印人傳研究 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2013), p. 39. Not all cases of book-burning in the mid-seventeenth century should be interpreted as direct reactions to the trauma of the Ming cataclysm. Dong Yue 董說 (1620–86), e.g., started burning his manuscripts as early as 1643; Zhao Hongjuan 趙紅娟, *Ming yimin Dong Yue yanjiu* 明遺民董說研究 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2007), pp. 234–39.

<sup>3</sup> On these charges see Zhu and Meng, *Zhou Lianggong nianpu*, p. 202.

<sup>4</sup> Zhou Lianggong 周亮工, "Gengchen chun shi Zhang Linzong beishang, su Yexia nansi, yue shinian jichou yu gongzi Zigu zai su qidi, jian xiansheng bishangshi, xuanran qixia, yong yuanyun de shi sishou" 庚辰春侍張林宗北上, 宿鄴下南寺, 越十年己丑與公子顯再宿其地, 見先生壁上詩, 泫然泣下, 用原韻得詩四首, in Li Hualei 李花蕾, ed., *Laigu tang ji* 賴古堂集 (Shanghai: Huadong shifan daxue chubanshe, 2009; hereafter cited as *LTJ*, all such references authored by Zhou Lianggong; and numerals before page nos. are *juan* nos.) 3, p. 48. "Vacuous reputation 浮名" at the same time evokes Zhang's suicide from drowning in the Yellow River. "Cannot be preserved" might also suggest that his reputation "cannot be concealed."

<sup>5</sup> Zhang Minbiao together with his eldest and second son all drowned; only his third son survived. The latter accompanied Zhou to the Yexia temple, where Zhou wrote the poem in 1649.

<sup>6</sup> "Rugao Huang liu Jishu, ren tong xingming, xia shu yu, shu yi zhuanzhou wei pu, pu danxi chijian si, wang shu suozai, zhenzuo futang, yibu wangsheng, yu shu cilu" 如皋黃六濟叔, 人同姓名, 下叔獄, 數以篆籀慰僕, 僕旦夕齒劍死, 望叔所在, 真作福堂, 意不忘生, 與叔此律, *LTJ* 6, p. 119.

<sup>7</sup> I am grateful to a reviewer for sharing thoughts on the meaning of this line.

instances, the poet starts to evaluate the precarious circumstances of his own survival amid recent political vicissitudes by writing about the annihilation of written traces.

Zhou Lianggong's performance of literary self-erasure in 1671 ostensibly marked the termination of his prolific career as a leading seventeenth-century poet, essayist, letter writer, and editor. In the two years between burning his books and his death, however, Zhou set about compiling an open-ended and ultimately unfinished collection of new vignettes on seal impressions, a work posthumously published by his sons as *Biographies of Seal Carvers* (*Yinren zhuan* 印人傳; here referred to frequently as *Biographies*) in 1673.<sup>8</sup> How should we interpret Zhou's decision, in the wake of destroying his woodblocks, to reflect at such length on the affordances of the seal (*yin* 印) as a reprographic device? (See appendix 3, "Zhou Lianggong's Major Works".)

Zhou Lianggong's book inspired late-imperial connoisseurs to compile collections of "seal carver biographies" (*yinren zhuan*), a trend that extends from Wang Qishu's 汪啓淑 (1728–1799) *Feihong tang yinren zhuan* 飛鴻堂印人傳 (later reprinted as *Xu Yinren zhuan* 續印人傳) in the Qianlong era and Feng Chenghui's 馮承輝 (1786–1840) *Lichao yinshi* 歷朝印識 (1829–1837) in the Daoguang era, to Ye Weiming's 葉爲銘 (or Ye Ming 葉銘; 1867–1948) *Zaixu Yinren zhuan* 再續印人傳 and *Guang Yinren zhuan* 廣印人傳 in the Republican Period.<sup>9</sup> These compilations are now often reprinted together as though they belong to a single bibliographic category.<sup>10</sup> Historians of Chinese calligraphy have subsequently made extensive use of Zhou's collection as the first repository of biographical information on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century seal carvers.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> There are no full-length studies of *Biographies of Seal Carvers* in English. Kim introduces the book and its relation to Zhou's "passion for epigraphy" in *Life of a Patron*, pp. 73–75. In Chinese, there is Zhu's introduction to the text and its significance for the history and aesthetics of seal carving; Zhu, *Ganjiu*.

<sup>9</sup> On Wang Qishu's activities as a seal collector and connoisseur, see Yulian Wu, *Luxurious Networks: Salt Merchant, Status, and Statecraft in Eighteenth-Century China* (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 2007), pp. 91–126. For a study of Ye Ming's *Zaixu Yinren zhuan*, see Tomoaki Masaoka 正岡知晃, "Ha Mei no tenkoku shikan, Ha Mei hensan no inpu to shirushi hitozute o chū shin ni" 葉銘の篆刻史観, 葉銘編纂の印譜と印人伝を中心に, *Shogaku shodōshi kenkyū* 書道史研究 26 (2016), pp. 1–14.

<sup>10</sup> Zhou Lianggong et al., *Yinren zhuan heji* 印人傳合集, ed. Yu Liangzi 于良子 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin meishu chubanshe, 2014).

<sup>11</sup> Huang Dun 黃惇, *Zhongguo gudai yinlun shi* 中國古代印論史 (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 1994), pp. 162–78. A tendency to use Zhou's *Biographies of Seal Carvers* to identify key moments in the historical development of seal carving becomes especially pronounced in studies of Wen Peng's 文彭 (1497–1573) "discovery" of soapstone, an episode documented by Zhou and a supposed precondition for the late-Ming emergence of "scholarly seal carving 文人篆刻." For perspectives on the veracity of this apocryphal anecdote, see Wu Xiang 無相, "Lun Wen Peng zai zhuanke shi shang de diwei he gongxian" 文彭在篆刻史上的地位和貢獻,

This essay argues that these approaches to the evidentiary value of *Biographies of Seal Carvers* have obscured the literary significance of Zhou Lianggong's vignettes. By investigating the dynamic interplay between Zhou's catalogue of seals named *Laigu tang yinpu* (*Seal Catalogue from the Studio for Relying on the Ancient* 賴古堂印譜; here referred to frequently as *Catalogue*), his self-annotated poems about seal impressions preserved in *Laigu tang ji* (*Collection from the Studio for Relying on the Ancient* 賴古堂集), and the notes that became *Biographies*, I reconsider *Yinren zhuan* not as a volume of straightforward "biographies 傳" that recount the lives of historical individuals, but as a sophisticated effort to use seals as "conceptual tools" with which to examine the fraught relationship between writing and memory.<sup>12</sup>

To identify the constitutive function of Zhou Lianggong's seals in his accounts of recent events in turn elucidates the extent to which early-Qing literary remembrance was conditioned by underlying, yet often overlooked, concerns with both the material act and techniques of inscription.<sup>13</sup> *Biographies of Seal Carvers* not only investigates how technical procedures of stamping or imprinting inform the encoding and retrieval of memory, the collection also suggests the enduring capacity

*Shufa yanjiu* 書法研究 122 (2005), pp. 78–81; Liu Dongqin 劉東芹, "Wen Peng wannian shufa zhuanke huodong ji liangjing xingji kaoshu" 文彭晚年書法篆刻活動及兩京行跡考述, *Shuhua yishu xuekan* 書畫藝術學刊 3 (2007), pp. 432–33.

<sup>12</sup> On seals as "conceptual tools," see Brigitte Miriam Bedos-Rezak, *When Ego Was Imago: Signs of Identity in the Middle Ages* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 1–6. For an introduction to the use of seals and sealing practices as "conceptual tools" in Chinese Buddhism, see Paul Copp, "Seals as Conceptual and Ritual Tools in Chinese Buddhism, ca. 600–1000 CE," *The Medieval Globe* 4.1 (2018), pp. 15–48.

<sup>13</sup> Zhou Lianggong also reflects at length on the significance of ink in the wake of the dynastic transition. Zhou's son Zaiyan 周在延 (b. 1653) links his father's seal obsessions to his obsession for inksticks; see Zhou Zaiyan, "Laigu tang yinpu ba" 賴古堂印譜跋, in *Zhou Lianggong quanji*, 周亮工全集, ed. Zhu Tianshu 朱天曙 (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2008; hereafter, *ZLGQ*), vol. 18, p. 298. Early-Qing poets note that Zhou organized rituals for inksticks 祭墨之會 on New Year's Eve, making libations with wine as an offering to the objects, before grinding ink to compose poems dedicated to the sacrifice; "Dinghai chuxi dusu Shaowu cheng lou, yongye buchuang, chengshi sizhang" 丁亥除夕獨宿邵武城樓, 永夜不寐, 成詩四章, *LTJ* 7, p. 152; Wu Weiye 吳偉業, "Zhou Liyuan you mopi, changxu mo wanzhong, suichu yi jiu jiao zhi, zuo jimo shi. Youren Wang Ziya hua qishi, manfu er lu" 周樸園有墨癖, 嘗蓄墨萬種, 歲除以酒澆之, 作祭墨詩。友人王紫崖話其事, 漫賦二律, in Li Xueying 李學穎, ed., *Wu Meicun quanji* 吳梅村全集 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2013), j. 6, p. 182. For a study of Zhou's activities as an ink connoisseur and ink maker, and surviving inksticks attributed to him, see Zhou Shaoliang 周紹良, *Zhou Shaoliang xumo xiaoyan* 周紹良蓄墨小言, ed. Zhou Qiyu 周啓瑜 (Beijing: Zijincheng chubanshe, 2009), vol. 1, pp. 39–41. A number of surviving inkstones (*yan* 硯) bearing inscriptions attributed to Zhou Lianggong also survive in museum collections, see Tianjin bowuguan 天津市藝術博物館, ed., *Tianjin bowuguan cangyan* 天津市藝術博物館藏硯 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1979), p. 67; Zhongguo wenfang sibao quanji bianji weiyuanhui 中國文房四寶全集編輯委員會, ed., *Zhongguo wenfang sibao quanji 2: yan* 中國文房四寶全集 2, 硯 (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 2007), p. 150; Zhu Furong 朱傳榮, ed., *Xiaoshan Zhushi cangyan xuan* 蕭山朱氏藏硯選 (Beijing: Sanlian chubanshe, 2012), pp. 44–45.

of literature to identify and interrogate this dynamic.<sup>14</sup> Post-conquest meditations on the vagaries of recollection, Zhou's prose suggests, might be construed not simply as responses to traumatic experiences of dynastic transition but as increasingly self-conscious reflections on how the tools and media of writing convey and counteract a vanishing past.

THE INTERPRETATION OF IMPRESSIONS

Zhou Lianggong's vignettes are structured around what, after Verity Platt, we might term moments of "sphragistic recursion," instances where encounters with a seal's impression (or acts of making new impressions) occasion reflection on the storage, transmission, and interpretation of memory more broadly.<sup>15</sup> The compositions in *Biographies of Seal Carvers* focus on two sets of materials: 1. impressions made from singular antique seals in Zhou's collections or those of family members and friends; and 2. folios of collected seal impressions (*yinpu* 印譜) attributed to contemporaneous carvers. His entries are not titled "biographies" (*zhuan*) but rather take the form: "Drafted 書 after 後/before 前 [X's] seals/seal catalogue 印章/圖章/印譜." Zhou reverently places colophons "after" impressions from prestigious antique seals or those of close associates, while inserting his remarks on present-day seal carvers "before" their folios or compilations of imprints. The collection's format thus mediates a shift from an epigrapher's investigation of old inscriptions to the prefatory endorsement of contemporary knifework, implicitly justifying the latter in terms of the former. Zhou's prose, in either instance, records and responds to embodied experiences of handling seals, authenticating folios of impressions, and making fresh imprints. Attending to the technical affordances of seals and sealing practices in Zhou's literary project in turn elucidates the extent to which he departs from earlier antiquarian colophons on ink-squeeze rubbings of stone inscriptions or mounted works of brush-based calligraphy.<sup>16</sup> He dwells instead on the unique power of a seal's impression to evoke

<sup>14</sup> On the relationship between impression as a technology of inscription and as a psychic process, see Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: U. Chicago P., 1996), pp. 25–31.

<sup>15</sup> Verity Platt, "The Seal of Polycrates: A Discourse on Discourse Channel Conditions," in Pantelis Michelakis, ed., *Classics and Media Theory* (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 2020), p. 72.

<sup>16</sup> On the development of the antiquarian tradition of writing about rubbings of inscriptions see Ronald Egan, *The Problem of Beauty: Aesthetic Thought and Pursuits in Northern Song Dynasty China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 2006), pp. 7–59; Wu Hung, "On Rubbings: Their Materiality and Historicity," in Judith T. Zeitlin and Lydia H. Liu, eds., *Writing and Materiality in China: Essays in Honor of Patrick Hanan* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003), pp. 29–72.

and unsettle distinctions between charismatic trace and haunting copy, contact and resemblance, then and now.<sup>17</sup>

In vignettes placed after singular seals once owned by loyalist martyrs, family members, or friends, Zhou dwells upon the status of an impression as the authenticating mark of a person's presence in the face of their corporeal absence.<sup>18</sup> As a small handheld object, typically worn at the waist, the seal evokes for Zhou an intimate connection to the body of its custodian: "I have set out [these impressions] from the left, the moisture of [his] hands is still on them, I cannot display them 次第於左, 手澤猶存, 不能展視."<sup>19</sup> Encounters with impressions consequently summon the touch and demeanor of the seal's former owner, eliciting apparitions of the departed, as in Zhou's elegiac remarks on the seals of deceased companions:

The seals that I have laid out to the right are all those he (Xu You 許友; ca. 1620–1663) commonly used. Alas, I cannot see this gentleman, yet when I see his commonly used seals, it is as if I can see him. While carefully inspecting these seals, it is as if he suddenly appears before me slapping his big belly with a large goblet in hand, and I cannot help but break into tears 右所列圖章, 皆君所恒用者。嗟夫, 君不及見矣, 見其恒用之章, 輒如見君。繙閱諸章, 如見君鼓大腹以巨觥合面上時, 不禁潛然而涕下也。<sup>20</sup>

Such lines typically appear at the end of entries in *Biographies of Seal Carvers* yet might also be construed as kernels that inspire and retroactively structure Zhou's vignettes. It often makes more sense, that is, to read Zhou's entries backwards, beginning with his involuntary response to a seal (the occasion that prompts the composition of the colophon), then tracing the ways in which this mental image organizes his account of a friendship. The aforementioned picture of his deceased friend "slapping his big belly," for instance, ultimately leads him back to the moment when they first met at wine-fueled banquets decades earlier: "He had a big belly without a single sprout of hair, from a dis-

<sup>17</sup> For an extended discussion of how an imprint embodies tensions between intimate contact and spurious copy, see George Didi-Huberman, *La ressemblance par contact: Archéologie, anachronisme et modernité de l'empreinte* (Paris: Minuit, 2008).

<sup>18</sup> A seal impression, Platt observes, belongs to a specific subcategory of "indexical sign," whereby the "abductive process" that links the material trace to the object that produced it depends upon features of resemblance created by means of "material contact"; Platt, "Seal of Polycrates," p. 72.

<sup>19</sup> Zhou, "Jingshu jia daren ziyong tuzhang hou" 敬書家大人自用圖章後, in Zhou Liang-gong, *Yinren zhuan* 印人傳 (hereafter YZ [as published in ZLGQ], where except for several exceptions author is assumed to be Zhou Liang-gong; numerals just before page nos. are *juan* nos.), vol. 5, 1, p. 17.

<sup>20</sup> "Shu Xu Youjie ziyong yinzhang hou" 書許有介自用印章後, YZ 1, pp. 21–22.

tance he looked like a wet-nurse, his face was broad and fatty, he did not resemble a man of letters 君大腹，無一莖鬚，望之類乳媪，面橫而肥，不似文人。”<sup>21</sup> Acts of viewing and making seal impressions, from this perspective, begin to model mental processes of recollection.

By contrast, in those vignettes he placed before contemporary seal folios, Zhou Lianggong starts to evaluate impressions as replicable imprints that might survive through their proliferation, and yet – by providing accessible templates for wide-scale duplication – perturb the very notions of credence and authenticity that a seal was supposed to guarantee. At stake in these vignettes is the more consequential issue of how to liberate the seal’s replicatory powers as a tool for the study and transmission of past traces (or inscriptions on bronze vessels and stone stelae) from its imbrication in early-modern commercial life – from the spread of urban pawnshops, the widespread forgery and commodification of calligraphy, and the transgressive mobility of entrepreneurial carvers from Huizhou-based mercantile lineages.<sup>22</sup> Zhou’s vignettes on contemporary seal folios strive – through narrative and anecdote – to discern an increasingly elusive sense of individuality within this market of outwardly interchangeable copies.

Largely composed in the last two years of his life, Zhou’s *Biographies of Seal Carvers* wavers between these two approaches to impressions, by moving from a confrontation with fragile traces of the past (in colophons placed *after* the seals of loyalist martyrs, family members, and deceased friends) to concerns with ensuring transmission through replication (in colophons placed *before* the folios of contemporary carvers). In doing

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 20. Zhou’s friendship with Xu You inspired some of his most candid reflections on the fallout from the Manchu invasion of China in 1645 and their shared experiences of imprisonment awaiting execution on false charges of official corruption in the late 1650s. In jail on a winter’s night in 1659, Xu painted “Crows’ Wintry Conversation” (“Qunya hanhua tu” 群鷓寒話圖), a nonextant work; it expressed “personal rage” that inspired Zhou to write a song on the painting, a lengthy poem that seeks an elusive pretext for revival amid despair. Zhou’s “Song on ‘Crows’ Wintry Conversation” (“Qunya hanhua tu ge” 群鷓寒話圖歌) forms the centerpiece of his biography of Xu You in *Record of Reading Paintings* (*Duhua lu* 讀畫錄). By the time he updated his sketch of Xu in *Biographies of Seal Carvers* he has removed any reference to the experiences or sentiments that “Crows’ Wintry Conversation” evokes. Zhou, “Xu Youjie” 許有介, in Zhou Lianggong, *Duhua lu* 讀畫錄, in *ZLGQ*, vol. 5, j. 3, pp. 105–8. The private history of Zhou and Xu’s poetic collaboration in prison, encapsulated in the case of “Crows’ Wintry Conversation,” divulges unsettling emotions – grief, rage, longing – that lurk beneath and exceed the image of Xu You drunkenly clutching his goblet, a memory that draws Zhou back to shared moments of friendship before interdynastic war, incarceration, and death.

<sup>22</sup> On the prevalence of forgery see Bruce Rusk, “Artifacts of Authentication: People Making Texts Making Things in Late Imperial China,” in François Louis and Peter Miller, eds., *Anti-quarianism and Intellectual Life in Europe and China, 1500–1800* (Ann Arbor: U. Michigan P., 2012), pp. 180–204. On Huizhou seal carving, see Zhai Tunjian 翟屯建, *Huipai zhuanke* 徽派篆刻 (Hefei: Anhui renmin chubanshe, 2005).

so, however, his prose examines gaps and tensions between these two understandings of seals, reflecting on how the promise and perils of copying modulate the search for an authentic presence beyond death. The means by which a seal ostensibly secures longevity – the serial generation of copies – might at the same time undermine its reliability as the genuine trace of either a particular body or a discrete moment of material contact.

Zhou Lianggong finds tentative release from this dilemma when in some of the book's most evocative passages he writes of his own embodied experiences making fresh imprints. By dwelling on the creative act of stamping new impressions, Zhou's attention turns from the implications of past trauma or future-oriented anxieties of endurance to the contingencies and fleeting opportunities of the present. His prose, on such occasions, considers how the significance of a given seal's carved message can be recreated in the here and now. Zhou's meditations on making new traces in *Biographies of Seal Carvers* – an “unfinished book 未完之書” conceived in the wake of his violent rejection of print publication – are in this sense less an attempt to ensure fixity and permanence than an open-ended effort to come to terms with transience and change.<sup>23</sup>

*SEAL CATALOGUE FROM THE STUDIO FOR RELYING  
ON THE ANCIENT AS A WORK OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY*

Zhou Lianggong's personal seal catalogue provides the necessary context to understand his literary reflections on seal impressions. Tracing hitherto neglected connections between Zhou's seal collection and *Biographies of Seal Carvers*, I first uncover the extent to which entries in this latter work respond to, and seek to reconstruct the details behind, impressions preserved in *Seal Catalogue from the Studio for Relying on the Ancient*.<sup>24</sup> Zhou's seal catalogue departs from earlier Ming models by promoting an autobiographical vision, curating personal seals as traces of an individual career and personality. Impressions from this work consequently became kernels for Zhou's self-annotated reflections in poetry and prose on his personal memories of official service, imprisonment, and lost love. Anticipating his late-period writing in *Biographies of Seal Carvers*, Zhou started to explore the symbiosis between

<sup>23</sup> Qian Lucan 錢陸燦, “Xu” 序, in *YZ*, pp. 1–5.

<sup>24</sup> For an overview of the publication history and variant editions of this catalogue, see appendix. For a comprehensive study of variant editions and library holdings, see Ouyang Moyi 歐陽摩一, “Zhou Lianggong *Laigu tang yinpu tanxi*” 周亮工賴古堂印譜探析, *Xin shiji tushuguan* 新世紀圖書館 3 (2014), pp. 81–87.



seals and literary remembrance, using poems and letters to expound the meaning of impressions in *Catalogue*, while treating seal impressions as stimuli for poems.

Three years before burning his woodblocks, Zhou Liangong lamented, and sought to forestall the breakup and dispersal of his family collections by preserving the impressions from his own seals, those of his father, and those of his brothers.<sup>25</sup> He commissioned twenty-five copies of this folio, titled *Laigu tang jiacang yinpu* 賴古堂家藏印譜 (but later retitled *Laigu tang yinpu*; namely, *Catalogue*), to be preserved by his sons and close friends.<sup>26</sup> Connoisseurs later grouped this catalogue with Zhang Hao's 張灝 (*juren* 1618) *Xueshan tang yinpu* 學山堂印譜 (1631) and Wang Qishu's 王翬 (*Feihong tang yinpu* 飛鴻堂印譜 (1776) as one of the "Seal Catalogues from Three Studios" ("Santang yinpu" 三堂印譜), or the three superlative compendia of present-day seal designs from the late-imperial period.<sup>27</sup>

Zhou's personal folio of impressions at once betrays the influence of a late-Ming boom in publishing seal catalogues, and yet deviates from contemporaneous conventions in formatting and layout. In 1572, Gu Congde 顧從德 (1525-?) and Wang Chang 王常 (1535-1607) collaborated on the publication of *Gushi jigu yinpu* 顧氏集古印譜, a set of twenty folios of impressions from Qin- and Han-dynasty seals (around 150 jade seals and 1,600 bronze seals) owned by prominent collectors in the Jiangsu and Zhejiang regions.<sup>28</sup> Gu and Wang sought to exploit the subsequent popularity of this project in 1575 by recarving the impressions in *Gushi jigu yinpu* onto woodblocks to facilitate further printing. The success of this book, retitled *Yinsou* 印藪, stimulated a wave of printed "catalogues collecting ancient seals 集古印譜," facilitating the late-Ming resurgence of a Qin-Han aesthetic in seal carving.<sup>29</sup> At the same time, *Yinsou's* accessibility prompted fears among connoisseurs that contemporaneous carvers might study seal scripts not by viewing ancient seals or consulting epigraphic sources but by recycling woodcut

<sup>25</sup> Zhou, "Laigu tang yinpu ba," p. 298.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Cai Yaoqing 蔡耀慶 [Tsai Yao-ching], *Mingdai yinxue fazhan yinsu yu biaoaxian zhi yanjiu* 明代印學發展因素與表現之研究 (Taipei: Guoli lishi bowuguan, 2007), p. 109.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., pp. 103-11.

<sup>29</sup> Catalogues that copy *Yinsou* include Zhang Xueli 張學禮: *Kaogu zhengwen yinsou* 考古正文印藪 (1589), Gan Yang 甘暘: *Jigu yinpu* 集古印譜 (1596), Wu Yuanman 吳元滿: *Jigu yinxuan* 集古印選, Fan Dache 范大澈 (1524-?): *Jigu yinpu* 集古印譜 (1600), Zhu Xiuneng 朱修能 (d. 1624): *Yinpin* 印品 (1601), Fang Yongguang 方用光: *Gujin yinxuan* 古今印選 (1604), and Pan Yunjie 潘雲杰: *Qin Han yintong* 秦漢印統 (1607). For a comprehensive table of late-Ming seal catalogues, see Cai, *Mingdai yinxue fazhan yinsu*, pp. 179-82.

copies of impressions in printed books.<sup>30</sup> The woodblock re-printing of seal impressions consequently generated an increasingly nuanced vocabulary for discerning the presence of the knife or the affordances of different materials in seal carving.

In the wake of *Yinsou* and related “catalogues collecting ancient seals,” contemporary seal carvers started to compile and publish their own compendia of seal designs.<sup>31</sup> Collectors like Zhang Hao responded by publishing anthologies that gather impressions from groups of famous Ming carvers. Neither a compendium of Qin-Han seals nor the portfolio of a single carver, Zhou Lianggong’s *Catalogue*, repurposes Zhang Hao’s model of a “collector’s seal catalogue.”<sup>32</sup> In doing so, however, Zhou departs from Zhang’s editorial proclivities. *Xueshan tang yinpu* privileges “leisure seals 閒章,” impressions based on short mottoes, maxims, lines of poetry, or proverbs – memorable phrases that readers might adopt and apply to their own life circumstances.<sup>33</sup> Zhou’s anthology by contrast prioritizes personal seals, displaying impressions that bear Zhou’s courtesy name (*zi* 字), many alternative names (*hao* 號), nicknames (*chuhao* 綽號), studio names (*shiming* 室名), and official names (*guan zhi* 官職; *guan jue* 官爵; *guan ming* 官名).<sup>34</sup> As such, his catalogue assumes a distinctly autobiographical character, compiling the marks with which he identified himself both in official life and among friends.

Editors typically printed “explanatory captions 釋文” in black ink beneath the stamped red impression, assisting readers in deciphering the seal’s inscription and hence helping them learn how to read seal scripts. As seal carvers earned renown in the Ming marketplace, Zhang

<sup>30</sup> See, e.g., Wang Zhideng 王稗登, “Jin Yifu yinpu xu” 金一甫印譜序, in Han Tianheng 韓天衡, ed., *Lidai yinxue lunwen xuan* 歷代印學論文選 (Hangzhou: Xiling yinshe, 1985), p. 459.

<sup>31</sup> Cai, *Mingdai yinxue fazhan*, pp. 106–7. On early examples of printed “seal carver seal folios,” see Shu Wenyang 舒文揚, “Cong *Sushi yinlüe* kan Su Xuan de chuanguozuo ji qita” 從蘇氏印略看蘇宣的創作及其它, in Xiling yinshe 西泠印社, ed., *Ming Qing Hui Zhou zhuanke xueshu yantaohui lunwen ji* 明清徽州篆刻學術研討會論文集 (Hangzhou: Xiling yinshe chubanshe, 2008), pp. 183–92.

<sup>32</sup> Zhou alludes to, and takes issue with claims in, Zhang Hao’s catalogue at several points in *Biographies of Seal Carvers*; see “Shu Wang Yizi yin zhang qian” 書汪尹子印章前, *YZ* 2, p. 72; “Shu Wang Hongdu yin zhang qian” 書汪宏度印章前, *YZ* 2, p. 73; “Shen Fengji” 沈逢吉, *YZ* 3, p. 110.

<sup>33</sup> See, for instance, Qianshen Bai’s discussion of the political slogans in Zhang Hao’s *Xueshan tang yinpu* in Qianshen Bai, *Fu Shan’s World: The Transformation of Chinese Calligraphy in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003), pp. 54–55.

<sup>34</sup> Zhou Lianggong had at least 2 *zi* (Yuanliang 元亮 and Baian 伯安, 百安, 白安) and 19 *hao*. For an overview, see Meng Han, “Zhou Lianggong zi, hao, biecheng huikao” 周亮工字, 号, 別稱匯考, *Shangqiu shifan xueyuan xuebao* 商丘師範學院學報 33. 2 (2017), pp. 65–69; for a study of his studio names see Meng Han, “Zhou Lianggong shiming huikao” 周亮工室名匯考, *Lantai shijie* 蘭台世界 5 (2016), pp. 147–49.

Hao in his earlier 1617 anthology *Chengqing guan yinpu* 承清館印譜, also started to print the carver's name and the seal's material (whether stone, gold, silver, bronze, amber, agate, jade, or crystal) beneath the red impression. Zhou, however, refrains from identifying either the names of carvers or materials, a decision that resonates with tendencies in his practice as a literary editor: he confessed to a friend that in editing poetry he felt it was necessary to “delete the names of poets and only keep their poems 盡刪其姓名而獨存其詩,” so that worldly concerns with fame would not obscure poetic meaning.<sup>35</sup>

*Seal Catalogue from the Studio for Relying on the Ancient* effectively transforms the late-Ming seal catalogue into a “curriculum vitae,” inviting readers to decipher and parse Zhou's impressions not in the first instance as evidence of artisanal talent or antiquarian expertise, but as a set of clues to his character. Zhou's personal seals limn the vicissitudes of his career and shifting political allegiances against the backdrop of dynastic transition: he proudly displays the seal for his official position under the Ming as “vice censor-in-chief” (*da zhongcheng zhang* 大中丞章) near the beginning of the first volume, while later including seals that insinuate his regret at choosing to serve as an official: “Seals of a Remorseful Codger” (“Huiweng tushu” 悔翁圖書).<sup>36</sup> The many studio-name seals in the anthology concurrently map Zhou's itineraries throughout the Ming and Qing empires in service of two regimes (see appendix 2). Zhou sets out to document the devices with which he sought to secure a sense of identity amid the profound upheavals of the mid-seventeenth century. And yet, the catalogue's surfeit of alternative names and competing declarations of both official and reclusive resolve start to expose this “self” as contingent, multiple, and fragmented.

#### SEALS AND POETICS

The autobiographical vision in *Catalogue* becomes more readily apparent when considered alongside Zhou's poems and letters on his seal collection. Zhou's literary responses to personal seals elsewhere in his oeuvre generated a nuanced mode of autocommentary on the meaning behind the stamped impressions within his seal catalogue. These responses broach Zhou's experiences of imprisonment, dynastic transi-

<sup>35</sup> Zhou, “Yu Chen Qiyuan shu” 與陳琪園書, *LTJ* 19, p. 368. For a detailed analysis of this claim in the context of Zhou's aversion to literary schools, see Xie Mingyang 謝明陽 [Hsieh Ming-yang], “Zhong Lianggong de ‘fan liupai’ shixue” 周亮工的反流派詩學, *Zhongyang daxue renwen xuebao* 中央大學人文學報 41 (2010), pp. 110–14.

<sup>36</sup> Zhou Lianggong, *Laigu tang yinpu* 賴古堂印譜, in *ZLGQ* (hereafter referred to as *LTYA*), vol. 17, pp. 17, 43.

tion, and his attitudes toward the interplay between seals and poetics. Zhou's writings about his impressions, in other words, start to model a mode of reading seals for autobiographical significance.

When Zhou includes leisure seals in his *Catalogue*, they insinuate stubbornly personal perspectives, whether his reading preferences (“I love reading the two biographies [of Sima Qian] ‘Roaming Knights’ and ‘Money Makers’ 愛讀遊俠貨殖二傳”) or his views on late-Ming poetry (“Don’t Read the Poems of Wang [Shizhen] 王世貞 (1526–1590), Li [Panlong] 李攀龍 (1526–1590), Zhong [Xing] 鍾惺 (1574–1624), and Tan [Yuanchun] 譚元春 (1585–1634) 不讀王李鍾譚之詩”) (figure 1).<sup>37</sup> This latter impression emblemizes Zhou’s frequent recourse to literary thought in his writing on seals.<sup>38</sup> He claimed to his imprisoned friend Huang Jing, for instance, that “this technique [seal carving] and poetics are the same 此道與聲詩同,” and that “as Ming poetry has been through several upheavals, so seals have followed suit 明詩數變, 而印章從之,” before comparing clusters of seal carvers to the three major literary “schools 流派” of the late-Ming: the Latter Seven Masters 後七子, the Gong’an 公安 School, and the Jingling 竟陵 School.<sup>39</sup> As the “Don’t

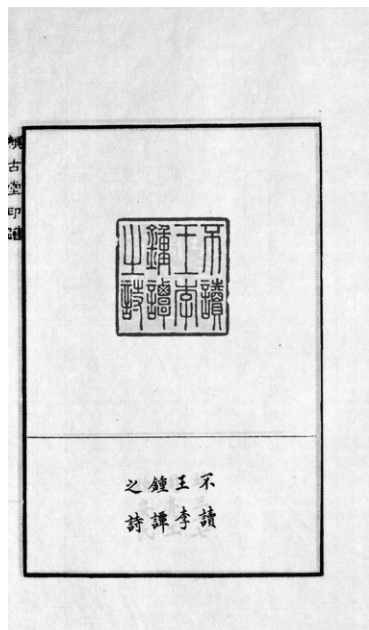


Figure 1. “Don’t Read the Poems of Wang, Li, Zhong, and Tan” 不讀王李鍾譚之詩

After LTYB 2, p. 4a.

<sup>37</sup> LTYA, p. 151. Another edition of *Laigu tang yinpu* contains the variant seal: “Resolve Disputes between Wang, Li, Zhong, and Tan” 調停王李鍾譚; LTYA, p. 172. The “Don’t Read the Poems of Wang, Li, Zhong, and Tan” impression appears on a hanging scroll bearing a heptasyllabic poem in running script on reclusion for Geng Jie 耿介 (1622–93) dated to 1663, now held in the Metropolitan Museum.

<sup>38</sup> Beyond poetics, other seals in *Laigu tang yinpu* reflect Zhou’s distinctive scholarly interests in “manipulation of written characters 測字” as a divinatory technique and philological method. Two impressions play with the eight-character literary riddle (*wenmi* 文謎): “Yellow pongee, youthful wife, maternal grandson, ground in a mortar 黃絹幼婦, 外孫齏臼,” a line that can be rearranged to reveal the phrase: “Utterly wonderful, lovely words 絕妙好辭”; LTYA, pp. 186, 202. Zhou devotes close attention to this riddle in his landmark 1647 monograph on glyphomancy, *Zichu* 字觸. Anne Schmiedl, *Chinese Character Manipulation in Literature and Divination: The Zichu by Zhou Liangong (1612–1672)* (Leiden: Brill, 2020), pp. 90–98.

<sup>39</sup> Zhou, “Yu Huang Jishu lun yinzhang shu” 與黃濟叔論印章書, LTY 19, p. 361. This letter forms a kernel for Zhou’s vignette on Huang in *Biographies of Seal Carvers*; see “Shu Huang

read the poems of..." impression implies, Zhou took issue with both the imitation of classical models promoted by the Latter Seven Masters (Wang Shizhen and Li Panlong), and the "eccentric confusion 離奇錯落" of the Jingling School (Zhong Xing and Tan Yuanchun), judgments he adapts to organize his assessments of contemporaneous carvers.<sup>40</sup> The impression's stated rejection of these two literary movements might imply Zhou's affinity for the Gongan School and its ideal of revealing one's "innate sensibility 性靈" in written expression.<sup>41</sup> The small object nevertheless suggests that Zhou not only drew from literary thought in order to appraise seals but that he saw seal carving as a newly legitimate venue for commenting upon developments in literary thought.<sup>42</sup>

Much as many of the writers in *Biographies of Seal Carvers* reject normative models of scholarly endeavor in the wake of dynastic transition to improvise in idiosyncratic fields of artmaking, Zhou suggests that poetry's privileged capacity to express genuine emotion might amid the ruptures of the mid-seventeenth century now extend to, and in turn be revitalized by, hitherto minor forms of graphic art such as seal carving.

---

Jishu yinpu qian" 書黃濟叔印譜前, *YZ* 2, pp. 53-64. In this piece Zhou compares Wen Peng and He Zhen to literary archaists in their pursuit of a Han style in seal carving; he then compares Huang Shu 黃樞 (n.d.; *zi* Zihuan 子環) and Shen Hesheng 沈鶴生 (n.d.) to the Gong-an School for breaking with the archaists and integrating characters from bronze inscriptions into seals; he finally compares Liu Lüding 劉履丁 (n.d.; *zi* Yuzhong 魚仲) and Cheng Sui 程邃 (1605-91; *zi* Muqian 穆倩) to the Jingling School for their eccentric practice of mixing characters from bronze inscriptions with greater and lesser seal scripts 大小篆.

<sup>40</sup> Zhou, "Yu Huang Jishu lun yinzhang shu," p. 361. Zhou Zaijun reiterates his father's aversion to archaist and Jingling poetics in his "account of conduct 行述": "In terms of poetry, [he] outrode both the superficiality of the Seven Masters and the shallowness of the Jingling School 詩則曹七子, 淺竟陵, 爾驛騎兩家者," in *LTJ*, p. 494. This passage paraphrases Zhou Liangong's preface to his poetry collection, see Zhou, "Laigu tang shiji xu" 賴古堂詩集序, *LTJ* 13, p. 273. A similar formulation appears in Zhou, "Shu Cheng Shimen zaiyou Yantai shi hou" 書程石門再遊燕臺詩後, *LTJ* 21, p. 48.

<sup>41</sup> Zhu Tianshu argues for the influence of Gongan poetics on Zhou Liangong's literary thought and attitudes toward seal carving; see Zhu, *Ganjiu*, pp. 168-73. We should, however, bear in mind Qian Zhongshu's 錢鍾書 (1910-98) observation that binary comparisons between the Latter Seven Masters and the Jingling School were common in the critical writings of poets who lived through the Ming-Qing transition (and that explicit references to the Gongan School in these same accounts were rare); see Qian Zhongshu, *Tanyi lu* 談藝錄 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1993), p. 418. Xie Mingyang has gone further in arguing that Zhou developed an "anti-school" (fan liupai 反流派) stance in his literary thought, not only rejecting the Latter Seven Masters and the Jingling School, but the concept of a "school" itself. Xie, "Zhong Liangong de 'fan liupai' shixue."

<sup>42</sup> The impression "I love reading [Sima Qian's] two biographies of Roaming Knights and the Money Makers" also resonates with a letter to Huang Jing that compares an affective response to reading Sima Qian to the acquisition of antique seals: "When you read the biographies of Ban Gu or Sima Qian, they make you want to cry or sing... Collecting the damaged bronze or scattered jade seals of ancient people can bring an uninhibited joy, to yell and dance wildly 及讀班馬諸傳記, 便欲哭欲歌...; 拾得古人碎銅散玉諸章, 便淋漓痛快, 叫號狂舞." Zhou, "Shu Huang Jishu yinpu qian," p. 59.

Personal seals, through the compression and concentrated expression of an absent custodian or carver's will, retain an emotional residue that for Zhou demands exposition in verse. Poets, meanwhile, might find in a seal's imprint – as both a mark of credence and a copy – a compelling figure for the haunting return of the past in the present.<sup>43</sup>

Seal impressions resurface within Zhou's poems and letters, prompting reflection on the circumstances behind their production. A variant edition of Zhou's *Catalogue* that is held in the National Library of

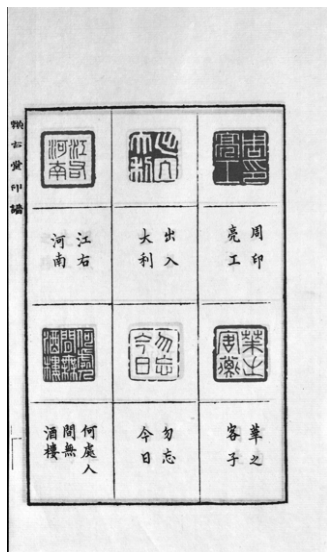


Figure 2. “Don’t Forget Today” 勿忘今日  
After LTYB 6, p. 21a.

China contains impressions that commemorate Zhou's experience of imprisonment from 1655 to 1661 on false charges of official corruption.<sup>44</sup> Two seals – “Don’t Forget Today” (“Wuwang jinri” 勿忘今日) (figure 2) and “Live One More Day” (“Youhuo yiri” 又活一日) (figure 3) – can be attributed



Figure 3. “Live One More Day” 又活一日  
After LTYB 6, p. 37a.

to Zhou's close friend and fellow prisoner, the carver Huang Jing (z. Jishu), the subject of the most detailed vignette in *Biographies of Seal Carvers*.<sup>45</sup> The final line of a self-annotated poem by Zhou for Huang included in his collection of poetry and prose *Laigu tang ji*, for instance,

<sup>43</sup> Zhou, in this respect, draws upon earlier poetic approaches to the seal in the *huaigu* 懷古 mode, see for instance the Yuan-dynasty poet Tai Buhua's 泰不華 (1304-52) “Song for General Wei's Jade Seal” (“Wei Jiangjun yuyin ge” 衛將軍玉印歌) in Han, ed., *Lidai yinxue lunwen xuan*, p. 805. On the subsequent popularity of seal poetry in High Qing antiquarian circles, a trend much indebted to the writings of Zhou Lianggong, see Yip Cheuk-wai 葉倬瑋, “Yi shi wei wu: lun Qian-Jia yinxue yu ying” 以詩爲物, 論乾嘉印學與印歌, *Malaxiya Hanxue kan* 馬來西亞漢學刊 4 (2020), pp. 51-76.

<sup>44</sup> Kim, *Life of a Patron*, pp. 93-112.

<sup>45</sup> For the impressions, see Zhou Lianggong, ed., *Laigu tang yinpu: si juan* 賴古堂印譜: 四卷 (Beijing: Guojia tushuguan chubanshe, 2010; hereafter, *LTYB*), j. 6, pp. 21a, 37a. On Huang Jing, see Zhou, “Shu Huang Jishu yinpu qian.” This entry, as I demonstrate below, might be considered the centerpiece of Zhou's anthology.

identifies the four characters of the seal “Don’t Forget Today”: “Pack up once more and sculpt Today; in the dusty sands of one hundred *ka-lpas*, pledge Don’t Forget 裝成更爲鑄今日, 百劫塵沙愿勿忘.”<sup>46</sup> At the end of the poem, Zhou makes the following note: “When Jishu was about to depart he carved ‘Don’t Forget Today’ as a gift for me 濟淑瀕行, 鑄‘勿忘今日’ 貽予.”<sup>47</sup> These correspondences between verse and impression anticipate Zhou’s later admission that his poetry drew direct inspiration from Huang’s carving and succinctly affirms his mantra (first divulged in a letter to Huang) that “this technique [seal carving] and poetics are the same.”<sup>48</sup>

“Live One More Day,” meanwhile, appears in a “short biography 小傳 of Zhou that serves as a preface to a manuscript copy of his poems in Zheng Fangkun’s 鄭方坤 (1693-?) *Guochao mingjia shichao xiaozhuan* 國朝名家詩鈔小傳.<sup>49</sup> Zheng notes that Zhou entrusted a “friend” in prison (Huang) to carve a seal with the phrase “Live One More Day” adapted from a letter he composed to express his daily fortitude in avoiding execution:

Today I will receive the rescript [that authorizes my execution]. Therefore, I am dressed up waiting for it. This is what people mean by saying ‘When the time comes, I shall go.’ Another letter said: ‘Today I still haven’t received the rescript, and so I can live one more day.’ 今日當得旨, 束衣待之, 所謂時至則行也。又一札云: 今日尚不得旨, 又活一日。<sup>50</sup>

The literary reception of “Don’t Forget Today” and “Live One More Day” attests to the way seventeenth-century readers, following

<sup>46</sup> Zhou, “Huang Jishu yu ren tong xingzi, xian ruolu yizai yu, jinri debai, fu ershi song qi huan li. Tong zhilu yuanci fu” 黃濟叔與人同姓字, 陷若盧一載余, 今日得白, 賦二詩送其還里。同芝麓園次賦, *LTJ* 10, p. 221.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* We see Zhou adopt similar tactics in other self-annotated poems related to seals, see for instance his note on the seal “The People’s Hearts Create a Wall” 人心成城 carved by a Fujianese scholar and the basis of a poetic couplet in Zhou, “Liuyue shiri jishi” 六月十日紀事, *LTJ* 12, p. 263.

<sup>48</sup> Both remarks appear in the first two letters cited in Zhou, “Shu Huang Jishu yinpu qian.” Other poets commemorated Zhou and Huang’s exchange: Gong Dingzi 龔鼎孳 (1616-73) composed a poem that matches Zhou’s verse celebrating Huang’s release, the final line of which also implicitly dwells on the characters of the impression: “Commit to fine seal script characters that hold your hearts, a friendship worthy of Guan (Zhong) and Bao (Shuya) these days, can be said to be easily forgotten 相煩細篆藏心字, 管鮑於今道易忘”; Gong Dingzi, “He Liyuan song Huang Jishu chuyu nan gui” 和樸園送黃濟叔出獄南歸, *Dingshan tang shiji* 定山堂詩集, in *Xuxiu Siku quanshu* 續修四庫全書 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1995-2002), zibu, vol. 1403, p. 98.

<sup>49</sup> Zheng Fangkun 鄭方坤, “Laigu tang shichao xiaozhuan” 賴古堂詩鈔小傳, in *ZLGQ*, vol. 18., j. 10, pp. 218-19.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 219. This anecdote also appears in Zhou Lianggong’s son Zhou Zaijun’s “account of conduct” (*xingshu*) for his father, reprinted in *LTJ*, p. 495.

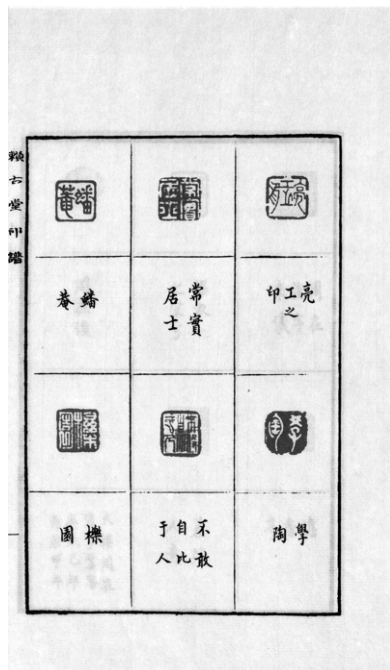


Figure 4. “Emulate Tao” 學陶  
After LTYB 2, p. 31a.

Day While at Sea, I Composed Eight Poems” (“Haishang zhoumeng wangji chengshi bazhang” 海上畫夢亡姬成詩八章) (figure 4).<sup>52</sup> Overseeing naval forces on behalf of the new Qing government in the summer of 1649, Zhou dreamt of his dead lover Wang Sun 王蓀 (1625–1646),

<sup>51</sup> The phrase for this seal is based on a line of poetry attributed to the Yuan-dynasty recluse Wang Meng 王蒙 (1308–85). Zhou, *Laigu tang yinpu*, pp. 54, 159, 200. For a study of Zhou’s identification with Tao Qian, see Kim, *Life of a Patron*, pp. 79–86. The complexities of Zhou’s attitude toward Tao Qian (the question of whether or not he represents a model of carefree reclusion) are distilled in the case of Chen Hongshou’s 陳洪綬 (1598–1652) paintings *Scenes from the Life of Tao Yuanming* 陶淵明生平故實圖 and *To Serve or Withdraw* 出處圖, both dedicated to Zhou; see Liu Xiyi 劉唏儀, “San Liang tongxin shuo”: Chen Hongshou zeng Zhou Lianggong erhua shixi” 三亮同心說—陳洪綬贈周亮工二畫試析, *Gugong xueshu jikan* 故宮學術季刊 28.1 (2010), pp. 1–44. For a discussion of Tao Qian’s multi-layered associations in Zhou’s poetry on his experiences of imprisonment, see Wang Xueling 王學玲, “Qiuju yu qiujue: Qingchu shi Qing wenren Zhou Lianggong Min yu shi tanxi” 秋菊與秋決, 清初仕清文人周亮工閹獄詩探析, *Guowen xuebao* 國文學報 56 (2014), pp. 95–122. On the competing meanings of identification with Tao Qian in early-Qing literature, see Wai-yee Li, “Introduction,” in Wilt L. Idema, Wai-yee Li, and Ellen Widmer, eds., *Trauma and Transcendence in Early Qing Literature* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006), p. 38.

<sup>52</sup> For the “Emulate Tao” impression, see LTYA, p. 204. Zhou, “Haishang zhoumeng wangji chengshi bazhang” 海上畫夢亡姬成詩八章, *LTY* 7, p. 156. For a full translation of the poem, see Wai-yee Li, *Women and National Trauma in Late Imperial Chinese Literature* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2014), p. 327. In what follows, I cite Li’s translation with minor changes.

Zhou’s lead, sought to excavate the hidden meaning of, and intimate relations affirmed by, impressions preserved in editions of *Seal Catalogue from the Studio for Relying on the Ancient*. These impressions emerge from Zhou’s literary correspondence with the carver Huang Jing, and subsequently shaped literary reflections on their friendship.

Other seals in the catalogue evoke Zhou Lianggong’s idiosyncratic obsessions (“Your subject has a seal obsession 臣有印癖”) and personal identification with historical figures, notably the poet Tao Qian 陶潛 (365–427; Tao’an 陶菴; Yuanliang 元亮): “From antiquity until today Tao Yuanliang is the one I love the most 古今我愛陶元亮.”<sup>51</sup> One of these seals, “Emulate Tao” (“Xue Tao” 學陶), resurfaces in Zhou’s 1649 poetic sequence titled “Dreaming of My Deceased Concubine during the



his comrade-in-arms from his service six years earlier leading Ming resistance to the Manchu siege of Wei county 維縣 in Shandong.<sup>53</sup>

Zhou Lianggong's preface to this set of eight poems records Wang's instructions for her burial shortly before her premature death in 1646: "... Cover me with a portrait of Guanyin. Let my left-hand hold prayer beads, and my right grasp a seal with your name and sobriquet. I am relying on the power of the Buddha for deliverance. It is not my wish to make for the next life a love token from a former life 覆以大士像, 左持念珠, 右握郎君名字章, 仗佛力解脫, 非願再世作臂上環也。”<sup>54</sup> Wang compares Zhou's seal to a love token that might facilitate her rebirth in the “next life” and yet stubbornly denies a wish to fulfil this promise, she at once invokes and withholds the prospect of her future replication.<sup>55</sup> Wang subsequently returns within Zhou's poetic dream as a martial ghost bearing his impression, in a scene that reads as a phantasmal copy of her burial tableau: “On the small seal she gladly held was my old name of ‘Emulate Tao’ 小篆歡攜舊學陶。”<sup>56</sup> Reactivating repressed memories of both Wang's early death and Zhou's former existence as a Ming loyalist, “Emulate Tao” now reads as an implicit admonition: “are you truly emulating Tao Qian”?<sup>57</sup> A sense that Wang's ghost returns to claim the “Emulate Tao” sobriquet for herself is compounded by the fact that she otherwise remains “nameless 某” in Zhou Lianggong's poetry and prose: he elsewhere confesses that he dared not publish anything she wrote: “Even her name – I could not bear to reveal it 並其名字, 亦不忍露也。”<sup>58</sup>

In a short note appended to this poem, Zhou specifies that the object Wang held as she died was a small “linked pearl” jade seal 連珠

<sup>53</sup> Zhou recounts his successful leadership of the county defense in *Tong jin* 通鑑 (1643) and *Quan Wei jilüe* 全維紀略 (1643). See appendix 3.

<sup>54</sup> Zhou, “Haishang zhoumeng wangji chengshi bazhang,” p. 155. Zhou's evocation of Wang's request to hold his seal in death perhaps betrays his own fantasy of authorship, as if he were authenticating this deathbed “portrait” of his concubine.

<sup>55</sup> “A ring on the arm 臂上環” alludes to the tale of a Tang lover who takes a ring as a love token to the grave before being reincarnated with the same name and flesh shaped like a ring on her finger; Li, *Women and National Trauma*, p. 323.

<sup>56</sup> Zhou, “Haishang zhoumeng wangji chengshi bazhang,” p. 156.

<sup>57</sup> This is not to say that “Emulate Tao” becomes a coherent symbol of latent Ming loyalist sympathies, but rather that the seal's intimate association with Wang Sun's ghost serves to dramatize an uncomfortable disjunction between Zhou's present-day circumstances serving the Qing and his memories of fighting for the Ming resistance. Zhou had started to identify with Tao Qian before the dynastic transition.

<sup>58</sup> Zhou, *Yinshuwu shuying* 因樹屋書影, *ZLGQ* vol. 3, j. 1, p. 158. As Li shows, we only know that Wang's name is Sun and that she had the cognomen Ruolan 若蘭 because five of her song lyrics were reprinted in Xu Shumin 徐樹敏 (late-17th and early-18th c.) and Qian Yue's 錢岳 (17th c.) anthology *Zhong xiang ci* 衆香詞 (1690); Li, *Women and National Trauma*, p. 326.

小玉章, a type of sealing device that bears two interlinked impressions (one typically carved in relief and the other carved intaglio) – an object upon which Zhou had commissioned a carver to cut his sobriquet “Emulate Tao” and his name “Lianggong.”<sup>59</sup> The “linked pearl” stamp stimulates and structures Zhou’s poetic dream: the face-to-face reunion between “Emulate Tao” and “Lianggong” evokes the seal’s status as an emblem of conjoined fate, a token that embodies an inextricable bond between two contiguous impressions. The “doubleness” of the seal, however, also betrays the poet’s dawning sense of self-division, that his identity at sea in 1649 is riven between his former sobriquet (now the property of his dead lover) and his name, between dream and mundane reality, his past as a Ming loyalist and present as a Qing official.<sup>60</sup> Several variants of “Emulate Tao” and “linked pearl seals” that break apart his name (Lianggong 亮工) and cognomen (Yuanliang 元亮) survive in Zhou’s seal catalogues, yet there is no extant match for the seal he describes in his poetry for Wang Sun, suggesting that while the memory of her burial troubles one of his most visible markers of self-identification, still the precise combination that she held in death and ghostly dream remains hidden from view.

The poet does not specify who carved the seal, yet Wang Sun returns to haunt Zhou’s account of Han Yuesu 韓約素 (n.d.; *zi* Diange 鈿閣) in *Biographies of Seal Carvers*, a courtesan celebrated for carving small jade seals.<sup>61</sup> After describing Wang’s keen knowledge of, and affection for, Han’s seals, Zhou mournfully concludes: “When I look at Diange’s seals, I feel the pain of my deceased concubine [Wang Sun’s] first passing away 見鈿閣諸章, 痛亡姬如初歿也。”<sup>62</sup> In his vignette on Han Yuesu, Zhou notes that Wang Sun was the only one who knew how to fastidiously store and arrange his personal seal collection in their clothbound cases: “Only my deceased nameless concubine could put them back in their original positions one by one. If I entrusted this task to anyone else, by the end of the day they would all be mixed up 惟亡姬某能一一歸原所, 命他人, 竟日參差矣。”<sup>63</sup>

<sup>59</sup> The relevant section of this note reads: “I had a ‘linked pearl,’ small jade seal upon which was engraved my name and sobriquet ‘Emulate Tao.’ As my concubine died, she entreated me to clutch it 予有連珠小玉章, 鐫予名及學陶字, 姬沒時囑予納掌中.” Zhou, “Haishang zhou-meng wangji chengshi bazhang,” p. 156.

<sup>60</sup> As Zhou Lianggong’s collection of poetic accounts of the siege of Wei county, *Bailang heshang ji* 白浪河上集, suggests, he frequently used the “Emulate Tao” seal in the 1640s.

<sup>61</sup> “Shu Diange nüzi tuzhang qian” 書鈿閣女子圖章前, *YZ* 1, pp. 49–52. On the biography of Han Yuesu, see Cai Mengchen 蔡孟宸, “Xiri penglan bo ruanqu, jinzhao fu’an nong jinshi: lun nü zhuanke jia Han Yuesu” 昔日憑欄撥阮曲, 今朝伏案弄金石, 論女篆刻家韓約素, in *Ming Qing Huizhou zhuanke xueshu yantaohui lunwen ji*, pp. 93–108.

<sup>62</sup> Zhou, “Shu Diange nüzi tuzhang qian,” p. 52.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

Facing poverty in later life, Zhou was forced to sell ten prized sets of items from his collection, four of which he commemorates in a quartet of poems: paintings (*hua* 畫), seals (*tuzhang* 圖章), inksticks (*mo* 墨), and a small Han-era jade artifact (*xiao Han yu* 小漢玉).<sup>64</sup> Zhou recycles his poem about these seals in his vignette on Han Yuesu in *Biographies of Seal Carvers*; it hints once again at the intimate association between Han's carving and Wang Sun's haunting visage: "I once obtained a seal inscription that I often admired; the size and shape of the seal were fitting 得款頻相就, 低崇愜所宜."<sup>65</sup> Zhou effectively measures the later breakup and dispersal of his collection against his memories of Wang Sun's once consummate ability to care for and curate his seals.

The final line of Zhou Lianggong's third poem in his sequence for Wang from 1649, a piece that dwells on her "ghostly talent," concludes: "I still remember, spoken in slight inebriation, her teasing words: 'Neither an immortal, nor a Buddha, nor yet a lord 猶憶微酣譏我語, 不仙不佛不封侯.'<sup>66</sup> As Wai-yee Li notes, this line may be an allusion to a lost poem by Wang Sun, one that in turn alludes to a Song poet's ruminations on mutability upon visiting a ruined Daoist temple: "This series of negations," she writes, "suggests freedom and a refusal to mold oneself to fit into power structures and value systems."<sup>67</sup> Zhou Lianggong also owned a seven-character seal that commemorates Wang Sun's ghostly reproach: "Neither an immortal, nor a Buddha, nor yet a lord 不僊不佛不封侯."<sup>68</sup> When first viewed on *Catalogue's* pages, this phrase reads as one more expression of its owner's career frustrations; when considered in light of Zhou's self-annotated poetry for Wang Sun, however, it elicits a tragic pathos, introducing the phantom heroine's voice and

<sup>64</sup> Zhou, "Changan jiu chuan shimai shi, pu mai bu zhi shi, ran jie fei suo yi, yi wei si, zuo siyi" 長安舊傳十賣詩, 僕賣不止十, 然皆非所憶, 憶惟四, 作四憶, *LTY* 5, p. 103.

<sup>65</sup> For the original poem, see *ibid.* It is also cited in Zhou, "Shu Diange nüzi tuzhang qian," p. 52. In a note by Zhou appended to this poem, he restates Wang Sun's ability to properly curate his seal collection: "My deceased concubine put [my seals] in clothbound cases, around a hundred or so stacked up, none of them lost their place 亡姬爲予布函中, 反覆百十, 皆不失位置." Zhou, "Changan jiu chuan shimai shi, pu mai bu zhi shi, ran jie fei suo yi, yi wei si, zuo siyi," p. 103.

<sup>66</sup> Zhou, "Haishang zhoumeng wangji chengshi bazhang," p. 155.

<sup>67</sup> Li, *Women and National Trauma*, p. 326. The supposition that this final line may refer to Wang Sun's poetry stems from Zhou Lianggong's note on this poem: "She wrote about a hundred recent style poems but kept them secret. She also requested that I should not transmit them 姬別有近體詩白餘首, 自秘之, 斬余勿傳." The phrase echoes Liu Guo's 劉過 (1154-1206) line: "That is why Master Liu / Is no immortal, no Buddha, and no lord 是故子劉子, 不仙不佛亦不侯." Liu Guo 劉過, "Deng Shengyuan ge guji" 登升元閣故基, in *Longzhou ji* 龍洲集 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1978), j. 1, p. 4. Cf. Li, *Women and National Trauma*, p. 326.

<sup>68</sup> Within this poetic sequence, Zhou's memory of Wang Sun's reproach: "Neither an immortal, nor a Buddha, nor yet a lord," immediately precedes, and could be said to stimulate, his dream of her return with the "Emulate Tao" seal.

the unsettling memories of loss it evokes into the male collector's repository of personal imprints (figure 5).<sup>69</sup> If a seal notionally functions as a stable marker of identity, Zhou's poetry dwells upon the semiotic instability and haunting afterlives of his impressions: he uncovers not so much a sense of security as an increasingly unsettling apprehension of the self as other.

THE COMPILATION OF *BIOGRAPHIES OF SEAL CARVERS*

Zhou Lianggong's self-annotated poems and letters on impressions preserved in *Seal Catalogue from the Studio for Relying on the Ancient* anticipate the concerns of his later vignettes on seals in *Biographies of Seal Carvers*. The 1673 printed edition of the latter work emerges, however, from extended negotiations between two distinct editorial vi-

sions: that of Zhou Lianggong, and that of his sons, led by Zhou Zaijun 周在浚 (b. 1640).<sup>70</sup> According to Zaijun, this anthology was one of the only projects his father pursued after burning his woodblocks in 1671.<sup>71</sup> Following his father's death, Zaijun selected passages from Lianggong's leftover manuscripts, edited these compositions, and respectfully carved them onto woodblocks to ensure their survival and transmission.<sup>72</sup>

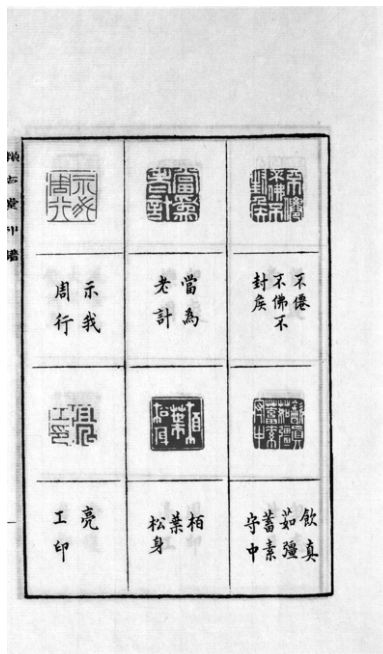


Figure 5. “Neither an Immortal, Nor a Buddha, Nor Yet a Lord” 不僊不佛不封侯  
After LTYB 6, p. 17a.

Interpretations of *Biographies of Seal Carvers* thus vary depending on whether the work is read from Zhou Lianggong's perspective or that of his sons. Zhou Zaijun and his brothers present Lianggong's jottings on seals as biographical entries in a single work of historical prose. The original format of any given vignette is less important than

<sup>69</sup> LTYA, p. 34.

<sup>70</sup> Zhu, *Ganjiu*, pp. 125-27.

<sup>71</sup> Zhou Zaijun, “Ba” 跋, in YZ, p. 143.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

its placement within the conceptual scheme of the printed collection, a testament, in its sequencing and thematic patterning, to Lianggong's talents as a historian and prose stylist. For Zhou Lianggong, these jottings, composed after the destruction of his woodblocks, were not intended for print, but were annotations to impressions and folios of impressions from his personal collection. The two parties were ultimately grappling with different orders of loss: Zhou Zaijun and his brothers saw the project as an effort to posthumously honor and preserve their father's compromised literary legacy. Zhou Lianggong saw the project as a provisional and inconclusive effort to regather scraps of materials in the wake of his own act of literary self-destruction.

Qian Lucan's 錢陸燦 (1612–1698) preface and Zhou Zaijun's postface to the printed book retroactively define its origins and scope through analogy to early-Qing poetic anthologies and earlier collections of biographical writing in Zhou Lianggong's oeuvre. Commissioned by Zaijun to compose an introduction, Qian Lucan justifies the literary significance of the collection by comparing Zhou Lianggong's "unfinished book" to Qian Qianyi's 錢謙益 (1582–1644) 1656 edited collection of poems by recent poets, *Wuzhi ji* 吾炙集 (an anthology that contains a significant number of poems by Zhou's close friend Xu You, a figure who features prominently in *Biographies of Seal Carvers* as the drunkard slapping his belly).<sup>73</sup> As Zhu Tianshu 朱天曙 observes, this reference was altered in the course of the book's transmission (likely due to the censorship of Qian's work and the relative obscurity of *Wuzhi ji*) to name Wang Shizhen's 王士禎 (1634–1711) *Ganjiu ji* 感舊集, a similarly "unfinished" anthology of poems grouped by contemporary poets (a collection that includes sixteen of Zhou Lianggong's poems).<sup>74</sup> Allusions to *Wuzhi ji* (and later *Ganjiu ji*) serve to compliment the lyricism of *Biographies of Seal Carvers*, sanction its unfinished state, and underscore a common "nostalgic 感舊" disposition shared by the anthologies.<sup>75</sup>

Qian Lucan's comments implicitly invoke both the Qian family's reputation and Zhou Lianggong's literary debts to Qian Qianyi. Yet it

<sup>73</sup> Qian, "Xu," pp. 1–5. On Xu You, see Zhou, "Shu Xu Youjie ziyong yinzhang hou." The vignette on Xu in *Biographies of Seal Carvers* documents Zhou's intention and ultimate failure to publish Xu's poems along with those of three other acquaintances from their time together in Fujian under the title "Poems of Four Deceased Friends from Min" ("Minzhong si wangyou shi" 閩中四亡友詩). Zhou reiterates his deep-seated regret at not publishing Xu's poems in his very last conversation with his student Huang Yuji 黃虞稷 (1629–91) in the months preceding his own death in 1672. Zhu and Meng, *Zhou Lianggong nianpu*, p. 225.

<sup>74</sup> Zhu, *Ganjiu*, pp. 135–40. Wang Shizhen composed a preface for *Laigu tang yinpu*, see Wang Shizhen, "Ba Zhou Liyuan shilang yinpu" 跋周櫟園侍郎印譜, in *ZLGQ*, p. 298.

<sup>75</sup> On Qian Qianyi's *Wuzhi ji*, see Sun Zhimei 孫之梅, *Qian Qianyi yu Mingmo Qingchu wenxue* 錢謙益與明末清初文學 (Jinan: Shandong daxue chubanshe, 2010), pp. 369–382.

might also be construed as an elaborate reading of extraneous details in Zhou's vignettes on seals. In Zhou's colophon on his friend Xu You's seal impressions, he invokes Qian Qianyi's stature as a literary theorist before citing *Wuzhi ji* as an example of the type of poetry anthology he hoped to emulate in publishing an unfinished compendium of poems by his "Four Deceased Friends from Fujian" (Min zhong si wangyou shi 閩中四亡友詩).<sup>76</sup> More specifically, as Zhu Tianshu again has argued, Qian Lucan's analogies suggest a possible model for *Biographies of Seal Carvers* in early-Qing poetry anthologies, where selections of poems were increasingly catalogued under the names of poets and prefaced with short biographical sketches.<sup>77</sup> Qian Lucan reiterates this point later in his preface by comparing *Biographies of Seal Carvers* to his relative Qian Qianyi's *Liechao shiji xiaozhuan* 列朝詩集小傳, a collection that "makes use of poems to preserve [poets'] personalities 間有借詩以存其人者."<sup>78</sup> For Qian, Zhou Lianggong's *Biographies of Seal Carvers* adapts and extends these conventions in editing recent verse, treating seals as if they were poems, parsing their significance as evidentiary traces of a lost human life. Qian's analogies at once expound upon Zhou Lianggong's views regarding the fungibility of seals and poems yet efface Zhou's own stated aversion to recording the names and lives of poets in collecting verse.<sup>79</sup>

Zhou Zaijun celebrates his father's writings on seals by comparing the book to Zhou Lianggong's earlier anthology of painter biographies, *Record of Reading Paintings* (*Duhua lu* 讀畫錄).<sup>80</sup> Lianggong, however, clearly saw these two projects as conceptually distinct endeavors. He planned and wrote *Record of Reading Paintings* before destroying his printed oeuvre in 1671, yet he set about working on what became *Biographies of Seal Carvers* only in the wake of the bibliocaust. Even though Zhou had composed a biography in *Record of Reading Paintings* for his close friend and former inmate in prison Xu You, in working on *Biographies of Seal Carvers* he drafted an entirely new composition on an early spring day after making fresh impressions from several of Xu's seals.<sup>81</sup> As this example suggests, the vignettes in *Biographies of Seal*

<sup>76</sup> The four poets were Chen Kezhang 陳克張, Chen Kaizhong 陳開仲, Xu Cunyong 徐存永, and Xu You; Zhou, "Shu Xu Youjie ziyong yinzhang hou," p. 21.

<sup>77</sup> Zhu, *Ganjiu*, pp. 140-41.

<sup>78</sup> For this comment, see Qian Qianyi 錢謙益, ed., *Liechao shiji xiaozhuan* 列朝詩集小傳 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2008), p. 135. For Qian Lucan's preface, see Qian, "Xu," in *YZ*, pp. 1-5. Qian Lucan also composed a preface for Qian's *Liechao*.

<sup>79</sup> Zhou, "Yu Chen Qiyuan shu," p. 368.

<sup>80</sup> Zhou Zaijun, "Ba," p. 143.

<sup>81</sup> Zhou, "Shu Xu Youjie ziyong yinzhang hou," p. 21. Cf. Kim, *Life of a Patron*, p. 146.

*Carvers* were not stand-alone biographical accounts like the compositions included in *Record of Reading Paintings*, but colophons that preface, append, or were drafted alongside, imprints taken from seals.

Both Zhou Zaijun and Qian Lucan attempt to classify an essentially unprecedented literary project through recourse to models either within Zhou Lianggong's oeuvre or the poetic collections of his peers. There are, however, no surviving statements from Lianggong concerning the title, intended format, or planned organization of the book (or even if his scattered colophons were intended to become entries in a single book). Within the vignettes that now constitute *Biographies*, Lianggong divulges that he continued to compose colophons on seals up until his death: "This is the *renzi* year (1672). I just had my birthday. Now I have become sixty years old. How can I hope to see the completion of this work 歲在壬子, 余方落地矣。今六十年矣, 余何由繼睹其全哉。"<sup>82</sup> At least nine other vignettes can be dated to 1671 (the *xinhai* 辛亥 year), the year before Zhou passed away.<sup>83</sup> For Zhou Lianggong, in other words, the work that became *Biographies of Seal Carvers* was an untitled, unfinished, and thus ultimately open-ended project. Peeling back Zhou Zaijun's editorial interventions in print in turn reveals Zhou Lianggong's creative departure from the conventions of literary biography, and his provisional attempts to recover a presence beyond death by thinking with, and through, remnant impressions.

#### VIGNETTES ON SEAL IMPRESSIONS

The first six entries in *Biographies of Seal Carvers* are not biographies of carvers but colophons that discuss impressions from antique seals. Zhou Zaijun's chronological sequencing of these vignettes in print implicitly casts Zhou Lianggong as a chronicler of historical events and personages, presenting the book as a tract on the circumstances and repercussions of Ming decline. Shifting focus from the antiquarian significance of these old seals as objects to the personal significance of surviving impressions made from these seals, Zhou Lianggong's vignettes divulge the recursive power of personal memory to exceed, haunt, and perturb the work of writing history.

<sup>82</sup> "Shu Jin Yifu yinpu qian" 書金一甫印譜前, *YZ* 1, p. 30.

<sup>83</sup> "Shu Jiang Cisheng yinzhang qian" 書姜次生印章前, *YZ* 3, pp. 134-37; "Shu Xu Laixi yinzhang qian" 書須來西印章前, *YZ* 3, p. 108; Zhou, "Shu Chen Chaojie yinzhang qian" 書陳朝階印章前, *YZ* 3, pp. 104-5; "Shu Ni Jingong yinzhang qian" 書倪觀公印章前, *YZ* 3, pp. 105-6; "Wang Wenan tuzhang qian" 王文安圖章前, *YZ* 3, pp. 106-7; "Shu Zhang Jiangru yinzhang qian" 書張江如印章前, *YZ* 3, pp. 103-4; "Shu Cheng Yusheng yinzhang qian" 書程與繩印章前, *YZ* 2, pp. 81-82; "Shu Gu Zhugong yinpu qian" 書顧築公印譜前, *YZ* 2, pp. 74-76; and "Shu Wu Pingzi yinzhang qian" 書吳平子印章前, *YZ* 3, pp. 124-25.

The organization of the anthology outwardly invites readers to discern a meaningful historical narrative. The collection opens with a paper sheet bearing an impression made from an excavated iron seal belonging to Song martyr Wen Tianxiang 文天祥 (1236–1283; the duke of Xin 信國公), an object that invokes themes of loyalist suicide and the cyclicity of dynastic transition.<sup>84</sup> Zhou's reflections on the violence that led to the abandonment and accidental burial of Wen's seal in a field unavoidably evoke the pathos of his own wartime experiences: "Who knows when this seal was left behind in the fields, could it have been when defeated armies at the Battle of Mount Ya fled south to Annan? 此印不知何時遺田間, 其在厓山兵敗, 走安南時耶."<sup>85</sup> His final comparison of the seal to the material traces of Wen's body (his hair and teeth) venerated as relics by later disciples, coupled with attention to the impression's apotropaic power in exorcising malign spirits, strives to reconcile reverence for loyalist martyrdom with a longing to protect oneself from the unsettling ghosts of the past.<sup>86</sup> The second entry turns to an impression from a clay seal that belonged to Ming Confucian moralist Hai Rui 海瑞 (1514–1587), a model of uncompromising honesty and political integrity.<sup>87</sup> The third entry implicitly takes up the repercussions of Hai Rui's defiant memorials to the Jiajing 嘉靖 emperor (r. 1521–1567) by tracing the rise and fall of the famous Donglin 東林 literati faction in a response to a seal once owned by the faction's leader Gu Xiancheng 顧憲成 (1550–1612).<sup>88</sup> The fourth and fifth vignettes point to the imbrication of dynastic and familial histories by focusing on seals used by Zhou's father and younger brother, entries that evoke a powerful longing to grasp traces of absent bodies.<sup>89</sup> The sixth entry turns to memoirs of Ming loyalism in Zhou's reflections on the impressions of his deceased friend Xu You.<sup>90</sup> It is only in the seventh entry that the anthology introduces the figure of the seal carver (*yinren*) by describing Wen Peng's 文彭 (1497–1573) discovery of a batch of soft stones in Nanjing.<sup>91</sup>

This six-entry overture to *Biographies of Seal Carvers* frames Zhou's antiquarian interests in seals in terms of the larger theme of Confucian loyalism, a concept he examines from multiple perspectives in his writ-

<sup>84</sup> "Shu Wen Xinguo tieyin hou" 書文信國鐵印後, *YZ* 1, pp. 7–8.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> "Shu Hai Zhongjie niyin hou" 書海忠介泥印後, *YZ* 1, pp. 8–11.

<sup>88</sup> "Shu Donglin shuyuan yin hou" 書東林書院印後, *YZ* 1, pp. 11–15.

<sup>89</sup> "Jingshu jia daren ziyong tuzhang hou," *YZ* 1, pp. 15–17.

<sup>90</sup> "Shu Xu Youjie ziyong yinzhang hou," *YZ* 1, pp. 19–22.

<sup>91</sup> "Shu Wen Guobo yinzhang hou" 書文國博印章後, *YZ* 1, pp. 22–26.



ings on earlier resistance fighters, uncompromising mid-to-late-Ming memorialists, and contemporary remnant subjects.<sup>92</sup> Editorial decisions to invoke Zhou's political commitments through the sequencing of entries resonate with the organization of his epistolary compilation *Chidu xinchao* 尺牘新鈔, which as David Pattinson observes, suggests Zhou's links with the Restoration Society (Fushe 復社) by bookending the collection with letters from Gao Panlong 高攀龍 (1562–1633) and Wei Dazhong 魏大中 (1575–1625), both prominent Donglin martyrs.<sup>93</sup> Charged with relocating and publishing his father's work in the wake of the 1670 bibliocaust, Zaijun sought to defend his family's loyalist credentials, a move encapsulated in his request for outspoken Ming loyalist Lü Liuliang 呂留良 (1629–1683) to compose a preface for what became Zhou Lianggong's collected poetry and prose – a piece that implicitly casts the book-burning episode as a symbolic rejection of post-conquest collaboration.<sup>94</sup>

Zhou's own vignettes, however, offer comparatively ambivalent or fragmentary assessments of the historical significance of his impressions. His first entry on Wen Tianxiang's iron seal, for instance, eschews any mention of the seal's properties or biography to dwell on his personal failure to purchase the antique and subsequent need to settle for paper slips bearing its stamp.<sup>95</sup> He begins, in other words, by foregrounding the independent objecthood of an inky red imprint rather than the seal itself. Zhou's retainer explains to him that the "Old Confucian 老儒" who acquired the antique from a farmer now depended on the seal's apotropaic powers to earn a living, visiting patients suffering from pestilence or malaria and using the seal's impression to help cure them: "Later if customers were too numerous or the distance was too far then the Old Confucian was unwilling to make the trip and would make an impression on a piece of paper and send it to be pasted on the door or the cheeks of those suffering with malaria until they were better 後購者紛紛, 或道途遠, 老儒不能往, 印一紙給之, 傳黏於戶或瘡者額上亦輒愈."<sup>96</sup> Zhou's attention, in the space of his vignette, wavers between the momentous historical events of an inter-dynastic war and

<sup>92</sup> On the shifting meanings of loyalism as a political discourse during the long seventeenth century, see Ying Zhang, *Confucian Image Politics: Masculine Morality in Seventeenth-Century China* (Seattle: U. Washington P., 2016).

<sup>93</sup> David Pattinson, "Zhou Lianggong and *Chidu Xinchao*: Genre and Marginalisation in the Ming-Qing Transition," *East Asian History* 20 (2000), p. 65.

<sup>94</sup> Lü, "Laigu tang ji xu" 賴古堂集序, *ZLGQ*, vol. 18, pp. 259–60; Kim, *Life of a Patron*, p. 142.

<sup>95</sup> "Shu Wen Xinguo tieyin hou," p. 7.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

the small quotidian wonders that these healing impressions now elicit in the shabby market-towns of Fujian.<sup>97</sup>

“Drafted after a Seal from the Donglin Academy” (“Shu Donglin shuyuan yin hou” 書東林書院印後), a colophon composed beside an impression made from a seal once owned by Donglin leader Gu Xiancheng, ostensibly verifies Zhou’s political ideals, evoking his own youthful membership in the Xingshe 星社, an affiliate branch of the larger Fushe/Donglin movement.<sup>98</sup> This seal, as a supposedly authoritative mark of institutional identity, prompts nostalgic reflection on the establishment, expansion, and eventual destruction of the Donglin organization. The structure of Zhou’s colophon subtly inverts the logic of sealing a certified document: rather than stamp an impression to endorse a written tract, Zhou’s essay on the rise and fall of the Donglin seeks to reestablish the authority of Gu Xiancheng’s seal.

This elegiac account, however, is not Zhou’s own composition, but an excerpted passage from his former patron Sun Chengze’s 孫承澤 (1592–1676) study.<sup>99</sup> Sun had provided protection and financial support for Zhou during their time together in Henan in the 1630s, going so far as to purchase a farm for the struggling young tutor.<sup>100</sup> A leading collector and connoisseur, Sun assisted in Zhou’s artistic education, introducing him to the Xueyuan 雪園 (Snow Garden) circle of eminent northern antiquaries.<sup>101</sup> Despite his sympathies with the Donglin movement, Sun obtained high office under the Qing before eventually retiring in 1653. In the 1660 preface to his *Record of Whiling Away the Summer in the Gengzi Year* (*Gengzi xiaoxia lu* 庚子消夏錄), a nostalgic collection of jottings on calligraphy, paintings, and rubbings that he had viewed, Sun names himself “Recluse of the Valley of Retreat 退谷逸叟,” inviting friends to eulogize his estate, The Valley of Retreat 退谷, as a space of lyrical refuge and transcendence.<sup>102</sup> Zhou Lianggong honored his former patron’s retirement by commissioning a seal carved with the phrase: “My Teacher, the Old Man from the Valley of Retreat 吾

<sup>97</sup> The concerns of this entry in particular recall the style and subject-matter of Zhou’s quasi-ethnographic notes on Fujianese customs, anecdotes, and hearsay in *Min xiaoji* 閩小紀 (c. 1670).

<sup>98</sup> Kim, *Life of a Patron*, pp. 39–41.

<sup>99</sup> For Sun’s essay, see Sun Chengze 孫承澤, *Chunming meng yulu* 春明夢餘錄 (Beijing: Beijing guji chubanshe, 1992), j. 56, pp. 1143–44.

<sup>100</sup> “Sun Beihai fuzi wei Liang mai tian” 孫北海夫子為亮買田, *LTJ* 3, pp. 33.

<sup>101</sup> Kim, *Life of a Patron*, pp. 43–45.

<sup>102</sup> For a discussion of Sun Chengze’s estate and Wu Weiye’s “Song of the Valley of Retreat” (“Tuigu ge” 退谷歌), see Wai-ye Li, “History and Memory in Wu Weiye’s Poetry,” in Li et al., eds., *Trauma and Transcendence in Early Qing Literature*, p. 134. Wu, “Tuigu ge,” in *Wu Meicun quanji*, j. 11, pp. 300–1.

師退谷老人,” an impression he preserved in his *Seal Catalogue from the Studio for Relying on the Ancient*.<sup>103</sup>

When read in light of these biographical details, Zhou’s inclusion of Sun’s study in “Drafted after a Seal from the Donglin Academy” raises the question of whether he is primarily concerned with editing an objective history of the Donglin movement, or with personally documenting the words, and preserving the literary legacy, of his beloved teacher, Sun Chengze. Gu’s impression revalidates Sun’s commitment to the Donglin cause, as Sun’s retrospective account of the Donglin’s subsequent demise claims custodianship of, and seeks to reinscribe, Gu’s political vision on behalf of twice-serving officials in the early Qing. An “essay” that first appears as a work of historical scholarship is framed by, and becomes inextricably entwined with, Zhou’s own memoirs of his literary education. Finally, this colophon discloses the extent to which *Biographies of Seal Carvers* constitutes a makeshift archive of other written documents, from transcribed letters to essays and occasional poems. Zhou’s attention to the social lives of seal imprints, or their service in the management of interpersonal communication, stimulated literary reflection on the fragile scraps and related fragments of paper through which past traces might be preserved and transmitted.

Implicit tensions between history and personal memory, intimated in Zhou’s “Drafted after a Seal from the Donglin Academy,” become more apparent in his short colophon on a clay seal once owned by Ming Confucian memorialist Hai Rui. This seal bears an enigmatic five-character title, “Official Who Grasps the ‘Transformations in the Wind’ [or “Morals and Manners”]” (“Zhang fenghua zhi guan” 掌風化之官), an impression elsewhere preserved in the fourth volume of *Seal Catalogue from the Studio for Relying on the Ancient* (figure 6, overleaf).<sup>104</sup> Zhou’s response to the seal reveals a complex overlay of competing memories: 1. Zhou’s memory of obtaining a rare antique clay seal in Nanjing; 2. his memory of a dream in which he encountered Hai Rui at a shrine for the mid-Song Neo-Confucian philosopher Lü Zuqian 呂祖謙 (1137–1181); and 3. his memory of a poem to commemorate a viewing of the seal by his friend He Cide’s 何次德 (n.d.) son He Yannian 何延年 (n.d.). Zhou’s vignette first dwells on the uncanny coincidence that a friend brought him Hai Rui’s seal shortly after he dreamt of meeting Hai Rui at the Lü Temple. Whereas in his poetic sequence, “Dreaming of My Deceased Concubine...,” Zhou’s “Emulate Tao” seal returns to

<sup>103</sup> *LT*<sub>B</sub>, j. 8, p. 21a.

<sup>104</sup> *LT*<sub>A</sub>, p. 209.

haunt him in his sleep; here, he unexpectedly obtains a seal in his waking life that triggers involuntary memories of a scene from a dream.

Unlikely correspondences between dream and reality suggest a portentous omen, yet Zhou remains reticent in explicating its meaning. He notes that when encountering the impression it is as if he sees Hai Rui's "grave aura and rigid disposition, solemnly appear before [him], forbidding any transgressions 嚴氣正性, 肅然於前, 凜不敢犯."<sup>105</sup> Does the twice-serving minister view Hai Rui's apparition as a righteous model worthy of emulation, or an unsettling reminder of his own insufficiencies?



Figure 6. "Official Who Grasps the Transformations in the Wind" 掌風化之官

Top row, left col. After ZLGO, vol. 17, p. 209.

The eminent early-twentieth-century essayist Zhou Zuoren 周作人 (1885–1967) picks up on these details in a short newspaper article he composed after reading a poem describing Hai Rui's clay seal in July 1938.<sup>107</sup> Zhou Zuoren lambasts Hai Rui as a "merciless official" (*kuli* 酷吏), claiming that his seal's inscription betrays its owner's self-righteousness and quasi-murderous commitment to abstract "principle" (*li* 理): "Look at the phrasing of this seal and you can see his innards, I haven't a clue how one can 'su-

gressions 嚴氣正性, 肅然於前, 凜不敢犯."<sup>105</sup> Does the twice-serving minister view Hai Rui's apparition as a righteous model worthy of emulation, or an unsettling reminder of his own insufficiencies? The difficulty of parsing Zhou's dream of Hai Rui is compounded by his discussion of the Ming official elsewhere in *Shadows of Books at the House by the Trees* (*Yinshuwu shuying* 因樹屋書影), a miscellany of notes he drafted in prison. Zhou records an anecdote that Hai Rui's five-year old daughter starved herself to death following her father's reproach for eating rice-cakes that she had obtained from a male servant.<sup>106</sup> The eminent early-twentieth-

<sup>105</sup> "Shu Hai Zhongjie niyin hou," *YZ* 1, p. 9.

<sup>106</sup> Zhou, *Yinshuwu shuying*, j. 9, p. 283.

<sup>107</sup> Zhou Zuoren, "Ji Hai Rui yinwen" 記海瑞印文, in Zhong Shuhe 鍾叔河, ed., *Zhou Zuoren wenxuan* 周作人文選 (Guangzhou: Guangzhou chubanshe, 1995), j. 3, p. 180. The poem in question is the eighth couplet in Zha Qichang's 查崎昌 (n.d.) sequence, see Zha, "Lunyin jueju shishou" 論印絕句十首, in *Lidai yinxue lunwen xuan*, p. 846. Zha mistranscribes the impression as: "Official who supervises the transformations of wind 司風化之官." Other Qing poets also alluded to Hai Rui's clay seal in matching poetic sequences, see, for instance, Chen Zhan 陳鱣, "Lunyin jueju shier shou" 論印絕句十二首, in *Lidai yinxue lunwen xuan*, p. 852.

pervise' the 'transformations in the wind 觀印語, 其肺肝如見, 我不知道風化如何司.'<sup>108</sup> By reading the colophon from *Biographies of Seal Carvers* alongside the anecdote from *Shadows of Books*, Zhou Zuoren highlights the latent ambivalence in Zhou Lianggong's personal response to Hai Rui's seal.<sup>109</sup> What did he discern in this impression? How did he interpret the five characters?

Rather than personally explain the meaning of either the dream or the seal, Zhou leaves this task to his friend's son. He Cide reappears in various vignettes in *Biographies of Seal Carvers* as a collector and astute connoisseur of seals: he managed to obtain a rare seal from the courtesan carver Han Yuesu (favorite of Wang Sun), and features in Zhou's discussion of Qian Leizhong's 錢雷中 (n.d.) folio of impressions.<sup>110</sup> Zhou lists He Yannian, meanwhile, as a talented contemporary painter and seal carver in appended indexes to both *Record of Reading Paintings* and *Biographies of Seal Carvers*. As with his transcription of Sun Chengze's essay, Zhou's focus on copying out Yannian's poem evokes a shift from studying the historical significance of an impression to recollecting transient scenes and contingent acts of literary recollection.

He Yannian seeks to offer an authoritative version of events, yet his poem deviates from the sequence and details of Zhou's own short preface: Zhou describes how his acquisition of the strange clay seal prompted an involuntary memory of his enigmatic dream of Hai Rui; He Yannian claims Zhou first dreamt of Hai's appearance in an office filled with seals before later encountering a stamped impression from the clay seal sent to him by letter.<sup>111</sup> For Zhou, the experience of holding the clay seal triggered memories from a dream; for He, Zhou's dream foreordained the later delivery of the seal's stamped impression by mail. Rather than excavate the historical meaning of an antique, Zhou's colophon and appended transcription of He Yannian's poem evoke a series of shifting, fragmentary, and discontinuous perspectives. Instead of resolving these discrepancies, Zhou reflects on the seal's capacity to elicit competing and disjointed associations, moving

<sup>108</sup> Zhou Zuoren, "Ji Hai Rui yinwen," p. 180.

<sup>109</sup> Hai Rui's clay seal circulated among prominent antiquarians throughout the remainder of the Qing dynasty. Song Luo 宋肇 (1634–1713) records his appraisal of the seal's inscription. By the Jiaqing era, Chen Yuxian 陳毓咸 (n.d.) claims that the collector Jiang Beiyan 蔣北硯 (n.d.) owned the seal; Zhou Zhengju 周正舉, *Yinlin shihua* 印林詩話 (Chengdu: Bashu chubanshe, 2004), pp. 56–9.

<sup>110</sup> Zhou, "Shu Diange nǚzi tuzhang qian," p. 51; "Shu Qian Leizhong yinpu qian" 書錢雷中印譜前, *YZ* 2, p. 91. Zhou Lianggong also corresponded with He Cide; see, e.g., a memorable letter in which Zhou reflects on recent technological innovations in "puppet plays" (*kuilei xi* 傀儡戲); Zhou, "Yu He Cide" 與何次德, *LTJ* 20, p. 390.

<sup>111</sup> "Shu Hai Zhongjie niyan hou," p. 10.

from an impression to memories of a first encounter with an object, to a memory of a dream, to a memory of a gathering with friends, to the poem that commemorates that gathering. The object, then, of Zhou's literary reminiscence morphs from the historical significance of a seal's impression to the act and vagaries of remembrance itself.

#### VIGNETTES ON FOLIOS OF IMPRESSIONS

Whereas Zhou Lianggong's vignettes on antique seals dwell upon the power of an impression to summon apparitions of a seal's former owner, recovering a semblance of presence in the face of their bodily absence, his vignettes on contemporary seal folios (*yinpu*) manipulate biographical details to discern a sense of individuality in a market filled with increasingly interchangeable and unreliable imprints. In doing so, Zhou attends to the promise and perils of replication, considering the affordances of copying as a means of studying and transmitting seal script, while reflecting on how a proliferation of mechanically reproduced imprints might perturb notions of originality and authenticity.

Zhou Zaijun and Qian Lucan introduce Zhou Lianggong's vignettes on seal impressions as biographies by comparing them to both his accounts of leading late-Ming painters and contemporaneous approaches to biography in early-Qing poetic anthologies. An interest in the lives and deaths of carvers, and a more proximate source of inspiration for Zhou Lianggong's informal prose, however, first emerges in late-Ming colophons on seal folios. Indeed, Zhou's writings on impressions can be read not simply as recollections of late-Ming seals and carvers but as a self-conscious engagement with the literary heritage of late-Ming writing on seals.

Feng Mengzhen 馮夢禎 (1548–1605), the chancellor of the National Academy (Guozijian 國子監), documented the career and burial of Huizhou artist He Zhen 何震 (c. 1530–1604), one of the first figures in Chinese history to earn posthumous renown exclusively for his talent in engraving seals.<sup>112</sup> Feng's colophon, anticipating the concerns of Zhou Lianggong's vignettes in *Biographies of Seal Carvers*, ultimately renders the seal carver's biography a supplement to his assessment and planned publication of He's surviving impressions.<sup>113</sup> That the event of a carver's passing in 1604 while lodging at Cheng'en Temple 承恩寺 in Nanjing (a regional center for the book trade) was deemed noteworthy

<sup>112</sup> For an introduction to He Zhen's career, see Zhai Tunjian, "He Zhen de shengping yu zhuanke yishu" 何震的生平與篆刻藝術, in *Ming Qing Huizhou zhuanke xueshu yantaohui lunwen ji*, pp. 57–70.

<sup>113</sup> For a diary record of Feng's relationship with He Zhen, see Feng Mengzhen 馮夢禎,

is unprecedented. Feng briefly recalls that he had, in years past, invited He Zhen into his official residence to carve a number of seals (some in jade and bronze), yet his focus drifts to popular rumors concerning a totemic specimen of a “strange rock 奇石”:

*On a Folio of He Zhuchen's Seals*

He Zhuchen, a man of She county, name unspecified, style name Xueyu, used his talent for seals to roam throughout the empire. While stationed in Nanjing in years past, I invited him into my offices, entrusting him with jade, stone, and bronze to render several dozen impressions. I still treasure them today.

Zhuchen, last year at the age of seventy, passed away while lodging as a guest at Cheng'en Temple in Nanjing. When they searched his sack, the only thing left was a strange stone. His friends pooled together money to bury him and return his coffin to his hometown. Now there is no one to offer a peal of incense to Zhuchen.

I heard from Ding Nanyu that He Zhuchen, in studying seals, spent all his resources roaming throughout Wu, studying with Wen Xiucheng and Xu Gaoyang for a long time. He effectively combined their strong points and grew more skillful as he matured – he was unrivalled at the time.

Alas! Seal carving is only one art form, yet its virtuosity lies in combining the brush and knife with intaglio and relief techniques. Without the instruction of a master one cannot attain virtuosity, and without virtuosity one cannot expect transmission to posterity, how much more so for one who goes beyond virtuosity?

Ding Zhenbai's two folios of Zhuchen's seals contain around one thousand impressions. I obtained them from his son and they should be truly treasured, in anticipation of their dissemination.

Composed on a rainy summer's day in 1605, while roaming in the Yellow Mountains.

題何主臣符章冊

何主臣，歙人，名某，字雪漁，以善符章奔走天下。昔年在白下，余召之入官署，授之玉、石、銅，成數十面，俱奇古有致，實用至今。主臣去歲滿七十，客死承恩寺。搜其橐惟奇石一座存焉。友人釀金斂之，歸其柩。今遂無祝瓣香於主臣者。余聞之丁南羽，主臣之學符章也，破產遊吳中，事文休承，許高陽最久，兼得其長，老而益精，遂縱橫一時。嗚呼，符章雖一藝而用筆用刀硃

*Kuixue tang riji* 快雪堂日記, ed. Ding Xiaoming 丁小明 (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2010), pp. 108–9.

文白文俱有妙解，非得師不能精，不精不能久傳，況其上者乎。丁貞白藏主臣符章二冊，凡千餘面，得之於其子，真可寶也，其俟而廣之。

萬曆乙巳夏日游黃山雨中題。<sup>114</sup>

Feng Mengzhen's attention to the details of He Zhen's career – the carver's travels and training with renowned calligraphers Wen Jia 文嘉 (1501–1583) and Xu Chu 許初 (n.d.), vectors of legitimate transmission from He to his followers – stems from efforts to certify a set of impressions and thus publicly broadcast the prestige of seals in his own collection. The vignette centers upon a “strange stone” discovered by monks – a synecdoche for the material with which He Zhen earned renown among late-Ming collectors.<sup>115</sup>

The recovery of He's last stone underwrites and subsequently raises the value of the carver's remnant traces in the world of the living, whether the early He Zhen seals hidden away in Feng Mengzhen's collection or the two rare folios the connoisseur obtains on his pilgrimage to the Yellow Mountains of Huizhou.<sup>116</sup> Writing in the final years of his life, Zhou Liangong adapts the recursive structure of Feng's colophon – the narrator's nostalgic remembrance of his early experiences as a collector of seals in Nanjing upon handling a rare folio of impressions on a rainy summer's day – to grapple with a more profound sense of absence in the wake of dynastic transition. Zhou elsewhere reworks Feng Mengzhen's anecdotal records of He Zhen's close association with stone seals and his training with members of the Wen family as kernels for his two vignettes on Wen Peng's seals and He Zhen's seals in *Biographies of Seal Carvers*.<sup>117</sup> His comments on He Zhen prefigure a shift from discussion of antique seals or singular impressions in the opening six entries, to new folios of impressions attributed to contemporary seal carvers.

<sup>114</sup> Feng Mengzhen, “Ti He Zhuchen fuzhang ce” 題何主臣符章冊, *Kuaixue tangji* 快雪堂集, in *Siku quanshu cunmu congshu* 四庫全書存目叢書 (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 1997), jibu, vol. 164, p. 446.

<sup>115</sup> Zhou Liangong elsewhere celebrated the prestige of He's stone seals in a colophon on a seal folio preserved in the Japanese National Library in Kyoto (a document that provides a rare glimpse of how the vignettes in *Biographies of Seal Carvers* might have appeared): “He Zhuchen started out from the Yellow Mountains, clutching three inches of iron he looked askance at the gentry, with an elegant retinue. Members of the gentry longed to catch a glimpse [of He Zhen] but couldn't. If one is lucky enough to obtain a square-inch of stone from him, it should be wrapped up and stored away in a fine brocade. Although I have never seen Zhuchen, whenever I open up folios of his impressions, I gasp at such a splendid achievement 何主臣起自黃山，挾三寸鐵脾睨士大夫間，車從甚都，士大夫冀一見不可得，幸而得其盈寸之石，相與什襲藏之，予雖未及見主臣，每展其譜帙，未常不嘆為盛事也。” Reprinted in Zhu, *Ganjia*, 158.

<sup>116</sup> For Feng's diary records of this trip, see Feng, *Kuaixue tang riji*, pp. 221–25.

<sup>117</sup> “Shu Wen Guobo yinzhang hou,” p. 20.



Even though seals act as security devices, they are also “potentially unstable signifiers,” inasmuch as impressions might be easily made from impressions, replicating the original seal and thus facilitating its circumvention as a “guarantor of authenticity.”<sup>118</sup> Such fears were exacerbated by both a proliferation of printed seal catalogues like *Yinsou* in the late-Ming and the newfound celebrity of entrepreneurial carvers from Huizhou merchant lineages. Zhou Lianggong’s concerns with the names and biographical details of individual carvers betray underlying efforts to distinguish between legitimate modes of copying and aberrant alternatives. This challenge, as Feng Mengzhen’s attention to the custodianship of He Zhen’s posthumous legacy insinuates, typically entails extricating lines of filiation (from fathers to sons, or teachers to students) from unauthorized practices of imitation by first ascertaining who a carver was, where they came from, and who they studied calligraphy and seal carving with.

Almost a quarter of the seventy-three seal carvers named in the anthology can be grouped into nine father-son units.<sup>119</sup> These partnerships prompted connoisseurs to carefully differentiate between cases where a filial son copies his father’s impressions to master seal carving and faithfully transmit his family’s accomplishments, and cases where a greedy son abused his father’s reputation to make money carving counterfeits, or a negligent father secretly employed his son to carve copies on his behalf.<sup>120</sup> Zhou Lianggong’s interlinked prefaces on the Huizhou carvers Wang Guan’s 汪關 (father; n.d.) and Wang Hong’s 汪弘 (son; n.d.) seals, for instance, take issue with Zhang Hao’s claim in *Xueshan tang yinpu* that Guan’s seals were carved by his son as a “ghost-writer” (*zhuodao* 捉刀).<sup>121</sup> In recycling Suzhou gossip, Zhou disagrees

<sup>118</sup> Verity Platt, “Making an Impression: Replication and the Ontology of the Graeco-Roman Seal Stone,” *Art History* 29. 2 (2006), p. 234.

<sup>119</sup> The nine pairs are: 1) He Zhen 何震 and He Tao 何濤; 2) Cheng Sui 程邃 and Cheng Yixin 程以辛; 3) Cheng Yuan 程原 and Cheng Pu 程朴; 4) Wang Guan 汪關 and Wang Hong 汪弘; 5) Cheng Lin 程林 and Cheng Qiwu 程其武; 6) Wu Shan 吳山 and Wu Wanchun 吳萬春; 7) Xue Juxuan 薛居瑄 and Xue Quan 薛銓; 8) Huang Shu 黃樞 and Huang Bingyou 黃炳猷; 9) Xu Zhenmu 徐真木 and Xu Yin 徐寅. For a discussion of further sources on these father-son teams, see Qin Zhen 秦蕓, “Yi ji xiang chuan, yigong shitong: Zhou Lianggong *Yinren zhuan* suozai yinren fuzi yishi gouchen” 以技相傳, 藝工識通, 周亮工印人傳所載印人父子藝事鉤沉, *Shilin* 史林 6 (2015), pp. 80–85.

<sup>120</sup> For an example of the former tendency, see Zhou’s discussion of the way Cheng Yixin copied Cheng Sui’s seals to keep his elderly father’s practice going; “Shu Cheng Muqian yinzhang qian” 書程穆倩印章前, *YZ* 1, p. 49. In another instance, Zhou makes a folio that combines Xue Juxuan’s and Xue Quan’s impressions, celebrating the son’s ability to imitate his father precisely by claiming he cannot distinguish between the two; see “Shu Xue Hongbi yinzhang qian” 書薛弘璧印章前, *YZ* 3, p. 120.

<sup>121</sup> “Shu Wang Yinzi yinzhang qian” 書汪尹子印章前, *YZ* 2, pp. 72–73. On the ghostwriting claim, see “Shu Wang Hongdu yinzhang qian,” *ibid.*, p. 74.

with Zhang (inferring that he must have had a secret feud with Wang Guan) not on the basis of his judgment of any seals but because Hong was apparently renowned for his “debonair” (*fengliu* 風流) lifestyle, frittering away any money he earned on courtesans with little regard for his father’s command.<sup>122</sup> The need to compose a seal carver’s biography, from this perspective, can be construed as a byproduct of the collector’s struggle to authenticate and curate otherwise indistinguishable sets of impressions.

Zhou Lianggong’s comments on the Yangzhou-based carver Liang Zhi 梁裘 (d. 1644; *zi* Qianqiu 千秋) encapsulate his manipulation of biographical details to distinguish among folios of seal impressions.<sup>123</sup> Zhou’s “Drafted before Liang Qianqiu’s Seal Catalogue” (“Shu Liang Qianqiu pu qian” 書梁千秋譜前) is among the first entries on a seal catalogue in the first volume of *Biographies*. Much of this vignette takes up resemblances and subtle discrepancies among Liang’s seals, those of his teacher (and nominal founder of Huizhou seal carving) He Zhen, those of his younger brother Liang Danian 梁大年 (n.d.), and finally those of his concubine Han Yuesu.

Zhou dismissively claims that the worst impressions attributed to Liang (some of which made “people want to vomit 令人望而欲嘔耳”) were direct copies of He Zhen’s works “Strive to Eat” 努力加餐 (a copy of which Zhou preserves in his *Catalogue*), “Sipping Wine, Reading Lyrics” 痛飲讀騷, and “Living Amid Verdant Hills” 生涯青山.<sup>124</sup> Confusion between the seals of He Zhen and Liang Zhi stems from the format and editorial agenda of Liang’s catalogue *Yinjun* 印雋, a 1610 collection of 439 seals that openly mixes the impressions of teacher and student. Contributors to this catalogue go so far as to celebrate slippages between the two carvers’ hands, claiming that Liang Zhi’s copies essentially resurrect He Zhen:

My old contact Wu Wenzhong brought along some seals made by Liang Qianqiu, mixed with some seals that Zhuchen had made – I could not tell them apart and gasped in surprise. If we have Master Liang, then Master He is not dead! 舊交吳文仲攜廣陵梁千秋所爲印章, 雜主臣所爲者, 余不復能辨, 驚嘆不已. 有梁生, 何生不死矣.<sup>125</sup>

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> For a variant of the “Strive to Eat” impression, see *LTYA*, p. 162. On Liang Zhi, see Qiao Zhongshi 喬中石, “Liang Qianqiu zhuanke chutan” 梁千秋篆刻初探, in *Ming Qing Hui-zhou zhuanke xueshu yantaohui lunwen ji*, pp. 82–92.

<sup>124</sup> “Shu Liang Qianqiu pu qian” 書梁千秋譜前, *YZ* 1, p. 32. Zhou reiterates his claim that “Strive to Eat” and “Sipping Wine, Reading Lyrics” became widely imitated impressions in a letter to Huang Jishu; see Zhou, “Yu Huang Jishu lun yinzhang shu,” p. 361.

<sup>125</sup> Zhu Shilu 祝世祿, “Liang Qianqiu Yinjun xu” 梁千秋印雋序, in *Lidai yinxue lunwen*

The editors of *Yinjun* embrace confusion between original and copy, applauding failures to authenticate individual impressions, approaching replication as a means with which to forestall fears of oblivion and overcome death. While later commentators present Liang Zhi as a derivative copy of He Zhen, he was largely responsible for the collation and transmission in print of what came to be seen as the distinctive traits of He Zhen's seal art. His career, and the influence of *Yinjun*, thus raise the question of how many surviving He Zhen seal impressions were first designed by Liang. Consider, for instance, a soft-stone seal attributed to He Zhen, "Vista of Green Pines and White Clouds" ("Qingsong baiyun chu" 青松白雲處), a dubious object signed and dated to the autumn of 1553 – thus supposedly one of He's earliest surviving works (despite representing his mature style), carved when he was only nineteen.<sup>126</sup> This seal's impression, however, also appears in Zhang Hao's *Chengqing guan yinpu*, where it is attributed to Liang Zhi (and is listed as cut not in stone but in the hard material of agate 瑪瑙), raising the question of whether Liang's design was a copy of a He Zhen stone, or a model for the later production of a fake.<sup>127</sup> Zhou Lianggong also included the "Vista of Green Pines and White Clouds" impression in his *Catalogue*, preserving a copy of the seal that closely resembles Liang Zhi's carving in Zhang Hao's catalogue.<sup>128</sup> Zhou does not specify, however, whether this particular seal in his own collection was carved by He Zhen, Liang Zhi, or another later copyist.

For Zhou, the confusion between original and copy precipitated by Liang Zhi's practice concurrently prompted fears of the seal's linguistic and social debasement. Whereas Wen Peng, the founder of scholarly seal carving, predominantly carved "personal-name seals" (*mingzi zhang* 名字章) bearing literary sobriquets or studio names, He Zhen introduced "common sayings 世語" into his seals – "[yet] when it came to [Liang Zhi], there was no expression that could not be incorporated 至千秋則無語不可入矣."<sup>129</sup> For Zhou, Liang's promiscuity in his selection of phrases reflects the diverse and unruly makeup of his clientele: Wen

*xuan*, p. 447.

<sup>126</sup> Sheng Shilan 盛詩瀾, "He Zhen baiwen yin de xingshi tezheng: cong Wuxi bowuyuan cang He Zhen yin shuoqi" 何震白文印的形式特徵, 從無錫博物院藏何震印說起, *Zhongguo shufa* 中國書法 299 (2017), pp. 122–23. For a reproduction of the seal, see Tong Yanfang 董衍方, *Jinshi qishou: jinshijia shuhua mingke tezhhan tulu* 金石家書畫銘刻特展圖錄 (Shanghai: Shanghai sanlian shudian chubanshe, 2016), vol. 2, p. 8.

<sup>127</sup> Zhang Hao 張灝, *Chengqing guan yinpu* 承清館印譜 (1617; Kyoto University Library), xuji: p. 5b.

<sup>128</sup> *LTYA*, p. 103.

<sup>129</sup> "Shu Liang Qianqiu pu qian," p. 33.

Peng only carved for “famous men” – with Liang, anyone (from peddlers and hucksters to petty members of political cliques) could procure a seal.<sup>130</sup> If Wen Peng was an amateur who dabbled with the knife, Liang’s whole family attempted to make money by carving seals: his younger brother earned fame for his knifework as did his concubine Han Yuesu, the first recorded female seal carver in Chinese records. Liang’s household economy builds upon the example, and yet came to emblemize the threat posed by He Zhen’s social mobility. Not only could anyone commission a seal (an object that might at this point bear any phrase), but anyone could also carve a seal.

Zhou Lianggong’s attempts to distinguish Liang Zhi from He Zhen create a foundation for his comparatively idiosyncratic assessments of Liang Zhi’s younger brother Liang Danian and Liang Zhi’s concubine Han Yuesu in the final section of “Drafted before Liang Qianqiu’s Seal Catalogue.” For Zhou, Liang Danian’s individuality derives from his stubborn refusal to carve his elder brother’s seals as a ghostwriter. Having won fame for his impressions, Liang Zhi devoted his time to partying with courtesans and working to fulfil client demand by outsourcing his operations to members of his household. Danian, however, was unwilling to participate in Liang Zhi’s ruse and consequently distanced himself from his elder brother’s business.<sup>131</sup>

Zhou’s colophon “Drafted before Liang Danian’s Seal Catalogue” (“Shu Liang Danian yinpu qian” 書梁大年印譜前), a vignette that now appends the colophon on Liang Zhi’s catalogue in *Biographies of Seal Carvers*, builds upon this detail to discriminate between the seals of the two brothers. Whereas Zhou’s colophon for Liang Zhi’s catalogue focuses on both Liang Zhi’s imitation of He Zhen and subsequent efforts to delegate his carving to others, his colophon for Liang Danian’s catalogue dwells on the carver’s first-hand adjudication of epigraphic materials, whether bronze inscriptions (“he was able to discern ancient vessel inscriptions 君又能辨別古器款識”) or a recently unearthed ancient jade seal: “A jade seal was once excavated and its inscription could not be deciphered 嘗有從土中得一玉印。” Danian urged the connoisseur Zhu Zhifan 朱之蕃 (1558–1626) to buy it from an undiscerning source. He later “scrubbed it down, judged its inscription and recognized it was a small imperial seal with six characters from the Qin 後爲澆洗, 辨其文, 秦

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Leading Qing connoisseurs meanwhile prided themselves on an ability to spot exemplary “Liang Zhi” seals that had in fact been carved by Han Yuesu; see Zhu Qi 朱琪, *Zhen-shui wuxiang: Jiang Ren yu Qingdai Zhepai zhuanke yanjiu* 真水無香, 蔣仁與清代浙派篆刻研究 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin meishu chubanshe, 2018), pp. 43–44.

六字小璽也。”<sup>132</sup> Again, Zhou’s two colophons are not so much contrasting different personalities as they are distinguishing between different understandings of copying. Liang Zhi represents cheap imitation and the deceptions of ghostwriting. Liang Danian represents the connoisseurship and studious transmission of past traces.

Zhou’s careful comparison of Liang Zhi’s and Liang Danian’s folios of impressions allows him to tentatively sketch an ethics of replication, anticipating an argument that resurfaces in various vignettes, namely, that seal carving served as a conduit for the pursuit and transmission of epigraphic scholarship: “Study of the six ancient scripts has died; only one form remains in copying seals 六書之學亡，賴摹印尚存其一體。”<sup>133</sup>

Zhou was a prominent participant in both the seventeenth-century revival of antiquarian research on bronze and stone inscriptions and the ascendancy of the “epigraphic style” (*bei feng* 碑風) in early-Qing calligraphy.<sup>134</sup> He collaborated, for instance, with Lin Shangkuai 林尙葵 (n.d.; *zi* Zhuchen 朱臣) and Li Gen 李根 (n.d.; *zi* Yungu 雲谷) on editing and reprinting the influential work of Ming epigraphic scholarship *Guang jinshi yunfu* 廣金石韻府, an expanded sourcebook of variant archaic characters from bronze and stone inscriptions.<sup>135</sup> This project dovetails with Zhou’s interests in seal carving: his preface to the reprint claims that “my disposition is fond of antiquities, and so I devote my thoughts to seal carving 予性嗜古，畱心篆刻，” and he restates the significance of *Guang jinshi yunfu* for the study and replication of seal script in a vignette on his collaborator Li Gen’s seal folio in *Biographies of Seal Carvers*: “[Li] devoted his thoughts to the study of seal scripts 尤畱心篆籀之學。”<sup>136</sup> As his comments on Li Gen and Li Danian’s seals suggest,

<sup>132</sup> “Shu Liang Danian yinpu qian” 書梁大年印譜前, *YZ* 1, p. 36.

<sup>133</sup> “Shu Wu Zunsheng yinpu qian” 書吳尊生印譜前, *YZ* 3, p. 128. For discussions of Zhou’s comments, see Kim, *Life of a Patron*, p. 73; Bai, *Fu Shan’s World*, p. 58. Zhou offers a variant of this claim (one that puns on his cognomen Laigu 賴古) in another vignette: “I once said that the study of characters has become mired in confusion, only one thread has been preserved in seals that rely on the ancients (*laigu*)” 余嘗言字學迷謬耳，惟賴古印章存其一綫; “Shu Shen Shimin yinzhang qian” 書沈石民印章前, *YZ* 2, pp. 84–85.

<sup>134</sup> Zhou, for instance, assisted prominent Shaanxi collector Wang Hongzhuan 王弘撰 (1622–1702) with the publication of Guo Zongchang’s 郭宗昌 (ca. 1570–1652) influential *History of Bronze and Stone* (*Jinshi shi* 金石史). Bai, *Fu Shan’s World*, p. 162.

<sup>135</sup> The Harvard-Yenching Library holds a 5-juan edition of Zhou Lianggong’s 1670 reprint of *Guang jinshi yunfu* in red and black ink (*zhumo tao* 朱墨套), published by the Daye tang 大業堂 in Nanjing. The title page states the book was “Revised in Laigu Studio” (Laigu tang chongding 賴古堂重訂). Zhou’s emended version was based on a 5-juan edition (also in red and black ink; now held in the Harvard-Yenching Library) edited by Lin Shangkuai and Li Gen and published by the Hou Lian’an 侯蓮菴 publishing house in Fujian in 1636. Zhou discovered this book and began his collaboration with Lin and Li during his time in Fujian.

<sup>136</sup> See Zhou, “*Guang jinshi yunfu xu*” 廣金石韻府序, *LTJ* 15, pp. 316–18. On Li Yungu’s impressions, see “Shu Li Yungu yinpu qian” 書李雲谷印譜前, *YZ* 2, pp. 92–94.

Zhou repeatedly presents the most talented contemporaneous seal carvers as students of epigraphy. He celebrates, in a prominent example, one of his favorite Fujianese carvers Huang Shu 黃樞 (n.d.; *zi* Zihuan 子環) for: “diligently researching and authenticating every archive of bronze and stone sources, and naming his folio ‘Record of Ancient Inscriptions’ 凡金石典冊，靡不精研辨證，其譜名款識錄。”<sup>137</sup>

Zhou reiterates these claims in letters to his close friend, the seal carver Huang Jing, whom he elsewhere applauds for his consummate study of the “small seal script” (*xiaozhuan* 小篆) used for Qin-dynasty minister Li Si’s 李斯 (280 BC–208 BC) Taishan stele: he commends Huang’s copy as a superior model to Li’s original inscription, grateful that he no longer needed to ponder the calligraphy of this “treacherous minister” (*jianchen* 奸臣).<sup>138</sup> Zhou concurrently argued that seal carving might even supplement and help restore inscriptions on stone monuments (*bei* 碑) in the present. He noted, for instance, how an engraver named Xu Zhenmu 徐真木 (n.d.), famed for carving local stelae in Jiahe 嘉禾, used stone seals to transmit ancient stone inscriptions: “he in turn transmitted in stone that which he obtained through the transmission of stone 其得以傳之石者石傳之。”<sup>139</sup>

Seals uniquely encapsulate broader cultural tensions in the mid-seventeenth century. On the one hand, these basic devices for navigating the marketplace – for stamping correspondence; for endorsing contracts, bills, or payments in escrow – index profound upheavals in late-Ming commercial life – the spread of pawnshops; the commodification and counterfeiting of paintings and calligraphy; and the transgressive mobility of Huizhou merchants like He Zhen and Liang Zhi. On the other hand, seal carving constituted an avenue for intellectual renewal by facilitating a return to the investigation, reparation, and transmission of past traces through copying, which anticipated a resurgence of philological approaches to the history of writing in early-Qing scholarly circles. Zhou’s comparisons of Liang Zhi’s and Liang Danian’s impressions are thus not simply attempts to prove connoisseurial expertise by slyly subverting presumed hierarchies of value, but tentative efforts to liberate the seal’s replicatory powers from associations with late-Ming inauthenticity and forgery. Liang Zhi, who perhaps more than any other figure mentioned in *Biographies of Seal Carvers*, embodies for Zhou the worst traits of late-Ming seal carving, was killed in 1644 as he “blundered unwittingly, returning south” amid

<sup>137</sup> “Shu Huang Zihuan zi Kehou yinzhang qian” 書黃子環子克侯印章前, *YZ* 3, p. 121.

<sup>138</sup> Idem, “Ti Huang Jishu mo Taishan bei” 題黃濟叔摹泰山碑, *LITJ* 23, p. 423.

<sup>139</sup> Idem, “Shu Xu Shibai yinzhang qian” 書徐士白印章前, *YZ* 2, p. 99.

the violence of inter-dynastic war.<sup>140</sup> Zhou mentions this detail not in his vignette on Liang Zhi's folio but in his comments on Liang Danian's impressions. By discerning outwardly imperceptible variations between the two brothers' techniques of copying, he locates latent openings for regeneration not in a stark rejection, but in a nuanced reassessment of replication in late-Ming art.

MAKING A FOLIO: JIANG CISHENG'S SIGNATURE REFRAIN

Zhou Lianggong in *Biographies of Seal Carvers* does not simply evaluate folios of seal impressions but records his own acts of editing and making new folios. In recounting these efforts, he offers his most nuanced reflections on the underlying challenge of how to discern a sense of individuality amid a proliferation of seemingly dubious or interchangeable copies, seeking to reconcile his writings on seals as both impressions of presence and as replicable imprints.

Such concerns constitute the central focus of "Drafted before Jiang Cisheng's Seals" ("Shu Jiang Cisheng yinzhang qian" 書姜次生印章前), a vignette later reprinted by Zhang Chao 張潮 (1650–1707+) in his influential anthology *Yu Chu xinzhì* 虞初新志 as an exemplary work of early-Qing prose.<sup>141</sup> The piece reflects on the idiosyncratic persona of the Lanxi 蘭溪 carver Jiang Zhengxue 姜正學 (1597–1663; *zi* Cisheng 次生), a "granary scholar" from Zhejiang who disbanded official service in the wake of the dynastic transition and devotes his time to drinking and to carving seals.<sup>142</sup> Zhou's vignette is artfully structured around the repetition of a musical leitmotif, the so-called "Ballad of the Kuaiji Prefect" 會稽太守詞, a likely reference to arias from Yuan-era dramatic adaptations of the Zhu Maichen 朱買臣 (d. 115) story.<sup>143</sup> A major of-

<sup>140</sup> Idem, "Shu Liang Danian yinpu qian," *YZ* 1, p. 37.

<sup>141</sup> Zhang Chao reprinted three vignettes from *Biographies of Seal Carvers* in *Yu Chu xinzhì*: "Shu Diange nūzi tuzhang qian," "Shu Wang Anjie Wang Micao yinpu qian" 書王安節王宓中印譜前, and "Shu Jiang Cisheng yinzhang qian." See Zhang Chao 張潮, *Yu Chu xinzhì* 虞初新志, ed. Wang Genlin 王根林 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2012), *j.* 15, pp. 185–87. For an introduction to Zhang Chao's *Yu Chu xinzhì*, see Alan Barr, "Novelty, Character, and Community in Zhang Chao's *Yu Chu xinzhì*," in Li et al., *Trauma and Transcendence in Early Qing Literature*, pp. 282–309.

<sup>142</sup> Zhou, "Shu Jiang Cisheng yinzhang qian," pp. 134–37. A Qingtian stone seal attributed to Jiang Zhengxue was excavated from a tomb in Tongyuan 同源 village in Lanxi in 1982. The seal measures 6.8 cm (ht.) x 4.2 cm (w.) x 4 cm (deep) and bears two carved matrices: "Yang Yongyan's seal" (Yang Yongyan yin 楊永言印) cut intaglio (*baiwen* 白文) and "Presented Scholar of the *guiwei* year (1643)" (Guiwei jinshi 癸未進士) cut in relief (*zhuwen* 朱文). The side of the seal bears Jiang's signature inscription in regular script: "Jiang Zhengxue's seal script" (Jiang Zhengxue zhuan 姜正學篆). Chen Xing 陳星, ed., *Gu Wu wenhua shiyi* 古婺文化拾遺 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang gongshang daxue chubanshe, 2013), p. 462.

<sup>143</sup> There are two *zaju* based on the Zhu Maichen story: 1. a nonextant play listed by

ficial of the Western Han dynasty (206 BC–24 AD), Zhu was seen to embody the Confucian virtue of perseverance in poverty, working for years as a woodcutter before being granted a high official post and eventually serving as the prefect of Kuaiji. In the literary imagination, Zhu’s scholarly reputation was eventually overshadowed by the story of his divorce: Zhu’s wife left him as a woodcutter, ashamed of his loud singing; when Zhu eventually returned to Kuaiji as a prefect he took pity on his former wife and her new husband, which led his wife to hang herself in shame. Tales of Zhu Maichen’s return to Kuaiji as an official disguised in commoner’s garb dwell on his use of an official seal to prove his authority before unsuspecting clerks in the governor’s residence.<sup>144</sup> Jiang’s single-minded devotion to singing “Ballad of the Kuaiji Prefect” evokes the model of Zhu Maichen’s uncompromising Confucian integrity in times of dynastic crisis yet also ironically recalls the reason Zhu’s wife initially left him and the Kuaiji prefect’s dependence on a seal to reveal his true self.

Zhou Lianggong’s piece begins by identifying Jiang’s signature predilection for this song: “Whenever he obtained wine, he drank until he was inebriated, and whenever he was drunk, he would sing the Yuan ‘Ballad of the Kuaiji Prefect’ 得酒輒醉，醉輒鳴嗚歌元人會稽太守詞... Whenever he was drunk, he would sing, and the song had to be ‘Ballad of the Kuaiji Prefect’; he paid no heed to any other tune 每醉輒歌，歌又必會稽太守詞，不屑他調也。”<sup>145</sup> Introducing this refrain, Zhou narrates Jiang’s relationship with his patron, attendant censor Fang Hengxian 方亨咸 (n.d.; *zi* Jiou 吉偶; *hao* Shaocun 邵村), during Fang’s tenure as the district magistrate of Lishui 麗水. Jiang offers his services carving seals for Fang in return for the gift of wine, and Fang agrees only after drinking with Jiang and hearing him sing “Ballad of the Kuaiji Prefect”: “Thereafter the attendant censor obtained a great number of Jiang’s seals, while Jiang drained the reserves of brew held in the magistrate’s

Zhang Dafu 張大復 (1554–1630) in *Hanshan tang qupu* 寒山堂曲譜 entitled “Zhu Maichen poshui chuqi ji” 朱買臣潑水出妻記 (“Zhu Maichen Spills Water to Repudiate His Wife”); 2. an extant *zaju* preserved in Zang Maoxun’s 臧懋循 (1550–1620) *Yuanqu xuan* 元曲選 entitled “Zhu Taishou fengxue yuqiao ji” 朱太守風雪漁樵記 (“Prefect Zhu, the Woodcutter, and the Fisherman amidst the Wind and Snow”). For a detailed study of the dramatic afterlives of the Zhu Maichen story, see Josh Stenberg, “Staging Female-initiated Divorce: The Zhu Maichen Story in Twentieth-Century Drama from Opprobrium through Approbation,” *Nan Nü* 16.2 (2014), pp. 308–40.

<sup>144</sup> David R. Knechtges and Taiping Chang, eds., *Ancient and Early Medieval Chinese Literature: A Reference Guide* (Leiden: Brill, 2010–2014), vol. 4, p. 2301. This detail is also taken up in dramatic representations of the Zhu Maichen story, a nonextant Ming *chuanqi* drama attributed to Gu Jin 顧瑾 (fl. 1596) is titled “Peiyin ji” 佩印記 (“To Carry the Official Seal”).

<sup>145</sup> “Shu Jiang Cisheng yinzhang qian,” *YZ* 3, p. 134.



office 於是侍御得生印最多，侍御署中釀亦爲生罄矣。”<sup>146</sup> The vignette centers upon an episode wherein Jiang visits an initially fearful Fang in the middle of the night to show him a seal he had just carved: the commotion Jiang causes among the magistrate’s staff ironically recalls the tale of how Zhu Maichen revealed himself as the prefect of Kuaiji by displaying an official seal before negligent clerks, again suggesting the way Zhou Lianggong casts Jiang’s persona as a copy of the image encoded in his signature refrain. To celebrate, they drink until the early hours before Jiang heads to the local bridge to sing “Ballad of the Kuaiji Prefect” once more, waking the local pastry bakers and tofu chefs.

Zhou concludes by reflecting on the challenges of transmission and the circumstances behind his composition of the vignette:

Jiang had no wife or children and often said: “My home is in the drunkard’s alley. My seals are my progeny and will definitely be transmitted. Why should I worry [about carrying on my family line]?” He parted from the attendant censor and returned home. He passed away at the age of eighty.

In the autumn of the *xinhai* year, the attendant censor displayed for me the seals Jiang had made for him and I made impressions of them in a folio, editing the historian of Lougang’s narration of Jiang’s life as a preface.<sup>147</sup> The attendant censor said: “whenever I bring out Jiang’s seals, I sense the fumes of wine emerging from the stones, and it is as if all of sudden the sound of him singing ‘Ballad of the Kuaiji Prefect’ is in the roots of my ears and the corners of my eyes!”

生無妻無子女，常自言曰：曲蘖吾鄉里，吾印必傳，吾之嗣續也，吾何憂。別侍御返里，年八十卒。辛亥秋侍御以生所爲印示余，予入譜。復隱括樓崗太史述生事錄之於前。侍御曰：每展玩生印，覺酒氣拂拂從石間出，生歌會稽太守詞聲，猶恍惚吾耳根目際也。<sup>148</sup>

Zhou presents his final conversation with Fang as a fitting compliment to his editorial work, yet it might make more sense to read Fang’s reference to the “Ballad of the Kuaiji Prefect” as the involuntary memory that inspires and retroactively structures Zhou’s second-hand account of Jiang’s personality. The vignette offers no assessment of the visual or material traits of Jiang’s seals, instead hinting at his inimitable style through the lulling iterations of a musical leitmotif. This song becomes the alluring, yet elusive signature of Jiang’s untrammelled character,

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., p. 135.

<sup>147</sup> The “historian of Lougang” is Fang Hengxian’s brother Fang Xiaobiao 方孝標 (1617–97).

<sup>148</sup> “Shu Jiang Cisheng yinzhang qian,” *YZ* 3, pp. 136–37.

his boisterous drinking, and his friendship with the magistrate. Fang's synesthetic response to Zhou's new folio (the way he smells and hears Jiang reemerge from the impressions) suggests the meaning of his seals ultimately lies beyond sight and touch, as an intangible remainder, the significance of which can only be intuited in the wake of the carver's death. There is no evidence to confirm whether Zhou preserved impressions carved by Jiang in his own folio, yet he did possess a seal that takes up the theme of "wine's fumes": "Fumes of Wine Souse My Ten Fingers" 酒氣沸沸十指上 (figure 7).

Zhou composed his comments on Jiang Cisheng's folio, the penultimate entry in *Biographies of Seal Carvers*, the year before he died – in ill health and with diminishing eyesight.<sup>149</sup> This was a period of remarkable creativity in his own work as a seal collector, compiling and authenticating numerous folios of seal impressions: eight other vignettes in *Biographies* can be dated to the same year. Read in this light, Zhou's attention to the recurring refrain of "Ballad of the Kuaiji Prefect" evokes his own lingering faith in the power of replication to overcome death and counteract fears of oblivion. And yet, Zhou's vignette also finds variation in repetition. The significance of the ballad changes with each iteration: the version of the melody Fang recalls with Zhou Lianggong in 1671 is no longer the same melody he first heard when Jiang initially sought his patronage in exchange for wine.<sup>150</sup> Memories of the past are transformed by both intervening experiences and the

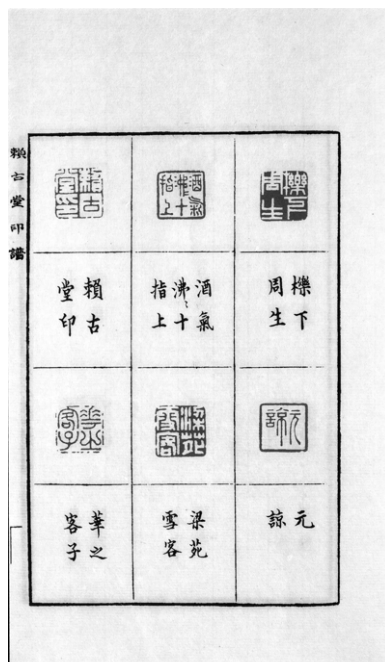


Figure 7. "Fumes of Wine Souse My Ten Fingers" 酒氣沸沸十指上  
After LTYB 6, p. 21a.

<sup>149</sup> The conclusion to one of the latest dated vignettes in the collection dwells on Zhou's failing eyesight: "That day the pain in my eyes was severe so I mistook three characters and left out two others, my agedness was clear to see, I put down the brush and sighed 是日, 目忽疼甚, 遂誤三字, 逸二字, 老態畢見矣, 放筆一嘆"; "Shen Fengji," p. 111.

<sup>150</sup> Zhou Lianggong and Fang Hengxian (and his brother Fang Xiaobiao) reconvened the following spring in 1672 at Li Yu's 李漁 (1611–80) Mustard Seed Garden (Jieziyuan 芥子園) to watch a theatrical performance by Li's courtesan troupe. Both Zhou and Fang Hengxian had submitted calligraphy that Li Yu transferred to placards to be installed in the garden. Li published full-page illustrations of these placards in his landmark *Casual Expressions of Idle*

shifting perspectives of the present, casting the remembering self in an active or creative role, while forestalling the prospect of interpretative closure. Zhang Chao affirms this dynamic in his own final comments on Zhou Lianggong's vignette, treating Zhou's scene of remembrance with Fang Hengxian as an independent object of aesthetic contemplation: "Zhang Shanlai said: 'I don't know Master Jiang, but when reading this biography I also hear "Ballad of the Kuaiji Prefect" and the fumes of wine emerging from his song'. 張山來曰: 仆不識姜君, 然讀此傳時, 亦覺耳中如聽歌會稽太守詞, 酒氣拂拂從歌聲中出也。"<sup>151</sup>

#### CODA: "DON'T FORGET TODAY"

I have reconsidered the literary significance of Zhou Lianggong's *Biographies of Seal Carvers* by reading Zhou's vignettes not as straightforward biographies but as responses to embodied acts of viewing and making seal impressions. Largely composed after he destroyed his woodblocks, Zhou's writings on seals move beyond treating remembrance as a literary theme to adumbrate the material processes of storage and transmission that condition the interpretation of memory.

The entries in *Biographies* can be divided between vignettes on singular seal impressions (whether Wen Tianxiang's iron seal or Hai Rui's clay seal) and vignettes on folios of seal impressions (from those of leading late-Ming carvers like Liang Zhi to Zhou's personal folio of Jiang Cisheng's impressions). Whereas the former dwell on fragile traces of the past, probing tensions between history and personal memory, the latter sketch an ethics of copying, finding in replication a means with which to seek continuity and hence forestall fears of oblivion. To conclude, I examine how these two themes are brought together in a composition that forms the centerpiece of *Biographies of Seal Carvers* – Zhou's vignette on his friend Huang Jing's seal folio, which I have already alluded to at various points in passing, above. Not only is this essay, "Drafted before 'Huang Jishu's Seal Folio'" 書黃濟叔印譜前, by far the longest entry in the anthology, but it also yokes together claims and anecdotes that resurface in other vignettes from the collection. The piece succinctly articulates an argument that emerges across Zhou's anthology, namely, that writing about sets of seal impressions is less an

---

*Feelings* (*Xianqing ouji* 閒情偶寄; 1671). Zhou's placard for Li is dated to the early summer of 1669; Zhu and Meng, *Zhou Lianggong nianpu*, pp. 200, 223. For the placard see Li Yu 李漁, *Xianqing ouji* 閒情偶寄, in *Li Yu quanji* 李漁全集 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 1991), vol. 3, j. 4, p. 192.

<sup>151</sup> Zhang, *Yu Chu xinzhi*, p. 187.

attempt to ensure fixity and permanence than it is an effort to come to terms with evanescence.

Like “Drafted after a Seal from the Donglin Academy” and “Drafted after Hai Zhongjie’s Clay Seal” 書海忠介泥印後, Zhou’s vignette on Huang Jing’s seal folio is in large measure a patchwork of other literary compositions. In this case, his sources are three letters: two from Zhou Lianggong to Huang, and one from Du Jun 杜濬 (1611–1687) to Zhou.

While Zhou clearly names his three partially transcribed letters as “letters” within his vignette, other passages within his framing of the vignette are also based on unmarked citations from Huang’s correspondence. Early in the vignette, Zhou remembers his friend’s uncompromising integrity in prison by recalling a past conversation they had about depending upon old friends in straightened circumstances: [Huang said]: “I can’t first go to them. If I’m in difficulty and they are old friends, then they will first come to see me 君曰: 不可以先往, 經在難, 故人固當先經耳。”<sup>152</sup> Although Zhou presents Huang’s response as reported speech, the line is drawn from a short note Huang sent to him, preserved elsewhere in *Chidu xinzhao*. Zhou, in other words, did not compose his literary reminiscences of Huang’s personality from scratch but by re-collecting and editing the paper scraps they once shared with each other.

Historians of Chinese calligraphy, keen to identify a coherent aesthetic theory in *Biographies of Seal Carvers*, frequently cite the first of the three aforementioned letters as Zhou’s authoritative opinion on the development of Ming seal-carving – significantly, the central theme in this composition is the concept of “transformation 變,” the notion that an accomplished seal carver should search for creative variation through the transmission of past models.<sup>153</sup> In this letter, independently titled, “A Letter to Huang Jishu to Discuss Seals” (“Yu Huang Jishu lun yinzhang shu” 與黃濟叔論印章書), Zhou first introduces analogies between Ming poetics and seals (“this way [seal carving] and poetics are the same” ... “As Ming poetry has been through several upheavals, so seals have followed suit”), grouping contemporary carvers according to the three major movements in late-Ming literary thought.<sup>154</sup> Reframed within “Drafted before ‘Huang Jishu’s Seal Folio,’” however, it is unclear

<sup>152</sup> Taken from a letter from Huang Jing to Zhou Lianggong, see Zhou, “Da Yinshuwu zhuren” 荅因樹屋主人, in Zhou Lianggong, *Chidu xinzhao* 尺牘新鈔, in *ZLQG* vol. 8, j. 2, p. 228.

<sup>153</sup> On Zhou’s theory of *bian*, see Zhu, *Ganjiu*, pp. 180–82; Huang Dun, *Zhongguo gudai yinlun shi*, pp. 164–73.

<sup>154</sup> “Yu Huang Jishu lun yinzhang shu,” p. 361.

whether the letter matters for Zhou primarily for its strident assertions about contemporaneous trends in seal carving, or for its status as documentary evidence of his friendship with Huang in prison. Comparisons between poetics and seals in the above “Letter to Huang Jishu to Discuss Seals” anticipate the concerns of the second full-length letter from Zhou to Huang cited in this vignette. Zhou reflects on how his poetry draws direct inspiration from Huang’s seal carving: “If I have recently become slightly versed in poetry and prose, it is because I have been enlightened [...] by your seal script 不孝之詩文近日少少曲折如意者，從先生之篆 ... 種種悟入耳。”<sup>155</sup>

The third and final letter in “Drafted before ‘Huang Jishu’s Seal Folio’” was composed not by Zhou or Huang, but by their mutual friend Du Jun. This piece dwells at length on the problem of transmission. Du recounts for Zhou his struggles to publish a twenty-volume theoretical work by Huang Jing on the six script-types. Following Huang’s death, Du travels to his hometown to rescue the manuscript in part due to fears that Huang’s appointed descendant who had turned to farming was incapable of protecting the papers: “he had given up studies for a long time and had no way to properly cherish this work 然廢學已久，未必能護惜此書。”<sup>156</sup> After reflecting on his own poverty, Du admits to Zhou his inability to secure Huang Jing’s manuscripts:

Given I’m poor and without any family members, I don’t have the ability to commit his manuscripts to printing blocks and ensure their transmission. As I roam from east to west, there is a chance that I might scatter his papers, or leave them in a hamper so long that they would be eaten by silverfish, or that the servants and maids might steal them and sell them in exchange for cakes. Then my old friend’s painstaking labor would disappear in my hands, and this would be a real crime. So I hesitated and stopped. 赤貧無家之人，既力不能為付梓以傳，又東西遊走，萬一放失其稿，或久閉箝中，徒飽蠹魚，又或僕婢竊之以易餅餌，則故人心血翻漸滅於吾手，罪過不小，踟躕而止。<sup>157</sup>

Du finishes his letter beseeching Zhou to take up the incomplete task of commemorating their friend’s legacy by editing and eventually publishing Huang’s thoughts on seals.

By citing Du Jun’s heartfelt plea for assistance with printing, Zhou underscores his own eventual inability to locate and publish Huang’s

<sup>155</sup> “Shu Huang Jishu yinpu qian,” *YZ* 2, p. 58.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*

manuscripts. Zhou effectively concludes his vignette by recounting his own failure to carry out Du's request. It remains unclear from Zhou's terse confession whether he was ever able to recover the papers in Rugao, or if he had managed to transfer them to woodblocks that he then destroyed in the self-inflicted bibliocaust. In either case, Zhou presents his vignette in *Biographies of Seal Carvers* as a provisional memorial for Huang, a stand-in composition unintended for, or cast as an alternative to, a print publication. Instead of publishing Huang's work, Zhou has settled for assembling a makeshift folio of letters he had exchanged with his friend:

And so, I took the several dozen letters he wrote to me while in the interrogation chamber, he had bound them into a folio, and I wrote on them "Don't forget today." I had hoped to return them to him, but he has died, and so they remain with me. Every time I take them out to look at them, I can't help being overwhelmed with tears. I often thought of writing a biography for Huang but never completed it. Guanwu said: "This can serve to transmit [Huang] Jishu, there is no need to make another biography."

即予在請室與君數十札子，君裝爲一冊，予書其上曰‘毋忘今日’，急以歸君，而君亡矣！遂留予處，每展視之，未嘗不淚涔涔下也。每思爲君立傳耳不果，冠五曰：即此可以傳濟叔矣。遂不復爲別傳。<sup>158</sup>

Zhou Lianggong's concluding comments retroactively justify the disjointed structure of his vignette as a pastiche composed from old letters. Such remarks also call into question the status of "Huang Jishu's Seal Folio." Unlike the other folios of impressions Zhou collected or compiled, Huang's folio appears to have been assembled from fragments of stamped correspondence. At the same time, Zhou's Huizhou friend Wu Zongxin's 吳宗信 (n.d.; *zi* Guanwu 冠五) final rejoinder ("there is no need to make another biography") succinctly articulates an argument that I have traced across the course of this essay, namely that the vignettes in *Biographies of Seal Carvers* are not straightforward "biographies," but sophisticated efforts to use seal impressions to investigate the relationship between writing and memory – to imagine other ways of recovering a presence beyond death. Questions remain as to why Zhou so self-consciously draws attention to both his inability to preserve Huang's words in print and his failure to complete a proper biography for his friend. Why does Zhou explicitly frame his tribute in terms of lack, insufficiency, and incompleteness? His attention to these themes incidentally recalls some of the earliest concerns of his corre-

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., p. 64.

spondence with Huang: it was in a poem discussing seals from their time in prison that Zhou first broached the idea that he might destroy his writings: “Of those ‘strange characters’ I knew too many, let’s agree to burn the vestiges of those documents.”<sup>159</sup>

Zhou’s final comment on the front of the folio reads “Don’t Forget Today,” a reference to the four-character phrase Huang carved on a seal for Zhou in prison (figure 2). This act of labeling the folio becomes the point around which Zhou organizes his memories of Huang: the title recalls the seal impression that leads him back to his first meetings with his friend. In one sense, Zhou’s transcription, “Don’t Forget Today,” can be read as a matching response to his friend’s carved injunction, as if he is verifying that he indeed did not “forget” that day. Such a match in turn serves as a fitting tribute to initial correspondences between Zhou’s poem on Huang’s release from prison and Huang’s decision to carve a seal to mark the occasion of his liberation. “Don’t Forget Today” might from this perspective be seen to commemorate a singular, unrepeatable event, and yet the phrase also evokes a call for its reader to dwell not in the past but in the here and now, to exploit the contingencies and evanescent opportunities of the present. “Don’t Forget Today” itself recalls the other seal Huang carved for Zhou in prison, “Live One More Day,” a phrase based on Zhou’s letters: “Today I will receive the rescript [for my execution]. Therefore, I am dressed up waiting for it. This is what people mean by saying “When the time comes, I shall go.” ... Today I still haven’t received the rescript [for my execution], and so I can live one more day.”<sup>160</sup> Huang’s two seals for Zhou are thus mementos to “today” or “*this* day,” invitations to elude the strictures of preordained fate and make do with the fleeting circumstances in which one might find oneself.

If a seal impression captures a moment of material contact between the sealer’s body, a seal, and a stamped surface, this moment is only transient: an impression might stand in for or serve to recover a semblance of its maker’s person, and yet in this capacity it effectively becomes a device for enduring, and finding provisional security in their absence.<sup>161</sup> Even as the fragile trace of a supposedly singular occasion,

<sup>159</sup> Zhou, “Rugao Huang liu Jishu, ren tong xingming, xia shu yu, shu yi zhuanzhou wei pu, pu danxi chijian si, wang shu suozaizai, zhenzuo futang, yibu wangsheng, yu shu cilü,” p. 119.

<sup>160</sup> Zheng Fangkun, “Laigu tang shichao xiaozhuan,” p. 219.

<sup>161</sup> See Bedos-Rezak: “[...] the moment of contact between die and impression, between seal and owner was, however undoubtedly historical, only transient. That which remained, visible and tangible, was the consistency, the identity between successive imprints produced from a single die.” Bedos-Rezak, *Signs of Identity*, pp. 204–5.

an impression insinuates the possibility of its own replication, intimating that other copies might yet appear. A seal's imprint – as a marker of both physical connection and loss, then and now – thus speaks to the way memory demands both preservation and erasure, the retention of indelible traces and forgetting, or a receptiveness to the new.<sup>162</sup>

That Zhou Lianggong's project is ultimately concerned not with forestalling, but with accepting transience in the present can be inferred from one of the only sections of this lengthy vignette that is not a recycled fragment from another letter: namely, the author's narration of Huang Jing's death. Zhou stages this moment at (or as if it *were*) an operatic performance:

After I “returned to life,” [Huang] Jishu visited me in Qinghua Belvedere, and we lodged together for over a month.<sup>163</sup> As he was about to depart, we watched opera at the Ji family's residence in Yanling. Suddenly he said to the audience: “I wish to leave.” He then called to his servant and said: “Master Ji was good to me, I actually found release from life in a seated posture: I had no other sickness. Tell my family members not to suspect Master Ji.” And so, he made an obeisance before the assembled spectators and said: “To leave in this manner is an occasion of great happiness; those who claim to see ghosts and spirits upon death are deluded.” And with that, he closed his eyes. Jishu studied Buddhism his whole life and so the manner of his departure makes sense, truly he had achieved deliverance.

予生還後，濟叔訪予情話軒，同坐臥者月餘。別去，在延令季氏家，方席間觀劇，忽向眾曰：‘吾欲去矣。’遂呼其僕曰：‘季公待我厚，我實坐脫，無他病，爲語家人毋疑季公也。’復拱手向諸君曰：‘便此等去，亦大快，人言死見鬼神語謬耳’遂瞑目。濟叔生平學佛，去來明白，如是，真得大解脫者。<sup>164</sup>

Zhou presents Huang's scene of self-transformation and transcendence as if he were another actor leaving a makeshift stage at Ji Zhenyi's 季振宜 (1630–1674) banquet. In a final note appended to a poem he ostensibly composed to mourn Huang's death, Zhou wrote: “as he left, unbound, he took pleasure in drink and courtesans. He himself said

<sup>162</sup> See, for instance, Thomas Ford's discussion of Freud's “Note on the ‘Mystic Writing Pad’” (a wax “imprint receiving device” that retains layers of former traces yet can also be wiped clean): “But if memory is to speak to the present, its medium also needs to remain receptive to the new, and therefore to be capable of forgetting... the trace system of memory requires transience as much as permanence.” Thomas H. Ford, *Wordsworth and the Poetics of Air* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 2018), p. 85.

<sup>163</sup> “Return to Life” refers to Zhou's release from imprisonment and interrogation.

<sup>164</sup> “Shu Huang Jishu yinpu qian,” *YZ* 2, p. 60.



death was bliss, and that there was nothing to fear 君化去, 方飲酒觀伎, 自言死甚樂, 不足怖也。”<sup>165</sup>

*Appendix 1. A Note on Editions of Seal Catalogue from the Studio for Relying on the Ancient*

Three editions of Zhou Lianggong's *Catalogue* are listed in *Zhongguo guji shanben shumu* 中國古籍善本書目, two held in the National Library of China and one held in the Shandong Provincial Library:<sup>166</sup> 1. a four-juan seal folio dated to the sixth year of Kangxi (1667) containing 1,550 impressions, with explanatory captions (*shiwén*); 2. a four-juan seal folio acquired by Fang Zhou 方舟 in 1817, an edition that contains no explanatory captions; 3. the Shandong two-volume edition with a colophon by Guo Qilong 郭起隆 (1804–1884). This edition bears handwritten notes alongside various impressions attributing the seals to carvers mentioned in *Biographies of Seal Carvers*: Xue Musheng 薛穆生, Lin Gongzhao 林公兆, Gou Daoren 垢道人, Cheng Muqian 程穆倩, Wu Yibu 吳亦步, Chen Shihuang 陳師黃, Wu Renzhi 吳仁趾, Tao Shigong 陶石公, Huang Jishu 黃濟叔.

Throughout this study I cite impressions from two reprinted facsimile editions: 1. a reprint of the above mentioned 1667 four-juan folio held in the National Library of China and listed as: Zhou Lianggong, ed., *Laigu tang yinpu: si juan* 賴古堂印譜：四卷 (Beijing: Guojia tushuguan chubanshe, 2010); 2. Zhu Tianshu's edited reprint of a 1912 facsimile first produced by Shenzhou guoguangshe 神州國光社, now held in the Shanghai Library and listed as: Zhou Lianggong 周亮工, *Zhou Lianggong quanji* 周亮工全集 (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2009), vol. 17.<sup>167</sup> This 1912 facsimile is based on a nonextant early-Kangxi-era four-juan folio containing 600 impressions with no explanatory captions. This folio appears to be more focused on Zhou Lianggong's collection than the 1667 edition, which foregrounds and contains a larger selection of Zhou Zaijun's personal seals and those of his brothers.

<sup>165</sup> “Ku Huang Jishu” 吳黃濟叔, *LTJ* 6, p. 132.

<sup>166</sup> *Zhongguo guji shanben shumu bianji weiyuanhui* 中國古籍善本書目編輯委員會, ed., *Zhongguo guji shanben shumu, Zibu* 中國古籍善本書目, 子部 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1996), p. 437.

<sup>167</sup> I have also consulted two other modern facsimile reprints with variants: 1. a folio of over 600 impressions preserved by Zhuliguan 竹里館; see Zhou Lianggong, *Laigu tang yinpu* 賴古堂印譜 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1992); 2. *Laigu tang yinpu chao* 賴古堂印譜鈔, in Kobayashi Toan 小林斗盦, ed., *Chūgoku tenkoku sōkan* 中國篆刻叢刊 (Tokyo: Nigen-sha, 1983), vol. 8.

*Appendix 2. Zhou Liangong's Studio-Name Seals*

LOCATIONS (chron. order)	STUDIO NAMES 室名	RELATED SEALS FOUND IN CATALOGUE (LAIGU TANG YINPU)
Nanjing	Laigu tang 賴古堂	
	Shijiu an 食舊庵	“Shijiu an” 食舊庵
	Yaolian tang 遙連堂	“Yaolian tang” 遙連堂; “Yaolian tang ruilian” 遙連堂瑞蓮
Weixian 濰縣, Shandong	Taoan 陶庵 (ca. 1641-42)	“Taoan” 陶庵; “Taoan sanshinian jingli suo ju” 陶庵三十年精力所聚
	Wushi tang 無事堂	
Yangzhou	Meihualou 梅花樓 (ca. 1647)	“Meihua lou” 梅花樓
Fuzhou	Jiao tang 蕉堂 (ca. 1647-48)	
	Liqinxuan 荔琴軒	“Liqinxuan zhongjiao ke” 荔琴軒種蕉客; “Liqinxuan” 荔琴軒
	Shuobing tang 說餅堂	“Shuobing tang” 說餅堂; “Weiyi shuobing” 惟宜說餅
	Jiesong tang 節松堂	
	Xuefang 雪舫	“Xuefang” 雪舫
	Baitaofang 百陶舫	
	Ganyuan 敢園	“Ganyuan jiuyuan Minxue beixue” 敢園就園閩雪北雪
	Tianyue tang 天月堂	
Beijing (prison)	Yinshuwu 因樹屋 (1659)	
Nanjing	Qinghuaxuan 情話軒 (ca. 1661)	“Qinghuaxuan” 情話軒
	Suoshi caotang 瑣石草堂 (ca. 1662)	“Suoshi caotang” 瑣石草堂
Qingzhou 青州, Shandong	Zhenyiting 真意亭 (1663)	“Zhenyiting” 真意亭
Nanjing	Ousui tang 偶遂堂	
	Duhualou 讀書樓 (1667)	“Duhualou” 讀書樓
	Shulao tang 恕老堂 (ca. 1671)	
	Yanyun guoyan tang 煙雲過眼堂 (1673)	“Yanyun guoyan tang shuhua yinji” 煙雲過眼堂書畫印記

Appendix 3. Zhou Lianggong's Major Works

TITLE	NOTES
<i>Laigu tang ji</i> 賴古堂集 ( <i>Collection from the Studio for Relying on the Ancient</i> )	24 <i>juan</i> + 1 additional <i>juan</i> ; first printed in 1675. Zhou Lianggong's collected poetry and prose, edited and compiled by Zhou Zaijun following the book burning in 1671. <i>ZLGQ</i> vols. 1-2.
<i>Tong jin</i> 通儘 ( <i>Great Fury</i> )	1 <i>juan</i> ; a surviving Qing-dynasty manuscript. An early volume of Zhou Lianggong's poetry, a collection that contains poems describing Zhou's service in the Ming resistance during the siege of Wei County in 1643. <i>ZLGQ</i> vol. 6.
<i>Quan Wei jilüe</i> 全濰紀略 ( <i>A Brief Account of Defending Wei</i> )	1 <i>juan</i> . A collection of court reports and official records from the siege of Wei County in 1643. <i>ZLGQ</i> vol. 6.
<i>Zichu</i> 字觸 ( <i>Realizing a Character's True Meaning</i> )	6 <i>juan</i> . A study of glyptomancy and character manipulation ( <i>chai zi</i> 拆字). Completed in 1647, printed in 1667. <i>ZLGQ</i> vol. 6.
<i>Tongshu</i> 同書 ( <i>The Book of Fellowship</i> )	4 <i>juan</i> . An anthology of short records and <i>biji</i> 筆記 notes on historical figures. First printed in 1649. <i>ZLGQ</i> vol. 7.
<i>Yinshuwu shuying</i> 因樹屋書影 ( <i>Shadows of Books at the House by the Trees</i> )	10 <i>juan</i> . An encyclopedic collection of notes on diverse categories of knowledge, compiled during Zhou Lianggong's interrogation and imprisonment in 1659. First printed in 1667. <i>ZLGQ</i> vols. 3-4.
<i>Duhua lu</i> 讀畫錄 ( <i>Record of Reading Paintings</i> )	4 <i>juan</i> . An anthology of 76 short biographies and notes on late Ming and early Qing painters authored by Zhou Lianggong. Most entries are based upon transcriptions of poems written on the painter's paintings. First printed in 1673. <i>ZLGQ</i> vol. 5.
<i>Yinren zhuan</i> 印人傳 ( <i>Biographies of Seal Carvers</i> )	3 <i>juan</i> . An unfinished anthology of Zhou Lianggong's notes and biographical sketches based upon impressions from antique seals in his collection or the folios of famous late Ming and early Qing seal carvers. First printed in 1673. <i>ZLGQ</i> vol. 5.
<i>Min xiaoji</i> 閩小紀 ( <i>A Minor Account of Fujian</i> )	4 <i>juan</i> . A collection of quasi-ethnographic notes on Fujianese customs. The earliest printed edition is dated to 1667. <i>ZLGQ</i> vol. 5.

- Chidu xinzhao* 尺牘新鈔  
(*New Transcriptions of Letters*)
- Cangju ji* 藏菴集  
(*The Sequestered Collection*)
- Jielin ji* 結鄰集  
(*The Collection of Neighborly Ties*)
- Laigu tang wenxuan* 賴古堂文選  
(*Selections of Refined Literature from the Studio for Relying on the Ancient*)
- Laigu tang cangshu* 賴古堂藏書  
(*Collected Books from the Studio for Relying on the Ancient*)
- Laigu tang yinpu* 賴古堂印譜  
(*Seal Catalogue from the Studio for Relying on the Ancient*)
- Ji mingjia shanshui* 集名家山水  
(*The Landscapes of Collected Masters*)
- 12 *juan*. An edited anthology of close to 1,000 letters composed by 230 scholars from the late Ming and early Qing. First printed in the Kangxi era. *ZLGQ*, vols. 8–9.
- 16 *juan*. A follow-up anthology of letters, planned as a sequel to *Chidu xinzhao*. *ZLGQ*, vols. 10–11.
- 15 *juan*. A further sequel to *Chidu xinzhao*. Printed in 1670. *ZLGQ*, vols. 12–13.
- 20 *juan*. An anthology of prose by a selection of late Ming scholars, edited by Zhou Lianggong. First printed in 1667. *ZLGQ*, vols. 14–15.
- 10 fascicles. A bibliography of titles held in the *Studio for Relying on the Ancient*. Printed during the Kangxi era. *ZLGQ*, vol. 16.
- 4 *juan*. A 1667 compendium of impressions from seals owned by Zhou Lianggong, his father, his younger brother, and sons. *ZLGQ*, vol. 17.
- A folio of 36 landscape paintings from Zhou Lianggong's collection. *ZLGQ*, vol. 16.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- LTJ Li Hualei 李花蕾, ed., *Laigu tang ji* 賴古堂集
- LTYA Zhou Lianggong 周亮工, *Laigu tang yinpu* 賴古堂印譜 (as pub. in *ZLGQ*)
- LYTB Zhou Lianggong, *Laigu tang yinpu: si juan* 賴古堂印譜, 四卷 (2010)
- YZ Zhou Lianggong, *Yinren zhuan* 印人傳 (as pub. in *ZLGQ*)
- ZLGQ Zhou Lianggong, *Zhou Lianggong quanji* 周亮工全集, ed. Zhu Tian-shu 朱天曙