



On the Revival of Seal Script in Qing Dynasty

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Abstract: Seal script was formed in the Shang and Zhou dynasties. After the Qin Dynasty unified the six states, it was collectively known as "Xiaozhuan", which was a standardized common character at that time. Because of the complexity of writing and the need for deep ancient writing skills, the writing of later generations is time-consuming and laborious, so it is constantly limited in the development of later generations. With the rise of official script, regular script and running script, they gradually disappeared in the field of vision of the masses and had little influence. It was not until the late Ming and early Qing dynasties that the rise of Stele Study and Archaeology and the flourishing trend of restoring the ancients that the ancient style of seal script came into our view again. This paper will start from the background of the times and related calligraphers to explore the revival of seal script in Qing Dynasty.

Keywords: revival, seal script, Qing Dynasty

1. The background of the revival of seal script

The development of calligraphy reached its peak in Yuan Dynasty. Before that, the foundation of "Zhong Wang" in Wei and Jin Dynasties was laid, the method of Sui and Tang Dynasties was regulated, "Ou Yu Yan Liu" created the brilliance of regular script, "Dian Zhang zusu" also helped the development of cursive script. Later, it was promoted by the "Su Huang Mi Cai" of the four schools of Song Dynasty. By the Yuan Dynasty, Zhao Mengfu had made great achievements in calligraphy styles such as Kai, Xing and Cao. It was very difficult for calligraphy in Ming and Qing Dynasties to innovate on this basis. If we want to continue to develop the art of calligraphy, we will break the Convention, surprise and find a new way. Until the end of Ming Dynasty and the beginning of Qing Dynasty, a large number of Han Dynasty steles were found. The study of Han Dynasty steles was very popular, and the study of Steles and Archaeology rose. The wind of restoring the ancients was very popular, which caused a boom of seal script on the Han Dynasty and Wei Dynasty steles. In the late Qing Dynasty, with the emergence of a number of important bronzes, the study of epigraphy had a greater development. Calligraphers in this period added the meaning of Zhen to the previous seal script.

In addition, during the reign of Qianlong and Jiaxing in Qing Dynasty, in order to better control the literati's thoughts and consolidate their rule, the literati launched the "Literary Inquisition". In order to avoid the Internet, the literati in this period embarked on the road of textual research. During this period, the Three Kingdoms, the Jin Dynasty, the southern and Northern Dynasties were constantly excavated. Besides consulting the ancient history, calligraphers also constantly provided new reference materials for the inscriptions. Calligraphers feel the charm of the characters on the stele more intuitively, and constantly broaden their horizons, so that the calligraphy innovation can be followed.

2. The style of seal script of "Deng school" and its influence

2.1 The life story of Deng Shiru

At the beginning of his life, Deng Shiru was named Yan, and his name was Shiru. Because he lived at the foot of Gongshan mountain, he was also named wanbaishan people. He was born in a small village in Anhui Province. He grew up in a poor family and made a living by being the father of a private school teacher. The difficult family conditions also led to the inability of Deng Shiru to continue to go to school. His grandfather and father were Deng's enlightening tutors. As a young man, Deng Shiru traveled through mountains and rivers and made friends with his father, and at the same time, he worked with his father to sell calligraphy and paintings for a living. In this process, Deng Shiru met the well-known calligrapher Liang Yao in Qing Dynasty, who changed his life and fate, and was introduced to the collection family Mei family to study. During his eight years as a sojourner in the Mei family, Deng studied hard, visited the stone tablet extensively, broadened his horizons, improved his ideological cognition, accumulated profound knowledge in calligraphy techniques, and laid a solid foundation for the formation of his own school.

2.2 Inheritance and innovation of Deng Shiru's seal script

Most of the writers of Xiaozhuan in the past dynasties took the method of Lisi. Wang Shu, a calligrapher in the early Qing Dynasty, can be regarded as the first symbol of seal script with the rise of retro style in the Qing Dynasty. In his book *Shuowen Jiezi*, the standard of seal script established by him mentioned that we should respect the ancient and attach importance to the law. Under this concept, the "ancient" is still "Er Li", which also leads to Wang Shu's style of seal script blindly pursuing the beauty of form, and the font is too rigid, which is contrary to the original intention of the beauty of "Yu Shu" created by Li Si. It is said that some people even burn the brush to achieve this effect, These paranoid imitations make calligraphy lose its original charm and vitality, and can not convey the author's own emotions and feelings through calligraphy. Deng Shiru can be called the first calligrapher in Qing Dynasty who comprehensively practiced Stele Study. He established the calligraphy creation mode of stele school from the perspective of practice^[1] It echoed with Ruan Yuan's "on the school of northern and southern calligraphy" and "on the northern stele and southern calligraphy" at that time.

Deng Shiru was born in cloth clothes, so his calligraphy is more open and less aristocratic red tape. During his study in Mei's family, Deng Shi Ru's seal calligraphy "Erli" was full of reading and visiting the inscriptions, and constantly studying the achievements of his predecessors. On the basis of inheriting the "Er Li" writing style, we should make self innovation, integrate Han Li and use Li writing style into Zhuan. It follows the style of "jade sheath seal" in which the knot is long and slender and the pen is fluent, which increases the changeable pen use. There is a square and a circle at the beginning and the end of the pen. There is a circle in the square and a square in the circle. The combination of hardness and softness greatly enriches the pen of seal script. With the pen, there are straight lines in the music, and the combination of straight and curved lines. The implication reaches the state of realizing the square in the circle and giving consideration to the square and the circle. Although the strokes are sophisticated and steady, they are light and vivid. Compared with the neat and neat seal script of "Er Li", Deng Shi Ru often makes changes in hanging feet, which makes people find its subtleties instead of the first impression. This kind of small change is more ornamental than the "jade sheath seal script" of "Er Li". I muhbbb think that the most shining point in Deng Shiru's seal script is the treatment of the relationship between the density and the picture. His "official script into the seal script" applies the precise writing method of official script to the seal script, and the comparison of density and density is beneficial. It is different from the rule of "Er Li" seal characters and bu Bai, but uses the spatial black-and-white relationship between Bu Bai and the characters to achieve the integrity and unity of the picture in shushushang, the book "yizhoushuangyi". It is said that "you can walk in the sparse places, but you can't let the wind pass in the dense places. You often count the white as the black, and the strange interest comes out."^[2] Deng Shiru has been following this. Looking at Deng Shiru's mature style work "notes of Bai's thatched cottage" (Figure 1), also known as "notes of Lushan thatched cottage six screens of seal script", the considerable characters are different from each other in that they are close and soothing, and the white place is not empty, but there is still a scene here. The strokes are thick and comfortable, and the feet are unique, which gives the viewer endless imagination and other aesthetic feeling. This work can be called one of the most representative seal script works in Deng Shiru's later years.



Figure 1. Notes of Deng Shiru's Bai's thatched cottage

2.3 The influence of Deng Shiru's seal script

In the upsurge of the revival of seal script in Qing Dynasty, I think Deng Shiru can be regarded as the most pioneering calligrapher. It broke the writing style of "Yushu Zhuan" since Qin Dynasty, and introduced the official script with more writing meaning and more able to convey ideas into the seal script. It creates a new style of seal script which is comfortable, thick and gentle, creates a new situation for the development of seal script in Qing Dynasty, and makes seal script, which has been silent for a long time, rejuvenate. It can be said that Deng Shiru's seal script has the significance of founding a school. He is the first calligrapher to use stele to write seal script, followed by Zhao Zhiqian, Wu rangzhi, Hu Shu, etc. in addition, Yang Yisun, he Shaoji, Wu Changshuo and other calligraphers who use Shiguwen and Jinwen are also deeply influenced by him. Yang Yisun is beyond the "Deng school" and unique, another into a family.

Kang Youwei once praised Deng Shiru as "the man of Wanbai mountain has not come out yet, and the world is divided into books that can not be made by Qin Dynasty, which are not good ancient scholars, and they are rare or able to do so". A three-foot child can make a seal script.^[3] This comment also proves the wonderful calligraphy of Deng Shiru, and opens up a new way for the study of calligraphy. Since then, all calligraphers have been influenced by it.

3. Conclusion

The seal script of Qing Dynasty has been revived for a long time since Deng Shiru. Through his constant exploration and trial, he finally opened a new chapter for the seal script of Qing Dynasty with his unique style of seal script, and left an indelible brilliant stroke in the history of Chinese calligraphy. Under the influence of the trend of thought of Stele Study and Archaeology in the Qing Dynasty, Deng Shiru took the lead in breaking the conventions by writing Han steles in the form of official seal script, which provided new ideas for many calligraphers of later generations and had a far-reaching and great impact on the innovation of calligraphy of later generations. The emergence of Deng Shiru accelerated the revival of seal script in Qing Dynasty. In the Qing Dynasty, with the appearance of calligraphy theory, seal characters emerged one after another, which really achieved the revival and development of seal characters, and provided an important basis for later seal characters' learning and research.

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