

Chen Xuexue

## A Textual Research on *LRJS Painting Manual* and *Master Du's Four Manual Books · Manual of Painting*

*Painting Manual of Liu Ru Ju Shi* (六如居士, hereinafter referred to as *LRJS Painting Manual*) or *Painting Manual of Tang Bohu* (唐伯虎) is a compilation of painting theories and techniques that appeared in the middle and late period of Ming Dynasty.<sup>1</sup> Ever since the Qing Dynasty, the book has been recorded in various collection catalogues and widely cited as important reference material in many theoretical works on the art of painting. Even so, most scholars still believe that a talented Bohemian artist like Tang Yin should have disdained to compile such a rudimentary manual. Therefore, *LRJS Painting Manual* is almost certainly a pseudograph.<sup>2</sup> However, so far, no scholar has made a firm argument on the authenticity of the book. In this case, this paper will discuss the authenticity of *LRJS Painting Manual* by exploring the relationship between *LRJS Painting Manual* and another painting manual book published in the Ming Dynasty entitled *Master Du's Four Manual Books · Manual of Painting* in a concurrent attempt to reconstruct the publication history of *LRJS Painting Manual*.

**INTRODUCTION TO MASTER DU'S FOUR MANUAL BOOKS' MANUAL OF PAINTING** The copy of *Master Du's Four Manual Books · Manual of Painting* as collected and kept at the National Science Library, Chinese Academy of Sciences is a set of three volumes. The original *Master Du's Four Manual Books*, as in the Ming Dynasty woodblock printed editions,<sup>3</sup> consists of four sets, and are accordingly divided into four parts, namely, Poetry, Prose, Calligraphy, and Painting. The block print frame is 19.1 cm high and 12 cm wide. There are ten vertical lines every half page, and each line contains twenty Chinese characters. The notes are written in small characters and placed two lines every space. There is space on both sides, single fish tail, and white outer margin. In the preface to the book the author's name reads as "Yixiusheng Du Jun (Shenbo) from Jinling." It is undated. The

---

<sup>1</sup> *LRJS Painting Manual* is also known as *Painting Manual of Liu Ru Master Tang*. The change of name is to be discussed below.

<sup>2</sup> About the authenticity of the work, see Xie Wei, ed. *A Catalogue of Writings on Chinese Painting* [M]. Shanghai: Shanghai Painting and Calligraphy Press, 1998. p. 314; Ding Fubao & Zhou Yunqing. *Four General Records of Chinese Arts* [M], Hangzhou: Zhejiang People's Fine Arts Publishing House, 2015, p. 170; Yu Shaosong. *Explanatory Notes of Indexes to the Works of Calligraphy and Painting* [M], p. 350.

<sup>3</sup> The original *Master Du's Four Manual Books* has no record of its publishing time. This information is merely based on the records taken in *A Description Catalog of Rare Chinese Books in the Library of Congress* (p. 593) edited by Wang Chongmin: "*Master Du's Four Manual Books* printed in the Ming Dynasty has 4 sets, 12 volumes, and 1 article, while every page has 10 lines, each of which consists of 20 words." In addition, its traits of edition and the styles of carvings indicate that the book was published in the Ming Dynasty.

postscript reads as “collated and printed by my younger brothers Du Jing and Du Jian.”

*Master Du's Four Manual Books· Manual of Painting* is an extremely rare ancient book with very limited number of copies still existing in the world. The copy collected and kept at the National Science Library of the Chinese Academy of Sciences is the only one found so far in the Mainland of China. *Master Du's Four Manual Books· Manual of Painting* is a miscellaneous collection of various painting theories and treatises on painting written by different artists in different historical periods, but most of the articles included are abridged and incomplete. The articles included in each volume of the book are listed as follows (with names of the original authors):

Volume I contains seven articles, namely, “The Origin and Development of Painting” (Zhang Yanyuan), “Production Model” (Guo Ruoxu), “Titles and Themes of Paintings” (Anonymous), “Basic Training of Painting” (Guo Xi), “Themes of Paintings” (Guo Xi), “Titles of Paintings” (Guo Xi), and “Appreciation of Great Paintings” (Guo Xi).

Volume II contains ten articles, namely, “Landscape Painting Tips” (Wang Wei), “Rhapsody on Landscape Painting” (Jing Hao), “A Discourse of Painting” (Anonymous) “Essentials of Landscape Painting” (Huang Ziju), “Painting Tips & Secrets”(Huang Ziju), “Six Principles and Three Merits” (Xie He), “Six Principles and Six Merits of Painting” (Liu Daochun), “Three Malpractices of Painting” (Guo Ruoxu), “Twelve Taboos in Painting” (Rao Ziran), and “The Method of Calligraphy and Painting” (Anonymous).

Volume III contains twenty-six articles, namely, “The Art of Drawing Dragons” (Dong Yu), “The Secret of Portrait Drawing” (Wang Sishan), “The Way of Making Coloured Paintings” (Anonymous), “Harmonizing Colors and Textures” (Anonymous), “Applying Fine Colors” (Anonymous), “Coloring of Silk” (Anonymous), “The Painter’s Brush Work” (Anonymous), “Ink Application Techniques” (Anonymous), “Texturing Methods” (Anonymous), “Evaluating Famous Paintings in Ancient and Modern Times” (Anonymous), “Authentic Paintings of Ancient Times Are Hard to Find” (Anonymous), “The Brushwork and Coloration of Ancient Paintings” (Anonymous), “Famous Painting Scrolls” (Anonymous), “Literati Painting” (Anonymous), “Anonymous Paintings” (Anonymous), “Boneless Painting” (Anonymous), “Court Painting” (Anonymous), “Rough Sketch” (Anonymous), “Yufu Painting and Calligraphy” (Anonymous), “The Difficulties of Titling Paintings Drawing the Name of the Puzzle” (Anonymous), “The Title Painting”

(Anonymous), “Art Appreciation” (Anonymous), “Ancient Paintings on White Silk” (Anonymous), “Ancient Paintings on Colored Silk” (Anonymous), “Decorative Painting” (Anonymous), and “Decorative Painting Stereotypes” (Anonymous).

The compiler of the book, Du Jun, has a grand theory about the collection and compilation of articles in his preface to the book. He believes that this series of books can be used to help later learners to “clean up troubles and follow the right path”; and he even claims with full confidence that “should there be a great hero capable of fighting rhinoceros elephants, killing whales, whipping thunders, riding the wind, and sweeping through the universe, the author hopes he could point out possible errors in the book”. However, an overview of the contents of the book seems to indicate that the compiler just randomly collected and compiled all articles and treatises on painting he could lay his hands on into a book. The collection is not exhaustive. And the collected articles are not specifically sorted and classified according to their contents, time of publication or authorship. Furthermore, the contents of some articles are not complete. The layout style of the book is similar to that of *Wang’s Calligraphy and Painting Collection*, but the volume is much smaller. It is more like a painting theory manual that can be put on the desk or night table for reference, or similar to *Night Boat*, a handbook written by Zhang Dai of the Ming Dynasty which became very popular among Ming Dynasty literati as a must-have knowledge manual.

**TEXTUAL RESEARCH ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LRJS PAINTING MANUAL AND MASTER DU’S FOUR MANUAL BOOKS • MANUAL OF PAINTING AND THEIR COMPLETION AND PUBLICATION TIME** *LRJS Painting Manual*

has circulated widely in various editions including: 1) the *Wanli Jiayin* block-printed edition (printed in the year of Jiayin during Emperor Wanli’s reign, that is, the year of 1614); 2) the *Zhibuzu Studio* block-printed edition printed in the Qing Period; 3) the *Guokeshanfang* block-printed edition printed by Tang Zhongmian in the Qing Period; 4) the *Xiyinxuan Congshu* (Collectanea of the Cherishing Time Studio) edition; 5) the *Xiaoyuan Congshu* (Collectanea of the Whistling Garden) edition; 6) the *Shishi Shanren* (The Hermit of Stone Chamber) block-printed edition printed in the Qing Period; 7) a handwritten copy hand-copied by Ma Guangmei in the Qing Period; 8) The *Meishu* Congshu edition, which is a modern collectanea compiled and published in the ROC Period. The existence of so many old and modern editions points to the

fact that *LRJS Painting Manual* has long been a popular book on the art of painting widely circulating among painting theory researchers and painting learners since the Ming and Qing Dynasties up to the modern times. The *Peiwenzhai Handbook of Calligraphy and Painting* compiled in the early Qing Dynasty has selected many articles from *LRJS Painting Manual*.

However, the intriguing point is that through the comparative textual research on *LRJS Painting Manual*<sup>1</sup> and *Master Du's Four Manual Books• Manual of Painting* we have got the following findings:

1. *Master Du's Four Manual Books* features a block print frame sized 19.1 cm x 12 cm; There are ten vertical lines of words per page, and twenty words (Chinese characters) per line, with explanatory notes double-lined in small print, space on both sides of every line, single fish tail, and white outer margin. And the *Painting Manual of Liu Ru Master Tang* kept at Taiwan's National Central Library has its printing features recorded as follows: The block print frame is sized 22.9 cm x 15.3 cm; there are nine vertical lines of words per page, and twenty words (Chinese characters) per line, with explanatory notes double-lined in small print, space on both sides of every line, and florid outer margin.

2. Except for some few words, the articles included in the two books are absolutely identical, and as are the cut-out paragraphs in the articles, so that all the paragraphs are still in the same order even though some of the paragraphs are cut out from the articles.

3. Both books are three-volume sets with exactly the same arrangement of contents and division of chapters.

4. The authorship is indicated differently for some articles. For an article in Volume I, Titles and Themes of Paintings, whose authorship *LRJS Painting Manual* attributed to Guo Ruoxu, *Master Du's Four Manual Books• Manual of Painting* refrained from indicating authorship. Another article in Volume II entitled A Discourse of Painting which has its authorship attributed to Jing Hao in *LRJS Painting Manual* is treated as an Anonymous work in *Master Du's Four Manual Books• Manual of Painting*. Similarly, Essentials of Landscape Painting in Volume II is also treated as an Anonymous work in *Master Du's Four Manual Books• Manual of Painting* but has its authorship attributed to Jing Hao in *LRJS Painting Manual*.<sup>2</sup> The Universal way of Painting and

---

<sup>1</sup> Here in this article it is meant to refer to the block-printed edition of *Painting Manual of Liu Ru Master Tang* kept at Taiwan's National Central Library which was printed by He Dacheng in the year of Jiayin during Ming Emperor Wanli's reign, that is, the year 1614.

<sup>2</sup> Some scholars of later generations believe that Essentials of Landscape Painting was authored by the famous master painter nicknamed "Big Fool" (i.e. Huang Gongwang, a renowned painter of the Yuan Dynasty) rather than by Jing Hao. We suspect that *LRJS Painting Manual* was probably the

Calligraphy in Volume II, whose authorship is not indicated in *Master Du's Four Manual Books• Manual of Painting*, has its authorship attributed to Rao Ziran in *LRJS Painting Manual*. As for Volume III, all the articles beginning from The Secret of Portrait Drawing towards the end have their authorship attributed to Wang Sishan in *LRJS Painting Manual* while in *Master Du's Four Manual Books• Manual of Painting*, The Secret of Portrait Drawing is the only one attributed to Wang Sishan; all the other articles are unbylined. In summary, it can be seen that for all the articles that *Master Du's Four Manual Books• Manual of Painting* left unbylined, *LRJS Painting Manual* would invariably attribute the authorship to the author of the previous article.

5. The Wanli Jiayin block-printed edition kept at Taiwan's National Central Library has one sheet (two pages or eighteen lines of words altogether) missing in Volume I, beginning from the line with the words 穷处坐看云起时 (To the water's ending, see the clouds rising)<sup>1</sup> to the line with the words 世说所载戴安道 (The stories about Dai Andao taken in *A New Account of the Tales of the World*). The missing words are from the article Titles of Paintings. This accounts for the fact that this article cannot be found in the book *LRJS Painting Manual* although the title of the article is right there in the table of contents.

The earliest edition of *LRJS Painting Manual* from ancient book-collecting institutions is the Wanli Jiayin block-printed edition printed by He Dacheng in the Ming Period (to be more exact, in the year of Jiayin during Emperor Wanli's reign, i.e. 1614). The manual is appended to *Complete Works of Master Tang Bohu* wherein it is titled *Painting Manual of Liu Ru Master Tang*. As can be seen from the preface written by Yuan Zhi, the earliest edition of *Collected Works of Tang Bohu* should have been first printed and published in the year of Jiajing Jiawu (1534) and it still has a separate edition.<sup>2</sup> The collection consists of two volumes, and the collected works include 32 *Yuefu* poems (folk-style ballads), 2 *Fu* poems (odes), and 15 essays. *LRJS Painting Manual* is not included in the collection. The year 1607 witnessed the publication of *Addendum to Collected Works of Tang Bohu*. Years later, in 1612, Cao Yuanliang amalgamated *Collected Works of Tang Bohu* and *Addendum to Collected Works of Tang Bohu* into *A compilation of Tang Bohu's Works*. It is

---

original misleader / was probably responsible for this misbelief.

<sup>1</sup> The missing sheet should be a particular case of printing mishap, which is not seen in any of the other editions, including the Guokeshanfang block-printed edition printed by Tang Zhongmian in the Qing Period and the Xiaoyuan Congshu (Collectanea of the Whistling Garden) edition.

<sup>2</sup> Volume II of *Collected Works of Tang Bohu* compiled by Yuan Zhi during the Ming Jiajing period is now collected in the library of the Palace Museum.

a collection of four volumes, plus an appendix volume, making a total of five volumes, but *LRJS Painting Manual* is not included in it.<sup>1</sup> In 1614 (year of Wanli Jiayin), He Dacheng expanded the addendum into a 12-volume set and *Painting Manual of Liu Ru Master Tang* into a 3-volume set, and then combined the two into a compilation entitled *The Complete Works of Tang Bohu*. This was the first time *The Painting Manual of Liu Ru Master Tang* became a component part of a compilation. In the Qing Period, when Tang Zhongmian published the Guokeshanfang block-printed edition of *The Complete Works of Liu Ru Ju Shi (Tang Bohu)*, he changed the title of *Painting Manual of Liu Ru Master Tang* into *LRJS Painting Manual* with the content remaining unchanged. Since then, every edition has followed this name. It is a safe assumption that *LRJS Painting Manual* came out later than *Master Du's Four Manual Books • Manual of Painting* (the publication time of the latter is to be subsequently deduced). Based on the assumption and relevant textual research results, it can be concluded that *LRJS Painting Manual* was not really compiled by Tang Bohu. It was actually a pseudograph compiled and published by He Dacheng in Tang Yin's name.

The above discussion has roughly clarified the publication time and authorship of *LRJS Painting Manual*. He Dacheng, the man who published the book in Tang Yin's name, is not a nameless nobody. Some traces of his life can easily be found in historical documents<sup>2</sup>. According to historical records, He Dacheng, whose style name was Jun Li, was born a native of Changzhou, Jiangsu Province. As a famous book collector in the late Ming Dynasty, he was also known by an alternative name: Ci Gong. He was the author and publisher of *Collected Works of Yuye (Wild Pleasure) Garden*. Some of his poems are included in *Nostalgic Collection* (Feng Shu: 2003) compiled by another famous book collector named Feng Shu. One of the poems recalled his experience of visiting a friend in piercing wind and snow together with Feng Shu and Feng Ban just to borrow and copy a popular poetry anthology entitled *New Songs of the Jade Terrace*, thus making a much-told tale in the academic world (Feng Shu, 2003: 248). In addition to the Feng brothers, namely, Feng Shu and Feng Ban, He Dacheng also had friendly contacts with famed scholars like Wang Shizhen<sup>3</sup> and Qian Qianyi (Qian Qianyi: 2009). Presumably, at that

---

<sup>1</sup> The four volumes and the appendix volume of *A compilation of Tang Bohu's Works* proofread by Cao Yuanliang are kept at Taiwan's National Central Library.

<sup>2</sup> The records of He Dacheng can be seen in these historical documents such as *Annalistic Bibliotheca Poem* by Ye Changzhi, *A Brief History of Jiangsu and Zhejiang Book Collectors* by Wu Han, *Chinese Book-storage Buildings* by Ren Jiyu and *A Dictionary of Book Collectors of All Ages* by Liang Zhan and Guo Qun.

<sup>3</sup> See *Biography Collection in the Qing Dynasty* compiled by Zhou Junfu, Ming Wen Publishing House, Academics, *Collected Works by Old Friends*

time, most of the book collectors in Changshu were in contact with each other, and it was common for them to know each other. A brief biography of He Dacheng in Feng Shu's *Nostalgic Collection* vividly outlined the life of a late Ming Dynasty book collector. Because of his good relationship with Ci Gong, Feng Shu was able to know about all kinds of things in his life. The detailed description makes people feel that he is within reach at present, and it also makes readers either laugh or sigh at the simple wishful thinking of the literati and the paleness of the world. According to Feng's records, He Dacheng was born into an aristocratic family, and his grandfather, He Kuang, was a *Jinshi* scholar who successfully passed the highest imperial examination in the year of Wanli Jiayu (1574). He Dacheng was an honest man of integrity. He served in the army in his early years. In spite of his military merits, he failed to get an official post because of his upright and outspoken character. He was "good at swearing", and his wife was a "very jealous woman", and the resulting daily quarrels between the couple were also vividly recounted in Feng's biographical sketch. An introduction to the book can be found in *Catalogue of Book Collection from Pangxizhai Studio*, a book catalogue block-printed by Pan Zuyin, a bibliophile in the late Qing Dynasty: "The front cover is stamped with the famous collector Zhao Qimei's seal, and the back cover is stamped with an official seal, which reads: He Cigong's cherished book collection from Yuye (Wild Pleasure) Garden. It is thus confirmed by Zhao Qimei to be one of He Dacheng's books. At the end of another book, *Collected Works of the Duke of Luguo(Wen Yanbo)*, there is an added postscript handwritten by He Cigong, which reads, "Obtained at a book sale in the year of Chongzhen Gengwu (1630), this is a book which was previously the collection of my brother-in-law Xuandu. Very soon it was included in the collected works in the Song Dynasty" (Pan Zuyin, 1928: 9). As Xuandu was Zhao Qimei's courtesy name, it can be inferred that He's wife (the so-called "very jealous woman") is very likely to be Zhao Qimei's sister, and Zhao Yongxian's daughter.

Zhao Yongxian, He Cigong's father-in-law, was also a renowned book collector and bibliographer, well known as the compiler of the *Bibliographic Catalogue by Zhao Ding-yu* and *Master Du's Four Manual Books*.<sup>1</sup> Subsequently, Zhao Qimei also initiated his own bibliographic compilation known as *A Catalogue of Maiwangguan Library*,<sup>2</sup> including four manual books

---

of *Yu Yang Shan Ren (Wang Shizhen)* • *Climbing Autumn Water Pavilion with He Cigong and Li Mengfang*.

<sup>1</sup> *A Bibliographic Collection of Prefaces and Postscripts in Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing Dynasties*. Zhonghua Book Company, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

respectively entitled *Manual of Poetry*, *Manual of Prose*, *Manual of Calligraphy*, and *Manual of Painting*. Considering that Zhao Qimei inherited his father Zhao Yongxian's collection, we may well conclude that the above four manual books are very likely to be *Master Du's Four Manual Books* though not named as such. Anyhow, the postscript added to the *Collected Works of the Duke of Lugu* (*Wen Yanbo*) has clearly shown He's familiarity with the collection of the Zhao's. Since it is known that both Zhao Yongxian and Zhao Qimei were open-minded scholars holding positive attitudes towards sharing knowledge and books with fellow book lovers, it is almost certain that He Dacheng had read or transcribed *Master Du's Four Manual Books* in his father-in-law's collection. It is even possible that He Dacheng inherited the book from his father-in-law. The date of birth and death of He Dacheng is unknown. But some clues can be found from the books. A birthday-congratulating poem *Guiyou Zishou* in *Nostalgic Collection* revealed his age, confirming that he was 60 years old "in the year of Chongzhen Guiyou" (1633) (Feng Shu, 2003: 247). He Dacheng's Preface to the *Painting Manual of Liu Ru Master Tang* is dated "the year of Wanli Jiayin" (1614), so it can be inferred that He was 41 years old when he published the book.

As an honest, upright man who is straightforward and unsophisticated in the ways of the world, He Dacheng should not have published the *Complete Works of Tang Bohu* for the purpose of making a profit. This can be better understood in view of the historical and cultural background of the time. In the late Ming period, book collectors in Changshu were not only fond of collecting rare ancient books and circulating them among fellow book lovers, but also attached great importance to the collation and publication of the books, which had virtually become the order of the day. Since He's father-in-law and brother-in-law were both renowned book lovers who had collated and block-printed a considerable number of books, it was inevitable that He Dacheng, who was also a book lover and collector, would follow their examples. More importantly, Tang Yu and He Dacheng were both natives of Wu Commandery, that is to say, they were fellow Wunese. In the Ming Dynasty, natives of Wu, especially those who were learned men of letters, were mostly proud of being Wu People. Therefore, it is very likely that one of the original intentions of He Dacheng's publishing *LRJS Painting Manual* in the name of Tang Bohu was to make a name for himself as well as for his fellow man of letters from the Wu Area. It has been proven that the great success and massive popularity of *LRJS Painting Manual* among painting and calligraphy learners is to some extent attributable



to Tang Bohu's name.

**THE AUTHORSHIP OF MASTER DU'S FOUR MANUAL BOOKS · MANUAL OF PAINTING**

The discussion above has made it clear that the *LRJS Painting Manual* was a pseudograph. It was actually *Master Du's Four Manual Books · Manual of Painting* disguised as Tang Bohu's work with a change of book title. Then, who was the real author of *Master Du's Four Manual Books · Manual of Painting*? When and where was it block-printed? At present, there are fairly scarce documentary records about *Master Du's Four Manual Books · Manual of Painting*.<sup>1</sup> After referring to *A Bibliographic Collection of Prefaces and Postscripts in Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing Dynasties*,<sup>2</sup> we know that there are only four published catalogues of private collections in which some information about the book can be found. These include 1) *Bibliography of Danshengtang* published by Qi Chenghan, a famous scholar and collector in the Ming Dynasty, in which there is a separate introduction to each Manual Book of *Master Du's Four Manual Books*; 2) *Bibliography of Wanjuantang* published by Zhu Mujie (who was also a famous scholar and collector in the late Ming Dynasty), but authored by Mu Dan (assumed to be a typographical error, for it is an unfamiliar name); 3) *Bibliographic Catalogue by Zhao Ding-yu* published in the Ming Dynasty; 4) *Baojinglou Collection of Books* compiled by Shen Deshou, a famous collector in the late Qing Dynasty, which contains three volumes of *Master Du's Manual Books*.

It can be inferred from the above four bibliographic catalogues published during the Ming and Qing dynasties that *Master Du's Four Manual Books* had already been fairly popular and had a certain influence at that time. However, it has not yet been possible to find any record regarding the life of the author Du Jun. It is recorded in *Index to Ming Period Scholars' Personal Library Names, Nicknames and Style Names* (Yang Tingfu, 2002: 158) that in the Ming period there were altogether three scholars named Du Jun, who were respectively: 1) Du Jun, born in Renqiu, Hebei, style-named Zhongtong and nicknamed Jiuhe (Nine Rivers); 2) Du Jun (former named Zhaoxian), a native of Huanggang, Hubei, style-named Yuhuang, nicknamed Chacun; 3) Du Jun, a native of Fugou, Henan, style-named Liangyu, nicknamed Mr. Xueya or Snow

---

<sup>1</sup> The referential books include *Chinese Rare Book Summary* and *A Descriptive Catalog of Rare Books in the Library of Congress* both written by Wang Chongmin, *Research On Chinese Painting Works* edited by Xie Wei, *Explanatory Notes of Indexes to the Works of Calligraphy and Painting* of Yu Shaosong (Yu classified this book into the category of lost works) as well as Ding Fubao and Zhou Yunqing's *Four General Records of Chinese Arts*.

<sup>2</sup> *A Bibliographic Collection of Prefaces and Postscripts in Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing Dynasties*. Zhonghua Book Company, 2006.

Cliff. But there is only one scholar by the name of Du Jun recorded in *Index to Qing Period Scholars' Personal Library Names, Nicknames and Style Names* (Yang Tingfu & Yang Tongfu 2001: 253), that is, the one from Huanggang whose style-name is Yuhuang. Thus we can clarify two points: 1) None of the three scholars named Du Jun was a native of Jinling; 2) Of the three scholars named Du Jun, Mr. Du Chacun was the most famous one, and the only one who lived from the late Ming Dynasty to the early Qing Dynasty, which happened to be a period of time corresponding to the time of publication of *Master Du's Four Manual Books*. So, it seems that he was most likely to be the author. Mr. Chacun has been highly respected for his unyielding moral integrity and his spirit of glory in honest poverty which distinguished himself from those snobbish social climbers of his time. Besides, he was also a reputed poet, book lover and collector, whose unsparing efforts in compiling and publishing books were much appreciated by the men of letters of his time. Resultantly, we can say that he has always been a heavyweight playing an important role in the study of the history of literature and culture in the Ming and Qing dynasties. However, a textual research conducted by the author of this paper has led to a conclusion that the possibility of this heavyweight scholar being the author of *Master Du's Four Manual Books* is very small.

In the preface to the book, the author signed his name as “Yixiusheng Dujun Shenbo from Jinling”. Jinling is the name of a county in Changzhou Prefecture, Jiangsu Province, formerly known as Piling. According to the official records of *Changzhou Prefecture Annals*,<sup>1</sup> in the fifth year of the reign of Emperor Gaozu of the Han Dynasty, Yanling Township was changed into Piling County. In the first year of Yong'an Period of Jin Dynasty (AD304), Emperor Hui of the Western Jin Dynasty granted Piling Prefecture a fief to the Crown Prince of King of Donghai. The Crown Prince was named Sima Pi, so Piling was changed to Jinling for avoidance of taboo. In the 9th year in the Kaihuang Period of the reign of Emperor Gaozu of Sui Dynasty (AD589), the name of Jinling was changed to Changzhou. During the Ming Dynasty, Changzhou was under the jurisdiction of South Zhili Province. However, according to the existing historical records, Du Chacun was “a native of Huanggang, Hubei Province”, who moved with his family to Nanjing in the 2nd year of Shunzhi in the Qing Dynasty (1645). Afterwards, he lived in a number of places including Guangling, Loudong, Huaiyin, Jiangdu, Huaiyang,

---

<sup>1</sup> *A Collection of Local Chronicles of China · Changzhou Prefecture Annals*. Jiangsu Classics Publishing House, 1991.

Taixing, Yangzhou, Songjiang and other places. There are no records whatsoever to show that he had ever lived in Jinling or called himself a native of Jinling. Moreover, according to the signed autograph in the preface to the book, Du Jun was style-named Shenbo and nicknamed Yixiusheng. Existing historical records show that the above-mentioned Du Jun (former name Zhaoxian) who was style-named Yuhuang and nicknamed Chacun did use a great variety of nicknames and pen names, which include Jian Weng, Ban Weng, Xizhi, Fengyuan, Huang Min, Bulaizi, Shudaoren, Bianyangtang, Jifengxuan, Zunguzhai, Baojiexuan, Zhengyiyuan, Yunwangtang, Xuwu shanren, Shenniaoshanren, Jinlingshanyong, Huangheshanqiao, Shuangji moan, etc. However, “Yixiusheng” cannot be found in the long list of nicknames and pen names. Furthermore, from what was written in postscript of the book “Collated and printed by my younger brothers Du Jing and Du Jian”, it can be inferred that the author Du Jun had two younger brothers respectively named “Du Jing” and “Du Jian”. However, it is clearly recorded in *A Chronicle of Du Chacun's Life*<sup>1</sup> that this Mr. Du was the second eldest son of the family, who had an elder brother named Du Fangshuo and a younger brother named Du Shaokai (Du Jie). So it seems that he should not have two younger brothers respectively named “Du Jing” and “Du Jian”<sup>2</sup>.

As mentioned above, information about *Master Du's Four Manual Books* can be found in three catalogues of private book collections published in the Ming period, namely: *Bibliographic Catalogue by Zhao Ding-yu*, *Bibliography of Danshengtang* and *Bibliography of Wanjuantang*. Based on the years of birth and death of the above three bibliographers, the author of this paper could speculate about the approximate time *Master Du's Four Manual Books* was completed and published. *Bibliographic Catalogue by Zhao Ding-yu*, the first of the three catalogues, was compiled by Zhao Yongxian, whose years of birth and death were recorded as “1535-1596”<sup>3</sup>, so the bibliographic catalogue should have been completed before the year 1596; *Bibliography of Danshengtang*, the second catalogue, was prefaced by “A Book Collection Agreement” dated “mid-summer of the Guichou Year of Wanli's reign (1613)” and “A Brief Account of Book Arrangement in the Year of Gengshen.” Given

---

<sup>1</sup> According to *Album of Two Scholars Seeking No Official Position · A Chronicle of Du Chacun's Life* edited by Wang Yiyuan and collected in the National Library of China, Lihua Printing House, the twenty-fourth year of the Republic of China (1935).

<sup>2</sup> Of course, we can't rule out the cases that Du Jun had two cousins who named “Du Jing” and “Du Jian” or younger brothers of a family clan who bore the same names. Though the author of this paper has got the access to the *Genealogy of Family Du* in local Huanggang, it was not that genealogy of Du Jun's family. Besides, in Du Jun's preface in *Change the Hall of the Church*, the author clearly stated that the genealogy of his family had been lost. So this point needs further survey.

<sup>3</sup> According to the photocopy of *A Bibliographic Collection of Prefaces and Postscripts in Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing Dynasties · Volume II of Ming Dynasty*. Zhonghua Book Company, 2006.

that the bibliographer Qi Chenghan's years of birth and death were 1563-1628,<sup>1</sup> we can infer that the "Year of Gengshen" should be 1620. Therefore, the catalogue should have been completely written before that year. The third catalogue *Bibliography of Wanjuantang* was prefaced by "An Account of Wanjuantang Book Collection", which recorded "August Mid-Autumn, Year of Gengwu" as the time when the compilation of the catalogue was completed. Because the years of birth and death of the bibliographer Zhu Mujie were 1518-1587,<sup>2</sup> the recorded "Year of Gengwu" should be "Longqing Gengwu year", that is, 1570. Although the *Bibliography of Wanjuantang* available today is collated and reprinted out of the original edition by Ye Dehui, Ye the reprinter clearly states in his "Preface to the Wanjuantang Bibliography" that when collating the bibliography, he aims to keep it as it is without making any unwanted change, "correcting only the obvious mistakes while suspected mistakes and missing words are to stay as they were in the original edition." Therefore, it can be reckoned that the *Bibliography of Wanjuantang* reprinted by Ye Dehui is a faithful reproduction of Zhu Mujie's original edition without any arbitrary changes. Hence, there is no doubt that *Bibliography of Wanjuantang* was completed and published prior to 1570. It can thus be seen from the above discussion that the *Bibliography of Wanjuantang* was the earliest one of the three catalogues. And we can also conclude with much certainty that the completion and publication time of *Master Du's Four Manual Books* was prior to 1570, when Du Chacun was not yet born, not to mention compiling *Master Du's Four Manual Books*.

Moreover, as one of the adherents of a former dynasty, Du Chacun and his family led a hard life of poverty. In view of his necessitous circumstances, it is hardly conceivable that he could afford the money to have such a great work printed. According to written records left behind by his contemporaries, such as *Reminiscences of Yuyang Shanren* (Wang Shizhen: 2014) by Wang Shizhen and his epitaph written by Fang Bao, although Du Chacun was a prolific author with many works to his credit, most of his works had been lost but not handed down because he could not get them printed.<sup>3</sup> Even the *Collected Works of Bianyatang*, his most famous work, was printed with the help of some friends in the years after his death. If Du Chacun could not afford to print even his own writings, how could he print a set of books just compiled

---

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> According to the photocopy of *A Bibliographic Collection of Prefaces and Postscripts in Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing Dynasties · Volume I of Ming Dynasty*. Zhonghua Book Company, 2006.

<sup>3</sup> According to *Change the Hall of the Church · Appendix I* in *Renewal of the Siku Quanshu*.

but not written by himself?

In the light of what was written in postscript of the book “Collated and printed by my younger brothers Du Jing and Du Jian”, we can affirm with some certainty that *Master Du’s Four Manual Books* was indeed one of the numerous Ming Dynasty editions of block printed books. Nevertheless, we still have no access to any records about the life of its real author known as Du Jun from Jinling. Who was he? And why did he compile *Master Du’s Four Manual Books*? Answers seem hard to find due to the remoteness of time and the lack of historical records. He might be a nameless scholar living at the bottom of the society, who was entrusted to compile books by some bookseller. Or he was a bookseller himself? Or perhaps he was a bookish member of the local gentry who engaged himself in compiling books on a whim of interest? Regrettably, despite the great efforts we have made to search for information in various kinds of literature including local chronicles and genealogical records, we have not found even a single word or sentence about Du Jun’s life. Reconstructing the compilatory history of *Master Du’s Four Manual Books* has become a mission impossible, and has to be left for further research in the future.

**CONCLUSION** In the Ming Dynasty, Jiangsu Province, as one of the political centers of the country, was an area characterized by economic prosperity. Its economic development led to unprecedented prosperity of the book printing industry. According to what was written by Hu Yinglin in his *Notes from Shaoshishanfang*, “Of all the block-printed editions of books, those printed in Suzhou and Changzhou are the best in quality, those printed in Jinling are the second best, and Hangzhou is second to Jinling in book printing. But recently, Huzhou and Shezhou are developing robustly to catch up, and their book printings are beginning to match those printed in Suzhou and Changzhou in quality and price. Sichuan block printings are now rarely seen on the market, and Fujian printings are the lowest in quality. In other areas, editions of this book are similar in quality to those in Song Dynasty” (Hu Yinglin, 2015: 44). The reigns of Emperor Jiajing and Emperor Wanli are the golden periods for the development of the book printing industry in the Ming Dynasty. In addition to a considerable number of official printing institutions, private printing houses and printing workshops had also seen their best days. In such a historical context, the publication of *Master Du’s Four Manual Books* seems to be a matter of course. As a rarely-seen ancient book, *Master Du’s Four Manual Books* has not attracted the attention of the academic circles

before, but *Master Du's Four Manual Books*, as a rudimentary handbook, has not only had a certain influence among members of the Ming Dynasty literati class, but also had an important role to play in the inheritance and dissemination of the traditional Chinese art theories. With the development of book printing industry in the Ming Dynasty, private book collection evolved into a popular trend. It became a common practice for book collectors to advocate book printing. With a view to leaving their collections to later generations and enabling more book lovers to share the happiness and benefits of reading and collecting books, the collectors would willingly reprint and publish those rare ancient books they had collected. Some great collectors would try all means to gather the scattered works and transcripts of predecessors including hand-copied books, and then print them into books after collation and editing. He Dacheng was one of such collectors, and his compilation and printing of *Complete Works of Tang Bohu* was a typical example of the arduous work of the collector-turned-printers. For reasons unknown, he included *Master Du's Four Manual Books: Manual of Painting* in the compilation after changing the title to *Painting Manual of Liu Ru Master Tang* and attributing the authorship to Tang Bohu. It might be speculated that he wanted to add to Tang's fame, though that could be as needless as painting the lily, or he just wanted to popularize the work in the name of Tang Bohu, a well-known celebrity. Whatever the reasons might be, we are certain about the consequences: *LRJS Painting Manual* had been popularly known, but *Master Du's Painting Manual* remained unknown for centuries. Thanks to the existence of surviving copies of *Master Du's Four Manual Books*, now we have come to know the historical truth. However, there are still many unknown facts about the book remaining to be revealed by further research.

## Bibliography

Feng Shu. *Pangxizhai Series-Nostalgia Collection* [M]. Beijing: Beijing Library Press, 2003.

Hu Yinglin. *Notes from Shaoshifangshan* [M]. Shanghai: Shanghai Library Press, 2015.

Pan Zuyin, *Collection of Pangxizhai Series* [M]. Continuation of *Si Ku Quan Shu*, Vol. 3. 1928.

Qian Qianyi, *Collected Poems and Proses in Ming Dynasty• Four Poems by He Cigong*

*in His Old Age* [M], Shanghai: Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 2009.

Wang Shizhen. *Reminiscences of Yuyang Shanren* [M]. Shanghai: Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 2014.

Yang Tingfu & Yang Tongfu. *Index to Qing Period Scholars' Personal Library Names, Nicknames and Style Names* [M]. Shanghai: Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 2001.

---. *Index to Ming Period Scholars' Personal Library Names, Nicknames and Style Names* [M]. Shanghai: Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 2002.

**Authors:** **Chen Xuexue**, Ph.D candidate, China Academy of Art. Hangzhou, China. E-mail: Cxxdebut@163.com