



CHINA  
2000  
FINE  
ART

**Ning Fucheng (1897–1966)**, courtesy name Zonghou (宗侯), pseudonym Laofu (老腐), was a native of Haicheng, Liaoning province. His studio name was Dan Mo Zhai (淡墨斋), which means "light Ink Studio." Influenced by his family at a young age, he loved calligraphy, painting, and seal carving. He graduated from Shenyang Normal School. While living in Liaoning, Ning studied painting with Qiu Zipei (邱子佩), and Yuan Zichun (袁子春). In the early 1950s, he moved to Beijing and devoted himself to the creation of calligraphy, painting, and seal carving. He was close friends with many famous artists of the time, including Zheng Songxian (郑诵先), Deng Sanmu (邓散木), Xu Molou (许磨庐), Yan Han (彦涵), Li Kuchan (李苦禅), Ma Jin (马晋), and Sun Rongbin (孙荣彬).

Ning Fucheng's art is characterized by the equal development of calligraphy, painting, and seal carving, and by the mutual influence of these three art forms. Ning studied inscriptions and steles extensively, and worked tirelessly to improve his calligraphy. He was best known for his clerical script calligraphy (隶书, lishu), which was based on the Han dynasty stele of Zhang Qian (张迁碑) in his early years and later incorporated the Jin dynasty stele of Cuan Baozi (爨宝子). He particularly liked to draw on the structure of Chen Hongshou's (陈鸿寿) clerical script for his own variations, and his use of the brush was inspired by the broken and incomplete charm of Han and Jin brick inscriptions. His style was new and unique, and it was known as the "Ning style".

His seal carving was based on the Qin and Han styles he studied in his early years, while later he incorporated the styles of Chen Shizeng (陈师曾), Wu Changshuo (吴昌硕) and Qi Baishi (齐白石). He particularly exaggerated the contrast between dense and sparse spacings, and his use of the knife was unprecedented. In his later years, he was no longer bound by conventional rules and his works were lively and full of variation.

His painting is serene with a slight touch of color, usually in ink and wash and full of interest in the natural world. He is also well-known for combining finger painting and brush painting in a single work.

In the 1950s and 1960s, his clerical script calligraphy (隶书, lishu), was exhibited in Japan many times. His publications include among others: 《宁斧成书法篆刻集》 (Ning Fucheng Calligraphy and Seal Carving Collection), 《宁斧成印存》 (Ning Fucheng Seal Collection), 《宁斧成印谱》 (Ning Fucheng Seal Album).

His works are in the collections of museums, like Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, Hokkaido Museum of Art in Japan, Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst Köln in Cologne, Germany.