

## Street Calls of Peking by Zhou Pei Chun

Vin Morgan

Dear All,

I seek information on a booklet of watercolors by Zhou Pei Chun (Chou Pai Chu'en or Zhou Peichun, dates unknown) which registers and preserves in delicate design on laid paper various street shop symbols found in Peking, China, before the Revolution. This is thought to be painted circa 1860. It is an 18-page booklet, 10 by 13 inches, containing two to six calls per page. Each symbol is labeled in Pin yan and each page is stamped with Zhou Pei Chun's own red seal. The calls include a pawn shop, lamp store, tea house, hat shop, saddle store, bakery, bath house, military sabre shop, tobacco store, and more. Each call is done in lively colors and suggests that quite an artistic splendor hung along the streets of Peking to inform and beckon shoppers about what lay inside shops. In their urban infrastructure, the myriad street calls heralded commerce through art—transcribing their wares and services into art which, itself, created one street art gallery after another and surely gave added vitality to the shopping, or even just the strolling, experience.

The provenance of this item is established by Anna Granger's diary reference, as follows: "May 15[, 1930, Peking, China]... Walter [Granger] & I went to hear a lecture by a Chinese on Street Calls of Peking at the Art Institute (source: The Granger Papers Project)."

During the mid-1800s, Zhou Pei Chun is known to have also painted a similarly-sized booklet of Peking court costumes and rank insignias of the military officials in the Ch'ing Dynasty. This is entitled "A Mandarin Receiving an Embassy of European Diplomats at His Court." Last I knew, this was stored at the Peabody-Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts.

If anyone can add to my knowledge and understanding of this item and the artist, I would greatly appreciate it.

Thanks,

Vin Morgan

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<http://users.rcn.com/granger.nh.ultranet>

Reference:

Q: Street Calls of Peking by Zhou Pei Chun. In: Arthist.net, Apr 23, 2008 (accessed Jul 4, 2025),

<<https://arthist.net/archive/30290>>.